

EARLY TURKISH BUILDINGS IN TRABZON

By SELINA BALLANCE

While surveying Byzantine buildings in Trabzon, I took the opportunity of measuring these three interesting Turkish buildings; and publish the plans, with some brief notes on their construction, in the hope that the drawings at least may be of some use to someone qualified to make a real study of them.

Hatuniye Camii, Figs. 1-5 :

This mosque, standing in an open space just outside the old city, beyond the west ravine and the bridge spanning it, was built in memory of Gülbahar Sultan, mother of Selim I (1512 - 20) and wife of Bayazıt II (1481 - 1512).

Plan and Construction. It is kept in excellent repair. The masonry is of well-dressed dark grey stone which varies to pinkish-grey, with narrow mortar joints; the roofs are lead-covered. The central square of the plan is covered by a dome on pendentives; the east and west wings each have a smaller dome; the porch (fig. 3), stretching the full width of the north side, is five bays long, each with a dome. The six columns supporting the porch are of Marmara marble and the capitals have a formalised leaf motif. The two niches in the porch wall of the mosque have stalactite carving, as has the recess over the doorway; none of it is very deeply cut.

Türbe (figs. 4, 5). The actual türbe of Gülbahar Sultan lies just to the east of the mosque; it is of a much yellower stone than the mosque but of equally good workmanship and in equally good repair; the courses are alternately deep (34 - 51 cm.) and shallow (13 - 16 cm.). It is octagonal, with a north door and six windows, all of which have blind ogee arches over them, with voussoirs in alternating dark and light stone. The windows themselves have flat lintels. The türbe is domed internally, but externally the lead-covered roof is treated in two levels, the upper one with a slight ogival curve and raised above the lower outer level on a low masonry wall. Three

stones, set in the wall over the door, are carved in elaborate Seljuk-type patterns in low relief, but all are broken or defaced.

Bedesten Figs. 6-10.

This is a large rectangular building (19.90 m. x 17.48 m. internally) in the old commercial quarter of the town and only a short distance from the shore. It is still standing to cornice height, approximately 11 m., but is in a poor state of repair, and sizeable trees growing on the tops of the walls will soon ruin it irreparably (see fig. 9).

Construction. There is an entrance in the centre of each side, that on the west being the largest and therefore presumably the principal one; the doors themselves are of wood plated with iron. The only windows (now blocked) are high up, two in each wall, though clearly there was never any upper floor; they have flat lintels but pointed blind arches externally, and internally are set in recesses with pointed arches. Internally the north and south walls each have eight arched recesses, and east and west walls six, beginning 1.10 m. above floor level but of varying widths.

The walls are of roughish coursed masonry (courses 25 - 30 cm. deep with thick mortar joints) in the local dark grey-brown stone; the lowest 6.70 m. or so is 1.50 cm. thick but at that level there is a set back, externally, of about 70 cm. and above this there is a slight batter, up to the decorative brick cornice. It is interesting that though the lower block has normal angles the upper part, with the batter, is rounded at the corners.

It is very difficult to visualise the roof of the building. Across each internal corner strides a brick arch (figs. 7, 10) of 8.05 m. span - a squinch as it were - with the vault, of a truly remarkable shape, which it encloses built principally of brick but with the lower part of masonry. As to the roof itself, some of the brick vaulting remains, but nowhere is it more than about a metre high: it looks as if there was a brick rib spanning north and south across the centre, and presumably there was a similar one east and west, the two crossing at the centre. Next to these ribs bricks are set vertically, but each course slopes more than the next until at the corners of the building they are lying flat. The four great free-standing piers (fig. 9) are almost certainly not original; they are of much more precise masonry, courses of stone alternating with brick in the upper parts. Probably they were put

up to support a later roof of timber when the original vaulting, whatever form it may have taken, fell in.

Use. Lynch¹ refers to it as a "Bezestan", or "repository of stuffs", and in his day it was occupied by sellers of yorgans; he mentions that the roof had gone, and that there was a well in the centre. It is now a timber yard.

Date. It is a very difficult building to date. Lynch calls it Italian, presumably meaning either Venetian or—more likely—Genoese, as these were the two Italian trading republics that had commercial arrangements with the Empire of Trebizond and possibly with the Ottoman Turks too. But even if it belonged to them, which is perfectly likely, it must have been built by local Turkish workmen in local Turkish style. The pointed blind arches over windows and doors are the same, in humbler materials, as those in Gülbahar Sultan's türbe (see above); and there is nothing else stylistic in the building to give a clue. There was an inscription in Arabic script over the west door which might have helped, but it is hopelessly defaced. The construction of the walls, as far as can be seen, is much the same as it was during the Empire of Trebizond and for centuries after, and the same can be said of vaulting in brick. The brick cornice, and the brick string-course a short distance below it, have a slightly Byzantine air, but the tradition of details of this sort may well have lingered on long after 1461.

Vakıf Han Figs. 11–17:

This han stands on the edge of the sea in the commercial quarter of the town; it is no longer used as a han, but various craftsmen, such as brushmakers and cobblers, and a çayhane, occupy the rooms and booths.

Plan. It is on three floors, built round an open rectangular courtyard, which in recent times has been floored in at the level of the first floor gallery. The site slopes sharply down to the seashore, so that while the lowest floor (Fig. 14) is on the same level as the shore (though there was no door on this side), the street from which the han is entered (see fig. 12) is at first floor level. There is an entrance to the lower floor from the steeply sloping alley on the east of the building.

¹ H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia*, Vol. I. *The Russian Provinces*, p. 29.

The lowest floor has six rooms, each with door and window, on the south side of the court, and four similar ones on the north side with a larger one in the centre. The bays at east and west ends, which in the floors above contain rooms, are here open; each has a shallow brick saucer dome over it. There is a well in the courtyard, under the stone stair leading up to the first floor gallery.

Here (fig. 15), an open gallery runs round north, west and south sides (see fig. 13) with the ivan and four rooms opening off the north side, and two rooms off the west. On the south there are no rooms as the space is occupied by four open booths (now enclosed) giving onto the street, the entrance to the han, the şadirvan, and the staircase up to the mosque. A large room occupies the east end of the building.

The small chamber, possibly a lavatory, opening off the ivan and projecting from the main block of the building, is almost certainly a later addition.

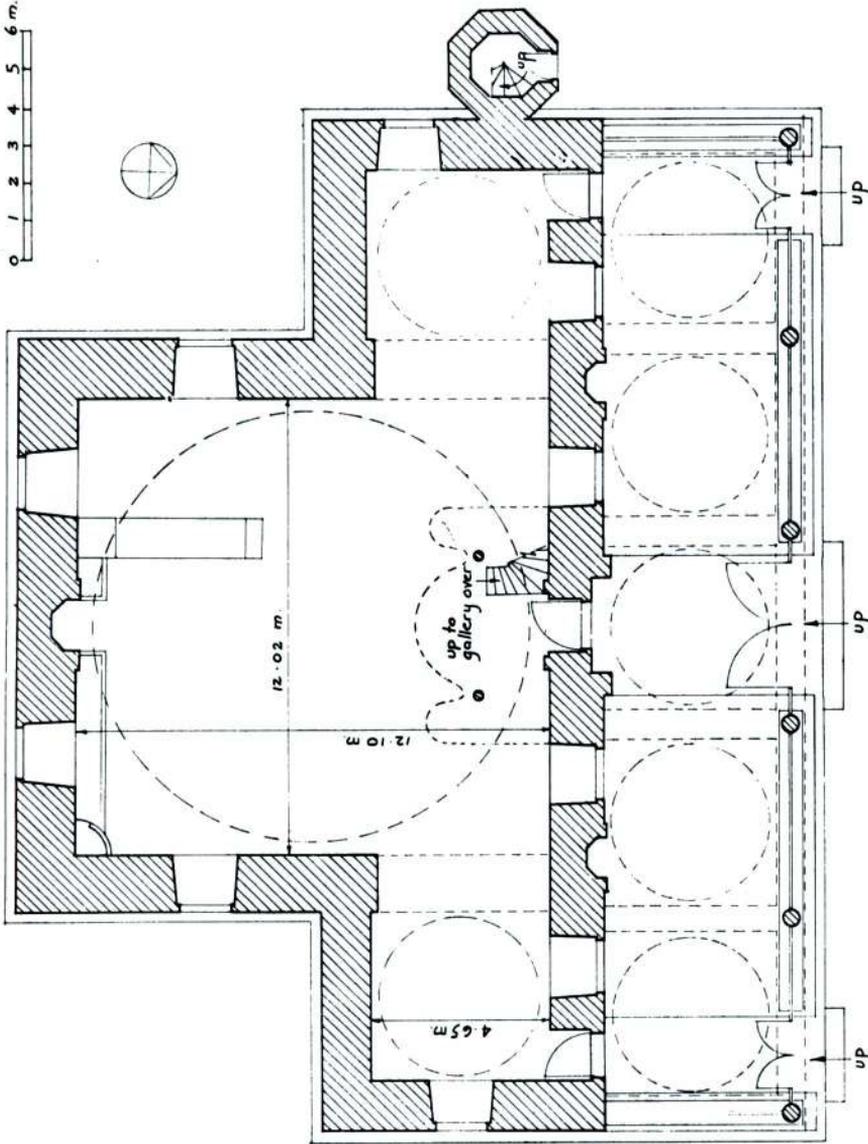
The top floor (fig. 16) is different again: there are five rooms on the north, two on the west, three on the south and one on the east. The whole south-east corner is occupied by the mosque which has a gallery, an oval dome and some most attractive woodwork (fig. 11).

Construction. The external walls, mostly 90 cm. thick, are built in the usual local style, of rough coursed masonry of dark grey-brown stone. Presumably the rather thinner partition walls are the same, but as they are all plastered their construction cannot be seen. All the rooms and galleries are vaulted, some with semicircular barrel-vaults and some with low pointed vaults curving down to the walls. Again, plaster obscures the construction; some vaults are coursed mortared rubble, though some may be brick.

All the arches of the galleries are well built of dressed stone; they vary considerably in span but all are less than a semicircle and spring from square masonry piers. The roof is tiled.

The whole building is still magnificently solid and apparently sound, though somewhat shabby, and it is much to be hoped that it will not be allowed to deteriorate.

Date. Probably an expert in old Turkish buildings would be able to date this building fairly closely, or records of its foundation may exist; the author, however, has no knowledge of these things and can only hazard a guess at the 17 th or 18 th century.



HATUNIYE CAMI'I

Fig. 1 — Hatuniye camii.

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Fig. 2 — Hatuniye camii, from the north-west.

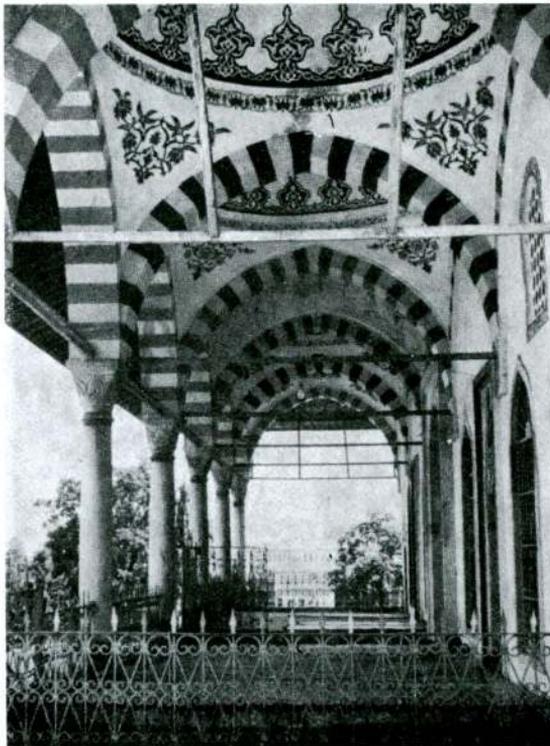


Fig. 3 — Hatuniye camii, porch from the west.



Fig. 4 — Türbe of Gülbahar Sultan, from the north.

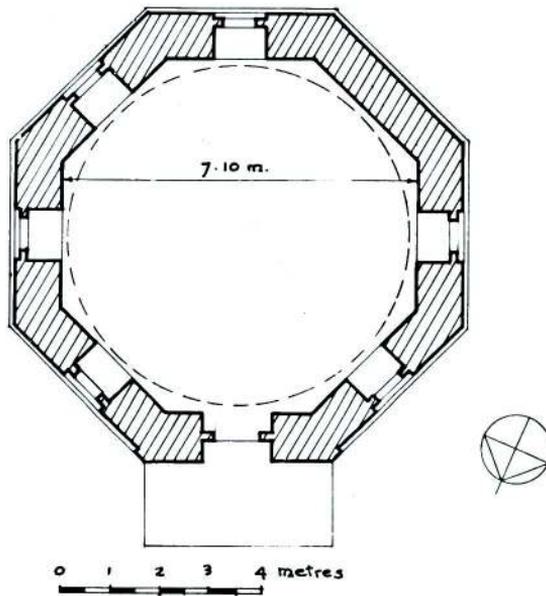


Fig. 5 — Türbe of Gülbahar Sultan, plan.

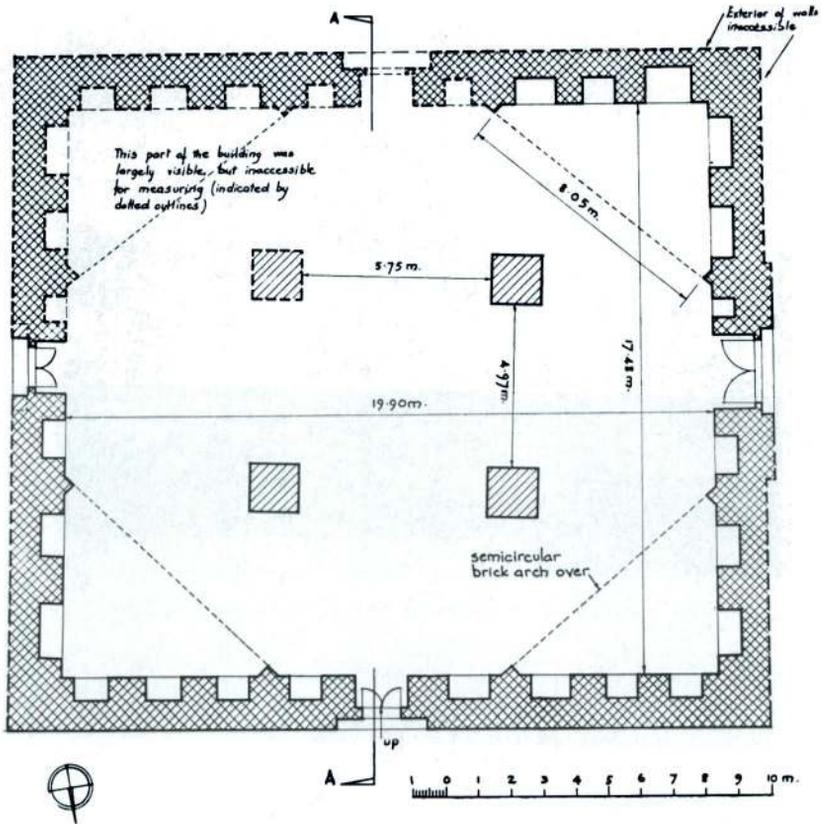


Fig. 6 — The Bedesten, plan.

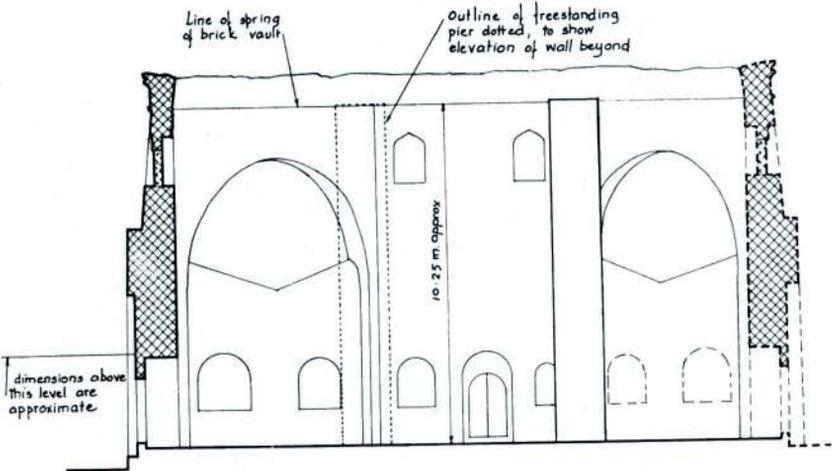


Fig. 7 — The Bedesten, section A-A.



Fig. 8 — The Bedesten, from the north.



Fig. 9 — The Bedesten, interior, looking south.

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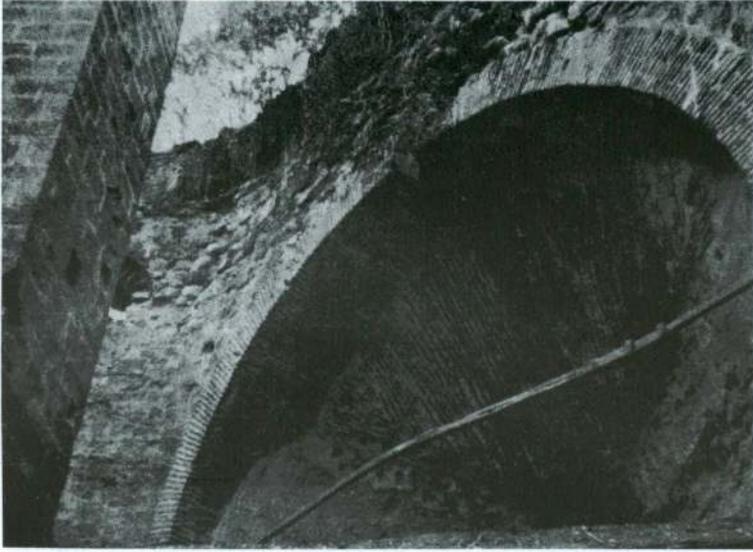


Fig. 10 — The Bedesten, arch across the north-west corner.

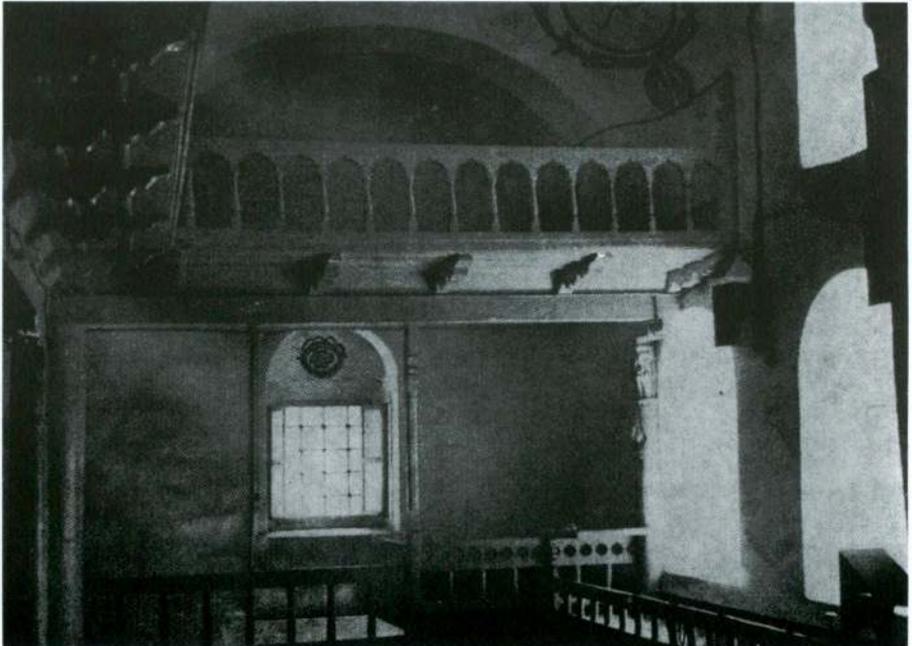


Fig. 11 — Vakıf Han, mosque, looking east.

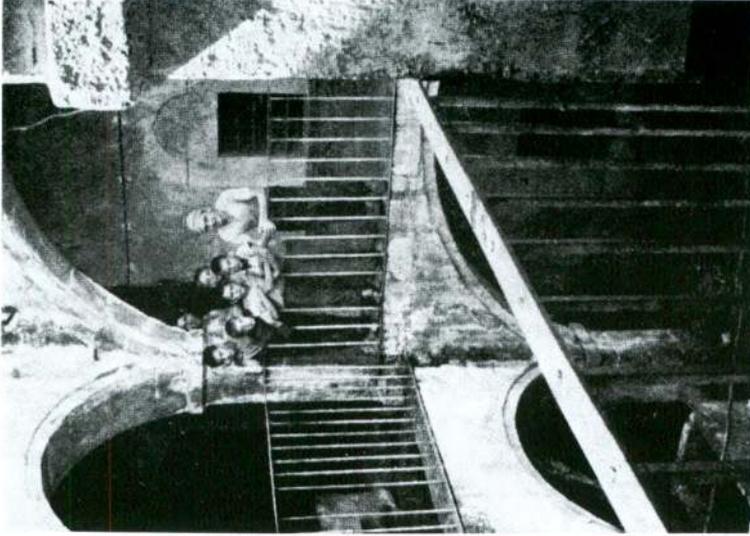


Fig. 13 — Vakaf Han, Courtyard, looking south-west.

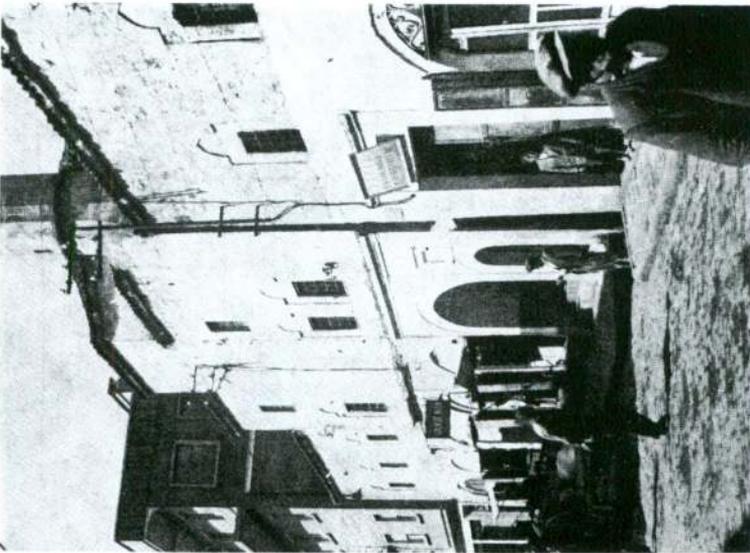


Fig. 12 — Vakaf Han, south side.

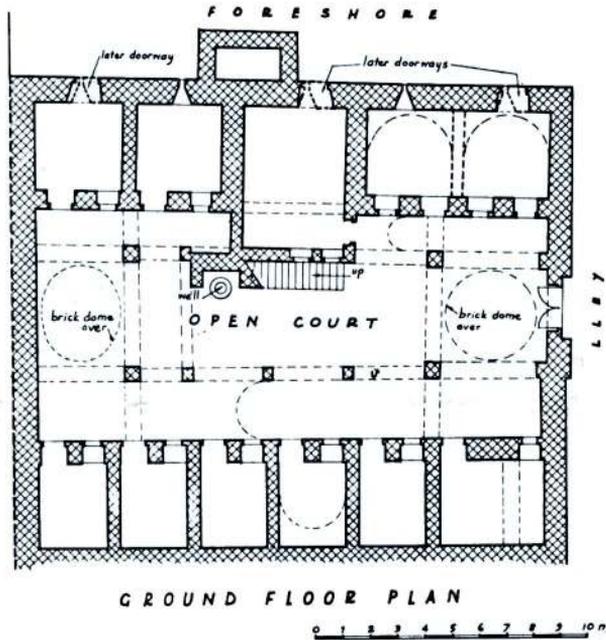


Fig. 14 — Vakif Han, ground floor plan.

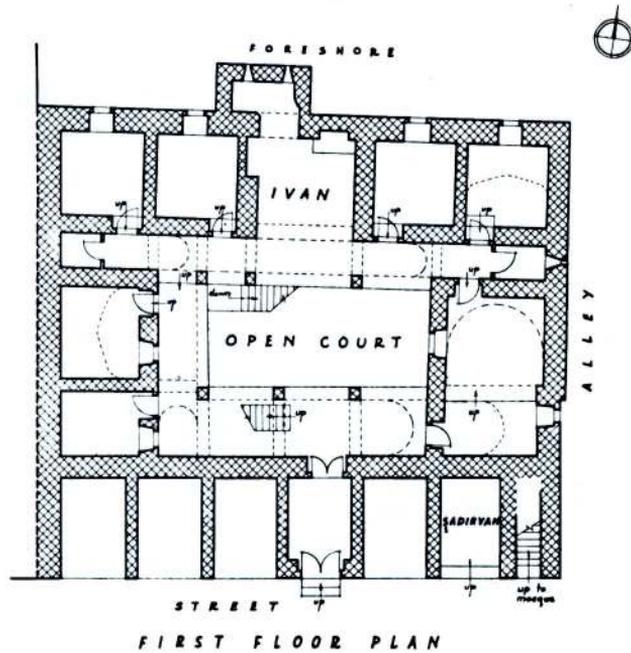


Fig. 15 — Vakif Han, first floor plan.

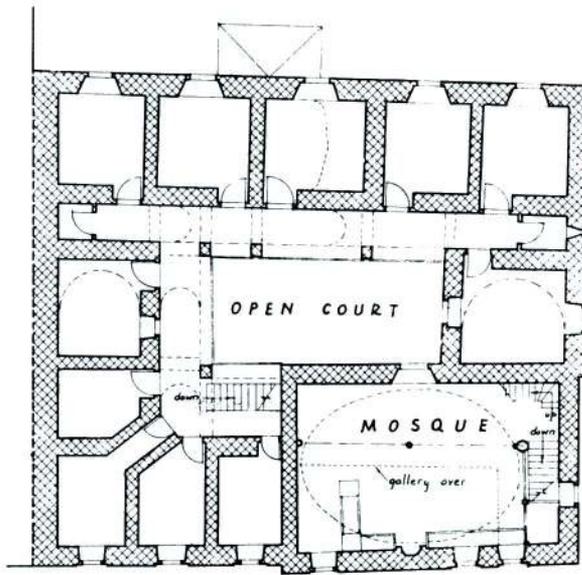
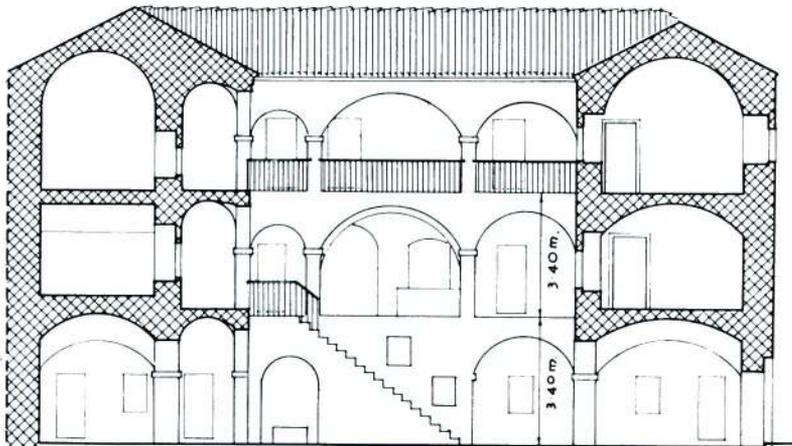


Fig. 16 — Vakif Han, second floor plan.



S E C T I O N L O O K I N G N O R T H

Fig. 17 — Vakif Han, section looking north.

