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TWO LITTLE KNOWN MONUMENTS OF EARLY AND CLASSICAL OTTOMAN ARCHITECTURE IN GREEK THRACE

HISTORICAL AND ART-HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE HAMĀMS OF TIMURTAŞ
PĀŞAZADE ORUÇ PASHA (1398) AND FERIDUN AHMED BEG (1571)
IN DIDYMOTEICHON

In a previous article in this journal¹ we tried to stress the importance of Greek Macedonia and Thrace for the old Ottoman Balkans, and especially for its great, but still insufficiently known art². Whereas we previously focussed

1. In *B.S.* 12.2 (1971) pp. 415-462. As the present article is not in the first place written for the handful of Orientalist but for a more general public we deemed it necessary to explain some oriental terms and practices which do not belong to everybody's knowledge. Those who are initiated can better skip them.

2. As "Ottoman Architecture" we want to call those monuments constructed within the former limits of the Ottoman empire and constructed on order of an Ottoman patron by Ottoman Turkish architects and master builders according stylistic and aesthetic principles peculiar to the Ottoman empire alone. In its formative period this style absorbed elements of the art of its predecessors, the Seljuks of Anatolia but also incorporated minor influences from the art of the contemporary Turkish Beyliks of Anatolia and to a limited extent some Byzantino-Slavic influences and even a few isolated elements of the "colonial gothic" of the Crusader kingdoms in the Mediterranean. Around 1400 a synthesis was reached in which the foreign elements remain sometimes recognisable but the whole concept is a wholly new one. In the so-called. 'Classical' Ottoman period the style evolved into one the great arts of the Islamic world, independent and self conscious and no longer open to alien influences. The latter penetrated again in the 18th century, by way of Western Europe. Being an art which was formed in the great centres of the empire, Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul and the product of a strictly centralised state it is logic to see real Ottoman works in the central provinces of the empire, Thrace, Macedonia, Bulgaria on the European side and Western and Central Anatolia south of the Bosphore. In the border provinces such as the Peloponnese, Epirus, Albania and Bosnia, or in Syria and Kurdistan in the East, the imperial art did hardly take root. Although a large number of mosques, baths, medreses, caravanserais etc. were built in these lands in the Ottoman period and more or less in accordance with the official style we are able to discern the influences of the local environment quite easily.

The problem of who built the Ottoman mosques, who were the master builders, carpenters, stone masons, plumbers, glaziers etc. has convincingly been worked out by Omer Lütfi Barkan for the best time of the empire, the 16th century. His publication of the voluminous paybooks of that time allow us at once to do away with the numerous legends as that certain Balkan nations carried out the work (this is true only for the architecture of the 18th and 19th century). The bulk of the artists and workmen were Muslim Turks, sons of Muslim

on two centres in Northern Greece, and discussed some of the outstanding works of Ottoman architecture in the cities of Komotini and Serres we will now concentrate on two almost wholly overlooked monuments in the old town of Didymoteichon. These monuments, or rather the ruins of them, deserve special attention for two reasons. Firstly both are outstanding works of Ottoman utilitarian architecture, secondly they are the works of some of the most outstanding men of the old Ottoman empire. We mean the hot baths (hamâm, from the Arabic root 'hamma': 'to make hot') of Oruç Pasha and of Feridun Ahmed Beg. The hamâm of Oruç is perhaps the very oldest Ottoman bath preserved in South-Eastern Europe today, that of Feridun is one of the most original of its kind, a product of the most mature period of the classical phase of Ottoman architecture: the seventies of the 16th century.

Both works have come down to us in a very ruined state and not much is known about them locally³. Fortunately we possess the notes of four Ottoman geographers which, combined together, allow us to determine which is which and give us sufficient detail to reconstruct the history of the buildings. Usually Ottoman geographers do not give much information on baths. They just mention the names and the number of the baths, which institution they took for granted. The reason why they made an exception for the baths of Didymoteichon (Dimetoka in Ottoman) is that these works were local celebrities and moreover, built by men who were known by the educated Ottomans because of their contribution to the immense treasure house of Ottoman historical writing. Both men, Oruç, but especially Feridun Ahmed were, what was called: "şâhibü's-seyf ve'l-ķalem" (Master of Sword and Pen), an Oriental

Turks. As the empire was a multinational state it is clear that non Muslims also had their share. In the mentioned paybooks every single master is mentioned by name and patronym and the place where he came from is noted. See: O. L. Barkan, "Türk yapı ve Yapi Malzemesi Tarihi için Kaynaklar", in: *Istanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 17, No 1-4, Istanbul 1955/56 pp. 3-26; and with all the desirable details in his great monography: *Süleymaniye Cami ve İmareti inşaatı*, Ankara, T.T.K. 1972.

For a tentative study on local influences see: M. Kiel, "Reflections on the origins of provincial tendencies in the Ottoman architecture of the Balkans", in: *Islam in the Balkans / Persian Art and Culture of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Papers arising from a symposium held to celebrate the World of Islam. Festival at the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh 1979, pp. 18-29.

3. Locally we were told that the hamâm of Feridun Ahmed was built by "sultan Murad" and finished by "sultan Bayezid". Dr. Fred de Jong, who visited Didymoteichon in 1979, was told that the bath was built by "Oruç Paşa". As in all 'legends' there is some truth in these statements. Ottoman sultans were indeed active in Didymoteichon but the names given are altogether wrong.

pendant of the European medieval and Renaissance "Arma et Litterae".

It is not curious or accidental to find two works of architecture of the greatest originality in such a provincial town as Didymoteichon. It is also no hazard that both mentioned men are the founders of these works. In Ottoman times Didymoteichon was not larger than today⁴ but it was certainly more important. It was, as is known, the first residence of the Ottoman rulers in Europe. It was captured before Edirne/Adrianople and the first sultans' palace in the Balkans was there⁵. The state treasure was kept for a long time between the strong circuit of the double walls of the Byzantine period⁶. Sultan Bayezid II son of Mehmed II, was born in the palace of Didymoteichon⁷. Some decades before that event another ruler, Mehmed I, erected in Didymoteichon one of the largest and most magnificent mosques of the Balkans⁸, the Çelebi Mehmed Mosque still dominating the skyline of the little town. 'Dimetoka' was also the place which Bayezid II selected for his retirement after he had abdicated from the throne of Osman in 1512. Of greater importance perhaps was the place of Didymoteichon as a seat of Islamic learning. In the 16th century the little town boasted no less than three colleges (medrese) where a number of the most famous of the Ottoman scholarly world have worked as professors.

4. Bertrandon de la Broquière, (*Voyage d'Outremer*, edited by Ch. Schefer, Paris, 1892 p. 172/73) ambassador of Duke Philip of Burgundy, passed Didymoteichon in 1433 and called it a: "bien grande ville" and a "tres belle place," with 400 houses. Barkan marked it on his map reflecting the ethnic situation in the Balkans from around 1510/20 with 300 houses of which the half was Muslim and the other half Christian. (Ö. L. Barkan, "Les deportations comme méthode de peuplement et de colonisation dans l'empire Ottoman", in: *Revue de la Faculté des Sciences Economiques de l'Université d'Istanbul*, 11, No 1-4 Istanbul, 1953, pp. 1-65). Evliyâ Çelebi, *Seyâhatnâme*, vol. VIII, printed edition, Istanbul 1928, p. 73 and 75, mentions in 1667/68 a hundred prosperous houses in the castle, inhabited by non-Muslims, and 600 houses in the open town, exclusively inhabited by Muslims. 700 households would mean a population of 4000 or 5000 souls. As the Ottoman census registers of the 15th and 16th century concerning Didymoteichon are still unpublished, we have to do without this vast source of information, which allows the most detailed research on topographical ethnic/religious and economic problems of the area covered by this kind of sources.

5. For the Ottoman conquest of Thrace and Didymoteichon cf. Franz Babinger, *Beiträge zur Frühgeschichte der Türkenherrschaft in Rumelien*, Brunn-München-Wien, 1944, p. 48. G. Ostrogorski, *History of the Byzantine State*, 2th edit. Oxford 1968, p. 536 (with further literature), or: Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *La conquête d'Andrinople par les Turcs, La pénétration turque en Thrace*, etc. in: *Travaux et Mémoires*, I, Paris, 1965, pp. 439-461.

6. For the Byzantine castle see in detail: Philippos-Adonis Giannopoulos, *Didymoteichon. Geschichte einer byzantinischen Festung*. Inaugural-Dissertation Köln, 1975.

7. Franz Babinger, *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit*, München, 1953, p. 53.

8. For this mosque see: Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimarisinde Çelebi ve II. sultan Murad devri*, Istanbul, 1972, pp. 136-150, with numerous fotos, plans etc.

Among them was Ahmed Taşköprüzâde⁹, and one of the authors whose notes we used for this article, the learned Kadi Abdurrahman Hibri Efendi. On an official list of colleges in the Balkan provinces of the empire, made up in the second half of the 17th century, no less than six colleges are mentioned to have functioned in Didymoteichon¹⁰. If this list is correct¹¹ this means that the little town ranked foremost as centre of learning in the Balkans, in second place following Gallipoli (9 medreses) but much ahead of famous centres as Târnovo in Bulgaria (5 medreses), Larissa in Thessaly (4 medreses) or the much better known centres of Oriental culture as Sarajevo (3 medreses) and Monastir (3 medreses) not to speak of Sofia, Belgrade or Thessaloniki. The importance of Didymoteichon in this respect will perhaps be more clear if we remember that there were, in the 17th century, in 69 cities and towns of the Ottoman Balkan institutions of higher Islamic learning, with a total of 120 colleges. This gives an average of less than two colleges per town. We deemed this little detour necessary for a good understanding of what kind of place Didymoteichon was.

The founder of the oldest of the Didymoteichon baths, Oruç Pasha¹², belonged to one of the most outstanding families of the empire in its early years. His father was the second Beglerbeg (Governor-General) of all Ottoman Europe: Kara Timurtaş Pasha¹³. Timurtaş had four sons, Oruç, Umur,

9. For this great scholar see the article "Tashköprüzâde" in *Enzyklopaedie des Islams*, vol. IV, Leiden, 1936, p. 747; or Babinger, *Geschichtschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke*, p. 84 vv; or the biography at the end of his great bibliographical work "es-Saka'ik en-Nu'maniya", most easily accessible in the German translation of Oskar Rescher, Konstantinopel/Stuttgart, 1927, photomechanical reprint, Biblio Verlag, Osnabrück, 1978 (the autobiography on pp. 340-345).

10. For this list see: Kemal Özergin, "Eski bir Rûznâme'ye göre İstanbul ve Rumeli medreseleri", in: *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 4/5, İstanbul, 1974, pp. 263-290.

11. This valuable list, however, is incomplete. It does not mention, for example, the well known medrese of Ishak Begoğlu Isa Beg in Skopje (Üsküb), the Koski Mehmed Pasha Medrese and the Ruznâmecî İbrahim Medrese in the important Hercegovinan city of Mostar, etc. The medreses of Umur Beg, Cerrah-başı and Perviz Efendi in D. are only mentioned in this source. The only mention we could find on a school of Perviz Efendi was his medrese in İstanbul. The problem calls for detailed research because a complete survey of the institutions for higher learning in the old Ottoman empire was never given. Very useful is the recent work of Cahid Baltacı, XV. XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı Medreseleri, Teşkilat, Tarih, İstanbul, 1976, which in spite of its more than 700 pages is still incomplete.

12. For the biography of Oruç we used the following sources: Aşıkpaşazâde, Sa'deddin, *Sicill-i 'Osmanî* (vol. I, p. 442-443) and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimarîsinin ilk dervi*, İstanbul, 1966, pp. 387-395.

13. Timurtaş succeeded Lala Şahin, the first Beglerbeg of "Rumeli" around 1383, when

Ali and Mahmud. Oruç served under Emir Süleyman, Mehmed Çelebi and Murad II. The latter made him his Beglerbeg of Anatolia in 826 (1423). He died, according to the Sicill-i 'Osmāniye, in 829 (1426). All the Timurtaş brothers as well as their father were great patrons of architecture. They must have had a pleasure in the development of new ways in building as all the works that have come down to us show uncommon features¹⁴. In Didymoteichon Oruç Pasha founded the first of the later so famous colleges, the 'Uruç Paşa Medrese'¹⁵. For the upkeep of the building and the payment of the staff the Pasha constructed a large public bath which in the course of time became famous as Fısıltı Hamamı, or: Whisper Bath. The revenue of the bath, as well as the rent of a few plots of garden land near Didymoteichon was devoted to the school¹⁶. It is not clear what kind of relations Oruç Pasha had

the latter is mentioned for the last time. Timurtaş' name is related with the colonization of the environs of Serres shortly after the capture of this Macedonian stronghold (1383). (For the conquest of Serres see: G. Ostrogorski, "La prise de Serres par les Turcs" in: *Byzantion*, XXXV (1695), pp. 302-319; or: "Srpska oblast posle Dušanove smrti", in Posebna Izdanja Visantinološkog Istituta IX, Beograd, 1965). He was active in all the campaigns of Murad II and Bayezid I and died in Bursa in Ramazan 806 (March 1404) according to the text on his tombstone, still to be seen in Bursa, behind the large mosque he had constructed there.

14. Timurtaş himself had constructed, besides the already mentioned mosque in Bursa, a hamām with a disrobing room covered with one of the largest domes produced by the Ottomans till that date (it approaches 18 metres in diametre) and the largest ever used for an Ottoman bath. The technical achievement of this construction from 1390/95 is better understood if we bear in mind that the usual Byzantino-Slavic dome of the 14th century did not exceed a diametre of five to six metres and the largest of the Middle Byzantine period, when the material resources and technical ability was much larger, never surpassed a diametre of eleven metres! (Daphni, Hosios Lukas, Aya Sophia at Thessaloniki). From the works of the Timurtaş brothers some of the works of Ali Beg in the city of Manisa (Magnesia ad Sipyle) remain preserved and those of Umur Beg in Bursa. Their history and architectural value has been discussed in detail in the magnificent works of Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi. Oruç' foundations fared less well. In the old Byzantine castle of Bursa he erected a mescid and a hamām but both of them disappeared long ago. A small street, the 'Oruç Bey Sokagi' still reminds us of the man and his works.

15. The other medreses were those of Karagöz Pasha and of Abdül Vası' Efendi. The first mentioned college was perhaps built by the high court dignitary under Bayezid II (1481-1512), bearing that name. The second medrese was built in 1522/23 by Abdül Vası' Efendi, a native of Didymoteichon who studied in the Timurid capital of Herat (now in Afghanistan) and died in Mekka in 1538 after a succesful carrier in the Ottoman empire. Before his death he bequeathed all his earthly possessions to the promotion of science. For his biography see Taşköprüzade's Şaka'ik, (Rescher) p. 251/52; or Baltacı, Medreseleri, p. 150-152, with list of the professors who worked at the college in the 16th century.

16. cf. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Edirne ve Paşa Livâsi*, Istanbul, 1952, p. 246/47, who refers

with the Thracian town. We only know that he had some landed estates in the surroundings of the town¹⁷. In 16th century records there appears an 'imaret of Oruç Pasha' in the village of Çobanlı (today known as 'Poimenikon')¹⁸. The revenue of the village was given to the mentioned kitchen of the poor, where free food was distributed to the needy. If we survey these facts and have no other information we may conclude that Oruç' interest in the Didymoteichon region must have been of the nature of a benevolent landlord, who knew the local needs and wanted to promote Islamic learning in the area. If he had in mind the commemoration of his name, an attitude common among the old Ottomans, he might have founded just a mosque. This would have been considerably cheaper than a medrese. The building price would be roughly the same but the daily expenditure of a medrese was much higher because the staff received a much higher salary¹⁹. Besides that each student usually received one akçe a day as pocket money. With the usual number of students at 10 or 15, as was the common Ottoman practice, this meant another 3.600 to 5.500 akçe yearly. Add the library, with which every medrese had to be equipped, and bear in mind the very high prices of books²⁰, it will be clear that a medrese was not the cheapest way to have one's name perpetuated.

to the numbers of the documents preserved in the *Başbakanlık Arşivi* in Istanbul and gives extracts of them in Ottoman script.

17. One of them was the village of Çobanlı, which according to the census register of 890 (1485) numbered 45 households and four bachelors and yielded yearly 4939 akçe. The other village was Branki, which in 890 had 22 households and 6 bachelors and yielded a revenue of 3372 akçe. The revenue of these villages was turned into a vakf pious foundation for Oruç' children and further descendants. The remark of Gökbilgin (ibidem, p. 247, note 16) that the medrese was in Edirne is a slip of the pen. Hibri Efendi (see further on) makes this sufficiently clear.

18. cf. Klaus Kreiser, *Die Siedlungsnamen Westthrakiens nach amtlichen Verzeichnissen und Kartwerke*, Klaus Schwarz-Freiburg, 1978, p. 15/16, and 75.

19. Numerous details on salaries of staff members of various Ottoman institutions can be found in the publication of a great number of vakıfnâme's by E. H. Ayverdi Ö. L. Barkan, *Istanbul Vakıfları Tahrir Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli*, Istanbul 1970; or: Hasan Kaleši, *Najstariji Vakufski Dokumenti u Jugoslaviji na Arapskom Jeziku*, Priština, 1972.

20. It has been said that Ahmed Taşköprüzâde, mentioned above, in his quality of professor copied every year himself the text of a very famous handbook on Islamic jurisprudence and sold the copy for 3000 akçe! which money he used to defray the expenditure of the iftar meals which he offered to his students in the nights of the blessed month of Ramadan. In Ali Mınık's continuation of Ş. N. p. 5. Recently Michaela Staynova published a number of bookprices taken from the registres of the Cadi of Vidin. The equivalent of the value of a good book was often as high as the price of a cow. Cf. Staynova, *Ottoman Libraries in Vidin*, in: *Etudes Balkaniques*, Sofia, 1979, No 2, pp. 54-69.

last century of the Ottoman period. The *Sâlnâme*'s ('Yearbook', issued every year by the provincial administration) of the last decades before 1912 do not mention it any more²⁴. The *Sâlnâme* of 1892/93, however, mentions the bath as still working and in good condition. This note contains more interesting information about Oruç Pasha and his works. Here it is better to quote the original²⁵.

"The türbe (mausoleum) of one of the most famous commanders of the armies of Islam, who remained behind here after the conquest, Oruç Pasha, is at the edge of the Great Graveyard of D. (Didimoteichon). The bath known as Fısıltı Hamâmı, a part of the property of the pious foundations of the mentioned deceased, is here preserved. It is in good state because of the condition that it must be under the jurisdiction of the Müttevelli's (administrator) of the vakfs. This bath is known as the Whisper Bath because of an arch situated inside the disrobing room; if someone sits below one side of this arch the words he whispers can be understood completely by one who sits on the opposite end of the arch and holds his ear against the wall".

We are thus here confronted with a feature similar as the famous 'Whispering Gallery' of St. Pauls Cathedral in London and certainly as famous in the old Ottoman empire as the London gallery in Britain. All four great Ottoman geographers of older times mention the curiosity of Didymoteichon.

These four geographers are: Moḥammed-i 'Aşık, from Trebisond (worked a long time in Thessaloniki), who wrote in the nineties of the 16th century; the afore-mentioned Hibri Efendi²⁶, who wrote in the thirties and fourties of

24. So for example the yearbook of 1310 (1892/93), which on p. 343 gives a survey of all the institutions for education that existed by then in the town. The little list is illustrative for the cultural policy of the empire in the last century. There was a high school (rüşdiye) for Muslim children and two primary schools for the same group, five primary schools for the Greek speaking children two primary schools for the Bulgarian speaking children one Jewish school and one Armenian school. This school policy, so greatly contrasting with the present situation in S. E. Europe and the Middle East, is an interesting one but has never been studied in detail although the provincial yearbooks provide excellent source material for such an survey.

25. *Sâlnâme-i Vilâyet-i Edirne*, 1310, p. 340/41.

26. On Hibri Efendi and his work (still unpublished) see, Babinger, *Geschichtschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke*; and with more detail, Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Edirne hakkında yazılmış tarihler ve Enis-ül Mûsâmirin*, in: *Edirne'nin 600. Fethi Yıldönümü Armağan Kitabı*, Ankara, T.T.K. 1965, pp. 77-117; and: Sevim İlgürel, *Hibri'nin Enis-ül-Mûsâmirin'i*, in: *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2-3 İstanbul, 1973/74, pp. 137-158.

For Mohammed-i 'Aşık (also written as "Mehmed Aşık") see the older study of Franz

the 17th century; Hadschi Chalfa, who wrote in the forties and fifties of the 17th century²⁷; and the most voluminous writer of all, Evliyâ Çelebi, who travelled extensively in the entire empire and beyond in the sixties and seventies of the same century and wrote his ten volume 'Travelogue' in retirement in Egypt, perhaps in the eighties²⁸. Only Evliyâ wrote about the place where the baths were situated. The other authors just describe both of them but give no indication as to where the baths were situated. After his description of the Fısıltı Hamâmı of Oruç Pasha Evliyâ noted that the other bath was: "situated opposite the Great Mosque"²⁹. This leaves no room for doubt. Opposite the Great Mosque, the mosque of Çelebi Sultan Mehmed, which still stands in the centre of the town today, are the remains of a sizeable hamâm which shows outspoken features of the art of the advanced 16th century. The ruin we see today near the river bank, below the south-western corner of the Byzantine castle, is the ruin of a large bath with very ancient features, this is the once famous Fısıltı Hamâmı.

It is difficult, at the moment, to give an exact plan of this bath. Some kind of minor excavation is needed to establish the form of the bathroom proper. It can at least be said with certainty that the bath was a single one, working in shifts for men and women. The whole construction measures about 25-13 metres. The original water container and heating room as well as the bathroom proper collapsed long ago and the materials of these structures were largely re-used for other constructions (houses). The former disrobing hall and the intermediary hall are still standing. One entered the bath through a finely worked gate crowned by a decorative arch. The overall impression

Teaschner, "Die geographische Literatur der Osmanen", in: *Deutsche Zeitschrift Morgenländischen Gesellsch.* II, 1921, Neue Folge; or: Richard F. Kreutel, "Ein Kirchenraub in Selânik", in: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 69, Wien, 1977, pp. 73-90, who tries to illustrate how 'Aşık worked scholarly.

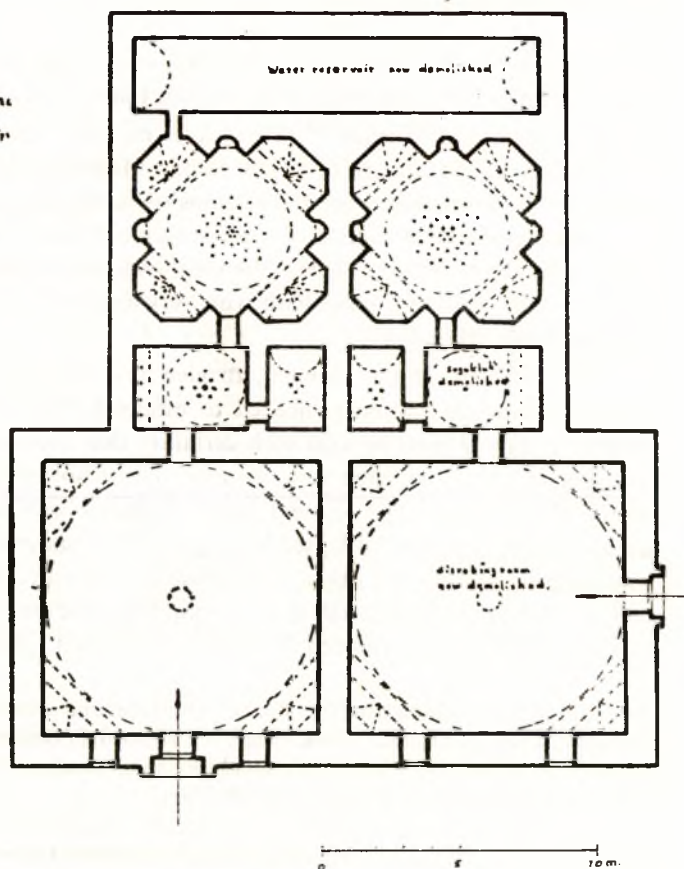
27. For notes on the life and work of this greatest Ottoman scholar of the 17th century see the article "Katib Çelebi" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*². A part of his great Geography has been made accessible for non-Orientalist by J. von Hammer: Rumeli und Bosna, geog. beschrieben von Mustafa ben Abdallah Hadschi Chalfa, Wien, 1812.

Hadschi Chalfa/Katib Çelebi did not travel himself but made extensively use of the works of others who did.

28. It is impossible and irrelevant here to cite the ever growing Evliyâ bibliography. A few fundamental studies are: R. F. Kreutel, "Neues zur Evliyâ Çelebi Forschung", in: *Der Islam*, 48, 1971/72, p. 269 f.; Pierre Mackay, "The manuscripts of the Seyahatnâme of Evliya Çelebi", in: *Der Islam*, 52, 1975, p. 278/98; or the article "Ewliyâ Çelebi" in the *Encycl. of Islam*².

29. Seyahatnâme, vol. VIII, printed edit. Istanbul, 1928, p. 76.

Bidymatzeichen - Dimesche -
 Feridun Ahmed Hamami
 reconstruction: 1971



1. Feridun Ahmet Hamāmi. Reconstruction.

of this portal reminds us of the portal of the Ghazi Mihal Hamāmı in the nearby Edirne, which bath is, as the Fısıltı Hamāmı, from the first decades of the 15th century and in just a miserable state of decay as the Didymoteichon bath³⁰. However, the Greek bath must be a twenty or thirty years older than its Turkish counterpart in neglect. The portal is built of the magnificent, travertine-like, grey lime stone which is quarried in the surroundings of Edirne and is known as 'küfeki'. The masonry of the walls of the bath is of less precious material. Behind the portal lies the largest room of the bath, 7.40-5.20 metres in size. The room is partly covered by a lofty dome which is decorated with an intricate pattern of rhombic panes and zig-zag bands. The central section of the dome is now open but was originally covered by a lantern dome which allowed daylight to penetrate the room freely. Additional light fell through three rows of eight 'eyes' (small star-shaped or hexagonal openings), placed in three circles in the zig-zag band. The remaining section of the room is covered with two arches which embrace a curved, roll-formed vault or arch. This is most certainly the 'hollow arch'³¹ mentioned by Hibri Efendi and mentioned less accurately by the other authors. The room was doubtless the disrobing room and there the Sālnāme places the whispering arch.

To the right of the entrance was once a spacious room vaulted with a barrel vault. This room has now almost disappeared. Some traces of walls and the springs of the vault remain visible. Its function is not clear. Most probably it was the place where the wet towels were dried, or else the clothes of the customers were placed.

Usually an Ottoman bath has three sections: disrobing room, tepidarium, annex toilet room and depilatory, and the hot section proper. This hot section is always as close as possible to the water container-heating installations. Usually it is situated with its rear wall against the container. Tubes with hot and cold water run through the walls of the hot section and the half-warm section at knee height. The heat of the fire (from trunks of trees) is led beneath the floor of the hot section and the tepidarium by means of a hypocaust floor. Heat and smoke are allowed to escape through chimneys in the wall between the disrobing room and the tepidarium. The disrobing room was always without tubes in the walls and had no hypocaust floor because it did not have to be warm. This is the disposition of the Ottoman baths from the late 15th

30. For this remarkable bath see in detail: E. H. Ayverdi, Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri, p. 469-471. For a general survey of the Edirne baths see: Sabih Erken, "Edirne Hamamları", in: *Vakıflar Dergisi*, X, Ankara, 1973, pp. 403-420.

31. "mücevved binā olunmuş bir kemer" Hibri, Enis, Codex Vindob, fol. 46r.

century onward. At baths built before about 1460-1480 we sometimes find another procedure. In these older baths the disrobing room itself was also heated and the tepidarium (always very small in baths from the 16th, 17th and 18th century) is often as large as the hot-bath proper. Elsewhere³² we tried to trace this curious feature and the unusual kind of building plan in which it resulted to influence from the bathing practice in Syria. It is at least so that in Islamic Syria and especially in the great baths of Damascus we see the curious plan already well developed in the 14th century. The functions of the rooms were different then, and that may be the reason why Evliyâ Çelebi writes that there were 'kurna's' in the room with the 'whispering arch' beside which the bathers sat. In a usual Ottoman bath there were never wash basins in a disrobing room. The presence of the spacious tepidarium and the 'kurna's', in the so-called disrobing room, tell us that we are here confronted with a bath which doubtless belongs to the 15th century, or older.

The tepidarium is reached through a door to the left of the entrance portal, immediately below the middle of the great dome. It consists of three differently covered rooms. The central one, measuring 3×4.50 m. is covered by two massive arches over the lateral wings and a curiously flat mirror vault over the central section. To the left of it is a very small room, measuring just over two metres square and covered with a rich, decorative dome made of eight different sections which were once adorned with stalactite work in cut plaster, which has now fallen off. It certainly was the toilet. The room on the right hand side of the central section of the tepidarium is a plain dome square of 3×3 metres. Its dome sits on a belt of so-called 'Turkish triangles' an element which forms the transition between the square room and the round base of the dome. It is a solution only to be found in Turkish architecture.

In the rear wall of the tepidarium is a door, now blocked, which once led to the bath room proper, the hottest section of the Hamâm. This section appears to have been formed by only one large domed room but its form cannot longer be established. At least not without a minor excavation. The room appears to have been preserved for the greater part. Only the vaults have fallen in and debris fill the room. A mass of rubbish poured in the ruin makes further research difficult. In front of the collapsed room(s) are the foundations of the water container, still well recognisable.

If we survey the bath as a whole we may conclude that we are confronted here with one of the most curious and most original examples of this kind of

32. See: M. Kiel, "The Ottoman Hamam and the Balkans", in: *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, N° 9, London, 1976, pp. 87-96.

oriental utilitarian architecture we ever came across during our twenty years of field work with Ottoman monuments in the Balkans. In originality the Didymoteichon bath rivals the once famous *hamāms* of the old Ottoman capital in Europe, Edirne/Adrianople, which are as a group, the most curious of all Ottoman baths taken as a whole. This should be understood as pertaining to the originality of the plan and the whole set up; not as to size or richness of decoration. Some of the great *hamāms* of Istanbul and Bursa have larger rooms and richer decoration of stucco and ornamental domes. We would certainly like to add the Didymoteichon bath to the previously mentioned 'Edirne group' from the 15th century but perhaps the formation of this group of monuments owed more to Didymoteichon than Didymoteichon to Edirne because the Greek bath is certainly the oldest of them. Hibri Efendi, who was himself professor of the Oruç Pasha Medrese in the late thirties of the 17th century³³, wrote that the medrese was built by Oruç in the year 803 (1400-1401) and the *hamām* in 801 (runs between September 1398 and September 1399). The oldest Edirne baths are from the twenties and thirties of the 15th century (Ghazi Mihal *Hamāmı*, Beylerbey *Hamāmı*, Alaca *Hamāmı*, Taht ül-Kale *Hamāmı*). If we bear in mind that the very oldest Ottoman monument in Edirne is from the year 1399³⁴, and that 14th century Ottoman buildings in the Balkans are a great rarity, the value of the ruins of the Oruç Pasha Bath will become clear to the reader. Add the famous personality, the very curious form and the long standing celebrity of the bath, and it will be obvious that, with some care, it could still be useful in various ways.

The state of preservation of the *hamām* of Ahmed Feridun Beg is the same as that of the foregoing. It is situated just as Evliyâ Çelebi once pointed out, opposite the Great Mosque, on the northern side of the central square of the modern town. From the outside the bath is hardly recognisable and this might be the reason why it was most literally overlooked by the various learned men who visited the town in the last decades.

It appears that the bath of Feridun Ahmed was out of order by the beginning of our century. The last *Sālnāme*'s of the years before Turkey lost Western Thrace (1912) mention only one bath in the town, which means one bath in function. This was the Fısıltı *Hamāmı*. Very probably the inactive bath of Feridun was farmed out to shopkeepers to save at least a part of the

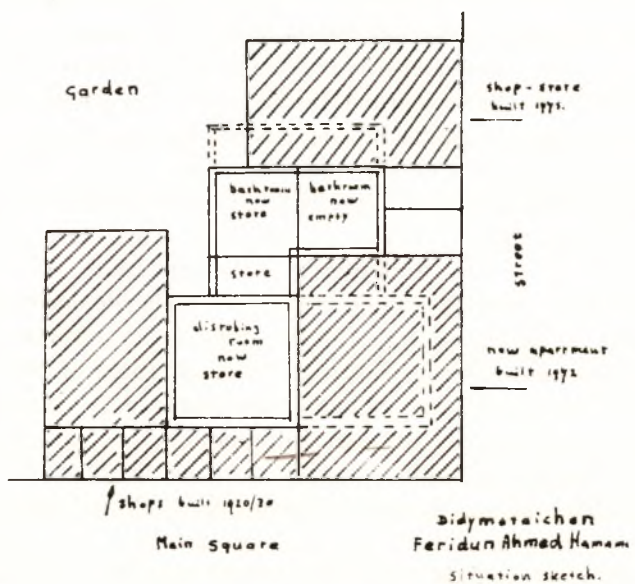
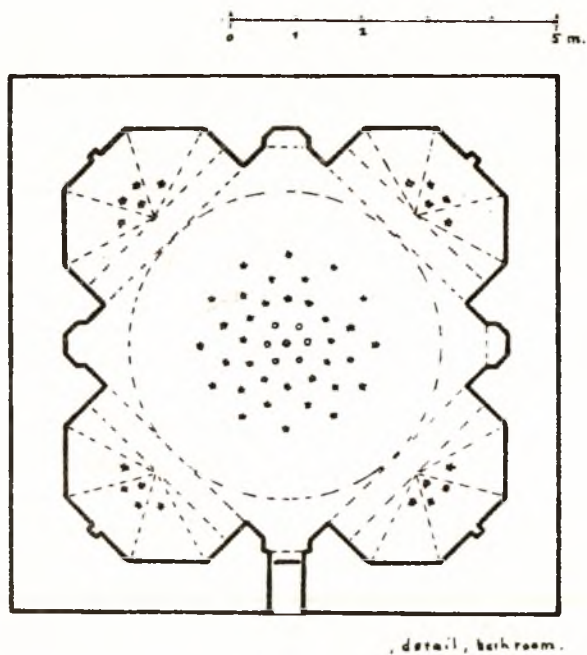
33. "anî yerine bu fakir olub, sene tis' ve arba'in ve elf cemâzîü'l-evvelinde vakî' olansilsilada ibrahim paşa medresene kalkdıkda yerine bâlî efendizâde 'abdullah olmışdır". (Enis, Codex Vindob. fol. 46^r).

34. Enis, Codex Vindob, fol. 46^v.

revenue of this object for the other foundations of Feridun. Later on the vakf of Feridun lost completely its hold and the new occupiers could do what they pleased with their section. The weak economic condition in this part of Thrace, however, prevented the new owners from knocking down the part of the ruin they possessed. To this situation the monuments owed its survival. It is an example of a very common phenomenon in our world, where poverty has always been the best protector of the works of the past, as money was simply lacking to make new and better suited buildings. This situation of poverty has drastically changed in North-Eastern Greece since the late sixties of this century, and with it the state of preservation of the bath of Feridun. This is almost unavoidable because the bath is situated in the very centre of town, in the middle of the business district, where ground prices are the highest. What we can do now is no more than reconstruct the bath on paper.

In its good days the bath was a double one. Being a work of the best years of the classical Ottoman architecture the bath shows for that time the usual regular tripartite lay out: disrobing room, tepidarium and hot bath proper. The disrobing room faced the central square of Didymoteichon. It was composed as a large block covered by two domes which must have been conspicuous from afar. Each domed room served one sex. The entrance of the men's section must have been from the main square, that of the women's from the street running from the square to the north. Entrances of both sexes on one and the same side of a bath were usually avoided in Ottoman bath architecture for reasons of decency. It is often said that man was representative in oriental society and that therefore the bath section for men was more monumental and larger. Especially the dome of the disrobing room of the men had to be higher than that of the women. Be this as it may, in the Didymoteichon bath both sections were exactly of the same size and monumentality.

The greater part of one of the disrobing rooms is still preserved today. This is the former men's section. The site of the women's section is now occupied by a new structure of concrete but we were able to see it still standing in the sixties. Both rooms measured internally almost exactly ten metres in square (9.96). The monumental domes that covered these halls sat on squinches formed by three interlocking triangular panes abutting against an arch thrown from corner to corner (see design). These arches sprang from consoles which were adorned with some high quality stalactite work in carved plaster. The lower part of the triangular panes was also filled with stalactite work. The style of these carvings reveal the date of construction of the bath in an eloquent manner. Even if we had no other evidence these stalactite carvings are sufficient to establish the chronology of the work. The subtle elegance of the carving



2. Feridun Ahmet Hamāmi. Situation sketch.

announces already a certain weakness which was the beginning of the post-classical phase of Ottoman architecture. The dome of the preserved room has collapsed long ago but the zone with the four squinches and the spring of the dome is still to be seen.

The bather, then, entered the tepidarium of the bath through a door in the middle of one of the walls of the main hall. This tepidarium is rather small (4.10×3.00 m.) and covered by a dome and a segmental arch. To the right of the entrance is a door which leads to the barrel vaulted toilet, annex depilatory. In the women's section this last compartment was to the left of the entrance. The small size and plain forms of this section of the bath is in accordance with the bath procedure as canonised after the last decades of the 15th century. The women's section has disappeared together with their disrobing room.

The last section of the bath is reached through a door in the tepidarium and leads to the exact center of the hot bath proper. In a bath of the size and importance of that of Feridum Beg one could expect a hot bath split up in a central hall with three extending arms and two separate rooms between these arms where the bather could have more privacy (*halvet*). In the *Didymoteichon* bath a much different solution was found. Both hot sections (both preserved, and used as store rooms) were given the very rare form of a *tetra-conche*. A relatively small domed section is visually extended through four deep niches which are covered with squinches of the same kind as used in the disrobing hall, three triangular panes. The spacial effect of the rooms is further enriched by four small decorative niches in the central axis of the room. In one of them is the entrance to the tepidarium. In one of the two hot sections was once a large water container and the heating section. This part of the building disappeared not long ago but we could still determine its size and shape.

The reconstructed plan of the bath gives the impression of a rigid symmetry. This is characteristic for Ottoman bath architecture in the 'Classical' phase (roughly the entire 16th century). The haphazard and free planning of the 15th century baths is a thing of the past. Stalactite decoration and ornamental domes, used in profusion in the 15th century are only used on a few well selected places. What makes an Ottoman room of the 16th century beautiful is the fine proportions and balance between the various elements and volumes as well as a restraint use of decoration. The difference between the Ottoman 15th and the 16th century is as in the difference between Western European Baroque and Rococo, between Louis XIV and Louis XVI. In 17th century Ottoman architecture, at least in baths, the sculptured decoration disappears wholly and the feeling for forceful, monumental proportion begins to fade and gives way for ponderous forms and large size. These works are

only impressive because of their size. In the 18th century this has also disappeared and with it the creative spirit of Ottoman art.

With the *hamām* of Feridun Ahmed Beg we are thus confronted with a work of the best part of the Classical age. It is therefore that the work is such an extraordinary one, erected in a place which was something more than common and by a man of great taste.

Hibri Efendi and Evliyā Çelebi give us the texts of two inscriptions that once adorned the bath and tell the story of its construction. Nothing of these inscriptions remains preserved. The texts appear to have been larger. The two geographers perhaps only noted the first and last section of the inscriptions, leaving those lines which only contain niceties without much meaning, out of their account. Hibri wrote:

“And the other bath is that of Feridun Beg, which has the following chronogram:

taḥsīn u ḳasem ʿdüb hātīf dedi tāriḥin
b’illāh güzel olmuş ḥamām-ı ferīdūm beg

(An invisible voice swore [= invoked God] and said with admiration its date: “By God, the bath of Feridun Beg has become beautiful”).

After the *hamām* of Feridun Beg had been out of repair for some time the late sultan Osman Khan repaired it in 1030 (1620/21). And this is the reason why the name of sultan Osman is written above the door”.

The last half verse is a so-called ‘*tāriḥ*’ or chronogram in which the date of construction is given according to and ingenuously composed verse of which every letter has a fixed value. The sum of these values gives the date (979 = A. D. 1571/2)³⁵.

35.

ba = 2	alif = 1	fa = 80	Recapitulation:
alif = 1	vav = 6	ra = 200	
lam = 30	lam = 30	ya = 10	
lam = 30	mim = 40	dal = 4	
he = 5	şin = 300	vav = 6	
		nun = 50	
68	377	350	68
			63
			377
			89
			350
			32
			979
kef = 20	ha = 8		
vav = 6	mim = 40	ba = 2	
za = 7	alif = 1	ya = 10	
lam = 30	mim = 40	kef = 20	
63	89	32	979 = A.D. 1571/72

بالله كوزل او طش حمام فریدون بیک

The text is written according to the principles of the Arabo-Persian prosody ('arūḏ) which was uniformly used for the classical Ottoman poetry³⁶. The metre used is a variety of 'hecez' (— — ∪ / ∪ — — — / — — ∪ / ∪ — — —) 'Hātif' (the Unseen Voice) (or Voice from Heaven) is not a pseudonym for the poet but is a commonly used metaphor if the poet did not want to 'sign' his product.

It appears that the inscription, of which Hibri has preserved at least a fragment, was removed when sultan Osman II (1618-1622) ordered the reconstruction of the bath. Hibri, who travelled in Thrace both before and after the mentioned date, must have seen the original text of Feridun. When Evliyā Çelebî made his grand tour through Greece, in 1078 (1667/68) he saw only the inscription of Osman II and is silent about Feridun Ahmed Beg, of whose publication of historical documents of the empire he was well aware. About our ḥamām he wrote³⁷:

"And the chronogram of the bath opposite the Great Mosque is:

yapdı bu ḥamāmı sultān 'osmān
cu-yı kevser ola cennetde şu

hāzir ilāç olub tāriḥ dēdim
hāşılı ḥammām-ı rüşendir bu."

حاصلی حمام روسلار بو

Although this text is a bit enigmatic we may perhaps suggest the following translation:

Has built this bath Sultan Osman
may the Kevser stream of Paradise be its water
It came to be a ready-made medicine. I spoke the chronogram:
"In brief, a splendid bath is this."

The text appears to be complete, it is not a part of a longer inscription. It seems

36. For the technical aspects of Ottoman poetry and the rules of its prosody see: E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, London, 1900 (reprint 1958) vol. I, chapter I and III; and Richard F. Kreutel, *Osmanisch-Türkische Chrestomathie*, Wiesbaden, 1965, "Erflauterungen zur osm. Prosodie", pp. 163-166.

37. Seyāḥatnâme VIII, printed edition, vol. VIII, p. 76.

to be written in a variety of the common Remel metre of which we know no other example (— ∪ — — / — ∪ — — / — —). Line 1a and 1b fit the metre very well, as does 2b but 2a is hopelessly out of order. No poet mentions himself as the author of these lines. Line 1b gives no logical meaning in the way it is written. Our translation is more an interpretation of what has to be understood than what is actually written in the text. The way the word *i'lâç* is written is against all rules of orthography.

There are more problems with this text. The word *hamām* in the chronogram has to be written with a double mīm, thus as: *hammām*, because the metre requires that the fourth syllable of the line (*ha*) is written as a closed one (*ham*). The chronogram also appears to demand the double mīm. Without it the value of the letters gives 996 (1587/88), which is 16 years before Osman II was even born (1604). Reading and counting *hamām* as *hammām*, however, we arrive at 1036 (1626/27), which is four years after the young sultan had met his violent end. Was his successor Murad IV so pious to write the whole reconstruction of the Didymoteichon bath on the credit of his murdered uncle? It is little likely. Is this text, or at least the manner in which it was handed down to us yet another example of the mysterious way Evliyâ Çelebî often worked? Is this text not a fake? Or an example of a text which the much travelled author saw and noted down much later, when his memories were blurred? Did he not 'compose' it himself, having in mind some text he had seen a few hours or days before he wrote it down? If this is true it would explain many of the peculiarities of this rather barbarous 'poem' which we can hardly expect to have figured on a sultan's building. As there is nothing left of this inscription, and other Ottoman authors (Kâtib Çelebî for example) are silent about it is seemed nevertheless worth while to outline its content.

Feridun Ahmed Beg (Pasha) was one of the most remarkable Ottoman figures of the 16th century. There is no ground for confusing him with another bearer of the same name as there is no other of such name in the second half of the mentioned age. Feridun Ahmed was born in Istanbul³⁸. Nothing is known about his family circumstances, which usually means that the man in

38. For these biographical notes on Feridun Ahmed we used: Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i 'Osmânî*, Istanbul, 1311 (1893/94), vol. IV, p. 20; Bursalı Mehmet Tahir Efendi, *Osmanlı Müellifleri* (Modern Turkish edit. Fikri Yavuz, İsmail Özen, Istanbul, 1972), vol. II, p. 111/12; Mustafâ Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selâniki* (edit. Klaus Schwarz, Freiburg, 1970), p. 162/63; İsmail Hamî Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. V. Istanbul, 1971, p. 323-325. The Catalogue of Turkish manuscripts in the Istanbul Libraries (İst. Kütüb. Tarih, *Cografiya Yazmaları Kataloğu*, I/II, Istanbul, 1962, p. 846) mentions two *vakifnâmes* of Feridun Ahmed which perhaps contain informations on his Didymoteichon foundations. This source was unfortunately inaccessible to us.

question was of humble descent. He was trained in the secretary branch in the household and office of the Chief Defterdar (Minister of Finances) Civizâde Abdullah Çelebi (Baş Defterdar between 1548 and 1553), later he was promoted to Secretary of the Imperial Divân. He joined the intimate circle of the famous Grand Vizier Mehmed Sokollović, and became his confident. During the Szigetvár Campaign in Hungary (1566) Feridun showed an extraordinary bravery for which he was honoured. He rose to the high post of Nişancı (the man who placed the imperial monogram on state documents, thus giving them the force of law). In 1576 he fell in disfavour with the new sultan (Murad III) and was removed from the capital. The following year, however, Feridun was made governor of the important sandjak of Semendire (Smederevo in Serbia) with Belgrade as capital and after having served another term in Kjustendil, Bulgaria, returned to the exalted office of Nişancı in 1581. Around that year he was married to the Ottoman princess 'Ayşe Sultân, daughter of Rüstem Pasha and sultan Süleyman the Magnificent's daughter Mihri-mah. Feridun died in March 1583 and was buried in a türbe he had erected previously, next to the mosque and mausoleum of the saint Eyyub Ansari and that of his friend Sokollović (Sokollu) in the Istanbul suburb of Eyyub. This türbe (Feridun's) is still preserved today. It was restored in 1945³⁹.

In Didymoteichon the remarkable man not only founded the bath discussed here but also a mosque. This mosque was still in good state in 1892 (Sâlnâme) but perhaps perished shortly afterwards in the turmoil of the two Balkan Wars and World War I. The connections of Feridun with the little Thracian town still remain to be pointed out, perhaps with help of his vakîf-nâmes.

The special monument discussed above, having relatively well preserved the two hot bath sections with their rare tetraconchal plan, and partly structurally sound, could be a challenge for a modern architect to try to adapt them into a new structure such as an "Oriental" coffee-house, or a special show room, thus bringing to light its old architectural form.

Castricum, Holland

39. Feridun Ahmed, the Man of Pen and Sword, whose house was ever filled with poets and witty people, left to posterity a number of important historical works as well as a volume with his poetry (divân). Among the historical works is a "History of the Szigetvar Campaign" and a "History of France" which he had translated from the French, but his renown derives from his voluminous recollection of state documents, the "Münşe'atü's-Selâtin" which authenticity caused some doubts in the past but is today regarded as a highly valuable and reliable source. It was printed several times (i.a. 1849/49 and 1858). The eloquence of his style has remained proverbial in Turkish speech.



Didymoteichon. General view, taken from the river dike. In the middle of the photo the ruin of the bath of Oruç Pascha.