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An Investigation of an Important Armenian Church Architecture in terms of Urban Identity: Digor Khtzkong

Kent Kimliği Açısından Önemli Bir Ermeni Kilise Mimarisinin İncelenmesi: Digor Khtzkong Manastırı

Abstract

Cultural heritage enables us to have information about past civilizations that form the identity of the built environment in a residential area. While cultural heritage structures reflect the material properties and techniques of the period they belong to, the architectural styles they adopted, and the level of civilization, they express the societies they belong to and the way of life of the societies, world view, management style and religious structure. For this reason, the sustainability of cultural heritage is important for the preservation of the local identity of societies and the continuity of cultural values. However, historical buildings such as mosques, churches, monasteries, chapels, synagogues, madrasas, inns, baths and castles, which reflect the identity of different regions, were built in masonry. Masonry structures, on the other hand, are not resistant to natural disasters such as earthquakes.

In this context, it is aimed to examine the monastery, which consists of five churches from the Armenian churches in the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. This monastery is Khıdskonk Monastery, which consists of the Churches of St. Karapet, Virgin Mary (Surp Asdvadzdzin), St. Stefanos, St. Krikor and St. Sarkis. The churches, which differ in terms of culture and architecture, are important in terms of having the first church plan typologies. The problem of the study is that the remains of four of the five churches that were built in the same region and that were recently built, and that only one church is partially preserved. Based on this problem, it is aimed to document and archive these churches, which are important for the Kars region, and to examine their plan typologies. In this context, the relationship between earthquake damage and typologies was investigated and evaluations were made for the churches surveyed in the sample area. As a result, by emphasizing the importance of cities for their identities, suggestions were made for the protection of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Armenian Church, Urban Identity, Urban Memory, Conservation, Cultural Heritage, Masonry Buildings.

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Kültürel miras öğeleri bir yerleşim alanındaki yapılı çevrenin kimliğini oluşturan ve geçmiş uygarlıklar hakkında bilgi sahibi olmamızı sağlamaktadır. Kültürel miras yapıları ait oldukları dönemin malzeme özellikleri ve teknikleri, benimsedikleri mimari üslupları, uygarlık seviyesini yansıtırken, ait olduklarını toplumları ve toplumların yaşama biçimlerini, dünya görüşünü, yönetim biçimini, dini yapısını ifade etmektedirler. Bu nedenle kültürel miras öğelerinin sürdürülebilirliği toplumların yerel kimliğinin korunması ve kültürel değerlerin sürekliliği açısından önemlidir. Fakat farklı bölgelere özgü kimliğini yansıtan cami, kilise, manastır, şapel, sinagog, medrese, han, hamam ve kale gibi tarihi yapılar yığma şekilde inşa edilmişlerdir. Yığma yapılar ise, deprem gibi doğal afetlere karşı dayanıklı değildir.

Bu kapsamda çalışmada Türkiye'nin Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nde bulunan Ermeni kiliselerinden beş kiliseden oluşan manastırın incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu manastır Aziz Karapet, Meryem Ana (Surp Asdvadzdzin), Aziz Stefanos, Aziz Krikor ve Aziz Sarkis Kiliseleri'nden oluşan Khıdskonk Manastırı'dır. Kültürel ve mimari açıdan farklılık gösteren kiliseler, ilk kilise plan tipolojilerine sahip olması açısından önem taşımaktadır. Bugün aynı bölgede ve yakın tarihli olarak inşa edilen beş kiliseden dördünün kalıntılarının günümüze ulaşmış olması ve sadece bir kilisenin kısmen korunmuş olması çalışmanın problemini oluşturmaktadır. Bu problemde yola çıkılarak çalışmada Kars bölgesi için önemli olan bu kiliselerin belgelenecek arşivlenmesi ve plan tipolojilerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda örneklem alanında araştırılan kiliseler özelinde depremden zarar görmesi ile tipolojileri arasındaki ilişki araştırılmış ve değerlendirmeler yapılmıştır. Sonuç olarak kentlerin kimlikleri için önemleri vurgulanarak, kültürel mirasın korunmasına yönelik öneriler getirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ermeni Kilisesi, Kent Kimliği, Kentsel Bellek, Koruma, Kültürel Miras, Manastır Yapıları.

Introduction

The concept of urban identity, which affects the image of the city and has its own characteristics with different scales and interpretations in each city; It is shaped by physical, cultural, socio-economic, historical and formal factors.¹ Every place has its own memory and meaning, thanks to the spirit of the place, which contains all the features of the place. For this reason, the features of the place are unique, separate that place from the others, and these differences form the local identity.² Norberg-Schulz defines the location-specific characteristics of urban identity as "genius loci" or "spirit of the place".³

It was classified the features of the buildings with their appearances as follows :⁴

- The era it belongs to (such as the Middle Ages or the Renaissance Period)
- Worldview or lifestyle (such as Islamic culture and Indian culture)

1 Şölen Çöl, "Kentlerimizde Kimlik Sorunu ve Günümüz Kentlerinin Kimlik Derecesini Ölçmek İçin Bir Yöntem Denemesi" (PhD. Thesis Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 1998).

2 Sonay Ayyıldız and Filiz Ertürk, "Kentsel Kimlik Bileşenleri ile Yerel Kimliği İzlerini Sürmek," *Mimarlık ve Yaşam Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (2017): 70.

3 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc. , 1979).

4 Gülay Kodal, "Atapark ve Tabakhane Köprüsü Arasındaki Tarihi Aksın Kent Kimlik Bileşenleri Açısından Değerlendirmesi" (Master Thesis Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi, 2014):.

- The form of government or political regime (such as totalitarian or democratic order)
- The societies they belong to (such as Ottoman architecture or Japanese architecture)
- Symbols (like the Paris Eiffel Tower or Sydney Opera House)
- Design ideology or architectural movement (such as Brutalist or Post-Modernist movement)
- The styles of the architect (such as Frank Gehry and Tadao Ando)
- Its quality (such as original, ordinary, simple and exaggerated)
- Posture expression (such as static and dynamic)
- Purpose of use (such as residence and museum)
- Persons or events (Egyptian pyramids built for the Pharaohs or Baghdad Mansion for Murat IV's Baghdad expedition).

According to Norberg-Schulz the identity or character of a city is an important part of its existence and functioning.⁵ Urban identity and historical traces can be formed with physical components, social lifestyle and production and consumption habits over a long period of time with a certain accumulation. Cities gain identity with their unique characters. Preservation of structures and building groups that contribute to the unique identity of that city and have significant architectural and vital features related to the period they belong to in a city plays an important role in ensuring cultural continuity in that city and in carrying the identity of the city to the future.⁶

The preservation of the urban identity also helps to ensure the continuity of the urban memory. In the collective memory of society, architecture is associated with urban memory.⁷ Values that trigger memory, describe the cultural structure of a certain period and have an impact on society are defined as memory spaces.⁸

Urban identity and urban images consist of various components acquired in a long process.⁹ According to Güvenç understanding the identity of the city as a continuity from the past to the future and the formation of this continuity is possible by carrying out the works to protect the historical heritage and ensuring the continuity of the developments as well as the studies.¹⁰ The aging processes in masonry buildings, which have historical importance, are under risk due to various reasons such as vandalism, natural disasters, wars, and environmental factors. In general, strong earthquakes cause severe damage and destruction. Especially old masonry structures, which

5 Norberg-Schulz, "op. cit."

6 Gaye Birol, "Bir Kentin Kimliği ve Kervansaray Oteli Üzerinde Bir Değerlendirme," *Arkitekt Dergisi* Kasım-Aralık 2007, no. 514 (2007).

7 M. Christine Boyer, *The city of collective memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

8 Pierre Nora, *Hafıza Mekanları* (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 2006).

9 Ali Ulu and İlknur Karakoç, "Kentsel Değişimin Kent Kimliğine Etkisi," *Planlama* 3 (2004).

10 Bozkurt Güvenç, "Kentlerin Kimliği ve Antalya Üzerinde Notlar, Öneriler, Örnekler," *Mimarlık* 29, no. 1 (1991)..

are one of the cultural heritages, are sensitive to earthquake effects.^{11,12,13} These important cultural heritages, where the local identity stands out in the earthquake zone of Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, are at risk. In this context, it is important to document, examine and protect the historical buildings, which are an important part of the urban identity, and ensure their sustainability. It is necessary to carry the historical and cultural heritage values of historical buildings and cities to future generations. In this context, it is aimed to document and examine the plan typologies of a monastery complex consisting of five churches located in the same region, which has the characteristics of the first period church type in terms of the cultural heritage of the Armenians and has religious and strategic importance.

1. Church Typology and Church of Armenian

1.1. Church Typology

The church, which is the place of worship of Christianity, started to be built in the 4th century. Previously, other buildings were used by converting them for religious functions. It is seen that it was taken as an example in the basilical plan type church plan belonging to the Romans. The abscissas are defined as the stage where attention is concentrated, because Christian worship is likened to a theatre, and therefore the space is made longitudinally. Thus, the participation of the congregation in the ritual was ensured.¹⁴ At the end of the Early Middle Ages, an architectural type consisting of many spaces with a rich function dominated the church plans. Although the architectural type between the 7th and 10th centuries had more variety, the main typology continued. The religious building was built in Romanesque and Gothic styles. In Baroque architecture after the Middle Ages, churches were designed with organic forms.¹⁵

Church architecture varies depending on many factors such as worship types, local cultural characteristics and geography.¹⁶ For this reason, it has been stated that the most important factor in the formation of differences in church buildings is local architectural traditions and usage habits and local construction techniques.¹⁷ Since the early periods, different plan typologies have been formed with the development of architectural elements (such as arch, dome and column) of the church structure. The reason for this is local factors and various needs. Churches in different regions have different characteristics according to climate, vegetation, topographic structure, geological structure, and material of the region. For example, the architectural features and facade characteristics of a church built in a warm climate region Mesopotamia and a church built in a

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- 11 Elvis Cescatti et al., "Damages to masonry churches after 2016–2017 Central Italy seismic sequence and definition of fragility curves," *Bulletin of Earthquake Engineering* 18, no. 1 (2020/01/01 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10518-019-00729-7>.no. 1 (2020/01/01 2020)
 - 12 Andrea Penna et al., "Damage to churches in the 2016 central Italy earthquakes," *Bulletin of Earthquake Engineering* 17, no. 10 (2019/10/01 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10518-019-00594-4>.
 - 13 Marco Valente, Gaia Barbieri, and Luigi Biolzi, "Seismic assessment of two masonry Baroque churches damaged by the 2012 Emilia earthquake," *Engineering Failure Analysis* 79 (2017/09/01/ 2017), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.engfailanal.2017.05.026>.
 - 14 Anonymous, *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5 (Tarih Vakfı Yayını, 1994).
 - 15 Zeynep Ahunbay, *Ezracıbaşı Sanat Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2 (İstanbul, Turkey: Yapı-Endüstri Merkezi Yayınları, 1997).
 - 16 Funda Karabey, "Moda'da Hristiyan Dini Yapıları" (2001).
 - 17 Ahunbay, "op. cit."

cold climate region Europe are different from each other. For another example, while buildings in the Mesopotamia region are built with easily accessible stone materials, mud bricks are used in structures in the Syria region.

All the materials used in the construction of Armenian churches were made of stone. Volcanic tuff in pink, red, orange, and black colors was used as stone material. Tuff has been preferred more frequently because it is a light, easy to process and hardening material when in contact with air. Another architectural characteristic feature in Armenian churches is that the covering elements are usually vaulted. It was used to make simple cover elements. When looking at Armenian churches, the common and easily perceptible timber in Armenian architecture is the use of stone material.

The most important person in the Armenian Church's gaining different characteristics is Surp Krikor Lusavoriç. After Christianity was accepted as the official religion in Armenia, Surp Krikor, who was chosen as the spiritual leader, continued to spread Christianity in the region. He demolished the Pagan and Pagan temples in the region and had churches built instead.¹⁸ Church architecture has developed according to needs and forms of worship. The simple places of worship, which were created underground at first, turned into magnificent architectural works in later periods, depending on the development of Christianity.

1.2. Church Typology of Armenian and Architectural Properties

As in all medieval architecture, the most popular type of building in Armenian architecture is churches.¹⁹ The construction of Armenian churches dates from the 4th century to the 7th century. Thousands of Armenian churches have been built throughout the history of Christianity. Along with small churches, large and magnificent churches were also built. Some churches were built alone, while others were built as part of monasteries. Many church types have been developed, differing in facade and interior. Armenian architects created armenian-specific church forms. Great differences are observed in the first churches. However, when the other churches built in the process were examined, a style that could be called Armenian Churches emerged with some common qualities and material combinations.

A national style of church architecture emerged in the late 6th and early 7th centuries. This suggests that an Armenian church architecture emerged long before Romanesque and Gothic, or the lesser known Ethiopian, Scandinavian, and Slavic styles, emerged concretely.²⁰ The architectural principles of the three-nave basilica and the single-nave rectangular church building, which were widely observed in the early Christian architecture throughout the Mediterranean, also entered Armenian architecture in the early period.²¹ It is thought that this effect occurred through Syria. However, there are some differences between Armenian structures and Syrian structures. Armenian basilicas are made of stone and their top covers are stone vaults. By contrast, in Syria the walls and abscissas are of stone, but the top cover is usually wooden, as in Byzantium and Rome.²²

18 Canan Seyfeli, "İstanbul Ortodoks Ermeni Patrikliği" (2002).

19 Ahunbay, "op. cit."

20 Derya Mert, "Preservation Process Of Akşehir Armenian Church And It'scontribution On Urban Identity" (Master Thesis, Konya Technical University, 2020).

21 Ahunbay, "op. cit."

22 Dickran Kouymjian, *The Arts of Armenia* (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1992).

Generally, pink, red, orange, and black colored, easily processed volcanic tuff material was used as stone. Due to the lack of timber material in the region, simple and flat vaulted ceilings were built with stone material for the upper cover. The architectural problem here is how to withstand the enormous weight of the stone vaults and ceilings, how to build churches with complex plan schemes in the interior volume and how to protect them from the effects of earthquakes. The region of Armenia has a volcanic and active seismic landmass. However, they built churches with thick walls, few, and small openings to withstand the pressure created by the weight of the stone vaults. In the 6th century, instead of polygonal cylinders, domes were started to be built in churches.

The following forms are seen in Armenian church architecture: Basilica and Single-nave Church, Domed Basilica and Domed Single-nave church, Central Plan, Niche Buttressed Square Plan, Hripsime Type, Circular Plan and Narthex.²³

Memorial Churches; Since the reverence for the dead (especially the martyrs) was an important custom and symbolic aspect that accompanied the development of funerary architecture, it played a fundamental role in the revival of architectural forms from the early centuries. Armenian memorial church architecture in the Early Middle Ages managed to create its own special character in the 5th or 7th centuries. At the beginning of the 18th century, memorial churches began to appear in some important monasteries, which were counted as universities.²⁴

The Basilica and the Single Nave Church; are the oldest church structures in Armenia. Of these, seven surviving churches all have three naves. There is also a simpler version of these basilicas with a single nave. IV. from the VI century. Many these single-nave churches were built until the 19th century. Most of the churches built from the 4th to the 6th centuries are basilical in plan.²⁵

Domed Basilica and Domed Single-nave Church, single-hall churches and three-nave basilica have become a domed structure over time, where the dome is the focal point. By the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the 6th century, a dome was added over the central part of the Basilica of Tekor. Starting from the 5th century, single-nave churches with a central dome began to be built in Zovuni. In the 7th century, basilicas similar to Tekor Basilica were built.²⁶ The main building type in Armenian church architecture from the past to the present is the domed basilica. As of the 12th century, new building types with different functions emerged. Unlike the Byzantine churches, the importance given to stonemasonry in the Armenian Church, which stays away from the art of painting, is striking. The double-skinned, rubble-filled masonry is the dominant element of the Armenian construction technique. The spaces are covered with vaults or dome.²⁷

Central Planned Churches; was started to be built at the end of the 5th century and in the 6th and 7th centuries. There are various forms of centrally planned churches. The church diagrams are in the form of a four-leaf clover with four abscissas. The abscissas merge into one another without walls. The arms of the churches in the form of a Greek cross are of equal length, in the form of a four-leaf clover. There is an abscissa only to the east of these churches. There are churches

23 Mert, "op. cit."

24 Mert, "op. cit."

25 Kouymjian, "op. cit."

26 Mert, "op. cit."

27 Ahunbay, "op. cit."

with three abscissas with a long western arm and a plan scheme in the form of a three-leaf clover.²⁸

The Square Planned Church Shared with a Niche; is another variation of the four-leaf central planned church with four abscissas. In this type, the weight of the dome in the middle is carried by the buttressed niches.

The Hripsime Planned Church; is the most advanced type of central plan. It is also the type of church that is most unique to Armenians. It can be thought that it is unique to the Caucasus, as the first examples were seen in Georgia. It was named after the Church of St. Hripsime, the most famous example of its type, built in Etchmiadzin in 618.

The Circular-Planned Church; is the latest design, perfectly in the central plan. Zuarthnotz Cathedral is the oldest example of the four-leaf clover church type.²⁹ Other circular churches from the 7th century are the eight-leaf Zoravar and Ġrind Churches.³⁰

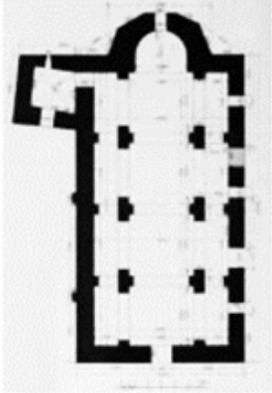
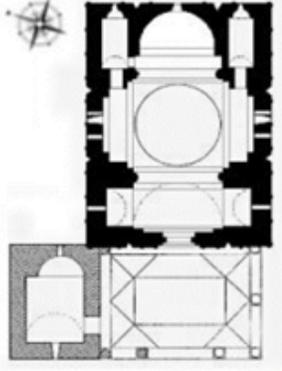
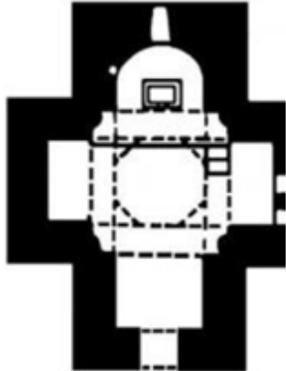
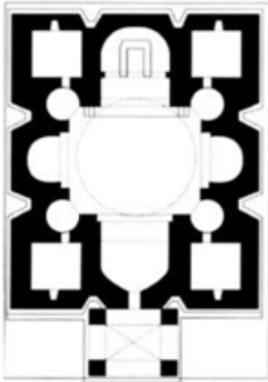
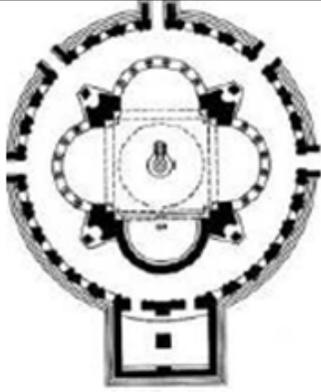
The narthex; is common in monastic complexes as they are used as meeting rooms and anterooms. Between the 2nd and 14th centuries is a period when monasteries became widespread. The intersections of these vaults in the upper part of the hall create openings for light and air. The walls of this type are massive, few and contain small windows.

28 Mert, "op. cit."

29 Ahunbay, "op. cit."

30 Mert, "op. cit."

Table 1. Armenian Church Architecture^{31, 32, 33}

| The Basilica and the Single Nave Church | Domed Basilica and Domed Single-nave Church | Central Planned Churches |
|--|--|---|
|  |  |  |
| The Hripsime Planned Church | The Circular-Planned Church | |
|  |  | |
| The narthex | | |
|  | | |

31 İsaf Bozoğlu Bay, "Facade Arrangements of the Churches In Kars and Van (10th-13th C.)" (2019).

32 Patrick Donabédian, "Kurtarılmayı Gereken Önemli Bir Anıt: Khıdزونk Surb Sarkis Kilisesi," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 258 (2015).

33 Faruk Torunoğlu, "Monasteries in Kars and Its Neighbourhood: Bagnayr, Hripsine, Horomos, Khtzkonk and Kız Kalesi Monastery" (2016).

2. Architectural Properties of the Digor Church

Khtzkong Monastery was built on the plains on three different rocks near the Digor River, close to Derinöz Village of Digor (Tekor) District of Kars. Known as five churches in Turkish, the monastery consists of five churches with domes and built of reddish yellow and brown colored cut stone. These churches are Surp Karapet, Surp Astvatsatzin (Virgin Mary), Surp Stefanos, Surp Krikor and Surp Sarkis Churches. Today, only the Surp Sarkis Church remains standing, while the ruins of other churches remain.³⁴

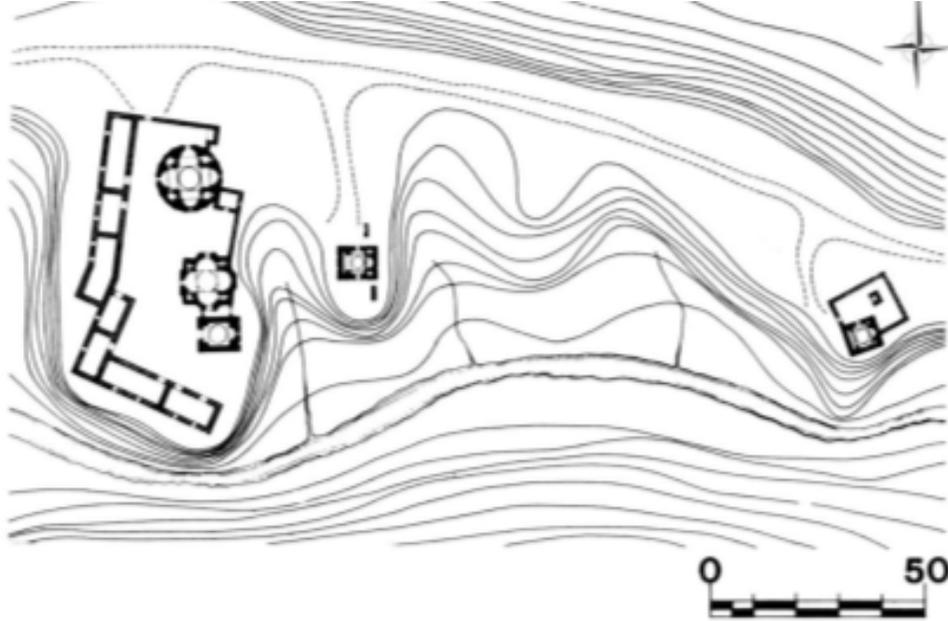


Figure 1. Digor Five Church Khtzkong Monastery Plan³⁵

The structures of the monastery have been restored many times. The monastery, which is thought to have been built approximately in the 10th or 11th century, was institutionalized in the early 11th century. It was restored in the 13th century in 1213 and 1216.³⁶ According to the researches³⁷, one of the most important works of the period known as the Pakraduni period (853-1045) in Armenia, which was the most productive period of the Armenian church, is the Khtzkong Monastery.³⁸ The monastery was forcibly abandoned during the Mongol invasion in the 13th century.³⁹

34 Donabédian, "op. cit."

35 Paolo Cuneo, *Architettura Armena*, vol. 1-2 (Roma, 1988).

36 Donabédian, "op. cit."

37 Torunoğlu, "op. cit."

38 George Bournoution, "Ermeni Tarihi," in *Ermeni Halkının Tarihine Kısa Bir Bakış* (İstanbul: 2011)..

39 Torunoğlu, "op. cit."



Figure 2. General View of the Monastery Consisting of Five Churches from the Southeast, 1900⁴⁰

In 1878, when the Kars region came under Russian rule, Beşkilise was given to the Armenian Church again. After the churches were restored, the monastery was opened to worship again.⁴¹ New accommodation has been arranged and built for monks and Christian pilgrims to benefit from healthy water resources. The churches, which were rehabilitated in the Russian Period, are in good condition until the 1920s.⁴² However, due to the earthquakes and destructions that followed, the buildings were largely destroyed. Today, only the Surp Sarkis Church has been preserved, although some parts of it are damaged.



Figure 3. General View from the East of the Four Churches on the Same Ground, 1881⁴³

40 Donabédian, "op. cit."

41 Torunoğlu, "op. cit."

42 Bay, "op. cit."

43 Donabédian, "op. cit."

The church of Surp Karabet, known as the Church of the Prophet John, is the oldest known church in the monastery. The church is thought to have been built approximately in the 7th century. The architectural and stylistic features of the church are dated to the 9th or 10th century.^{44,45} The plan and old photographs of the church, whose ruins have survived until today, were examined. There are curvatures on the outer walls of the church, which has a clover-shaped interior plan. In the octagonal plan, there are small chapels with trapezoidal plan at four corners. The entrance of the church is provided through the door openings on the north, south and west facades. The abscissa of the church is located on the east façade. The square-shaped main space of the church has an octagonal umbrella-shaped cone-shaped top cover. All the windows are semicircular arched and crenellated windows.

The church of Surp Asdvadzadzin; is located to the south of the Surp Karabet Church, also known as the Virgin Mary Church. There are no ruins of the church, which was built approximately in the 10th century. There are the remains of the hall between the Surp Karabet Church and the Surp Asdvadzadzin Church.⁴⁶ The plan and old photographs of the church, whose ruins have survived until today, were examined. When the plan scheme of the church is examined, the inside of the rectangular planned church is in the form of a T-shaped closed cross. The abscissa of the church is semicircular. The main space is square in plan. The entrance of the church on the axis of the abscissa is on the west side. While the square planned section is covered with a high cylindrical conical cone, the cross-plan sections are covered with barrel vaults and other sections are covered with roofs. The main space receives light from the crenellated windows on the north, south and east façade where the abscissa is located. There are two niches on the north, south and east facades of the church.

Surp Grigor Lusavoriç Church is in the east of the four church groups and inside the tombs surrounded by walls. The church, which is thought to have been built in the 10th or 11th century, has been completely destroyed today, and the medieval tombs around it have been destroyed.⁴⁷ The interior of the church, which has a rectangular plan, has a single nave domed cross type plan. The entrance of the church is through the door opening on the north façade. The square main area of the church is covered with a high cylindrical cone, while the other areas are covered with barrel vaults. The main space receives light from the crenellated windows on the west, south and east façade where the abscissa is located. There are two niches on the east and west facades of the church.

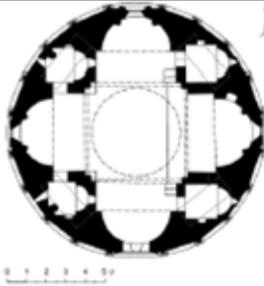
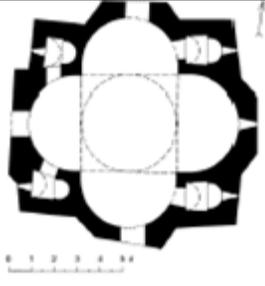
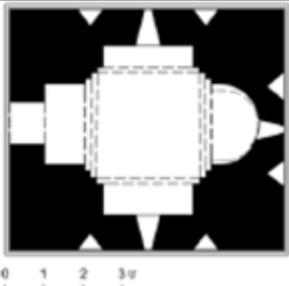
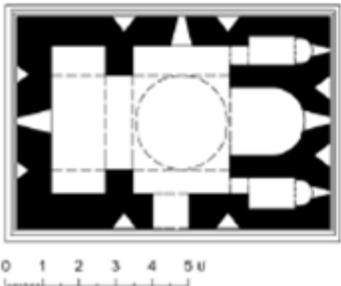
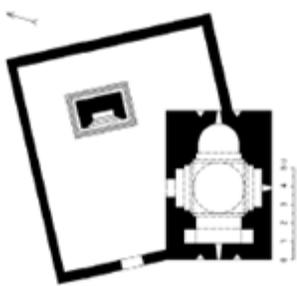
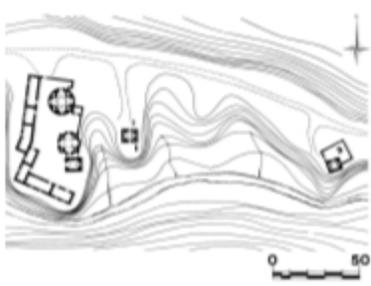
44 Donabédian, "op. cit."

45 Antony Kazaryan, "'Bagnayr-Kozluca, Horomos (Ghoshavank Plateau), Khtskonk Church," in *New Discoveries in Ani*, ed. V. Akçayüz (İstanbul, Turkey: 2018).

46 Torunoğlu, "op. cit."

47 Torunoğlu, "op. cit."

Table 2. Digor Five Church/Khtzkonk Monastery Plan and View ^{48,49}

| <u>Surp Sarkis Church</u> | <u>Surp Karabet Church</u> | <u>Surp Asdvadzadzin Church</u> |
|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| <u>Surp Stephanos Church</u> | <u>Surp Grigor Lusavoric Church</u> | Five Church <u>Khtzkonk Monastery</u> |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

48 Donabédian, “op. cit.”

49 Torunoğlu, “op. cit.”

Surp Stephanos Church; is thought to have been built approximately in the 10th century. The church was built on a different rock opposite the Surp Karabet Church. Only a part of the foundation of the church has survived and cemeteries have been found around it.⁵⁰ The church, which has a rectangular plan, has a single nave plan. The entrance of the church is perpendicular to the axis of the abscissa, through the door opening on the south façade. There are chapels on both sides of the semicircular abscissa. While the square planned section is covered with a high cylindrical conical cone, the other sections are covered with barrel vaults. There are two symmetrical niches on each side of the church. The main space receives light from the crenellated windows on the north, west and east façade where the apse is located.

The Church of Surp Sarkis, which is the largest church of the monastery, known as the five churches, is also still a preserved architectural structure.⁵¹ According to Samuel, Surp Sargis Church was built in 1024 by Syunik Prince Sargis Vestes. The inscription dated 1033 in the church partially confirms this information. Therefore, the church is dated to the beginning of the 11th century.⁵² If the construction date of the church is 1025, it is the oldest Armenian church roof example built with this plan.⁵³

The church, which was built on a high cylindrical platform, consists of four abscissas and has a central plan. The plan type of the church consists of a cross-shaped four-leaf clover and eight corners (tetrakonchos). The church is covered with a dome seated on four columns and its dome has an angular umbrella roof. In the plan of the church, which is in the form of a circle from the outside, there are rooms at four corners. There is a small window in each of the four abscissas. There are twenty arches without windows on the façade.

The church of St. Sarkis was severely damaged by the 1989 earthquake. The core of the building has been severely damaged and is in danger of collapse.⁵⁴ Damages on the main walls of the church up to the drum of the dome occurred and some of the walls were demolished. A part of the roof covering the southern conch collapsed, the stones on the inner and outer surfaces of the dome drum were damaged and a small hole was made at the top of the dome.⁵⁵

50 Torunoğlu, “op. cit.”

51 Torunoğlu, “op. cit.”

52 Bay, “op. cit.”

53 Hovannes Marzbanyan, *Dini Mimariye Karşılaştırmalı Bir Bakış ve Onun İçinde Ermeni Mimarlığının Yeri*, vol. Marmara Yayın Evi (1970).

54 Torunoğlu, “op. cit.”

55 Bay, “op. cit.”

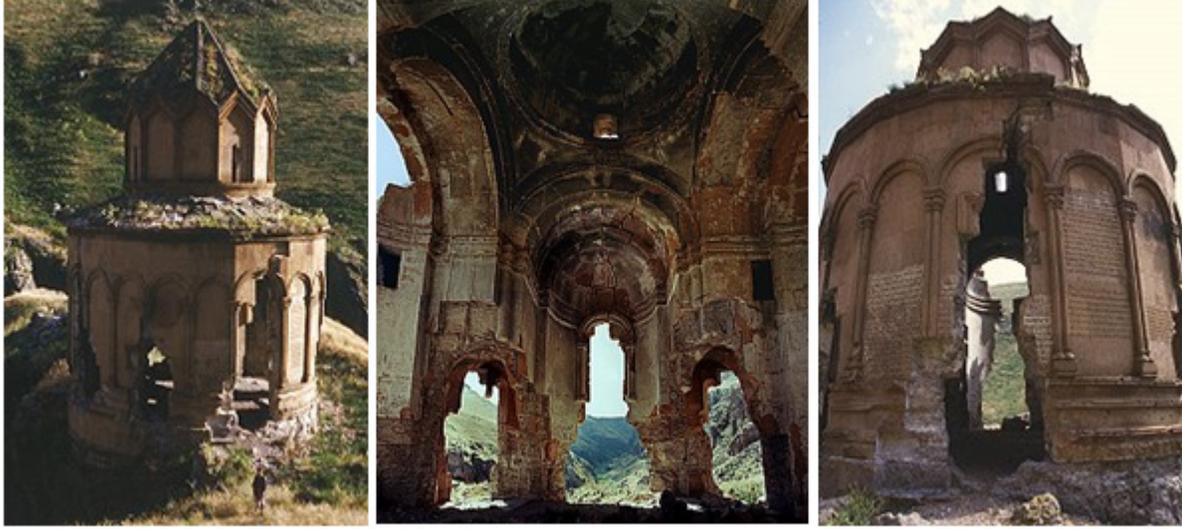


Figure 4. General View Surp Sarkis Church, Today ⁵⁶

Conclusion

The buildings, which are the components of the identities of the cities, reflect the cultural structure of the society, the lifestyle, the religious structure, the characteristics of the period they belong to, and the technological developments in architecture. Religious structures such as mosques, churches, chapels and synagogues that contribute to faith tourism are important for the societies they belong to. These structures are important structures that have a place in the memory of the society. In this study, Khtzkonk Monastery, which consists of five churches dated approximately between the 7th and 11th centuries, was examined. The oldest structure of the monastery was the Surp Karabet Church in the 7th century, the Surp Asdvadzadzin Church and the Surp Stephanos Church in the 10th century, and the Surp Grigor Illuminator Church and the Surp Sarkis Church in the 11th century. It is seen that the Surp Grigor Illuminator Church and the Surp Asdvadzadzin Church were completely destroyed, leaving no remains. It was determined that the Surp Stephanos Church and the Surp Karabet Church were demolished and the foundation remains remained. Only one of these churches, which is important because it is one of the first examples of Armenian churches, has survived. Surp Sarkis Church, which has not been completely destroyed and preserved today, was seriously damaged in the earthquake that occurred in 1989, and its core was shattered and a hole was drilled in its dome. When the plan typologies of the churches are examined, the Surp Asdvadzadzin Church, the Surp Stephanos Church and the Surp Grigor Illuminator Church have a square plan on the outside and a T-shaped closed cross plan type on the inside. Surp Karabet Church and Surp Sarkis Church have a clover-shaped interior plan. Surp Sarkis Church has a circular plan and consists of eight corners more regularly than the Surp Karabet Church, while the Surp Karabet Church has an irregular outer shape. These churches have identity features such as unique plan typologies, unique structural features, architectural workmanship, Armenian stonework, construction using yellow stone, the building material of the region, reflection of Armenian culture, and Armenian religious building characteristics. However, Surp Sarkis Church is the only surviving church of the five churches of the monastery. In this context, the only church of the monastery that has survived to

the present day should be restored and taken under protection. Cultural heritage, which is important as its architectural features, importance within the scope of faith tourism, location, identity features and the last structure of the monastery, should be protected. Factors that will damage the structure, especially earthquake, vandalism and war, should be minimized. With the preservation of the building, the architectural and cultural identity characteristics of the period will be preserved and transferred to future generations and memory preservation will be ensured.

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