

**UNIVERSITATEA „OVIDIUS” DIN CONSTANȚA**  
FACULTATEA DE ISTORIE ȘI ȘTIINȚE POLITICE

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**”OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA**  
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCES



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## CAROL I (KING) MOSQUE IN CONSTANȚA

Serkan KILIÇ\*

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**Abstract:** In this study, Carol I Mosque which is situated in Constanța district will be introduced. This mosque, which was built in 1913 with the contributions of Carol I and the Ottoman Empire, differs from the Ottoman mosques in terms of both its plan and adornment characteristics. Although the mosque was built with the techniques of modern architecture, it has the importance of having the main features of Ottoman mosque architecture. Analysing the plan, material and ornaments of the mosque in detail, this study aims to present all features of the mosque by comparing it with other mosques both in Anatolia and in Romania.

**Keywords:** Romania, Constanța, Ottoman, Carol I Mosque

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### Introduction

It is known that Turks began to arrive in the Balkans in the second half of the fourth century before Ottoman Empire. Huns, Avars, Pechenegs and Cumans (Kipchaks), who migrated from Central Asia to the region one after another from the North of the Black Sea, played an important role in the composition of Eastern Europe and the Balkans.<sup>1</sup> Wallachia, one of the Romanian territories today, fell under the rule of Ottoman Empire during the reign of Bayezid I (1394) and Moldavia had been subjected to the same during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror (1476).<sup>2</sup> These communities settled in Timișoara, Dobruja<sup>3</sup> and Ada Kaleh in particular. As for the Turkmen who came from Anatolia and Tatar-Noghay Turks who came from the North domiciled at Dobruca region. In 1419, the Ottomans conquered the most part

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<sup>1</sup> Tuğrul Kihitir, *Balkanlar'ın Osmanlı Tarihi 1352-1913*, İnkılap Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2015, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Eflak*, „İslam Ansiklopedisi”, in Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, vol. 10, 1994, İstanbul, p.466-469; Abdülkadir Özcan, *Boğdan*, in „İslam Ansiklopedisi”, vol. 6, 1992, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> The name Dobruja (Dobruca) comes from Dobrotiç who governed Turkish state in 1357. Afterwards Turks called this region as “Dobrotiç’s Land” namely Dobruca. See Mustafa Üstündağ, *Altın Dobruca'da Bir Köy Yenice*, İstanbul, 2014, p. 3.

of Dobruja as well as Constanța. After this conquest, there occurred an intensive Muslim-Turkish settlement into the region.<sup>4</sup>

In 1877-1878, Russo-Turkish Wars have completely put the Ottoman presence in the region a close.<sup>5</sup> Because of the Russo-Turkish Wars, Turks immigrated to Bulgaria and Turkey with the large masses in 1877.<sup>6</sup> Being under the rule of the Ottomans about 485 years, Romania seceded from Ottoman Empire according to Treaty of San Stefano and Treaty of Berlin in 1878.<sup>7</sup> Ottoman Empire had the several structures built during its rule in Romania, and as it is understood from the researches and archival records, it is identified that 354 structures were built but only 73 of them have reached the present day. One of these work of arts reaching today is King (Carol I) Mosque. Appointed as the Prince in 1866 and became the King of Romania in the early 1900s, Carol I has been known for his tolerance to the Muslims living in his country. Romanian Government built a mosque for the Muslims in Constanța in return for the recognition of Romania Church's authority in Macedonia by Abdul Hamid II's Decree.

### **Carol I (King) Mosque**

The mosque is located in a courtyard at the crossing point of two streets of Constanța, namely Crângului and Arhiepiscopiei. Founder of the mosque is Carol I and the architect is Victor G. Ștefanescu. It is known that King Mosque was built on the foundations of Mahmudiye Mosque, which was constructed by Hafız Hussein Pasha in 1823 in Mahmud II period.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, *Köstence*, in „İslam Ansiklopedisi”, vol. 26, 2002, Türk Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, Ankara, p. 276-277.

<sup>5</sup> Giray S. Bozkurt, *Geçmişten Günümüze Romanya'da Türk Varlığı*, in „Karadeniz Araştırmaları”, no. 5 (17), 2008, p.3; Aleksandre Popovic, *Balkanlarda İslâm*, İnsan Yayınları, İstanbul, 1995, p.124.

<sup>6</sup> Müstecib Ülküsal, *Dobruca ve Türkler*, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, Ankara, 1966, p.25; Sezer Arslan, *Balkan Savaşları Sonrası Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri ve Osmanlı Devleti'nde İskânları*, Unpublished Marster's Thesis, Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Edirne, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *Balkan Tarihi 18. ve 19. Yüzyıllar*, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, 2015, p. 390; Bogdan Murgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 276-277; Halil İnalçık, *Devlet-i Aliyye, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar-IV*, in E. Yalçın (Ed.), Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, vol. IV, İstanbul, 2017, p. 285; Kemal Karpat, *Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Mirası ve Milliyetçilik*, Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012, p. 296.

<sup>8</sup> “*This mosque, named after the deceased Sultan Mahmud, was demolished in 1823 by the deceased Hafız Hussein Pasha in the main district of Constanza, according to the Istanbul Shaykh al-islam's fetwa and it was rebuilt under the merry and glorious reign of the King Carol I of Romania and his wife, Queen Elisabeth II. 5 Zilkade 1328 (November 8, 1910).*” See Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), File number: 468, Case number: 4; It is known that the mosque was built by the Romanian government in return to the recognition of the authority of the Romanian church in Macedonia with the edict of Abdul Hamid II. See

Construction of the structure, which is also known as King Mosque, was started in 1910<sup>9</sup> and the mosque was opened with a ceremony in which King Carol I (Charles) and Queen Elisabeth participated on June 13, 1913.<sup>10</sup> It is understood from the photographs belonging to 1911 that construction of the mosque continued. **(Photo 1)**.<sup>11</sup> Near the completion date of the mosque construction, Hafiz Rifat, who was Constanța's Mufti, filed a report to the Romania Religious Affairs Administration and Ministry of Education and Church House Administration in which he emphasised that the people who will take office in the mosque should be chosen.<sup>12</sup> As of July 1, 1913 the mosque was commissioned by preacher, muezzin and servant.<sup>13</sup> The mosque was restored under the leadership of engineer Aurel Beleş with the support of Romanian State between 1957-1958 upon the request of the Mufti of the period named Yakub Mehmed.<sup>14</sup>

The harim centre of the rectangular planned mosque is covered with a dome, the main axes are covered with barrel vault and the areas in the corners

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Doina Păuleanu and Virgil Coman, *Moscheea Regală Carol I Constanța 1910-2010*, Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2010, p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> “From the Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Registry no: 1671/752 to Sadaret; Romanian government has determined that for the Muslim population living in Dobruja, the Mahmudiye Mosque in Constanța will be demolished and in return for this a new and large mosque will be built; and 6 of the Romanian officials and the mufti of the Constanța will be honoured by their services. Those who have provided services have been promoted and rewarded. Fi 1 Zilkade 1328 ( November 4, 1910).” See BOA. Î. TAL., File number: 468, Case number: 4.

<sup>10</sup> “It has been determined that the mosque, which was built in Constanța, will be inaugurated by the King of Romania and it has been agreed in the Assembly of Ministers that the travel allowance will be given to the participants upon the approval of Minister of External Affairs. 6 Month of Receb 1331 ( June 11, 1913).” See BOA. BEO, File number: 4181, Case number: 313574; “Decree of the Treasury in order to cover the expenses in the amount of 5000 kurus of the deputy chief of the Land Registry (Mahmud Esat Efendi), who was present at the opening ceremony of the mosque built in Constanța, and then came to the country. 17 Month of Recep 1331 (June 22, 1913).” See BOA. MV., File number:178, Case number:123.

<sup>11</sup> Doina Păuleanu, Virgil Coman, *op. cit.*, p.114, 124.

<sup>12</sup> “The necessary personnel consists of 1 hatib, 1 imam, 1 muezzin and 2 servants. The Hatib will have a monthly salary of 300 Ley, the imam and preacher will have the same, the muezzin 200 Ley and each of the two servants 100 Ley. As I mentioned in my previous reports, in the selection of hatib, imam and muezzin, deep religious knowledge, experience and nice vocal should be sought. Since such religious officers are not present in the country, I would ask you to authorize me in order to choose the personnel to be appointed by contract.” See *Ibidem*, p. 85.

<sup>13</sup> “Hafiz Kemaleddin, Hafiz Mustafa Fevzi as muezzins and Rifat Muhiddin as the servant have been appointed to the Carol I Mosque in Constanța.” See *Ibidem*, p.89.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p.96-98.

are covered with a covering that reminds the brick vault.<sup>15</sup> The minaret of the mosque is located on the northwest corner of the harim. The upper floor of the structure, which is constructed as two-storey building, has a wall thickness of 0.68 m and the thickness of the basement wall is 0.71 m (**Plan 1,2**).

The harim walls of the mosque is knitted with the infilled wall technique and the surface of the walls is plastered with cement. The columns in the courtyard of the building, the portal of entrance gate of the harim and the door wings include marble, and gypsum materials is used on the pilasters in the harim, gathering-place of women and the decorations on the mihrab. Ceramic is used on the internal walls of the harim and bronze decorations are seen on the external surface of the dome covering the harim, on the wings of the entrance gate of the harim and on the oil-lamp hanging down from the dome. The inner walls of the mosques courtyard and the minaret are plastered with cement. The dome of the mosque is covered with asphalt material and pebble stones. The minbar and the sermon platform are made of wood. Brass material is preferred on the dome located in the minbar. The conical cone of the minaret is covered with lead materials. The bricks are used in the harim and the areas where the passage elements of the dome are located and in the basement floor. (**Photo 2**).

The central dome of the mosque sits on a high base with a dodecagonal plan. The four corners of the base are bevelled. The dome is reinforced concrete and covered with pebble stones on the outside asphalt. Dome plinth is activated by a total of 16 recessed lancet windows. Having eight-armed stars in its centre and spiral-shaped decorations around, waffle slabs are placed between the windows. The surface of the top of the dome is decorated with curved *brach rumi* motifs processed in the moulding techniques with bronze material. The dome ends with a four-nodal finial. (**Photo 3**). The roof of the mosque and the stone mosaic of the dome were completely renovated in 1957 and 1958.<sup>16</sup>

The mosque's harim walls are surrounded by four flat and concave mouldings. The mosque has an unorthodox facade organisation that is not seen in the Ottoman buildings built in Romania. The east and west facades of the mosque are arranged in a similar way and are divided into three parts by masonry buttresses. The surface of the lancet arches in the middle section, which is held higher than the roof, is activated by the mouldings composed of three stages in different sizes. The corbels on which the arches sit are designed with arches. Inside the arch pediment, a triple-window application that reminds the form of the clover is seen. The lower two windows are separated by a

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<sup>15</sup> The plan of the mosque is likened to the *Curtea de Argeș*, a crosslike planned church which is located in Romania. See Bruno Andreșoiu, Cristian Bracescu and Mihai Maxim, *Geamii: Minarete Pe Cerul Dobrogei-Minarets in a Dobrogea Sky*, Igloo, București, 2012, p.19.

<sup>16</sup> Doina Păuleanu, Virgil Coman, *op. cit.*, p.188.

column with the palmette head. Eight-armed star motifs are used in the networks of the recessed windows. On each side of the arch, an extending rectangular window ending with a horseshoe arch is positioned. The four corners of the harim are decorated with romanesque style including plaster palmette bands (**Photo 4,5**).

A similar belt arc is seen on the southern front. The reinforced concrete chimney, positioned just to the west of the belt arc, is striking. In the center of the facade there are buttresses supporting the mihrab and walls. In the arch pediment, there is a rounded triple window application. On both sides of the arch, we see the windows and palmette bands with which we confronts on other facades.

The north facade is arranged differently than other facades. The side wings of the facade designed as three blocks are deafened. The main door with drop arch is located on the center of the facade. The door that is collapsed inside is framed with three rows of lancet arches (**Photo 6**). On the arch pediment, there are inscriptions arranged in hand-drawn technique; in the circle above, black on white ground “Bismillahirrahmanirrahim” (*Basmala: in the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful*) and below:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْفُوتًا

[Pronunciation: *İnnes salâte kânet alâl mu'minîne kitâben mevkûtâ (mevkuten)*]<sup>17</sup> are read.<sup>18</sup> Both sides of the top of the facade center are activated by an application of bevelled corners that resembles weight towers.

The courtyard of the mosque is entered through the door with a drop arch. The courtyard is designed as a rectangular plan measuring 15.00x7.92 m. In the east and west of the courtyard, there are porticoes formed by throwing a lancet arch between one marble column. The surface of porticoes are covered with flat housetop. The belt arcs are marked with four rows of moulding. The midpoint of the belt corner in the center is decorated with a three-armed star in the form of a circle. The tops of the columns are activated by a five rows of the rings in the form of a hollow moulding. The column headings are decorated with palmette, curved branchy rumi and lotus motifs according to the orientalist style.<sup>19</sup> Ablution is performed on the eastern and western walls of the porticoes with faucets connected on two stone blocks. Block stones are framed by a series of thin mouldings and the lower parts of the stones are activated by the outwardly expansive composed by means of dividing the hexagonal forms into two. Each part where ablution is performed is taken into the frame by three interwoven lacet arches (**Photo 7**).

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<sup>17</sup> Surah of Nisâ, Verse 103.

<sup>18</sup> It is known that the inscription was written by Ömer Vasfi Efendi in H. (Hijri Calendar) 1333 / M. (Gregorian Calendar) 1914-15. See Ekrem H. Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimari Eserleri, Romanya-Macaristan*, vol. 1, İstanbul, Fetih Cemiyeti, İstanbul, p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> Turgut Saner, *19. Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarlığında Oryantalizm*, Pera Turizm ve Ticaret A.Ş., İstanbul, p.31-32.



The southern wall of the courtyard is designed so as to effuse from the harim to the north. A minaret with a single balcony is positioned to the west corner of the facade. In the center of the wall, there is a door opening to the passage corridor. On both sides of the door, there are two masonry buttresses supporting the wall. The door with a monumental look overflows. Outwardly the first moulding is designed in the form of a straight, second one is hollow, the third one is concave, the fourth is straight and the fifth moulding is in the form of hollow. The name of “*Architect V.G. Ștefanescu*,” who is the architect of the mosque, is written on the surface of the second moulding with an engraving technique in the west of the door. The door cavern (*kavsara*) is activated by zigzags gradually narrowing from bottom to top. The zigzags that define the boundaries of the cavern have been emphasised by the thin hollow moulding. Alongside both inner corners of the door, wreathed and embedded columns are symmetrically placed. The headings of the columns are decorated with rumi and palmette motifs by means of engraving technique. The surface of the cap stone on the door, large and small palmette motifs are processed alternately (**Photo 8, 9, 10**).

A monumental door is entered into the passage corridor. The center of the corridor is covered with a dome 2.74 m in diameter, sitting on the arches thrown in the north-south direction. In the east of the corridor, there are stairs leading to the women's gathering-place and the basement of the mosque. The eastern corner of the corridor is arranged as a preparation room for the imam, and the entrance to the minaret is on the west of the corridor. The passage corridor reminds the place of the last community, but it is functionally far from this.

The minaret is located on the northwest corner of the harim. The minaret, designed as a single balcony, is built entirely of concrete. The minaret is entered through the flat lintel door located in the west of the passage corridor. The height of the minaret is 40.00 m and it is reached by 140 steps. The upper part of the cylindrical body is activated by six rows of smooth face moulding. The lower section of the balcony is supported by 16 consoles separated by lancet arches. The upper part of the balcony is limited to four rows of moulding and the waffle slabs are placed on the surfaces between the consoles. The surfaces of the waffle slabs are filled with eight-armed stars and spiral-shaped decorations in the center. A wide eaves is placed in order to prevent the rain and sun from the incumbent ascending there. This eaves is carried by 10 columns placed on the barriers of balcony. The headings of these columns are decorated with decorative muqarnasses. The conical cone is located on the honeycomb section, which is more slimly designed than the cylindrical body. The outer surface of this cone is covered with pebble stones on asphalt

and ends with a single-nodal finial (**Photo 11**). In 1966, the balcony of the minaret and the cover system of the balcony were rebuilt.<sup>20</sup>

At the center of the southern facade of the passage corridor, there is the entrance door of harim with drop arched. Marble is used on the arch and wings of the door. In the door wings, an application that has never been encountered before is noteworthy. The wings are composed of marble blocks which are enclosed with iron material. Bronze plates made of moulding technique were nailed down, which corresponded to the hinge level of both doors. The surface of the plates is decorated with palmettes, rumi and lotus motifs. As for the surface of the plant decorations, it is marked by the scraping technique (**Photo 12,13**).

The Harim has a square plan with 14.25x14.20 of sizes and the central space carried by the feet of shaped like cross is covered by a dome with a diameter of 7.21 m at the center. The main axes are covered with a barrel vault and the remaining areas in the corners are covered with a cover that reminds the brick vault. Lancet arches are placed between the feet and the pendant is used in the passage to the dome.<sup>21</sup> The dome core is adorned with a yellow, 16-armed star on a blue background by means of the hand-drawn technique. The section between the dome core and the dome plinth is filled with eight-armed stars of large and small sizes. In the barrel vaults located in the main axes, eight-armed stars are seen which are processed in the same technique. The dome plinth is activated with 16 lancet arched windows. Vertical rectangular cartridges are placed between the windows. The surface of the cartridges is decorated with lotus motifs in yellow and green colors on a white background (**Photo 14, 15**).<sup>22</sup> Just below the windows, there are two rows of curb that encircles the dome from end to end. The first curb is decorated with a geometric ornament having a yellow colored pyramidal form on a blue background and the surface of the broader second curb is decorated with antrolak motifs (circles knotted together) composed of yellow, brown and red colors. The 5th and 6th verses of Surah of İnsan are written on the wider designed curb, which encompasses the dome pulley, with a gold star on blue background by means of hand-drawn technique (**Photo 16**). The bronze oil lamp hanging down from the dome core to the bottom with a chain is made by casting technique. In unit motif, the surface of oil lamp is decorated with eight-armed star and a composition in which the curved branched palmette and the rumi motifs are located. Green colored stones are added to the recessed nests of the arms of the star. The alignment of the crossing points where the chains are mounted to the oil lamp is activated with palmette motifs (**Photo 17**). Gypsum plates are placed in the parts located

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<sup>20</sup> Bruno Andreșoiu, Cristian Bracacescu, Mihai Maxim, *op. cit.*, p.19.

<sup>21</sup> It is known that the marbles brought from Câmpulung city of Romania were used inside the feet of the harim. See Doina Păuleanu, Virgil Coman, *op. cit.*, p.187.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem.*, p.150.

in the top of the crosslike feet carrying the dome, which are directed to the center of the harim. The plates are decorated with embossed rumi motifs. Just below this ornament, auger columns that are placed in a way to corresponding to each corner of the feet are striking. Thinly designed each column has a rumi motif. The edges of Rumi leaves are designed as folded (**Photo 18**). The four facades of the harim walls are covered with square tiles consisting of three rows of curbs, that is approximately 2.50 m high from the ground. The ornaments seen on the surface of the tiles are made with the glazing technique. The upper bordure is made of zigzag motifs, which are processed in yellow color on a blue background, gradually expanding from bottom to top and just below the border is wider and is decorated with blue and yellow eight-armed stars on a green background. The lower border consists of yellow tiles (**Photo 19**). It is known that the carpet laid on the floor of the mosque was donated by Sultan Abdul Hamid II to the mosque in Ada Kaleh. Hereke carpet, which measures 15.00x9.00 m and weighs 480 kg, was moved to the Carol I Mosque in 1965 due to Ada Kaleh's submergence under the dam waters.<sup>23</sup>

Harim is lightened with a total of 34 windows. 16 of these windows are located at the plinth of the dome. There are 10 windows on the east and west sides, five on the southern front and three on the north front.

The mihrab is placed in the center of the southern wall of the harim and the minbar is placed just to the west of the mihrab. There are three round-shaped windows on the mihrab, which are reminiscent of the clover type. The windows are taken into the frame with the large curbs processed in hand-drawn technique. The surface of the curbs is filled with yellow palmette motifs on a blue background. A window is positioned at the upper elevations of the eastern and western corners of the south wall. The lower parts of the windows are rectangular and the upper parts are designed as a semicircle. (**Photo 20**). The window arrangements of the east and west walls of the harim are symmetric and the center of the facades is activated by the recessed lancet arch. In the arch pediment, triple window application can be seen. The lower two windows extend in rectangular form and end with a lancet arch. Just above the windows, another window is placed in round form. On the north and south corners of the facades, an upper elevation window is placed. On the north side of the foot in the southeast corner carrying the dome, a sermon platform is positioned. In the center of the northern facade of the harim, there is an entrance door with drop arches. Just above the door, women's gathering-place is placed. The upper elevation of the northern facade is activated by a recessed lancet arch. In the

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<sup>23</sup> Semavi Eyice, *Gurbette Kalan Türk Eserleri*, in „IX. Vakıf Haftası Kitabı-Türk Vakıf Medeniyetinde Hz. Mevlana ve Mevlevihanelerin Yeri ve Vakıf Eserlerde Yer Alan Türk İslam Sanatları Semineri”, Ankara, 1992, p.181-186; Gülten A. Nazare, “Romanya ve Aşağı Tuna Avrupa Bölgesinde Geçmişten Bugüne Türk Varlıklarını Canlandırma ve Koruma Mücadelesi”, in *Türk Dünyası Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Zirvesi*, 11-13 Mayıs 2014, Eskişehir, 2014, p.161-171.

arch pediment, different round-shaped windows are located, which are similar to the clover type.

The mihrab is positioned at the center of the southern facade of the harim and is moved 0.28 m out of the wall. Since the surface of the mihrab is completely painted, any construction material has not been detected. However, it is known that gypsum material is used in curbs and ornaments. The mihrab is enclosed with four rows of curbs in the opposite U direction. From outside to inside, the first and third curbs are flat surfaces and the second is hollow-form. “Esmā-ul Husnā” (*The names of Allah*) is written on the surface of the larger fourth curb with a yellow colour on the blue background by means of hand-drawn technique. The mihrab cavern is filled with 10 rows of muqarnas narrowing from bottom to top. Mukarnas joggles are marked by painting in blue, green and red colors. The surface of the ninth muqarnas in row is decorated with palmette motifs. In the unit motif with green color on blue background, the corner beads of the arch are adorned with a composition of hand-drawn technique of which its center contains a palmette surrounded by two curved branched rumi leaves. The depth of the mihrab niche is 1.22 m. The surface of the niche is enclosed by three thin hollow mouldings and is decorated with six-armed stars formed by the interconnected lines at the center, which are both lowered and topped. On both sides of the niche, there is one wreathed column. The column heads are decorated with two rows of muqarnasses, which are processed in the engraving technique. The cap stones of the mihrab consists of three parts. The lower section is decorated with alternating lancet arches and lotus motifs one after another. The interior of the lancet arches is filled with processed muqarnas rows in the engraving technique. To the each corner bead of the arch, a lotus motif is placed which is made by gypsoplasty technique. Just above the surface of the second section, “*kullēmā debale aleyhā zekeriyyal mibrābe*” is written by hand-drawn technique with yellow color on the blue background.<sup>24</sup> The third section ends with a frieze with rowed palmette motifs. The palmettes made of carving technique are painted in white and orange.

The minbar is located in the west of the mihrab and is made entirely of wood with the exception of the dome in the pavilion. The ornaments seen on the minbar are engraved and scraped. The baseboard of the minbar is kept plain. The minbar door, which is enclosed with a row of curbs, is rectangular and has a straight lentil. The surface of the curb is decorated with motifs by engraving technique, which reminds triangles and arrowheads. In the door pediment, “*Bismillabirrahmanirrahim*” inscription can be read, which is taken into frame of a rectangular board. The cap stone of door is designed as sliced and decorated with intertwined rumi and palmette motifs. The transom and the passage sections of the minbar are decorated with eight-armed stars and rosette

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<sup>24</sup> Surah of Āli Īmrān, Verse 37.

motifs, which are processed in high relief technique. Each arm of the stars is engraved with a thinly scraping method, giving the appearance of the leaf. The lower section of the passage section is divided into six small panels. The surface of the two upper panels is decorated with a six-armed star motif by low-relief technique and the surface of the four panels at the bottom is decorated with a four-armed leaf motif. Inside each panel, the barriers of the minbar are activated by the octagonal-shaped motifs of broken lines upon cage technique. The minbar pavilion with 11 steps is covered with a flat roof carried by four wreathed columns. Column heads are adorned with rumi motifs in engraving technique. Sliced lancet arches are laid between the columns and the corner beads of the arch are decorated with rumi and palmette motifs in the same technique. The cap stone part of the pavilion is designed in three slices. On the surface of the slice located in the center, palmette and rumi motifs are seen, and at the edge of the slices only rumi motif is seen. The minbar ends with the symbolic dome and the finial, which are made of brass. The top of the dome, palmet motifs hanging from top to bottom are applied.

The platform of the sermon is located on the northern facade of the southeastern foot carrying the dome. The platform of the sermon was built by Babic family which is one of the prominent Romanian family.<sup>25</sup> The platform of sermon, which is made entirely of wood, is designed as hexagonal planned. There are five stairs to the platform. The base of the platform is activated by two rows of adorning cords. The cord at the bottom is composed of the leaf motifs enclosed in triangle with the engraving technique, and the cord in the upper section is composed of the knotted motifs. The barriers of the platform consists of six facades. A vertical rectangular panel is located in the center of each facade. The surface of the panels is filled with four-armed star at the center, and the bottom and the top of the star are filled with hexagons formed by the interlocking of the broken lines. Star motif is used in low-relief technique and the hexagons are processed in engraving technique.

Women's gathering-place is 14.20x2.46 m in size and extends along the northern wall of the harim. The parts of the southern facade of the barriers of the gathering-place made of reinforced concrete material, apart from the feet, are activated by a large curb consisting of three parts. The surface of the recessed curbs are decorated with embroidered floral motifs on the plaster. As a unit motif, the palmette motif in which rumi branches are connected together by means of knotting, is located in the center. One flower motif is placed on the surface of the nodes in the center. The consoles made of plaster for decorative purposes are placed on the lower part of the barrier. The surface of the consoles is decorated with palmette, rumi, rosette and leaf motifs by the same technique (**Photo 21**).

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<sup>25</sup> Bruno Andreșoiu, Cristian Bracacescu, Mihai Maxim, *op. cit.*, p.19.

The basement of the mosque has 17 stairs located in the east of the passage corridor. The basement floor has a rectangular plan measuring 14.00x13.30 m. The northeast corner of the place is designed as a room and the north west is designed as a large hall. In the center of the basement, there is a place formed by means of knitting brick walls between four crosslike feet. There are two central heating boilers in the middle of the room. The metal tubes that are installed in the boilers provide hot water to the heating cores in the harim and warm the mosque (**Photo 22**).

### **Evaluation:**

The mosque, whose construction was completed on June 13th, 1913, is important in terms of the fact that it was built in cooperation with the Ottoman Empire.

The mosque, which was built as a result of the tolerance between the two countries, has Orientalist and Byzantine influences. It is known that Victor Ștefănescu, the architect of the mosque, applied to many sources before the construction of the building and he went to İstanbul and visited works that interested him with a delegation.<sup>26</sup> Although it was built as a mosque, the concept of design and facade is more reminiscent of the architecture of the Christian church than the Ottoman architecture. Given that the mosque's constructive and architect is Christian, it is better understood why the structure was built in this style. It is also known that an exhibition on structures containing national architectural elements was organized in order to honor the independence of Romania, in 1906, and Ștefănescu participated in this exhibition.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it can be said that the architect designed this mosque by combining both Romanian national architecture and Ottoman architecture.

The mosque has many styles such as Romanesque, Byzantine and Orientalist in terms of plan, decoration and design. It is noteworthy that the palmet, rumi, mukarnas and star ornaments seen in the plaster and bronze materials used in portal and mihrab of the mosque have traces of Ottoman architecture. Considering the mosque's exterior design, it is thought that the architect visited Nur-u Osmaniye Mosque and Nusretiye Mosque during his stay in İstanbul and built the Carol I Mosque, inspired by these works.

The mosque, which was built during the reign of Abdul Hamid II, resembles the facade design of the Hamidiye Mosque in Selanik (1902)<sup>28</sup> and

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<sup>26</sup> Doina Păuleanu, Virgil Coman, *op. cit.*, p.185.

<sup>27</sup> Ada Hajdu, *The Search of National Architectural Styles in Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria from the Mid-nineteenth Century to World I*, in „Entangled Histories of the Balkans”, IV, Brill Academic Publish, Bucharest, 2017, p. 422.

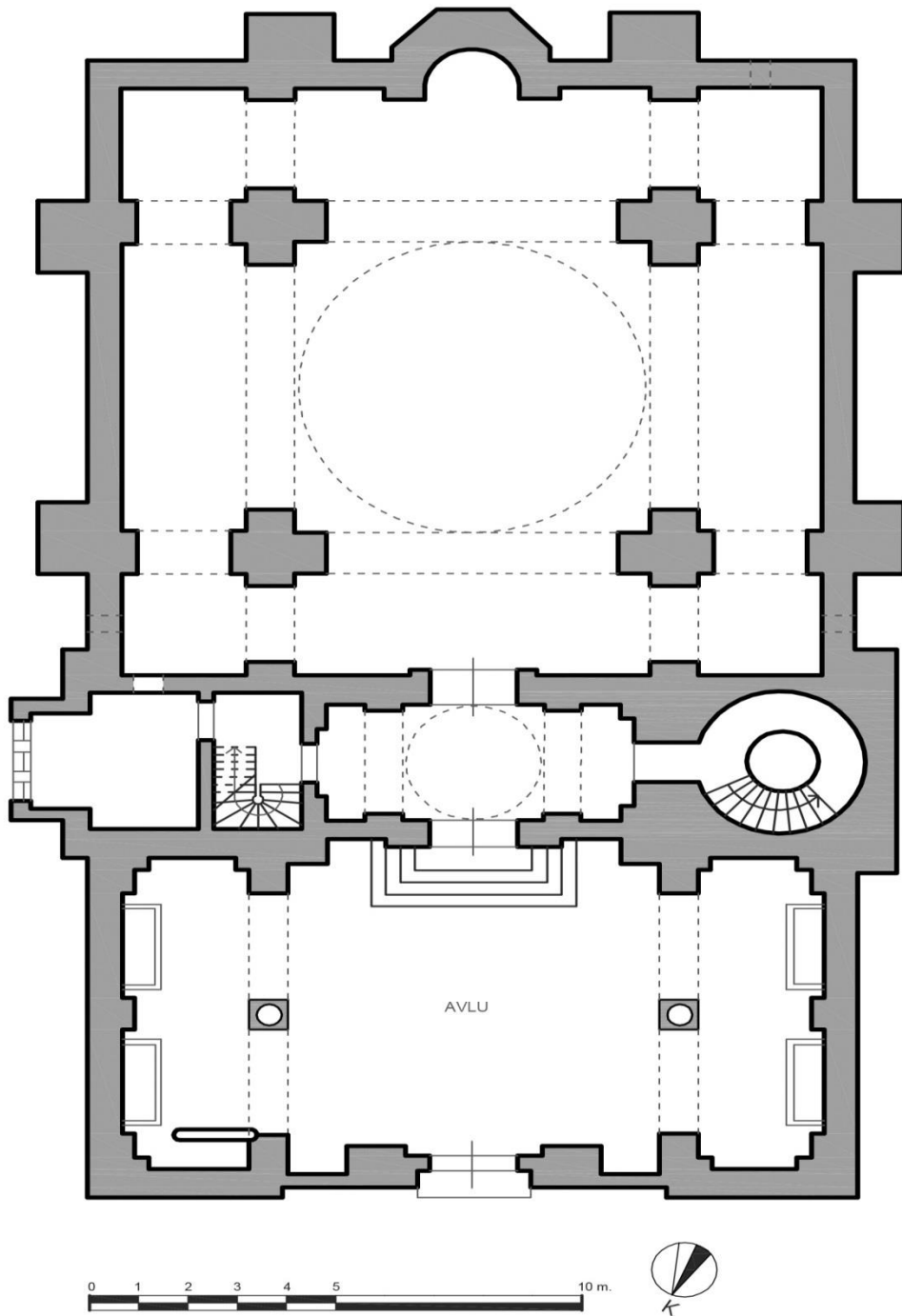
<sup>28</sup> Oya Şenyurt, *Selanik Hamidiye Cami: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Mimaride Geleneksel Yaklaşımlar ve Oryantalizm*, in „KOSBED”, 31, 2016, p. 185-201.

the Tomarza (1876-1908)<sup>29</sup> and Han Mosque (1899)<sup>30</sup> in Kayseri, which were known to have been built by an Italian architecture commissined by Abdul Hamid II.

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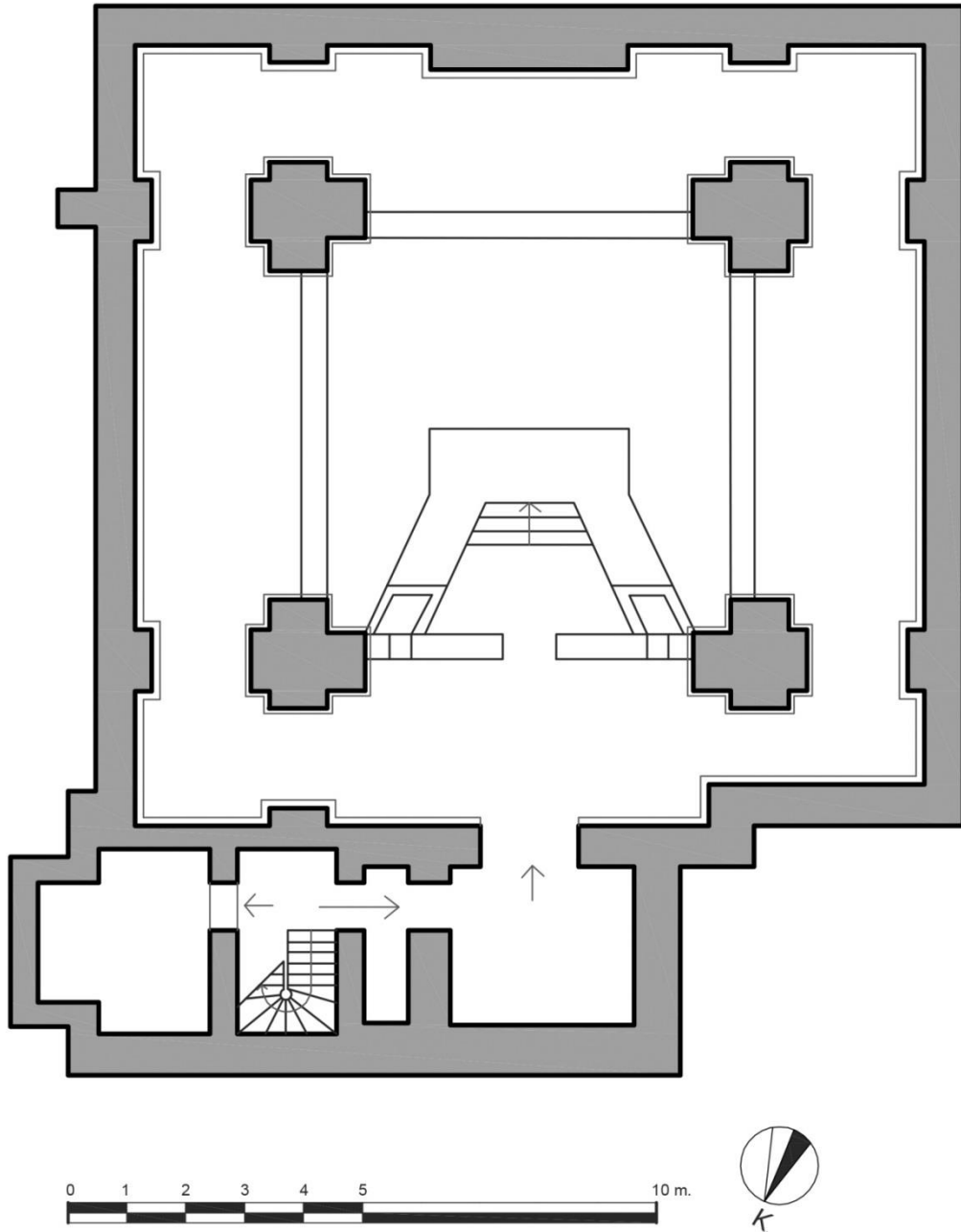
<sup>29</sup> Yıldray Özbek, *Kayseri Tomarza'da II. Abdülhamid Döneminde İnşa Edilmiş İki Yapı: Merkez Camisi ve Müftülük Binası*, in „METU.JFA”, no. 28 (1), 2011, p.55-68.

<sup>30</sup> Kerim Türkmen, *Talas'ta Türk Devri Yapıları*, in „Vakıflar Dergisi”, no. 26, 1997, p.153-192.



**Plan 1:** The Plan of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța (Editing from Păuleanu, Coman)





**Plan 2:** The Plan of Downstairs of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța  
(Editing from Păuleanu, Coman)



Fotografie a Moscheii Regale „Carol I” Constanța, în timpul construcției, realizată în anul 1911 de arhitectul Victor Ștefănescu (Colecția Mihail G. Ștefănescu)

**Photo 1:** Photo of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța from 1911.

Serkan KILIÇ  
CAROL I (KING) MOSQUE IN CONSTANȚA

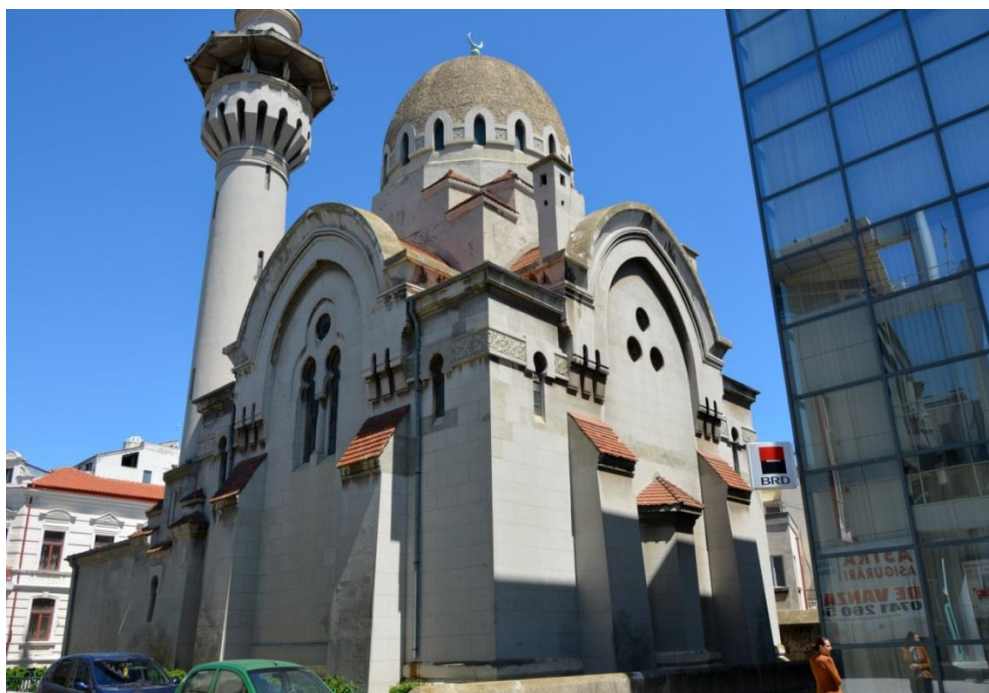
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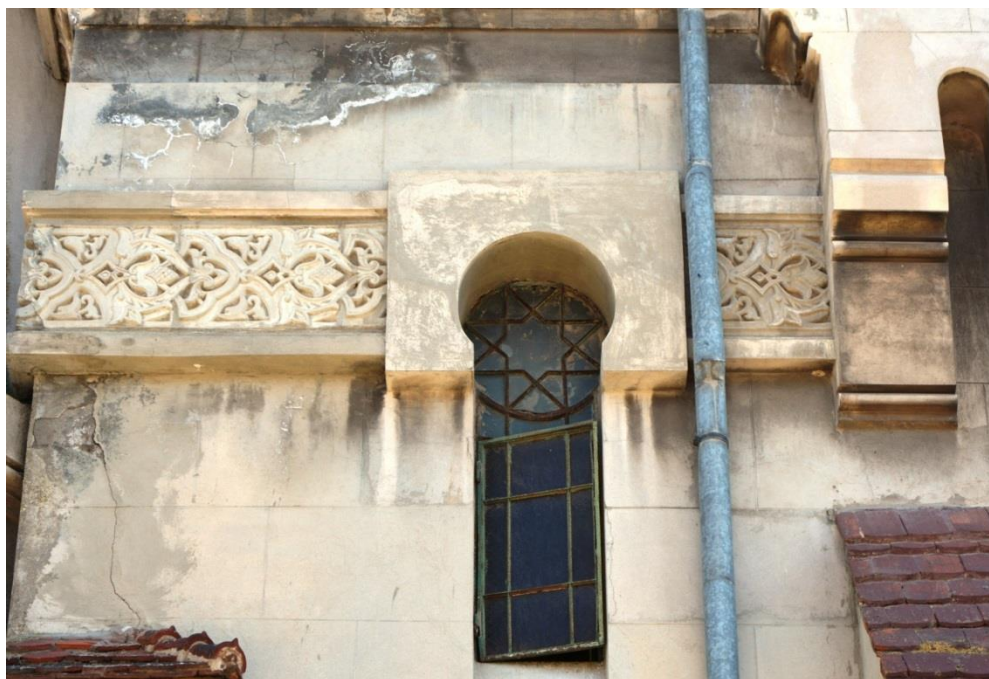
**Photo 2:** General View of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 3:** The Dome of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 4:** The Southwest Facade of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 5:** Detail from the Palmet Bands of Carol I (King) in Constanța



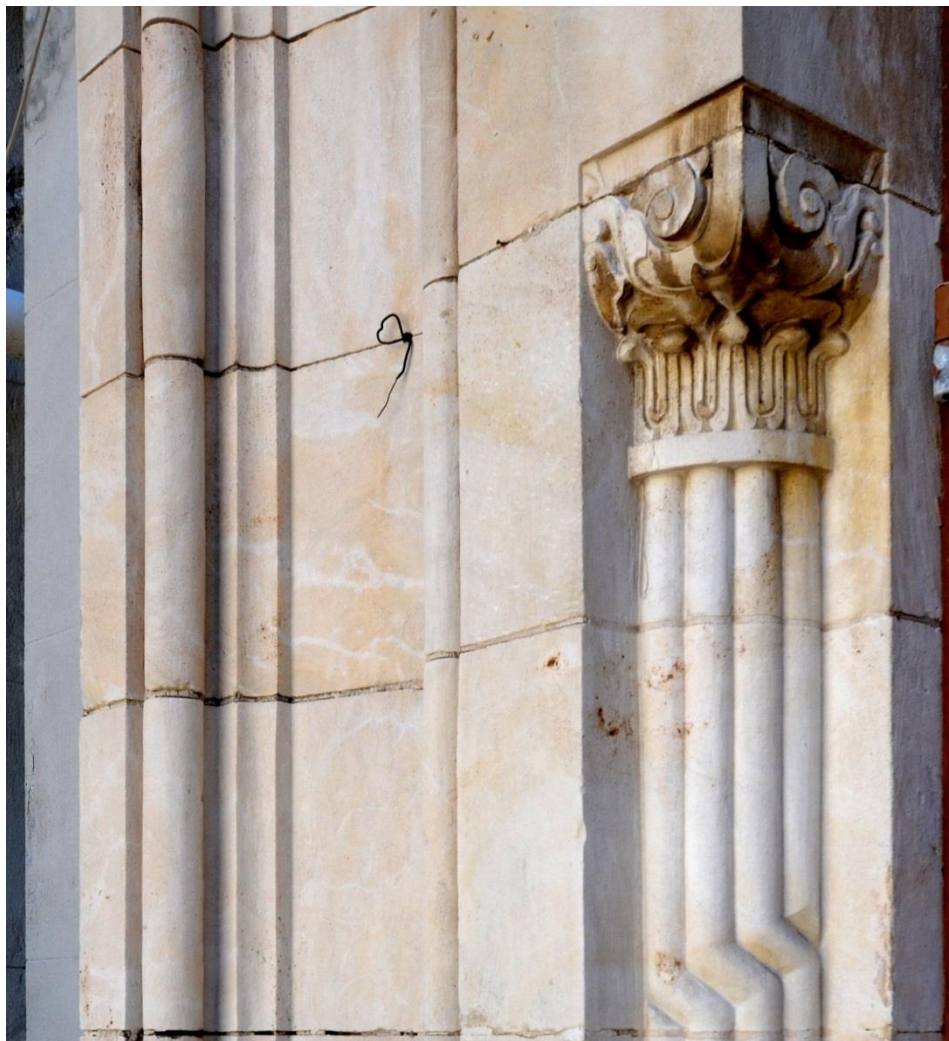
**Photo 6:** Entrance Door of the Courtyard Located in the North of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 7:** The West Facade of the Courtyard of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 8:** The Door to the Passage Corridor of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 9:** Detail from the Columns of the Door to the Passage Corridor of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța





**Photo 10:** The Signature of the Architect of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



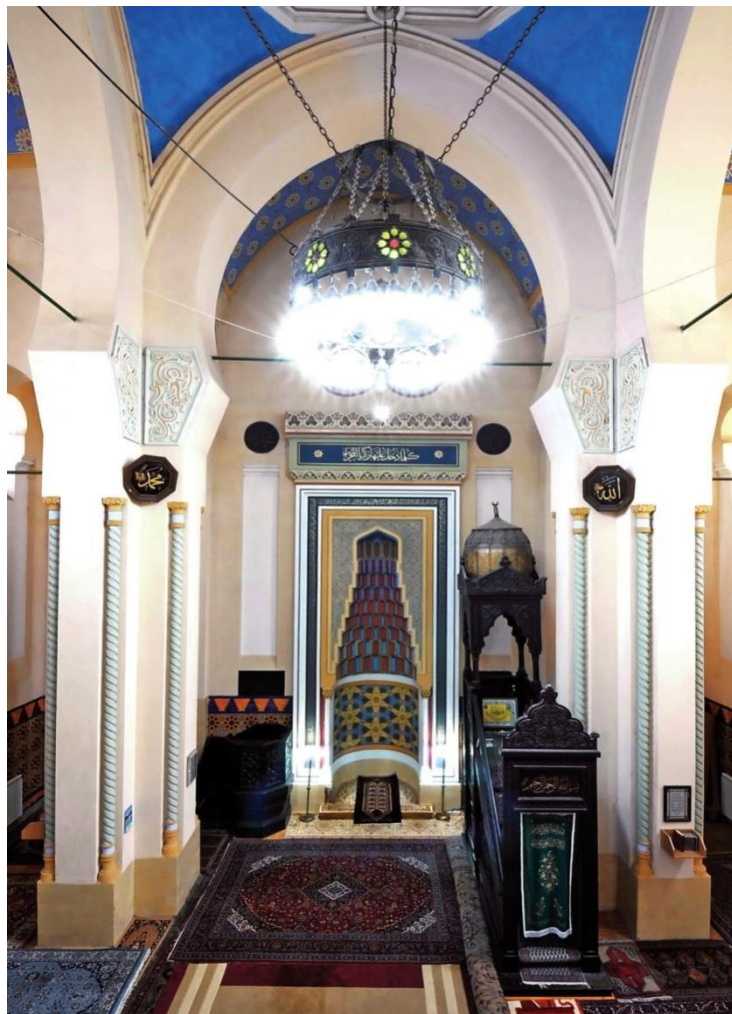
**Photo 11:** Detail from the Minaret Balcony of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 12:** Entrance Door of the Harim of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 13:** The Bronze Adornments at the Entrance Door of Harim of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 14:** The General View from the Inside of the Harim of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța (From Păuleanu, Coman)



**Photo 15:** The Dome and the Vaults of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 16:** Detail from the Dome Adornments of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



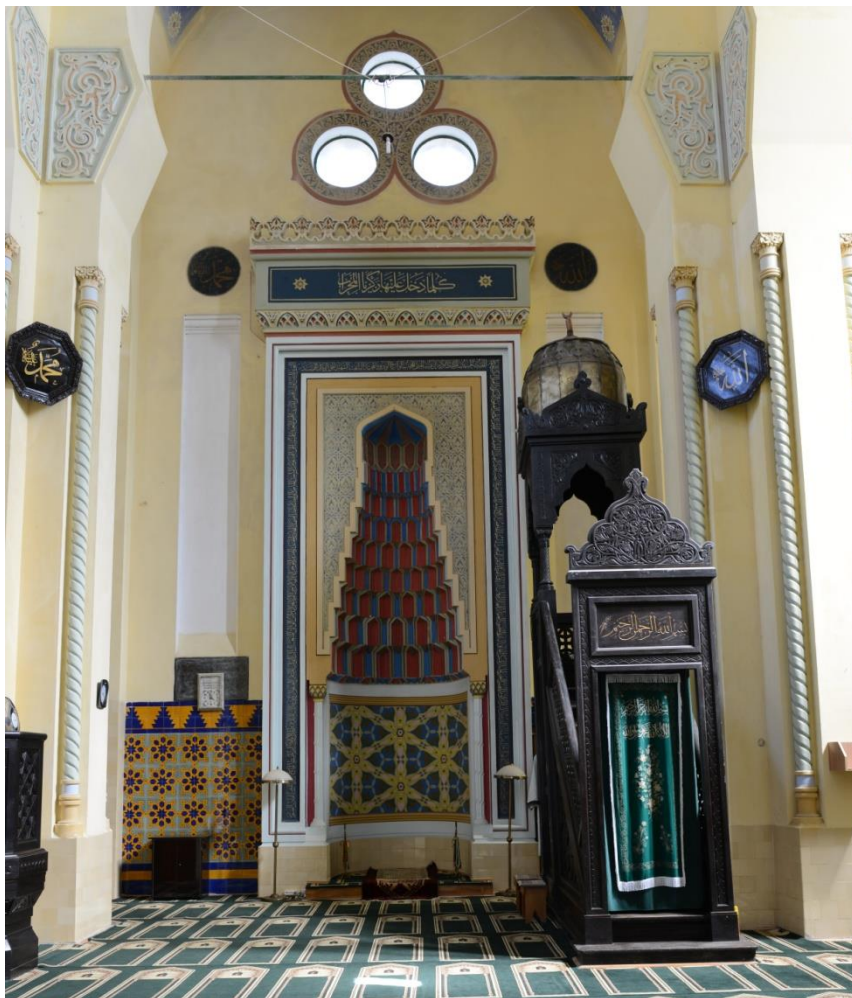
**Photo 17:** The Bronze Oil Lamp Hanging from the Dome Core of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 18:** Plaster Adornments Seen on the Crosslike Feet of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța

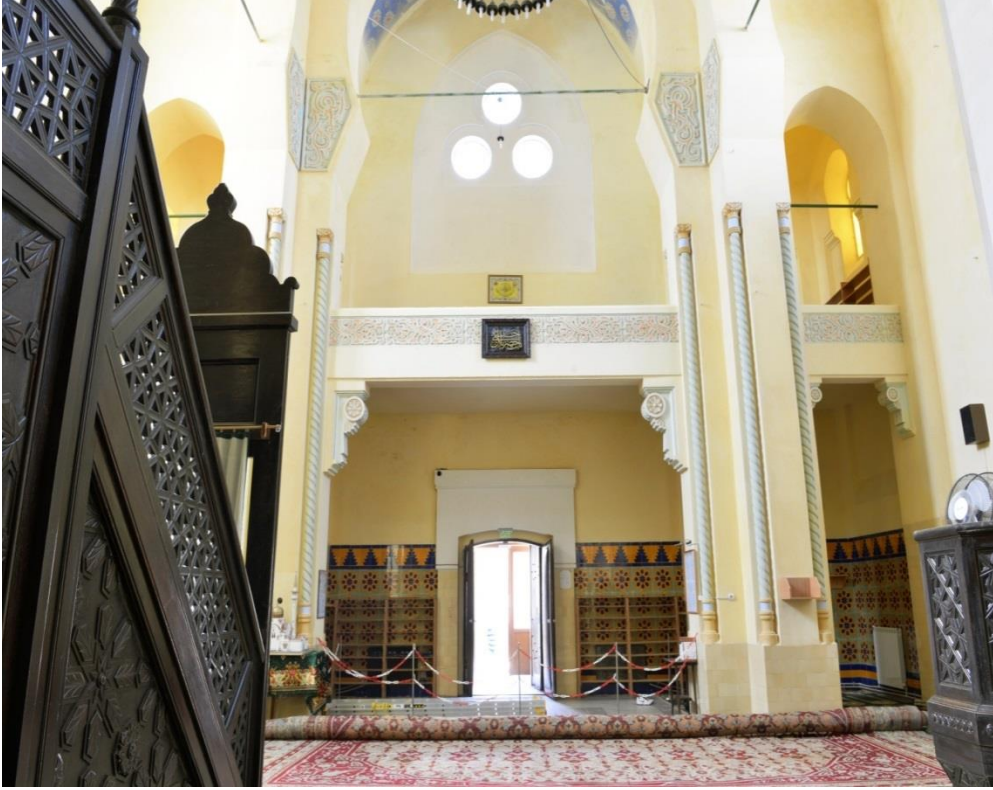


**Photo 19:** Details from the Tiles of Harim Walls of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 20:** The Southern Wall of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța





**Photo 21:** Women's Gathering-Place of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța



**Photo 22:** The Room of Heating Boilers Located in the Center of the Basement of Carol I (King) Mosque in Constanța