

The Architecture of Margins: an Exploration of Civic Architecture and its Representation of Political Administration in Sarajevo, Ljubljana, and Skopje

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Introduction

In 2010, a short video was broadcast on televisions across the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to announce a forthcoming program of urban development.¹ The footage of the city's civic and public realm, superimposed with animated renderings, would become known as "Skopje 2014", an urban agenda supported and partially funded by the then-ruling political party, the VMRO-DPMNE.² The revitalization program has now included the construction of new institutions outfitted with white façades and decorative columns, the proliferation of public artworks representative of historically significant figures, and the reclothing of the capital city in pseudo-Baroque and Neoclassical garb.³ The aesthetic lamination of plaster décor⁴ has attempted to symbolically reposition the city's history, and thus the history of its territorial boundaries. Inspired by these events in Skopje, this paper examines the architectural deployment of stylized tectonic elements as a response to new configurations of territory and political administration.



Fig. 01: New public artworks, and construction projects reclothing the city in pseudo-Baroque and Neoclassical stylizations.

- 1 Jasna Mariotti, "What Ever Happened to Skopje". *MONU* 25 (2016): 4-7.
- 2 Maja Muhić and Aleksandar Takovski, "Redefining National Identity in Macedonia: Analyzing Competing Origin Myths and Interpretations through Hegemonic Representations", *Etnološka Tribina* 44 (2014): 140-141.
- 3 Mariotti, "What Ever Happened to Skopje".
- 4 Siniša-Jakov Marušić, "Photo: Macedonian Capital Unveils Its Own White House", *Balkan Insight*, December 31 (2014).



Fig. 02: The 22-meter bronze formally titled 'Warrior on a Horse'.

The Construction of Contemporary Skopje

The vision of Skopje 2014 has merged the future of the city with a fabricated state of antiquity, an image that could be received simultaneously as extraneous and familiar. The immense scale of the development has changed the urban center with an aesthetic lamination that had little prior reality.⁵ However, the idea of complete transformation is not entirely foreign to the city. An earthquake in 1963 caused damage to 80 per cent of the urban fabric and made major rebuilding necessary.⁶ Then part of Yugoslavia, Skopje was reconstructed and replanned by local, Yugoslavian, and international architects, who crafted a series of buildings that characterized a particular time and formation of Skopje's history.⁷ Just as the post-earthquake reconstruction dramatically changed the terrain of Skopje, the continued development of Skopje 2014 has again refaced the city. The new *en masse* adjustment can be characterized as using *antiquised*⁸ aesthetics to provide a new representation of the sovereign state for the twenty-first century.

Macedonia received self-government in 1991, when it gained independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The identity of the relatively new nation has been complicated by its past, with continued shifts of external administration and the consequent redefinition of territory. Between the ninth and mid-fourteenth century, the lands pertaining to contemporary Macedonia were controlled by Bulgarian, Byzantine and Serbian powers.⁹ From 1371 until 1913, the region was governed by the Ottoman Empire, and in 1919 was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and later formed the southernmost part of Yugoslavia.¹⁰

5 Muhić and Takovski, "Redefining National Identity in Macedonia", 142-143.

6 Mariotti, "What Ever Happened to Skopje".

7 Ibid.

8 Anastas Vangeli, "Nation-Building Ancient Macedonian Style: The Origins and the Effects of the So-Called Antiquization in Macedonia", *Nationalities Papers* 39, 1 (2011).

9 Robert Bideleux and Ian Jefferies, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*, 2nd ed. (Oxon UK, and New York USA: Routledge, 2007), 65-69.

10 Muhić and Takovski, "Redefining National Identity in Macedonia", 139-140.

Since the state received independence, the accelerated drive for its own identity has been the subject of both internal and international political conflict. Greece, with its own region of Macedonia, has disputed the rights of its northern neighbor to use the name as its title.¹¹ Significant conflict emerged in 2007, when the city's airport was renamed Skopje "Alexander the Great" Airport.¹² The disputes between Macedonia and its southern neighbor have been exacerbated by Skopje 2014's readjustment and its stylizations of antiquity, including a newly erected statue evocative of Alexander the Great in the city's central square. (Fig. 02)

Within internal politics, there is a major split between the VMRO–DPNME government that initiated the project, and the ethnic Albanians that make up a significant percentage of the country's population.¹³ Maja Muhić and Aleksander Takovski describe how the city's major renewal program has increased segregation between the Christian Orthodox Macedonians and the country's minorities.¹⁴ The aspiration of Skopje 2014 to establish its identity free from the architectural traces of Yugoslavian administration has extended to other histories in the city, such as those of the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic communities.¹⁵ The redevelopment's overlaying of alien aesthetics, and the fickle materiality of its construction, have been described as "kitschy"¹⁶ and a "Disneyfication"¹⁷ of the city.

The term "kitsch" is used as a subjective appraisal of aesthetics and stylistic suitability. Style is one of a much broader series of themes applied to the criticism of Skopje 2014. Other debates focus on: the inclusion and exclusion that the urban project establishes through its construction of a Macedonian identity; the cultural authenticity and geographic correctness of the histories being symbolized; and the extreme cost of construction versus the economic gains from the touristic value of the intervention. The reformation of identity that reflects Macedonia's shifts of territorial boundaries and change of imperial, federal and sovereign administrators has occurred in a wider collection of Balkan nations, including Slovenia, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina. At different times, these countries have responded to territorial redefinition, a multi-national population, and changes in administration, with architectural tectonics apparent in the civic institutions of the newly configured territory. Like Skopje, the shift in political representation was made visible in the associated representative architecture, and broadcast through everyday media.

Sarajevo's Vijećnica

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Austrian administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina began exporting visualizations of colonial Sarajevo through images rendered in popular media.¹⁸ Dijana Alić and Carel Bertram trace architectural representation and its shifting reception within Sarajevo and the city's evolving political constructs.¹⁹ At different points, they analyze the Vijećnica, Sarajevo's town hall, to frame the Bosnian "pseudo-Moorish" style as a carefully developed colonial tool employed during Austro-Hungarian administration. The two authors end their article with a series of images of Sarajevo rendered upon postcards dating from 1907.²⁰ The postcards provided a novel mode of carriage for personal correspondence leaving the Bosnian cultural capital. Fulfilling the medium of postcard photography with a display of both exoticism and identity, one particular variant titled "Postcard. View of the Town Hall. Sarajevo" illustrates a

11 Max Holleran, "Show Us Your Country: Macedonia's Capital Transformed", *Dissent* 61, 3 (2014): 20.

12 Vangeli, "Nation-Building", 25.

13 Holleran, "Show Us Your Country", 20.

14 Muhić and Takovski, "Redefining National Identity in Macedonia", 142.

15 *Ibid.*, 143.

16 Marušić, "Photo: Macedonian Capital Unveils Its Own White House"; Muhić and Takovski, "Redefining National Identity in Macedonia", 149.

17 Holleran, "Show Us Your Country", 23.

18 Dijana Alić and Carel Bertram. "Sarajevo: A Moving Target". *Centropa* 2, 3 (2002): 173-174.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

view of the Vijećnica foregrounded by a man and woman crossing the Šeher-Ćehaja Bridge over the Miljacka River.²¹ (Fig. 03) Within the folds of its perspectival framing, the “oriental” appears both recurrently and predominantly, capturing the traditional Bosnian clothing of people in the foreground, the sixteenth century Ottoman bridge that connects the two sides of the river, the town hall with its two-toned masonry, and the minaret of a mosque in the distant Baščaršija. A generous border encloses the postcard image and is inscribed with the title “Sarajevo–Rathaus”, a German word for town or city hall that references a building completed in Vienna less than a decade before the Vijećnica.²² While local correspondence tracked the integration of multi-national Bosnia into the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the postcard illustrated an oriental cultural capital framed by a Western colonial power.

Ottoman Administration

In the fifteenth century, Sarajevo was established under the rule of the Ottoman Empire²³ and shortly afterwards, was granted an exemption from taxes as a reward for supporting the suzerain’s military efforts.²⁴ This economic advantage, together with its geographic positioning, provided a sound foundation for the city as a trading post between the central lands of the Ottoman administrators and the traders from beyond their borders. Within this continental and economic milieu, Sarajevo’s development was linked to the *vakuf* system, an Islamic institution charged with the transferal of patronage into the upkeep of religious and civic structures.²⁵ Located within the old city and marketplace, known locally as the Baščaršija, the *vakuf*-funded structures drew heavily upon the Islamic styles emanating from Istanbul, and contributed to a foundation of architectural and urban aesthetics with strong Ottoman references.²⁶ (Fig. 04)

While the city’s Islamic population was by far the largest, Ottoman Sarajevo had other major populations defined by their faiths, including Catholic, Jewish and Orthodox religious groups.²⁷ The multi-faith and multi-cultural formation of Sarajevo could be partly attributed to the Baščaršija’s role as a space of exchange — spurring populations outside of Bosnia to immigrate to Sarajevo and establish communities with stylized cultural facilities.²⁸ This process of cultural importation overlaid the Ottoman city with fragmentary architectural forms and stylizations introduced from neighboring states and cultures.

Austro-Hungarian Bosnia

The Austro-Hungarian administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina began in 1878 with the ratification of the Treaty of Berlin.²⁹ The new administration quickly encouraged infrastructural development for the collection of material resources, as well as the roads and railways required for market logistics.³⁰ The rapid development of the surrounding terrain was mirrored in the urban node of Sarajevo with the construction of new buildings and cultural centers. The developments deployed different historical modes of architectural form to provide a visual and spatial representation for the city’s multiple communities.³¹

21 Ibid., 174.

22 Anthony Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak: Architecture as Language in the Habsburg Empire and Its Aftermath, 1867-1933* (Chicago USA and London UK: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 19.

23 Alić and Bertram, “Sarajevo: A Moving Target”, 165; Robert Donia, “Fin-De-Siecle Sarajevo: The Habsburg Transformation of an Ottoman Town”, *Austrian History Yearbook* 33 (2002): 43.

24 Dijana Alić and Maryam Gusheh, “Reconciling National Narratives in Socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Baščaršija Project, 1948-1953”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, 1 (1999): 7-8.

25 Alić and Bertram, “Sarajevo: A Moving Target”, 165; Alić and Gusheh, “Reconciling National Narratives”, 6.

26 Alić and Bertram, “Sarajevo: A Moving Target”, 165; Alić and Gusheh, “Reconciling National Narratives”, 8.

27 Donia, “Fin-De-Siecle Sarajevo”, 43-44.

28 Alić and Gusheh, “Reconciling National Narratives”, 8.

29 Alić and Bertram, “Sarajevo: A Moving Target”, 166; Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans 1804-1945* (Harlow UK: Longman, 1999), 113.

30 Donia, “Fin-De-Siecle Sarajevo”, 47-48.

31 Ibid., 54.



Fig. 03: View of the Vijećnica from across the Seher-Cehaja Bridge. Images of the Town Hall from this vantage point were used as postcard media during Habsburg administration.

Fig. 04: The Baščaršija and its Ottoman influenced architecture, and the pseudo-Moorish Vijećnica in the background.



Within this context, the faculties of architecture and urban planning were quickly invested in political agendas. The existing Croatian and Serbian communities already had national identities that spread across Bosnia's borders and into cultural alliances to the east and west.³² These connections were made visible in the architectural styles that drew upon precedents already deployed in neighboring countries, and engaged built form to visualize specific cultural and political ties.³³ The Bosnian Muslims were positioned a little differently. With Ottoman rule vacated, they became not only the largest cultural group of the city, but also one with no immediate neighbor of similar cultural origins. They did, however, have a vernacular architecture developed over centuries under guidance of the Ottomans.³⁴ The shift in territorial boundary repositioned Bosnia as a margin within an entirely different imperial community — one in which would be forged a uniquely Bosnian identity to combine the various faiths and cultural groups as a multi-nation severed from their neighboring ties and the Ottoman Empire.³⁵

The pseudo-Moorish Style

The pseudo-Moorish architectural style was born as a fabrication; an assemblage of architectural forms and decoration derived from Islamic architecture in Spain and northern Africa.³⁶ Within the context of Central Europe, the use of the pseudo-Moorish style was employed regularly in designs for Islamic and Judaic cultural and religious buildings, as well as the architectural representation of Islamic colonies at world exhibitions.³⁷ Anthony Alofsin describes the re-emergence of the Moorish style in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century, simultaneously with the Gothic Revival.³⁸ Against the Gothic Revival with its clear connection to the Christian church, and stemming from precedents within the European architectural canon, pseudo-Moorish architecture was often subjugated to the role of Gothic's "heathen cousin".³⁹ However, it also emerged as a novel architectural style that contained elements foreign to the context in which it was sited, and as such was employed to evoke the exotic. The duality of framing the "foreign" or "exotic" within a perceived hierarchy of western and eastern models soon found political agency in the construction of civic space.

Within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, stylistic hybridizations appeared regularly in projects located in Bosnia and other colonial territories.⁴⁰ The incorporation of local architectonic elements within civic and government buildings sought to become emblematic not only of the diversity of cultures (and thus territories) within their empire, but also of the native traditions under their administration.⁴¹ In this sense, pseudo-Moorish architecture and other hybrid forms of style were both intro- and extra-spective. At a continental level, they sought to project the landscape that the empire controlled; and within each cultural capital, they affirmed a union of governments, people and cultures with an inferred order. The style's Bosnian manifestation cohered to this trope and drew upon foreign architectonic elements that visually resembled the Islamic sphere beyond Western Europe. Critically, however, the antecedents were derived from Moorish and Egyptian models located in Spain and northern Africa, and completely alien to Sarajevo's Ottoman architecture.⁴² (Fig. 05) This simultaneous recognition of Islamic culture and

32 Alić and Bertram, "Sarajevo: A Moving Target", 169.

33 Emily Gunzburger Makaš, "Sarajevo", in *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires: Planning in Central and Southeastern Europe*, ed. Emily Gunzburger Makaš and Tanja Damljanović Conley (Oxfordshire, UK and New York, USA: Routledge, 2010), 248-249.

34 Alić and Bertram, "Sarajevo: A Moving Target", 165.

35 Ibid., 169.

36 Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak*, 44; Makaš, "Sarajevo", 250.

37 Makaš, "Sarajevo", 250.

38 Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak*, 44.

39 Ibid.

40 Dijana Alić, "Ascribing Significance to Sites of Memory: The Sarajevo's Town Hall", in *At War with the City*, ed. Paola Somma (Gateshead, UK: The Urban International Press, Great Britain, 2004), 70-71.

41 Ibid.

42 Makaš, "Sarajevo", 250.



Fig. 05: The architectural vernacular of Sarajevo, and the pseudo-Moorish Sharia School (arch. by Karel Pařik) in the background.

complete de-contextualization from the vernacular Ottoman canon was fundamentally political.⁴³ Tactically, the operation represented the predominantly Muslim population of Sarajevo, but did so with aesthetics that separated the city from its previous imperial host. The empire's Joint Minister of Finance, Benjamin von Kállay, was a strong advocate of the pseudo-Moorish style and its link to the new Bosnian identity.⁴⁴ Kállay commissioned Karel Pařik, an architect from the country now known as the Czech Republic, to produce a design scheme for the Vijećnica. As Sarajevo's new town hall, the Vijećnica, was tasked with the representation of the new administrative government.⁴⁵ However, upon submission, Pařik's proposal took the form of a neo-Renaissance palace⁴⁶ structured around a triangulated plan.⁴⁷ Unimpressed by the neo-Renaissance style of the building, Kállay replaced Pařik with Viennese architect Aleksander Wittek, who was tasked with producing a pseudo-Moorish iteration.⁴⁸

The Vijećnica

Drawing upon precedent sources that are alleged to have included the Alhambra as well as the mosque and religious school of Hasan II, Wittek utilized imported architectonics, décor and materiality to develop the proposal as a pseudo-Moorish conglomeration.⁴⁹ The three façades applied a Mamluk fenestration using a repeated sequence of two-toned masonry, and the building was topped with delicate crenelations.⁵⁰ The Moorish influence was manifest in thin columns and the application of "horseshoe" arches⁵¹ upon the balcony, portico and interior atrium. (Fig. 06)

43 Alić and Bertram, "Sarajevo: A Moving Target", 169.

44 Makaš, "Sarajevo", 250-251.

45 Alić, "Ascribing Significance", 69.

46 Makaš, "Sarajevo", 251.

47 Alić, "Ascribing Significance", 70.

48 Makaš, "Sarajevo", 251.

49 Alić, "Ascribing Significance", 70.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.



Fig. 06: Architectonic details on the front façade of the Vijećnica.

Fig. 07: The Vijećnica facing the Miljacka River and the Baščaršija located behind it.



The siting of the building remained as Pařík had originally intended — facing across the river to the nearby gaol, so as to consolidate a new civic precinct at the eastern edge of the Baščaršija.⁵² Orientating the Vijećnica to form this new municipal area — a move that would make the stratified silhouetting of Sarajevo's postcards possible — caused the building to face away from Baščaršija, and from the citizens who it was designed to politically and architecturally represent.⁵³ (Fig.07) Its function as a bureaucratic and administrative vessel, removed from the everyday operation of the city, formed a gateway into the old town, marking both foreign intervention and external control.⁵⁴ Further, the commanding nature of the building was increased by its towering elevations, which vastly overshadowed the Ottoman architecture surrounding it.⁵⁵ In 1893, when Aleksander Wittek passed away, a third architect was brought in to manage the building's construction.⁵⁶ Ćiril Iveković, an architect with previous experience in the pseudo-Moorish style, and like his predecessor, trained in Vienna, finished the construction of the building three years later.⁵⁷

The work of three foreign architects, employing a syncretic assemblage of elements from multiple continents under the purview of two distant capitals, created a visualization of the Vijećnica as a clear political idea. The building provided the Islamic Bosnian population with a predominant visualization in the city, but simultaneously separated them from the cultural imagery of their previous administrators. The building's morphology constructed a gateway to the Baščaršija district, and a locus of civic administration, but at the same time marginalized its traditional cultural operations. The Vijećnica was a colonial symbol formed as an assemblage of carefully redeployed tectonics, as if conceptualized as a postcard image of an exotic land brought under control. Half a century later in nearby Ljubljana, a similar process of constellating architectonic fragments would be employed to fabricate a national identity for the people of Slovenia.

Ljubljana's Unbuilt Parliaments

In 1991, the newly declared state of Slovenia released a postage stamp featuring the dramatic cone-shaped section of an unbuilt proposal for the Slovenian Parliament sided by two segments of italicized text: "*samostojnost*" and its English translation, "independence".⁵⁸ The postage stamp extends from the post office and its national postal system as a "government issue" receipt of payment. Thus, the small, gummed piece of paper became a proclamation of independence from the infrastructural workings of the Slovenian government. The representation of this image, one with both visual and operational connections to the new state, signaled a change in the peripheral territory; Slovenia was shifting from a Republic of Yugoslavia to a self-governed state.

The image of parliamentary architecture, designed by Slovenian Jože Plečnik in 1947, bears a similar rhetoric to the Sarajevo postcards featuring the Vijećnica. In both examples, the architecture reflected the greater political agenda, which was captured in an image disseminated through common communication networks. However, the key difference lies in the opposing conditions of colonialism and independence. Where the Vijećnica represented a change in Imperial occupation, the image of the Slovene Parliament symbolized a country that was claiming its sovereignty. The Parliament, while designed, was unbuilt, and therefore represented an ideal which had not been realized under prior political circumstances. Where the Vijećnica represented a political operation that became manifest within the architecture of Sarajevo, the picture of the Slovene Parliament symbolized a construction of political autonomy that was yet to come.

52 Alić and Bertram, "Sarajevo: A Moving Target", 171.

53 Ibid., 172-174; Alić, "Ascribing Significance", 69.

54 Alić and Bertram, "Sarajevo: A Moving Target", 172-173.

55 Alić, "Ascribing Significance", 69.

56 Makaš, "Sarajevo", 251.

57 Ibid.

58 Michael Z. Wise, "Cathedrals of Freedom; from Ljubljana to Prague, They're Dusting Off the Memory - and Drawings - of Jože Plečnik: [Final Edition]", *The Washington Post*, July 7 (1994); Slavoj Žižek and Andrew Herscher, "Everything Provokes Fascism/Plečnik Avec Laibach". *Assemblage* (1997): 73, 75.

Unformed Slovenia

Until the twentieth century, Slovenia never existed as a consolidated independent state. Gow and Carmichael explain that the original inhabitants of the geographic area pertaining to contemporary Slovenia comprised Romans, Thracians, Celts and Illyrians, and later formed as part of the Avar and subsequent Frankish Empires.⁵⁹ In the fourteenth century, the lands of future Slovenia were incorporated into the Habsburg Realm and governed from the capital, Vienna.⁶⁰ Rule was again interrupted when Napoleon conquered the north-eastern edge of the Adriatic and formed the Illyrian Provinces, within which Ljubljana became the capital.⁶¹ As a consequence, this period instigated a rise in Slovenian culture, made visible in the consolidation and advancement of the Slovene language.⁶² The promotion of Ljubljana as an administrative capital and the push for a vernacular language would position the city as a cultural capital of the Slovenian people. As the capital of a cultural group, rather than demarcated sovereign territory, Ljubljana would be maintained throughout the re-established Viennese administration until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the aftermath of World War I.

At the end of the nineteenth century, two major changes shaped the built form of the cityscape. The first occurred through the rise in competition between administrative centers within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and was made visible in the architecture of institutional buildings developed from the Austrian model of Neo-Renaissance.⁶³ During the same period, Ljubljana was critically damaged by an earthquake.⁶⁴ After commissioning two schemes for the reconstruction and future planning of Ljubljana from Max Fabiani and Camillo Sitte, the city's Municipal Building Office developed an urban plan of their own.⁶⁵ The schematic of concentric ring roads originally devised by Fabiani was maintained, and consolidated Ljubljana's elevated castle as the central node of the city.⁶⁶ This change in the city's structure would find pertinence in Plečnik's later interventions in the city and castle. At the end of the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian Empire splintered into new factions of independent states and multi-national conglomerates, and Slovenia was restructured from the Austro-Hungarian Empire into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.⁶⁷ Now removed from the centuries of Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian rule, the city's architects would need to capture a language that celebrated the Slovenian vernacular and Ljubljana's history.

Jože Plečnik

It was in this context that in 1921, Plečnik returned to his native Slovenia, and began work on the replanning and re-signification of Ljubljana. Plečnik could recall the city's Mediterranean character and was disappointed by its transformation through Austrian architecture in the aftermath of the earthquake.⁶⁸ The architect's work in Ljubljana operated on two scales; the urban plan of the city and a series of smaller public spaces strung together as sequential axes. The latter projects consist of institutional and religious buildings as well as an array of monuments, bridges, staircases and walkways that act as connective fabric linking civic and public spaces,⁶⁹ and can be understood

59 James Gow and Cathie Charmichael, *Slovenia and the Slovenes: A Small State and the New Europe* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 13.

60 Ibid.

61 Jörg Stabenow, "Ljubljana", in *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires: Planning in Central and Southeastern Europe*, ed. Emily Gunzburger Makaš and Tanja Damljanović Conley (Oxfordshire, UK and New York, USA: Routledge, 2010), 223.

62 Gow and Charmichael, *Slovenia and the Slovenes*, 18.

63 Stabenow, "Ljubljana", 227-229.

64 Ibid., 226.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Bideleux and Jefferies, *A History of Eastern Europe*, 321.

68 Damjan Prelovšek, *Jože Plečnik; 1872-1957 Architectura Perennis* (Yale and New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 1997), 267.

69 Steven Mansbach, "Making the Past Modern: Jože Plečnik's Central European Landscapes in Prague and Ljubljana", in *Modernism and Landscape Architecture, 1890-1940*, ed. Therese O'Malley and Joachim

as a series of individual nodes that connect in a web of constellated fragments. (Fig. 08) The unearthed artefacts of the city stretching from Roman Emona to recent history are placed into dialogue with markers of Slovenian culture, as well as stylistic references to the architecture of the Mediterranean and the historically significant Etruscan, Egyptian and Roman civilizations.⁷⁰ While the architect's constellated urban interventions had large success and contributed to the emergence of the city's architectural identity as a capital, his consolidated urban plans were hardly implemented despite fifteen years of development.⁷¹ However, the two categories of the architect's work were not completely independent, and a merger between the different modes of working can be identified in Plečnik's proposals for the Ljubljana Castle.

Plečnik's National Museum and Unbuilt Parliaments

The Ljubljana Castle was developed over a substantial period of time that coincided with Plečnik's application to other projects within the city. Andrea Iorio carefully explains the step-by-step development of Plečnik's work on Ljubljana Castle, between its initiation in 1932 as a proposal for a national museum, and its unbuilt conclusion in 1947 as the first scheme for a Slovenian Parliament.⁷² Iorio's studies illustrate Plečnik's enhancement of the visual connection between the castle and the city through the application of volumetric and architectonic modifications to the building's exterior.⁷³ Plečnik added another level to the building to regulate the varying heights of the structure, consolidate its form, and thereby enhance its monumentality.⁷⁴ Continuing this approach, he enlarged the castle windows and framed them with bold fenestration to make the building appear closer to the city-based viewer.⁷⁵ Finally, the exterior façade was reimaged as a



Fig. 08: The triple bridge in Ljubljana, and the Main Market located behind it. Both buildings were designed by Jože Plečnik and contribute to the greater Water-Axis.

Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, D.C., USA: National Gallery of Art, 2015), 105-111; Peter Rowe, "Representation and the Constitution of Spatial Meanings," in *Civic Realism* (Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 1997), 180-191.

70 Mansbach, "Making the Past Modern", 105-111; Rowe, "Representation", 180-191.

71 Prelovšek, *Jože Plečnik*, 271-273.

72 Andrea Iorio, *Comporre Architettura Costruire La Citta; Jože Plečnik Al Castello Di Ljubljana*, trans. Tommaso Giordani (Padua, IT: Il Poligrafo, 2014).

73 *Ibid.*, 72-74.

74 *Ibid.*, 72.

75 *Ibid.*

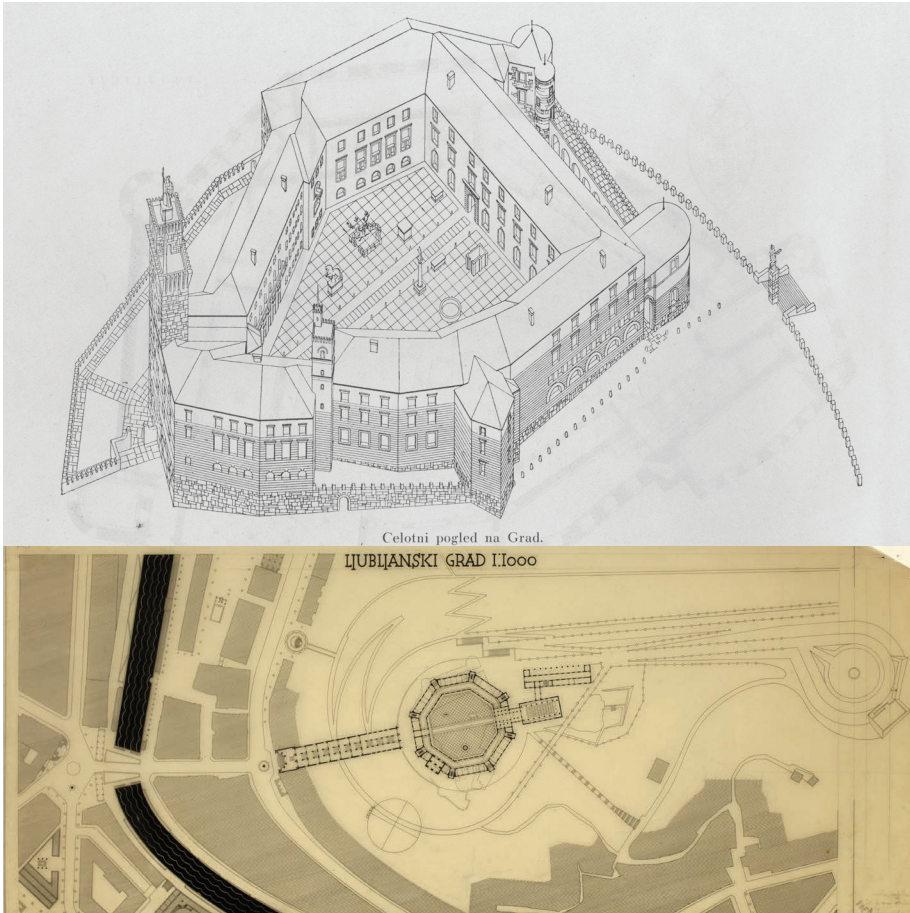


Fig. 09: Axonometric View of Plečnik's proposal to turn Ljubljana Castle into a National Museum.

Fig. 10: The octagonal plan of Plečnik's first proposal for a Slovenian Parliament, 'The Slovene Acropolis'.

banded horizontal tripartite; it started with rough foundations formed from uneven stone, moved through banded masonry with emphasized and ordered horizontal striations, and finally was topped by an attic space free from excess decoration.⁷⁶ (Fig. 09) This formation of the building's exterior was drawn from Florentine antecedents,⁷⁷ an importation of foreign architectonics that was again drawn upon in the enlargement of the clock tower.⁷⁸ The uneven stone visible in the foundations and basement provided a description of the archaic origin of the city, while the fenestrated and banded walls alluded to the city's Baroque and Renaissance development.⁷⁹ Further, the building's composition recalled the formal and morphological qualities of "proto-renaissance civic palaces",⁸⁰ These conglomerate civic buildings appeared during the nation-building processes of other cities and states, and this reflection effectively situated Ljubljana within an aesthetic paradigm of national emergence.⁸¹

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Prelovšek, *Jože Plečnik*, 294.

79 Iorio, *Comporre Architettura Costruire La Citta*, 73.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.



Fig. 11: View of Castle Hill and Ljubljana Castle from Congress Square. Plečnik designed alterations and additions to the square during his career in Ljubljana.

Little of Plečnik's work in the restoration of the castle reflects what was ever actually present. Instead of fashioning a factual account of the castle's material history, Plečnik created a fictional allegory of the city's past.⁸² In Plečnik's 1947 transformation of the scheme into a Parliament for the Slovene people, he proposed the castle's replacement with a new building formed around a near-perfect octagonal plan.⁸³ (Fig. 10) Iorio's drawings illustrate that the length of the front façade was maintained as a proportional metric and arrayed to create the outer dimensions of the new proposal.⁸⁴ Largely, however, the proposed Parliament was a completely different building to the castle that was to be destroyed and replaced. Where the museum merged fragments of a real and invented history, the parliament was designed as a symmetrical and ordered monolith elevated upon the city's historic hill and projected as an image across the city.

Damjan Prelovšek describes Plečnik's Slovenian Acropolis as a utopian project; a project that the architect knew would never be accepted by the city authorities and one that he, therefore, designed for his pleasure.⁸⁵ However, Plečnik did approach this project with rigor and tenacity.

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.*, 76.

84 *Ibid.*, 38.

85 Prelovšek, *Jože Plečnik*, 295.

Even before the transformation of the castle from a national museum to a Slovene Parliament, the architect had designed visual connections towards the castle from specified viewpoints within his landscapes and from buildings located in the context of the broader city.⁸⁶ (Fig. 11, 12) It may be more likely that Plečnik's proposal for the Slovenian Acropolis was political and ideological in nature, a scheme that would represent a vision not only of what the Slovene Parliament should look like, but of what the nation of Slovenia, finally demarcated from the margins of previous empires, should become.

When Plečnik submitted his plans in 1947, they were refused, and the architect's dream of the Slovenian Acropolis temporarily came to a halt. With the castle already reserved as the location of the National Museum, the building was deemed inappropriate for the site.⁸⁷ In response, a design competition was established for the new Parliament building to be sited in Tivoli Park, and Plečnik was invited to contribute.⁸⁸ (Fig. 13) In a matter of months, Plečnik had designed an entirely new scheme characterized by a dominant conical spire that reached high into Ljubljana's skyline.⁸⁹ (Fig. 14, 15) If the architect had lost his dream of creating an acropolis for the Slovenian people on the crest of the city's central hill, he had not lost his ambition to fold his visions for Slovenian sovereignty into the fabric of the state's Parliament. The project's title shifted from the "Slovenian Acropolis", to "The Cathedral of Freedom",⁹⁰ a change of title that seems appropriate for a country that had been granted the freedom to install its own constitution and assembly – even if it remained under the greater administration of Yugoslavia.

The Cathedral of Freedom was structured around a square plan with a circular rotunda interlocking the assembly hall at the center, an entry passage at the front, and a series of smaller rooms around the remaining perimeter. (Fig. 16) The rooms at the building's edge were stacked four storeys high, and the central hall extended vertically as a cylinder, to approximately double the height of the surrounding base. From the top of the cylinder, the cone-shaped spire reached a point 120 meters above the ground.⁹¹ Peter Krečič notes that the function of some of the building's spaces were jeopardized by the monumental forms of the structure and the way in which they intersect; the hallways adjacent to the main hall "would be imposing but somewhat monotonous,"⁹² and the triangular spaces formed at the joint of the cylinder and cone would have been "interesting but highly awkward to use".⁹³ The proportion of the building's plan, designed as a near-perfect square, instilled a level of autonomy in its relationship to the surrounding fabric — a quality that was made visible in the final modification of the castle into the octagonal plan in the parliament's previous schematic. The clarity of the building's monumentality overshadowed a number of its operational spaces and its specific relationship to the surrounding urban context.

If the architect's design development of the national museum into the "Slovenian Acropolis" had begun to foreground the fabrication of an ideal over an embellishment of what was present, the Cathedral of Freedom extended this trajectory into the configuration of a utopian vision.⁹⁴ Undoubtedly, Plečnik's scheme was an architectural proposition. However, its autonomous relationship to the particular site, and its radical ambition of expressing monumentality, was more articulate in crafting an image of sovereignty through architectural representation than it was in providing a proposition for a parliament in the urban fabric of Ljubljana. At the end of Krečič's description of Plečnik's second parliament, the author notes that the building, while failing to materialize physically, remained as an image of Slovenian sovereignty.⁹⁵

86 Iorio, *Comporre Architettura Costruire La Citta*, 77.

87 Peter Krečič, *Plečnik, the Complete Works* (New York, NY, USA: Whitney Library of Design, 1993), 176.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

90 Žižek and Herscher, "Everything Provokes Fascism", 70-71.

91 Krečič, *Plečnik*, 176.

92 Ibid., 177.

93 Ibid.

94 Žižek and Herscher, "Everything Provokes Fascism", 71.

95 Krečič, *Plečnik*, 178.

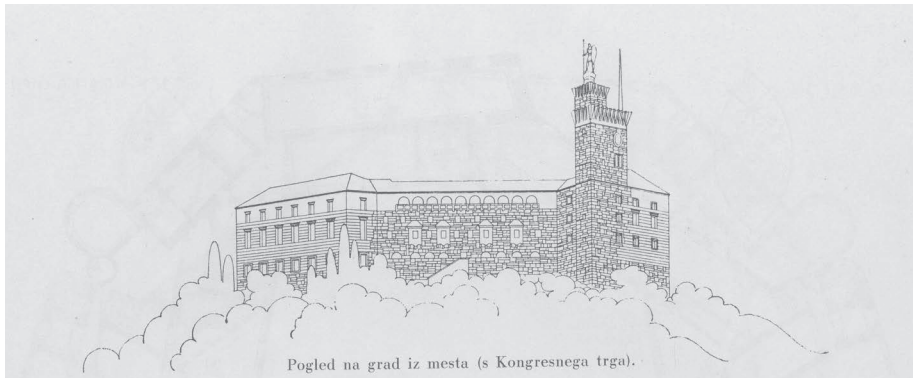


Fig. 12: View of Plečnik's transformation of Ljubljana Castle into a National Museum projected from a vantage point near Congress Square.

Fig. 13: Plan of central Ljubljana showing the placement and orientation of Plečnik's 'Cathedral of Freedom'.



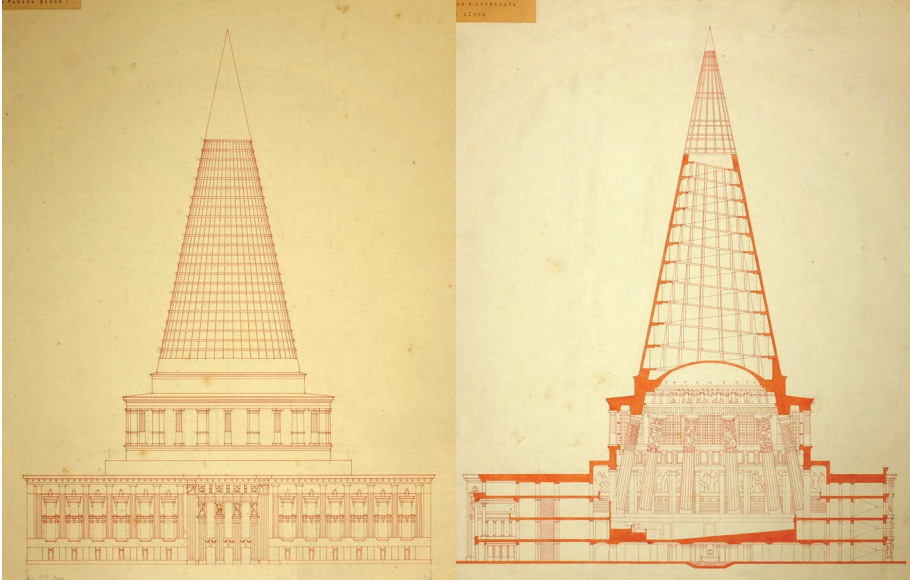
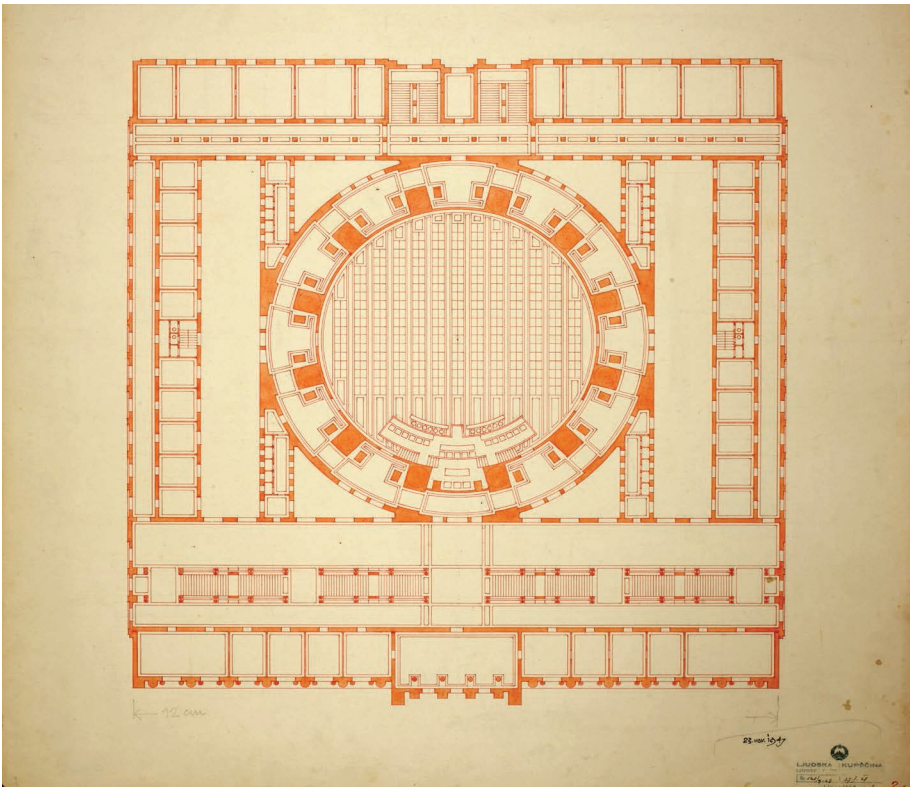


Image 14: Front Elevation of the 'Cathedral of Freedom'.

Image 15: Section through the 'Cathedral of Freedom', Jože Plečnik's second parliament proposal.

Image 16: Plan of the 'Cathedral of Freedom'.



Andrew Herscher offers an alternative reading of the second parliament that focuses on the origin of the antecedent forms and their manipulation.⁹⁶ The author compares Plečnik's plan to that of the Schinkel's Altes Museum; the façade is likened to Michelangelo's City Hall at the Campidoglio in Rome; and the dramatic cone, to the unbuilt competition entry for the Palace of Peace by Félix Debat. All of the antecedents comparatively drawn upon are emblematic of Slovenia's then-recent external administrators, the Germans and the Italians, who occupied Ljubljana during the Second World War, and the Palace of Peace, as a proliferator of "utopian internationalism".⁹⁷ The individual elements signify a tragic period, series of events, or ideology, against which Slovenia's own national identity was attempting to define itself. The technique of re-contextualizing signifiers in a novel relationship disconnects the element itself from the historical or ideological context that it symbolizes. The objects remain pre-discursive with no specified representation, and are refused a discourse that would reconnect a new or existing definition. Through this process, Plečnik's assemblage became a symbol for the nation of Slovenia; an image of sovereignty evoked by the Italian and German architectonic elements, but separated from the ideological context of nationalism that they previously conveyed.

Laibach, a music and performance compartment of the avant-garde art movement, NSK, uses a similar strategy in their imagery and live performances.⁹⁸ Laibach mixes Slovene historical imagery with iconography taken from nationalist and communist regimes, and resituates them as floating signifiers within the construct of (capitalist) pop music.⁹⁹ In the decade before Slovenia's independence from Yugoslavia, the group released a compact disk cover featuring the plan and section of Plečnik's second parliament building.¹⁰⁰ The image would move from the experimental art movement to mainstream media in 1991, when the application of the building's section on the first Slovenian postage stamps proclaimed independence.¹⁰¹ Later, a plan view of the central assembly hall would appear next to the architect's head embellishing the Slovenian 500 Tolar bank note.

While the "Cathedral of Freedom" was never physically constructed, it did have a presence beyond symbolic representation, and as argued by Herscher, the continued use of its imagery was formative in the construction of Slovenian sovereignty.¹⁰² Unlike the Vijećnica in Sarajevo, which devised a national representation as a political construct of control, Plečnik crafted a utopian image of emancipation; never manifest as a parliament, but drawn upon as a political ambition in the last decades of the twentieth century. The themes of cultural representation, territorial construction, and the expression of identity through architectural fragments, have re-emerged in the present with the current redevelopment of Skopje.

Skopje 2014

The square surrounding the equestrian statue of the "Warrior on a Horse" forms the central core of contemporary Skopje. Through an urban plan completed by Dimitrije Leko, the public space was designated the city center in 1914,¹⁰³ approximately a century before the latest redevelopment embellished it with added pomp. Planned during the resumption of Serbian rule, the square was always intended to be monumental, and as such, was endowed with surrounding buildings in a variety of Neoclassical, Modern, and Secessionist styles.¹⁰⁴ The imported architectural aesthetics formed a mode of Europeanization that was continued during the city's successive rule by the

96 Žižek and Herscher, "Everything Provokes Fascism", 68-73.

97 Ibid., 72.

98 Ibid., 64-74.

99 Ibid., 65-66.

100 Ibid., 73.

101 Ibid., 73, 75.

102 Ibid., 73-74.

103 Stefan Bouzarovski, "Skopje", *Cities* 28, 3 (2011): 266.

104 Ibid.

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.¹⁰⁵ Today, the square appears as an exaggeration of this initial appearance. Its ground plane is patterned in two-toned tiles and embellished with a string of fountains enhanced with light shows and dramatic music projected through speakers. The peripheral walls, formed by the ornate façades of surrounding buildings, overlay a mixture of *antiquised* architectonics and bright flat screen monitors. From the equestrian statue, the square extends past the surrounding buildings through a series of radial arteries in all directions; the most dominant one projects across the Stone Bridge and continues to the old market place known as the *Čaršija*.

Prior to 1914, the *Čaršija* had been the center of the city – a space of trade that was coupled with public institutions such as mosques and bathhouses.¹⁰⁶ The approximate geographic area pertaining to Skopje had shifted through a series of occupations by the Romans, and then various Byzantine, Bulgarian and Serbian rulers.¹⁰⁷ In the last decade of the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Empire took control of Skopje and consolidated the bazaar as both the urban center and an image of Ottoman rule.¹⁰⁸ Centuries later, the 1963 earthquake that caused major damage to Skopje's urban fabric did not leave the *Čaršija* completely unscathed.¹⁰⁹ The impetus of this event triggered the repair of the old town's urban fabric, and with a much greater intensity, the widespread planning and reconstruction of larger Skopje. At the intersection of these two movements was a push for the preservation of the *Čaršija* as a piece of urban history that would offer a link for the surrounding reconstruction to its past.¹¹⁰ At the turn of the 1990's, the *Čaršija* sat as something of an anomaly within the greater city fabric. The surrounding infrastructural development had disconnected it from other parts of the city, and strategic plans labelled the space as a zone of historical importance, but denied its categorization as either a commercial or residential precinct.¹¹¹ This series of planning agendas set forth a period of objectification — one in which the symbolism of the *Čaršija* as a place of Skopje's history would overshadow the cultural activities that occurred there.¹¹² The old Ottoman town became a controlled symbol of a multiculturalism propagated by the city and greater Yugoslavia.¹¹³

Beginning at the “Warrior on a Horse” before continuing over the Stone Bridge and past the towering sculpture of Philip II, the trajectory of Skopje 2014's development has now reached the gateway to the city's original center. In July 2017, the buildings directly in front of the Ottoman node were in the process of having their façades replaced with an *antiquised* lamination of cream colored tiling and Corinthian columns. The workmen, scaffolding, and half-finished façades sit on the front line of a contestation between two different architectonic representations of state. The stand-off, made visible through the climactic juxtaposition of built form, is the latest materialization of political impetus in a city that has crafted multiple representations of its collective identity in the space of a century. The expedient timeframe in which Skopje 2014 has resurfaced large tracts of the city has clearly caught the attention of architects, journalists, and the public. However, there are other debates that surround the regeneration with specific links to its representational architectonics, and the way in which they have been constructed as an image of the city.

In its continued development, the project cost has exceeded more than 640 million Euros, a striking sum for a country in the grips of an economic crisis.¹¹⁴ There have been claims of corruption and a lack of transparency in the decision making process, and further allegations that

105 Fabio Mattioli, “Unchanging Boundaries: The Reconstruction of Skopje and the Politics of Heritage”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20, no. 6 (2014): 604,611.

106 Bouzarovski, “Skopje”, 266.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.; Jasna Stefanovska and Janez Koželj, “Urban Planning and Transitional Development Issues: The Case of Skopje, Macedonia”, *Urbani Izziv* 23, 1 (2012): 92.

109 Brian Anthony Shott, “Space and Society in the Southern Balkans: Understanding the Čaršija in Skopje, Macedonia” (University of Virginia, 2000), 168.

110 Ibid., 169-170.

111 Ibid., 177-179, 82, 85.

112 Ibid., 185-186.

113 Mattioli, “Unchanging Boundaries”, 611.

114 Mariotti, “What Ever Happened to Skopje”, 6-7.



Fig. 17: Central Skopje and its re-stylization produced by the Skopje 2014 program.

the project is being used by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski to award contracts to companies that have been loyal to his political party.¹¹⁵ The argument of economic expenditure is countered by the threefold boost in tourism that occurred between 2002 and 2012.¹¹⁶ Skopje 2014 sought to establish an image of the city fit for the tourism market of contemporary Europe — a market that it has proactively sought to capture through the proliferation of imagery. The architecture of Skopje 2014 has become a stage set and advertisement for the city, the drama of which is a vision of the nation's past and the history of its people. However, the representation of Macedonian identity has been controversial.

Fabio Mattioli interprets the contemporary stylistic shift taking place in the city as a continuation of Europeanization and secularization during its governance under the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and later under communist Yugoslavia.¹¹⁷ During these two periods, the recurring agenda governed the appropriateness of certain activities in public space, and the appropriateness of the architectural fabric. This moved from an Ottoman to a European representation, and thus restricted both the public visualization and the presence of Islam in the city.¹¹⁸ This division of communities has re-emerged in the Skopje 2014 project, in which efforts to establish an inclusive image of Macedonian identity exclude a significant part of its populace. (Fig. 17) The Neoclassical and pseudo-Baroque façades applied to new and existing buildings, together with accompanying monuments, echo the European stylization that occurred during the de-Ottomanization period of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.¹¹⁹ Skopje 2014 duplicates several projects constructed during this time, and in doing so directly references a period of disenfranchisement for the city's Islamic communities. The current program has gone so far as to reposition one of these reconstructions on the site of a mosque destroyed by the kingdom's government.¹²⁰ Skopje 2014 does employ architectonic elements to specify a representation of a population group within the city, but fails to forge a representation of the city's greater populace. The development crafts a mono-ethnic vision of Macedonian identity, within a country formed by multicultural identities

115 Holleran, "Show Us Your Country", 23.

116 Guy DeLauney, "The Makeover That's Divided a Nation," *BBC News*, August 30 (2014).

117 Mattioli, "Unchanging Boundaries", 612.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., 604.

120 Ibid.

and contested histories.¹²¹ The architectonics deployed in the project symbolize a history of intercultural conflict and constitute a trope foregrounded by its international reception.

Skopje 2014 has been accused of cultural appropriation motivated by its importation of precedents and identities claimed by states beyond Macedonia's territorial boundaries.¹²² However, Plečnik's work in Ljubljana is likewise characterized by a syncretic use of symbols adopted from surrounding cultural contexts and reconfigured within a new civic fabric. Skopje 2014 might be seen in a similar light to Plečnik's redeployment of architectonic fragments from adjacent former republics, as an attempt to reconnect the city with its neighboring states by constructing an architectonic resonance. Or, following Andrew Herscher's analysis of Plečnik's reconfiguration of elements from the "enemies" of Slovenia, Skopje 2014 might be read as the proliferation and consequential nullification of nationalist iconography and the symbols of international dispute. Through these lenses, a similarity could be established between Plečnik's tectonics in Ljubljana, and those of Skopje. However, the former foreign minister, Antonio Milošoski, frames it somewhat differently: "This is our way of saying [up yours] to them".¹²³ The 22-meter bronze statue resembling Alexander the Great is not an attempt to nullify contentious symbolism. While it might be seen as an operation to connect a broader history of the country, it is foregrounded by antagonism towards neighboring Greece, or "revenge"—as Muhić and Takovski put it.¹²⁴ The statue and its surrounding debate highlights Skopje 2014's role, not only in maintaining the already existing conflict, but also in advancing it; it represents, quite literally, the *construction* of international dispute.

Skopje 2014 has been the subject of intense deliberation, not only in the international and local purview of Skopje and Macedonia, but also in government discussions between the party that initiated it, VMRO-DPMNE, and its opposition, SDSM. Needless to say, arguments have taken place across many fronts, including how the buildings will represent the past, present, and future of the city — debates situated against the backdrop of the program's continued construction.

As Muhić and Takovski tried to explain, some citizens were concerned that the interpretations will not affect the material form and existence of this complex signifier (the objects themselves), and the project will not cease to physically exist. This may lead first to the dominance of a single voiced discourse, and perhaps even to the end of the possibility of any "double voiced" signification. It will perpetuate itself through history, but not before it creates an irredeemable gap in Macedonian public and political life.¹²⁵

The Skopje 2014 redevelopment has become a vessel for argumentation between both major political parties. Through this mechanism, the building works stand as a prop to be utilized as a means to discuss not only national representation or the city's urban form, but also broader issues such as national economics and international relations.¹²⁶ This agency has made Skopje 2104 a political tool, and may well be prompting its continued development. Furthermore, the now climactic architectural standoff at the southern border of the Čaršija is representative of continued issues surrounding the representation of Skopje's multiple ethnicities. At present, there is a confrontation between the "showcase of planned multiculturalism"¹²⁷ of the Čaršija, and its escalation into the complete rebranding of the city in the image of Western antiquity. Both of these represent the disenfranchisement of the significant Albanian population. Further, it would seem that the halt of Skopje 2014 at this line, the continuation of the development into the Čaršija, or a reciprocal development of pseudo-Islamic statuary and façades on the other side of the threshold, would only inflame the tensions of this confrontation.

121 Muhić and Takovski, "Redefining National Identity in Macedonia", 142.

122 Vangeli, "Nation-Building", 17.

123 Helena Smith, "Macedonia Statue: Alexander the Great or a Warrior on a Horse?", *The Guardian*, August 14 (2011).

124 Muhić and Takovski, "Redefining National Identity in Macedonia", 143.

125 *Ibid.*, 151.

126 *Ibid.*, 46-51

127 Mattioli, "Unchanging Boundaries", 611.

Conclusion

Within the context of the Western Balkans, the assemblage of architectonic elements is a recurring apparatus for the construction of national identity. If the fabrication of architectural style as a means to represent the population of a new territorial boundary is not a unique concept within the politico-geographic landscape of Skopje and the greater Balkans, then what is unique about the recent transformation?

Skopje 2014 has applied mechanisms of importing and manipulating architectonics that various empires employed in Sarajevo, Ljubljana and pre-independent Macedonia, within the framework of democratic rule. Where the Vijećnica in Sarajevo represented the colonization of its multiple cultures, and Plečnik's two parliaments in Ljubljana functioned as a precursory symbol for the country's own sovereignty, Skopje 2014 both illustrates and promotes a conflict between democratic parties. The project's exacerbation of internal and international struggle, as well as its extreme expenditure to broadcast and market itself, elucidates a specific type of political agenda played out through the artifice of populism.¹²⁸ By constructing these conflicts, Skopje 2014 builds an architectonic representation of the major ethnic population of Macedonia, and a perceived desire for its own identity. Rather than creating a representation of the state, Skopje 2014 creates a contestation within the state – a contestation possibly being utilized to form supporter groups and voters during political elections.¹²⁹ Two common critiques of the redevelopment, the speed with which it has been implemented, and the scale of its façadism, could be based on the length of the political term, and the desire to stay in power.

However, as the case studies in Sarajevo, Ljubljana and Skopje have demonstrated, architectonics and the content that they signify are somewhat fickle; with new cultural and political developments, they are reconfigured and re-contextualized to produce new readings. Imported tectonic elements are constellated in a web of relations where their association forms new meanings not entirely present in the individual components. Through this process, a representation of identity emerges from the assembled whole — one that is not finite, but contingent on other political, ideological, or tectonic elements that may later be applied to the constellated field.

The success of Plečnik's work in Ljubljana can be attributed to its malleability. The constellation of elements leaves gaps that can be written into by future interventions. The architect's signification of national identity presented an ideal that could be furnished in time by later architectural and political expressions. Future revisions are afforded space to operate in the context of the work without being determined by it, and given the capacity to change its signification.

The Vijećnica in Sarajevo also shifted in its signification through changes of interpretation. The pseudo-Moorish architectural style was developed as a means of representing something exotic, without acknowledging the specifics of its origin or cultural connotations. The particular use of the style within the context of Sarajevo was a colonial operation that represented the large non-Christian population of the city and simultaneously separated them from the aesthetics of the Ottoman Empire. Later, after the end of Austro-Hungarian administration, the Vijećnica would be reclaimed by the Bašaršija and its residents, shedding its immediate association with Austro-Hungarian rule and becoming an "authentic" piece of Sarajevo culture and urban fabric.¹³⁰ The building's significance would shift again at the end of the twentieth century when the Vijećnica was destroyed in the inter-ethnic violence of the Bosnian War. The remnants of the structure became symbolic of an attack upon the city's historic multiculturalism.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Owen Hatherley, "Story of Cities #31: Skopje Plans for the Future by Fixating on Its Ancient Past", *The Guardian*, April 27 (2016); Paul Walsh, "Playing the Name Game: Populist Politics in Macedonia," *Fair Observer*, December 21 (2012).

¹²⁹ Vangeli, "Nation-Building", 22.

¹³⁰ Alić and Bertram, "Sarajevo: A Moving Target", 174-175.

¹³¹ Alić, "Ascribing Significance", 76.



Fig. 18: The architectural lamination of Skopje 2014.

It is too early for the fate of Skopje 2014 to be determined. While large swathes of Skopje's redevelopment have now materialized, the emergent national identity remains contingent on the elements of its assemblage. These elements not only include the tectonics that have been constructed, but also those that may still be erected or removed, the connection between these elements and what they signify, and the greater political framing by the government in power. The national representation evoked by Skopje 2014 may evolve with time as a confident image of the multi-nations within the country's margins. Or, it may fracture into a plurality of cultural identifiers to be reformed in future configurations. Only time will tell whether Skopje's new façades calcify as a stable representation of national identity, or whether they will delaminate to allow for an excavation of the country's multiple foundations. (Fig.18)

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