

A STRUCTURAL AND ORNAMENTATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EARLY TURKISH PERIOD BRIDGES IN SOUTH- EASTERN ANATOLIA

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The study and evaluation of bridges, one of the civil building types of the Early Turkish Period, were neglected until recently and represented a large gap in the study of Turkish architecture.

Recent studies have shed light on bridges built on historical routes and have shed light on the importance of bridges in Turkish architecture.

Anatolia's earliest Turkish bridges, our present subject, are in the south-eastern region. Apart from being the initiators of Turkish Anatolian bridge architecture, these edifices are notable by their monumental structures.

Bridges over running waters are found in many different regions of Anatolia either in ruins or in still usable form; the early Turkish bridges of south-eastern Anatolia belong to the 12th or 13th centuries.

Since the Turkish settlement of Anatolia and especially during the early centuries, south-eastern Anatolia has been defined as part of the region further to the south, in relation to the cultural and political scene. Accordingly, a discussion of the bridges spanning the waters of the south-east should not omit those built further south (outside Turkey).

Most of the bridges studied here are built upon an important highway of the Seljuk Anatolian period. The highway in question started at Konya, on which converged roads leading from many important cities at various directions. From Konya, the road led through Malatya-Diyarbakır-Mardin-Musul and on to Bağdad and Basra. The branch leading up to Bitlis in the north-eastern direction should also be considered part of this route.

On grouping the regional bridges typologically, the structures where the road leading through the bridge has little or no inclination

are: the Dicle Bridge (built in 1067 on pre-Islamic foundations), Kara Köprü (XII–XIII centuries), Küçük Köprü at Cizre (XII century), Halil Viran Bridge (1219), Nasraddin Bridge (XII–XIII centuries) and the Ambar Bridge (1223/24-inscription of repair-).

The presence of great rivers with deep beds in the region has caused ample examples of the second group, steep types with large main arches. Impressive to visitors of the locality with their monumental appearances, they are the Malabadi “Batman Su” (1145–1154), Hasan Keyf (1155–1175), Ceziret ibn Umar (1164), Haburman (1179), Siğnek (XII. century), Kasrik (XII.–XIII centuries), Dunaysır (early XIII. century) and Kemhuk (XII. century) bridges.

In relation to their general appearance, the examples cited do not differ from contemporary Anatolian bridges. However, in either group, the monumentally executed examples have converged in the south-east; simply the evaluation of the space between the main arches is quite enlightening.

Being built on an entirely functional basis, the bridge is not rich on architectural elements. The absence of such detail prevents the studier from deducting the characteristics of the period and from reaching a definite synthesis, as in other architectural forms.

In fact, to whatever extent the bridge is influenced by local and regional art, the essence of its structure remains unchanged due to its architectural nature. The artistic influences and traditions can only be traced in architectural details, so that such partial differences do not change the whole.

The most important element of the bridge, the “arch” is usually the pointed arch type in the south-eastern Anatolia. While the spaces between all of the main arches are built pointed, most of the small arches are observed to be circular.

There are apparent similarities both in the shape of the arch and the general appearance between the regional bridges we have discussed and the examples in further south, from outside Anatolia (Altın Köprü, IX. century, and especially the Habur Bridge). However, these southern bridges with pointed arches cannot easily considered to be the earliest specimens which served as prototypes to the Anatolian bridges, since the pointed arch was also used in the Roman and Byzantine periods, especially in the eastern and south-eastern regions.

Accordingly, the bridges cited for comparison (especially Habur) are not the first examples of a type, but examples of local architecture where the tradition of the pointed arch was carried on since the Roman period.

The Roman tradition of pointed arches continues in the south-east on the early examples of Turkish Anatolian bridge architecture.

As with all early Turkish bridges of Anatolia, the south-eastern Anatolian bridges do not have a well defined form of parapet.

The south-east Anatolian bridges are included into the tradition of stone architecture characteristic of the Seljuk Anatolian period. However, although the material is mainly stone, the bridge constructions where the greatest amount of bricks were used together with stone are in the south-east.

The early Turkish period bridges of Anatolia are generally stark, unornamented buildings. The exceptions are a group of south-eastern bridges, which display a rich array of figures within limited possibilities. The bridges in question are Malabadi, Hasan Keyf, Ceziret ibn Umar and Küçük Köprü of Cizre. The figures are in high relief; their common feature is the zodiac signs and planet motifs used for subject matter.

In contrast to the rich display of ornamentation on the bridges cited, we do not come across any figures on the others. There are some which lack ornamentation even in the form of the inscription. However, some notable examples are ornamented with character arranged in various forms displaying the "hatti" variety of ornamentation (Halil Viran Bridge).

In conclusion, the bridges are an exception to the south-eastern Anatolian style of architecture which generally differs from that of Seljuk Anatolia; however, the difference is reflected in the style of ornamentation.

The zodiac and planet symbols are well established as an important part of the decorative design of Anatolian Seljuk architecture. It is not surprising that the Middle Ages belief in astrologically determined human destiny was widely reflected on the south-eastern bridges of Anatolian bridge architecture. The numerous figures observed on religious and secular buildings of the region are proof to the extent of passion for figures in architecture.

The inscriptions which appear on most bridges prove that Anatolia's earliest bridges are concentrated in this area.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from its discovery to the present time. It is written in a clear and concise style, and is well adapted for the use of students in schools and colleges.

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E. Herzfeld'den.



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C. Preusser'den



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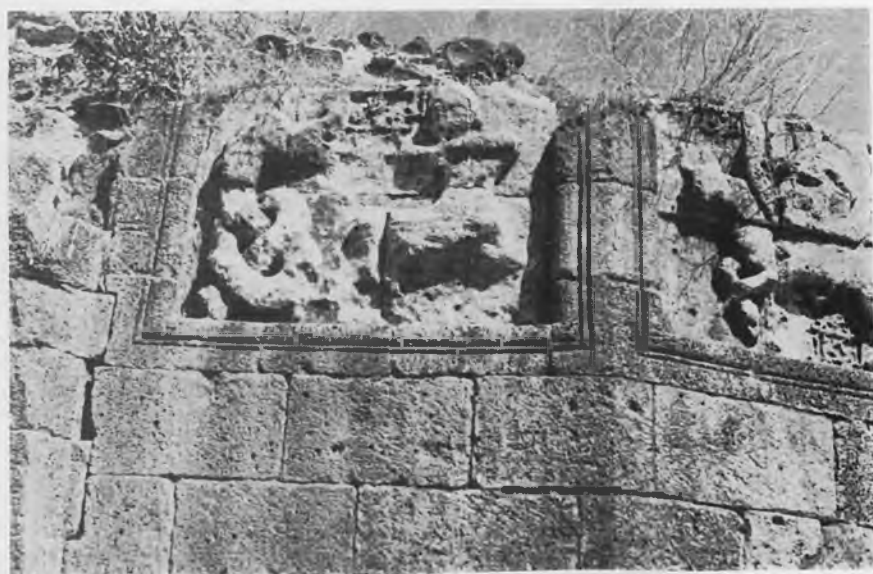
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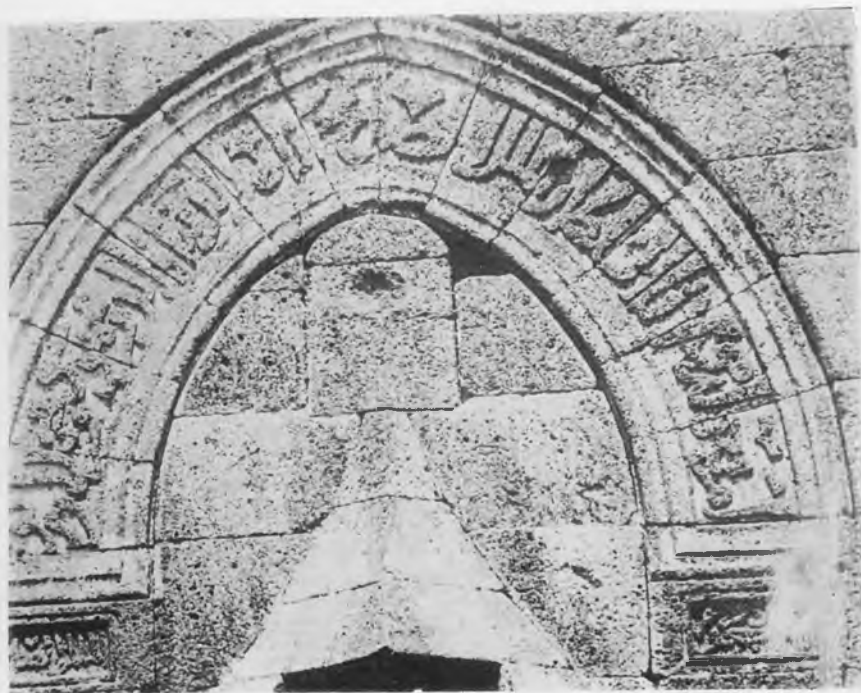
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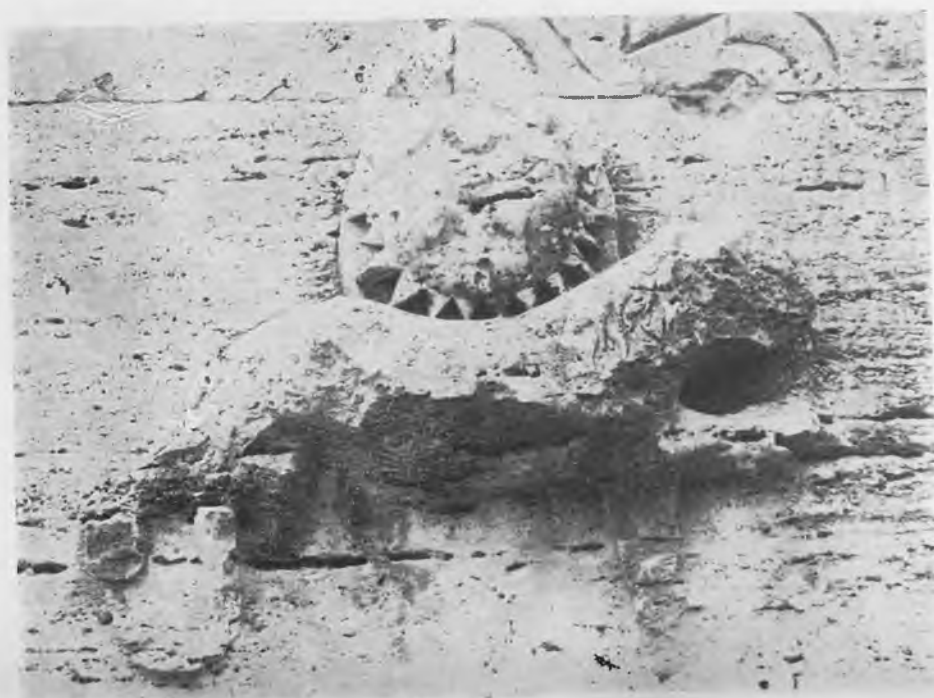


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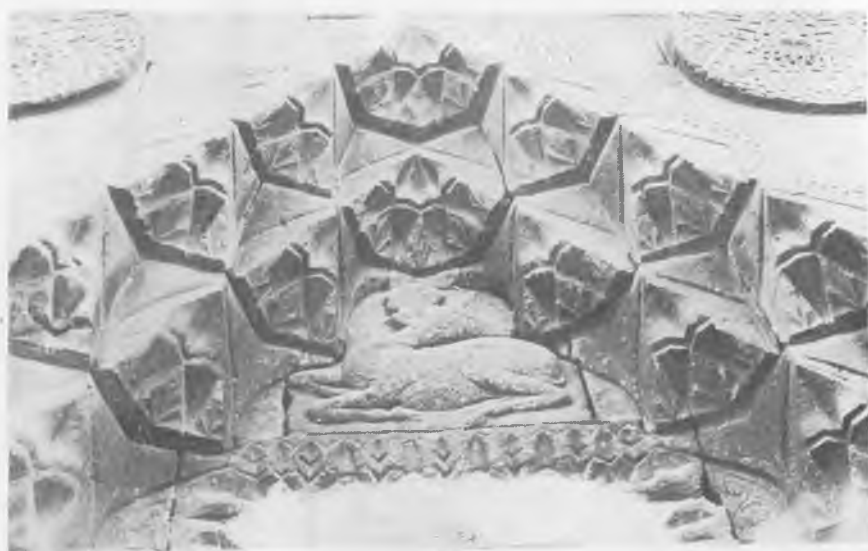


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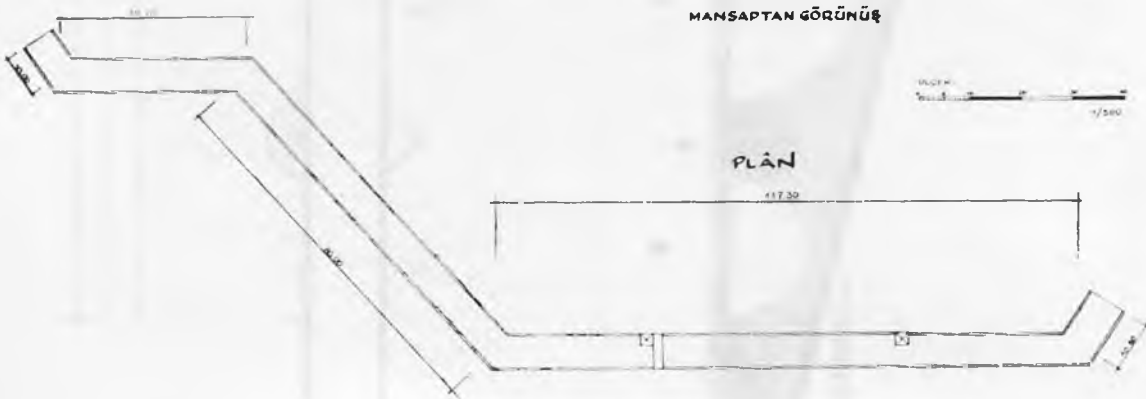


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MALABADİ (Batman su) KÖPRÜSÜ

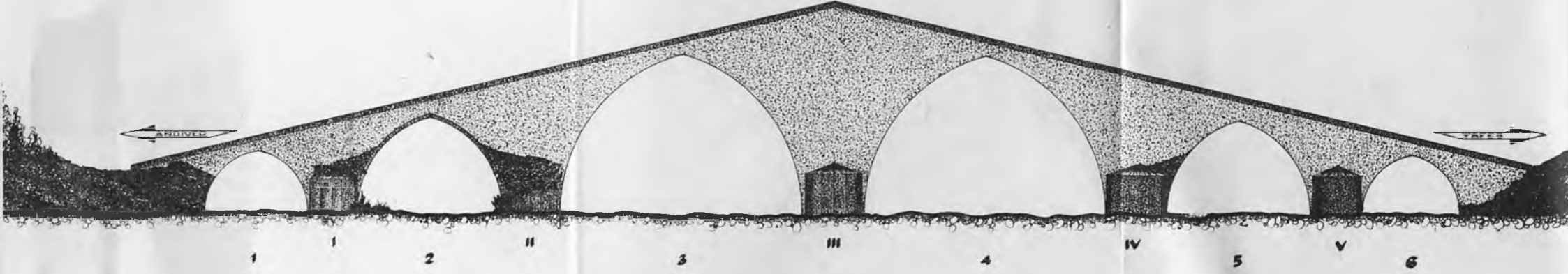


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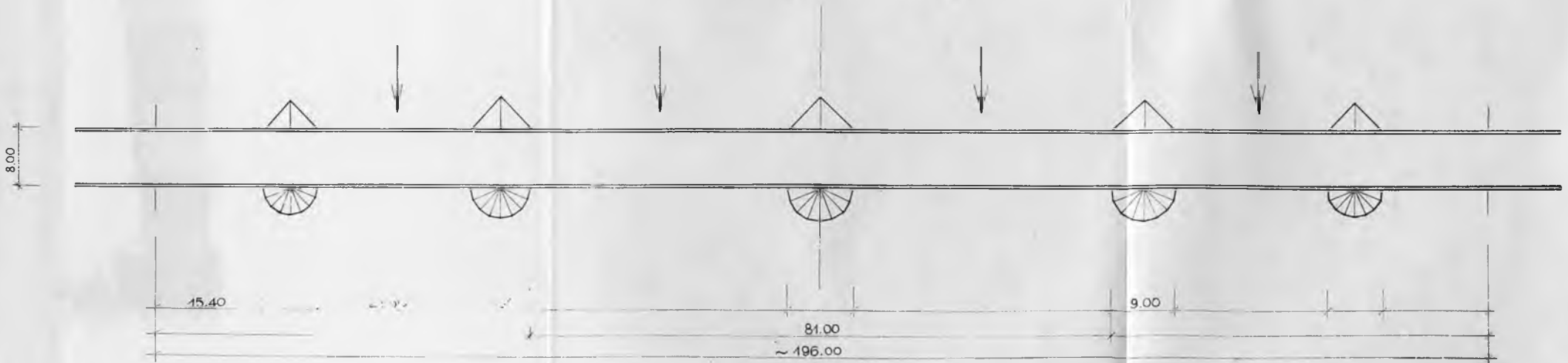


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CEZİRET İBN UMAR KÖPRÜSÜ



Mansaptan Görünüş

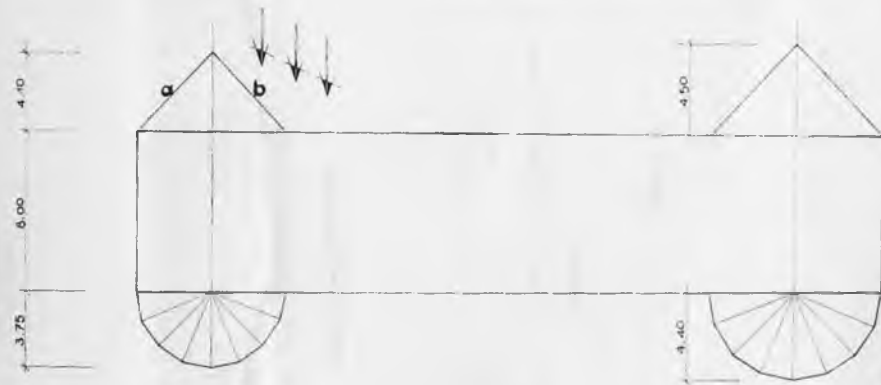
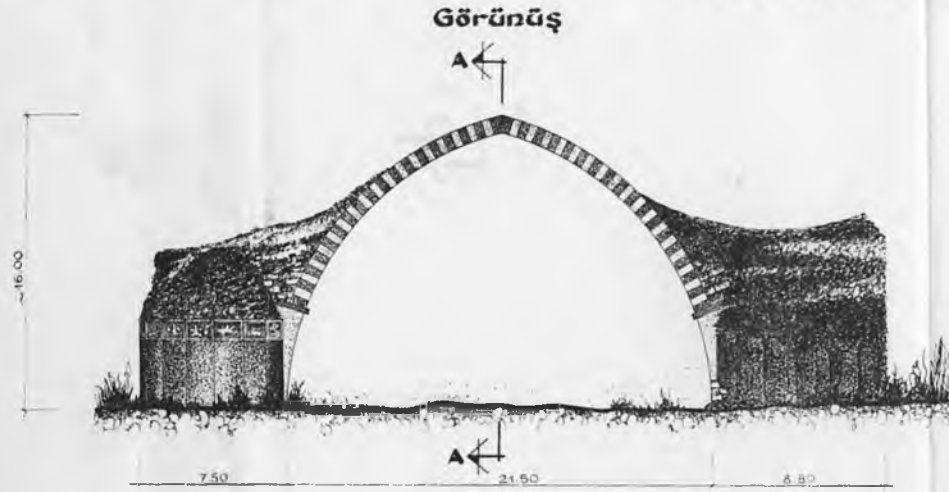


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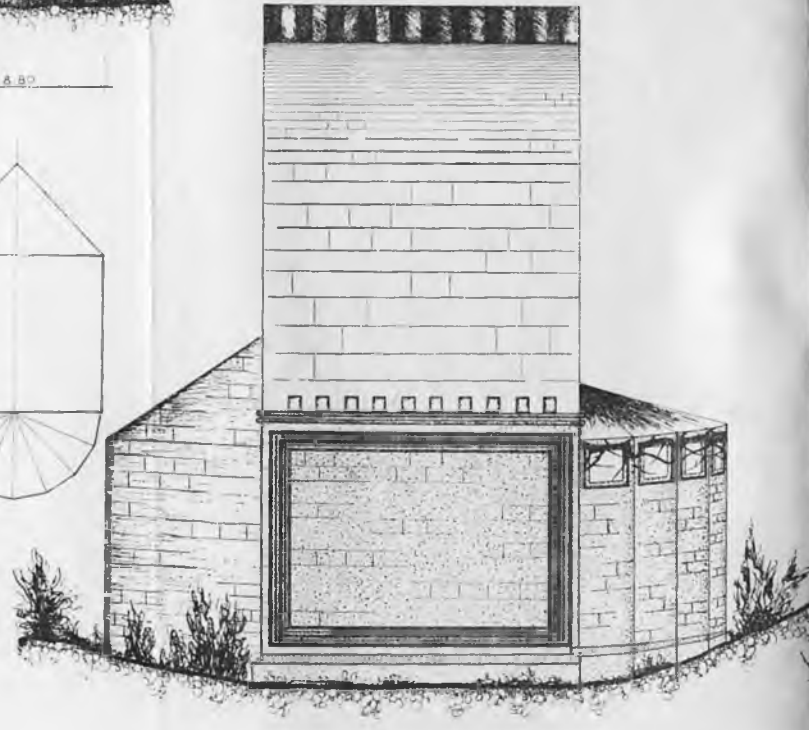
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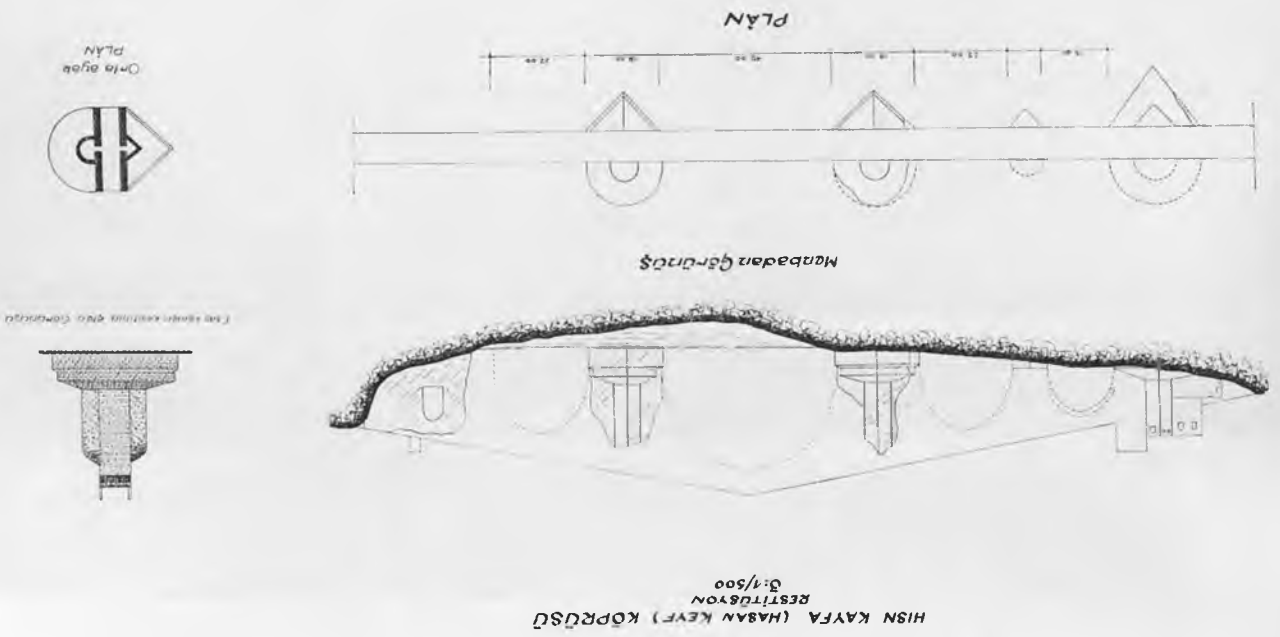
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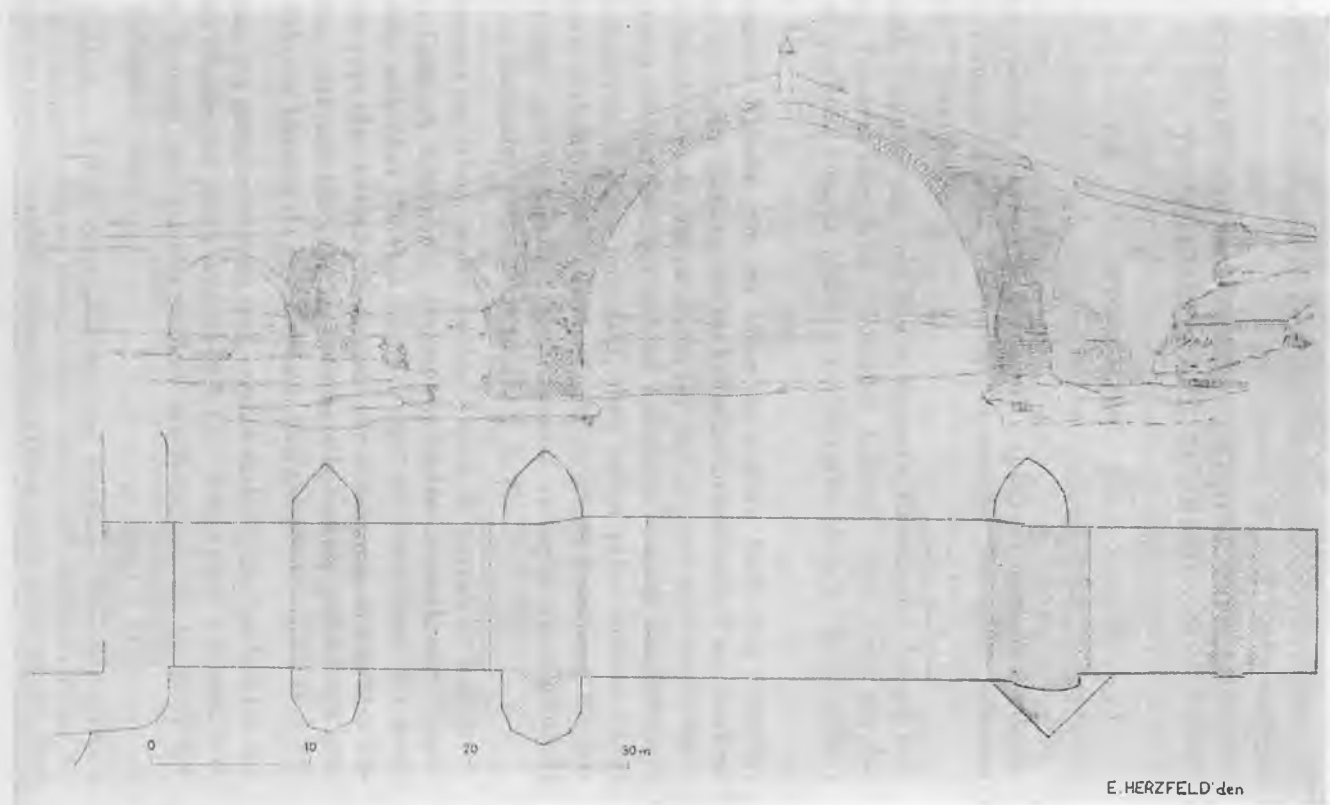
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Şekil 4





Şekil: 5