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Research, protection and restoration studies on the historical fabric of Isparta, using Aya Baniya Church as an example

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Abstract

Turkey is a country that bears the tracks of many civilizations because of its geographic location and its characteristics that come from its deeply rooted history. So it contains historical and cultural items of value that are quite rich and can be characterized as intensely universal. Thanks to these valuable items, it has always drawn the attention of the world. Isparta is a city that houses quite a few historical, archaeological and cultural items of value in its structure. Protecting the historical buildings that carry the cultural and historical traces of a period and making a contribution to its reuse for the future of all humanity are a truth of international importance. In this connection, with this study, essential work was carried out and certain suggestions made about St. Baniya Church, which is one of the most important structures of the historically, archaeologically and culturally valuable items that make up the historical fabric of Isparta and especially, the historical and cultural potential of Isparta.
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1. Introduction

In Turkey, the phenomenon of protecting and evaluating buildings that belong to previous eras has only recently begun to gain in importance and is still limited. In recent years approaches for protecting historically valuable items seem generally to have begun to receive increasing interest and as time goes by conscious preservation has developed. The protection phenomenon is not just taken up in the measure of a single building; projects are being carried out that aim at protecting a street and even a city. There are hopeful signs for the future in the matter of protection such as planned and orderly construction directed at protecting the historical ambience. Legislation related to protection is being drawn up according to the contemporary conditions of today and people's interest in the subject has grown stronger.

In the developed countries of the world, opening historically and culturally valuable items with new uses and protecting them at the same time is spreading quickly [1]. People are using all sorts of possibilities to see the historical wealth of different places and to taste the flavor and excitement of living where there are different cultures and where they existed. The focal point of the interests that people have in different historically and culturally valuable items appear as historically and culturally valuable within the historical process of the countries in which they are interested [2].

Turkey has a heritage of historically and culturally valuable items, characterized as wealthy and dense and universal and coming from its geographic position and deeply rooted history. The city of Isparta also is a city, which has quite a dense amount of historically, archaeologically and culturally valuable items in it. In this connection, St. Baniya Church, which we have

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taken as an example is one of the most important buildings that has been able to remain standing today because of the values we've discussed and creates historical and cultural potential for Isparta.

This study is aimed at totally rehabilitating this building and providing for its use in a sound manner for the benefit of the community and the city. The necessary studies of the building itself and its environment in connection with this (research, investigation, project formation) were carried out and various suggestions made.

2. Research, protection and restoration studies on the historical fabric of Isparta, using Aya Baniya Church as an example

2.1. Isparta city

Isparta city is located where the inner part of Anatolia, the Aegean and the Mediterranean regions intersect. Isparta has an important geographic position and an ancient history and has gained an important, economically functional role in Turkey especially, because of developments it showed in the country's Republican period. Rose cultivation and carpet making are identified with the name of Isparta: it has an important reputation and market in Turkey and even in the world with what has become the urban identity of Isparta and its symbol. In the later years, in the city, education and health services in particular have developed quickly. The establishment of Suleyman Demirel University, and attached to it an increasing number and variety of health facilities that provide services in different fields, have hastened urban development in all directions.

2.2. Historical fabric study in the city of Isparta

Isparta's central district possesses quite a wealthy position from the point of view of historically, archaeologically and culturally valuable items. The important historical and archaeological values that are estimated will offer greater potential in the future with proper evaluation are the following [3]:

- Baris Ancient City
- Minassos Ancient City
- Kapikaya Ancient City
- Alikoy Hoyuk
- Kanli Hoyuk
- St. Baniya Church
- St. Yorgi Church
- Old Isparta Houses (Damgaci St., Henden St., Tabakhane St.)
- Firdevs Bey Bedesten
- Kececi Hamam
- Yilankiran Fountain
- Karbuz Fountain
- Kutlubey Mosque (Grand Mosque)
- Firdevs Pasa Mosque (Mimar Sinan Mosque)
- Hizirbey Mosque
- Kavakli Mosque
- Pirefendi Sultan (Piri Mehmet Halife) Mausoleum
- Halife Sultan Mausoleum
- Along with these, many mausoleums are to be found such as the Seyh Alaaddin Efendi Mausoleum, Gokveli Sultan Mausoleum, Hace-i Sultan Mausoleum, Sitma Dedesi Mausoleum and Hizirabdal Sultan Mausoleum.

Because the historical fabric was denser in the city, the area that was first proclaimed an Old Site Area and later had its Old Site Area status removed, (and where work continued on protection at a scale of one building) and the St. Baniya Church were taken up in greater detail.

2.3. Old Site Area of Isparta

In Isparta the work on ascertaining and documenting the Old Site Area began in 1977. Through a decision of the Real Estate Old Works and Monuments High Council dated 14.10.1977 and numbered A-840, the areas that include the building and building groups that have architectural characteristics of historical and cultural value in the city center were circled and separated into Second and Third Degree Old Site Areas on maps of a 1/1000 scale. This area was in the north part of the Isparta Belonu Stream and remains in the area that is bounded by Aksu Street, Fabrika Street, Belonu Stream and Kaymakkapi Square (Fig. 1).

The area that includes nearly 40 ha of settlement spread straight to the south of the city center. The building wards on which area the Uzumpazari was to be found later, were added in the areas where Mimar Sinan Mosque, Bedesten Market and the government building are found. The Development Plan for Protection that was approved in 1980 could only provide protection for the area within the total Old Site Area until 1984 [4].

In Isparta, the historical buildings are one or two storey structures with a hall in back, a façade on the street generally, and gardens in back and on the sides.

There are houses that have entries from the center and from the side. The bottom floors of the houses generally are dressed stone. In some examples one sees that there are wooden beams and banded rustic stonewalls. The upper floors are wood or debris stone fill. The doors found in the houses, windows and cantilevers show typical characteristics and contribute to the general aspect.

For today only 58 registered buildings are still usable in the area in which historical buildings that were taken

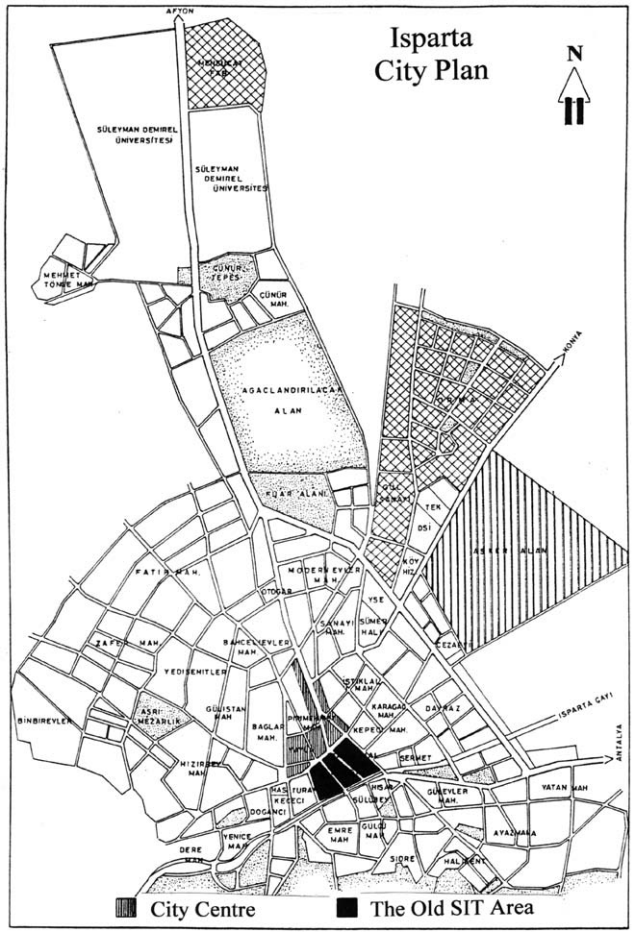


Fig. 1. City plan and location of old site area.

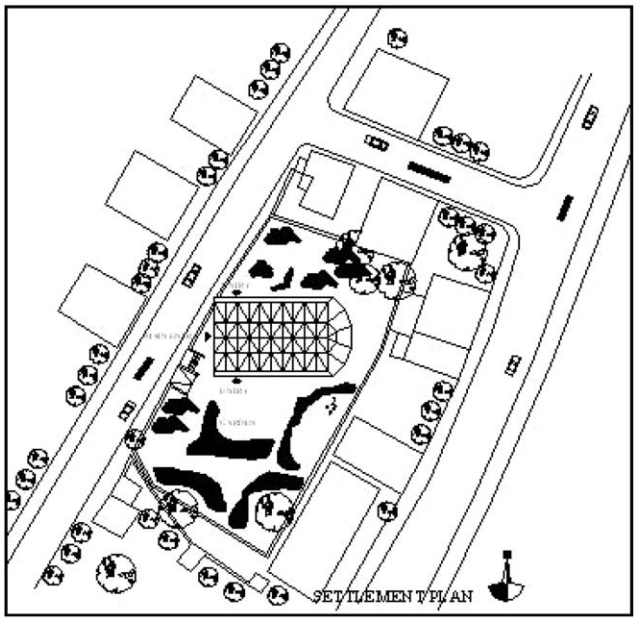


Fig. 2. Settlement plan of St. Baniya.

under protection on a single building scale and which has now completely lost its characteristic as a Old Site Area. Parallel to the positive developments in the protection subject in recent years, some of the registered buildings in Isparta too are being restored both by the public sector and by the private sector and are being evaluated for suitable functions.

2.4. Isparta St. Baniya Church

The St. Baniya Church in Isparta's Turan district is a building from the 19th century. It is known as St. Panaya and the Mother Mary Church.

The church is rectangular in plan and has three naves and a lath-and-plaster vault covering (Fig. 2). The front façade has been plastered while the other facades are stone wall without plaster. The walls were made using the rustic stone technique. The inner space was completely plastered.

In the interior space, in the apse section the ground was raised with poor stone stairs. In the main nave, dentil decorations were used in the east-west direction. The raised decorative elements, on the doors and windows in the side naves were held up by nailing them to the wall. The columns were made of roughed out, cylindrically formed stones and later closed over with thick whitewash. Starting from the iron arch band from the capitals, the building was completed by wooden rough frame being used on stone. It was observed that the plaster had been painted but the paint had turned white over time. On one of the columns there are the traces that belonged to the staircase that went to the baptismal font. However, these traces do not provide complete information on the form of the font and its dimensions. The column capitals were decorated with flowers in the Corinthian manner and above these capitals there were metal bars that made a tie between the columns.

On the western, northern and southern façades there are three metal doors. On all three doors in a form that resembles one another there is a triangular pediment, there are columns on two sides that appear as small main doors. With the exception of the north door, the inscription areas that are below the pediments are empty. In the inscription on the north façade "St. Baniya Church" is written in Turkish. There are cross motifs between the inscription and the arch in the parts of the doors that look to the outside façade. In the inner façades these doors are completely encircled with a complete round arch and the top of the arches have been decorated with raised flower motifs. While the windows of the church are seen as a slightly pointed arch from the external façade, they present the view of a completely round arch from the inner façade. In the parts of the windows that look toward the external façade, there are iron railings decorated with round motifs.

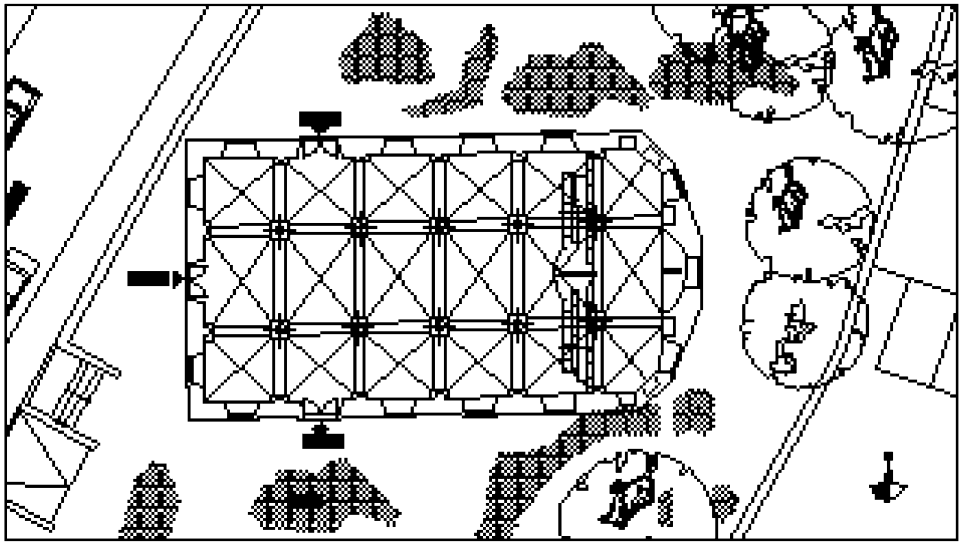


Fig. 3. A part of re-evaluation project of St. Baniya Church.





Figs. 4 and 5. Two photographs connected with the St. Aya Baniya Church's condition today.

On the east façade immediately below the roof there are windows in the form of water drops on both sides of a window with a completely round arch. Its ground is fake stone cement. The upper cover is a wooden frame, Spanish tile-covered hipped roof. The bell tower on the west façade was torn down during the construction of a road in 1938–1939.

According to oral sources the church was used in the 1960s as a provisions depot for the military. Measured drawings of the church in connection with the renovation being carried out of St. Baniya Church and its re-evaluation have been made and given as part of re-evaluation project in this work (Fig. 3).

In addition, two photographs connected with the church's condition today have been given space within the framework of the study in order to identify well and shed light on the studies that will be made (Figs. 4, 5).

3. Results and discussion

The section concerning the results of the study and suggestions resulting from the scope of the work has been divided into two sections (related to Isparta and the example building) and subjects.

3.1. Suggestions concerning the historical fabric research, documentation, preservation and restoration work in the city of Isparta

(1) The city of Isparta has a wealth of potential in terms of historically, archaeologically and culturally valuable items. It is essential that an inventory be made of the whole of these valuable items.
(2) The subject is to provide protection of these valuables on a continuous basis, take effective steps

in reevaluating them for the benefit of the community and produce policies.

(3) Protecting historically and culturally valuable items along with their environment and preventing nearby environments from being opened to construction are necessities. Proceeding with construction that shows many differences in physical, functional and socio-economic aspects that will destroy the historical fabric must be prevented. Proceeding with usage and construction that becomes increasingly intensified must be prevented.

(4) The historically and culturally valuable items found in the structure of the city are important for providing balanced tourism development and being able to find alternative solutions to the densification on shore lines makes one hopeful that the region's special values will be taken in hand and prevent the loss of environmental sources.

3.2. Suggestions related to the St. Baniya Church

(1) In the city of Isparta there are many potential historical buildings; however, today most of these are not looked after and have no owner. After these buildings have had all the necessary restoration, maintenance and repair done, they have to be provided with management by professional managers and the management activities have to be very frequently carried out by the Foundations General Directorate, the municipalities and the Ministry of Tourism.

(2) When St. Baniya Church was looked at generally what strikes one is that it has been cleaned and the tiles on the roof renewed. However, the parts of the decorations that have fallen must be completed without damaging the special character of the building at the restoration level; the plaster in the interior space must be restored in the original color; the tie of the metal ties openly seen on the external façade must be eliminated; and the windows must be closed with a suitable material (for example, glass).

(3) After the necessary restoration and repairs, of the two churches found in the center of Isparta and still remain face to face with their own fates, have been carried out and they are given suitable functions, they must be used for the benefit of the city of Isparta and its inhabitants.

So carrying out the work immediately, quickly and effectively will be a valuable initiative for the country, the region and the city of Isparta.

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