



YENIKOY SURP ASDVAZADZİN (ASTVAZAZİN) COMPLEX

(Araştırma Makalesi)

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Abstract

Public improvements started in 18th century in Yenikoy were made in compliance with the ethnical origins of the community. Non-Muslims were dominated and Greek and Armenian communities had churches in Yenikoy. Armenian Surp Asdvadzadzin Church and Complex, is a significant one of those churches and it was devoted to the Virgin Mary. The complex was built in the middle of 18th century first and it was reconstructed exactly the same with its current situation in 1834. The complex was formed around a basilica planned church with a single nave in the center. There is a baptism room and a pastaphorion room on the sides of the Church and a small graveyard in the backyard. There is a cistern at the entry of the surrounding walls of the church, and a little bit further located the foundation building. There are fountains in several places. While the parsonage is in the south of the Church, Mamigonyan School, a big part of which could not reach today, is located in the south. Surp Asdvadzadzin Complex is an example of the application of Turkish Islamic social complex in a non-Muslim construction complex. The complex was planned to meet the needs of the surrounding community and today it renders services to the Gregorian Armenians. Thanks to the restoration works performed in 2005-2006, it is in a very good condition today. Recently restoration works have been started for Mamigonyan School and the parsonage. The written sources about Armenian Surp Asdvadzadzin Complex, which is similar to Turkish Islamic social complexes, are mainly about the church. In this paper, church and other constructions in the complex, which are in integrity from architectural aspects, are discussed under different headings.

Keywords: Bosphorus, Yenikoy, Armenian, Church, Asdvadzadzin.

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Öz

18. yüzyılda Yeniköy'de başlayan imar faaliyetleri nüfusun etnik kökenine göre şekillenmiştir. Gayrimüslim nüfusun yoğun olduğu Yeniköy'de Rum ve Ermeni cemaatlerine ait kiliseler bulunmaktadır. Bu kiliselerden Meryem Ana'ya ithaf edilen Ermeni Surp Asdvadzadzin Kilisesi ve Kompleksi önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. İlk inşaa tarihi 18. Yüzyıl ortalarına tarihlenen kompleks 1834 tarihinde tekrardan inşa edilerek günümüzdeki formunu büyük ölçüde kazanmıştır. Kompleks merkezde bulunan bazilikal planlı tek nefli bir kilisenin etrafında şekillenmiştir. Kilisenin yan taraflarında vaftiz hücresi ile pastaphorion hücresi, arka bahçesinde ise küçük bir mezarlık yer almaktadır. Kilise çevre duvarının girişinde bir sarnıç, ilerisinde vakıf binası ve muhtelif yerlerde çeşmeler bulunmaktadır. Kilisenin kuzeyinde papaz evi, güneyinde ise günümüze büyük bir kısmı gelmeyen Mamigonyan Okulu yerleştirilmiştir. Surp Asdvadzadzin Kompleksi Türk İslam sanatında uygulanan külliye formatının bir gayrimüslim yapı kompleksinde uygulanmasına örnektir. Bölgede oturan cemaatin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayacak şekilde düşünülmüş kompleks günümüzde Gregoryen Ermenilerine hizmet etmektedir. Kilise 2005-2006 yıllarında gerçekleştirilen restorasyon çalışmaları sayesinde günümüzde iyi durumdadır. Son yıllarda Mamigonyan Okulu ve papaz evinin tamiri için çalışmalar yapılmaktadır. Külliye formatıyla benzerlik gösteren Ermeni Surp Asdvadzadzin Kompleksi hakkında yazılmış kaynaklarda özellikle kilise üzerinde durulmuştur. Yazımızda mimari bir bütünlük sergileyen kompleksin kilisesi ve diğer yapıları ayrı başlıklar altında incelenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Boğaziçi, Yeniköy, Ermeni, Kilise, Asdvadzadzin.

1. Introduction

Construction works in Yenikoy were started in the 16th century. Elite people started to live in this area after the 18th century (Taşcıoğlu, 1994). The area was named as Neokhrion/ Nihoriin Greek (Turker, 2004). According to the written sources, besides the Greek majority, Armenians and Turks also lived in Yenikoy in 18th century (Hovhannesian, 1996). Komurciyan who talks about Yenikoy in 17th century mentions a church that belongs to Armenians (Komurciyan, 1988). Inciyan says that Armenians had churches in 18th century (Inciyan, 1956).

The exact construction date of Surp Asdvadzadzin Church is not known. According to the record of the payment made for the subject church in the testament of Patrick Hagop Nalyan in 1760 (the Sultan Mustafa III period), the first construction date of the church goes back to before 1760 (Hancer, 2008). Therefore, the first construction date is in the middle of 18th century and it is accepted as the oldest Armenian Church in Yenikoy (Turker, 2004).

In the first half of 19th century, Surp Asdvadzadzin Complex was reconstructed in the masonry form with the payment made by Harutyun Amira Nevruzyan during the

Patrick Agavni III sdepanos Zakaryan and it was sanctified and opened to worship on 25 June 1834 by Patrick Istepanos III during Sultan Mahmud II period (Dökmeci, 2009). After this major repair, an epitaph was added to narthex (Seropyan, 1994). Surp Asdvadzadzin Church was subject to repairs during the Republican period. The building was repaired by Shınonrhkı in 1984 (Tuğlacı, 1991). About 20 years later, it was handled again in 2005-2006 (Hancer, 2008). Upon the completion of repair works, the building was sanctified and opened to worship by Patrick Mestob II in the summer of 2006. (www.turkiyeermenileripatrikligi.org) The complex consists of the church in the center, pastaphorion and baptism rooms, parsonage, Mamigonyan School, gardens, grave statues located in the back part of the church, fountains, a cistern and the foundation building. Hovhannesyan talks about a fountain with a cross figure on it located nearby the church. It was said that the fountain was called “Armenian Fountain” and constructed by an Armenian girl whose name is unknown (Hovhannesyan, 1996). This fountain with a cross shape on it could not reach today.

The surrounding wall which separates the church yard from the street was made of uneven faced stones and brick with alternate wall technique. (**Photograph 1**).



Photograph 1. The view of the complex from the street front.

In the both corners of the surrounding wall in the street side, there are gates enabling entry into the church yard. Today while the gate on the right side is open, the one on the right is closed. On the board located over the open gate, following expression is written both in Turkish and Armenian: "*Yenikoy Küd Dıpo Surp Asdvazazin Armenian Church 1760*".

While Mamigonyan School is located in the south of the surrounding wall, the parsonage is located in the north of the complex

Research Ethics

This study, titled “Yenikoy Surp Asdvadzadzin (Astvazazın) Complex was written by making use of the observations made in the region and the research works written about it. In this study, scientific research and academic principles were adhered to.

2. Church

Surp Asdvadzadzin Church was constructed in the middle of a high garden which can be accessed with a few steps from the ground. The Church has a basilica plan which was frequently used in Early Byzantine period (Turker, 2004). The building was covered with double pitched roof and constructed with alternate wall technique using rubble stones and bricks together and has a single nave.

While the main entries of the Armenian Churches in Istanbul are from the west side, two entries are located in the south and the north in this Church (Seropyan, 1994). The building does not have western frontage and there is a garden on the upper part of the building next to the buildings in the back street. The Church is surrounded with gardens in the south and north and with a terrace in the east. These gardens are opened to the street with symmetric gates but only the southern door on the left is used for the entry into the church. There are two entries to the narthex from the southern and northern gardens and the one on the south is used as the main entry (Hancer, 2008). The main entry has a rectangular frame and frames are made of marble. There is a gradual arrangement over the door and there is a horizontal rectangular marble board over this arrangement. This part might have been arranged as epitaph but it is empty today. **(Photograph 2).**



Photograph 2. It is the gateway to the narthex.

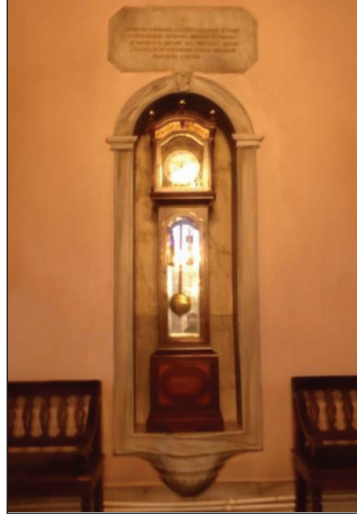
The construction is seen as a two storey building from outside and the second floor was separated with molding. In the southern frontage of the construction, there are five window openings (one of which belongs to the pastaphorion room). The windows in the first floor have rectangular frames and the frames are bordered with face stones. There are planar circular arches made of brick over the frames. The upper floor windows of the buildings are wide, made of brick and have a semi circular arrangement. The same features can also be seen at the northern frontage of the Church.

The ambulatory of the Church is in a semi circular form and extends outside. There was a small garden in the front side of the ambulatory frontage, which was over the cistern before the repair works. After the repair works performed in 2005-2006, this garden was removed and the ground was transformed into a terrace by covering with square stones (Hancer, 2008). Metallic bell tower is located in front of ambulatory semi circle. The deformed metal structure of the bell tower was renewed in the course of time. The location or the general format of the bell tower was not changed after its first construction and reached today with its original form. The bell tower is carried by two iron legs over a gradual bedplate and its upper part is next to the outer part of ambulatory semi circle. This part has a pavilion-like arrangement and there is a cross motive on it. **(Photograph 3)**.



Photograph 3. The metal bell tower of the church is located in the east.

Narthex can be accessed from inside of the Church and it is covered with a flat ceiling designed with quads inside each other and decorated with large rosettes. A niche with a narrow but long arch with an apparent keystone was opened on the main wall corresponding to the naos entry axis. There is a clock inside the niche and an epitaph text documenting the works performed in 1834 over it (Hancer, 2008). **(Photograph 4)**.



Photograph 4. It is the inscription dated 1834 found in the Narthex.

In the Epitaph text, following are written: Yenikoy Surp Asdvadzadzin Church was repaired with the efforts of Esteemed Harutyun Amira Nevruzyan and sanctified on 24 June 1834 by Agavni, the Isdepanos Patrick of Istanbul (Seropyan, 1994).

The doors opening outside narthex have rectangular frames and circular arches. In general imperial style is dominant in the arch and plant motives were engraved on the keystone. There is a gathering floor with wooden parapets.

The narthex of the building is separated from the naos with a three arched opening. The middle part of these arches enables the entry inside the naos. Keystones of wide circular arches were decorated with engravings. This situation reflects the imperial style frequently employed in the first half of 19th century. In the last repairs, wooden cross motives which are the combinations of different shapes were located on the openings in the both sides of the entry. The cross motives were made in 2004-2005 and they are not original. Original wooden arrangements of this part are kept in the depot of the church.

Naos part is covered with a ribbed tunnel vault. Like in the narthex part, there are engraved motives in the keystones of the circular arched windows with rectangular frames. All of these windows inside the church should belong to 19th century. The main walls of the church were covered with pastellilac colored plasters in the last repair. (**Photograph 5**).



Photograph 5. This section is the naos section of the church.

In the eastern side there is the bema, the holiest part of the building and the apsis part. In the apsis, vault surface between the vault which is carried by symmetrical wall proportions and bordered with a wide ebullient molding, and bema arch was allocated for an engraving describing a couple of angels holding the holy wine glass among the clouds. On the Bema arch, the following words of Jesus Chris were written in Armenian: “*I am the Road, Truth and Life*” (Seropyan, 1994). With a Holy Spirit composition within radial decorations a meaning is given to the top point of apsis. The altar made of limestone in the apsis was located during the repair works carried out in 2005-2006. On the alter table, there is painting depicting Mother Mary and Child Jesus. Religious objects were put on the graded part at the frontage. (**Photograph 6**).



Photograph 6. It is the apsis and bema of the church.

While the door on the left of bema opens to the baptism chapel, the door on the right is the pastaphorion room.

3. Pastaphorion Room

Pastaphorion room which is next to the southern wall of the church has a rectangular plan and covered with a jerkin head. There are two window openings with two rectangular frames in the southern frontage of the pastaphorion room which is made of uneven faced stones and brick with alternate wall technique. The frames of the rectangular framed door openings to the pastaphorion room from the church are made of marble.

Pastaphorion room is the place where the chaplains change their clothes before and after the ceremony and keep their religious objects. There is an oyster grooved arrangement which is thought original, over the door of the pastaphorion room. The holy area is located in the north side of the room and it is formed with a large arch at the front and a small arch at the back. (**Photograph 7**).



Photograph 7. It is the pastaphorion room next to the north part of the church.

The northern door of the room enables direct access to the yard. There is an oyster grooved arrangement over the door. The main walls inside the pastaphorion room were covered with pastel lilac colored plasters in the last repair like the naos part.

4. Baptism Chapel

Baptism chapel is next to the northern wall of the church and it was devoted to Surp Yerrotutyun (the Holy Trinity) (Hancer, 2008). It has a rectangular plan and covered with a jerkin head. The baptism chapel made of uneven faced stones and brick with alternate wall technique and there are two rectangular framed window openings in the southern frontage. In the northern frontage of the baptism chapel, there is a rectangular shaped door opening whose frame is made of marble and which is used in specific occasions. There is a door enabling access to the baptism chapel from the church in order to pray after the ceremony. The door looking towards outside should be the door that is opened only after baptism ritual and enabling people to access to the yard. The filling next to the door corresponds to the niche allocated for the baptism tube in the internal part. It is thought that this part is filled by misapplications of the architect or vice architects of the construction.

In contrary with the naos, narthex and pastophorion parts, the main walls of the baptism chapel is not plastered today. In the western part of the room, there is a niche with rectangular frame which is bordered with decorated caps and circular arch whose keystone extended outwards. Inside the niche, there is painting of Jesus Christ with Baptist. (**Photograph 8**). The surfaces of the carriers bordering the niche embellished with stone adornments. Frontage of the altar under the picture was decorated with stone reliefs.



Photograph 8. This is the view from inside the Baptism Chapel.

There is another opening with a circular arch surrounding the main niche. There is a letter motive in the arch keystone of this opening. At the northern main wall of the chapel, there is a rectangular framed baptism tube. Today the frontage of the tube is covered with wooden wings which are not original. There is another similar baptism tube at the southern main wall. Here, instead of wooden wings, there is a framed painting depicting the Baptist baptizing Jesus Christ in the River Jordan.

In the chapel, there are spolia stones with writings in Armenian on them close to the door on the northern wall and close to the window on the western wall. (**Photographs 9-10**).



Photograph 9. It is part of a baroque framed inscription with Armenian written on it.



Photograph 10. It is half broken stone with Armenian written on it.

5. Cistern and Fountains

There is a cistern in the complex. The double winged and circular arched door made of brick and located on the right of the garden walls of the complex enables access to the cistern.

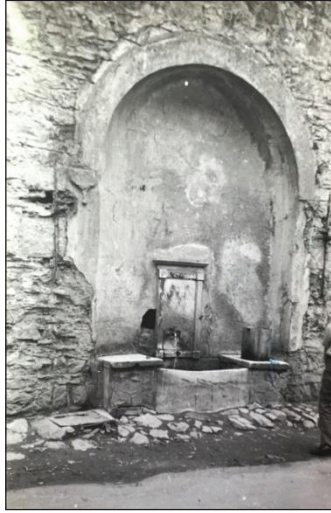
Existing wooden door wings were added during the last repair works. The cistern is very large and its ceiling is covered with tunnel vault made of brick. It is seen that there is a dense salinization on the main walls of the cistern and it is said that it shall be allocated for the special exhibitions after 2007 (Hancer, 2008). Today it is used as the depot of the complex. It is thought that the cistern consisted of three different parts in its first construction and while the middle part is the cistern and reservoir with a well mount like entry from the upper garden and side parts consist of two separate spaces. (**Photograph 11**).



Photograph 11. It is the middle section inside the cistern.

The window of the rooms next to it confirms this opinion. These two spaces were covered with a cross vault. The opening in the middle of the cistern might have been opened to collect rain waters. Today, this part is closed and it is thought that there was the cistern mouth and a cover stone in the past. Furthermore, the cistern was also used as the water reservoir of the imperial fountain looking toward the street frontage. In the last repair works, the connection between the fountain and the cistern was removed.

There are three fountains in the complex. Two of them saved their originality. The first fountain is the street fountain located in the middle of the surrounding wall at the cistern side and forms a projection at that point. With its circular arch with a wide opening and the rectangular framed ornamental slab located under arch opening and whose corners are relieved, the fountain reflects the imperial style. It is thought that the fountain was constructed in 1834 and today it has lost almost all its originality. From the photos taken in 1972, it can be seen that the cistern has been used for a long time and there is an arrangement hanging towards the bottom on the impost stone. (**Photograph 12**).



Photograph 12. This is the view of the street fountain from 1972 (mars mimarlık).

Today, this arrangement was damaged and it is an architectural detail frequently seen in 18th and 19th centuries. There is not a reflection of the blades located in both sides of the fountain within the cistern. The tube of the fountain is at the pavement level since the road level was raised. Today the fountain is not used and its arc opening was covered with plaster in the last repair works. The fountain is a typical representation of the imperial style. (**Photograph 13**).



Photograph 13. This is the current view of the street fountain.

The second fountain of the complex is adjacent to the surrounding wall in front of the baptism chapel. It reflects the fountain-curb form. The fountain also reflects the curliness and details of baroque style and it widens from the bottom to the top on the wide base. The body of the fountain consists of a bumped projectile. (**Photograph 14**). Today the fountain looks very humid and is need of care and there are cracks on the rectangular framed molding on the right side of the fountain. The fountain is functionless today.



Photograph 14. This is the general view of the fountain-curb today.

The third fountain in the complex is near the entry of the foundation building and adjacent to the surrounding wall. The original fountain could not reach today and on the basis of the photostaken in 1990s, it can be said that it was constructed with baroque style. (**Photograph 15**).



Photograph 15. It is an Old Photograph of The Baroque Fountain Which Has Not Survived (Preservation Board Achieve)

When this fountain was stolen, a new fountain was constructed in 2009. (**Photograph 16**).



Photograph 16. This is The View of The Fountain Made in 2009

6. Grave Monuments and the Garden

The stepped door opening to west from the side of the northern frontage of the church enables access to the garden at a higher code. Terrace garden was surrounded with a wall constructed with alternate technique using rubble stones and bricks. The surrounding wall in the eastern side is longer than the other sides and there are grab rails on it. In the terrace garden, there is a pergola made of iron frame and whose top is not covered and there are three tomb grave monuments at the corner of the garden. The pergola is used for

the ceremonies held after baptism. The garden was in a good condition due to the efforts of the church foundation managers. Several fruits and vegetables have been grown in the upper and lower gardens and distributed to the neighbors (Hancer, 2008).

There are three tomb graves that belong to philanthropists who were the members of the Armenian community (Hancer, 2008) at the corner of the garden. Tomb graves are made of stone and they have different shapes and sizes. The names of the persons written on the grave monuments are: Sarkis Aga Vahyan (D. 1843), Mrs. Nazlı Vahyan (D. 1884), Vahan Efendi Arzuman (D. 1891). (<http://www.turkiyeermenileripatrikligi.org/site/surp-asdvadzadzin-ermeni-kilisesi-2-bolge-bogazin-avrupa-yakasi-2/>). (**Photograph 17**).



Photograph 17. It is The general view of the tomb monuments in the Church Garden.

Sarkis Vahyanis a historical person. Sarkis Vahyanis known as the writer of the first chemistry book in Armenian and "Marmara Newspaper" published in Armenian language gave information about him in the issue dated 12 June 2012.

7. Foundation Building

From the entry of the church's garden gate, foundation building can be accessed via stairs. The two-storey foundation building is located in the north of the church. The foundation building is used by the foundation manager and the other personnel and extensions made of concrete and repair works can be seen. (**Photograph 18**).



Photograph 18. This is the general view of the foundation building.

This building has been existed since the first construction of the complex but it lost its originality in the course of time due to the repairs and in the aerial photo taken in 1937, it can be seen that it was not adjacent to the wooden house which was used as Mamingonyan School and there was a small garden between them. (**Photograph 19**). Furthermore, in the same aerial photo, it can be seen that the roof of the foundation building was below the surrounding walls of the church and therefore it was thought that at that time, it was a one-storey building made of trim stone.



Photograph 19. Aerial photo taken in 1937 (mars mimarlık).

The building should have been repaired after 1937, since it is adjacent with the wooden house and it was a higher structure than the garden wall in the aerial photo taken in 1950. (**Photograph 20**). Furthermore, during that time, the top cover of the building was transformed into jerkin head. New units were added to the building in the repair

works carried out in 1984 and the building was extended. Today the building consists of board of trustees' room, meeting hall and toilets.



Photograph 20. Aerial photo taken in 1950 (mars mimarlık).

8. Parsonage (Wooden House)

The entry of the building is graded and it consists of basement, ground and normal floor. (**Photograph 21**).



Photograph 21. This is the general view of the parsonage today.

Northern frontage has an attached arrangement. As it can be seen from the aerial photo taken in 1966, there is another structure adjacent to the wall of the building. (**Photograph 22**). This structure could not reach today.



Photograph 22. Aerial photo taken in 1966 (mars mimarlık).

Today the parcel on which this structure was located does not belong to the church foundation. Legal procedures to take this parcel back were initiated by the church foundation and they are still pending. The entry door of the building is below the road code. Subbasement made of rubble stones can be seen at the entry frontage. The authentic windows of the building were wooden framed rectangular sash windows having wooden groins, horizontal and vertical wooden laths; but today most of the windows were replaced with new double or single winged wooden framed windows. Material losses were determined in some of the windows. Wooden covers on the frontage are in an unauthentic manner. There is a window with socket iron window guards at the frontage in the basement floor. The left frontage is located on the surrounding wall of the complex in the first floor. The door opening from the parsonage to the church and located at the same frontage has been closed recently.

The building is entered after going down a three stepped stairs and going through a double winged original door. The opening on the right of the entry enables access to the coalbunker. This part was enforced with two wooden piles. There are giblets in front of the entry axis. There is also a passage enabling access to the backyard via the stairs going up. The ceiling height was decreased with the press constructed over the entry. There is a seven stepped stairs going up to this room on the left. Presses in the room and shelves located inside the niches reflect the civil Ottoman architectural tradition. The room at the right of the entry frontage in the ground floor is internally connected with the other room but the ground code of the other room is higher. There is a wooden press and shelves in the room located in the ground floor. The wooden stairs on the right of the door enabling access to the back room goes upstairs. The stairs going upstairs are authentic but the stair covers are not. Small sized press unit under the stairs was not plastered at all. The door on the left of the corridor reached by the stairs from the ground to the first floor opens to the long room of the first floor. The wooden cover on the long room floor was repaired with thin tin pieces. (**Photograph 23**).



Photograph 23. This is the view of the parsonage long room floor (mars mimarlık).

Under this wooden cover there is a double layer carrier and a 5-6 cm thick wooden layer on it. (**Photograph 24**).



Photograph 24. This is the view of the layer under the sofa floor cover (mars mimarlık).

It is estimated that the repair at the top cover was made in the first half of the 20th century. There is a bathroom and a kitchen on the left of the long room and two rooms looking to the entry frontage in the front. The panel doors of the rooms in the first floor are made of wood. The walls were plastered and painted. The ceiling is made of wooden lathes and floor cover is made of wood.

There is a small garden arrangement with a dense plant affect behind the wooden building. At the corner of the garden there is a small oven with a chimney. It is thought that inner arch arrangement of the oven is authentic.

9. Mamigonyan School

This structure was arranged as an education unit but ruined today and it was adjacent to the southern surrounding walls of the church. Ruins, old photos and parsonage plan give an idea about the architecture of the building.



Photograph 25. View of the Mamigonyan School in 1972 (mars mimarlık).

From the photo taken in 1972, it can be seen that the school was built on a subbasement constructed with two layers of bricks and rubble stones. (**Photograph 25**). The projectile arrangement over the subbasement and the window opening in the frontage are similar with the frontage arrangement of the parsonage. It can be seen that the middle frontage of the building is projected and wide rectangular windows were located on the projected frontage. In the narrow frontages, there are narrow rectangular window openings. The subbasement was evaluated with a vertical narrow square framed, iron railed window.



Photograph 26. The current view of the Mamigonyan School.

Today some parts of the school which were made of wood and concrete can be determined among the ruins. Traces of the Mamigonyan School can be seen in the western surrounding wall and the ground.

The fire started during the chimney cleaning of the school at the beginning of 1990, broke out the roof and burned all the building completely. The structure turned into a ruin as a result of the fire and it can be seen from the photos taken on 24 February 2006 that it was completely demolished and destroyed. (**Photograph 27**).



Photograph 27. It is a Mamigonyan School in Ruins (preservation board archive).

The door enabling the access from the church to the school was closed for safety reasons. (**Photograph 28**).



Photograph 28. The traces of the door can be followed on the wall.

During the building survey preparations, the ruins of the building were cleaned and document with the permission obtained from the Preservation Board and it was seen that only ruins at basement level and some ground covers were left on the ground.

10. Conclusion

The Surp Asdvadzadzin Church is the oldest Armenian Church in Yenikoy, which is a mosaic of beliefs within Bosphorus Historical and Natural Preservation Area, is a significant example which reached today and reflects the Ottoman Islamic social complex typology to Armenian Christian Architecture to some extent, with its complex containing different structure types with different functions. Very positive contributions shall be made to the religious wealth and cultural heritage of Istanbul and Yenikoy upon the completion of the current restoration process of the parsonage and the complex including an essential intervention with the reconstruction of the Mamigonyan School.

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