

Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture
(IRCICA) Istanbul

MOSTAR 2004 PROGRAM



**RECONSTRUCTION OF
THE NEZIRAGA MOSQUE COMPLEX
IN MOSTAR**

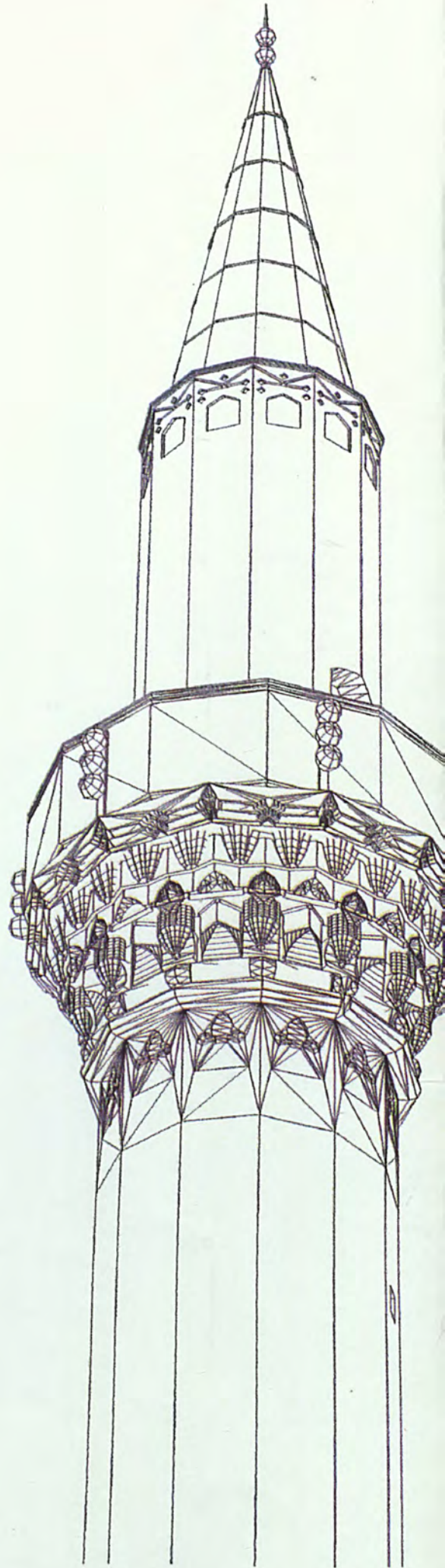
Completed in September 1999



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THE NEZIRAGA MOSQUE
COMPLEX IN MOSTAR
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The inscription above the mosque door: this mosque was built by Nezir Aga in 957/1550 and destroyed by the ruling authorities in 1950. It was rebuilt by the Ruler of Sharjah Sheik Sultan bin Mohamed a/-Qassimi by the intermediary of IRCICA and reopened for prayers on 29 Jamada'l ula 1420/10 September 1999.

under the coordination

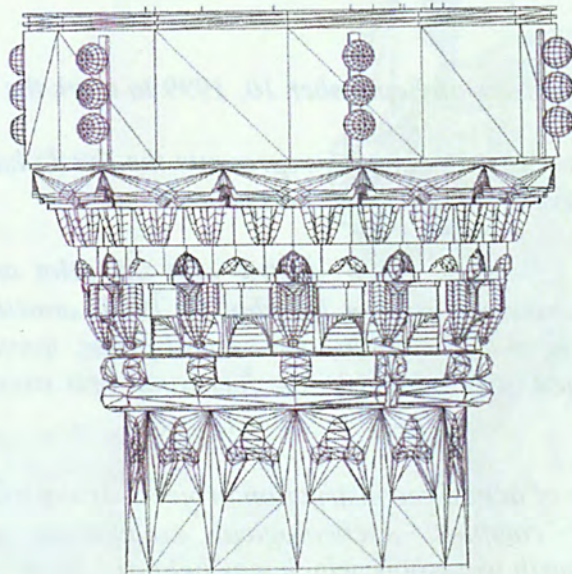
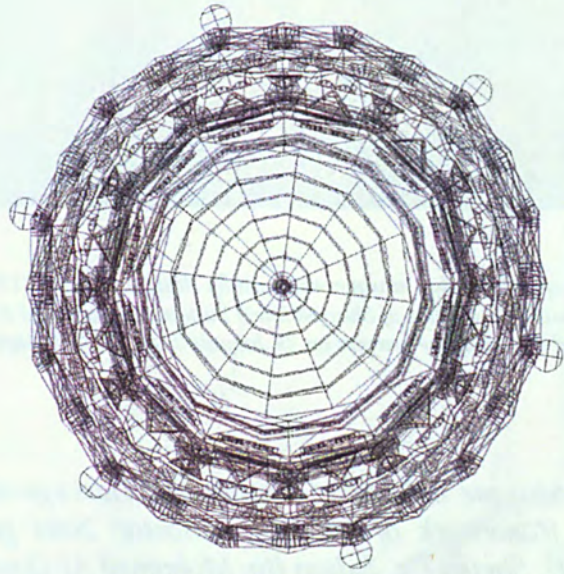
The historical Neziraga Mosque in Mostar, Bosnia and Hercegovina has been restored and inaugurated within the framework of IRCICA's Mostar 2004 program and thanks to a generous donation by H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohamed Al-Qassimi, the Ruler of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

A ceremony was held in Mostar on September 10, 1999 to mark the opening of the mosque.

The reconstruction of the mosque complex represents the third phase of IRCICA's long term Mostar 2004 Program and first implementation project.

The first phase of the program, which started with the pilot architectural workshop (84 participants from 25 countries) held in Istanbul in 1994, aimed at creating international awareness and mobilizing public opinion, and second phase, launched one year later as the workshop series continued, was related to the formation and strengthening of the academic network.

The third phase consists of actual reconstruction projects. It started with the reconstruction of the Neziraga Mosque complex. Archeological excavations started in August 1998, immediately after the fourth workshop, which was held in Mostar in 1998. Significantly, the reconstruction was completed and the mosque re-opened concomitantly with the fifth Mostar 2004 Program in 1999.



Muqarnas of the minaret

MOSTAR IN THE TIME OF THE MOSQUE CONSTRUCTION

From the mid 15th until the end of the 19th century Bosnia and Herzegovina was a part of the Ottoman State. The city of Mostar exemplifies the multicultural character of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Islamic architecture and urban culture of Mostar that developed between the 16th and the 19th centuries was an integral part of Ottoman culture and gave Mostar all the characteristics of a typical Ottoman-Islamic settlement.

It is remarkably sited on the Neretva River and its tributary, the Radobolja. The Radobolja is a small and tranquil river, which offers its inhabitants many advantages; the Neretva is more volatile. The Neretva valley is very fertile, and the river gives access southward to the sea and northward into the interior. The valley of the Radobolja River is surrounded by hills on all sides.

Traces of the prehistoric era and Roman times discovered at more than one location provide evidence that the valley of Mostar has been inhabited since very ancient times.

An old settlement in the immediate vicinity of Mostar--the Old Town at Blagaj--developed from a Roman settlement into an important medieval town, which became home to Herceg Stjepan Vukčić, the ruler of the region in the 15th century, who gave Hercegovina its name.

A document written in 1440 refers to a fort next to a bridge on the Neretva river, associated with the name of Gost Radivoje, a member of Herceg Stjepan's retinue. This is the first historic reference to present-day Mostar. A letter from two Dubrovnik merchants dated April 3, 1452, informs their compatriots in the service of the Serbian king Djuradj Branković that Vladislav Hercegović had fled from his father Herceg Stjepan and had siezed, among other things, the bridge with adjoining forts on the Neretva River.

In 1468, the Ottomans took Blagaj and most likely the fortresses close to the nearby bridge over the Neretva. The small settlement around the bridge received its name -- *mostar* in Bosnian language means "bridge keeper"--from its keepers. The settlement was first referred to as Mostar in 1474, when it was given as the seat of an Ottoman *subaša* (police superintendent) named Skender. Because of the strategic importance of this crossing over the Neretva, the bridge was replaced sometime before 1481, in the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror, by a new timbered one. Since the main road connecting Bosnia to the Adriatic coast used this crossing over the Neretva, the bridge brought a rapid expansion of the city and a concomitant development of its crafts and trade. The city also became the center of culture and education in that part of the Ottoman State.

The reign of Suleyman II the Magnificent (1520-1566) was a time of great expansion and prosperity for the Ottoman State. In that period, huge wealth flowed into Istanbul, bringing about unprecedented economic and social progress. The sultan's aspirations to surpass the glory of the antique world encouraged cultural development, especially in art and architecture. Numerous structures, mosques, bridges, and hammams, of extraordinary beauty were built.

It was at this time that Ottoman architecture established its particular spatial, structural, and decorative systems, based on its own aesthetic principles. It was also during this period that the most important architectural monuments of Mostar came into being including, in addition to the bridge and the large Karadžozbeg and Vučjaković mosques, Neziraga mosque and several other smaller mosques, schools, hammams, and a large number of other public buildings and domestic structures.

Mostar's favorable geographic location made it one of the most important commercial centers of the area with well-developed connections to other centers. This in turn stimulated the development of industry, and thirty different crafts thrived there. The residential part of the city first spread to the hillside of Stolac, in the foothills of the Velež mountain. Building houses on its slopes was advantageous not only for security, but also for hygiene, since the rain could wash down the streets; it also provided a pleasant view of the valley. The average craftsman in Mostar owned a shop in the bazaar, a house in a mahala, a barn for a cow or perhaps a horse, a vineyard in the vicinity of the city and several bee hives.

Mostar reached its maturity as an urban entity about 1670, and did not change significantly until 1878, the year of the Austro-Hungarian occupation. In the late 17th century, its population reached 10,000; it boasted 34 mosques, 7 medresas, and several mektebs, 2 hammams, and a number of other important public facilities. The dominant Muslim population boasted many educated persons, including writers and poets, some of whom were famous far beyond the confines of their native region. The city also became the seat of the mufti from the mid-17th century on. Almost all trades and crafts were in the hands of Muslims in both the 16th and the 17th century.

The Christians, both Orthodox and Catholic, probably lived in the city along with Muslims from the time of Mostar's founding, though the first record of a Christian population in Mostar dates only to 1575.



Old Town in Mostar in 1934

The bazaar in Mostar lined both sides of the Old Bridge, on the left bank from behind the Halebija tower in the south to the clock tower in the east, and to the Sinan Pašina Mosque in the north. The upper bazaar was located on the main road and was called Velika Tepa; the lower bazaar was situated in the vicinity of the Koski Mehmed Paša Mosque and called Mala Tepa; a third part, called Kujundžiluk, was situated between the Mala Tepa and the Stari Most.

The Priječka Čaršija was located on the right bank of the Neretva, from the Janissary barracks from the bridge north side till Neziraga Mosque on the West.

The bazaar in Mostar was particularly important for the construction of the Old Bridge between 1550 and 1570 when only three donors, Hadzi Mehmedbeg-Karadžobeg, Čejvan Čehaja, and Nasuh-Aga Vučjaković, had 153 shops and many other facilities built there. Their donations gave rise to mosques, hammams, mektebs, medresas, imarets, shops, warehouses, mills, and the water supply facilities. This period of intensive building gave the city all its public structures and influenced the formation of the mahalas, which provided housing space to all those who worked in the bazaar.

In that time, there were 30 different guilds in Mostar in more than hundred shops. The tanners' guild was the most developed.

The Radobolja River contrasts to the Neretva by offering many possibilities for human use. At a very early stage in the development of the city, a large-scale system of canals was constructed in residential areas on the west bank of the Neretva for the irrigation of gardens and for household needs. The Radobolja starts from springs at the village of Ilici, 2,5 - 3 km from the Old Bridge, soon dividing its waters among several beds and uniting them again immediately before flowing into the Neretva. Numerous canals bifurcate successively from the riverbed and their network irrigates a large number of gardens in the housing areas of Podhum and, especially, in Cernica.

Canals crossing the bazaar were used to move the wheels of water-mills. The latter were 19 in number and played an important role in the life of the city and its inhabitants. Water from canals was also used by craftsmen, producers of blankets, tanners, and others.

There were also hamams in the town, one near the tannery, another close to the Sinan Paša Mosque at Mejdan. They were an important element of the highly developed Ottoman housing culture and, at the same time, were connected to the cult of water brought to these parts by Islam. People meeting in a hamam, relaxed by the murmur of the water within its interior, discussed their affairs and made business deals.

The mosques, inns, and the public baths, together with the Stari Most and its fortifications, dominated the bazaar. Those structures were built of cut stone of a higher quality and on a considerably larger scale than the rest of the town, and were separated from the rows of shops by empty space. All these structures added to the harmonious composition of the area.

Those who worked in the bazaar used its mosques for prayer during the day; the hammams were used by all the inhabitants of the city. Christians and Jews lived and worked in the bazaar together with Muslims and shared with them an almost identical life-style.

The streets, as in those of every city, constantly adapted to new ways of life; they changed in size and appearance and especially in what they contained. The street network was totally

integrated into the urban system: housing was connected to the bazaar by a large number of streets, the bazaar itself was the traffic nucleus from which wide and narrow streets branched out in all directions, each with shops of one particular craft. The bazaar also contained all major public buildings, easily accessible to pedestrians and always within sight. Because of the special social functions of these buildings, they were protected with walls and gates. The larger bazaar area was also protected with a wall and controlled gates.

In Mostar, housing areas were built rather freely outside the city walls for a long period of time. They were different from those near the bazaar close to the Old Bridge, which were more compact and orderly. The first mahala originated in the vicinity of the Old Bridge around the Mejdan square, where the provincial governor Sinan-Paša built a mosque in 1474. According to the register of real estates, the so call *Tapu tahri defter*, Mostar had only 19 houses in that year.

The biggest population growth occurred around the middle of the 16th century as a result of rapid economic development of the city.

The city developed first on the left bank close to the bazaar, then spread to the south and north, passing onto the right bank close to the hill of Hum on the left bank of the Radobolja around the middle of the 17th century.

Mostar had a clearly differentiated urban scheme taken over from the East: the housing area was clearly separated from the business section of the town.



View on the mosque area from the East, around 1940

RESTORATION OF THE NEZIR AGINA MOSQUE

The Neziraga Mosque complex is located in the Šemovac area situated on a plateau called Spile above a tributary of Radobolja, not far off the Old Bridge and within the confines of Priječka čaršija. It has been built in 1550. It has been closed down in 1932, in order to be completely torn down in Spring 1950. The site was left derelict until the reconstruction started in March 1999.

The mosque foundation charter has not been saved. One can make a conclusion that for that time Neziraga was a well-to-do person, and the folk tradition has it that he was a member the highly respected Vučjaković family.

Nasuhaga Vučjaković, probably Neziraga's father in law, was one who had the greatest contribution to development of the bazaar in Mostar, with construction of his mosque on main street and numerous shops in the its surrounding. The family gave all captains of Mostar. The family has the largest residence compound in Mostar, across the street of the Neziraga mosque, only one housing complex in the city walls.

The foundation incorporated a mosque, a primary school (mekteb), an abdesthane, a courtyard and a small cemetery.

On July 30, 1998, a ceremony took place on the site of the mosque for inaugurating its re-erection; soon after which preliminary studies started for developing a project, which provide the basis for reconstruction work.

Historic reconstruction of the mosque has been realized with full respect to all facts, which resulted from the archaeological excavation and visual and written documents. These facts formed the basis of the restitution design.

Intervention presents a combination of the restoration of key elements of the complex, the reconstruction and new design with historic reminiscence.



Position of the mosque on the 1881 map of Mostar



Empty site of the mosque in summer 1988



Mostar2004 Plan: position of the mosque

The present state of the site was surveyed to get the exact measurements of the ruins. At the start, only the walls surrounding the mosque were visible above ground. Its hajat (portico) was buried under rubber and earth. Excavation revealed the portico, the intact stone floor, the walls, the mihrab, the window openings and a niche on the west wall. The base of the minaret, as well as some blocks belonging to the upper levels of minaret shaft were uncovered.

Old photographs provided a lot of evidence about the architectural details. Being a spectacular element of the cityscape, the mosque had been photographed extensively in the 19th century from several angles. The most interesting part of the mosque was its beautifully proportioned minaret in finely cut stone. As is traditional in Mostar mosques, the roof was made of timber and covered with slates.

One of the major concerns in reconstruction the mosque was to reconstitute a lost element of the cityscape in such a way that it would blend well with the historic milieu. As the surviving parts of the masonry clearly indicated, the walls of the mosque had been constructed of roughly hewn stone.

The same system was to be adopted for the reconstruction. The minaret on the other hand, was of finely carved limestone, as is traditional in the mosques of Mostar. The reconstruction project of the balcony and the roof of the minaret were detailed with the help of photographic evidence from the last century.

Nothing survived from the interior of the mosque. A drawing from the Austro-Hungarian period (end of 19th century) gave a rough idea about the mosque interior, but it wasn't very reliable. The oral account of an old citizen from the neighborhood, helped to figure out the configuration of the mosque.

Similar mosques in Mostar were studied for details, like windows, the ceiling and the mahvil. Dervišpašina, Tabačica and Sevri



Mosque in 1908: view from the East



Mosque in 1908: view from the West



Site of the mosque in 1998: view from the West

Hadji Hasan Mosques provided a lot of information about architectural details. Some of the small mosques in Mostar have beautifully carved stone minbars. The new minbar was detailed according to similar ones in the small mosques of Mostar. Similarities in minaret decoration made it possible to figure out the contours and working techniques of moldings and decorative patterns.

The preliminary project in 1/50 scale was developed at IRCICA, in Istanbul. The restitution project was handed over to the Mostar Institute for Preservation for working details. After the approval of the restoration project by the City of Mostar, the actual on the site started in spring of 1999, with ground stabilization. During the last war, several mosques in Mostar destroyed. Some of them were restored with international help. The restoration activity had already revived the traditional crafts relating to timber and stone. This contributed a lot to the success of the restoration work.

All the surviving architectural elements; the retaining walls, the stone floor and part of the portico and the base of the minaret were preserved and stabilized. Nothing remained remained form the 16th century interior decoration. Mihrab had a simple polygonal plan, as many small mosques in Mostar. The surviving plaster on the walls was of lime and painted light blue as in the Tabačica Mosque. This most have been from a late restoration in the 19th century as the former mosque.

To finish the walls, whitewash ^{from Istanbul, was arranged by} was preferred and it was decided to have calligraphy to embellish the interior surfaces. Hasan Çelebi, a celebrated calligrapher ^{worked} on the decorative medallions over the mihrab and other walls. Double-glazing, with an exterior and an inner window, ^{is} traditional in Ottoman mosques were designed and applied.

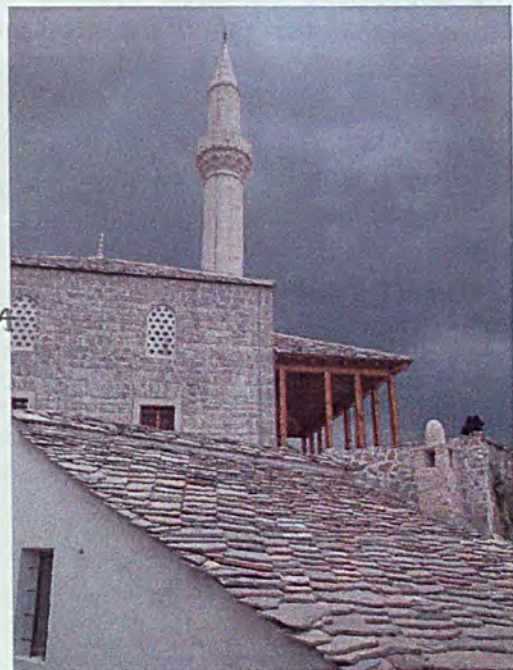
The mosque has a square plan with one side having the length of 10.20 meters, and the walls are 1.05 meters wide. It has a porch with stone sofas, which are 4.40 meters wide and



Mosque during construction



Chief craftsmen Omer Karaahmet and architect Fatin Uluengin are working on decorative elements of the minaret



Mosque: a view from the East above the blacksmith's shop

9.40 meters long. The porch rests against 12 wooden columns.

The minaret, which is 27,3 meters high, and a mimber were built from the tenelija stone with unique decorations.

The ceiling and the gallery were constructed with the pinewood elements.

The ceiling was designed in the traditional Turkish style, with evidence supplied from Šarića and Sevri Hadji Hasan Mosques. A chandelier was designed to hold traditional traditional oil lamps, brought from Istanbul. A new carpet to cover the floor was woven specially for the Neziraga Mosque.

The primary school (mekteb) was rebuilt with timber frame, over the surviving masonry walls. The building consists of two rooms on the upper floor as well as two rooms on the ground floor. There was very little information about the interior of this modest building.

The position of the windows and the chimneys gave a rough idea about the main lines of the interior. A kind of free organization similar to houses from late Ottoman period was set of the main room of the primary school.

The abdesthane (ablution fountain and the toilets) on the other side of the street were also rebuilt to complete the complex.

Original materials and technology were used wherever possible. The roofs of all buildings are covered with stone slates.

All contemporary facilities were applied to give people the maximum quality of use.

The restoration work was supervised jointly with the Mostar Institute for preservation and IRCICA experts. To commemorate the reconstruction activity, an inscription plaque was placed over the entrance to the mosque.



Mosque: a roof detail



Mosque: a porch detail

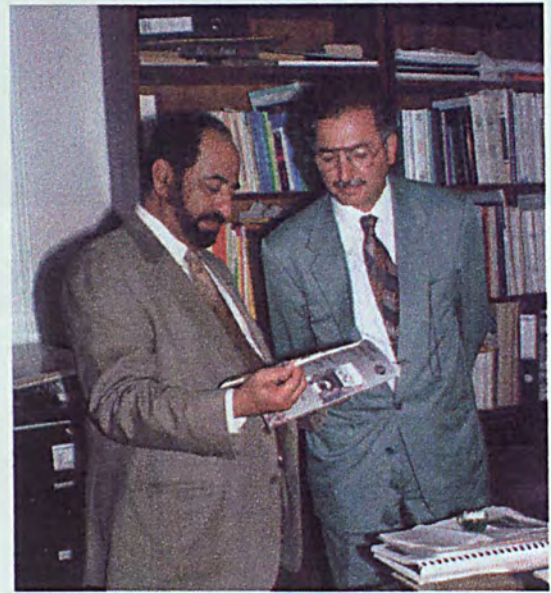


Mosque interior details a central: lighting, and a gallery

H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qassimi, the Ruler of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, has been allocated a generous donation for the mosque reconstruction of the mosque complex.

H.H. Dr. Sultan al Qassimi is an academician with the title of doctor of history, and the author of the many books. He is involved in charitable deeds, as well as supporting *culture and education* *for Muslim communities all over the world*.

He established several centers, which undertake works of charity worldwide. He has exerted invaluable efforts to help people of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war.



Al-
H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Al-Qassimi visited IRCICA on June 30, 1994. During the meeting Professor Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Director General of IRCICA has suggested to H.H. Dr. Qassimi to be the donor for the historic reconstruction of the Neziraga mosque complex in Mostar.

The inauguration ceremony for the reconstruction of the Neziraga Mosque was held in July 30, 1998, as a part of the 4th Workshop Mostar 2004 program.

Ceremony was attended by Mr. Safet Orucevic, Mayor of Mostar, the faculty, and other workshop participants, and representatives of international organizations.



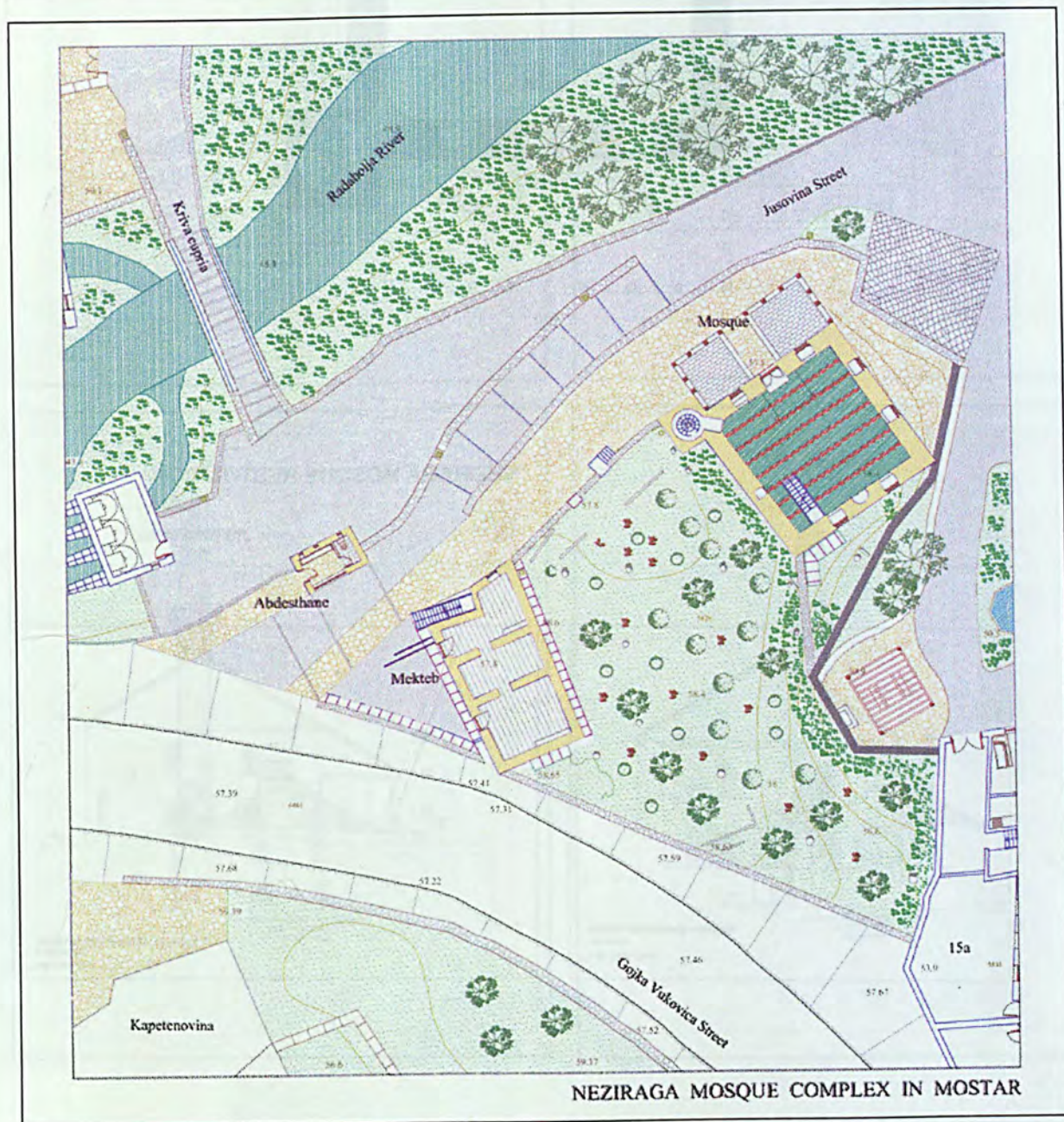
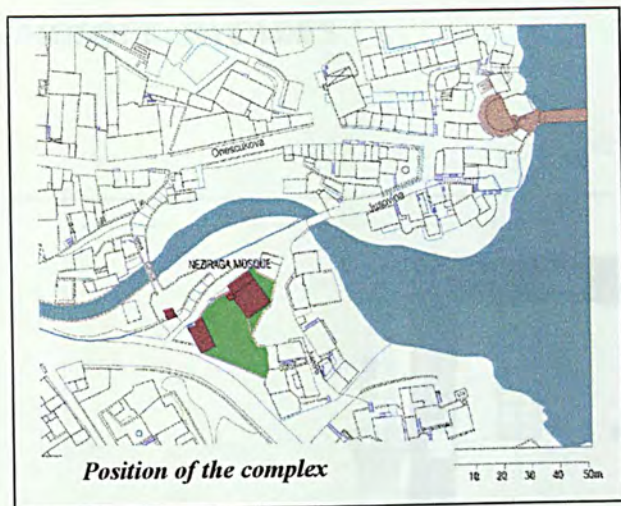
ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION



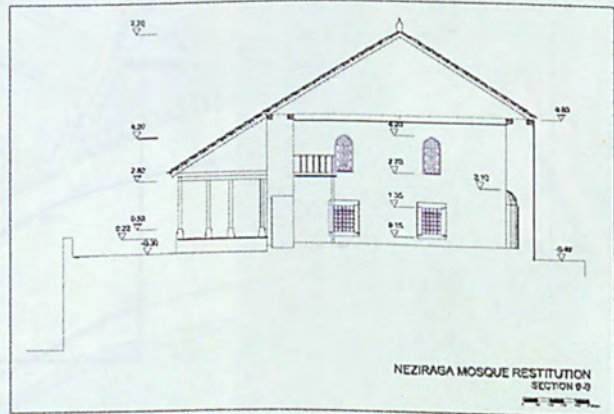
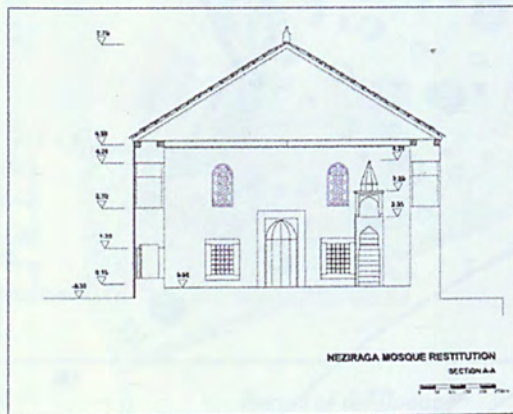
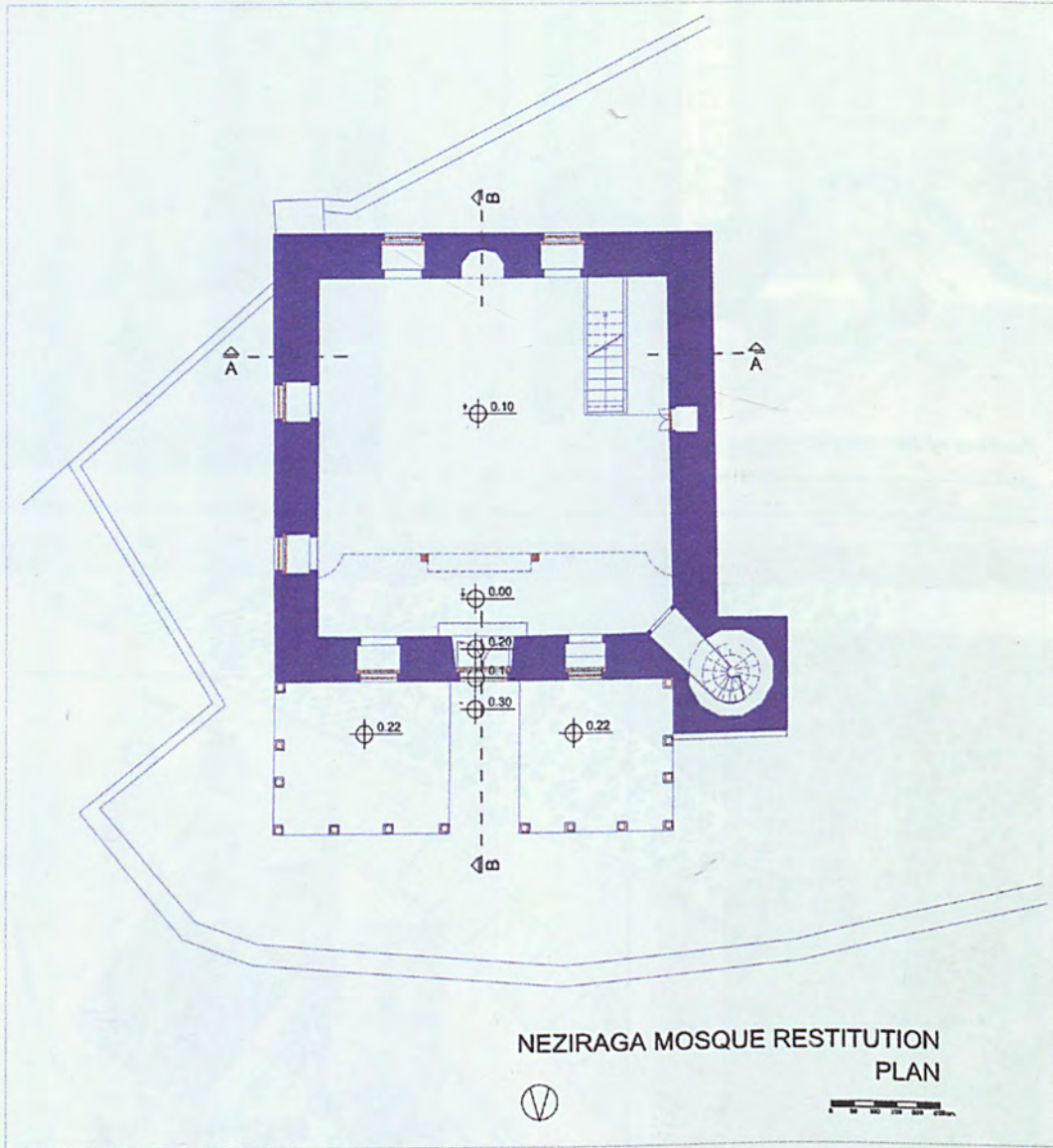
Survey of the floor



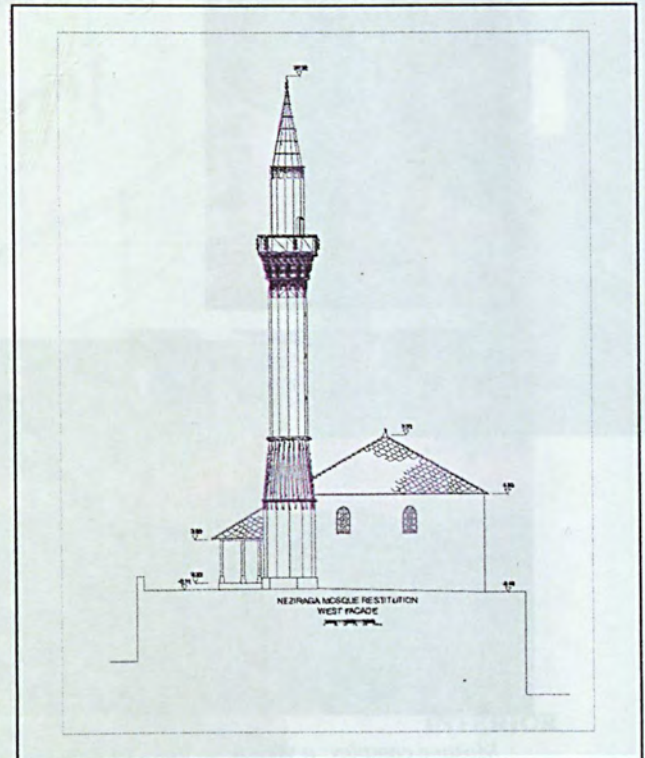
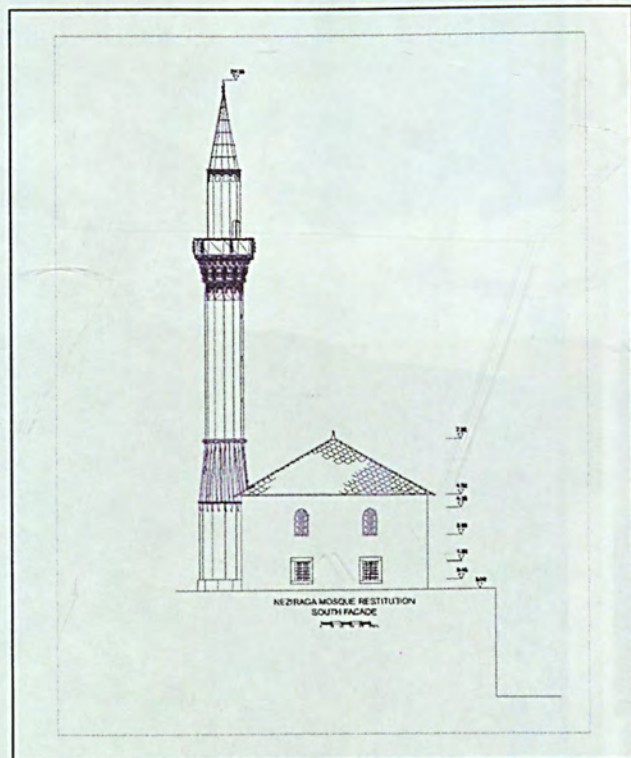
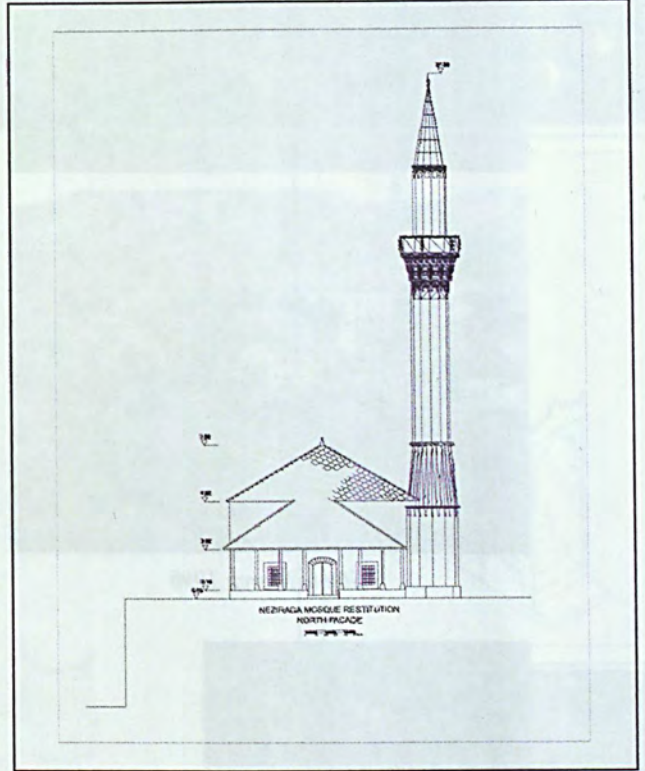
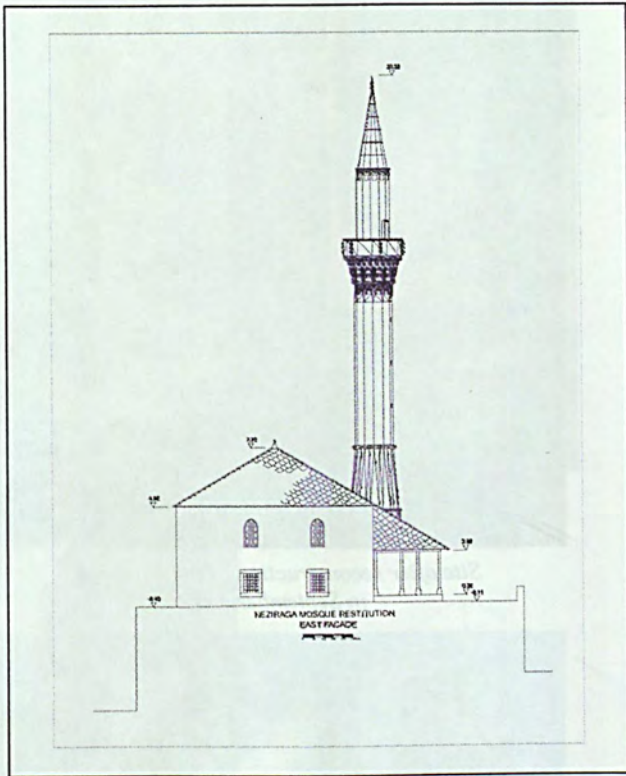
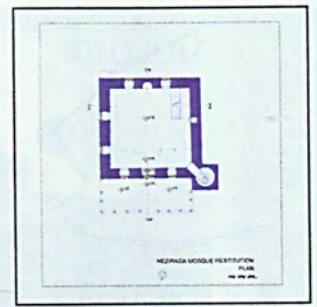
SITE PLAN



MOSQUE: PLAN AND SECTIONS



MOSQUE: FACADES



MOSQUE



Site in March 1998



*Site after reconstruction of the buildings
in September 1999*

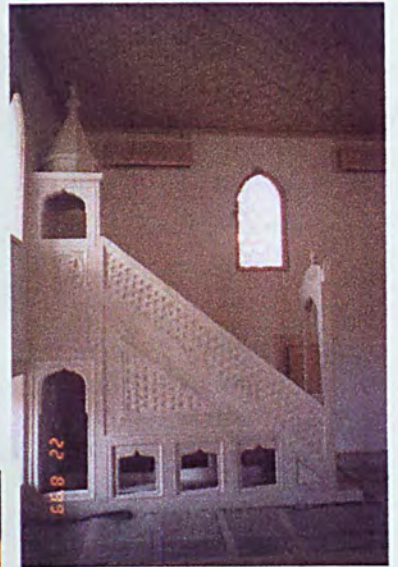
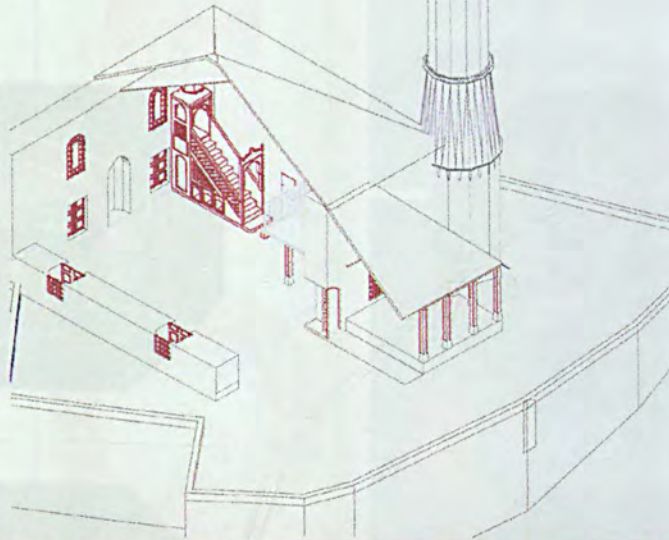
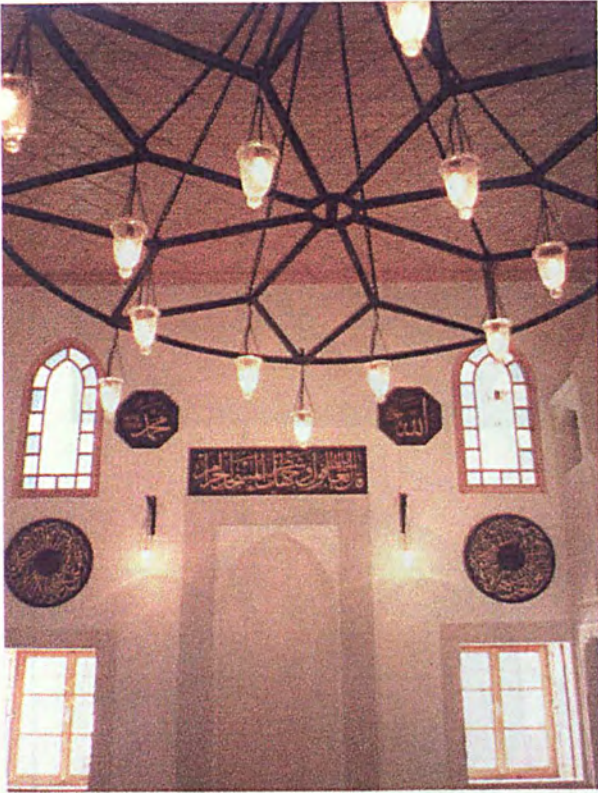


Door of the mosque



*Mosque complex: a view from the East, and a
view from the Buka watermill l(right)*



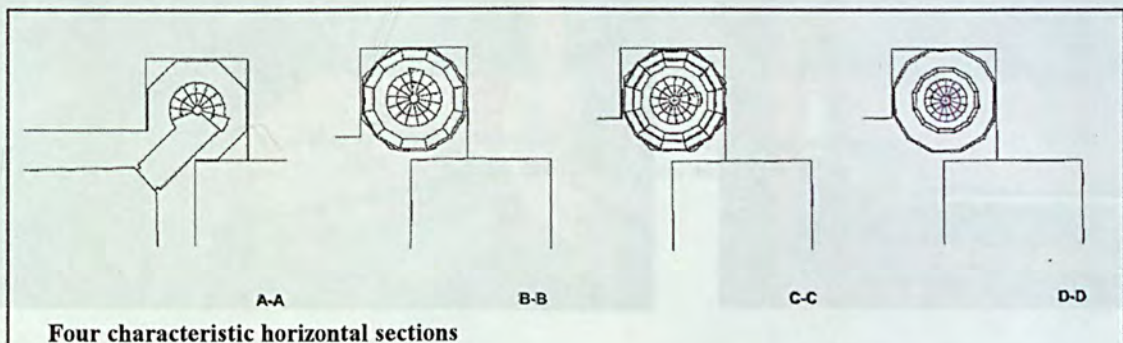
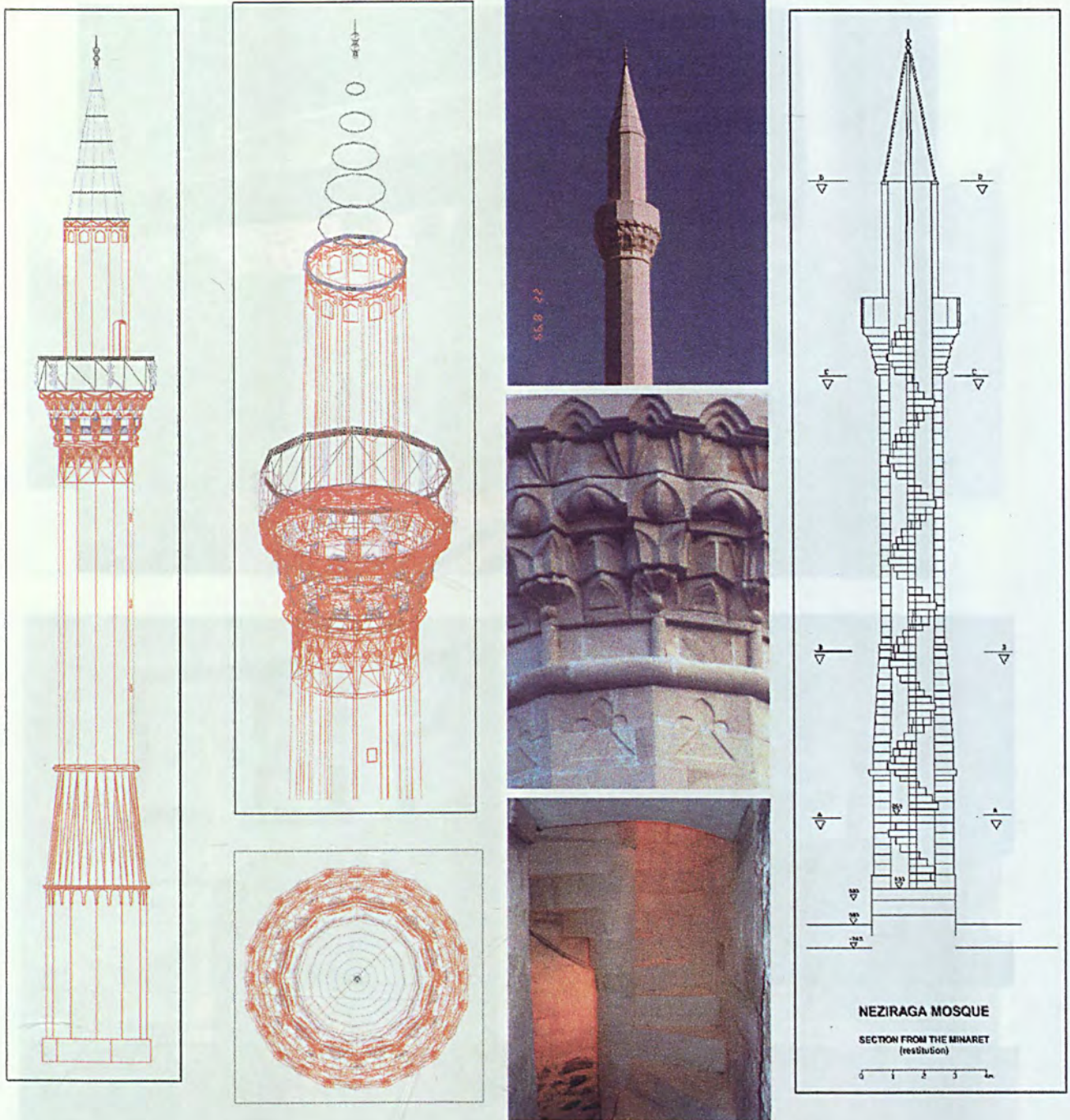


INTERIOR



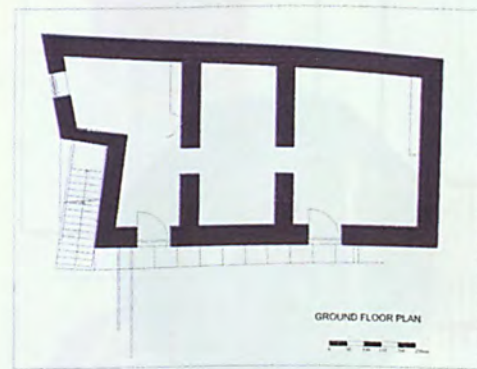
CALLIGRAPHIC INSCRIPTIONS BY HASAN ÇELEBI

MINARET



Four characteristic horizontal sections

MEKTEB



Plan of the first floor



Interior of the second floor

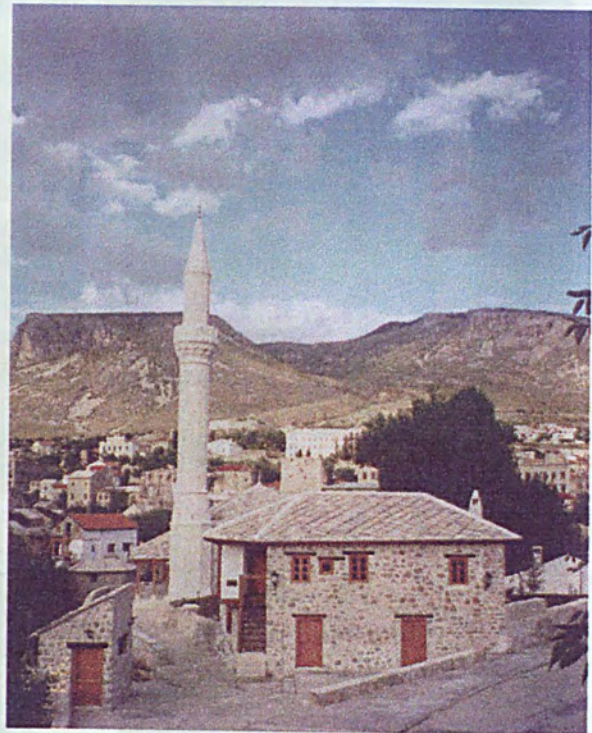
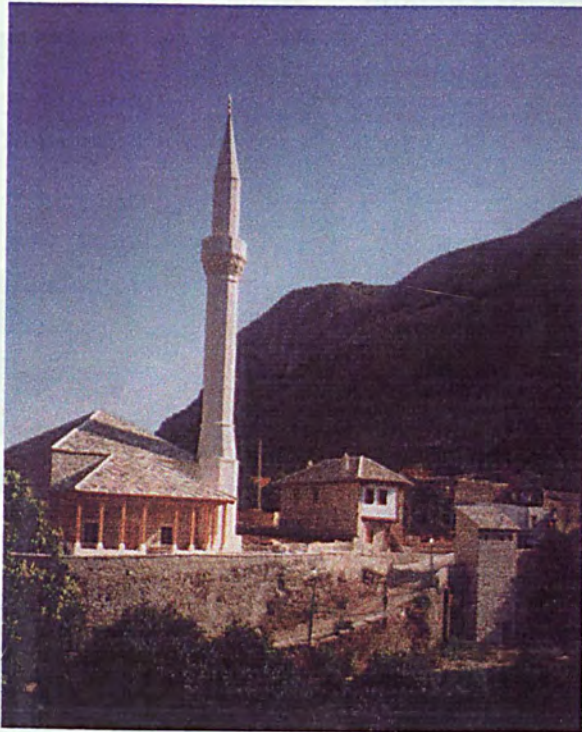


Square in front of the building

MOTIVES OF THE SITE BEFORE AND AFTER THE RECONSTRUCTION



Site in March 1998: views from the North, and the West



Mosque complex after completion of the reconstruction in 1999, views from the same points as photos above

IRCICA'S MOSTAR 2004: THE NEZIRAGA MOSQUE COMPLEX

MOTIVES FROM THE OPENING CEREMONY





Design team

RESTORATION AND RECONSTRUCTION DATA

Donor

H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan al-Qassimi, the Ruler of Sharjah

Organization responsible for the whole project

Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) Istanbul

Professor Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Director General

Professor Dr. Amir Pašić, Project Manager

Archeological survey and restitution design (August-December 1998)

Professor Dr. Zeynep Ahunbay

Professor Dr. Amir Pašić

Type of intervention:

Historic reconstruction - restoration, reconstruction and a new design with historic reminiscence

Implementation design (January-March 1999)

Institute for Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Mostar

Architect Zijad Demirović, Director

Construction (April-August, 1999)

Grđevinar-Fajić Mostar, Arif Fajić, Director and

Kara-Drvo Kiseljak, Omer Karaahmet, Director

Muqarnas restitution: M. Fatin Uluengin

Caligraphic inscriptions: Hasan Çelebi

Supervision

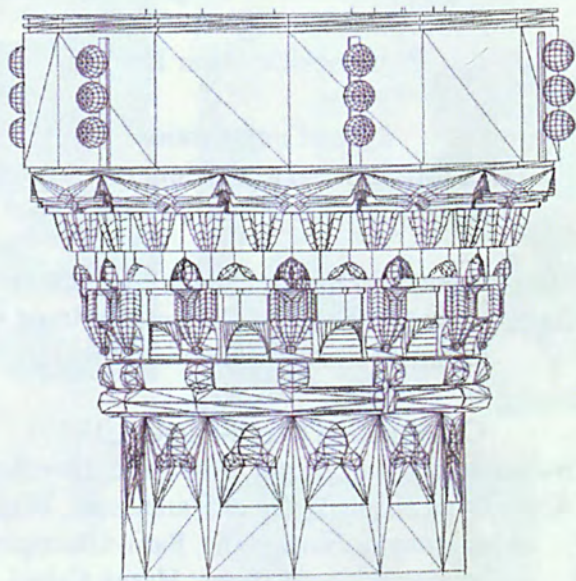
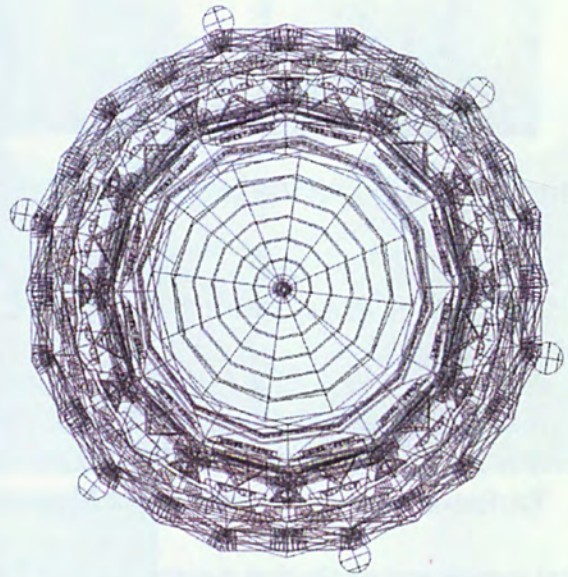
(at the site) Esved Dugalić and Omer Šahić

Professor Dr. Zeynep Ahunbay

Professor Dr. Amir Pašić

Cost of the project: approximately 500000 USD

Opening of the mosque: Friday, September 10, 1999



Muqarnas of the minaret

REKONSTRUKCIJA KOMPLEKSA NEZIR-AGINE DŽAMIJE U MOSTARU

Sažetak

Nezir-agina džamija je locirana na Spilama, dijelu historijske gradske jezgre Starog grada, na platou iznada Krive ćuprije preko rijeke Radobolje-pritoke Neretve, a samo 150 m daleko od Starog mosta.

Nakon rušenja objekta, na platou nije bilo nikakve izgradnje, tako da je kompletan donji dio objekta ostao sačuvan.

Džamija je bila podignuta 1550.godine. Njena vakufnama nije sačuvana. Može se zaključiti da je Nezir-aga bio cijenjena ličnost, vjerovatno zet čuvene porodice Vučjakovića koji su bili nastanjeni u kompleksu preko puta džamije, jedinom stambenom objektu unutar gradskih zidina.



Džamija je bila zatvorena 1932.godine, a srušena je po odluci lokalnih vlasti u proljeće 1950. godine.

Obnovljeni Nezir-agin kompleks se sastoji od džamije mekteba, abdesthane, dvorišta i harema.

Džamija ima kvadratnu osnovu sa dužinom jedne strane od 10,20m i debljine zidova 1,05 m. Ulazni trijem, sa kamenim sofama ima dimenzije 4,40 sa 9,40 m. Krov trijema je oslonjen na 12 drvenih stubova. Munara visine 27,3 m, i mimber su građeni od kamena tenelije i dekorisani unikatnim dekoracijama. Prozori, vrata, galerija i plafon su izvedeni od borovog drveta. Mekteb ima po dvije prostorije na obje etaže. Prostorije na spratu su bogato dekorisane i imaju kamine urađene od kamena tenelije. Svi krovovi u kompleksu su pokriveni kamenim pločama.

Historijska rekonstrukcija kompleksa je realizovana uz puno poštovanje svih činjenica koji su rezultat istraživanja pisane i vizuelne građe, i arheoloških iskopavanja. Nakon kompletiranja projekta restitucije pristupilo se realizaciji koja predstavlja kombinaciju restauracije ključnih elemenata kompleksa sa rekonstrukcijom, i unošenjem novih elemenata u skladu sa postojećim. Orginalni materijali i tehnologija su korišćeni gdje je to god bilo moguće. Savremena oprema koja se mogla uskladiti sa osnovnim konceptom obnove je ugrađena da bi se korisnicima omogućilo kvalitetno korišćenje prostora.

Donator obnove džamije Njegovo Visočanstvo Šeik Dr. Sultan al Qassimi, Vladar Šarže je akademik, doktor historijskih nauka, autor mnogih knjiga. On je uključen u brojne dobrotvorne aktivnosti u cilju podrške znanja i obrazovanja. Osnivač je više centara koji organizuju dobrotvorne aktivnosti širom svijeta. Šeik je ulagao i ulaže ogromne napore u pomoći Bosni i Hercegovini.

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