

SOME EARLY OTTOMAN MONUMENTS IN BULGARIAN THRACE

Stara Zagora (Eski Zağra), Jambol and Nova Zagora
(Zağra Yenicesi) ¹

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The five centuries, in which the Bulgarian lands were included within the frontiers of the Ottoman empire, left deep traces behind, some of which are still visible today. Among these is the architectural heritage which has been tremendously rich. The vicissitudes of the extremely agitated history of the past hundred years caused the majority of the Ottoman monuments to disappear, but the number of those preserved is still considerable, and among them are works of the greatest quality which shed ample light on some important phases of the development of this architecture. Our knowledge of the Ottoman Turkish monuments of architecture in the Bulgarian lands is far from complete, partly due to the relatively late date in which Bulgarian science began to realise their value, partly of the difficulty to Western and Turkish scholars to travel the land extensively. A general work covering all existing Ottoman-Turkish monuments in Bulgaria does not exist as yet and will take much pain-staking labour to produce. In this modest contribution we do not endeavour to give a full list of existing buildings nor wish to mention all literature in Bulgarian, in Turkish or in other languages concerning these monuments but merely pick out a few important works of Early-Ottoman art which have remained largely unknown and unstudied until now². At the

¹ The materials for this article were collected during several journeys in Bulgaria between 1967 and 1971 which were made possible by a bursary of the Netherlands Organisation for the Advancement of Pure Scientific Research (Z.W.O.) The Hague, and a generous gift of the Prince Bernhard Amsterdam.

² Just after finishing this study Ekrem Hakki Ayverdi published his second volume of *Osmanlı Devri Mimarisi*, Istanbul 1972, part 2, first half of the 15th century, in which the mosque of Hamza Bey in Stara Zagora is discussed briefly and a plan is given. Ayverdi, however, could not see the interior of the mosque and had to leave it unstudied. Also he could not give the important inscription. The great Eski Cami of Jambol he omits entirely.

same time the monuments we are going to discuss are destined to disappear with the progressive modernisation of the Bulgarian towns, unless measures are undertaken to save them.

STARA ZAGORA

Stara Zagora, the Ottoman Eski Zağra, at present a modern industrial town of some 88.000 inhabitants³, lies on gently sloping grounds against the foothills of the Sredna Gora Mountains on the extreme northern end of the Thracian Plain. Its foundation goes back to Antiquity. In the earlier middle ages it was an important fortress on the Bulgarian-Byzantine frontier which changed hands frequently. Stara Zagora became part of the Ottoman empire in the early sixties of the 14th century⁴, immediately after the conquest of Edirne and Plovdiv (Filibe). In the beginning of the 16th century it counted roughly 500 households⁵, all Muslims without Christians⁶. Evliya Çelebi⁷ described as a fair city with 3.000 houses, 47 mosques, 5 imarets and a massive bedesten. The author noted the presence of a great number of learned men, poets and members of the Islamic brotherhoods. The empire lost the city in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877/78 during which Stara Zagora was burned down and destroyed⁸.

Hamza Bey or Eski Cami, 1408/09

The only Ottoman-Turkish building of Stara Zagora which escaped wars and destruction is the Eski Cami, the Old Mosque. This building constitutes the sole memory of the time the city was a

³ *Kratka Bălgarska Ençiklopedija* vol 4, p. 622, Sofia 1967.

⁴ Franz Babinger, *Beiträge zur Frühgeschichte der Türkenherrschaft in Rumelien*, Brunn-München-Wien 1444, pp. 49-50, and Halil Inalcik in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Vol I, Leiden 1960, p. 1302.

⁵ So on the map of Ömer Lütfi Barkan in his "Les deportations comme methode de peuplement et de colonisation dans l'Empire Ottoman", in: *Revue de la Faculté des Sciences Economiques de l'Université d'Istanbul*, Istanbul 1953, No 11, 1-4.

⁶ Some Christians must have lived in the city but they are not marked on the map of Barkan as their numbers were too small.

⁷ In the translation of H.J. Kissling, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis Thrakiens im 17. Jahrhundert*, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* XXXII, 3, Wiesbaden 1956, pp. 27/28

⁸ On the destruction of Stara Zagora of 1877 see: Constantin Jiricek, *Das Fürstentum Bulgarien*, Prag-Wien-Leipzig 1891, pp. 389-393.

religious and cultural centre of the Turkish Islam. It stands in the very centre of the modern city. Until 1971 it was situated in a side alley of the Main Street, whose environs are now changed to be rebuilt according to new concepts of city planning.

The mosque and the adjacent gallery forms one solid block of 19.53 - 27.24 metres. On the front side the building appears low and heavy. This impression is caused by the enormous size of the dome and because the building has sunk in the terrain on that side. On the side of the mihrab wall the site has not changed very much, and there we can see the mosque in its original imposing proportions. The two main elements of the mosque, the prayer hall proper and the gallery, are of unusual form and size. The hall is an imperfect square which measures internally 16.49 from one lateral wall to the other and 17.47 metres from the Kibla wall to the Mihrab wall. This vast interior space is covered by one huge dome. The transition between the square and circular base of the dome is affected by four large squinches of primitive form. In order to enable the walls to carry the weight of the dome, they have been made rather thick: 1.55 m. The squinches sit very low. Eight pointed arches of roughly the same size support the dome and divide its pressure on the wall sections. The arches do not rest on pilasters but spring directly from the walls. The interior is lit by a series of three windows in the walls, two in the lower and one in the upper section of them, and by twelve windows in the tambour of the dome. All windows have been transformed or enlarged in later periods. Some are even blocked now. These in the tambour are oval at present but must originally have been round and much smaller, resembling the ones still preserved in Jambol. That the oval windows have been cut through the masonry, is perceivable when we examine them closely.

The form of the outer gallery of the mosque as it was originally is also an element which calls for special attention. Its forms have been spoiled by various repairs and transformations that the building has sustained in various periods, but the original form is easy to reconstruct as all elements are preserved. It has not the common form of three or five domed sections, as was usual since the second half of the 15th century. It has two fairly big domes on both sides of the central unit, which latter is considerably narrower, an archaic feature. Another archaic feature, which ties this mosque to older traditions in Ottoman

architecture, is the double colonnade at both sides of the gallery. Two square pillars of brick masonry, 0.95 m. thick, support each lateral side. The front of the gallery has six pillars with five round arches, supporting the three-domed sections. Thus the lateral domes are supported by two rounded arches on each side whilst the central section has only one arch. This latter part is vaulted by a small dome which rests partly on arches and partly on double stalactite pendentives which fill the remaining part of the rectangular space. Today only the coarse brick basis of the stalactite work remains, the fine plaster work has apparently fallen off or was removed during one of the successive repairs. During one of these repairs the open arches were blocked with masonry, only some were left partially open as well as a number of windows. During a later repair these openings were also closed.

The minaret of the mosque is placed on a rather awkward place, on top of the walls, at the point where the gallery begins. Its entrance is from the inside of the prayer hall. In its present form it is doubtless of later date, being the product of one of the many repairs. The place where it has been built and the manner in which this has been done suggests that it was no part of the original design but was a later addition. Congregational mosques without a minaret are occasionally met in Early Ottoman architecture.

The walls of the mosque are made of very coarse cloisonné work, sometimes not even recognisable as such. The rough broken stone of which it is made is placed with its most smooth face to the exterior, and thin bricks are placed around the blocks, often haphazardly. The eight square pillars of the gallery and the round arches above them are executed with more care. They are entirely built up of thin bricks, 3 - 3.1/2 cm. thick, with joints varying in thickness between 2.1/2 - 4 cm. The overall impression of the exterior of the mosque is that of a solid robustness though not very elegant. The deep spring of the arches and the dome are not directly visible on the outside. The tambour is kept relatively low. It is twenty-four sided and placed asymmetrically on the square base. The masonry of the tambour is of better quality than that of the lower parts of the mosque, being carried out in alternative layers of brick and cut stone. This difference between the upper and the lower part of the building is also a feature which is not too unusual. It can be found on many other buildings from

before and after the Stara Zagora mosque and does not necessarily mean two different periods of construction. With the Eski Cami this was certainly not the case.

Mention has been made of the various repairs of the mosque. The major one must have taken place in the latter part of the 18th century, when the building was changed to meet the different tastes of that period. To it must be attributed the oval baroque windows in the tambour, the enlargement of the lower windows and the overall painted decoration of the interior in baroque style. The simple mahfil is also from that period. The transformation of the gallery is likewise of late date. Today the place for the ritual washing has been accommodated inside, a feature which is rather common in Bulgaria, as is the closing of the once open galleries on many other mosques.

From the notes left by Evliya Çelebi we know that this mosque was the largest of the city, situated in the heart of the Çarşı and always full of people. According to the same author there was no other mosque as big as this one. The enormous dome was covered with lead, as it is in our days. Evliya attributes the mosque to Hamza Bey, one of the emirs in the time of Musa Çelebi, son of Yilderim Han. The date given in the printed edition of the work of Evliya is 700 H., which is a mistake. In fact the mosque of Hamza Bey was built in H. 811 (27.5.1408 - 15.5.1409) by the Emir Hamza Bey, during the rule of Emir Süleiman. The names, titles and the date are given in the inscription which remains preserved above the entrance of the prayer hall. This inscription was read by Babinger before World War II⁹, but this author unfortunately gave only a partial translation of it and some suggestions to identify Hamza Bey. In our reading it runs as follows¹⁰:

1. [? ?] تم انشاء هذا المسجد المبارك ايام
دولة السلطان الخطير المؤيد المظفر سلطان .

⁹ Babinger, Frühgeschichte p. 8 note 36.

¹⁰ The decipherment of this very difficultly readable inscription is the result of the joined efforts of Prof. Dr. Halil Inalcik of Ankara, and Drs. Fokke Dijkema of Leiden for which I thank them most sincerely. All eventual mistakes in transcription and translation are of-course for account of the author of these pages. There must be a complete Bulgarian translation of this inscription, made by Ibrahim Tatarli, which unfortunately could not be used for this article.

2. [? ?] الامير سليمان بن بايزيد بن مراد خان
خلد الله سلطنته .

3. الامير الخطير ظل الله في الارض جلال الدولة والدين حمزة بك ادام الله
دولته ووقع الفراغ من بنايه في نهاية العام احدى عشرة وثمانائة .

- 1) [? ?] the construction of this Blessed Mosque was finished during the rule of the Significant, the Strong [? (he who is helped by God) ?] the Victorious Sultan
- 2) of Islam and of the Muslimin Emir Süleyman, son of Bayazid, son of Murad Khan, may God prolong his rule.
- 3) The significant (al khaṭīr) Emir, Shadow of God on Earth, the Glory of State and Religion, Hamza Bey, may God prolong his fortune, the construction was finished at the end of the year eight-hundred eleven. (May 1409)

The titles of the founder of the mosque as given in the third line of the inscription; "Al-amir al-khaṭīr zill allah fi al-ard... djalal addawlat wa'd-din." These words are, according to Babinger, a possible indication of the royal descent of Hamza Bey. He could have been a son of Izmiroğlu Cuneid Bey, or else was the son of Firuz Bey, one of the leaders of the conquest of N.W. Bulgaria under Yilderim. Another possibility may be that of Bicerzade Hamza Bey, Beylerbey under Mehmed I.; but we prefer to leave this problem a subject for further research. In any case, our Hamza Bey was one of the most important men of this time and judging by his mosque in Stara Zagora, a promoter of architecture.

As a work of art, the mosque in question strongly reminds us of the Yilderim Bayazid Mosque of the Western Anatolian town of Mudurnu, built in the last decades of the 14th century¹¹.) In Mudurnu we see the same dominating role of the dome which is even greater than in Stara Zagora. (The respective sizes of the domes are 19.65 m, as against 17.47.) The system of transition is the same in both mosques. The gallery is organised along the same principles as followed in the

¹¹ For this building see: Ekrem Hakki Ayverdi, *Mudurnu'da Yilderim Bayazid Manzumesi ve Taş Vakfiyesi*, *Vakıflar Dergisi* V, pp. 79-86, and Aptullah Kuran, *The mosque in Early Ottoman architecture*, Chicago-London 1968, pp. 40-41.

Bulgarian mosque. By comparing both mosques, we notice, that the younger Hamza Bey Mosque has developed the concept of Mudurnu further. The extremely heavy forms of Mudurnu, caused by the inability to bring the large dome in accordance with the square substructure, has been more or less avoided in Stara Zagora. Externally, the body of the mosque is considerably higher and the tambour much lower than at Mudurnu, although the same elements of transition, squinches of the same kind, have been used. Nevertheless, in the interior, the weight bearing parts are still heavy and rather low. The Hamza Bey Mosque clearly demonstrates the growing experience and technical ability of the Early-Ottoman architects. As such, it marks an important stage in the development of that architecture and above all, is a proof of the importance of "Rumili". The European provinces (especially Bulgaria and Macedonia) were vital parts of the Empire during its formation. There new experiments were made which contributed greatly to the development of what has become specifically Ottoman. Certainly until the end of the 15th century the towns in Bulgaria and Macedonia were not provincial, but constituted centres which developed their own ideas. The same might be seen in other works in the old "Rumili", such as the Imaret Cami of Plovdiv¹² which stands comparison with the best contemporaneous works in Edirne, Bursa or Amasya, the splendid hamam of Murad II in Thessaloniki¹³ or the Cami-i Kebir of Yannitsa - Yenice Vardar¹⁴, to mention but a few examples. When discussing the Eski Cami of Jambol, we will return to this tendency.

The architectural development of the Eski Cami of Stara Zagora may lead us to revise some ideas expressed in earlier works. In his

¹² As long as the work of Nikola Muschanov, who restored this mosque and carried out interesting investigations is not published, we still have to use the now outdated work of C. Rudloff-Hille and O. Rudloff, *Die Stadt Plovdiv und ihre Bauten*, in *Izvestija Bălgarski Arheologičeski Institut*, VIII, 1934. (also cited as *Bull. de Institut Arch. Bulg.*)

¹³ This hamam still has its original inscription from Murad II, which was published by the author of this pages in his "Notes on the history of some Turkish monuments in Thessaloniki and their founders" in *Balkan Studies* 111, Thessaloniki 1970 pp. 126-156. The results of the study of the architecture of this splendid bath, made by the author in 1972 will be published on another occasion.

¹⁴ For the Ottoman monuments of Yannitsa - Yenice Vardar see: M. Kiel, *Yenice Vardar, a forgotten Turkish cultural centre in Macedonia*, in *Byzantina Neerlandica* II, Leiden 1972.

instructive work "The Mosque in Early Ottoman Architecture" Aptullah Kuran put forward the idea that the mosque of Mudurnu was the outcome of an experiment, which was not regarded as successful by the early Ottomans and "was never repeated again".¹⁵ Such absolute statements are always dangerous, keeping in mind our poor state of knowledge of the architectural richness of Anatolia. The little-known mosque of Stara Zagora is by itself proof enough, that the experiments with huge single-domed buildings did not stop with Mudurnu. As seen from a wider angle, both mosques must be regarded not as the beginning, but rather as the result, of a development in mosque architecture which started much earlier. So for example, we have the mosque of Ahmad Gazi in Eski Çine, in the territory of the former Menteşe Beylik which, according to its Vakifname, was built in 1308.¹⁶ This mosque is about the same size as that of Stara Zagora (a square of 19.50 m with a dome of more than 17 m internally, and the system of transition is about the same as in the Bulgarian mosque. It is known that on the territory of the Western Anatolian Beyliks interesting experiments in architecture took place in the entire 14th century. The mosque of Eski Çine bears ample witness of it. The extent of our knowledge of the monuments of Anatolia does not allow us to say if there are more works of the same type which fill the space of time between 1308 and about 1390 (Mudurnu), but it appears logical that there are such works, or in any case have been, which are lost now. The same can be said of large single-domed mosques built after Stara Zagora, which further continued the trend. Eski Çine, Mudurnu and Stara Zagora mark a steady and unbroken development and improvement of the type of a large single-domed mosque. At the same time this group of buildings, of which more examples should be found, at once mark the limits of the possibilities with single-domed mosques. Even the great works of Sinan belonging to the same group, built in a time when techniques had developed much further, rarely surpass the size of the three early works mentioned above.

The early presence of a dominant mosque type, as those under discussion, also questions the views put forward by Kuran,

¹⁵ Aptullah Kuran, *The mosque in Early Ottoman Arch.* p. 206.

¹⁶ See: *Türkiye'de Vakıf Abideler ve Eski Eserler I*, Ankara 1972, pp. 679-683.

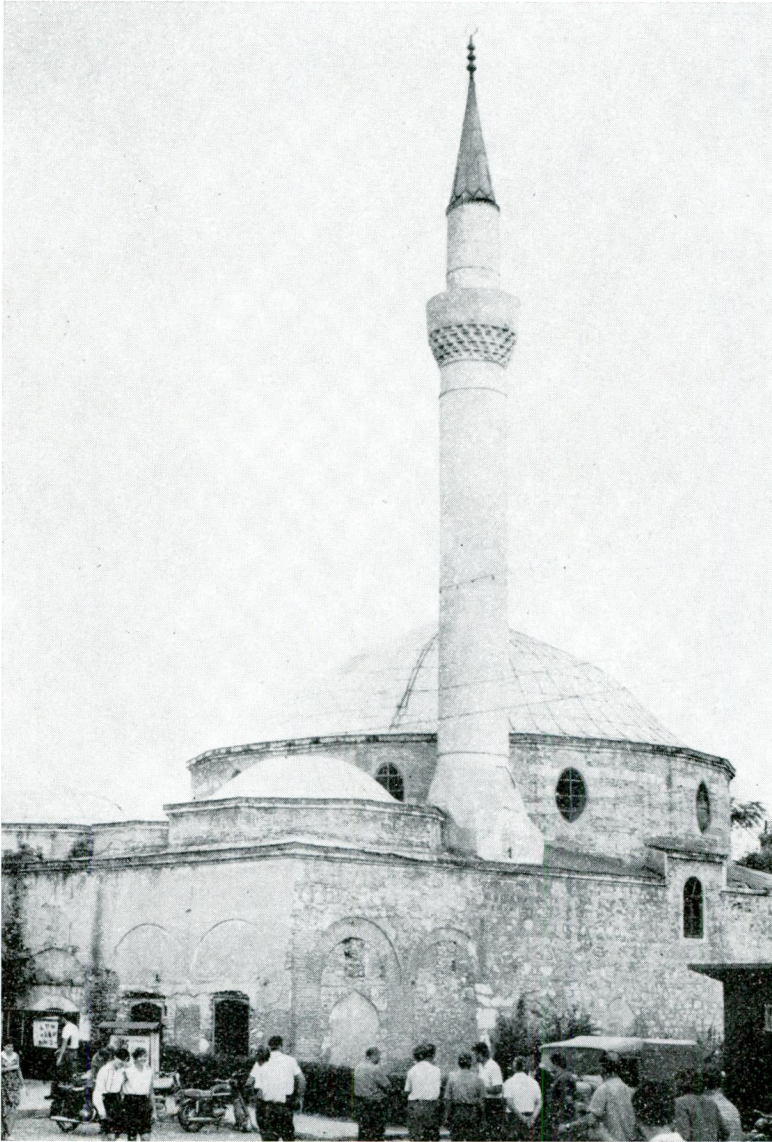
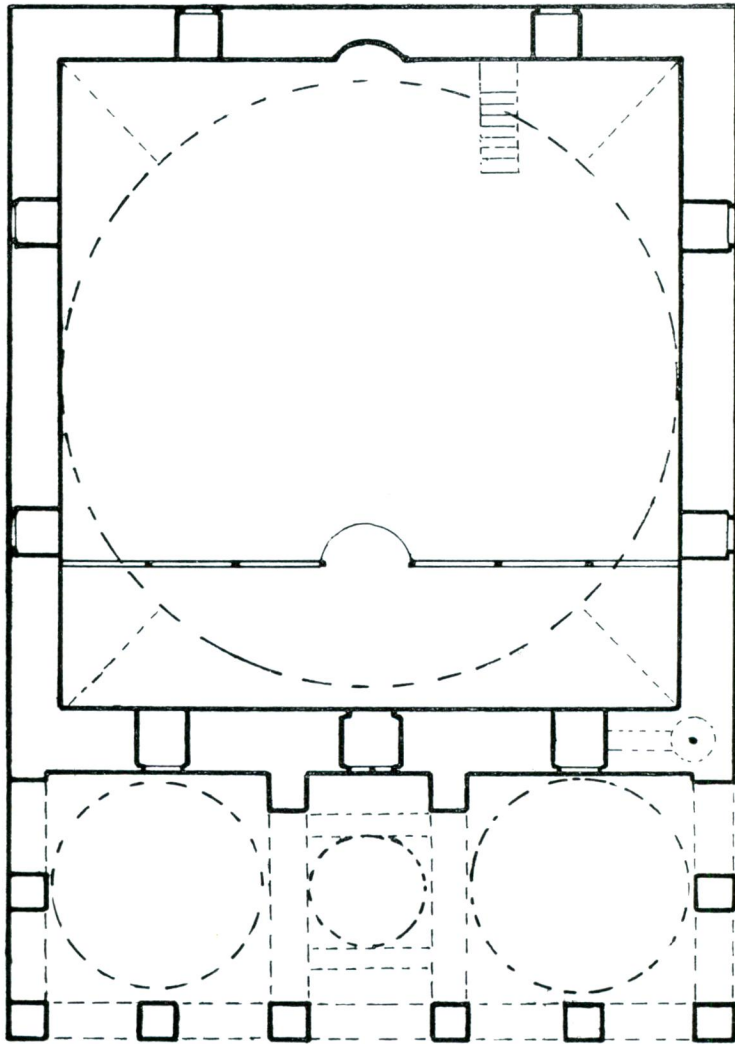


Fig. 1 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, general view



Stara Zagora Hamza Bey Mosque

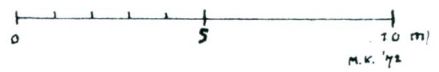


Fig. 2 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, plan

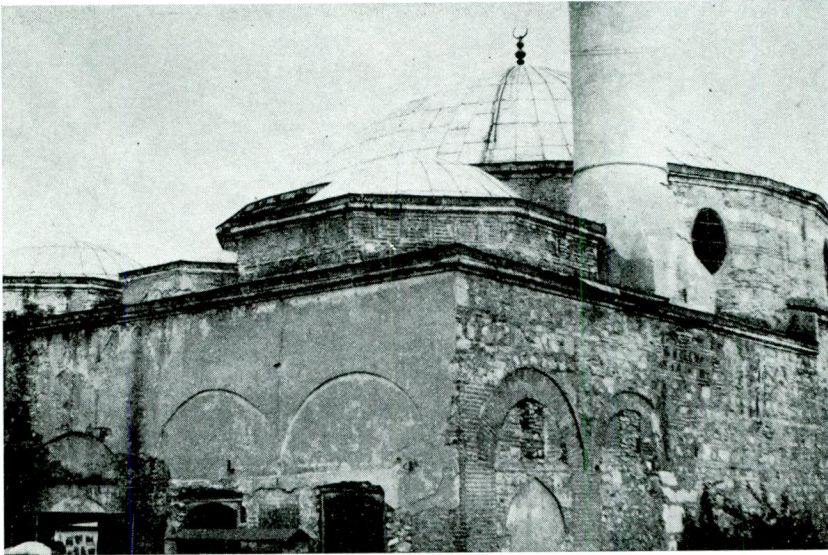


Fig. 3 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, detail of central dome and walled-up gallery

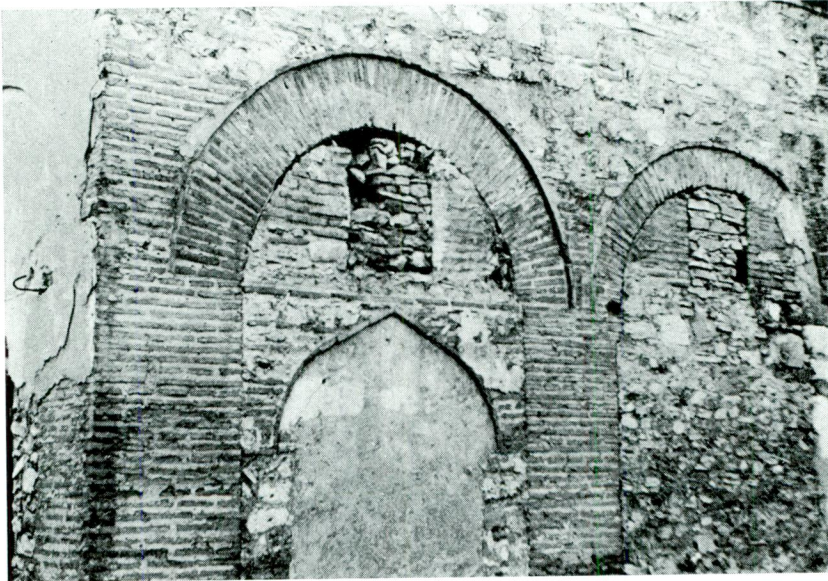


Fig. 4 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, detail of walled-up gallery

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Fig. 5 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, interior view

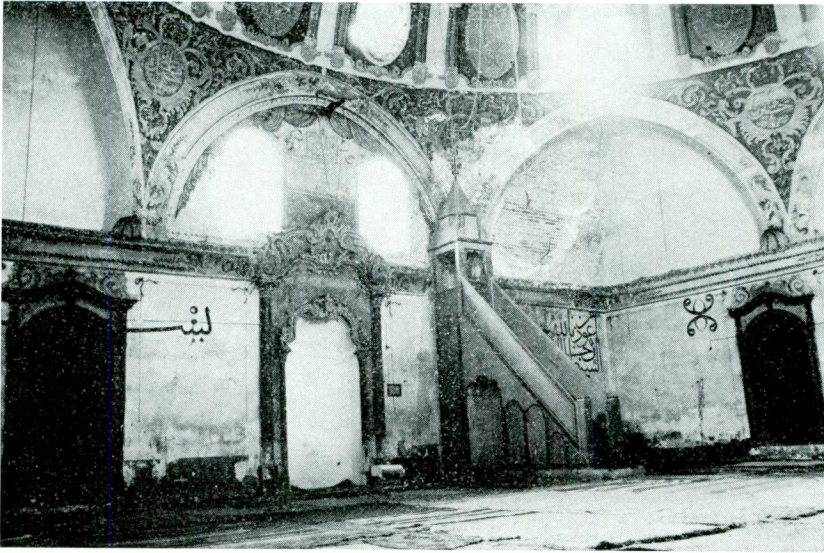


Fig. 6 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, interior view



Fig. 7 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, inscription of 1408/9

M. Kiel

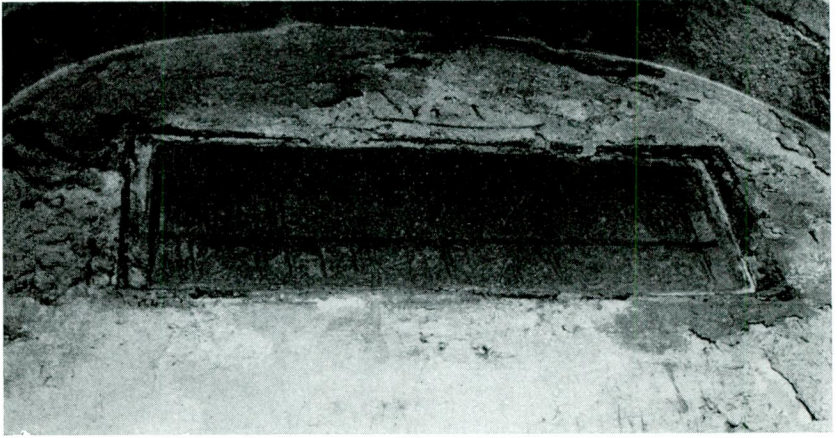
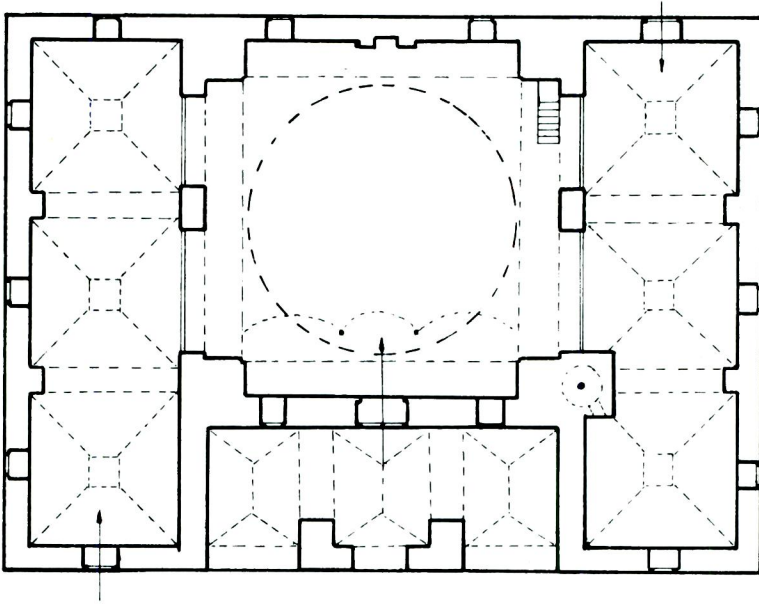


Fig. 8 — Stara Zagora, Hamza Bey Mosque, inscription of 1408/9



Fig. 9 — Jambol, Eski Cami. General view. Notice the enclosed “son cemaat yeri” and its walled-up arches



Jambol Eski Cami plan.

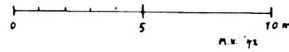


Fig. 10 — Jambol, Eski Cami, plan

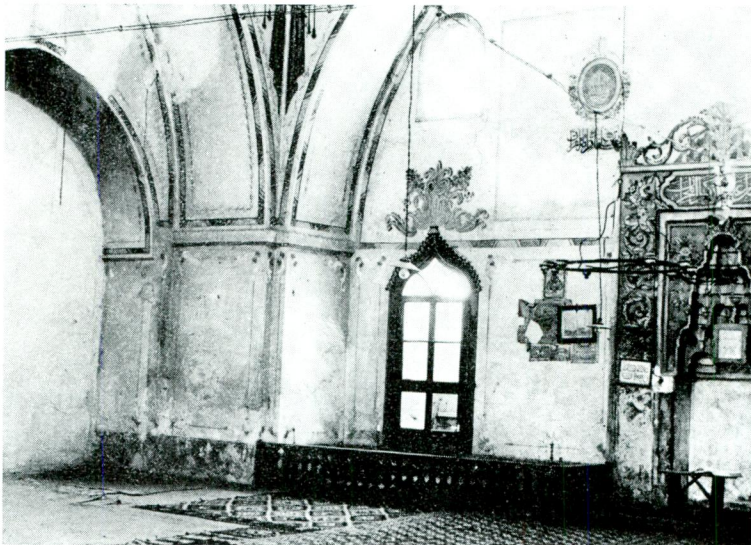
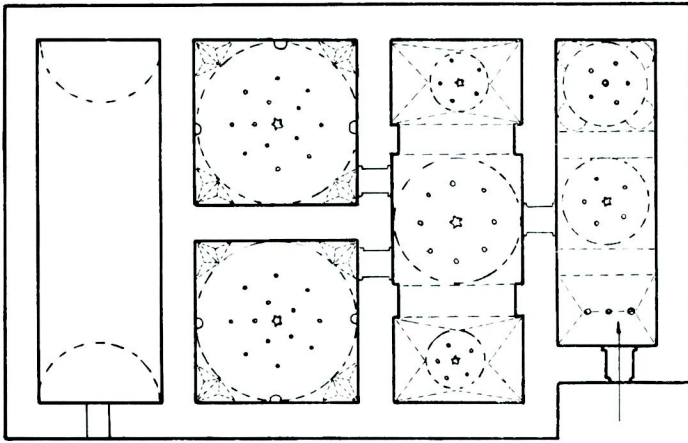
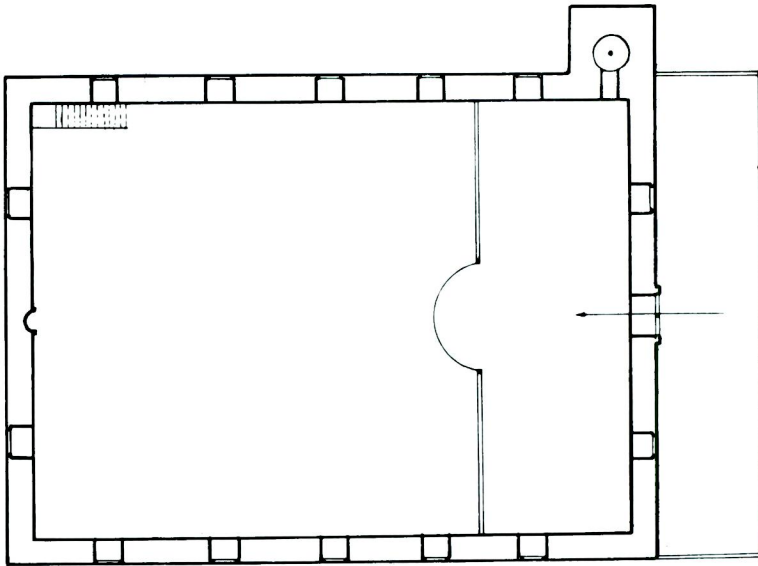


Fig. 11 — Jambol, Eski Cami, interior view



Nova Zagora Hamam of Ali Pasha Plan
5 m
NK 1875



Nova Zagora Mosque of Sarica Pasha sketch plan
5 m
NK 71

Fig. 13 — Nova Zagora, Hamam of Ali Pasha, plan

Fig. 12 — Nova Zagora, Mosque of Sarica Pasha, sketch plan

regarding the original meaning and real cause of the emergence of the Zaviye-Mosque (or T-plan mosque, to use the older but generally understood term). Essentially these views explain the emergence of the T-plan as an aesthetic necessity; to have a dominant building as focal point of a Külliye. As dominant a single-unit mosque and a Zaviye were combined to form together one monumental building, because the single-unit mosque alone, with a dome not exceeding 10-11 m, was insufficient for such a purpose.¹⁷ This explanation certainly has much attraction, but in our view Kuran misses the point regarding a T-plan building as a combination of mosque and Zaviye, when in fact it was only zaviye, which of course cannot be imagined without a place of prayer. The last word in this matter has certainly not been said yet. In any case both mosques, in Eski Çine and in Stara Zagora, demonstrate that the technical ability of the Turkish architects of the 14th and the 15th centuries was great enough to create an architectural dominant by using the single-domed mosque. This indirectly supports the theory of Semavi Eyice as regards the origin and function of the much discussed T-plan.¹⁸ The mosque of Ilyas Bey of Mentеше in Balat - Miletus - built in 1403, which has a dome of 14 metres, might be cited as a definite example of a single-domed mosque as focus of a Külliye.

In spite of its extraordinary importance in the field of Ottoman architecture the great mosque of Stara Zagora is not in good state of preservation. It has been declared "Monument of Culture" by the Bulgarian state, but at present its further existence is in direct danger. There are plans to remove it in view of the modernisation of the city centre which is now in the process of being carried out. It may be hoped, and expected of the Bulgarian authorities in charge, that they will undertake sufficient measures to protect this valuable building from being demolished. If we remember the great works of restoration and conservation on a number of Ottoman monuments in Bulgaria, of which some have only a very moderate architectural merit, in cities as Vidin, Plovdiv, Karlovo, Dupnica, Samokov and other places, we may certainly expect that one of the most valuable

¹⁷ Kuran, *The Mosque...* p. 207.

¹⁸ Semavi Eyice, *İlk Osmanlı Devrinin Dinî-İçtimaî bir Müessesesi: Zâviyeler ve Zaviyeli-Camiler*, in: *Istanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, No 18, 1962/63, pp. 1-80.

of all Ottoman works, that of Stara Zagora, will be saved for later generations. Furthermore the restoration of the Bayrakli Cami at Samokov shows to everyone how successfully ancient monuments combine with modern city centres and in this particular case greatly add to the charm of the place.

*

JAMBOL, Eski Cami

Although not of the same direct urgency as in Stara Zagora, in Jambol we are confronted with the same problems of restoration and conservation of a very important, though almost unknown, work of Ottoman architecture.

Jambol is the Diampolis of the Byzantine middle ages, during which time it played much the same role as Stara Zagora, defending the Bulgaro-Byzantine frontier.¹⁹ That the later part of the above-mentioned period was not the most prosperous of the long history of Thrace may be deduced from the fact that the Ottomans had to repopulate the land almost entirely²⁰ since their conquest in the sixties of the 14th century.²¹

Jambol is situated in the northern part of the Thracian Plain in a bend of the Tundja (Tunca) River. It was part of the Ottoman empire without interruption from about 1368 to 1878. Evliya Çelebi²² describes Jambol as a Muslim city composed of 17 Muslim mahalles and one Jewish and one Greek mahalle each. It counted 17 mosques, 3 medresses, 3 hamams, 4 hans and an incomparable bedesten. Today Jambol is a fast growing industrial centre which is in the course of general modernisation. Of the Ottoman monuments only two have been preserved, both situated on the Main Square of the city, giving

¹⁹ Constantin Jiricek, *Das Fürstentum Bulgariens* pp. 505/506.

²⁰ On the repopulation of Thrace see for example Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Rumili'de Yürükler, Tatarlar ve Evlâd-i Fâti'hân*, Istanbul 1957, and Münir Aktepe, *XIV ve XV. Asırda Türkler Tarafından İskânına Dair*, in *Türkiyat Mecmuası* X, 1951, pp. 290-312. See also the general but very correct description of this period by Jiricke, *Fürstentum* pp. 48-5h.

²¹ Babinger, *Frühgeschichte*, pp. 50-51 and Inalcik in *E. I.* new edition, p. 1302, where the date is given as 1368.

²² Kissling, *Beiträge-Thrakiens*, pp. 76-77.

it a particular flavour of its own. They are the "Incomparable bedesten" mentioned by Evliya and the Eski Cami, the Old Mosque. The bedesten is without exaggeration the most monumental Ottoman civil work preserved in Bulgaria. It is in restoration today and under the hands of very able architect Nikola Muschanov from the Institute of Cultural Monuments of Sofia, will regain its ancient splendour. A general restoration is also needed for the Eski Cami, nearby. This mosque forms a large rectangle of 29.11 m - 21.35 m which is divided into ten vaulted sections of different shape and function. The interior gives the impression of a central dome with lateral spaces, not unlike the Şerefeli Cami at Edirne. In fact this is only partially the case. The mosque of Jambol has a central dome of 10.65 m which rests on the mihrab wall, on the rear wall of the gallery and on the lateral sides on two pointed arches each, which arches rest on a rectangular pier of 1.55 - 0.92 m. The lateral thrust of the dome on both flanks is taken over by an arch which at the same time supports part of the vaults of the side naves. These parts of the building are now sealed off from the central section of the mosque by walls of inferior workmanship, clearly dating from the last century. The lateral spaces do not consist of the vaulted units each, as should be expected, but are formed of three equal parts on both sides of the central dome and are covered by ribless crossvaults. Two sections project far beyond the central space with which they have hardly any relation. The central section and the two projecting aisles enclose a rectangular space in which a kind of gallery, *son cemaat yeri*, has been accommodated. This gallery in turn is also divided into three equal sections, each covered by a cradle vault. In the front side of the mosque these sections are supported by two heavy piers. On the outside the mosque appears as one solid block covered by series of nearly identical lead-covered domes. In the middle the central domed section rises slightly above the succession of lateral vaults. As this dome rests on very solid arches and pilastres, which in the upper part are finished as a low square with a cornice, the tambour of the dome on top of it recedes considerably. The tambour is dodecagonal and pierced by four circular windows. Above it the lead-covered dome rises, finished with an *alem* and crescent.

Besides the general lay-out and the placing of the gallery (inside the building, instead of preceding it), the minaret of the mosque constitutes an unusual feature. It rises at the corner of the prayer

hall where the gallery and the aisles meet, inside the block. It has a square form up to the height of the top of the dome. Then follows the balcony and a circular upper part with the usual conical cap. This "square, towerlike minaret" was already noted by Evliya Çelebi²³ in the mid-17th century and is doubtless part of the original design. It cannot be ascertained whether the upper part of this minaret is also original or a product of later restorations, which brought it more in accordance with the general trend. This minaret, of which kind I do not know other in Ottoman architecture, can have derived from two sources, Syrian and South-Eastern Anatolian. An example of a Syrian type of minaret within the frontiers of the Republic of Turkey is that of the Ommayad Mosque of Harran, south of Urfa, most probably built by Khalif Marwan II between 744-755 A.D.²⁴ In South-Eastern Turkey, the Diyarbakir - Mardin region, a number of similar minarets are known dating from various epochs²⁵. The minaret of Jambol might be explained by the explicit wish of the founder of the mosque to have such a minaret, maybe pointing to the land of his origin, or in another way demonstrating his contacts with the old lands of Islam. One might also suppose more or less direct influence from Syria of South-East Anatolia, then outside the Ottoman realm, but if we accept such an influence, it would be likely to see it reflected also in the plan and set-up of the mosque. This however, is purely Ottoman.

The structure of the walls of the Eski Cami of Jambol is unfortunately hardly visible. Somewhere in the last century the entire building was heavily plastered over and painted in soft green. Babinger, who visited the mosque before World War II, was still able to read a now faded inscription which mentions that the mosque was painted by Aşçizade Ahmad in H 1247 (1831/32)²⁶. To these works we must certainly attribute the semi-baroque paintings in the interior of the mosque. The form of the windows was considerably changed at that date. In this way the mosque has changed so much that Babinger

²³ Kissling, Beiträge p. 76.

²⁴ For this mosque see: K.A.C. Creswell, A short account of Early Muslim Architecture, (Pelican edition) 1958, pp. 151-155.

²⁵ See Metin Sözen, Diyarbakır'da Türk Mimarisi, Istanbul 1971.

²⁶ Babinger, Beiträge Frühgeschichte p. 50 note 59.

mistook it for uninteresting²⁷. Investigations of Nikola Moushanov²⁸ made clear that the building was made of cloisonné work of a rather disorderly kind. Beneath the plaster the original cornice of 'dent de scie' finishing the walls has been preserved in several places. In the interior of the mosque the original mihrab of fine stalactite plaster work has been preserved but is covered by ugly 19th century paintings. At present only the domed central section of the mosque serves as place of prayer for the small Muslim community of Jambol. The lateral spaces are sealed off by thin walls of recent origin. Some workshops and a storehouse have been accommodated in the side rooms. On the outside the proportions of the mosque are spoiled by an office which has been built directly against the mosque. The original 'son cemaat yeri' is also walled, leaving only a small entrance to the mosque. Structurally the building is very well preserved. If the dividing walls and other 19th century additions were removed and the plaster taken off, the city of Jambol would gain a highly valuable historical monument.

The date of the very important mosque of Jambol can only be established by comparing it with other works of about the same time. No inscription bearing the date or the name of the founder has been preserved. Evliya Çelebi attributed it to an Ebu Bekir Pasha or Bey²⁹. Locally it is said to be between 500 and 600 years old which is certainly correct. The general form and the style of the work brings us to the first half of the 15th century. The plan contains the vital elements which were to be found in Üç Şerefeli Cami of Edirne. This work was begun in 1437, as is known. With the Rumelian capital so near we cannot expect that the Jambol mosque was built after Edirne, but must certainly be a decade or more before. As regards general concept and organisation of space, the Bulgarian mosque is closely related to the Ulu Cami of the Central Anatolian city of Uşak, built shortly before H. 822-1419³⁰, when this city was still part of the Germiyan

²⁷ The same p. 50, note 59 "Jambol... hat, wie ich mich in 1938 erneut durch Augenschein überzeugen konnte, *keinerleri bemerkenswerte Baudenkmähler der Osmanische Vergangenheit bewahrt*". This comment first of all shows in what a deplorable state the Ottoman monuments of Jambol were at the time of Babingers visits.

²⁸ Not published yet, verbal communication.

²⁹ Kissling Beiträge, pp. 76-77.

³⁰ Mahmut Akok, Uşak Ulu Camii, in: Vakıflar Dergisi III, Ankara 1956, pp 69-72.

Beylik. The main difference with Uşak is the place of the 'son cemaat yeri,' in Jambol between the two extremities of the aisles, in Uşak in front of the building. The place occupied in Jambol by the 'son cemaat yeri' is in Uşak covered by a barrel vault and the open space beneath this vault is integrated with the domed prayer hall, whereas in Jambol it is sealed off from it. Another difference is the use of domes over the lateral spaces. These are, however, minor details in view of the close likeness of both mosques. In my opinion we have to place the Eski Cami of Jambol between the Ulu Cami of Uşak and the Üç Şerefeli Cami in Edirne, which would mean that it is built in the twenties of the 15th century.

In a brilliant study of Early Ottoman architecture Robert Anhegger³¹ traced the origin of the Üç, Şerefeli Cami back to the major work of the Saruhan Beylik of the second half of the 14th century, the Ulu Cami of Manisa, thereby correcting older views. Mosques like that of Uşak and Jambol show, that experiments with a central domed building with vaulted lateral spaces were already made before the Üç Şerefeli Cami, preparing the road for it in some way. On the other hand, another source of the plan may have had some influence on its emergence. We mean the experiments with transverse prayer halls, covered with a large dome and lateral vaulted sections as were made in the Ortokid lands in South-Eastern Anatolia. The Ulu Cami of Dünaysir - Kızıltepe³² and the Ulu Cami of Mardin³³ might be cited as early (12th - 13th century) examples. The city of Mardin still has a number of mosques built after the above mentioned type, for example the Latifiye Cami from H (772=1370/71³⁴, or the Reyhaniye Cami from the end of the 15th century³⁵, which would indicate that the type was familiar there. The city of Diyarbakir has a

³¹ Robert Anhegger, Beiträge zur Osmanische Baugeschichte II, Die Üç Şerefeli Cami in Edirne und die Ulu Cami in Manisa, in: Istanbul Mitteilungen VIII, 1958, pp. 40-45.

³² For this building see: Albert Gabriel, Voyages Archeologiques dans la Turquie Orientale, Paris 1940. For a complete plan of this mosque, after the excavations in the Sahn see: Ara Altun, Mardin'de Türk devri mimarisi, Istanbul 1971, plan on P. 145.

³³ See Gabriel-Voyages and Altun, Mardin'de (pp. 29-41).

³⁴ Altun, Mardin'de, pp. 46-49.

³⁵ Altun, Mardin'de, pp. 57-59

number of even more outspoken examples of the type, both from before and after the famous Edirne mosque. The influence exercised by this group of monuments must by no means be underrated. In Eastern Anatolia the type of mosque appears to go back to the Great Mosque of Diyarbekir itself, after it had been rebuilt by the Great Seljuk sultan Malik Shah, in which rebuilding the Syrian Ommayyad tradition was followed. The Ulu Cami at Manisa and that of Aydinoğlu Isa Bey at Ephesus - Selçuk - are both influenced by Syrian works, possibly directly by way of Damascus and Halep. Experiments in the Germiyan Beylik, and as we saw also under the Ottomans in Rumili may have been influenced by both sources, blending the experiences gathered in Eastern as well as in Western Anatolia. The strange minaret of Jambol points to Ortokid influence but is no proof in its self. Whatever the case may be, it seems safe to state that the mosque in the Bulgarian city of Jambol occupies a place of great importance in preparing the emergence of the Üç Şerefeli Cami, which building marks a turning point in Ottoman architecture and precluded the great centrally planned mosques of the 16th century. It also bears witness to the importance of the building activity outside the capital cities of the state, to the importance of Rumili in Ottoman architecture. An importance which we only now begin to realise but which by no means should be underrated. As such, the mosque of Jambol deserved better care.

NOVA ZAGORA (Zağra Yenicesi)

Mosque of Sarica Pasha and Hamam of Hadim Ali Pasha

Some words should be added in this context concerning two early works of Ottoman architecture in Bulgarian Thrace, not so much because of their value in the development of this architecture as important as the two preceding buildings, but because they are doomed to disappear with the modernisation of the town. We mean the Sarica Pasha Mosque and the hamam of Grand Vezir Hadim Ali Pasha opposite it in the town of Nova Zagora.

The origin of Nova Zagora goes back to the first years of the Ottoman rule in Bulgaria.³⁶ The town lies in the plains about half-way

³⁶ According to the *Kratka Istorija na Bălgarskata Arhitektura*, Sofia 1965, p. 600 Nova Zagora emerged between the 16th and 18th century. According to the *Kratka Bălgarskata Enciklopedija III*, Sofia 1966 Nova Zagora arose in the 15th

between Zagora and Jambol, some miles south of the first folds of the Sredna Gora Mountains. Evliya Çelebi³⁷ describes it as a place consisting of 7 mahalles with 7 mosques, 3 hans, a hamam and 150 shops, details which point to a relatively modest town for that time. Evliya also mentions the names of the most important of these buildings: the mosque of Sarica Pasha on the Main Street, that of Ömer Gürçi near the market and the hamam of Ali Pasha. Of the buildings mentioned that of Ömer Gürçi has disappeared together with all the other works, leaving the hamam and the mosque of Sarica Pasha the only monuments of Ottoman times. At present Nova Zagora is a minor town without much character, counting some 20.000 inhabitants including a minor Turkish community of families.

The mosque of Sarica Pasha stands on a corner of the Kiril and Methodije Street and the Kâncu Tsanov Street, where at present is the northern part of the town. The mosque has completely lost its original appearance, the minaret was destroyed during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877/78 when the entire town was burned. A modest wooden construction serves as minaret at the moment. On the outside, all the old masonry is covered by a clamp of ugly machine-made bricks and the roof is a construction of after 1878. The mosque is a rectangle of 13.40-9.70 metres inside, covered by a flat wooden tavan of recent origin. There are five windows on each lateral wall and two in the mihrab wall. The mosque is preceded by a wooden portico of light construction. As a whole, the building gives the impression of a 19th century work but in fact is early 15th century. The Turkish inhabitants of the place remembered quite well the original coarse cloisonné work of brick and stone, now hidden behind the ugly covering. They also remembered a number of details concerning the founder of the mosque, Sarica Pasha. The building was 560 years old according to their statements. This is very well possible. Other details given by them concerned the mosque of the Pasha in Kazanlik, 60 km west of Nova Zagora. The mosque of Nova Zagora was the

century on the place of a Slavic settlement called Janitsa which name was changed to Jenice-i Zagra by the Turks. The Ottoman documents published by Gökbilgin in *Edirne ve Paşa Livası* concerning this place prove its existence in the early 15th century. Babinger, *Frühgeschichte* p. 50, mentions the foundation of a new town, "der Gründung einer Neustadt".

³⁷ By Kissling, *Beiträge Thrakiens*, pp. 26-27.

largest of the two, built by the Pasha. This last statement cannot longer be checked as the other building was demolished long ago.

The name of Sarica Pasha brings us back to the years of the Ottoman conquest and colonisation of the Balkans under Murad I and Bayazid I and all the great historical events of that time. Which of the several men bearing the name of Sarica Pasha I prefer to leave out of question³⁸. Several documents have been preserved of a Sarica Pasha and his son Umur Bey who founded a number of buildings in Nova Zagora and Kazanlik³⁹. This man was active in the first decade(s) of the 15th century, which fits perfectly with the statement of the local Turkish inhabitants of the town that their mosque is 560 years old. Thus 1410 or a few years before that will be the date of construction.

At present there are plans to raze the entire area around the mosque, including it, and to built a large modern bus-station on the spot. The great historical value of the mosque is not recognised yet in Bulgaria, certainly helped by the unpleasant appearance of the building as it is today. In view of its great antiquity and the importance of its founder as a historical personality, the building should at least be spared. As soon as possible investigations about its original outlook should be made, and a general restoration, as has been carried out in so many places in Bulgaria.

As a work of architecture the mosque of Sarica Pasha at Nova Zagora, in the form it had before the transformations after the fire of the last century, must have been related with the group of wood-covered mosques found all over Anatolia since Seljuk times. The entire concept of this mosque, as well as the relative thinness of the walls, exclude any possibility of stone vaulting or domes. If there have been inner supports for the ceiling, it is difficult to say at present. In Ankara a number of wood-covered mosques dating from the 13th till the 18th century have been preserved, showing the various possibilities in this type⁴⁰. Contemporary with Nova Zagora and of

³⁸ A review of this problem is given by Babinger in his *Frühgeschichte*, p. 73, note 34, and by Gökbiçgin, *Paşa Livası*, pp. 14-16.

³⁹ Gökbiçgin, p. 15 and 261-265.

⁴⁰ For the mosques of Ankara see the survey of Gönül Öney, *Ankara'da Türk devri Yapıları*, Ankara 1971.

roughly the same size and proportion is the Ulu Cami of Ayas⁴¹, forty km west of Ankara, which constitutes an excellent idea what the Bulgarian mosque could have been. Other wood-covered mosques of the first half of the 15th century, situated in Turkish Thrace, near Nova Zagora, are the Pasha Cami at Hayrabolu, built in 1419 by Mehmed I or the Muradiye Cami of Uzun Köprü, built in the thirties of the 15th century by Murad II, together with the famous bridge. Last mentioned two buildings, however, have lost their original roofing. What they are at the moment is the product of various restorations, like that in Nova Zagora, but of much better quality than the "repair" the Bulgarian mosque suffered. It must be said that we know very little of wood-covered mosques in the Balkans, but the general trend of this kind of architecture in Anatolia is more or less known, and there is nothing which would argue against an early presence of this kind of mosques as in fact nearly all elements of Ottoman architecture were brought from Anatolia to Rumili. To repeat our statement on the Nova Zagora mosque demolishing this historical work is certainly the last thing that should be done.

Hamam of Grand Vezir Hadim Ali Pasha

Opposite the mosque of Sarica Pasha, on the same crossroads, still stands the public bath, Evliya Çelebi spoke of in the 17th century. It is part of the extensive building activity of the Beylerbey of Rumili and later Grand Vezir Hadim Ali Pasha, the statesman and protector of Ottoman literature⁴² in the time of Bayazid II (1481-1512). The bath in Nova Zagora is mentioned among his foundations in a document published by Gökbilgin⁴³. From the outside the building makes no impression at all. The walls are thickly plastered over and roofing

⁴¹ For the date of this mosque see: Katharina Otto-Dorn, *Seldschukische Holzsäulenmoscheen in Kleinasien*, in: *Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel*, Berlin 1959, p. 72. More photographs in *Türkiyede Vakıf Abideleri ve Eski Eserler*, I, Ankara 1972, pp. 473-478. Compare also the Bünyamin Cami in the same town of Ayaş, built at the end of the 15th century, (Vakıf Abideleri pp. 465-467).

⁴² The qualities of Ali Pasha as such are mentioned by E.J.W. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry* II, p. 227 and III pp. 47/48 (New Edition London 1965) Among his protégés were such Early Classical poets as Mesihi and Zati.

⁴³ Gökbilgin, *Paşa Livası*, pp. 397-98.

has been changed. The disrobing room, if there has been any⁴⁴, is replaced by a featureless construction of recent date. The hamam has been placed in a kind of park, among trees. Only if we enter the building, we realise that it has real architectural value. The bath is a single one, a tek hamam. It measures only 9.60-15.30 m on the outside. We ignore the new disrobing room, and enter the bath on the lateral side, first coming into a long room which is covered by a succession of three different vaulted sections. This was the old tepidarium or soğukluk and must have served partially as depilatory and toilets. For the latter function a new toilet has been built outside the old building, placed against its walls. The bath room proper is a transversally placed section, covered by a dome over the centre and small domes placed on triangles over the narrower lateral spaces. From the bath room proper one enters two sizeable halvets covered by domes on different kinds of "Turkish triangles". No vaulted part of the hamam has the same way of construction or the same decoration. The main dome rests on pendentives but has a belt of finely worked stalactites around its base, as is often found by works of the later part of the 15th century. All decoration is restricted but refined. Unfortunately it has suffered considerably from bad repairs.

If we summarise our observations on the hamam of Ali Pasha at Nova Zagora, we may say that the bath is a valuable work of the late 15th or early 16th century. The plan shows some originality and inventiveness as compared with later hamams. The heating system has been modernised, but the original water reservoir is still preserved. The hamam is still in use as bath.

⁴⁴ We may notice the fact that a number of Early Ottoman baths of the 15th century had no large domed disrobing rooms. An outstanding example is the splendid Beylerbey Hamam at Edirne, built in 1429, which is now in such a shameful state of decay and half destroyed. There the finely worked original portal with its twin doors is still in situ. Behind it one does not enter a large domed or wood roofed room, but a very small cell, directly behind which is the bath. Other baths in Edirne, dating from the same period, show the same features (Gazi Mihal Hamam, Topkapi Hamam) but there the original entrances have been demolished or otherwise disappeared. The magnificent 15th century baths of Edirne need even more a general restoration than the works in Bulgaria discussed above. Their disappearance will be a grave loss for our knowledge of Early Ottoman architecture.

The building is also destined to disappear like the mosque opposite the street. Instead of demolishing we would argue in favour of a restoration. If the colourful original cloisonné work was brought to light again and the roofing is given back its original covering, the rather featureless town of Nova Zagora would gain an original note. Both buildings, the mosque and the bath, constitute the only link with the past which especially Nova Zagora cannot afford to cut.

(In the spring of 1974, after this article had been sent to the press, we found that the Mosque of Sarica Pasha in Nova Zagora was demolished. This demolishing happened in March, 1974. M. K.)