

## EVALUATION OF THE HISTORICAL CITY EDİRNE THROUGH CULTURAL ASSETS

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Edirne, the second capital of Ottoman Empire is important with its geographical location serving as a bridge to European countries as well as its historical build up. Nowadays Edirne struggles to maintain historical identity with its religious, educational and socio-cultural buildings besides the examples of civil architecture. However, it cannot be said that elements of urban identity are adequately evaluated except for specific periods of the year in accordance with tourism activities in Edirne which is rich in history and culture. The purpose of this paper is to introduce Selimiye Mosque Complex and Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling, two UNESCO World Heritage participants, along with the other cultural assets such as Bayezid II. Complex, Old Mosque, Sv. Georgi Church, and Synagogue.

**Keywords:** Edirne, Culture, Cultural Property, Architectural.

### Introduction

Communities reflect their cultures when they protect historical and cultural values and to combine these values with today's lifestyles. Cities which are inhabited by the communities contain in itself the cultural diversity, natural and artificial elements. Indeed, entities that separate cities from each other and give them an identity and define them are their historical cultural accumulation.

Turkey is located in a rich region in terms of natural, cultural and historical assets that will create identity to the cities. Edirne, located in the northwest of Turkey and forming the sampling area of this paper, is important with its geographical location serving as a bridge to European countries as well as its historical and cultural background.

Edirne which has hosted many civilizations is located at the western border of Turkey and is an important transit center and is a gateway of the country to Europe. The city, being the capital of the Ottoman Empire for almost 90 years, stands out with its majestic religious buildings and examples of civil architecture that are illustrations of climax of the Ottoman architecture. Different building types such as religious buildings (mosque, masjid, dervish lodge, and tomb), educational and socio-cultural buildings (madrasah, complex), commercial buildings (khan, bazaar), minority buildings (church, synagogue) and water buildings (bridge, fountain) as well as civil architecture buildings give identity to Edirne and reflect the Ottoman culture and architecture.

Nowadays, cultural assets of cities have become the subject and resources of the tourism industry. However, it can not be said that elements giving identity to city –especially in the movement of tourism activities- is adequately evaluated in Edirne which is a rich city in terms

of cultural heritage. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to introduce cultural assets of Edirne to develop preservation and utilization decisions and to discuss necessary strategies about transforming it to an attraction center on international dimension.

### **Methodology**

First of all in this study, history and demographic structure of the city at the Ottoman period creating its cultural diversity are mentioned for presentation of Edirne. Then, numeric data of existent and non-existent cultural assets in the city are determined and existent cultural assets are listed. However, in terms of limitation of the study, standing out prominent religious buildings and Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling as an intangible cultural heritage are analyzed. Finally, the elements creating 'historical and cultural city' identity to city are evaluated in terms of increasing tourism and determining strategies for developing preservation and utilization decisions as a cultural heritage are discussed.

### **History of Edirne**

The first settlement was established by Odrises that were one of the Thracian tribes in the antiquity period on a fertile plain where Arda and Tunca Rivers met with Meriç River and then developed by Macedonians and Romans (Emecen, 1998; Gökbilgin, 1993). The settlement referred as 'Orestia' by the Macedonians (Emecen, 1998; Peremeci, 1939), came under the control of Rome at 168 B.C. Hadrian (117-138), who visited Thrace in 123-124 A.D., gave this strategic town his name by granting municipal law and named it Hadrianopolis. The most important building of Hadrian for the city has been a fortress Castrum which has survived until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and covered approximately 360,000 m<sup>2</sup> areas (Mansel 1965).

The city located on a strategically important point, changed hands several times and was possessed by the Byzantine Empire as a result of the division of the Roman Empire in 395. Conquest of the city by the Ottomans in 1361 has become a turning point in the history of the Balkans and Europe which also facilitated the conquest of Istanbul (Eyice, 1965). Ottomans made Edirne (Adrianople) their capital in 1365 and this caused the initiation of a new era for the city which started to become a political center as well as its military feature. The name of the city has been adopted as "Edrene" in Ottoman sources; probably its name began to be known as "Edirne" in the first half of 18<sup>th</sup> century (Emecen, 1998).

Edirne has developed rapidly for approximately 90 years till Istanbul was conquered and made capital and even after then, the city continued to preserve its importance. However, disasters such as floods, fires, earthquakes and Russian, Bulgarian and Greek invasions affected the city negatively in many ways (Emecen, 1998). In 1923, with the foundation of Republic of Turkey, the city located in the Thrace region has become a border city along the border of Greece and Bulgaria. Today, the city is the major border crossing opened to the western civilization for the Republic of Turkey.

### **Demographic Structure of Edirne in the Ottoman Period**

When Edirne was conquered by Ottoman Turks from Byzantines Christian Thracians with Greek culture lived in the city (Peremeci, 1939). Following the Ottoman administration, population of

Edirne has increased in parallel with its physical development. Many Turks as well as some Armenians living in Anatolia were moved to this region in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. During the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Safarad Jews running away from the Inquisition in Spain have come to Edirne and formed the Jewish community. However, the population structure, social and economic balances of Edirne began to change due to invasions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the Muslim population immigrated to Anatolia owing to the Ottoman-Russian War in 1828-29 and Christians living in surrounding villages took over Muslim properties (Emecen, 1998).

The population of Edirne in the 20<sup>th</sup> century before the Balkan War was approximately 87.000 and of these 47.289 was Turks, 19.608 were Greek, 14.469 were Jews, 4.000 were Armenians and 2324 were Bulgarian (Peremeci, 1939). However, after the Balkan War, the population decreased. The report submitted to the Peace Conference in 27 February 1919, the population of Edirne was 65,454 in 1911. This population consisted of Greek (25.950), Muslims (25.000), Jews (9.500), Armenians (3.500) and Bulgarians (1.504) (Balta, 1998). Balkan War and the Greek occupation has caused a change in the population movements and population of the city was detected as 34.528 at the first census of the Republic of Turkey in 1927 (Peremeci, 1939; Gökbilgin, 1993; Darkot, 1965).

### **Cultural Assets of Edirne**

Cultural assets are described as all of the moveable and immoveable scientific, cultural, religious and fine arts assets situated above the ground, under the ground or under water relation belonging to prehistoric and historic periods by the Law of Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties published at Turkey in 1983 (T.C. Resmi Gazete, sayı:18113, 23 Temmuz 1983). Cultural heritage is defined as all kinds of creations taken from the past to be inherited to the future which have a physical presence and created by man and set of values belonging to a community (<http://teftis.kulturturizm.gov.tr>). "Tangible cultural heritage" is defines buildings, historical sites, monuments, works made by human hands. "Intangible cultural heritage" defines cultural products and production processes such as oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festivals, applications related to the nature and the universe and traditional handicrafts ([www.unesco.org.tr](http://www.unesco.org.tr)). According to these definitions, primarily inventory of cultural assets of the city of Edirne is given and then examples of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage are discussed.

Edirne began to acquire architectural monumental works after the Ottomans. The city was decorated with numerous architectural works in the guidance of a "city architect" and a "Chief Architect" who were assigned by the government. Because in the Ottoman Empire public buildings were valued in accordance with the requirements of the public, many buildings were constructed, in this sense, to meet the needs of the society in Edirne. Among these, examples such as mosque, madrasah, covered bazaar, soup kitchen, caravanserai, khan, hospital, bath, a room used to determine religious time tables (muvakkithane), bridge, fountain, water-tank with a fountain (şadırvan), and free distribution of water (sebil) can be given.

Mosque is a worship place for Muslims to pray and carry out certain religious rituals all together. Ottoman elementary-primary schools (sıbyan mektebi) are institutions to provide basic education; madrasahs, on the other hand, are the equivalents of higher education institutions such as universities or colleges. Khanqah and Zawiya (institution) are buildings designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood, or tariqa, and is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. The soup kitchens (imarets) are centers to distribute free food for poor people.

Hospices (tabhane) are located at the city center in conjunction with imarets and supply accommodation for guests coming to town. Caravanserais are roadside inns where travelers could rest and recover from the day's journey. Dariüşşifas serve as hospital or medical center. Arasta and bedesten are commercial buildings which have the characteristics of bazaar. Timekeeper's room (muvakkithane) is a small building near great mosque complexes that adjust worship times and calculate important religious days. These buildings have been constructed as singly or as a complex which consist of combination of several building types. Besides, construction of minority buildings such as church or synagogue was allowed in Edirne since it embraced different ethnical groups. The number of cultural heritage of the Ottoman period is given in Table 1 and the existing religious buildings are listed in Table 2 as an indication of the rich cultural heritage of Edirne.

**Table 1.** Numerical Data of the Cultural Heritage of Edirne in the Ottoman Period.

Building Type	Number of Existing Buildings	Number of Non-Existing Buildings	Number of Total Buildings
Social Complex	2	2	4
Mosque + Masjid	48	192	240
Minority Building	5	31	36
Soup Kitchen	2	7	9
Tomb	13	60	73
Madrasah	4	46	50
Khanqah and Zawiya	2	54	56
Khan	4	26	30
Bath	11	18	29
Bazaar	3	1	4
Bridge	8	-	8
Free Distribution of Water	4	11	15
Fountain	48	143	191
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>745</b>

**Table 2.** Existing Buildings (Social complex, Mosque, masjid and Minority buildings) in Edirne .

Social Complexes		
1. Selimiye Complex	2. Bayezid II. Complex	
Mosques and Masjids (Small Mosques)		
1 Selimiye Mosque	18 Kuşçu Doğan Mosque	36 Hazinedar Sinan Bey Mosque
2 Old Mosque	19 Lari Mosque	37 Çokalca Mosque
3 Üç Şerefeli Mosque	(Laleli Mosque)	(Çatalca Mosque)
4 Gazi Mihal Mosque	20 Süleyman Paşa Mosque	38 Kazas Salih Mosque
5 Gazi Hoca Mosque	21 Hasan Sezai Mosque	39 Karaağaç Eski Mosque
6 Arif Ağa Mosque	22 Süle Çelebi Mosque	40 Medrese Alibey Mosque
7 İsmail Ağa Mosque	23 Kasımpaşa Mosque	41 Sofu Beyazıt Mosque
8 Hıdır Ağa Mosque	24 Darülhadis Mosque	(Sarı Mosque)
9 Yahya Bey Mosque	25 Şüceaddin Paşa Mosque	42 Molla Mustafa Paşa Mosque
10 Sitti Hatun Mosque	26 Şah Melek Mosque	43 Bademlik Mosque
11 Defterdar Mustafa Paşa Mosque	27 Yıldırım Beyazıt Mosque	(Emir Hüseyin Bey Masjid)
12 Ayşekadın Mosque	28 II. Beyazıt Mosque	44 Alaca Mosque
13 Yeşilce Mosque	29 Beylerbeyi Mosque	(Bedevizade Ahmet Masjid)
14 Muradiye Mosque	30 Kadı Bedrettin Mosque	45 Çakır Ağa Masjid
15 Taşlık Mosque	31 Sarıca Paşa Mosque	46 Hacı İslam Masjid
16 Selçuk Hatun Mosque	32 Şeyh Çelebi Mosque	47 Zincirlikuyu Masjid
17 Şahabeddin Paşa Mosque	33 Atik Ali Paşa Mosque	48 Ak Masjid
(Kirazlı Mosque)	34 Tanburacılar Mosque	
	35 Zehr-i İmar Mosque	
Minority Buildings		
1 Sv. Constantine - Helena Church	3 Frank (Italian) Church	
2 Sv. Georgi Church	4 Italian Congregation Synagogue	
	5 Bahai House	

During the study, literature was reviewed and total of 745 existing and nonexistent cultural assets have been identified. As it is seen in the Table 1, 80% of the immovable cultural assets have not reached to the present day. Disasters and invasions as well as construction activities which gained momentum in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has caused this situation.

There are 53 existing religious buildings in Edirne and 48 of them belong to Muslims and 5 of them belong to non-Muslims. All of these buildings are situated within Ottoman settlement boundary and are located at the historical city center.

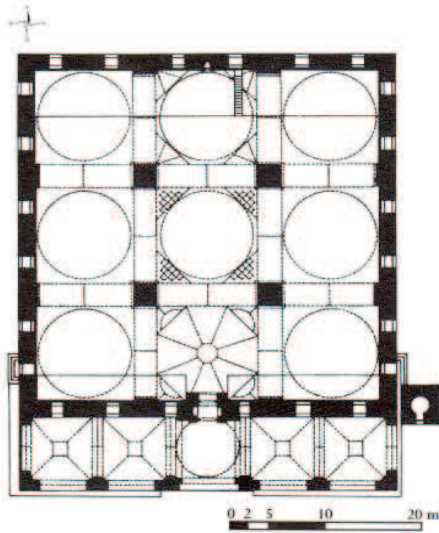
**Map 1:** Locations of Existing Religious Buildings Within the City.



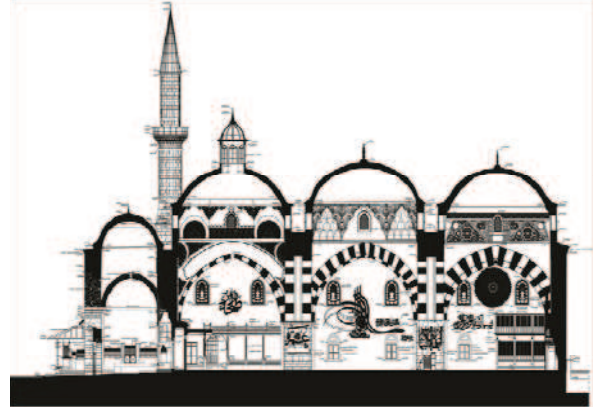
○ Mosques and masjids      ○ Minority buildings

Below are some examples of buildings of non-Muslims and some mosques which emphasize the Ottoman Architecture development line.

**Old Mosque (1403-1414):** The mosque is an early example of Ottoman Architecture. It is one of the first monumental buildings of Edirne, and was completed in the period of Sultan Mehmet I. Architect of the building is Haji Alaeddin of Konya (Kuban, 2007). The building is one of the last examples of multi-pier grand mosque tradition that has been designed during the Seljuk period to accommodate large numbers of people to worship together. The mosque is covered by 9 domes supported on four piers and it has been built in the masonry system. In the walls of the building cut stone, in the porch, in an interwoven manner, both cut stone and bricks are used (picture 1). The mosque is famed for its work of calligraphy which is present in the last prayer hall (portico), walls of the prayer hall and piers (picture 2).



Old Mosque plan (Kuban, 2007)



Old Mosque Section

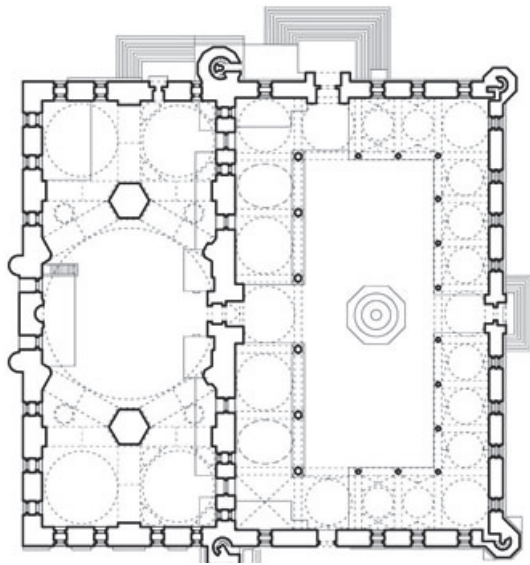


Picture 1. Old Mosque outside (Benian, 2005)

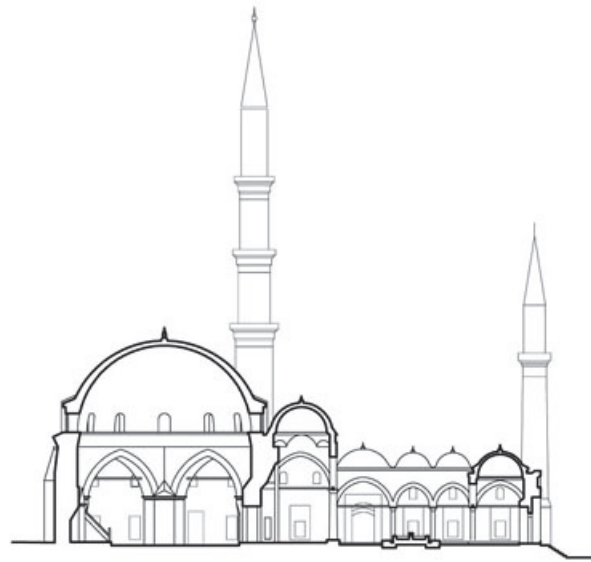


Picture 2. Old Mosque inside (wowturkey.com)

**Üç Şerefeli Mosque (1438-47):** The Üç Şerefeli Mosque, named after its unusual minaret with three balconies (şeref), was built during the reign of Murad II. The architect of the building is thought to be Muslihiddin but it is not known certainly. Üç Şerefeli Mosque has a special place in the history of Turkish architecture. The mosque consists of a rectangular prayer hall. The center of the mosque is covered by a grand dome and the prayer hall extends on either side with rectangular spaces. They are roofed with two domes each. The building created a new mosque typology for the Ottomans with its central dome rising above the hexagonal drum. Besides, eight buttress arches providing additional support to the central dome which sits on 24 angled drums at the exterior has been used for the first time in this building (picture 3, 4, 6). It is the first Ottoman mosque which has a courtyard (picture 5) (Kuban, 2007). The mosque has four minarets of different heights and types located at the four corners of the open court giving it a different plastic effect. The minaret which gives the name to the mosque has three balconies (şeref) and it is an early example of the use of three separate staircases to access the three different balconies (picture 7). The structure is built of limestone with marble. The building is famous with its door designed in kundekari (small cut wooden parts combined with click fit method to form a geometric decoration) technique (picture 8).



Üç Şerefeli Mosque plan (archnet.org)



Üç Şerefeli Mosque section (archnet.org)



Picture 3. Üç Şerefeli Mosque outside (wowturkey.com)



Picture 4. Üç Şerefeli Mosque tombs (wowturkey.com)



Picture 5. Üç Şerefeli Mosque courtyard (wowturkey.com)



Picture 6. Üç Şerefeli Mosque inside (wowturkey.com)

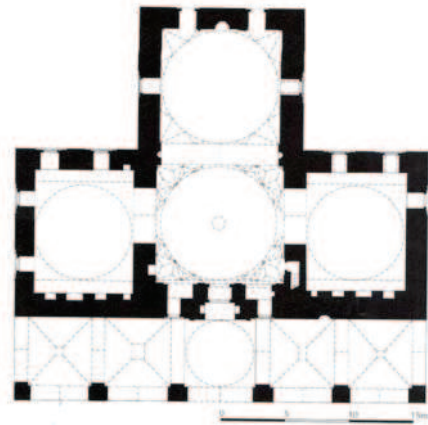


Picture 7. Üç Şerefeli Mosque minaret (wowturkey.com)



Picture 8. Üç Şerefeli Mosque door (wowturkey.com)

**Muradiye Mosque (1438-47):** It was built during the reign of Murad II. The mosque with its cut stone walls is the simplest example of the reverse-T type plan of early Ottoman style. It is composed of a five bay portico leading into a central hall flanked by iwans on two sides, and a prayer hall covered by two domes (picture 9,10). Despite its austere exterior, the Muradiye mosque is well-known for the tile work decoration of its interior especially of mihrab (picture 11).



Muradiye Mosque plan(Kuban, 2007)



Picture 9. Muradiye Mosque outside  
(www.mustafacambaz.com)

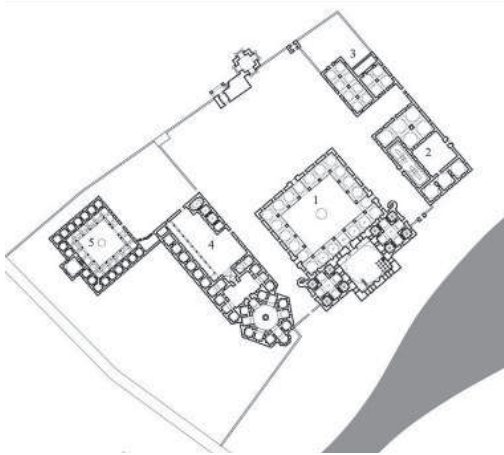


Picture 10. Muradiye Mosque entrance  
(wowturkey.com)



Picture 11. Muradiye Mosque inside and mihrab  
(wowturkey.com)

**Bayezid II. Complex (1484-88):** The Complex, located near the Tunca River was built during the reign of Bayezid II and was designed by Architect Hayrettin (picture 12). The units of this complex are the medical school; the mosque (picture 13), which is at the center of the complex; two guesthouses, each having four rooms for guests, travelers, and patients' or students' visitors; the hospital, which consisted of three courtyards for the outpatient and service rooms, administrative rooms, and an inpatient section; a social aid unit (imaret), which served free meals twice a day; a bridge and a water mill, which served as a source of income; a Turkish bath (hamam); Janissary Band (mehterhane), and an elementary school. The principal idea in constructing the complex was to provide a hospital to Edirne which is the most important and magnificent building of the complex (Kuban, 2007). Currently, the hospital is serving as the "Health Museum" and has won the Council of Europe Museum Prize in 2004 and the Best in Heritage Excellence Club the Best Presentation Award in 2007 (www.trakya.edu.tr) (picture 14).



Bayezid II. Complex plan  
(wowturkey.com)



Picture 12. Bayezid II. Complex outside  
(www.edirnegezi.com)



Picture 13. The Mosque of Bayezid II. Complex  
(Misirli, 2012)



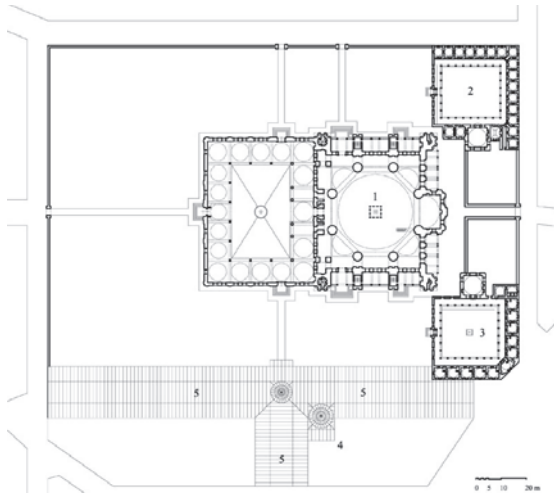
Picture 14. The Health Museum of Bayezid II. Complex  
(wowturkey.com)

**Selimiye Mosque and its Complex (1568-1575):** The Complex was built during the reign of Sultan Selim II. The building was designed by Architect Sinan, the Ottoman's chief architect. Selimiye Mosque and its Complex are located at the focal point of the city in the historic center and are situated as an identifying point of the city's silhouette. Complex consists of the mosque, two madrasahs (Quran and Hadith schools), an arasta (row of shops) and an elementary school (Picture 15).

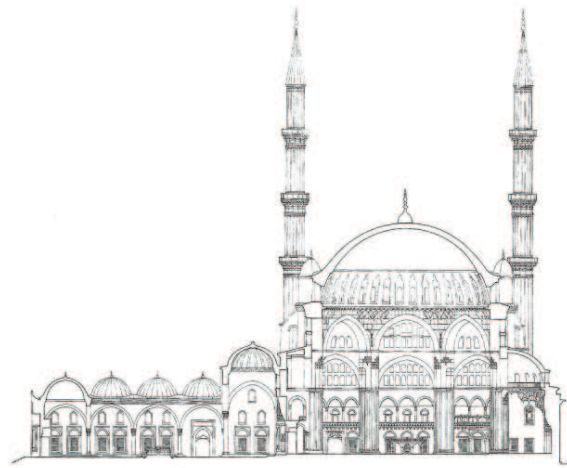
The main building of the complex is the mosque (Picture 16). Selimiye Mosque is an example of how the unity of space under the dome can gracefully be solved. Architect Sinan, in his masterpiece, has achieved to assemble the congregation under the same dome and has been able to cover a very large space with this one single grand dome. The plan of the mosque contains of almost all of the geometric forms. The dome with its 31.5 meter diameter and with its 43 meter height from the ground is carried by eight massive piers and the octagon is pierced by four half domes covering the corners of the square so that a larger space can be created (Benian, 2011) (Picture 17, 18).

Selimiye Mosque is the peak example of the Classical Ottoman Period. It is a masterpiece setting the special status of the Ottoman architecture in world architecture and its authentic

characteristics. Mimar Sinan, in this building, has created a central space idea with a sensation of absolute sovereignty of the dome. Symmetrical four minarets designed around the dome emphasized the idea of creating a central space (Kuban, 2007).



Selimiye Complex plan  
([www.archnet.org](http://www.archnet.org))



Selimiye mosque section  
(Directorate Regional of Foundations archive)



Picture 15. Selimiye Mosque  
([selimiye.edirnegezi.com](http://selimiye.edirnegezi.com))



Picture 16. Selimiye Mosque  
(Directorate Regional of Foundations archive)



Picture 17. Dome ([www.sugraphic.com](http://www.sugraphic.com))



Picture 18. Larger Space ([www.sugraphic.com](http://www.sugraphic.com))

The mosque, together with its complex, was included in the UNESCO's World Heritage List in 27 June 2011 at a meeting held in Paris. The complex was accepted on UNESCO's World Heritage List because it represented a masterpiece of human creative genius and is an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural, or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history ([www.unesco.org.tr](http://www.unesco.org.tr)).

**Sv. Constantine - Helena Church:** It is a basilica consisting of three main parts; semi-open narthex, main space and apse and its construction was completed in 1869. The main space is divided into three parts by a two-column array and the middle nave is higher and larger than side naves. There are two gallery floors on the narthex and they are called the emporia. Apse has semi-circle shaped inside, five-sided shaped outside. The church has been built in the alternating bonded masonry system (Benian, 2004). The church lost its community in the first half 20<sup>th</sup> century and has been neglected for many years. The church was heavily renovated in 2008 after long years of abandonment. The renovation project was partially funded by the Bulgarian government. Nowadays the building is open to visitors (picture 19, 20).

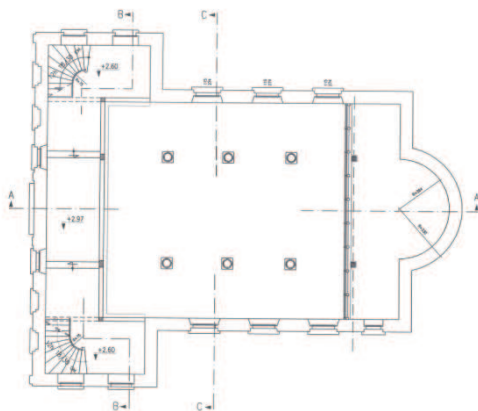


Picture 19. Sv. Constantine - Helena Church outside ([wowturkey.com](http://wowturkey.com))

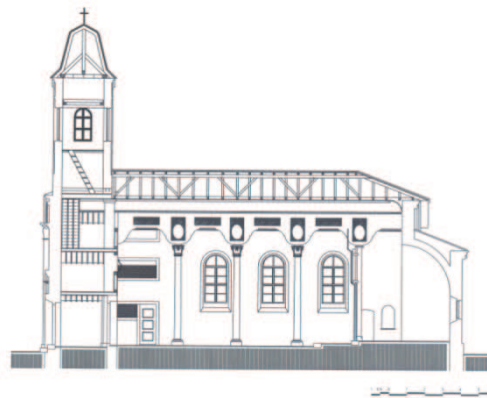


Picture 20. Sv. Constantine - Helena Church inside ([wowturkey.com](http://wowturkey.com))

**Sv. Georgi Church:** Construction of the building was completed in 1880 and is composed of a church and annex buildings. The church has a basilical plan unique to the late period of Bulgarian renaissance. It consists of three main parts; semi-open narthex, main space and apse and there are two gallery floors on the narthex. Apse has semi-circle shaped both inside and outside. The church has been built in the alternating bonded masonry system. There are different scenes and the icons on the iconostasis which separates naos and apse (Benian 2004). Restoration of the building which wore out over time was completed in 2004 and was opened to the visitors (picture 21, 22).



Sv. Georgi Church plan (Benian, 2004)



Sv. Georgi Church section (Benian, 2004)



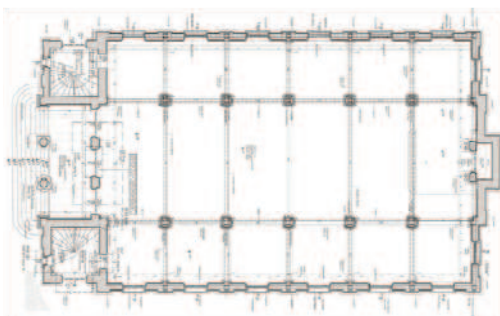
Picture 21. Sv. Georgi Church outside (Benian, 2012)



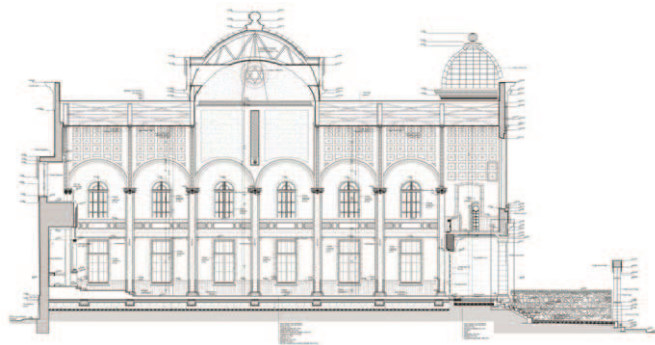
Picture 22. Sv. Georgi Church inside (Benian, 2012)

**Edirne Grand Synagogue:** The synagogue was opened for religious services in 1907 and is located at the inner part of the fortress. It is a complex consisting of three buildings: the synagogue, Midrash (school of religious education) and the administrative building. The building has a basilical plan and the main space is divided into three parts by a two-column array. It is known as the largest synagogue in the Balkans and the third largest in Europe. Although the building has designated an effect on the identity of Edirne, it is the only symbol of the Jewish population that has reached to our time. Synagogue was used actively until 1960 but later the large part of the building was destroyed (Tuna, 2006). Restoration of the Synagogue began in 2010 is still continuing today (picture 23, 24).

**Bahá'í House:** Bahá'í faith which is an independent religious belief, began to exist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Bahá'í faith is a monotheistic religion emphasizing the spiritual unity of all humankind living in peace. Hz. Bahá'u'lláh who is considered the founder of the Bahá'í faith, lived in a house around the Selimiye Complex when he came to Edirne in 1863 (<http://www.bahaitr.org>). This house has the traditional characteristics of a traditional Edirne house. Its construction technique is masonry and it has a single storey. This building is sacred according to Bahá'is and is visited by tourists from several parts of the world and Turkey.



Edirne Grand Synagogue plan  
(Directorate Regional of Foundations archive)



Edirne Grand Synagogue section  
(Directorate Regional of Foundations archive)

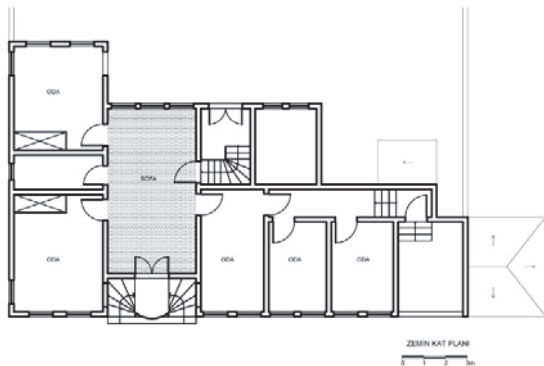


**Picture 23.** Edirne Grand Synagogue entrance (Mısırlı, 2012)



**Picture 23.** Edirne Grand Synagogue outside (Mısırlı, 2012)

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Bahá'í House plan (Kesbiç, 1991)



**Picture 25.** Bahá'í House outside (Mısırlı, 2012)

**Intangible Cultural Heritage; Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival:** Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling was born in Rumelia (Western Anatolia) in 14<sup>th</sup> century and it is the world's oldest (651 years) continuously sanctioned sporting competition. Oil wrestling creates the main theme of the festival and the wrestlers are at the heart of oil wrestling (picture 26). Wrestler character is an important cultural identity element for the Turks. It is a large organization attended by thousands of people with different ages and different cultures coming from almost every region of Turkey (Management plan of Edirne).

The festival begins on Friday which is considered sacred for Muslims with the participation of all the wrestlers and Islamic memorial service is held at Selimiye Mosque. It continues at the “field of contest” which is specially designed for wrestling at the site of Sarayıçi (inside the remnants of Edirne Palace). There are some rituals at the field of contest such as rubbing of wrestlers with sunflower seed oil before the tournament, action of walk-and-greet called the

overture (peşrev) (picture 27), introduction of wrestlers by cazgırs and authentic Kırkpınar tunes performed by 40 sets of drums and flutes. The festival lasts for three days and at the end the champion or head wrestler wins the Kırkpınar Golden Belt. Kırkpınar Oiled Wrestling Festival brings together participants from various areas, giving a substantial boost to social peace and cohesion.

Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival was included in UNESCO's World intangible Cultural Heritage List in a meeting held in Nairobi in 26 November 2010. The festival is accepted on UNESCO's World intangible Cultural Heritage List due to its certain different qualifications such as verbal expressions and traditions (prayers by Cazgırs), performing arts, social practices, rituals and feasts, the tradition of crafts (wrestler's tights-kıspet, bag for wrestler's tights-zenbil) ([www.unesco.org.tr](http://www.unesco.org.tr)).



**Picture 26.** Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling wrestlers  
([www.tgf.gov.tr](http://www.tgf.gov.tr))



**Picture 27.** Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling, action of walk and-greet called the overture (peşrev)  
([www.resimler.tv](http://www.resimler.tv))

## Discussion

At the present day, Edirne with its impressive history and cultural assets is a city that should be conserved and flourished. In addition to the outstanding Selimiye Mosque, Old Mosque, Üç Şerefeli Mosque, Muradiye Mosque and Bayezid II. Complex, many other Islamic entities such as mosques, masjids and tombs; minority religious buildings such as churches or synagogue, constructed in accordance with the needs of the non-islamic societies living in Edirne in the past; hundreds of monumental buildings (madrassa, palace, caravanserai, bridge, soup kitchen, fountain etc.) and civil architecture buildings has been the cultural assets that constitute the identity of Edirne. However, many mosques except the above mentioned great mosques are kept closed outside prayer hours due to safety reasons or absence of a care taking official. Besides, many of the ruined works which are located in the neighborhood await repair. Many valuable civil architecture examples were demolished around Selimiye Mosque with zoning plan applications. Protection and regulation efforts in specific areas which banned building of new structures not only could not prevent the change in historical character of the city but the city began to move away gradually from its culture and identity which created itself. Although Management Plan of Selimiye Mosque Complex, Master Plan for Protection and efforts for the protection of the city silhouette in Edirne are administered, in practice, this implementation could not go further than restoration of a few historical buildings. How can Edirne, a city that has hosted many

civilizations in history and has been able to exhibit fruits of these civilizations in an open air museum manner in every corner of the city, pursue its “cultural and historical city” identity today? Is Edirne’s identity which carries considerable importance in terms of cultural and religious buildings mainly through Selimiye Mosque, being sufficiently evaluated for tourism activities? In view of these data, some suggestions to be carried out in short and long-term are listed below:

- Inventory of the city of Edirne should be completed without delay for promotion of the city’s cultural assets
- Different plans for Edirne which has a strategically important location as a border city should be developed for the addition of new identities such as university or tourism city to its preexisting historical and cultural city identity.
- Plans should be prepared for handling, promoting, conservation and utilization of religious buildings for “faith tourism” as an alternative way of tourism since most of the cultural assets are religious buildings. For this matter, activities such as conferences, seminars, photography exhibitions should be emphasized and city tours should be organized for public.
- Immediate surroundings of the Selimiye Mosque Complex which is accepted to the UNESCO World Heritage List should be planned at urban design scale. Parking lot necessity of this national and international sightseeing and religious area should be solved within these plans.
- Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival and the month of Ramadan are the most intense periods of tourism activities in the city. Attempts should be made for prompting touristic activities besides these times of the year. For this purpose, cultural assets that have been left aside so far should primarily be restored for public use.
- Solutions not contradicting to governmental protected historical site regulations should be prepared concerning the field of Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling competition. In these solutions, care should be taken for utilization of contemporary technical facilities while keeping in mind the regulations and the traditions of the competition. The height of the grandstand should be kept at minimum, lightweight and flexible systems should be preferred at cover coat. Moreover, in order to utilize the facility and the field besides the traditional wrestling competition, open sports fields, entertainment units, catering facilities, temporary and permanent exhibition and sales units, organized and controlled picnic areas, a variety of service units (security, healthy, trash collection etc.) and parking should be arranged.
- Social awareness and sensitivity about tourism should be developed and increased. Participation of the local population in tourism should be provided to accelerate cultural and economic development.

As a result, it can be said that extant historical monuments coming from the past receive a contemporary secondary role of “cultural asset” as well as their primary function. On behalf of reflecting properties of their era as a present presentation of the past, ensuring the sustainability of their new functions is desired.

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