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THE MOSQUE OF KEL HASAN AĞA¹ IN THE VILLAGE OF ROGOVA

AN UNKNOWN OTTOMAN MONUMENT OF THE 16th CENTURY
IN THE KOSOVO DISTRICT

The architectural heritage of the Ottoman Empire in the Kosovo-Metohija area does not belong to the best known part of the wealth of historical buildings in these lands. Although much work of inventarization has been done in the past 30 years most of the works are still unpublished and many still escape the attention they deserve.² Hence it is still possible to make some surprizing discoveries. One of such surprizes is the mosque of the village of Rogova.

The village of Rogova is situated on the western bank of the White Drim, 13 km south-east of Đakovica and 20 km to the north-west of Prizren, a little south of the Šivan Bridge and not far from the railway station of Zrze. The minaret and the lead-covered dome of the mosque rise high above the humble houses and the trees of the village and are conspicuous from beyond the

¹ As in the speech of the Turkish speaking inhabitants of Kosovo as well as among the Serbo-Croat speakers and Albanians the »Yumuşak g« (ğ) is invariably pronounced as a sharp g it would have been appropriate to write Aga instead of Ağa. For this article we preferred to use the recognised modern Turkish spelling.

² Among the existing literature concerning the Ottoman buildings of Kosovo we mention:

Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Yugoslavya'da Türk Âbideleri ve Vakıfları*, in: *Vakıflar Dergisi* III, Ankara 1957, pp. 1—73 (128 illustrations).

Hüsref Redžić, *Pet osmanlijskih potkupolnih spomenika na Kosovu i Metohiji*, in: *Starine Kosova i Metohije*, I, Priština 1961, pp. 97—112.

Ivan Zdravković, *Izbor građa za proučavanje spomenika islamske arhitekture u Jugoslaviji*, Beograd 1964.

Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimarisinde Fâtih Devri*, IV, Istanbul, 1974, pp. 834—839 (Priština). The same, *Fâtih Devri III*, Istanbul, 1973, pp. 304—306 (Peć — Ipek).

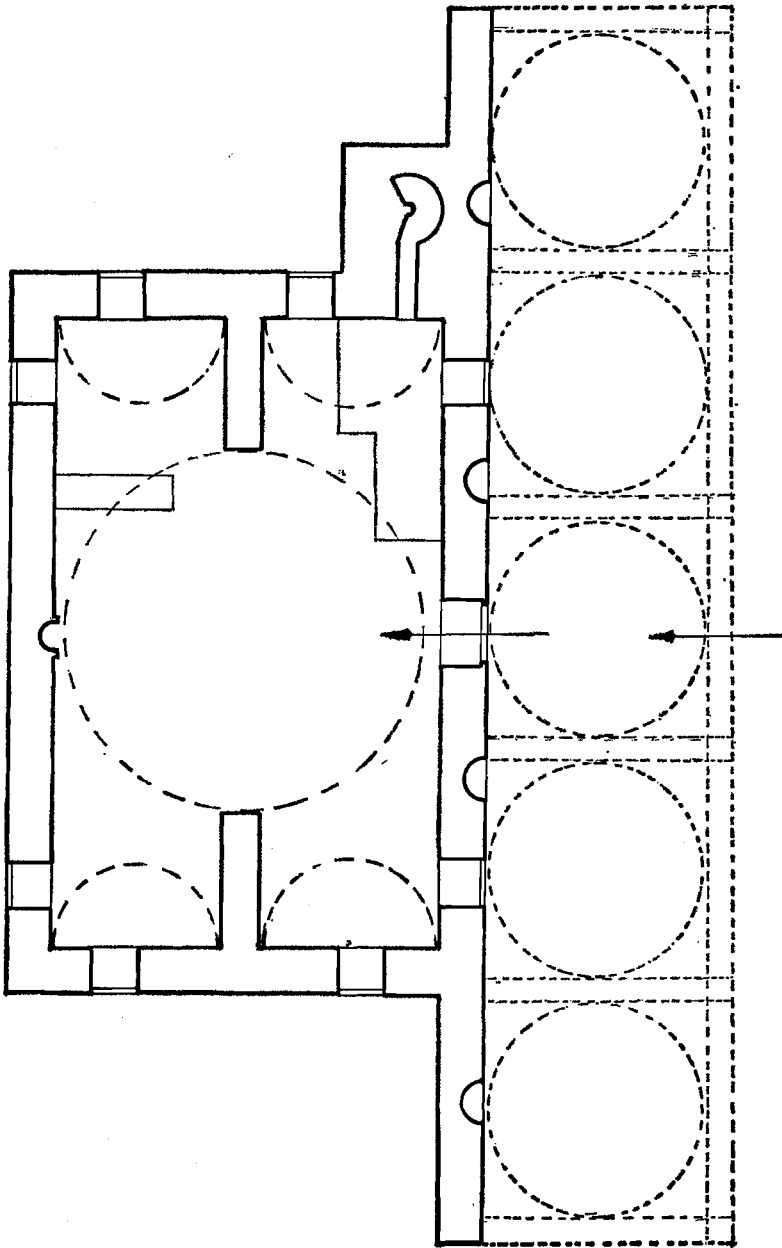
Madžida Bećirbegović, *Prosvjetni objekti Islamske arhitekture na Kosovu*, in: *Starine Kosova*, VI—VII, Priština, 1973, pp. 81—96.

river, from the modern Prizren — Đakovica road. The present village numbers roughly 300 houses and has, besides the mosque, an eight-year primary school (*osnovna škola*) and a mill. The village is exclusively inhabited by Albanian (Gheg) Muslims.

The mosque stands in the middle of the village in a vast walled garden (*photo 1*). The building is composed of two different parts; different in date and manner of construction. The actual prayer hall is a squat and relatively low stone-built rectangle covered by a dome. This hall, doubtless the oldest part of the mosque, is preceded by a wide and spacious annex built of mud brick in a skeleton of wood. The structure is covered by a roof of machine



The Mosque of Kel Hasan Ağa at Rogova



Regova, Mosque of Kel Hasan Ağa. №.

— = original structure, still standing

- - - = hypothetical reconstruction of porch, now greatly altered.

10m.

5



made tiles of a kind used before World War II. All features of this hall betray a date of construction somewhere in the late 19th century.

The domed prayer hall is a much better construction, built of broken stone, boulders and roughly squared blocks. The uneven surface is smoothed by a coat of plaster and was doubtlessly so from the beginning. It is a method of working which belongs to the Post-Classical period of Ottoman architecture, as well as to the methods current in more provincial districts.

The interior of the mosque was lit by twelve windows. Each lateral wall had four windows, the mihrab wall and the façade only two each. The windows are placed in the usual Ottoman manner, in two superimposed rows. The lower windows, the larger ones, are surrounded by rectangular stone frames. Above each rectangle is a pointed arched panel placed in a rectangular field, an ornament which is cut in the plaster of the walls. The panels suggest the relieving arches of earlier Ottoman structures. However, here they are only an ornament as no real arches could be detected in the masonry. The upper windows are much smaller than the lower. They are finished by a four-centered pointed arch with a form characteristic of the 17th century. A number of windows are now walled up.

As seen from the rear the prayer hall appears as a rectangle with a dome which covers only the central section. This dome rises out of an octagonal drum whose front and rear sides are merely an upward continuation of the walls. The drum is rather low and blind which gives the mosque its squat appearance and betrays its relatively late, Late-Classical, date and provincial environment. The lateral wings of the rectangle are covered on the outside by a shed roof. During one of the numerous repairs which the mosque underwent these shed roofs were heightened to the level of the cornice which finishes the drum. The wings are covered with the same kind of machine made tiles as the mud brick annex. The form the new roof acquired after the mentioned repair spoils the original appearance of the building.

The rectangular prayer hall (14.40—9.20 m.) must have been preceded by a wide and monumental looking outer porch (son cemaat yeri) of five domed units. The present mud brick structure, namely, follows exactly the size of the original gallery. This was 24.10 m. wide and 5.80 m. deep. The front wall of the prayer hall is extended by two wings of the same kind of masonry. These wings must originally have served as the rear wall of the porch. Later it became the rear wall of the annex building. A space of the size mentioned above can only be covered by a succession of five domes of equal size. Four mihrab niches, carved out in the masonry of the wings, still indicate its former function as »son cemaat yerik«.

Such a wide porch is a solution frequently met with in Ottoman architecture. It was preferably used to impart an air of monumentality to a relatively small structure. This five domed gallery must have collapsed at a rather early date. Above the mihrab of the prayer hall is an inscription which states that the mosque was »repaired for the third time« in 1835. Thus the first and the second repair must have been carried out in the course of the late 17th century and the 18th century, the first perhaps after the destructive invasion of the Austrian army under Piccolomini in 1689.³ All traces of the domed porch are now completely hidden behind various coats of plaster and can only be brought to light by a thorough restoration of the building, a work which is badly needed.

The mosque has a particularly high minaret which gives to the structure a pleasant vertical note. The minaret rises on the right side of the prayer hall, behind the screen wall of the former »son cemaat yeri«. It stands on a solid polygonal base and is accessible only from the inside of the prayer hall. The shaft is sixteen sided. It is finished by a cornice above which rises the chalice-like balcony. The shaft is built of fine thin bricks and has a thin coat of plaster. The conical cap still has its old lead covering with a half moon filial. The form of the balcony is characteristic for numerous late 16th and 17th century buildings and has numerous parallels.

One enters the building through a door in the middle of the mud brick annex. This door gives access to a small entrance hall. This hall is flanked on both sides by spacious rooms, each one roughly measuring 4.30 m. — 9.30 m. According to what we were told locally these halls once served as the primary school of the village the »mekteb« or »iptidaî mekteb«. This solution is often met with in 19th century Ottoman architecture.

A door in the rear wall of the entrance hall leads to the prayer room proper. Above this door is an Ottoman inscription relating the date of construction and the name of the founder. The prayer hall is, as can be seen on the outside, a multi-unit structure. A dome of 7.50 m. diameter covers the central section. It rests partly on the front and rear wall, partly on arches which are supported by two heavy, engaged pillars. The transition between square and circle is effected by small spherical fields. This central section is flanked on both sides by two lateral units which are covered by plain barrel vaults.

This original plan, unique in Yugoslavia, relates the Rogova mosque to a group⁴ of structures of the Early and Classical phase

³ For details concerning the Austrian occupation of Prizren and surroundings in 1689 see: Hasan Kaleši and Ismail Eren, Prizrenac Mahmud-Paša Rotul, njegove zadužbine i vakufi, in: Starine Kosova, VI—

VII, pp. 23—64 with further references.

⁴ For this group of mosques the fundamental works still remain: Robert Anhegger, Beiträge zur Frühosmanische Baugeschichte, II,

of Ottoman architecture. This group of buildings starts with the grandiose Üç Şerefeli Câmî'i,⁵ built by Sultan Murad II between 1437 and 1447 in his capital Edirne. Its plan was followed and further developed in the Çeşnegir Câmî'i in Manisa, of 1474,⁶ the Hatuniye Câmî'i of 1491⁷ in the same city of Manisa, the Mosque of Güzelce Hasan Pasha at Hayrabolu (Turkish Thrace) of 1499,⁸ the Mosque of Plak Mustafa Pasha of 1519 in the Macedonian city of Serres,⁹ the Sultan Câmî'i of 1522,¹⁰ also in Manisa and the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Beşiktaş — Istanbul, of 1555,¹¹ to cite but some of the better known examples. No mosques of this type built in the 17th century have yet been found. The Rogova mosque is apparently the latest of this attractive group and the only one yet come to light dating from the last quarter of the 16th century. At Rogova the scheme was doubtlessly chosen to create a building with rich vaults, features betraying the provincial origin of its architect. It was, however, a bold attempt to make something more elaborate than the usual domed square, the rather uninspired type of smaller mosque which dominates the greater part of the provincial work in the Balkans. The mediocre workmanship of the building and the lack of finesse in the proportions might be ascribed to the local, provincial environment and to the participation of local master builders, not too well versed in Ottoman aesthetics.

Moscheen vom Bauschema der Üç Şerefeli Cami in Edirne, in: Zeki Velidi Togan'a Armağan, Istanbul 1950—55, pp. 315—325; and: R. Anhegger, Beiträge zur Osmanische Baugeschichte II, Die Üç Şerefeli Cami in Edirne und die Ulu Cami in Manisa, in: Istanbul Mitteilungen, 8, 1958, pp. 40—56.

⁵ For the most comprehensive description, plans, sections and numerous photos see: E. H. Ayverdi, Osmanlı Mimarisinde Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri, II, Istanbul, 1972, pp. 422—462.

⁶ For this mosque see: Anhegger, Moscheen vom Bauschema etc., p. 317; and Ayverdi Fâtih Devri Mimarisi, IV, p. 817—819.

⁷ Details by Anhegger, Bauschema, p. 318. Also: Godfrey Goodwin, A History of Ottoman Architecture, London, 1971, pp. 158—159 (where accidentally the pictures of the Sultan Cami'i from 1522 and that of the Hatuniye Cami'i are transposed).

⁸ For this mosque see: Aptullah Kuran, The Mosque in Early Otto-

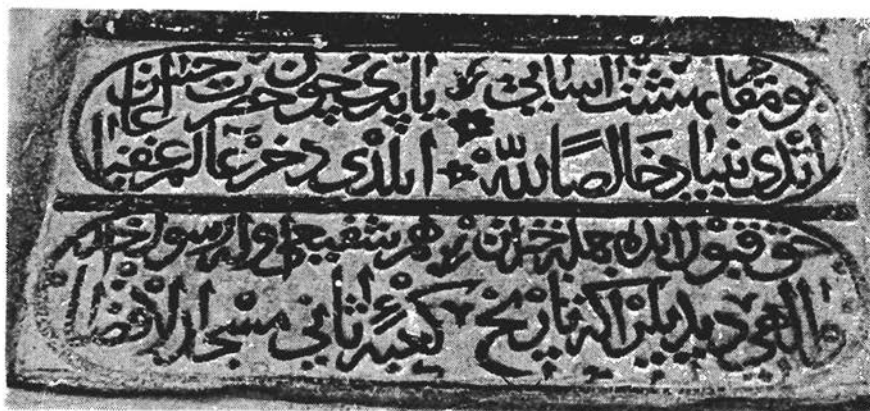
man Architecture, Chicago — London 1968, pp. 182—183 (through a mistake in his sources Kuran wrote that this mosque was built in 809—1406, whereas the inscription most clearly states that it was 905, on Rebi ül-evvel (October—November 1499).

⁹ For the Serres Mosque see: Robert Anhegger, Beiträge zur Osmanische Baugeschichte III, Moscheen in Saloniki und Serre, in: Istanbul Mitteilungen 17, 1967, pp. 312—324; and Machiel Kiel, Observations on the History of Northern Greece during Turkish Rule, Komotini and Serres, in: Balkan Studies 12², Thessaloniki 1971, pp. 415—465.

¹⁰ For this mosque see: Anhegger, Bauschema, p. 319.

¹¹ For this well known mosque see i. a.: Ulya Vogt-Göknil, Türkische Moscheen, Zürich, 1953, pp. 62—68. Also, E. Egli, Sinan, der Baumeister osmanischer Glanzzeit, Zürich, 1054.

Our conclusion as to the approximate date of construction of this mosque is happily corroborated by the preserved inscription. This text is cut in a slab of white marble of 90—50 cm. The text consists of four, somewhat clumsily written, beyits fitted in two cartouches. It reads¹² as follows (photo 2):



یاپدی جون حضرت حسن اغا	بو مقام بهشت اسایی
ایلدی دخر عالم عقبا	اتدی بنیاد خالصاً لله
هم شفيعی اوله رسول خدا	حق قبول ایده جمله حیراتن
کعبه نانی مسجد الاقصا	والهی دیدیلر اکه تاریخ

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Bu maḳām-ı behişt asāyı | — yaptı çun ḥazret-i Ḥasan Ağa |
| 2) Etdi bünyād ḥāliṣan Lillāhi | — eyledi zuhr-ı 'ālem-i 'uḳbā |
| 3) Haḳḳ ḳabül ede cümle ḥayrātın | — hem şefi'i ola Resül-ı Ḥudā |
| 4) O Vālihī dediler aña tāriḥ | — Ka'be-i Sānī, Mescidü 'l-Aḳṣā |

The Vālihī mentioned in the text is very probably the poet of Skopje who, at the time when 'Aşık Çelebi wrote his »Tezkiretü 'ş-Şu'arā« (1568/69) was supervisor of the medrese of Bayezid II at Edirne. He was the son of a Cadi and born in Skopje ('Aşık, Tezkeret, edit. Meredith—Owens, p. 78a). This Vālihī Ahmed Celebi died, according to Bursali Mehmed Tāhir ('Osmānlı Müellifleri, Şair ve Edibler Faşlı), in his native Skopje in 994 (1586) thus six years after completing the Rogova inscription.

¹² The authors of this article acknowledge the valuable help and suggestions by Mr. R. Peters, Amsterdam; Dr. F. Th. Dijkema, Lei-

den, and Prof. Dr. V. L. Ménage, London. The dot on the »dhal« is missing (a writers mistake?) but another reading is hardly possible.

- 1a b) When his Excellency Ḥasan Ağa constructed this Paradise resembling place
 2a) he built it with sincere intention.
 2b) He made a provision of reward for the World of the Hereafter.
 3a) May the True One (God) accept all his good works
 3b) and may the Messenger of God (Mohammed) be his intercessor.
 4a) O Vālihi, They have spoken for it a chronogram:
 4b) The Second Kaaba (the K. of the poor, of those who could not go to Mecca), the Mescidü 'l-Akṣā.¹³

The date is only given as a chronogram which gives the following calculation.

س = 20	ذ = 500	م = 40	ا = 1	ا = 1	
ع = 70	ا = 1	و = 60	ل = 30	ف = 100	97
ب = 2	ذ = 50	ج = 3	31	ص = 90	561
ه = 5	ی = 10	د = 4		ا = 1	107
<hr/> 97	<hr/> 561	<hr/> 107		<hr/> 192	<hr/> 31
					<hr/> 192
					<hr/> 988

$$H. 988 = 17. 2. 1580 - 4. 2. 1581.$$

Above the mihrab in the prayer hall is a second inscription, relating to a repair of the mosque. It is written in ink under a religious formulae. The whole is surrounded by a cartouch which measures 1.25—0.48 m. It reads as follows:

Kullamā dahala 'alayhā Zakariyyā al-mihrāb¹⁴ (Koran 3, 37)
 »When ever Zechariah entered the sanctuary to see her he found beside her provisions.«

»The third repair of the noble mosque was done by Mehmed 'Alī, the son of Bekir. This painting (by) Gani Memiş of Prizren, (in the month of) Cem. I, Anno 1251.«

جامع شريفك او جنجو دفعه تعمیری محمد علی بن بکر طرفندن یاپلمیشدر

بویاجی پر زرنلی غنی ممیش سنه ۱۲۵۱ جماد الاول

¹³ »The remotest of mosques«, in the narrow sense the Akṣā Mosque on the Temple Square in Jerusalem, south of the Dome of the Rock.

¹⁴ The way in which these words are written contains several mista-

kes. Here we give the correct, Koranic, from which was intended by the writer, of the text, who did not know his Arabic very well.

Câmi'-i şerîfiñ üçünce def'a ta'miri Mehmed 'Alî bin Bekir tarafından yapılmışdır.

Bu boyacı Perzerînlî Ganî Memiş.

Sene 1251, Cemâzu 'l-evvel (September 1835).

It proved to be difficult to identify the forementioned »His Excellency Hasan Ağa«. The way in which the founder styles himself (hazret) seems to indicate that he was a high dignitary, not a big landowner. Locally he is remembered as »Çelhasan Ağa« which is the Albanian corruption of the correct »Kel Hasan Ağa«. During our investigations at Rogova the imam of the mosque, Hafiz Şaban Efendi, told us two charming legends concerning the foundation. According to one of these stories Hasan Ağa was born in the willage of Damyan (which lies six km. south-west of Rogova). As a youth he tended cattle and one day his beasts broke through the fence of a private garden and ruined it. The owner of the garden caught Hasan and beat him. The very frightened boy ran away and eventually came to Istanbul! There he found a protector, was educated and rose to the rank of an important commander. When, after a long time, he came home he found the old garden owner, obtained forgiveness and bought the garden, the ultimate instrumentum of his career. There he erected the mosque that we see today. The second story relates that Hasan, not yet back in his native country, sent a large sum of money to the Halvetiyye sheikh Ali in Damyan Köy. Sheikh Ali constructed in Hasan's name a mekteb in Damyan Köy, a bridge in Deday Köy and a mosque in Rogova with opposite it a mekteb. The legends, although certainly embellished, must nevertheless contain elements of truth. The historical Kel Hasan Ağa must have made his career in the imperial capital and must have risen to a place of honour. Hence the word »His Excellence« in the inscription and the use of a plan for his mosque which surpasses the limits of provincial architecture and is doubtlessly inspired by the works of the great centres of Ottoman art. We may think of a Janisary Ağa or a lesser army officer. Less probable a Kızlarağa. More historical information and if possible, a Vakıfnâme is needed to clear up this question which we prefer to leave as a detail for further study. The wording of the inscription (cümle hayrâtın) seems atleast to confirm the indication of the second legend that Hasan Ağa founded a number of works for the general welfare. The first one contains elements for an explanation of the psychological motives behind the choice of the building site. The pattern of a young man who went to Istanbul, made his fortune there and then donated works for public welfare and the promotion of Islamic culture in his native district is very common and needs no commends. However, what we need is more documentary evidence.

In the yard of the mosque are a number of old gravestones. Only four of them bear inscriptions. The oldest one is doubtless

that which is crowned by a large turban in the style of the 17th century and is reminiscent of the stones of the same century as found in Peć.¹⁵ In the 18th century this kind of headgear fell into disuse. Unfortunately we could not read the text of the heavily weathered inscription of this stone. The three others are crowned with a fez and date from the late 19th century. The texts written on these stones offer nothing more than the stereotyped formulae »Hüve al-Bakī (He is the Everlasting) al-Merhūm ve al-Magfūr ... rūhiçün el-Fātiha sene ... ([Read] a Fātiha for the soul of the one God has taken into his mercy, the forgiven ... Anno ...).« The stones belong to Halil bin Davud, 1278 (1861/62), Mehmed ben Hasan, 1309 (1891/92) and Süleymān ben Hasan, also 1309 and probably a brother of the former. In original lettering they read as follows:

هو	هو الباقي	هو الباقي
الباقي	المرحوم والمغفور	المرحوم والمغفور
المرحوم	محمد بن حسن	سليمان بن حسن
خليل بن	روحيچون	روحيچون
داوود	القاتحه	القاتحه
روحيچون	سنه ١٣٠٩	سنه ١٣٠٩
القاتحه		
سنه ١٢٧٨		

The mosque of Rogova, although still in daily use, is in a neglected state. It might be hoped that a thorough restoration by the competent authorities, a restoration which would have to include the reconstruction of the gallery and a removal of the miserable 19th century additions, will bring back the original monumental form of this interesting building which vividly testifies to the fact that Islam had spread its wings over the villages of Kosovo in a peaceful and constructive manner long before the Veliki Seobe.

POST SCRIPT

After having written these lines we found that Evlija Çelebi, in vol VI, of his Seyāhatnāme, in the description of Üsküb/Skopje, (Serbocroat translation by Hazim Šabanović, Evlija Čelebija Puto-

¹⁵ A number of historical grave-stones of Peć have been published by: Asimov Mudžait, Turski nad-

grobni spomenici na Kosovu, in: Starine Kosovo, VI—VII, Priština, 1973, pp. 97—112.

pis, vol II, Sarajevo, 1957; German translation Herbert Duda in: *Sitzungsberichte der Österr. Akad der Wissensch. Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 226, Wien, 1949) described the türbe of »Mevla Vālihī Çelebi« which at the time of his visit was still standing. He also noted a chronogram of the poet Farūķī which gives the date of the death of Vālihī, 1009 (13. 7. 1600 — 1. 7. 1601). This is one year later that Bursalı Mehmed Tahir (Osmanlı Müellifleri) wrote but it needs not to be doubted that the person mentioned by Evliya is the same as the one of Mehmed Tahir.

THE MOSQUE OF KEL HASAN AĞA IN THE VILLAGE OF ROGOVO —
AN UNKNOWN OTTOMAN MONUMENT OF THE XVIIth CENTURY
IN THE KOSOVO DISTRICT

S u m m a r y

On the 12th kilometer of the road Prizren—Đakovica, on the other side of the river Drim, in the village Rogovo there is an old mosque named Kelhasanaga's mosque. The mosque's yard is walled by a stony wall and there are some tombstones inside. The inscriptions on some of them indicate that they originate from a later period (the XIXth century).

Entering the mosque one can see on both sides two sofas which are built later than the mosque. The inhabitants of the village say that they were used as ibtidaiyya (the primary religious school). Above the entrance there is an inscription (90×50 cm) from which one can find out that the mosque is built by a certain Hasan-aga in the year 1581 (988 after the Hejira). The legend says he was named Kel (Çel) Hasanaga and born in the village Dede near the village Damjan. By the same legend he was a poor shepherd boy and left his village, went to Istanbul, finished the education there and became the high rank officer. After a long time he returned to his native place, he bought there the meadow where he had been shepherd and built this mosque there.

By another legend he has not returned himself but he sent the money to a dervish sheik Alija (from the halvetian order) and the latter built a school in the village Damjan, a small bridge in the village Dede and this mosque in the village Rogovo.

The mosque is very old, its construction is very interesting so the author considered it worth to present this unique example of the early Islamic architecture in the XVIth century in this country.

From the inscriptions on the inner sides of the mosque's walls it can be seen that it was renovated three times, the third time by Muhamed Ali, the son of Bekir and the decoration inside was a work of Gani Memis from Prizren in the year 1835 (1251 after the Hejira).

KEL HASANAGINA DŽAMIJA U SELU ROGOVU — NEPOZNATI
SPOMENIK OTOMANSKE ARHITEKTURE IZ XVI. VIJEKA

Re z i m e

Na dvanaestom kilometru puta Prizren—Đakovica, sa druge strane rijeke Drima, u selu Rogovu nalazi se stara džamija poznata pod nazivom Kel Hasanagina džamija. Dvorište džamije je ograđeno kamenim zidom, a tu se nalazi i nekoliko nadgrobnih spomenika. Na nekim od njih nalaze se natpisi iz kojih se vidi da potiču iz kasnijeg perioda (XIX vijeka).

Na ulazu džamije, sa obje strane, nalaze se sofe koje su podignute kasnije nego sama matična zgrada. U selu se priča da su te sofe upotrebljavane kao iptidaije (osnovna vjerska škola). Iznad ulaza nalazi se natpis veličine 90×50 cm, iz kojeg se vidi da je džamiju sagradio neki Hasan-aga 1581 (h. 988) godine. U narodu taj čovjek i danas živi kao Kel (Čel) Hasan-aga rodom iz sela Dede nedaleko od sela Damjan. Po kazivanju seljaka Hasan-aga je bio siromašni čoban koji je napustio rodno selo, došao čak do Istanbula, tu se školovao i postao visoki oficir. Nakon dosta vremena se vratio u zavičaj, kupio livadu na kojoj je nekada čuvao ovce i tu sagradio ovu džamiju.

Po drugom kazivanju Hasan-aga se nije vratio u selo nego je poslao novac nekom halvetijskom šejhu Aliji, a ovaj je tim novcem u selu Damjan sagradio jednu školu, u selu Dede jedan mali most, a u selu Rogovu ovu džamiju.

Džamija je veoma stara, njena konstrukcija je vrlo interesantna te se smatralo vrijednim obraditi i predstaviti javnosti ovaj jedinstveni primjerak stare islamske arhitekture XVI vijeka u ovim krajevima.

Iz natpisa koji se nalaze na unutrašnjim zidovima džamije vidi se da je renovirana tri puta, da je treće renoviranje učinio Muhammed Ali sin Bekira a da je unutrašnju dekoraciju uradio neki Prizrenac Gani Memi 1835 (h. 1251) godine.