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Historical Niğde Fountains

Tarihi Niğde Çeşmeleri

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to document historical fountains within the center of Niğde, thus to transfer the information and documents on these structures to the next generations and take attention to their preservation issues. In the study, 14 historical fountains in the center of Niğde were examined. The surveying works of 11 of these fountains were carried out within the scope of the study. Protecting these fountains, which are in danger of destruction due to neglect and loss of function, with the necessary documentation studies is very important in terms of transferring cultural assets to the future.

Keywords: Fountain, survey, preservation, cultural asset, Niğde.

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı Niğde’de merkezinde bulunan tarihi çeşmeleri belgelemek, böylece bu eserlerle ilgili bilgi ve belgeleri gelecek nesillere aktarmak ve koruma konularına dikkat çekmektir. Çalışmada Niğde merkezinde yer alan 14 tarihi çeşme incelenmiştir. Çalışma kapsamında bu çeşmelerden 11 tanesinin rölöve çalışması yapılmıştır. Bakımsızlık ve işlevini kaybetme nedenleriyle tahrip olma tehlikesi yaşayan bu çeşmelerin gerekli dokümantasyon çalışmaları ile korunması, kültür varlıklarının geleceğe aktarılması adına oldukça önemlidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Çeşme, rölöve, koruma, kültür varlığı, Niğde.

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Introduction

Fountains, as prominent components of city spaces, have had influence in the formation of neighborhood and street texture (Yılmaz, 2006). Fountains, that are the smallest structures in a street, incessantly maintained their importance owing to their position and function in the social life (Uçar, 2009). They have been particularly built in the most appropriate places for the optimum use Figure of people, being mosques, prayer rooms, madrasahs, schools, bazaars, squares, caravanserais, bathhouses, palaces, mansions and houses (Demirel, 1992). The most important feature of these fountains are that wealthy civilians, bureaucrats or high-ranking military officers have had most of them built as charitable works, since water supply for the public is a praised deed in Islamic culture.

Turkish fountains typically have two main parts, a curly-ornamented stone embedded in an arched niche, on which a spout is mounted (spout stone), and a basin placed on the ground in front of this stone, and generally an arched structure enclosing these two elements from three sides and top. However, other than that plain type of fountain, there are those which have considerable ornamental richness and diversity (Önge, 1981).

The fountains in Niğde built between 13-19th centuries are quite unique in terms of architectural characteristics. While some were built attached to building, some were built as a separate, freestanding structure (Özer, 2008). Fountains maintained their importance evermore in the history but their construction substantially halted in the twentieth century depending on the cession of waqif waters to municipalities, construction of modern water supply networks and thus distribution of water to houses individually (Denktaş, 2002).

This study is the documentation work conducted on these historical fountains that face the danger of vanishing. The study is considered to make substantial contributions to the necessary restoration efforts to be carried out in the future.

Architectural characteristics of the historical fountains

The fountains that have survived and reached the present are located in various locations in the city center of Niğde (Image 1). The most old-dated ones belong to Seljukian Period, Period of Karamanoğlu Seignury and Ottoman Period. Others belong to the Late Ottoman Period. The Fountain Eskiciler that belongs to the Period of Karamanoğlu Seignury has not reached the present. The inscriptions with information on the construction and repair of some of the fountains are presented in Image 2.

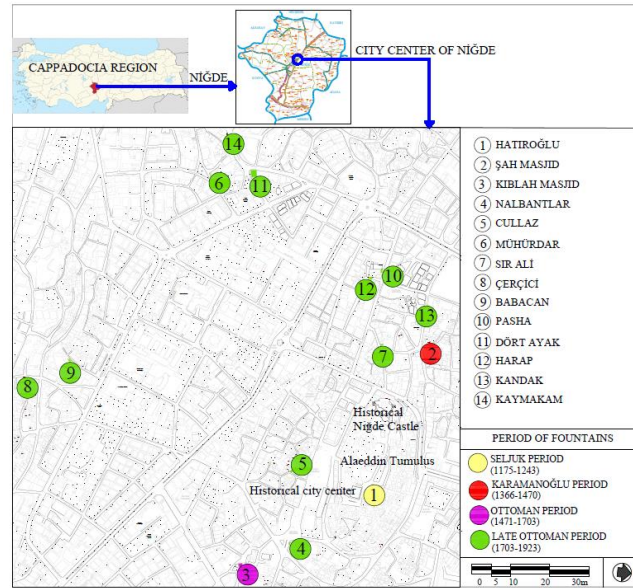


Image 1. Locations and construction periods of historical fountains in Niğde (Akçaözoğlu et al., 2020).



Image 2. Inscriptions of the Historical Fountains in Niğde.

Hatroğlu Fountain

Hatroğlu Fountain is the most old-dated fountain and belongs to the Seljukian Period. It is in Kale Neighbourhood and is located opposite to the portal of Aladdin Mosque (Image 3). According to the inscription on its portal, Hatroğlu Sharafaddin Masud has had it constructed in the years 1267-1268 (Özkarıcı, 2014). The plan of the fountain is rectangular and is made of dimension stone. A round-arched niche is located on the façade which is 358 cm high. The fountain has got two spouts and an inscription panel made of marble (Image 2). Front and rear façades have been furnished with stone molding. The roof of the fountain is flat and stones on the roof were renewed (Image 4).



Image 3. Hatiroğlu Fountain.

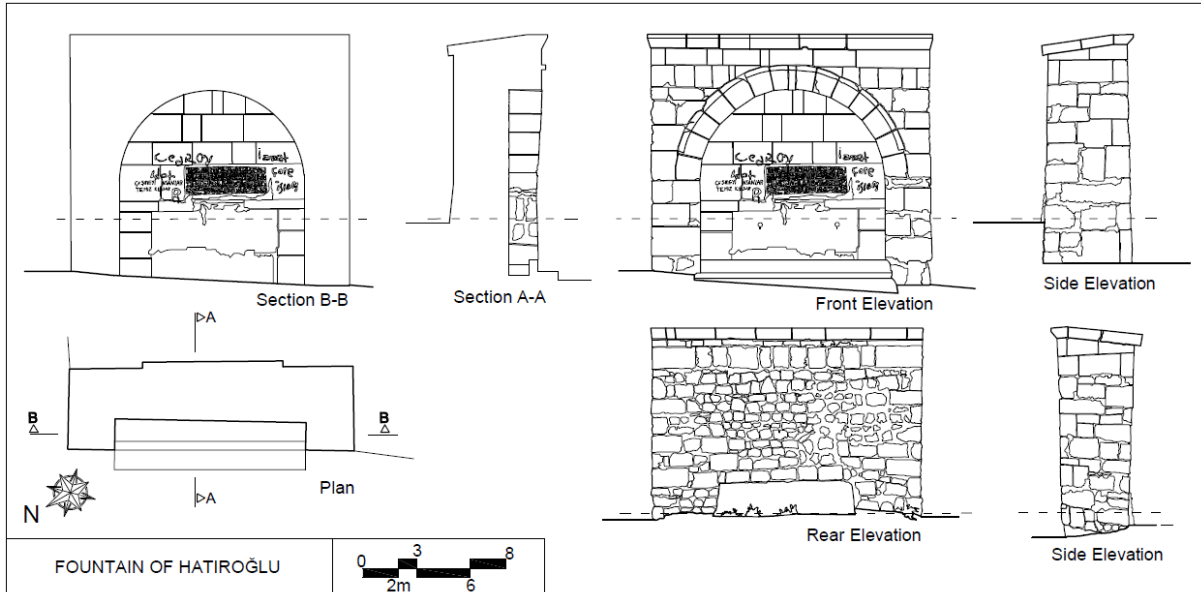


Image 4. Measured Drawings of Hatiroğlu Fountain.

Nalbantlar Fountain

Nalbantlar Fountain is located in the region currently being used as bazaar in Eskisaray Neighbourhood. It is adjacent to a building of which left side is being used as grocer and is at close quarters to outstanding historical buildings such as Sungurbey Mosque, and Greek Church (Image 5). The fountain was built in 1763 but the name of the person who had it constructed is unknown (Niğde Cultural Inventory, 2016). It is rectangular in plan, has got rich ornaments and is the exclusive representative of fountains, which have survived and reached today and are made up of white marble (Image 6). From the traces reached today, it is understood that it has had a pointed-arch niche which has been demolished (Özkarıcı, 2014). It is supported by dimension stones at both sides, at top and from rear. On the front façade of the fountain is a niche ending in round arches with greater molding compared to the niches in the middle at both sides. A basin is located in the middle, and two niches with moldings at both sides and finished with round arches are placed at both sides of the spout

stone. One water bowl (for birds) are placed on each niche. Spout stone and niches are not left plain but glamourized in baroque style (Image 5). The spout slot in the central part with rounded arch is enclosed with a wreath pattern.

Semi-cylindrical colonettes are located on the borders of the niches on the front façade. In the center of each niche, a spout junction was provided (Özkarcı, 2014). The stone molding that is located on these niches bisects the façade horizontally (Image 7). On the top of the façade is the marble inscription with information on construction and above that a prayer inscription is placed (Image 2).



Image 5. Nalbantlar Fountain.



Image 6. Nalbantlar Fountain, Ornaments.

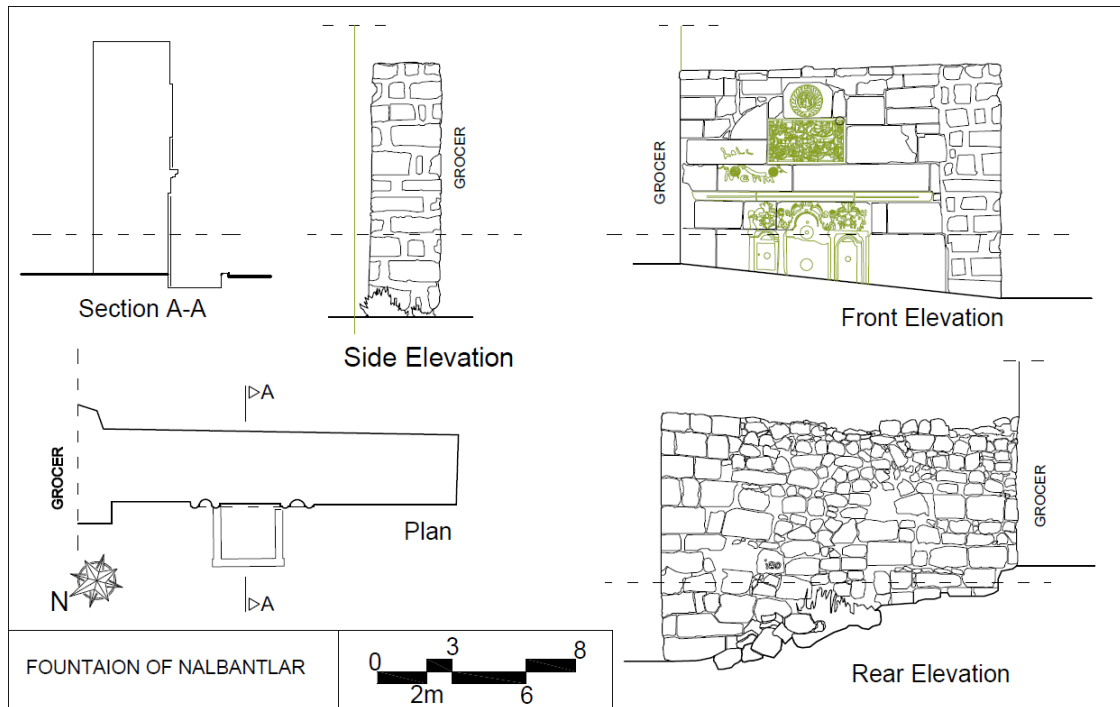


Image 7. Measured Drawings of Fountain of Nalbantlar.

Cullaz Fountain

Cullaz Fountain is located in Sungurbey Neighbourhood, on Üçler Street where traditional Niğde Houses are intensively present. A masjid with the same name is located in the south. The fountain was constructed in 1756 and underwent numerous repairs (Özkarcı, 2014). The last repair was employed between 2006-2008 within the scope of improvement projects. It is square in plan and built of fine-cut dimension stone. A pointed-arched niche is located on the front façade. There is a pointed-arched niche on the inner wall and spout is installed on the wall of that niche. The arch is aligned with stone molding in level, and this molding cinctures the interior side walls (Image 8.). On the fronton of the niche is the inscription of repair (Image 2). The pitched roof is supported by a pointed-arch, and built of dimension stone. During the repair, gargoyles were added to the right and front façades (Image 9). Today, the fountain serves as ablution washstand (shadirvan) for the masjid next to it.



Image 8. Cullaz Fountain.

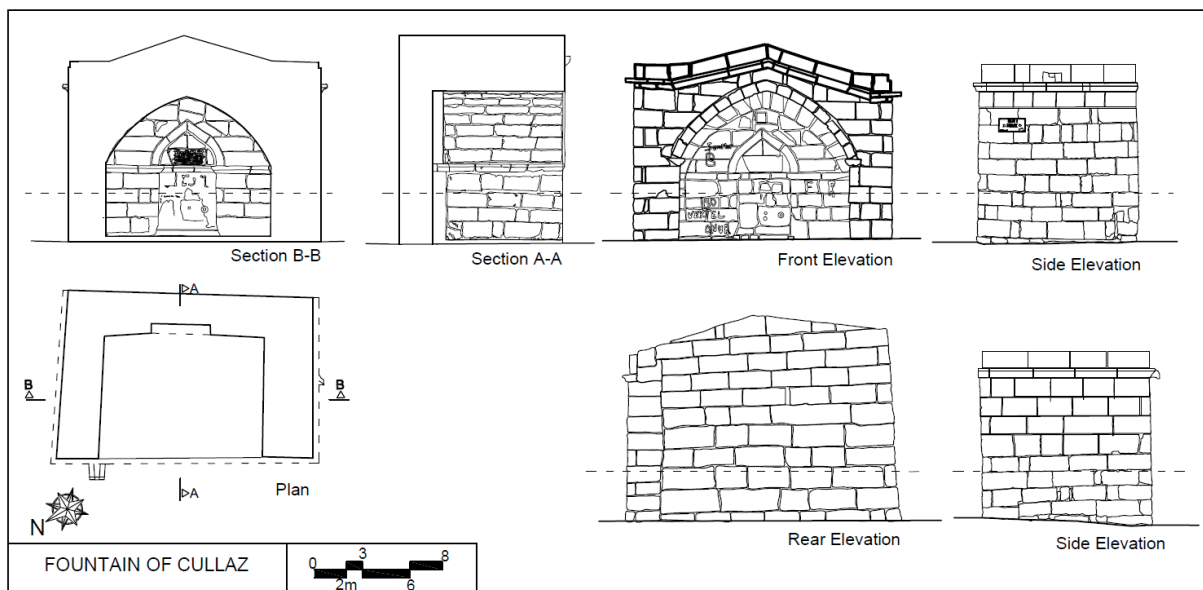


Image 9. Measured drawings of Cullaz Fountain.

Kiblah Masjid Fountain

Kiblah Masjid Fountain is placed in the pointed arched niche that is built in the south wall of the Kiblah Masjid which is located in Kiblah Street in Eskisaray Neighbourhood. The fountain is lower in level than the court of the masjid and is reached by means of a staircase (Image 10.). On the wall there is an inscription which does not belong to the fountain. Construction date is not known however it is considered that it should have been built concurrently with the masjid which is considered to have been built between 1522-1584 (Niğde Cultural Inventory, 2009). The fountain is dated to the Ottoman Period and currently is not in use but are the donated two fountains, one built next to the fountain and the other across it (Image 11).



Image 10. Kiblah Masjid Fountain.

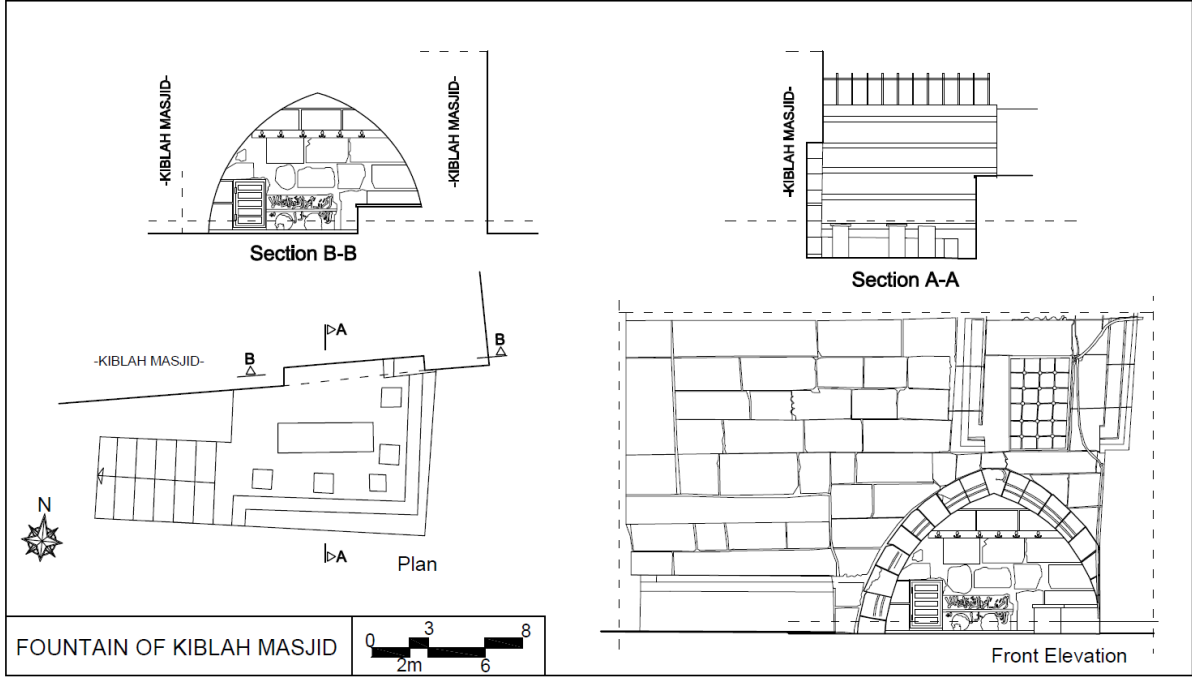


Image 11. Measured drawings of Kiblah Masjid Fountain.

Mühürdar Fountain

Mühürdar Fountain was built by Seyyit Hafız Agha between the years 1822-1823 (Niğde Cultural Inventory, 2009) and is located in Eroğlu Street, Yenice Neighbourhood. It has fallen below the raised street level most probably due to the addition of new layers to the road in due course. For this reason, it is reached down by means of a staircase today (Image 12). The fountain is rectangular in plan and its roof is supported by a pointed arch. The inscription of the fountain is currently lost. There are losses as well on the stone molding of the eaves of the fountain. On the level of the street, there exists a profiled stone molding which cinctures the interior of the fountain. The fountain is built of dimension stone and currently not in use (Image 13).



Image 12. Mühürdar Fountain.

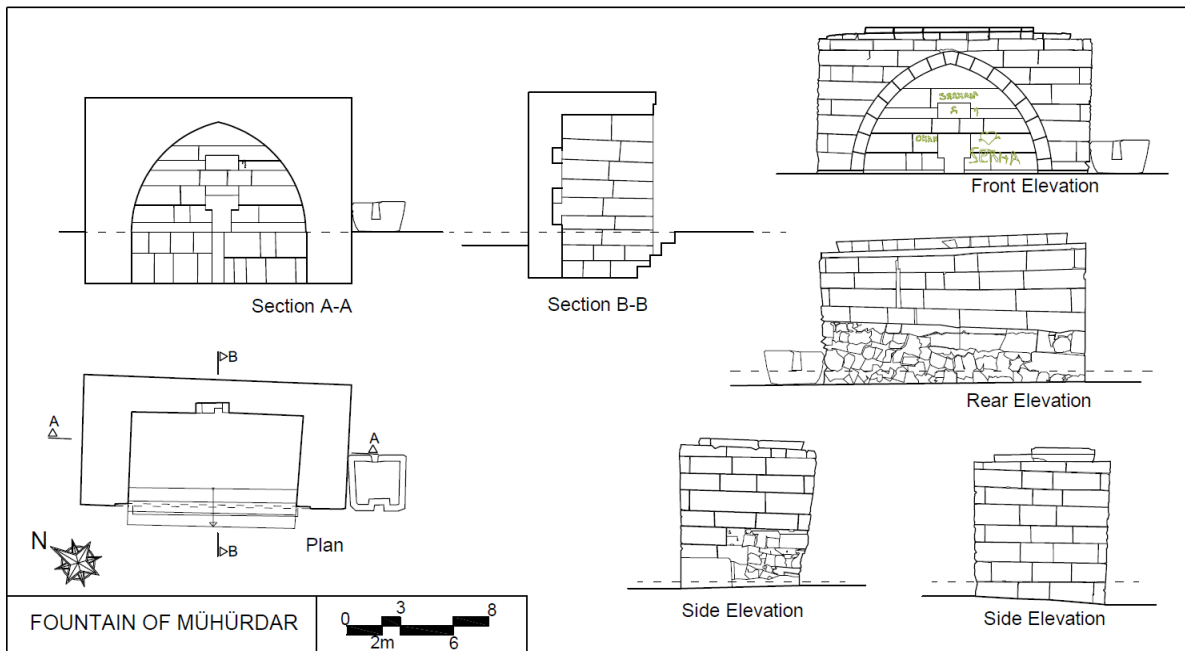


Image 13. Measured drawings of Mühürdar Fountain.

Sır Ali Fountain

Sır Ali Fountain bears the same name with the neighborhood it is located in, and was built in 1712 as written on the inscription (Image 2). (Niğde Cultural Inventory, 2009). It was built in substitution for an existing fountain thereat (Özkarıcı, 2014). The fountain is located on the west of Sır Ali Masjid and its façade is stupendous in appearance with its height of 4.74 meters. It is rectangular in plan, has a pointed arch and it has two additional pointed arched niches on the inner wall. In these arches and on the side walls of the fountain smaller niches are placed. Additionally, spouts are fixed in the centers of these. The fountain is built of dimension stone and the roof is double-pitched type. The eaves' molding is built of stone. A round-arched niche is placed on the rear façade (Image 14). The fountain has undergone repair and today it is currently in use (Image 15).



Image 14. Sır Ali Fountain.

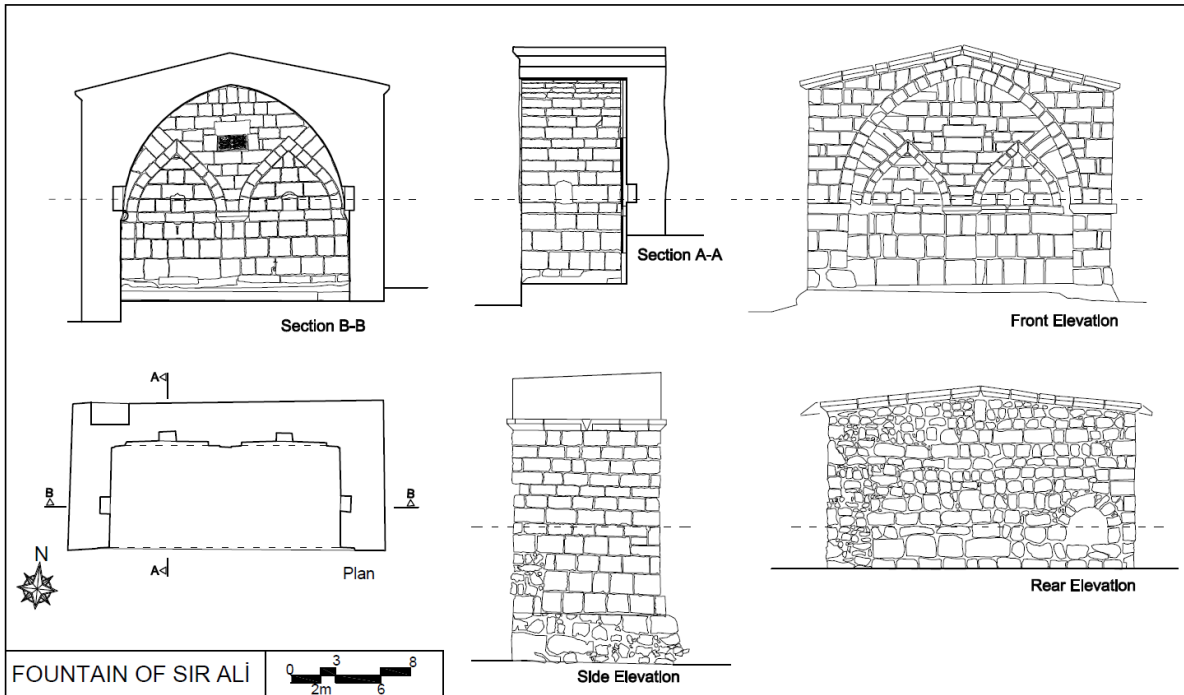


Image 15. Measured drawings of Sır Ali Fountain.

Shah (Şahin Ali) Masjid Fountain

Shah Masjid Fountain is located in Çayır Neighbourhood, Akminare Street and The Masjid of Shah (The Masjid of Şahin Ali) faces it from southeast (Image 16). The masjid is dated to 15th century (Çal, 2000, Topal, 2018). The fountain does not have an inscription. There are buildings adjacent to both right and left sides of the fountain. The fountain is rectangular in plan, is built of rubble stone and the roof is supported by a rounded arch. Front façade is cobbled with dimension stone. Two niches were placed on the main wall and spouts were mounted in the centers of these niches. The height of front elevation is 3.25 meters (Image 17). The fountain is in a dilapidated state and is not in use at present.



Image 16. Shah (Şahin Ali) Masjid Fountain.

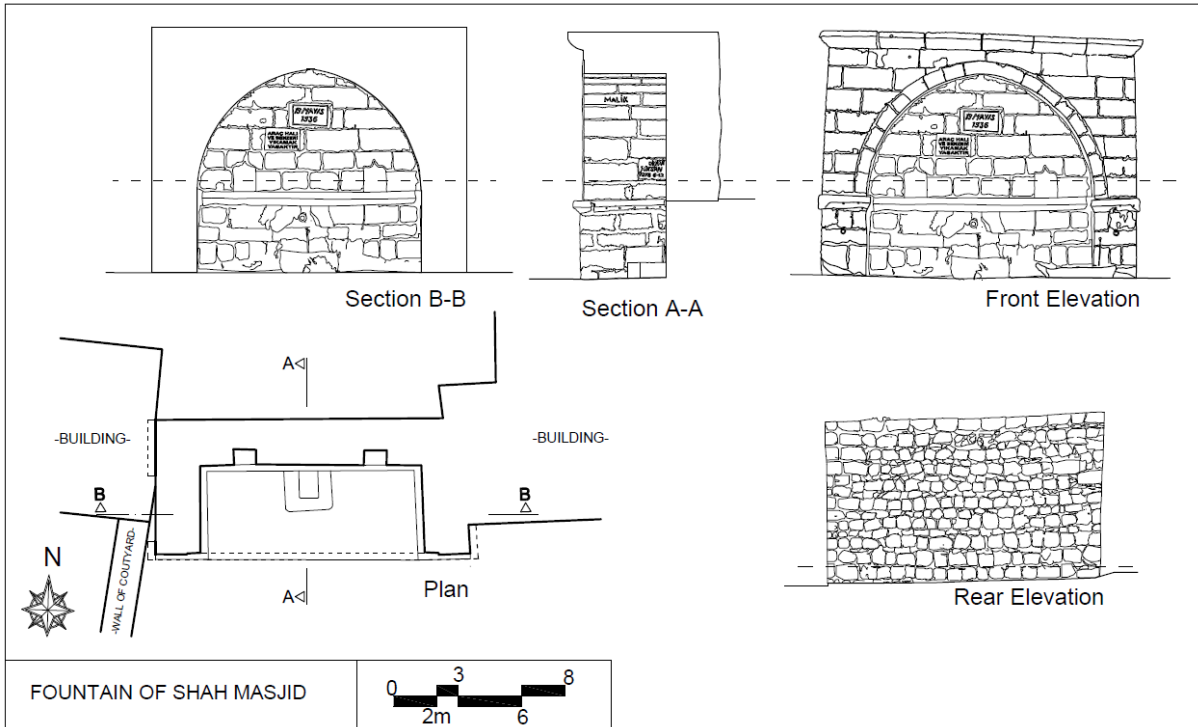


Image 17. Measured drawings of Shah (Şahin Ali) Masjid Fountain.

Çerçici Fountain

Çerçici Fountain is located on Topçu Street, in Aşağı Kayabaşı Neighbourhood. The street is pullulating with historic houses. In time, the fountain has fallen lower than the street level. The fountain was built in 19th century but the inscription of the fountain has not survived to the present (Özkarcı, 2014). The fountain was built adjacent to the courtyard wall of a house. Its type of plan is different from other fountains. While it is rectangular in plan, and has pointed-arch as others do, it has two other pointed-arches on left and right façades. Front and lateral façades were built of dimension stone while rear façade was of rubble stone (Image 18). On the front façade there is a pocket carved for inscription, there are two niches on both sides of this pocket and below the pocket is the spout (Image 19). Today, the fountain is dilapidated and off use.



Image 18. Çercici Fountain.

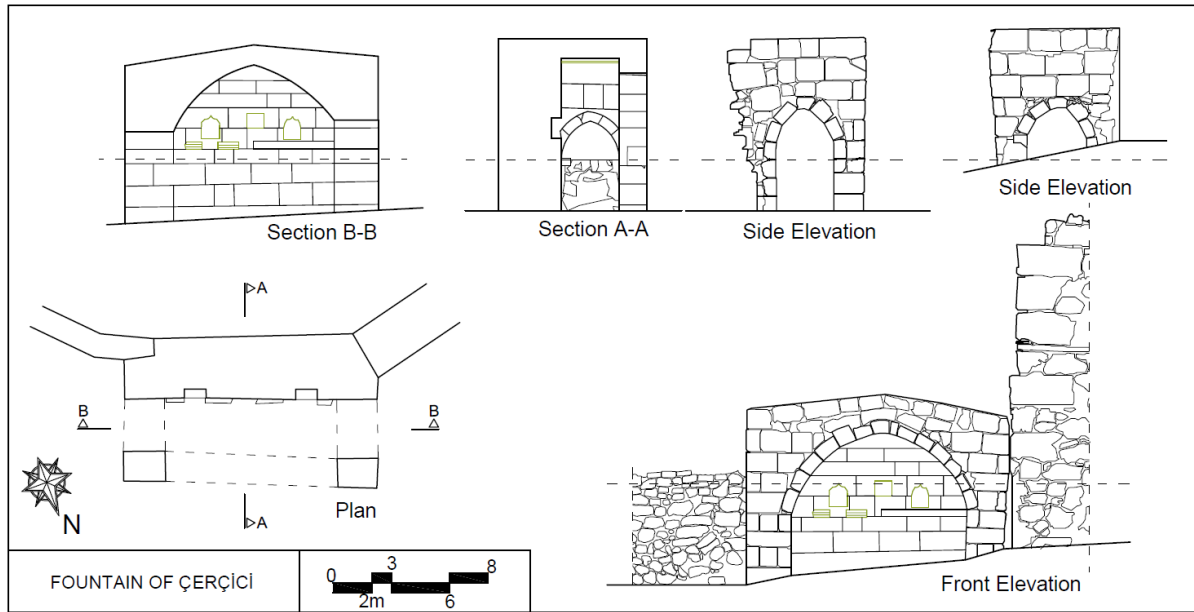


Image 19. Measured drawings of Çercici Fountain.

Babacan Fountain

Babacan Fountain is located on Babacan Street, in Yukarı Kayabaşı Neighbourhood and was built adjacent to courtyard wall of a house. On the west of the fountain is the traditional gate of the house (Fig 20). The fountain was built in 19th century (Özkarıcı, 2014). It was built in a plain style with its rectangular plan and pointed-arch. Front façade is built of dimension stone and rear façade is of rubble stone. The ceiling is vaulted, the roof is flat and clad with dimension stone. Some stone blocks have come loose and have been deteriorated (Image 21).



Image 20. Babacan Fountain

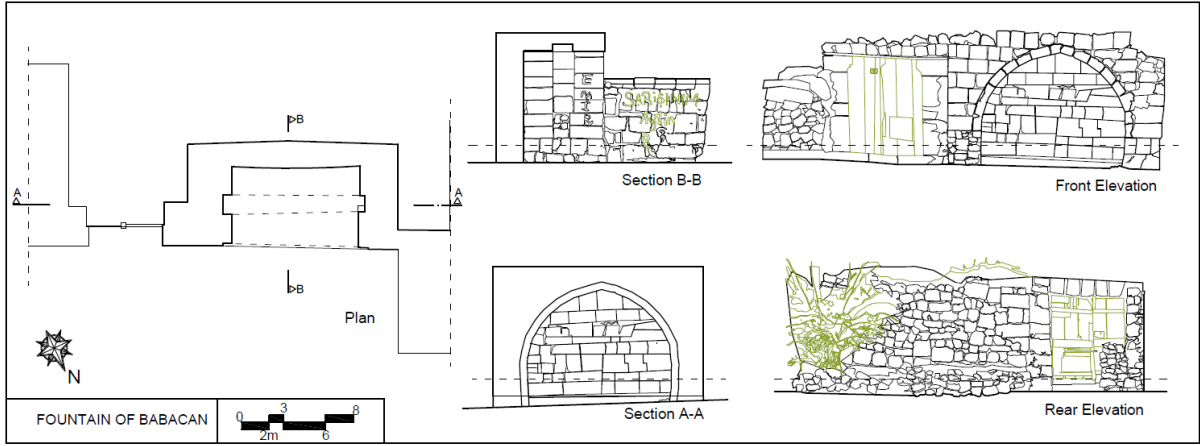


Image 21. Measured drawings of Babacan Fountain.

Pasha Mosque Fountain

Pasha Mosque Fountain is located on Paşakapı Street and part of an Islamic-Ottoman social complex composed of a mosque, tomb, hostelry and hammam. Murat Pasha and his son Ali Pasha had it built in 1670, and the complex was named after Murat Paşa as The Social Complex of Murat Pasha. According to its foundation certificate-charter dated 1670, it was stated that the complex embodied a madrasah and a master's residence as well. However, these buildings have not survived. The fountain built in 1710 is the last structure built within the social complex (Özkarcı, 2001). Northern façade of the fountain is adjacent to the Mosque. In time, the fountain has raised above the street level, and offers a statuesque spectacle with its height of 4.65 meters. The fountain is reached up by means of six steps starting from the street. It is rectangular in plan, the roof is supported by a pointed-arch, two pointed-arched niches are located in the inner wall, and are the spouts at the centers of these niches (Fig 22). In the niche which is on the right, there is an inscription panel made of marble (Image 2). The fountain is built of dimension stone. The basin is located behind the fountain. The roof has been beveled towards the front façade during subsequent repairs (Fig 23).



Image 22. Pasha Mosque Fountain.

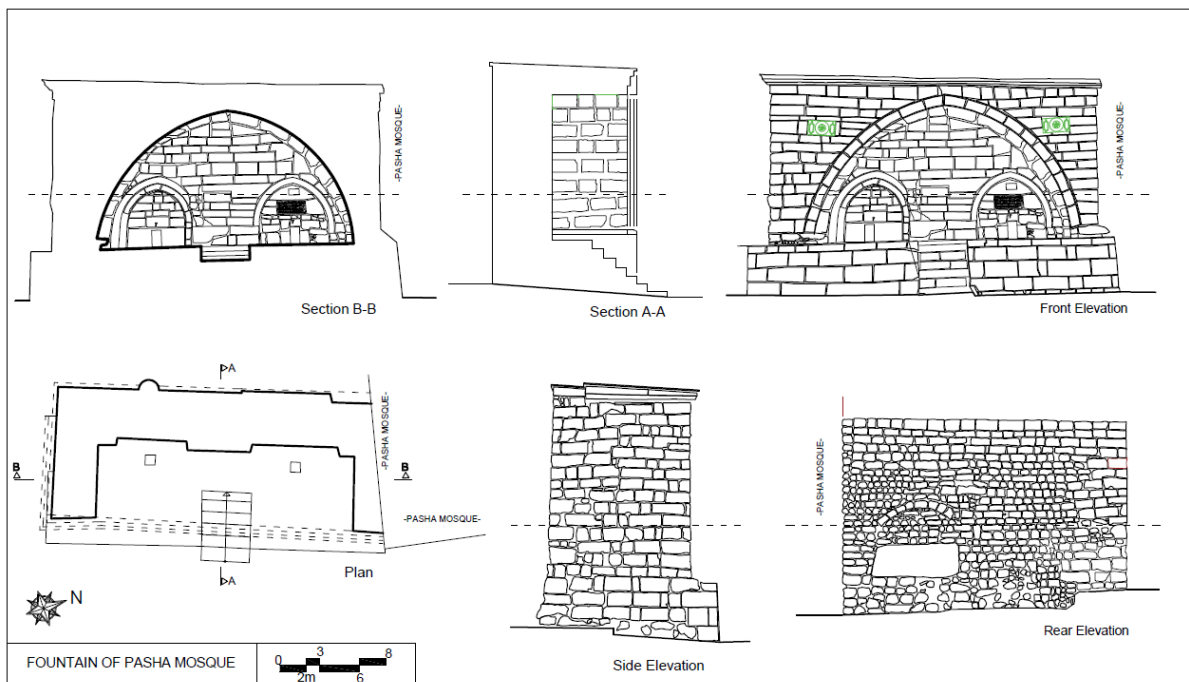


Image 23. Measured drawings of Pasha Mosque Fountain.

Dört Ayak Mosque Fountain

Dört Ayak Mosque Fountain is located on Kemali Ümmi Street in Yenice Neighbourhood. It was built adjacent to the west wall of the portico courtyard of the mosque (Image 24). As written on the inscription panel, Ebu Bekir Agha had it built in between 1764-1765 (Image 2) (Özkarıcı, 2014, Niğde Cultural Inventory, 2009). It is rectangular in plan and the roof is supported by a pointed-arch. At the center of the main niche, an inscription made of marble is placed, below the inscription panel is the spout, and on the both side of the spout are two smaller niches. The fountain is built of dimension stone and has got eave molding made of stone (Image 25). The fountain is currently in use.

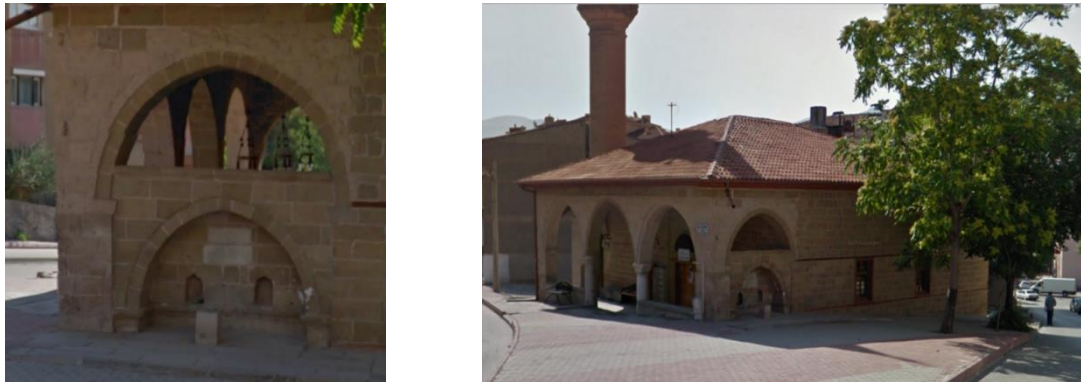


Image 24. Dört Ayak Mosque Fountain.

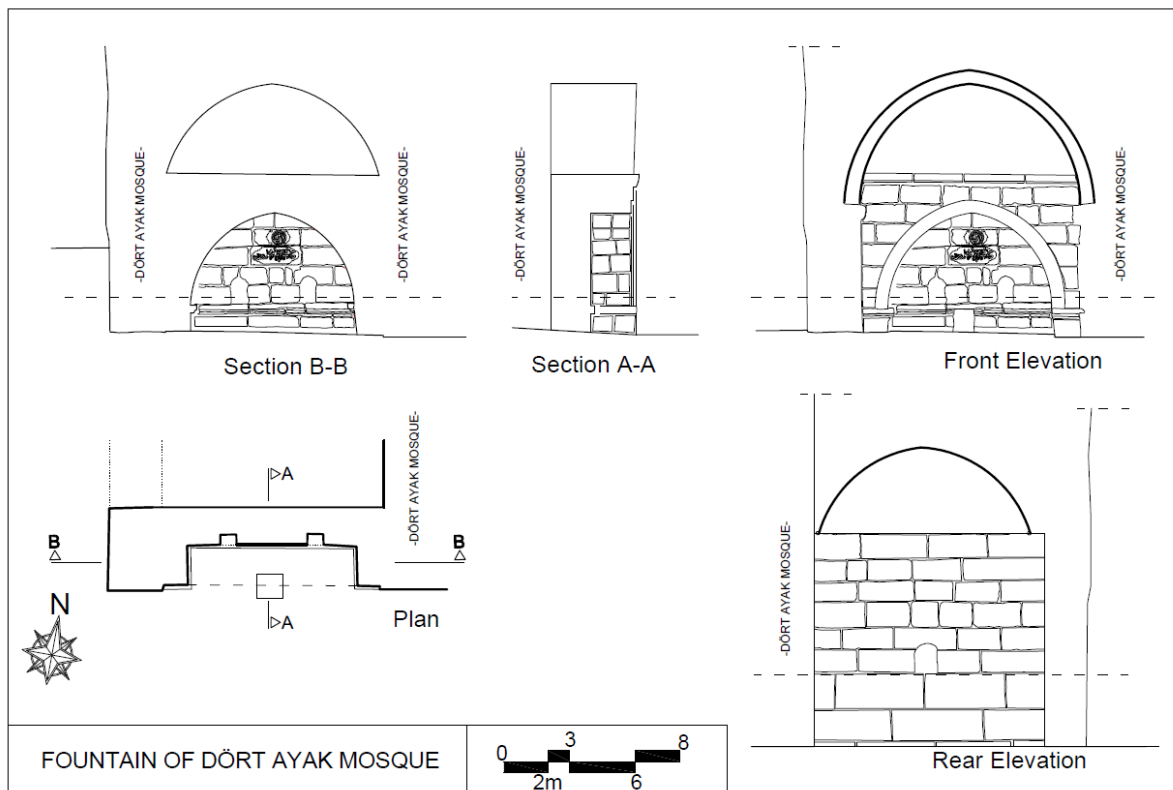


Image 25. Measured drawings of Dört Ayak Mosque Fountain.

Harap Fountain

Harap Fountain is located on Pasha Street in Esenbey Neighbourhood and today it is not in use. The fountain does not have an inscription but it is presumed that it was built in 19th century (Özkarıcı, 2014). It is square in plan and the niche is pointed-arched. The fountain is built of yellowish, hammer-dressed trachyte. The front façade profile is finished up with molded cornice. The roof is flat and clad with dimension stone. The ornament is plane and the bottom line of the cornice is decorated with a thin border composed of braiding

pattern. A marble inscription plate is placed at the center of the main niche. Just below the inscription plate, the spout is placed and there are two smaller niches on both sides of the spout (Image 26).



Image 26. Harap Fountain.

Kandak Fountain

According to the inventory register, the fountain was located in Şahinali Neighbourhood, on Zaimoğlu/Kandak Street, but it was later moved and reconstructed on somewhere different on the same street. The fountain is rectangular in plan and was built of dimension stone. The arc starts from the stone molding level, and that molding continues in the inner walls. There is a pointed-arched niche on the front façade. The inscription made of marble is currently being exhibited in the city museum. The roof is flat and covered with terrazzo. During its reconstruction, original stones were considerably changed with new ones (Image 27).



Image 27. Kandak Fountain.

Kaymakam Fountain

The fountain is located in Yenişehir Neighbourhood, on Yeşilburç Street, and was built by the District Governor Mustafa Agha in between 1822-1823 (Özkarıcı, 2007). The fountain was placed on the courtyard wall of a house and was built of hammer-dressed, xanthic trachyte. The overall size of the fountain is approximately 1,30 x1,40 meters. Front façade profile is ended with molded cornice, and the flat roof is covered with dimension stone. The fountain does not have any ornamentation. On the front façade, there is a pointed-arched niche which is 2,10 meters wide and 70 centimeters deep. The inscription panel is placed on the southern wall of the niche (Özkarıcı, 2014). According to the visual resources dated 2016, nearly half of the fountain fell below the street level, and considerably lost its originality. For that reason, the inner details of the fountain cannot be reached at present (Image 33). At present, the fountain is nearly joined with the courtyard wall and lost its authenticity. Some traces of the fountain are still visible on the courtyard wall (Image 34).



Image 28. Kaymakam Fountain, 2018 (Niğde Cultural Inventory, 2016).



Image 29. Kaymakam Fountain, 2019.

Classification of the fountains

Fountains by location are classified into two groups as attached and freestanding fountains (Ödekan, 1992; Denктаş, 2002). Nalbantlar Fountain was constructed attached to the southern wall of a shop, Kiblah Masjid Fountain was attached to the lower part of the masjid's southern wall, Shah Masjid Fountain was attached to the houses located on east and west façades of the fountain. Çercici, Babacan and Kaymakam fountains were attached to the courtyard walls of neighboring houses, Pasha Mosque Fountain was attached to the southern wall of the mosque, Dört Ayak Mosque Fountain was attached to the western façade of the mosque's portico courtyard. Hatiroğlu, Cullaz, Mühürdar, Sır Ali, Harap and Kandak fountains are freestanding fountains. Some of these fountains are considered to have been built to serve for squares, some to serve for mosques and others to serve for houses on the streets and neighborhoods.

The historical fountains were classified with respect to their façade compositions and their forms of body (carcass)/trunk). Niches were built considerably deep in Pasha Mosque, Sır Ali, Cullaz and Mühürdar fountains. Deep niches are a vernacular approach in the region (Özkarıcı, 2007).

Niches located on the walls of the fountains are enclosed with pointed or semicircle arches. Pointed-arched fountains are the most common type and seen on eleven fountains (Akçaözoğlu et al., 2020). Kiblah Masjid, Mühürdar, Babacan, Dört Ayak Mosque, Nalbantlar, Harap, Kandak and Kaymakam fountains do not have niches. Cullaz Fountain has single-arched niche while Sır Ali and Pasha Mosque fountains have double-arched niches. These two fountains are more massive and higher than the others. Nalbantlar Fountain has had a pointed-arched niche but it did not survive. Today, the fountain has a plain façade made of marble. In semicircle-arched fountains, the niche is enclosed with a round arch. Hatiroğlu Fountain built in Seljukian Period, and Shah Masjid Fountain built in Karamanoğlu Seigneury are included in this group. Çerçici Fountain differs from other fountains with its three arches, one in the front and two on right and left façades (Image 35).

The rectangular prism form is mostly preferred for the fountains in Niğde. The housings of Hatiroğlu, Nalbantlar, Kiblah Masjid, Mühürdar, Sır Ali, Shah Masjid, Çerçici, Babacan, Pasha Mosque, Dört Ayak Mosque, Kaymakam and Kandak fountains are rectangular prism. The housings of Cullaz and Harap fountains are square prism.



Image 30. Çerçici Fountain, arches on right and left façades, respectively.

Conclusions

In this study, a documentation of the fountains which have been built on various locations of the Province of Niğde and which have historic and cultural values, and thus to provide a preliminary preparation for their transfer to the future generations are aimed. These fountains are an integral part of historic and cultural structure of the city and have a substantial place in the formation of the identity of the city. Within the scope of the study, architectural features were examined and documentation studies were carried out by taking the surveys of the fountains.

With respect to their locations, eight of the fountains were determined as attached fountains that were built adjacent to a wall of a building. The remaining six fountains were determined to be freestanding fountains of which their surroundings are open. With respect to the forms of the arches, most of the fountains were pointed-arches while two of them were semicircle-arches.

Shah Masjid, Çerçici, Babacan, Mühürdar, Harap and Kandak fountains should be repaired and their functions must be restored. This study, being a documentation work conducted on the historical fountains that face the danger of vanishing and being the first phase of any preservation attempt, is considered to contribute substantially to any possible restoration works.

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