



The Western Maksurah of the Great Mosque of Diyarbakir, Research and Excavation

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Abstract: The Great Mosque of Diyarbakır is located in the district of Cami-i Kebir, in the northwestern quarter of the walled ancient city. The space occupied by the mosque has been recognized as the ancient forum of the city of Amida. To the east, it is located along the urban cardo opposite the Han of Hasan Pasa. The south of the monumental complex overlooks the traditional bazaar of Sipahi. To the north and east the mosque is surrounded by walls. Currently, around the courtyard, the Hanefi prayer room is located to the south, two maksurahs to the west and east and the Mesudiye medressa with its portico to the north, as well as the Shafi's section. The mosque has three entrances to the east, west and north. In the center, on the square, there is a conical octagonal and pyramidal pointed fountain as well as a prayer room and a pool. The courtyard also contains a sun clock. Many ancient spolia can still be seen. Excavations in the Western Maksurah have provided important information for the restoration of the Great Mosque and for the understanding of its history. The results obtained for both of these issues are presented here. The evaluations made for the preservation of the excavation findings, which were deemed necessary during the restoration works in the Great Mosque, will also be explained in this study.

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Diyarbakır Ulu Cami Batı Maksuresinde Araştırma Kazıları

Anahtar Kelimeler
 Diyarbakır Ulu Cami,
 Batı Makuresi,
 araştırma kazısı,
 restorasyon,
 koruma

Öz: Diyarbakır Ulu Camii, surlarla çevrili antik kentin kuzeybatısında, Cami-i Kebir mahallesinde yer almaktadır. Caminin kapladığı alan, Amida şehrinin antik forumu olarak kabul edilmiştir. Doğuda, Hasan Paşa Hanı'nın karşısındaki kentsel meydan boyunca yer almaktadır. Yapı topluluğunun güneyi Sipahi Çarşısı'na bakmaktadır. Cami kuzey ve doğudan duvarla çevrilidir. Hâlihazırda avlu çevresinde güneyde Hanefiler Bölümü, batı ve doğuda iki maksure, kuzeyde Mesudiye Medresesi ile Şafiler Bölümü yer almaktadır. Caminin doğu, batı ve kuzeyden olmak üzere üç girişi vardır. Merkezde, meydana, konik sekizgen ve piramidal sivri uçlu şadırvanın yanı sıra namazgâh ve havuz bulunmaktadır. Avluda ayrıca bir güneş saati bulunmaktadır. Birçok antik devşirme malzeme hala görülebilmektedir. Batı Maksura'da yapılan kazılar, Ulu Cami'nin restorasyonu ve tarihinin anlaşılması için önemli bilgiler sağlamıştır. Bu iki konu için elde edilen sonuçlar burada sunulmaktadır. Ulu Cami'deki restorasyon çalışmaları sırasında gerekli görülen kazı buluntularının korunması için yapılan değerlendirmeler de bu çalışmada anlatılacaktır.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 2010 and 2017 major restoration works were carried out in the Great Mosque. They coincided with the preparation of the UNESCO nomination file, which resulted in the classification of "the cultural landscape of Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Garden" as a world heritage site [1].

In order to obtain detailed information necessary for the restoration of the site, the members of the scientific committee wanted research excavations. The purpose of these was to obtain information in each section of the building before the intervention. The first interventions concerned the Hanafi prayer hall and the eastern Maksurah. In 2015 the Shafi prayer hall was excavated as well as the plot behind the Western Maksurah. Excavations were carried out behind the Shafi section and

the Western Maksurah. Numerous remains were uncovered.

These excavations have provided new information about the mosque and the history of the city and have contributed to the preservation and enhancement of the city center.

These results and the information obtained present the original value of the study.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this study, first of all, the architectural features of Diyarbakır Great Mosque are briefly explained. Brief information is given from the research excavations carried out during the extensive restoration work of the building between 2010-2017. The importance of the research excavation in the restoration works is explained and the excavations made in the back area of the Western Maksurah are explained. The importance and evaluation of the findings were made.

2.1. The Location and The Structural Plan of The Great Mosque of Diyarbakır

The Great Mosque of Diyarbakır is a group of structures in Cami-i Kebir neighborhood located in the northwest quarter of the traditional urban area. The mosque is in front of Hasan Pasha public house on Gazi Street. The mosque is located off the street and its east entrance opens to a square, while its north and west wings are surrounded by a street, its south wing looks towards the traditional Sipahi (cavalry) Bazaar (figure 1).



Figure 1. The Great Mosque of Diyarbakır on the Suriçi map (Gabriel,1940)

Although the construction period of the structure is not well known, we can find in each section, interventions from various periods which can infer from the inscriptions in the structure Gabriel 1940:184-194 [2]. Despite all these interventions, we have been able to keep the traditional features of the construction by integrating the art and techniques of the concerned periods.

Around the large courtyard of the building we can find to the south, the Hanafi's Section; to the east, an eastern portico (eastern maksurah), containing the library which may have been a muvakkithane and the eastern entrance; to the north, the Shafi's Section, the northern entrance, the

cloister of the Mesudiye Madrasa, a traditional house and toilets; to the west another portico (western maksurah), containing the Qur'anic classrooms, and the western entrance. Some other features of the large courtyard are: the pointed octagonal pyramidal Shadirvan with a sharp pyramidal tip, the fountain built in the Ottoman period, an open-air prayer space and a pool raised by a few steps. There is also a sundial in front of the portico of the Mesudiye Madrasa (figure 2).

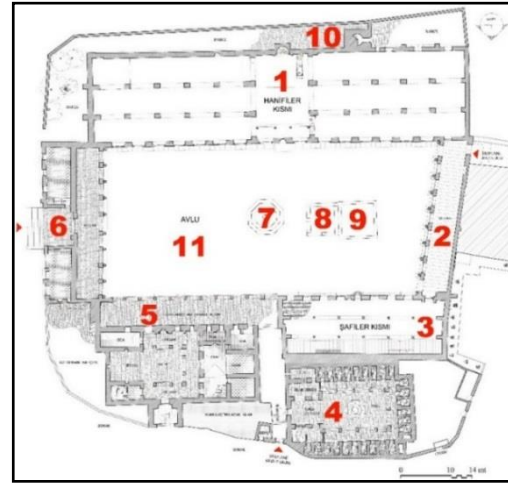


Figure 2. Plan of the Great Mosque: 1. Hanafi Section; 2. Western Maksurah; 3. Shafi Section; 4. Latrines; 5. Mesudiye Madrasa; 6. Eastern Maksurah; 7. Shadirvan; 8. Prayer Hall; 9. Pool; 10. Minaret; 11. Sundial

2.2. The Western Maksurah and Its Situation at The Rear of The Western Maksurah Before The Restoration Work

The Shafi's Section is located on the north of the ground floor, and we can find the Hanafi's entrance in the south. The entrance door of the mosque, which opens to a street, is located to the west. A significant part of the building leans on a traditional house on the outside. The stoa used to have another door, which is currently closed, near the Shafi's Section.

The façade of the courtyard of the Western Maksurah seems to have the same features as The Eastern Maksurah, but the construction period is different Assenat 2018 [3]. The ground floor consists of decorated columns, arches, and inscriptions. The same decoration can be found on the second floor but there are windows between the columns. However, we can also find windows built in the later periods on the outer façade. On the ground floor behind the stoa, there is a mortuary, a ghusl room, and a warehouse also constructed in the later periods.

Before the restoration work, as in the other sections, some damages can be seen. During the recent intervention, the mezzanine floor and the upper covering were changed into reinforced concrete, the pressure from the reinforced concrete roof led to erosion and crackings of the columns. All the decorated areas have erosion and crackings. There was significant urban pollution on the limestones' surfaces, and inappropriate work on the cement-based seals was carried out (figure 3).

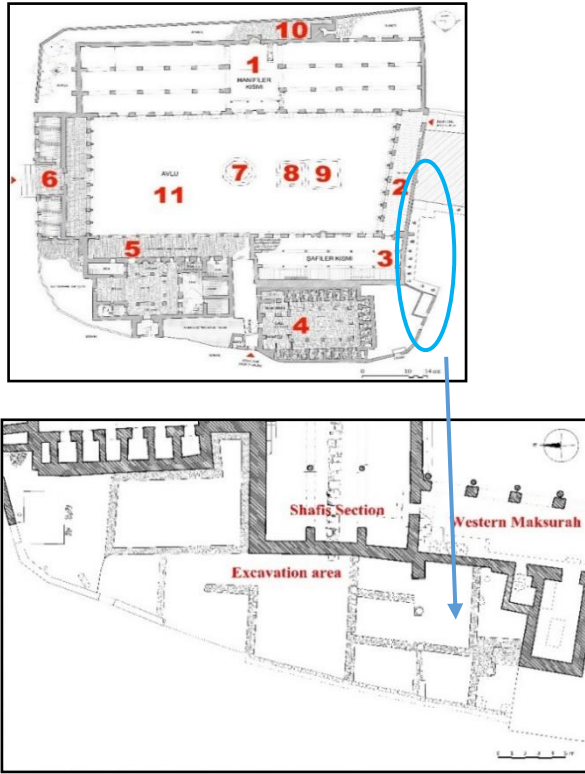


Figure 3. Excavation area

3. RESULTS

The objective of all the works carried out in the Great Mosque of Diyarbakir is the transmission of the posterity. In accordance with the recommendations of the scientific committee, the detailed information provided by the excavations made it possible to understand the originality of the structure and to preserve it. Elements that threatened the authenticity of the monument have been removed. Useful documentation and conservation work has been carried out and the rear area has been refurbished.

Furthermore various structures belonging to the Byzantine and medieval periods have been unearthed and document the history of the mosque and its immediate surroundings.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The objective of all the works carried out in the Great Mosque of Diyarbakir is the transmission of the monument to the following generations. To this end, excavations, carried out in accordance with the authorized project and in accordance with the decisions taken by the scientific committee, have provided detailed information in order to preserve the historical interventions made on the structure and its originality. The elements that threatened the authenticity of the monument were removed.

Research excavations were important to preserve the historical monuments, to obtain information about them during the restoration work, and to choose the correct restoration method. As it had been done in the other parts

of the Grand Mosque of Diyarbakir, the excavations behind the western maksurah have led to a useful method of conservation and correct restoration works.

So, the excavation was conducted in an area of approximately 300 square meters. The façade of a three-arched wall, taken from the frame of a traditional house, was uncovered to the south of the excavated area Ertunç 2015a; 2015b [4,5]; Aktay et alii 2015 [6]. The basalt columns and capitals of the façade were intact.

The excavations also led to numerous discoveries. Various structures belonging to the Byzantine and medieval periods have been brought to light.

In this area, walls, arches, columns, capitals, columns' bases, buttresses and rows of tiles from different periods were uncovered.

Useful documentation and conservation work was carried out, and the area at the back was reorganized.

The arch gaps were filled with mortar and stones. In the Shafi's Section, an arch door was uncovered. An elevation adjustment was made in the area of the western maksurah arc that took into account the ground level of the excavation. The door in the stoa of the western maksurah has been opened.

The cause of the humidity on the western wall of the Shafi's Section was found. Necessary drainages were installed. Restoration, conservation, and regulations works were carried out in the excavation area. Moreover, the restoration work made it possible to make correct decisions concerning the originality of the structure and its current use.



Figure 4. View of the excavated area. On the left the condemned door

*In this excavation work, some structures from different periods were uncovered. Some of them were grossly built and some others were carefully built, particularly a basalt wall that is approximately 60 cm wide.

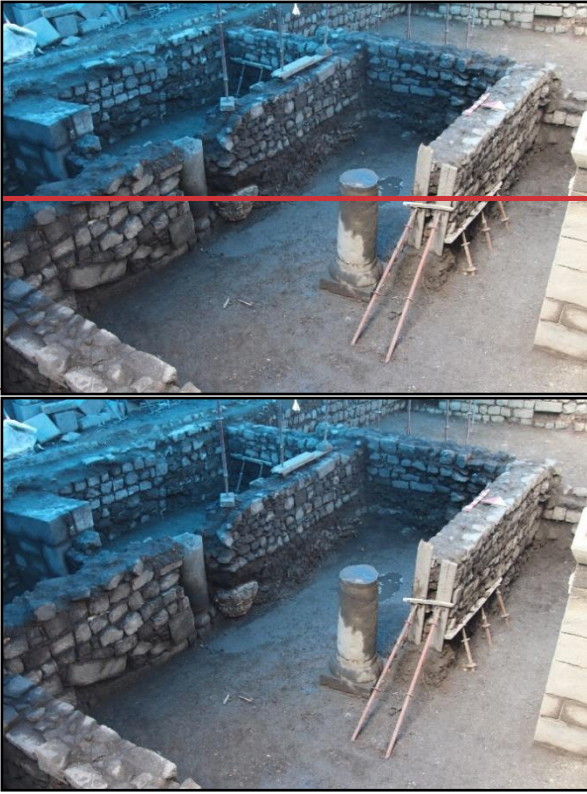


Figure 5. View of the excavations behind the Western Maksurah

* On the axis of the wall that separates the Shafi's Section from the western maksurah, in an east/west direction, a basalt buttress, a basalt column, and a basalt capital dating from the Byzantine period were uncovered.

*Parallel to the street, in a north/south direction, basalt stone walls between 150 and 200 cm high were discovered. A late-period building is located in the central area. Additionally, in the central area, basalt walls, that could be the foundation of a building of a later period, were uncovered.



Figure 6. A basalt wall that is approximately 60 cm wide.

*The use of bricks can be observed in the north of the excavation area, but the period is not determined.

In the north of the excavation area, from an undetermined period, basalt stonework.

*The arch door, which had a distinct circumference, located inside of the Shafi's Section has been entirely uncovered during the excavations.



Figure 7. Basalt stone walls between 150 and 200 cm

Excavation Conservation and Reclamation: The restoration work began in 2010 and ended in 2017. The complex is planned for both praying and visiting purposes. Therefore, during the restoration work, the complex was not completely closed. After the excavation and conservation works of the Hanifis section and the eastern maksurah, the same works were extended to the Shafi's Section and to the western maksurah Halifeoğlu 2019 [7]; Halifeoğlu & Assenat 2019 [8]; 2020 [7,9,10]. The work carried out in the western maksurah can be defined as cleaning, reinforcement, complementation, and reconstruction work. In the western maksurah, a suspension project was carried out before the intervention and the structure was suspended. Samples of mortar and dirt have been analyzed by experts. According to the new information, the project has been reshaped.

Cleaning: In all plastered surfaces and stone surfaces cleaning work was carried out. Cement-based plaster and joints were removed. The intermediate floor slab was removed by fragments with a core drilling machine. The work was carried out without causing vibrations. On the western side of the maksurah closer to the Shafi's Section, the closed-door has been opened.

Reinforcement work: The entire structure has been reinforced by injecting mortar. Metal bracelets are attached to the joints of columns. The stones have been consolidated.

Complementation work: After the cleaning work, complementation work was conducted for the missing materials.

Reconstruction: After the removal of the reinforced concrete roof, a slight wooden roof has been installed. Its surface is covered by lead sheets as in the other parts. Wooden beams were installed in the place of removed intermediate floor slabs. Wooden covers are installed. The intermediate floor slabs are reconstructed with wood. All windows and doors were reconstructed. After the removal of joint mortars, joint seals were done.

After the excavation work, a plan was drawn. Documentation and photo-shootings have been finalized. Due to the excavations, we have adjusted the difference in ground levels. A stair to climb to the street elevation level was built. In the south area, the water tank behind the lavatories has been removed. A women's bathroom and a room to perform ablution were built in this area.

The findings from the excavation were inspected by the museum's archaeologists, the science committee, and an art historian. The above-mentioned unqualified elements were removed. The conservation work was done on the wall pieces, arch wall, and the other details.

The floor was covered with basalt stones. Steps were installed because of the level differences. At the same time, wheelchair ramps were built.

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