

# Forging a Habsburg Muslim Elite: The Architecture of the Islamic Law School (*Scheriatsrichterschule*) in Sarajevo, 1887–1889

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*Abstract:* Under Habsburg rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1878–1918) there was significant building activity in regard to the Muslim community’s infrastructure. Architects and engineers trained in Vienna and other centres of the monarchy found employment in Bosnia, where they drafted plans for mosques, schools, mausoleums and other buildings serving a predominantly Muslim public. The style found most appropriate for such projects was an eclectic blend of elements drawn from various Islamic artistic traditions: from Spain, from Egypt, and – to an extent that perhaps has not been duly appreciated – also the local Ottoman heritage. This paper focuses on the former Islamic Law School in Sarajevo, built between 1887 and 1889 according to a design by Karl Pařík, a Bohemian student of Theophil Hansen. The portal and the windows’ horseshoe arch forms too quickly give away its stylistic orientation on an Islamic heritage external to Bosnia’s Ottoman tradition. In my reconstruction of the building’s planning and design I attempt to draw a more nuanced picture.

In 1878 Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both lands had been part of the Ottoman Empire for more than four centuries. The imprint on their cultural heritage was immense. Despite significant emigration to what remained of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, around half a million Muslims chose to remain in Habsburg-ruled Bosnia.<sup>1</sup> They were not expelled, as would have been the common practice following conquests in previous centuries. Instead, the provincial government, here an agency of the imperial capital rather than an elected representation, decided to seek common ground with the local Muslims. Tolerance of the new regime by the traditional elites was understood as a key long-term factor for successfully integrating this yet unfamiliar territory into the monarchy’s hegemonial space.

This part of the story is relatively well established. Far less known is the fact that in the mere four decades under Habsburg rule there was significant building activity in regard to the Muslim community’s infrastructure. Architects and engineers trained in Vienna and other centres of the monarchy found employment in Bosnia, where they drafted plans for mosques, *medrese*-type advanced schools, mausoleums and other buildings serving a predominantly Muslim public. The style found most appropriate for such projects was an eclectic blend of elements drawn from various Islamic artistic traditions: from Spain, from Egypt, and – to an extent that perhaps has not been duly appreciated – also the local Ottoman heritage.<sup>2</sup>

The reasons why so few of these projects are known to scholarship are manifold. Bosnia certainly suffers from being one of art history’s traditional peripheries. Also, until the 1980s there was little interest among scholars in this period’s architecture – in Yugoslavia as else-

1 Anon. 1896a, 26. The official censuses of the late nineteenth century recorded 448,613 Muslims in 1879 (39% of a total population of 1,158,164), 492,710 Muslims in 1885 (37% of a total of 1,336,091), and 548,632 Muslims in 1895 (35% of a total of 1,568,092). Orthodox Christians remained the majority group (43% in all three censuses), whereas the segment of others (mostly Catholics, Jews, and Protestants) rose from 18% in 1879 to 22% in 1895.

2 This heritage (on which see also Hartmuth 2018; 2019; 2020) is the subject of a project that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 758099 – project “Islamic Architecture and Orientalizing Style in Habsburg Bosnia, 1878–1918”, 2018–2023, PI: Maximilian Hartmuth, ercbos.univie.ac.at).

where.<sup>3</sup> Another important factor in these buildings' invisibility as a group and as a phenomenon is that many of them, especially the mosques, were typically erected in place of dilapidated Ottoman ones, the names of which they often retained. From an institutional viewpoint, they were considered mere renovations of existing buildings.<sup>4</sup> However, as ongoing research has shown, the vast majority must be considered entirely new constructions. In many cases, the material continuity with the older buildings appears to have been practically nonexistent.

This paper previews findings of an ongoing research project dedicated to the architectural heritage of the Habsburg period in Bosnia.<sup>5</sup> It focuses on one building that features quite prominently in writings of the nineteenth century – most probably on account of its location in the province's capital, Sarajevo, and its relative monumentality: the former Islamic Law School.<sup>6</sup> Historically known as *Scheriatsrichterschule* in German, as *Šerijatska sudačka škola* in the languages of Bosnia, and as *Mekteb-i Nüvvab* in Ottoman Turkish, it was built between 1887 and 1889<sup>7</sup> on a hill (named Ćurčića brijeg) behind Sarajevo's commercial district,<sup>8</sup> according to a design by a Bohemian student of Theophil Hansen named Karl Pařík. The portal and the windows' horseshoe arch forms too quickly give away its stylistic orientation on an Islamic heritage external to Bosnia's Ottoman tradition (Fig. 1). In my reconstruction of the building's design and building processes I attempt to draw a more nuanced picture of the architecture in the region and period.

In this paper's second part, following this outline, I will look at the architectural evidence in the context of its physical and cultural geography, that is, the topography of the site and the building's precedents. This will allow me to produce observations and formulate the questions to which I will return at later points in the paper. In its third part I will turn to the problem of agency, more specifically to the question of the contribution of the architect, his collaborators and superiors, and their cultural horizons. Here, the central question pertains to the stimuli that led Pařík to submit this specific design. As he was, in this case, by no means an independently operating artist, the fourth part of my paper will inquire about the broader agenda into which this project was interleaved; the fifth part will deal with the question of the project's reception. I will conclude with an appraisal of this object in the context of its stylistic phenomenon.

3 A pioneering role was played by an 1987 exhibition in Sarajevo with a catalogue by Krzović 1987.

4 For a large number of relevant inscriptions, reporting 'renewals' of Ottoman buildings, see Mujezinović 1977–1982.

5 I would like to acknowledge help by Ajla Bajramović, Nazlı Vatansver, Franziska Niemand, and Boris Trapara, who have surveyed the newspapers *Vatan*, *Rehber*, *Sarajevski List* and *Bosnische Post* for articles relevant to this study. Transcriptions from Ottoman Turkish are by Nazlı Vatansver.

6 The building is currently used by the University of Sarajevo's Faculty of Islamic Sciences (*Fakultet islamskih nauka Univerziteta u Sarajevu*, abbreviated FIN).

7 This dating is provided in Pařík 1917, 51. The Turkophone newspaper *Vatan* 134, 1–2, proclaimed on April 8, 1887, that construction of the first courtyard was to begin, while the second courtyard was to follow in 1888. The rather detailed description ("Bu mekteb iki katlı olup talebe için kırk beş odası ve beş dershanesi ve bir ta'am salonu ve direktör için iki oda ve kubbeli bir mescidi ve bir kütüphanesi ve vasi bir hamamı havi ve müştemil olacağı [...]") makes clear that no major changes were introduced after this point. The building that came to be referred to as *Mekteb-i Nüvvab* was officially inaugurated already on December 19, 1887; cf. *Vatan* 179 (1887), 1. In the same article we learn that at that time the curriculum was not yet published.

8 The plot was supplied by the endowments directorate; Pařík 1917, 52.

### Formal Analysis

The building of the former School of Islamic Law in Sarajevo is characterized by a rigid bipartite layout, which corresponds to the instruction and boarding functions, respectively.<sup>9</sup> These different functions were introduced as two separate building phases. The boarding tract (*Wohntrakt*) in the rear, completed in 1888, consists of four wings around a courtyard. It is slightly raised and accessed over a small flight of stairs from the educational tract (*Schultrakt*). This evidently owed to the area's physical topography.<sup>10</sup> For the same reason, access to the educational tract (completed already in 1887) from Sagrdžije street, located five meters below the entrance, had to be facilitated over an extended stairway. The building's characteristic portal section, with a monumental frame both raised and projecting from the alignment, may well have been devised to increase the building's visibility via its elaborate elevation. This visibility has been since lost due to surrounding later constructions and trees.<sup>11</sup>

This portal is also the school's trademark image. The actual doorway, surmounted by a rose window, is recessed from the colossal horseshoe-shaped portal frame. The façade's formal references are incoherent. The horseshoe form clearly points westward, to Andalusia; the mullioned windows probably more specifically toward the Alhambra. In the Ottoman tradition, *biforia* were not common. Other elements point toward an inspiration in the eastern Mediterranean. The walls' polychrome banding, here executed in plaster mixed with paints rather than in differently shaped stone material, and the stepped crenellation on top of the central *avant-corps* and in other places clearly point toward Egypt.<sup>12</sup> While the recessed entrance was also popular among the Mamluks, the motif of the vertically projecting colossal portal frame is more easily found in a Central-to-Western Asian continuum. The rigid structuring of space yet again points to Mamluk models.

An appropriation of Ottoman models does become evident in the frontal tract's arcaded courtyard (Figs. 2, 4, 5 a–b). For instance, in the characteristic pointed form of arches, in the chevron capitals, and in the arcades' vaulting, which here deceptively implies an exterior correspondence with the traditional form of cupolas. Instead, the vaults' covering is with shed roofs. The decorative painting is a Romantic variation on the Oriental theme. We see quite different patterns in the arcades' vaulting (Fig. 3 c), the boarding tract (Fig. 3 d), and the *mescid* (Fig. 3 a–b).<sup>13</sup> The latter, located in the south-facing wing of the building, was plainly articulated as a place of prayer in the building's upper structure through the use of a characteristic Ottoman hemispherical dome (Fig. 6). This cultural reference is not faithfully

9 Rüdiger 2019 has pointed to an interesting similarity between the Scheriatsrichterschule and the double-courtyard structure of the University of Vienna's Chemical Institute by Heinrich Ferstel, completed in 1874.

10 Pařík 1917, 52, makes clear that the architecture owed to the irregularity of the plot: "Dem unregelmäßigen und stark ansteigendem Bauplatze sowie dem Anstaltszwecke entsprechend wurde das Gebäude der Hauptsache nach in zwei Teile gegliedert, und zwar den vorderen Schultrakt und den rückwärtigen Wohntrakt [...]."

11 This was the conclusion upon trying to locate the building from the Begova mosque's minaret in September 2018.

12 Pařík 1917, 52, confirms that the original plastering was in yellow and red and moreover informs that the decoration was executed in sgraffito. Oddly, Munro 1900, 18, reported to have seen in 1894 "a large rectangular building in the oriental style, having its walls faced with horizontal bands of black and white stone."

13 The decoration of the Islamic Law School's premises is extremely well preserved and deserves a study in its own right.

mirrored in the *mescid*'s interior, where we, again, find horseshoe arches as well as exoticizing patterning. These observations of a certain incoherence with respect to models drawn upon can be duplicated for the rear tract, the courtyard of which is not arcaded (Figs. 4, 5 c). It features more acutely pointed Ottoman-inspired arches on the lower level and horseshoe arches on the upper one. The rear tract is, in a way, the 'private' counterpart to the 'public' frontal tract. Its borders are marked by a separate gateway, leading to a different level, and by switching the transparent, open layout of an arcaded courtyard for a more intimate setting.

In sum, what we see is an assemblage typical of this period. It draws eclectically on not one but a variety of sources, extracts fragments, and reassembles them in a way that may appear intolerably anachronistic to a present-day viewer, but probably seemed reasonably 'Oriental' to a contemporary one.

### *Author(s) and Models*

The Islamic Law School's architect Karl (Karel) Pařík was born in a village north of Prague and came to Vienna in the 1870s to study the building trade and, eventually, architecture. There he attended Theophil Hansen's master class at the Fine Arts Academy. Known as a pioneer in the use of Byzantine and Islamic elements, Hansen's teaching, broad horizons, and projects such as the Imperial-Royal Armoury Museum (*k.k. Waffnenmuseum*, now *Heeresgeschichtliches Museum*), Austria's first purpose-built museum, clearly played a role in Pařík's artistic formation.<sup>14</sup> The 1870s generally proved fertile ground for an architect who was to frequently draw upon non-Western forms for his work in Bosnia during the following decades. The 1873 World Exposition and the Oriental Museum founded in its wake, as well as a growing number of publications, furthered his acquaintance with previously unfamiliar monuments, objects, and patterns.<sup>15</sup>

After his graduation in 1882 and subsequent involvement in the final building stages at Vienna's Votive Church, Pařík is on record as supervising the construction of Sarajevo's new cathedral. This was a prestige project of the early occupation period, designed by a Croat student of Friedrich von Schmidt. Eventually Pařík found employment in Sarajevo with the provincial administration's construction department. There he worked under Edmund Stix and Johann Kellner, both of whom contributed significantly to the documentation of some of Bosnia's well-known Ottoman monuments.<sup>16</sup>

Among these was the 1530s *medrese* of Gazi Hüsrev Beg, which Stix had meticulously surveyed (Fig. 8), perhaps not incidentally, around the same time as the Islamic Law School was conceived.<sup>17</sup> One quickly finds similarities between the old and the new school building,

14 His teacher's bearing becomes evident if we compare Pařík's first executed project in Sarajevo, the Retirement Fund Building of 1886, with Hansen's *Heinrichshof* (formerly) across from Vienna's Opera. One could also compare the Islamic Law School's volumina with Hansen's Armoury Museum in Vienna (1850–56), which is similarly dominated by a massive avant-corps and features rose windows.

15 Dimitrijevic 1990, 155–157

16 Ibid., 156.

17 Stix's description (1887, 3–4) of Gazi Hüsrev Beg's *medrese* recalls the Islamic Law School's architecture in many ways – to the extent that it may have served as a *vademecum* in Pařík's design: "Der Bauplatz dieser Medressé ist nach Art der türkischen Bethäuser von einer hohen Mauer eingefasst und das Gebäude weit nach rückwärts verlegt. Das Eingangsthor der Umfriedungsmauer steht in der Längengasse des Schulgebäudes. Ein breiter gepflasterter Weg führt geradeaus in das Hauptportal, und hat man dieses und das kleine Vestibule durchschritten, so gelangt man in den Arkadenhof, um welchen

for instance in the outline of a horizontally oriented building interposed with chimneys and domes, and to some extent also in the elevated portal, projecting from the alignment and entered through a recess. In the Balkans, as should be stressed, the Gazi Hüsrev Beg *medrese*'s is a rare example of such a portal, and perhaps a distant echo of a motif more dominant in medieval times, certainly in Anatolia. In Ottoman Bosnia, its monumental frame variant is only found once. Thus, it is perhaps not a coincidence that the *medrese* and the *Scheriatsrichterschule* shared this feature as well as an educational function.

The interest in Gazi Hüsrev Beg's *medrese* in particular becomes even plainer when we enter that building's courtyard. Pařík (and/or his superiors) evidently identified it as a setting that Bosnian Muslims would consider an appropriate learning space. It probably helped that the aforementioned sixteenth-century *medrese* was one of the most respected institutions of its kind in the Ottoman Balkans. Its domed classroom was not reiterated by Pařík, however – probably because not one but five classrooms were required.

While one postcard depicting both buildings side by side (Fig. 9) may suggest that they were seen as connected, their formal and typological affiliation is not explicitly declared in texts published about the buildings. In a belated feature in the *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* the architect himself relates that:

The building is in the Oriental style, drawing upon local Oriental buildings; and even the fittings, in correspondence with the general objective, fully conform to the local and Oriental character.<sup>18</sup>

This statement becomes less puzzling if we consider that, in Pařík's age, the Ottoman, Mamluk, or Moorish were understood as chapters in one Islamic cultural history. The horseshoe arch, according to this mindset, belonged not to a different culture but to a different period or region in that Islamic culture's history.<sup>19</sup> This makes all the more interesting that what appears to be the demonstration drawing by Pařík (Fig. 6), evidently predating the detailed project drawings, actually features a pointed arch rather than a horseshoe-shaped one. As the latter does not possess any structural advantages over the former, it follows that a

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ringsherum symmetrisch nach der Längsachse die Räumlichkeiten angeordnet sind [...]. Die Arkaden sind in quadratische Felder getheilt; nur das nächst dem Haupteingange gelegene ist länglich und mit einer flachen Tonne überwölbt, welche auf einem, zwischen den Ecksäulen eingespannten Holzbalken ihr Widerlagen findet [...]. Sämmtliche übrigen Felder sind mit Hängkuppeln versehen, welche gegen das Innere des Hofes zu auf sieben Säulen aufruhren. Der Schaft derselben ist aus einem Stück gearbeitet und steht sowohl mit dem charakteristischen Würfelcapital, sowie auch mit der Basis durch ein metallenes Zwischenglied in Verbindung. Die Basis geht aus einem Wulst in das Achtecke und von diesem in das Quadrat über [...]. In der Façade des Gebäudes ist das Portal durch eine vor die Flucht tretende steinerne Umrahmung hervorgehoben. Der Eingang ist überwölbt und mit schönen Stalaktiten geziert [...]. Das Portal ist aus feinkörnigem Sandsteine ausgearbeitet und das übrige Mauerwerk dürfte aus abwechselnden Schichten von Tuffstein und dünnen, gebrannten Ziegeln bestehen. Denken wir uns die Façade durch diese Streifung belebt, die Stalaktiten zart bemalt und die vertieften Bogenfelder über den Fenstern mit einfärbigen Ornamenten geziert und ringsum das Haus auf hölzernem Lattenwerk ein dichtes Reibdach [...] so haben das Gebäude in seinem ursprünglichen reizvollen Zustande vor unseren Augen."

18 Pařík 1917, 52: "Das Gebäude ist im orientalischen Stile unter Anlehnung an die im Lande bestehenden orientalischen Bauwerke gehalten, und auch die innere Einrichtung hat dem Zwecke entsprechend gänzlich den orientalischen und landesüblichen Charakter." An article in *Sarajevski list* 152 (1897), n.p., praised the school as a veritable tourist sight, calling it "an architectural beauty in a purely eastern style" ("neimarska ljepota čisto istočanskog stila spojena sa uzornim redom i čistotom u zavodu").

19 Much in the same way, it could be said that few in nineteenth-century Vienna would have regarded as 'foreign' a neo-Gothic church portal that drew upon a French rather than local model.

decision was made to alter Pařík's pointed-arch portal frame for a horseshoe-shaped one (Fig. 7). Could the Alhambra's *Puerta de la Justicia* (Arabic *Bāb al-Sharī'a*) of 1348, similarly characterized by a monumental horseshoe-shaped portal frame, have interfered here, perhaps even on account of its jurisdictional connotation?

In light of this having been a retrospective interjection, one could speculate that the decision was made not by Pařík, who may have preferred his original design's pointed arch, or by his immediate superiors at the construction department, who must have overseen all design stages leading up to this presentation drawing, but perhaps by none less than the provincial governor Benjámín von Kállay, on whose desk the presentation drawing must eventually have surfaced. This speculation is bolstered by the fact that in the Orientalizing style promoted during his tenure, the horseshoe arch became, next to the polychrome façade banding, a dominant motif. The *Scheriatsrichterschule*, which combines both banding and horseshoe form, was a herald of this style.

Notably, around the same time, the Muslim Reading Hall ("kiraethane") (Fig. 10) by Pařík's colleague Josef Vancas (Josip Vancaš) was conceived and built (1888).<sup>20</sup> It, too, features polychrome banding and a horseshoe-shaped portal. Could this have been more than a coincidence – perhaps even an attempt to consolidate a style considered appropriate for an emerging Habsburg-loyal Muslim elite? Even if that was not the case, the fact that both polychrome banding and the horseshoe arch became standard elements of Orientalizing architecture in Bosnia in the following fifteen years or so seems to invest importance into the belated 'Moorification' of the Islamic Law School's portal arch.

Less ambiguous is the contribution by Hans Niemeček, who supervised the execution of Pařík's project and also proved responsible for the interior's decoration.<sup>21</sup> He had already been involved in the renovation and redecoration project for Sarajevo's largest mosque ca. 1885.<sup>22</sup> While the *Bosnische Post* states that Niemeček developed its decorative program on studies he undertook in 1884 at the local mosque of Ali Pasha,<sup>23</sup> this statement may be questioned in its absoluteness in light of an Alhambra-derived surface decoration that we find at both the Begova's prayer hall (piers) and the *Scheriatsrichterschule*'s boarding tract's walls (Fig. 3 d). Perhaps in recognition of the (generally praised) work he had already done for Muslim infrastructure, such as the Begova Mosque and the Islamic Law School, he entered the service of the *Vakuf-Commission*, an agency founded by the regime to reform the management of Bosnia's Islamic endowments, as a surveyor in 1887.<sup>24</sup>

20 The Muslim Reading Hall (not preserved) was opened in October 1888 (*Sarajevski List* 112 [1888], n.p.) and was belatedly presented to the German readership in an article in *Bautechniker*: Anon. 1896b.

21 The newspaper *Sarajevski list* 149 (1887), n.p., similarly stated that "the architect of the [government's] construction department, Mr. C. Paržik" was responsible for the overall design, while Niemeček supervised the execution and embellished the interior. He is, in this context, remembered as the man who "in 1885 renovated and wonderfully decorated the Begova mosque." Also in *Vatan* 171 (1887), 2, Niemeček is mentioned as a "an engineer charged with the school's construction" ("mekteb inşaatına me'mur olan mühendis").

22 Unfortunately, Niemeček's work at the Begova is now mostly lost. The painted decoration on the mosque's colossal stone frame is the most visible remnant of this phase.

23 Cf. *Bosnische Post* 31 (1884), supplement, 3.

24 Cf. Hodžić 2006, 81.

*Architecture Echoing Agenda?*

After 1878 Muslim judges continued to preside over cases where plaintiff and defendant were both Muslims. Therefore, Islamic Law School graduates received appointments as judges and for other jobs for which a thorough theological training was regarded as favourable.<sup>25</sup> The regime regarded it as a problem that Bosnia's elite families continued to send their offspring to the prestigious institutions in Istanbul – the power centre of the state from whose influence Bosnia was to be severed. A logical response was to establish substitute institutions that the emperor's proxies could control. Thus, a *reis ül-ulema*, or 'supreme scholar', was installed in 1882 as a sort of Habsburg-Bosnian grand mufti, supported by a council of scholars (*meclis-i ulema*). In the same year plans for a government-controlled *mekteb-i niivvab* ("School of Jurists") surfaced, which would take the place of institutions in Istanbul and offer rigorous training.<sup>26</sup>

This Austro-Hungarian Islamic Law School opened to students in 1889. Its curriculum included Arabic language, poetry, and calligraphy; Islamic and European jurisprudence; logic, math, and geography.<sup>27</sup> It was equipped with six professors (corresponding to the Ottoman *müderris*) and five lower-ranking teachers. The Islamic Law School required a five-year training preceded by at least two years of education at a regular *medrese*.<sup>28</sup> This institution was planned to be a prestigious one, and that goal was met within a short time. However, to call it 'the al-Azhar of Europe' as Karčić, probably oversteps the mark.<sup>29</sup>

25 Of the 49 students who had graduated by 1897, 17 continued on to serve as Islamic judges and 18 as apprentices, while 14 assumed other offices; cf. *Sarajevski list* 152 (1897), n.p. The first nine students graduated in 1892; cf. *Vatan* 409 (1892), 1.

26 The first mentions of the school project in the newspaper *Vatan* (122 [1887] 3–4; 123 [1887], 2) indicate that Bosnian Muslims appear to have had doubts over the new school's credibility. The grand mufti of Bosnia, Mustafa Hilmi (Hadžiomerović), published in early 1887 an appeal to Muslim parents to send their children to be trained at this school so that they can serve their country and receive education in their own language (i.e., Bosnian rather than Turkish). The acquisition of the German language, he argued, would contribute to Muslims' welfare during the new regime.

27 Pařík 1917, 51: "Altarabische Sprache, Logik, Arabische Poetik und Stillehre, Dogmatik, Scheriatenrecht, Grundsätze des Scheriatenrechtes, Verfassung scheriatenrechtlicher öffentlicher Urkunden, Erbteilungen, Scheriatenprozedur, Gesetze über den Grundbesitz, Europäische Jurisprudenz, Landessprache, Mathematik, Geographie, Geschichte, Arabische Kalligraphie [...]."

28 The high barrier for entering this school and the intervention potential of the government is elaborated on in surprising detail by Pařík 1917, 51–52: "Die Scheriatenrichterschule in Sarajevo wurde zwecks Förderung des Studiums in den Wissenschaften des Islams sowie insbesondere zum Zwecke der Herausbildung geeigneter Kandidaten für den Scheriatenrichter(Kadi)dienst in Bosnien und der Herzegovina in den Jahren 1887, 1888 und 1889 errichtet. // In diese Anstalt werden nur mohammedanische Zöglinge aus allen Teilen des Landes aufgenommen. Die Bewerber um die Aufnahme haben nachzuweisen, daß sie vollkommen gesund und frei von entstellenden Gebrechen sind und im Alter von mindestens 20 und von höchstens 30 Jahren stehen. Außerdem haben dieselben den Nachweis beizubringen, daß sie vier Klassen einer Ruždie oder eines Gymnasiums und überdies einen mindestens zweijährigen Medressekurs zurückgelegt haben, wobei unter sonst gleichen Umständen diejenigen Bewerber bevorzugt werden, welche eine höhere als die angeführte Schulbildung nachzuweisen vermögen. In besonders rücksichtswürdigen Fällen kann die Landesregierung im Einvernehmen mit dem Reis-ul-Ulema von diesem Studiennachweise zum Teil dispensieren. Dem Eintritte in die Anstalt geht eine Aufnahmeprüfung voran, welche von dem Professorenkollegium abgehalten wird. Die Aufnahme in die Scheriatenrichterschule geschieht über Vorschlag des Reis-ul-Ulema durch die Landesregierung ... Am Schlusse jeden Jahres wird in jedem Jahrgang in Anwesenheit eines Regierungsvertreters, unter Vorsitz des Reis-ul-Ulema oder seines Stellvertreters, eine Prüfung abgehalten, auf Grund welcher den Zöglingen Zeugnisse erteilt werden."

29 Karčić 2011, 41, vaguely refers to "different sources" making this analogy.

How could this political agenda have impacted the architecture? Pařík's task was to design a building that would be accepted by local elites both as an equivalent to established (Ottoman) institutions and as a legitimate innovation of the new order. His design was expected to express continuity and breach – continuity with a local Islamic tradition and breach with the old (Ottoman) hegemony. However, it is better to be cautious not to label the penchant for Mamluk and Moorish forms as an anti-Ottoman step, as some scholars suggested in the past.<sup>30</sup> Ottoman prototypes, as we have seen, are plain in other parts of the building. That said, there was probably a reason why the Gazi Hüsrev Beg *medrese* was taken as a partial, but not as a comprehensive model.

We also know that Austro-Hungarian contemporaries, attuned to an architecture that inflated façade ornamentation, undervalued Ottoman precedents in comparison to Islamic traditions that had more to offer in that respect.<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, the choice to prominently employ such forms stemmed from the desire to make this a truly representative building – and for Pařík's generation, representative meant surfaces adorned by ornamentation and, where applicable, colour.

### *Stylistic Reception*

So far, I have failed to encounter outspoken rejections of this architecture and style by Bosnian Muslims in its late nineteenth-century heyday. Had they visited Istanbul at the time, they would actually have stumbled upon similarly eclectic borrowings of Moorish and other Islamic forms.<sup>32</sup> Contemporary Ottomans evidently did not see this as a denunciation of their own Islamic heritage. An idealized image of Andalusia (*Endülüs*) was appropriated by intellectuals and even quoted in a late Ottoman architecture otherwise understood as auto-revivalist.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, few would have found late Habsburg decision makers' choice to take northern Germany's 'brick Gothic' town halls as the model for administrative buildings in Vienna's outer districts culturally inaccurate.<sup>34</sup>

In much the same way, perhaps we should not be surprised that it was found fitting to accommodate the University of Sarajevo's Faculty of Islamic Studies in the old *Scheriatschule* in 1993, after decades of serving as a museum. In a promotional clip of the faculty, the following text is recited:

The architecture of the building, and the overall environment of the faculty, together with the current programs of study, show the harmony we have established between traditional and modern Islamic sciences, and between Eastern and Western cultural values.<sup>35</sup>

This seems to demonstrate not only the long-term success of Pařík's design. It also relegates us art historians and our objections concerning historical-cultural inaccuracies to a backseat. While truth may be absolute, we are reminded that reality is in the eye of the beholder.

30 E.g. Balić 1992, 19.

31 Hartmuth 2015, 163.

32 See Saner 1998.

33 See Ersoy 2015, 98; McSweeney 2015; Eldem 2018.

34 This is the case with the 1880s *Bezirksamt* of Vienna's southern district of Favoriten, which draws upon this (essentially foreign) historical model.

35 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaTFSnv5ZBU>> (last accessed 5 July 2017).



### Concluding Assessment

The Islamic Law School represents an exceptionally important building for the understanding the Orientalizing style's phenomenon in Habsburg-ruled Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is not only the earliest preserved building designed by an Austro-Hungarian architect that draws upon a traditional Islamic typology, but also this style's earliest surviving example. It is preserved to an extraordinary extent in its original form, including surface decoration. The decision to change an earlier design's pointed arch in the portal frame into a horseshoe arch was central to the further development and consolidation of an Orientalizing style characteristic for Habsburg Bosnia.

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### *Illustration Credits*

Figs. 1–3: Photos Hartmuth 2013, 2018. – Figs. 4–7: Pařík 1917, pl. 35a; 39–40 (mounted); 41. – Fig. 8: Stix 1887, pls. 4–6 (details, mounted). Fig. 9: Prstojević 1999, 115. – Fig. 10: Anon. 1896b.



Fig. 1: Sarajevo, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, formerly the Islamic Law School (*Scheriatsrichterschule*), Karl Pařík 1889.



Fig. 2: First courtyard.



Fig. 3 a–d: Painted decoration, various techniques, by Hans Niemczek:  
 a–b: dome and wall in prayer room, c: vault in courtyard arcade, d: wall in residential tract.

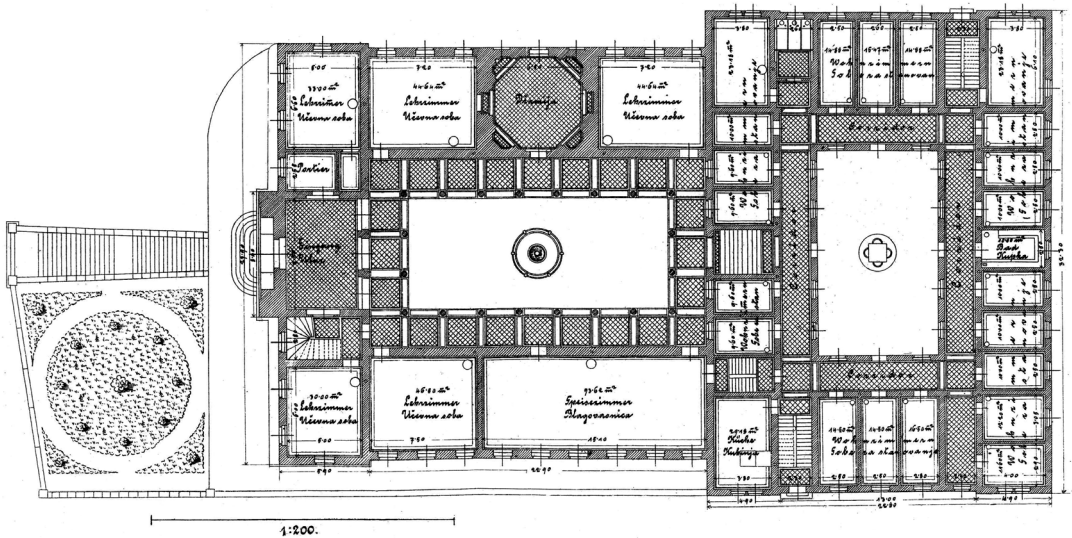


Fig. 4: Ground plan.

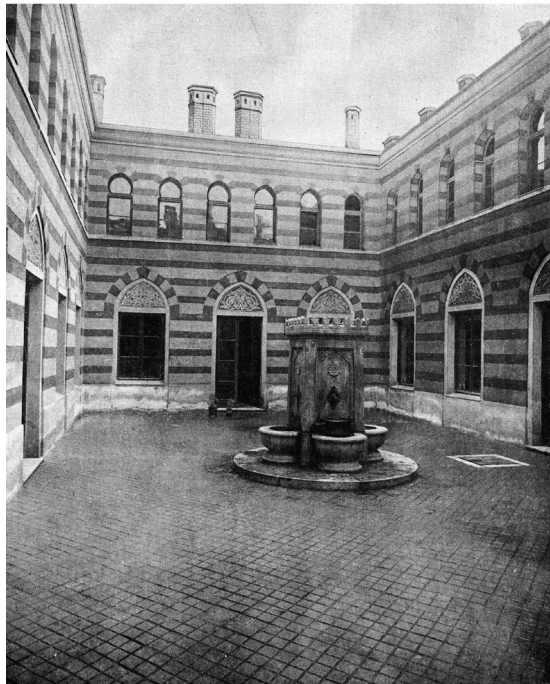
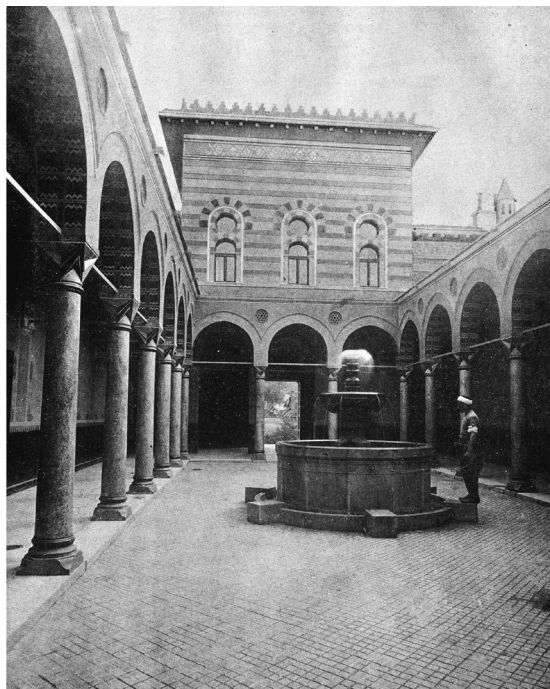
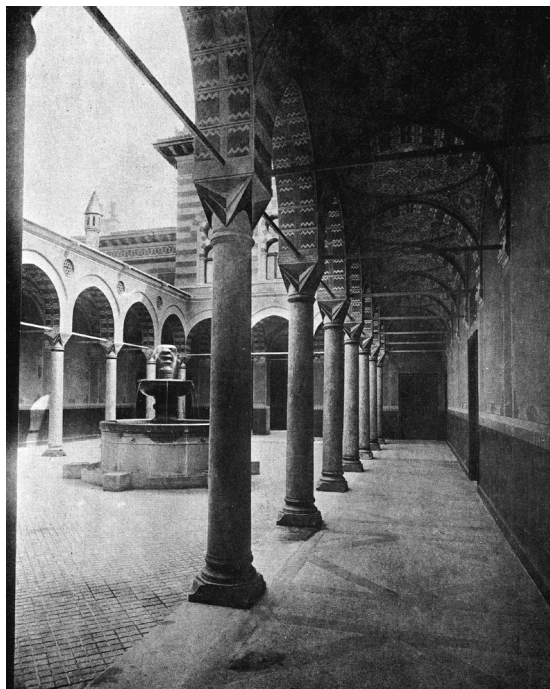


Fig. 5 a-d: First courtyard (a-b, top) and second courtyard (c-d, bottom), photographs late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

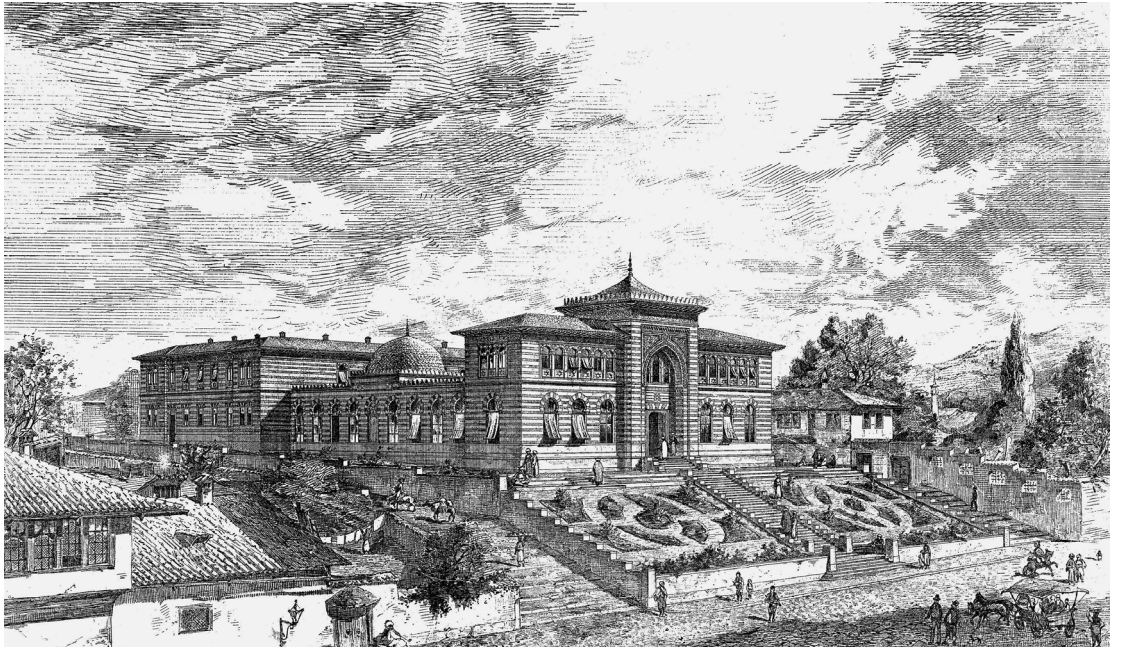


Fig. 6: Portal façade and side view with garden, presentation drawing, engraving published by the architect Pařík in 1917.

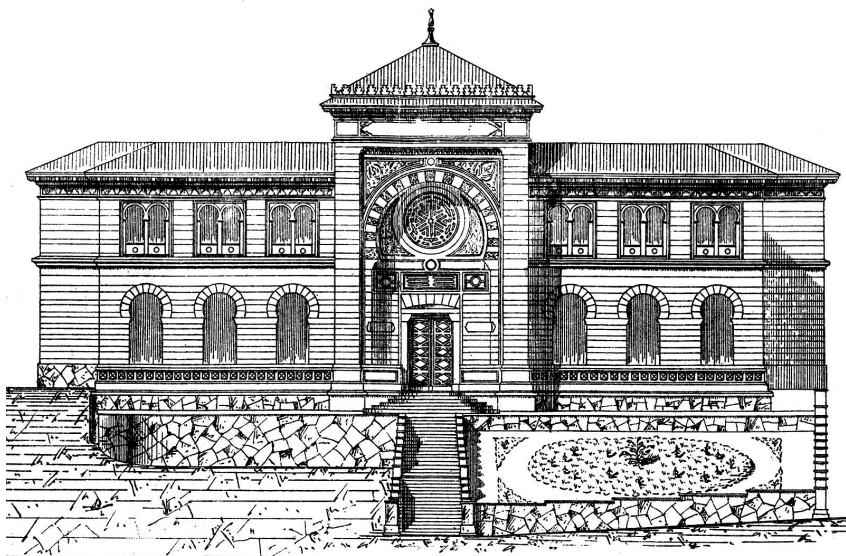
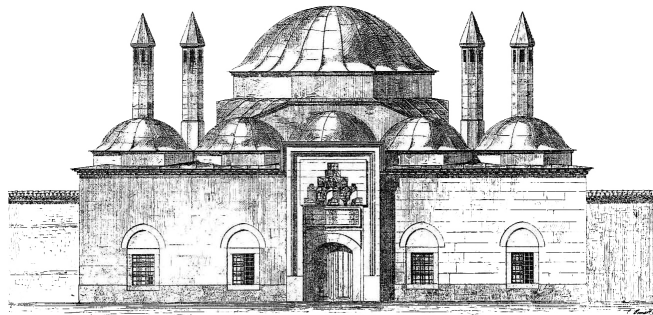
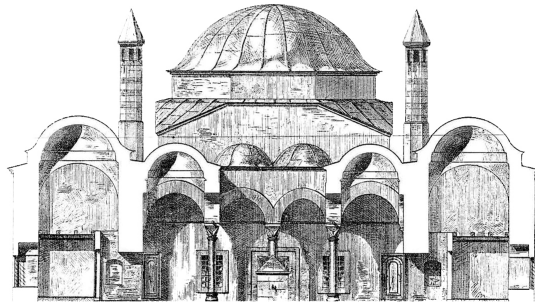


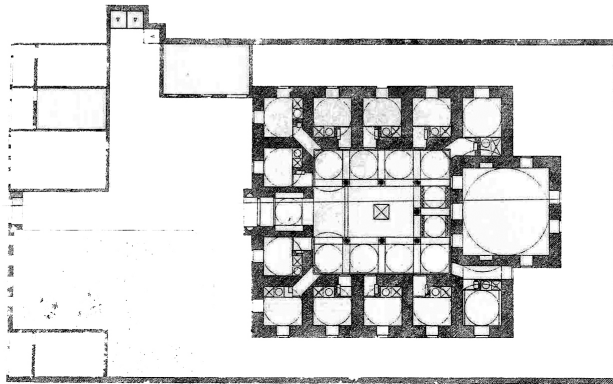
Fig. 7: Portal façade, executed design, different from presentation drawing in Fig. 6, engraving published by the architect Pařík in 1917.



a



b



c

Fig. 8 a–c: Kuršumlija Medresa, Sarajevo, 1537. Engravings published by Stix in 1887: a: elevation, b: section, c: ground floor plan.



Fig. 9: Postcard showing the Islamic Law School (“Scherjats Richterschule”, 1889) and the Kuršumljija Medresa (“Türkische Medress”, 1537) in Sarajevo side by side, mailed on 10 May 1904 to the law student Hamid ef. Šahinović in Vienna.

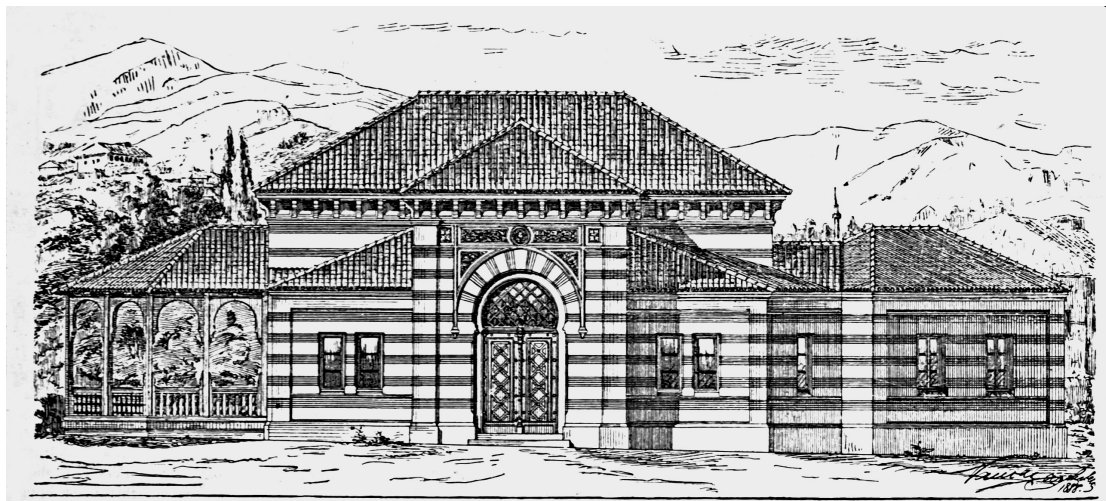


Fig. 10: Muslim Reading Hall (locally kiraethana or muslimanska čitaonica), Sarajevo, Josip Vančar 1888, not extant. Elevation, engraving, date unknown.