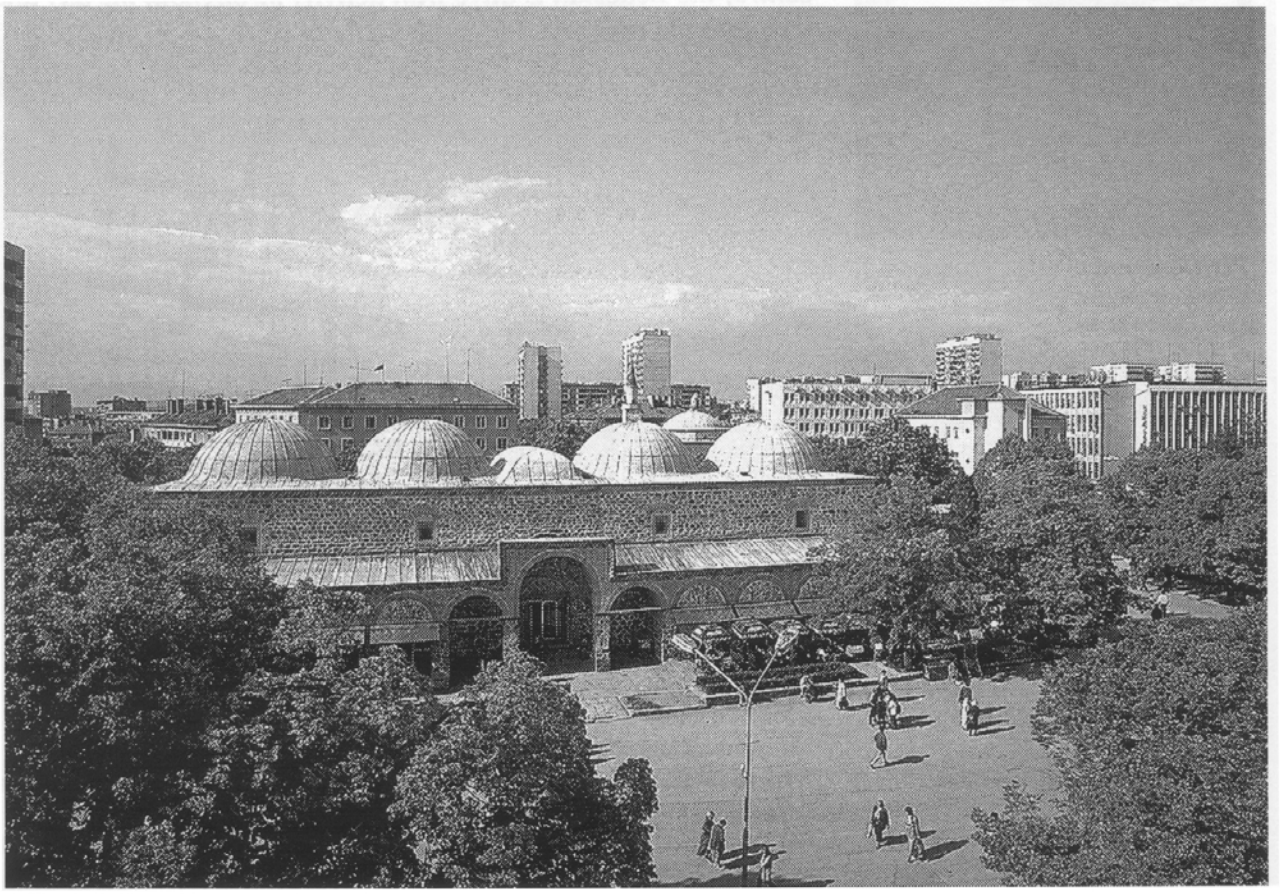
1995 Technical Review
Summary
by Selma Al-Radi

Restoration Of Eski Cami and Hadem Ali Bedestan

Yambol, Bulgaria
1751-2.BUL



Architect
Nikola Mouschanov, Sofia

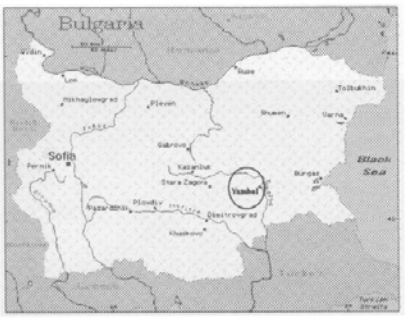
Client
City Council of Yambol

Completed
August 1974

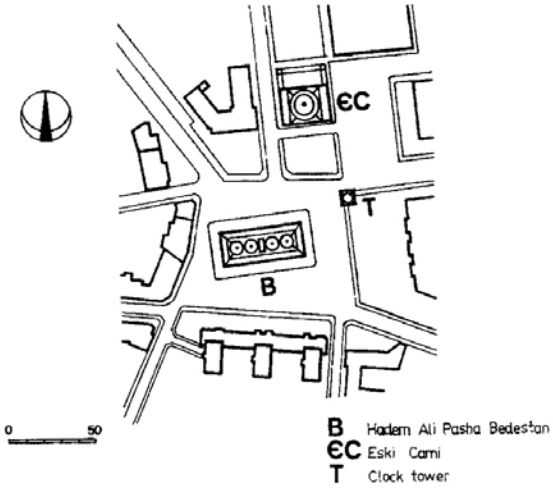
Restoration of the Hadem Ali Pasha Bedestan, Yambol, Bulgaria

Introduction

The Eski Cami and the Hadem Ali Pasha Bedestan or market are situated in the centre of the town of Yambol in south-eastern Bulgaria. Although the city was founded in the Roman period, it only became prominent under the Ottomans, when it was given its present name. Today, it is a large industrial town with an open central square, around which are situated the monumental Communist party headquarters and parade grounds, shops and offices, as well as the Bedestan and the Eski Cami, the latter two being the only monuments of note in the town. The restoration of these two buildings has given a delightful focus to the town centre; the Bedestan is alive with activity throughout the day and well into the evening.



Yambol; located in Bulgaria's eastern parts, 50 km North of the Turkish boarder



Context

Historical background

After the defeat of the Serbian army at Kosovo in 1389 the whole Balkan peninsula came under Ottoman rule. Most of Bulgaria was conquered by 1393; it remained under the Ottomans until the 1877-78 War of Liberation when the Principality of Bulgaria became independent. Macedonia and southern Thrace, however, remained under Turkish control. The Ottomans ruled Bulgaria harshly, slaughtering or deporting huge numbers of the population, the surviving Bulgars became virtual serfs of the Turkish landowners. The five hundred years under Ottoman rule account for the vicious hatred on the part of the Bulgarians of all things Turkish.

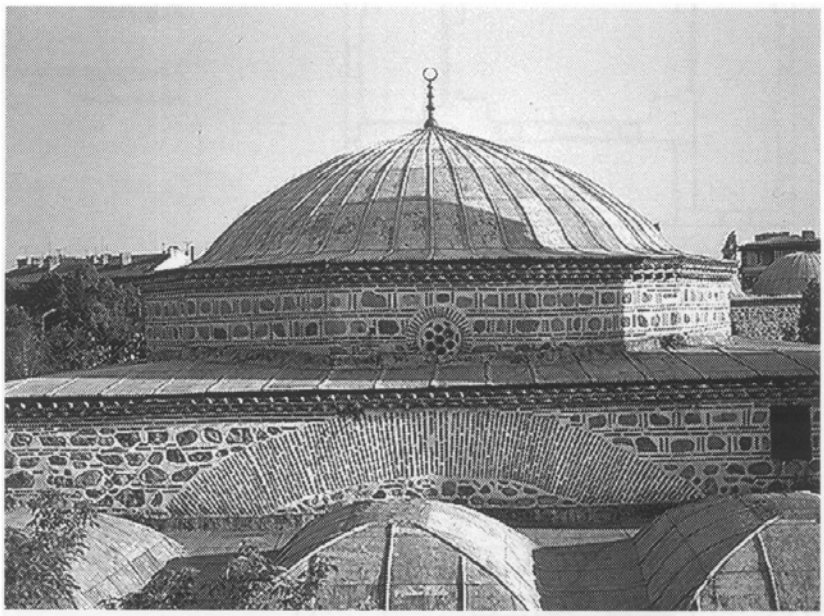
Although many public and administrative buildings were constructed under the Ottomans many of them were destroyed or neglected after Bulgarian independence when nearly half of the Muslim population emigrated to Turkey. After 1944, the Communist regime continued this destructive policy, and today only a few Ottoman monuments remain standing in Bulgaria. The Bedestan of Hadim Ali Pasha, built in 1502 by the Grand Vizier of the same name, is one such monument and the Eski Cami is another.

Local architecture

Yambol is a rather ugly industrial town; most of the buildings date from the late 19th and 20th centuries. The overall impression of the town is of uninteresting, Soviet-style architecture, high and low-rise buildings of concrete and steel, largely grey in colour. The central square has been expanded towards the east where a large park leads to the monumentally ugly party headquarters and parade grounds. The Bedestan is at the western end of this open area, a breath of fresh air in dull surroundings. Its arches, domes and wonderfully textured stone and brick facades, its friendly exterior and welcoming spaces act like a magnet, drawing the population to its cafes and shops.

Climate

The climate of Yambol is like much of the rest of south-eastern Europe, cold and wet with snow in winter,



View of the central dome and vaults (foreground) covering the side isles, after restoration

hot and dry in the summer. These extreme variations in the temperatures put a strain on building materials and cause cracks in walls, arches and domes. The use of baked bricks and stone with a gypsum mortar in older buildings was, therefore, more in tune with the climate than today's cement.

Site

Although the Bedestan and the Eski Cami stand virtually in the centre of the town, the fact that the square around them is pedestrian makes viewing and access much easier, and adds a further charm to the site. It dignifies both buildings, turning them into a complex. The landscaping is very simple, and consists of a few strategically placed trees for shade, and pathways for pedestrians. Low bushes protect the privacy of the patrons of the open-air cafes that are situated along the north and east face of the Bedestan. The flow of people is constant and easy, the space ample and large. There is a sufficient distance between the buildings and the high-rise buildings to the north, west and south for easy viewing and movement, creating an oasis.

Topography

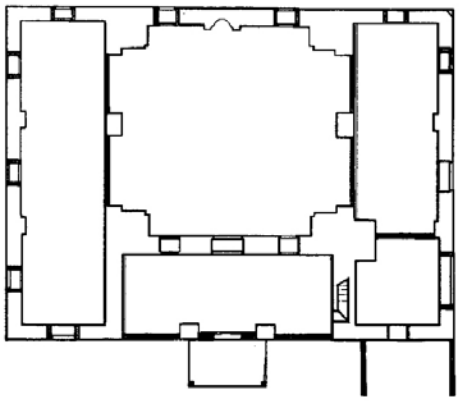
Yambol lies on the Thracian plain just south of the high Sredna Gora, the central highlands. It is situated about 300 kilometres due east of Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, and about 100 kilometres from Burgas on the Black Sea coast. The town is largely on flat land with some hilly sections. Its surroundings are hilly; farmlands and abandoned cooperatives dot the countryside. Vineyards and wheatfields are the most common agricultural sights, although some pasture land is also evident. The town has a population of 200,000 people of whom some 3,000 to 4,000 are Muslims.

Programme

The Communist regime that governed Bulgaria after 1944 initiated the founding of a Restoration Institute in Sofia, answerable to the Ministry of Culture, whose principal function was to record all the monuments in Bulgaria and be responsible for their preservation and restoration. Therefore, there is a register of all the monuments in Bulgaria. In 1989, Bulgaria was divided into 28 regions, not including Sofia. Each of these regions has a cultural representative who is responsible for the historical monuments. At present, each representative presents a list of monuments in need of restoration to the Restoration Institute and together they prepare a budget and work plan, and present it to the Ministry. The Ministry selects suitable projects and sends the money directly to the regional office concerned. The Restoration Institute appoints specialists, or hires local craftsmen when and if they are available. Since 1989 the regional offices have become more autonomous; prior to that the Restoration Institute had more authority. Its architects registered, surveyed and documented the monuments, sent a list of the neediest monuments to the Ministry every year and followed and directed each project from Sofia. However, state funds for restoration have been drastically reduced since 1989. Today, all mosques and churches must find their own funds for restoration; to all intents and purposes restoration projects have virtually ceased in Bulgaria.

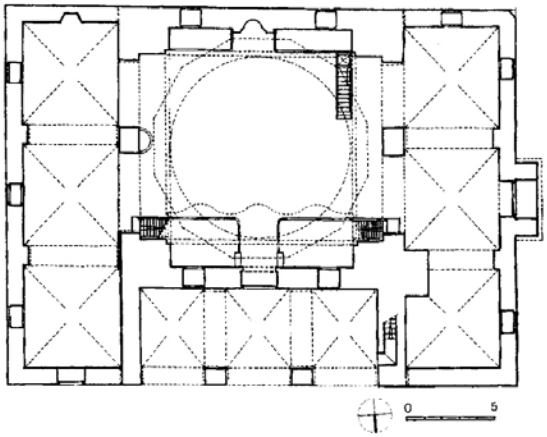
General objectives

The objective of the Restoration Institute was the preservation of the cultural heritage of Bulgaria. The main aim of the government programme was to reinvent Bulgaria and its diverse cultures through its standing monuments. All significant monuments, from the Neolithic up to and including the modern era, were registered and documented. Special



Eski Cami

Floor plan before restoration



Floor plan after restoration

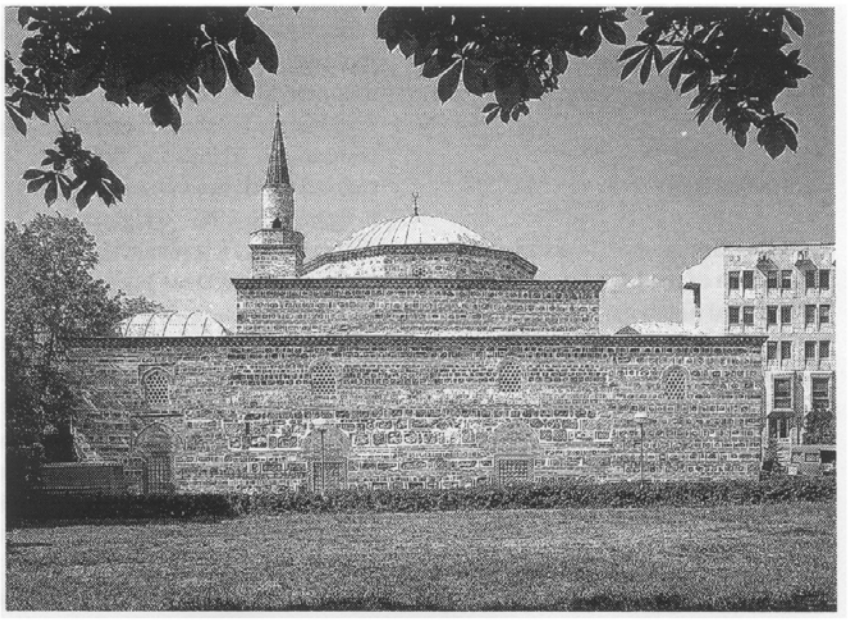
attention was focused on the monuments of the Bulgar Khanates and those of medieval Christianity since monasteries are seen as part of Bulgarian identity, as symbols of resistance to centuries of Ottoman and, therefore, Muslim domination. The standing Ottoman monuments were documented, mostly by architect Nikola Mouschanov, known in the Institute as the "Ottomanlog" because he was interested in that architectural style. Luckily for the Bedestan in Yambol he had researched Ottoman markets and had completed a survey and reconstruction of what its original appearance.

Functional requirements

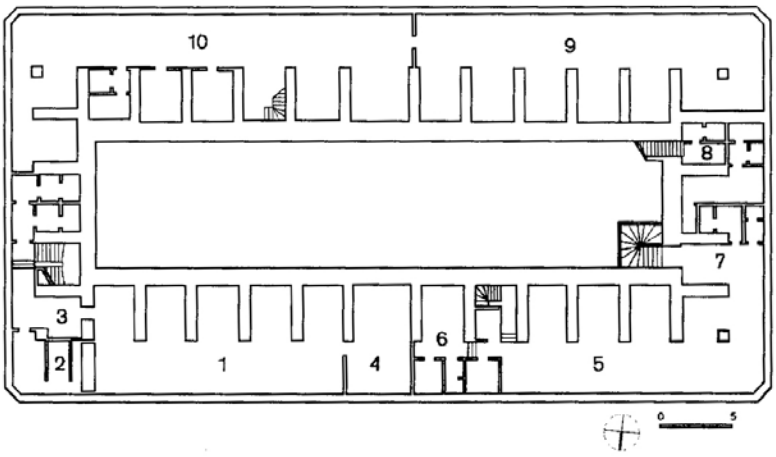
Nikola Mouschanov first clarified the structure of the Eski Cami by studying it, removing the separation walls and later additions and revealing its essence. The building's interior had been divided by additional walls, turning one space into many. These spaces had been used as a municipal archive, a carpenter's workshop, and a storeroom for scenery. As there were no practising Muslims in Yambol the mosque had long ceased to be used for prayers. Therefore, and because of its brilliant acoustics, architect Mouschanov adapted and designed the building to function as a concert hall. The building was never used for that purpose; it now acts as the main mosque of the town.

All the photographs taken before and during the restoration work of the Bedestan and the Eski Cami were lost by Georgi Vassilev, the master craftsman working on both restorations when he moved to a new house.

The competition for the Yambol Bedestan was won by an architect who had designed a modern marketplace, a "modern box". The municipality liked the design and began to tear down the 19th century additions around the original Ottoman structure. The Director of the Restoration Institute, Professor Berbenliev, did not like the modern version, but preferred Mouschanov's reconstruction. He took the plans to the Minister of Construction, Mr. Kubadinski, who agreed and vetoed the plan of the Municipality of Yambol. Apparently the head of the Municipality was furious and threatened to attack the Bedestan with a tank on May 1! In the end Mouschanov's design won the day



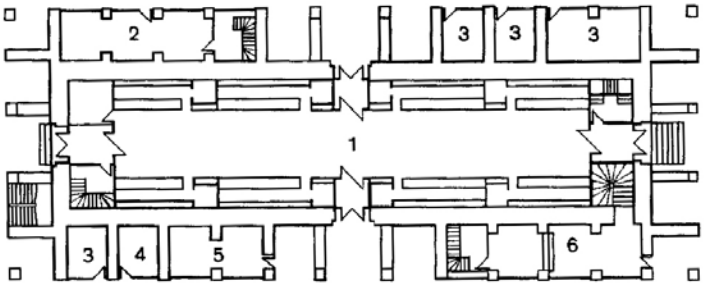
View of the Eski Cami, after restoration



Hadem Ali Bedestan

Basement after renovation

1.	*Tavern*
3,7	*Entrance & lavatories*
2,6	*Service sections*
4	*Banquet hall*
5	*Pastry shop*
8	*Staff cloakroom*
9	*Installation*
10	*Stores*



Ground floor after restoration

1	*Souvenir hall*
2	*Snack bar*
3	*Boutiques*
4	*Museum, tourist information*
5	*Flower shop*
6	*Cafeteria*

when excavations, conducted in the partially destroyed north-east corner of the building, uncovered walls and vaults that matched his reconstruction, and when the local party chief adopted the plan. There are no extant plans of the Bedestan prior to its restoration by the Institute; there are only some old photographs of the building at the turn of the century showing additions. How much the Mouschanovs followed the original plan of the Bedestan is uncertain, although they apparently followed the line of the original foundations and walls.

Description

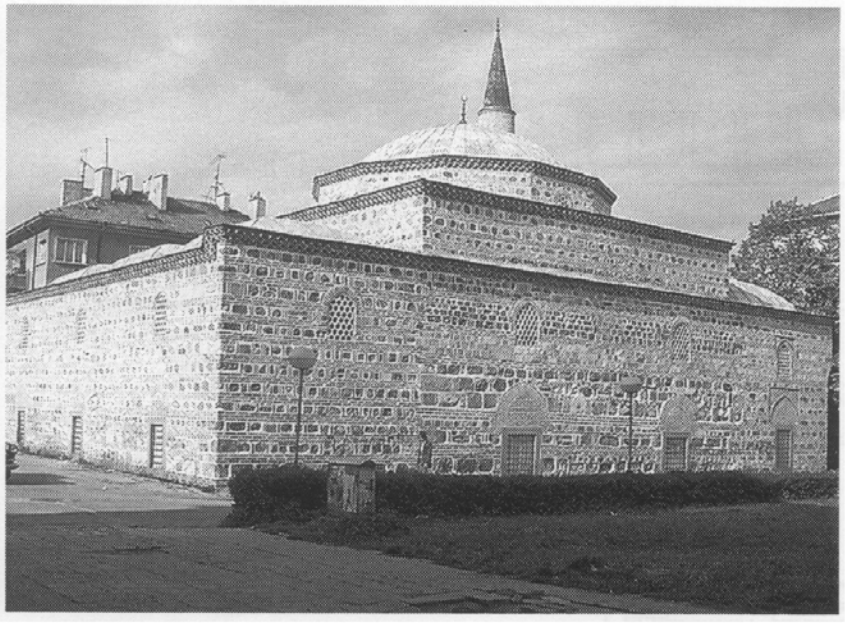
Building data: Eski Cami

The total area of the site is 1,600 square metres although the ground floor area covered by the mosque itself is 629 square metres.

The mosque is entered from the north through a large, vaulted portico, the western portal, which was reconstructed on the basis of foundation walls that the project uncovered, remains closed. Although there are three entrances into the prayer hall, only the central doorway is used today. The prayer hall is square with two rectangular vaulted bays on either side; the western bay has been subdivided to create an office and work-room for the imam of the mosque. This room can only be entered from the north facade. The eastern bay is curtained off and used as a prayer hall for women. There is a shallow mihrab in the southern wall of the mosque; it has a muqarnas overhang and floral painted decorations. It does not project on the exterior facade of the mosque. The central dome is massive, with large piers supporting the soaring arches on four sides. On the east and west sides these monumental openings frame smaller archways that lead into the bays. The paintings preserved in the interior of the mosque date to the 17th century and include scrolls, hanging drapery and garlands, stylized floral patterns, medallions and daisy-like rosettes. Once vibrant colours are now sadly faded. These paintings add a Baroque look to the interior. Quotations from the Quran are painted in the central medallion of the dome and around its lowest edge. Others can be seen around the prayer hall; they are all in poor condition. A wooden-railed gallery with a balcony above are supported on wooden pillars on a section of the northern wall. Its wooden painted ceiling also dates from the 17th century. The gallery is used to teach students the Quran. The square-shaped minaret is free-standing, built up against the north-west corner of the mosque.

Building data: Hadem Ali Bedestan

The total area of the site is 3,500 square metres although the ground floor area covered by the Bedestan,



View from the South-West of the Eski Cami, after restoration

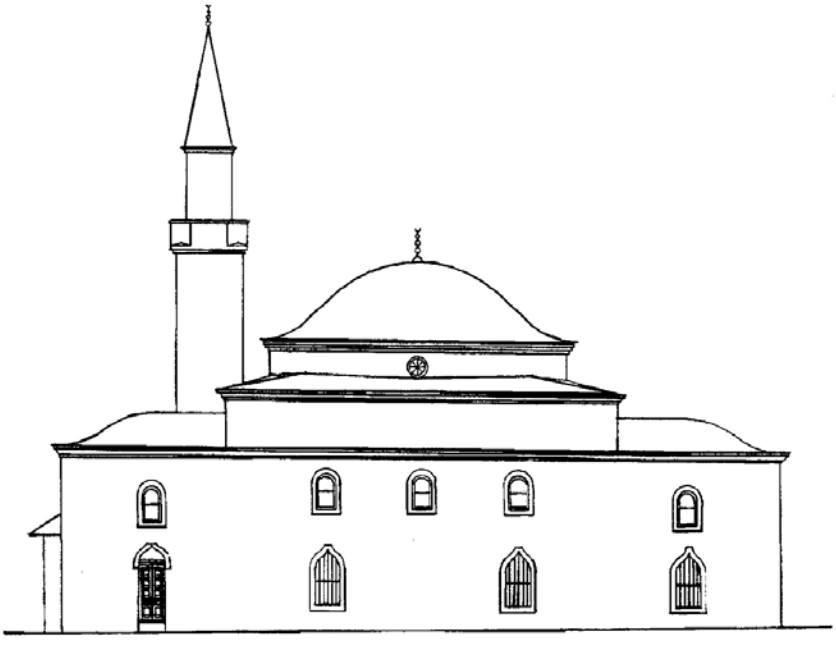
including the basement, is 2,360 square metres.

The basement houses a tavern, a banquet hall, a pastry shop, a staff cloakroom, stores, lavatories, service areas and the installations for the heating system. The ground floor contains a central vaulted and domed market-hall with four entrances; only the southern entrance is now open. The central space is open with no built-in shops. Mouschanov originally designed and built 32 wooden kiosks for this space, in which all kinds of goods were to be sold. These have been replaced with 16 larger stalls, made of white metal or aluminium, that sell toys, clothes, and various sporting goods for the youth of the town. Two cafes take up the north-west and south-east corners of the Bedestan, the coffee tables spilling out onto the terraces that surround the building. The cafe in the south-east corner of the Bedestan has a fresco painted on its walls; which portrays the past. It is based on the description of Yambol as given by Evliya Chalabi, the well-known traveller who passed through in 1668. He describes Yambol as "a lively town with a richly decorated Bedestan with an assortment of goods - a place where you can find almost anything you need". Shops and boutiques selling flowers, clothes, toys, an exchange and a translation office occupy the remaining spaces.

Design concepts

The design of the Eski Cami was circumscribed by the original building which was still standing. The proximity of the Bedestan, some 50 metres to the north, allowed the mosque to become part of an ensemble.

The design of the Bedestan was presumably based on that of the original form that had survived as a nucleus within the old covered bazaar with late additions of the 18th and 19th centuries. It occupies roughly the same space as the old bazaar although clearing the area around and leaving it free-standing accentuated its isolation, and gave it a formality and importance presumably not intended in the original design. The repetitive arches of the facades of the Bedestan and its domes can be seen from all sides of the square, even the positioning of the trees and the hedges help to accentuate its prime location.



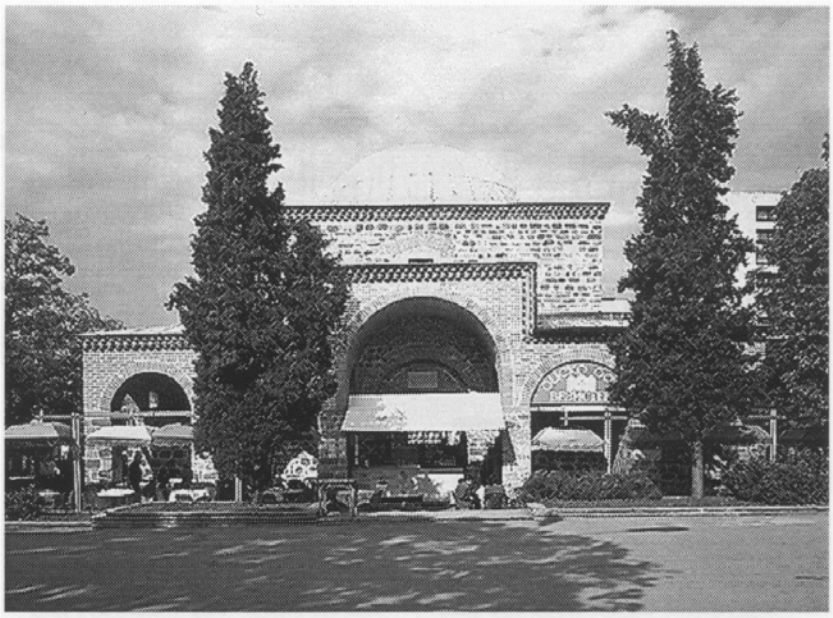
Eski Cami exterior elevation

Materials and technology

Eski Cami

The original Eski Cami was constructed of baked bricks, cut river stones, and wood. The Restoration Institute modified the materials and added concrete and ferro concrete, a legal necessity in Bulgaria, a country with many earthquakes. These interventions were used in the roof and domes, which were largely rebuilt with concrete and ferro-concrete. Iron rods were used to tie the large central dome to the eaves. That is to say, the dome was ringed with a thin iron plate to which iron rods were attached. These radiated out across the roof until they reached, and were built into, the eaves. The minaret was largely rebuilt with reinforced concrete, as was its spire, and topped off with a tapered conical lead roof. The spire was originally made of wood.

The infill used throughout the building was concrete. Facades were left to look natural, that is, they were not plastered over. The building materials used in the restoration were made to order. The bricks were made to a special format (not the normal industrial size of Bulgarian brick), and ordered from a factory in Butova in north-east Bulgaria which could fire them to a higher temperature, almost a terra-cotta consistency. The white lime mortar, khurasan, used also as the facing "fix" (term used by Georgi Vassilev, the master-builder who gave me this information) was made as follows: 1 bag of white lime, 2 bags of crushed marble (the largest piece being 2 millimetres across), 1 bag marble dust the quality of fine flour, and 1/2 a bag of white cement. These materials were then combined with water and mixed until they attained the right consistency. According to Vassilev only "government" projects mix in a cement mixer, builders like himself just heap the ingredients on the floor and mix them with hand-tools.



One of the side iwans now houses a restaurant-café where local residents gather

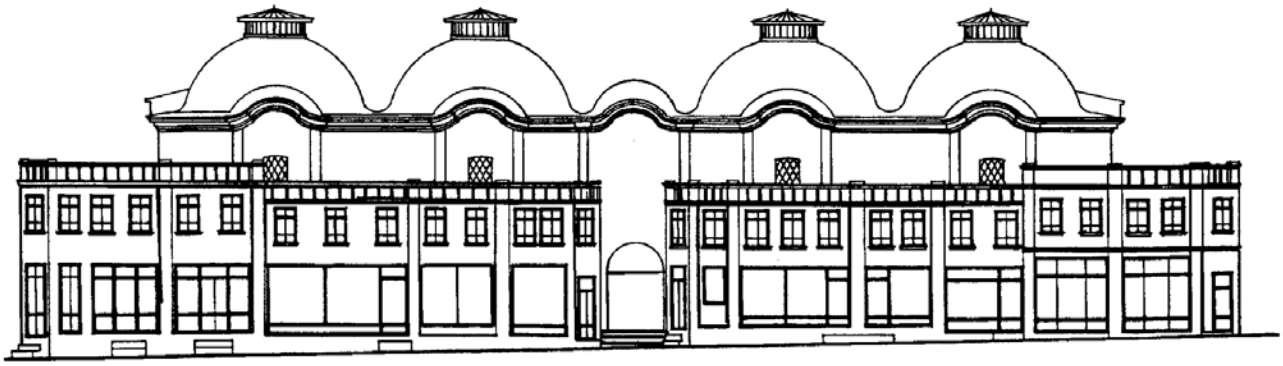
Since the roof was still in place, it was simply strengthened and graded with a reinforced cement. The dome was strengthened with a cement "neck" and encased in cement. Iron rods were connected to the eaves, like a mesh. The domes were then coated with 6-8 centimetres thick mud and straw plaster on to which the lead sheets were moulded. The lead sheets are 4 millimetres thick, and 1 or 2 metres long. They are cut on site into long, trapezoidal strips with a flat top edge. They are laid, overlapped and double-folded across the domes, and fixed with bolts which are hammered in a horizontal line. These strap the domes like belts. The lead-sheeting process starts from the bottom and proceeds upwards; 44 tons of lead were used on the roof of the Eski Cami.

The ablution area of the mosque is situated in the northern portico and is connected to the city's mains and sewage system. The electricity of the mosque is supplied by the city.

Hadem Ali Bedestan

The original Bedestan was constructed of baked bricks, cut river stones, and wood. The Restoration Institute modified the materials and added concrete and ferro concrete, a legal necessity in Bulgaria, a country with many earthquakes. These interventions were carried out in the foundations, which were made of concrete and ferro-concrete and in the walls and the vaults.

The infill used throughout the building was concrete. Facades were left to look natural, that is, they were not plastered over. The building materials used in the restoration were made to order. The bricks were made to a special format (not the normal industrial size of Bulgarian brick), and ordered from a factory in Butova in north-east Bulgaria which could fire them to a higher temperature, almost a terra-cotta consistency. The white lime mortar, khurasan, used also as the facing "fix" (term used by Georgi Vassilev, the master-builder who gave me this information) was made as follows: 1 bag of white lime, 2 bags of crushed marble (the largest piece being 2 millimetres across), 1 bag marble dust the quality of fine flour, and 1/2 a bag of white cement. These materials were then combined with water and mixed until they attained the right consistency. According to Vassilev only "govern-



Hadem Ali Bedestan exterior elevation before restoration

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The original interior vaults were made of gypsum, these were copied in stone for durability. The arched vaults in the cafes and shops along the outside were left with their bricks exposed and articulated with khurasan.

The fan-arched stained glass windows of the ground floor were designed by a local artist, after an idea of Mouschanov; the designs are abstract.

The slanted wooden shades or shutters over the windows on the outside protect them from the rain and give shade. The windows and doors have aluminium frames.

The roof is encased in poured cement with iron rods which are connected to the eaves, like a mesh. The domes are made of reinforced cement which is then coated with 6-8 centimetres thick mud and straw plaster which can be moulded to fit the lead sheets. The lead sheets are 4 millimetres thick, and 1 or 2 metres long. They are cut on site into long, trapezoidal strips with a flat top edge. They are laid, overlapped and double-folded across the domes, and fixed with bolts which are hammered in a horizontal line. These strap the domes like belts. The lead-sheeting process starts from the bottom and proceeds upwards.

The floor is laid with processed marble slabs. The walkways and steps that surround the Bedestan are made of laid bricks set in a cement mortar.

The building services and utilities are all housed in the basement of the Bedestan, the heating system is under the floors. Electricity and water is supplied by the city of Yambol; sewage is also connected to the city system.

Origins of:

The technology used in both projects was based on the traditional building methods of medieval Ottoman architecture with new additions such as cement and iron. The reinforced concrete used for the columns, beams vaults and foundations was also not traditional.

Materials

High-fired bricks and cut river stones were the basic materials used in the restoration process in both projects. The mortar was the traditional khurasan lime mortar with additional white cement to give it extra strength. Iron and concrete were new additions. Lead roof and domes were restored using largely traditional methods. Window frames, originally of brick, were restored, using limestone from Musel or from Aitas stone which is easily cut.

Principal iwan, detail of stone and brick re-pointing

Labour force The labour force was all local. The master-builder and stonemason, Georgi Vassilev was a local man too, and he supervised the project.

Professionals

The restoration of the Eski Cami was designed by architect Nicola Mouschanov from the Restoration Institute in Sofia; the co-designer, architect Zlatka Kirova is his wife. The other architect involved, Vassil Kitov was also from the Restoration Institute in Sofia, as was the construction engineer, Roumiana Sarafova. The Controller, Georgi Gatchev and the master-builder, Georgi Vassilev, were local men from Yambol. The Mouschanovs came regularly to Yambol and stayed for up to a week on site, but since they had other restorations projects to deal with the Eski Cami project was, to all intents and purposes, run by Vassilev.

The restoration of the Bedestan was designed by architect Nicola Mouschanov from the Restoration Institute in Sofia; the co-designer, architect Zlatka Kirova is his wife. The other architects involved, Dimiter Bojadziev and Stanislav Stoikov, were also from the Restoration Institute in Sofia. The artist who designed and painted the frescoes in the cafe, Boyan Tchukanov, was from Sofia. The technical manager, Todor Iovtchev, and the master-builder, Georgi Vassilev, were local men. The architects from Sofia, especially the Mouschanovs, came regularly to Yambol and stayed for up to a week on site, but since they had other restorations projects to deal with the Bedestan project was, to all intents and purposes, run by Vassilev.

Construction schedule and costs

History of project

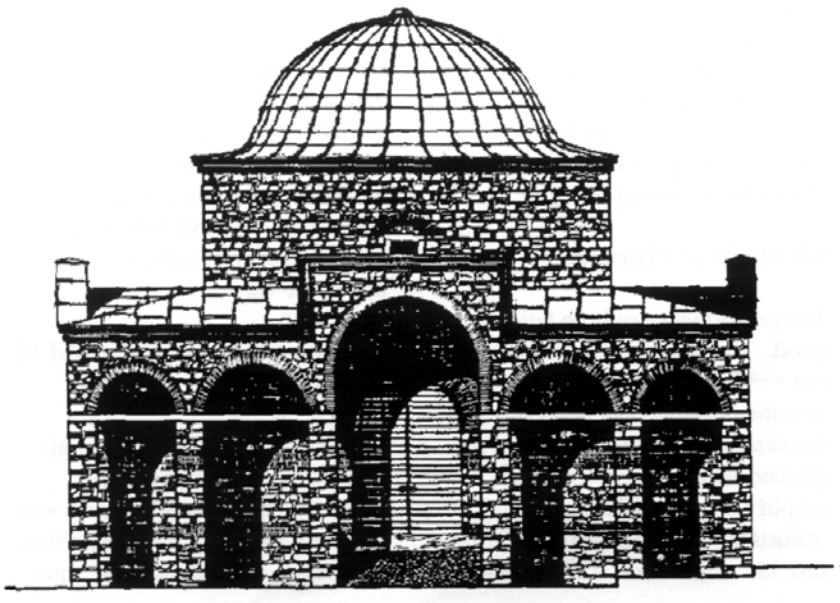
The restoration of the Eski Cami was undertaken as a result of the success of that of the Bedestan nearby. A design plan for the Eski Cami was commissioned from architect Nikola Mouschanov in 1975, it was completed by 1976. Work began in May 1981, and the exterior facades and the minaret were completed by October 1984. Although working plans for the interior had been made, the project ran out of funds and work stopped after 1984. The paintings have been numbered and documented and the badly cracked arch of the western bay was braced with an iron plate. The project remains incomplete, the interior was never finished.

The competition for the reconstruction of the Bedestan was held in 1967 and won by a local architect whose modern design was eventually turned down by the Minister of Construction, Mr. Kubadinski. The design created by architect Nikola Mouschanov was accepted in July 1969 but the plans and drawings were not completed until March 1971. Restoration work commenced in May 1971 and completed by August 1974. The Bedestan was fully operational by September 1974.

Costs and financing

The total cost of the restoration of the Eski Cami was estimated at 600,000 lev, about 300,000 US$ at the 1981 exchange rate of 2 lev to the dollar (today the rate is 65 lev to the dollar). All of the funding came from governmental sources.

The total cost of the restoration of the Bedestan was estimated at 1,200,000 lev, about 600,000 US$ at the 1969 exchange rate of 1/2 a lev to the dollar (today the rate is 65 levs to the dollar). Apparently, estimates were retained on both projects. The land, being state owned, was free. All the funding came from government sources, allocated from the Ministry of Culture and given directly to the local municipality.



Side view of Hadem Ali Bedestan after restoration

Comparative costs

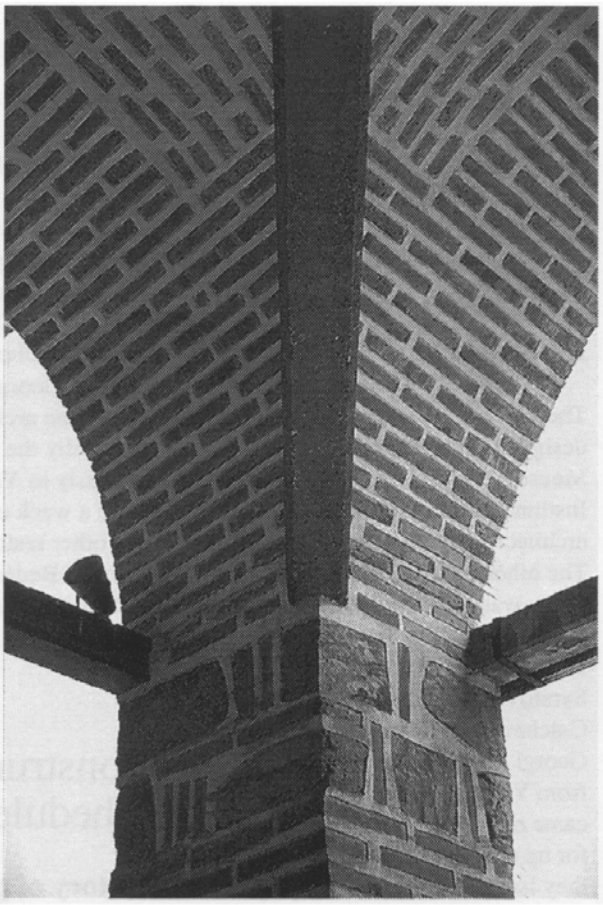
There is no information available on the mosque.

The restoration of the Bedestan is estimated to have cost roughly 20 per cent above that of an average building of comparable size in Bulgaria.

Qualitative analysis of costs

For the Eski Cami, 950 levs per square metre, with infrastructure 20,000 levs, labour 102,000, materials 408,000 and professional fees of 60,000 levs.

The actual cost per square metre of the Bedestan came to 508 levs. The infrastructure cost 120,000 levs, labour 192,000, materials came to 768,000, landscaping to 60,000 and professional fees to another 60,000 levs.



Corner column from which spring brick arches forming the exterior arcade

Technical assessment

Functional assessment

The Eski Cami is used by the Muslim community of Yambol. According to the Imam of the mosque, Hassan Umar Hassan, there are about 500 Muslim families left in the town. On Friday's some 75-80 people come to pray the noon prayer; and he has about 65 pupils that come to study the Quran in the mosque three times a week. There is also a special teacher who teaches the children Turkish. The building is decidedly underused, its abandoned looking interior, the peeling walls, faded paintings, tattered curtains and generally run-down appearance makes one feel sad. This feeling is accentuated if one comes to the mosque directly from the Bedestan, the liveliest and most popular spot in Yambol - the difference between the two is startling.

The Bedestan is well used. The cafes are always full of people just walking around, shopping, having a cup of coffee or doing crossword puzzles. In the evening the area is completely taken over by the teenagers of Yambol who hang around chatting, drinking a beer and generally doing their teen-age thing. It is the liveliest spot in Yambol and has become the focal point for the whole town. There is no doubt about the popularity of this building.

Climatic performance

The performance of both buildings is good. The lighting is well thought out and large windows let daylight into the interior. The pendentives of the central dome of the mosque are pierced with tiny holes which amplify sound, creating good acoustics. In the Bedestan, windows provide ventilation. The heating system is adequate, giving a pleasant temperature inside. However, I found the white of thewalls and vaults of the interior market rather stark, especially when taken in conjunction with the white metal used in the shop stalls. There is also a slight echo which could be unpleasant if the space became overcrowded and noisy. The cafes are pleasant, the terra-cotta walls go well with the exposed brick vaults. The frescoes are a lively addition, but the stained glass windows have abstract designs and use colour in a slightly jarring and crude way.

Choice of materials, level of technology

The choice of the basic materials used in the restoration of the Bedestan (bricks, stones, lead) was circumscribed by the building that was being restored and new, intru-

sive materials (cement, iron) were predetermined by the building codes and safety laws of Bulgaria. The level of technology was appropriate to the builders and workers involved with the project. No advanced technological innovations or methods were used. In the mosque, however, an iron ring was used to stabilize the base of the dome.

Maintenance

It is remarkable how good the Eski Cami and Bedestan look from the outside. Ten years after the completion of the mosque and 20 years after the Bedestan was finished, there are no visible signs of wear. There are no cracks. Vassilev who lives nearby passes by the Bedestan and the Cami Mosque daily and is very pleased that they have survived so well. The only maintenance problem that I saw was litter and dirt outside the building, especially on the north and west sides. But I saw litter everywhere in Yambol, presumably the city services do not function well. On my first visit to the mosque the water was pouring out of the ablution area. As the northern portico has been closed off by a high wall topped by an iron grille and its one metal door was closed, we were not able to shut off the water. The next day when I spoke to Imam Hassan and told him about the flowing water, he said that somebody had left the taps running the evening before. The ablution area in ugly, the basins and taps added later by the Muslim community. In fact, the entrance area has been redesigned and sealed off by Imam Hassan as a precaution against vandalism, and all the ground floor windows were boarded up because local youths threw stones at them. The doors are locked nightly. However, nobody can stop the graffiti from which the mosque suffers more than the Bedestan.

Design features

The design features of the Eski Cami are very strong, the spatial mass and volume of the building, its austere exterior, splendid domes and elegant minaret appear soothing and serene in the centre of this dready town. Even the close proximity of the hideous high-rise residential buildings, just north and west of the Eski Cami, do not take away from its pure and pristine lines. Just the opposite, the Eski Cami seems to elevate the central square by its very presence. The design features of the Belestan are also very pleasant, it's arches and domes give a welcomming appearance to the centre of the town, attracting people to it.

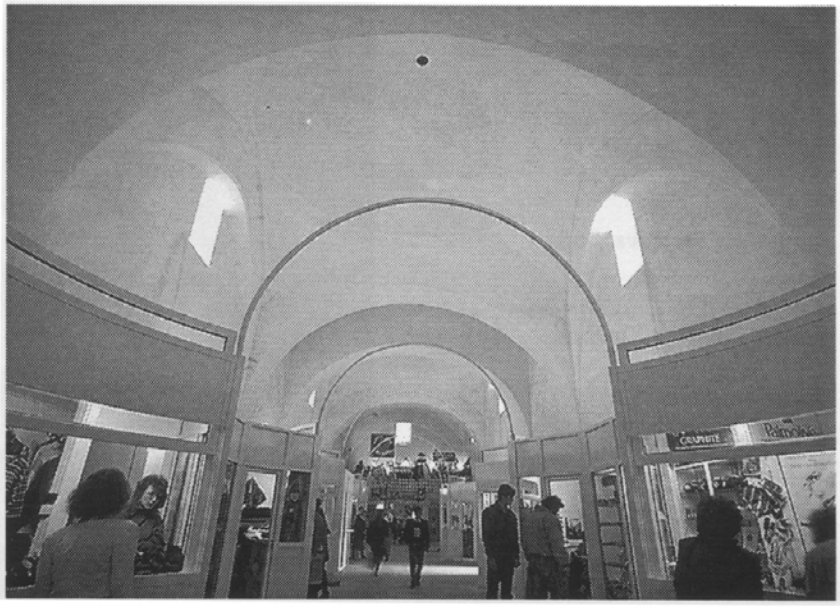
Users

Only a small portion of the Muslim community of Yambol uses the Eski Cami. Of the 500 or so families (some 3000-4000 people) that live in Yambol only about 200 use the mosque.

Everybody in Yambol, however, uses the Bedestan. People of all ages congregate there, or in the area immediately around it. At any time of day and evening, and well into the night, the place is full of people. In the evening the crowd changes and the youth of the town take over the Bedestan. The income levels may change slightly with the clientele, however, I do not think there are great disparities of wealth and/or class in Yambol. At a superficial glance, it seemed that the poorer and older members of the local population tended to stay in the free parks while the younger and wealthier (by Bulgarian standards) went into the cafes and restaurants.

Users' response

Once the clients, the City Council of Yambol, had accepted the design for the restoration of the Eski Cami, they did not impede the work in any way, in fact Mrs. Mouschanov said that the city authorities were always very helpful. It is just that the community



Interior of the central circulation axis at the Hadem Ali Bedestan

did not take to it like they took to the Bedestan, but then that has a very different function. In fact, the town of Yambol, with the exception of the local vandals, seems, by and large, to forget the existence of the Eski Cami. The disparity between the Bedestan and the Eski Cami becomes very evident when one stands in the central square, just south-east of the two buildings, the area around the Bedestan is a hive of activity while that around the Eski Cami is totally devoid of people. The City also saw the commercial possibilities that were available with Mouschanov's design for the Bedestan. Now it is the city's landmark. The community took to it immediately. In fact, the response of the whole town of Yambol to this restoration project is 100% positive.

Project personnel

Eski Cami

The client:
City Council of Yambol

Principal architect:
Nikola Mouschanov, Sofia

Co-designer:
Zlatka Kirova (Mouschanov), Sofia

Associated architect:
Vassil Kitov, Sofia

Engineer:
Roumiana Sarafova, Sofia

Controller:
Giorgi Gatchev, Yambol

Master builder:
Georgi Vassilev, Yambol

Hadem Ali Pasha Bedestan

The client:
City Council of Yambol

Principal architect:
Nikola Mouschanov, Sofia

Co-designer:
Zlatka Kirova (Mouschanov), Sofia

Associated architects:
Dimitar Bojadziev, Stanislav Stoikov, Sofia

Engineers:
Cyril Georgiev, Todor Todorov, Sofia

Technical manager:
Todor Iovtchev, Yambol

Master builder:
Georgi Vassilev, Yambol

Artist: Boyan Tchukanov, Sofia

Selma al-Radi
April 1995

Eski Cami; interior prayer hall, with wooden balcony above the entrance