

AN ARTUQID BUILDING: DUNAYSIR GREAT MOSQUE¹

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In this paper, the architectural features of Dunaysır Great Mosque and the restoration procedures the mosque has been through in the Republic Period are explored. The objective of this paper is to analyse the architectural features of Dunaysır Great Mosque, which one of the most beautiful examples of Artuqid architecture in Anatolia.

Dunaysır (Kızıltepe), lies to the south-west of Mardin. It is surrounded by Mardin and Nusaybin to the east, Derik and Ceylanpınar to the west, Mazıdağı to the north and with Syria to its south. In time, it acquired firstly the name “Koçhisar” instead of Dunaysır, and then Kızıltepe. As a consequence of its location over the fertile lands of Mesopotamia and over the crossroads of the Silk Road, the prominent trade route between Asia and Europe, Dunaysır remained a settlement that never lost its significance throughout history. (Figure 1) Due to this location, the town was witness to various wars and has been repeatedly sacked by various nations. [1] Dunaysır became an important centre for trade on the Diyarbakir – Musul and Urfa- Musul routes during the time of Artuqids, who have a prominent role in the Medieval Anatolian Turkish history, having taken great steps in the early stages of Turkification of Anatolia and enabled the Northern Syria and Anatolia connections. According to writers of the time, Dunaysır had become an international market town. Merchants from Syria, Diyarbakir and Anatolia (Rum), which was under the control of Sultan Mesud, would come together and trade here. In a short period of time, inns, bazaars, guest houses (*funduk*), public baths, mosques and madrasahs were built and people from various nations settled here. [2] İbn Cübeyr wrote that in 1184 Dunaysır was located on a caravan route and that the town had a new madrasah and baths. [3] Yakut Hamavi remarked that while a small village in 12th century, prior to the Mongol invasion, Dunaysır had become a large commercial town in 1225, had turned into a unequalled city with great bazaars. [2] [3] [4] Kuban [2], marks that this development was parallel to the completion of Dunaysır Great Mosque (1204). Moreover, during Necmeddin Alpi's reign (1154-1176), which is recounted in sources as the age of prosperity and development, Dunaysır became a cultural and commercial hub with the mosques, madrasahs, caravanserais, baths and bazaars, the construction of which the ruler had ordered. [2] [5] [6] Dunaysır was sacked by the Ayyubids in 13th century. Melik Kamil, who bore vengeance towards Sultan Alâeddin, annexed Urfa and Harran in 1236; after torturing Seljuk emirs, ravaged Dunaysır save for the mosque. Later on, in 1257, when the Mongols, who had besieged the Mardin Castle, gave up hope on taking hold of the city, they pillaged Mardin, Dunaysır and Erzen. [2] While Mongol commanders such as Togaçar, Baltu and Sülemiş, who were in revolt in Anatolia kept the Ilkhanates busy, Mamluks annexed the Artuk province in 1298. The Mamluks who could not penetrate the Mardin Castle looted the districts around the castle including the mosque and took the residents as hostages. From there, they passed on to Dunaysır and repeated the same acts. Mamluks continued their raids over the territories of Artuqids who remained loyal to the Ilkhanates; thus ransacking Mardin and Dunaysır many times. (Turan, 2001: 189-191) In this region, there also had been rather contentious conflicts between Aq Qoyunlu and Qara Qoyunlu rulers and in one of these, some of the enemy forces took refuge in the Koçhisar Mosque. [7] The town

subsequently passed on to Seljuk, Ilkhanate, Mamluk, Qara Qoyunlu, Artuqid, Timurid and Ottoman rule. Abdülgani Efendi [8], who lived in Diyarbakir during the final period of Ottoman Empire and the initial years of the Republic, had recounted having heard from reliable sources that while Dunaysır Great Mosque originally was a vast building with its double minaret madrasah, the madrasah had perished and the mosque remained in a state of disrepair only with walls and two thirds of the roof and its west minaret left; that during wartime its stones had been stolen by the Germans and some unscrupulous locals and also that the Armenians in the village of Tel Ermen used the stones in the church they were building. The Great Mosque, The Stone Bridge, Tasassut Tower, Sakhullubey Mausoleum, Hazren Taceddin Mesur Madrasah and Harzem Ruins are the monuments that made it to our day. Gabriel [9], reports that Dunaysır, which was a glorious, beautiful town in 12th century, had fallen into ruins through the Mongol annexation and others that followed and the ruins of the mosque, minaret and mausoleums were all that remained in the town.

Aslanapa [10] considers Dunaysır (Kızıltepe) Great Mosque, which displays all the architectural features of the region, to be the masterpiece of Artuqid mosque architecture. While it does not specify the architect, the inscription above the cusped arch that encloses the altar niche indicates the construction date of the mosque. The construction of the Great Mosque was initiated by Yavlak Arslan (1184-1200) of the Artuqids and it was later completed by Artuk Arslan (1200-1239) in 1204 (H.601).

"With the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful. The completion of this building was fulfilled by Ebu'l Feth Artuk Arslan ,son of Ilgazi,son of Alpi, son of Timutaş, son of Ilgazi, son of Artuk who is in need of the mercy of almighty Allah and brother of Melik Said Hüsameddin Yavlak Arslan (may he rest in peace). May God find it acceptable. Muharrem 601" [9]

The building consists of the peribolus and to the north of the this, the courtyard, of which only the ruins of the wall remains. The rectangular plan of Great Mosque with a maksoorah, consists of three naves covered with barrel vaults parallel to the altar wall. The building spans an area of 63,40x16,35 metres and the walls are as thick as 2.15 metres in places. [11] Stonemasonry is rather prominent in the building and it is and the brickwork seen in the barrel vaults is rather remarkable. ² (Figure 2) The courtyard-type plan of the mosque indicates that it was designed with the Damascus Great Mosque as its basis. In this region, which is an extension of Northern Syria, both in terms of climate and culture, courtyards has always been an element of architectural design as a significant constituent of daily life. [3] The main area is linked to the courtyard to its north with seven doors. At the centre of this main area, two breathtaking, high, oval, brickwork, squinched domes are situated. The dome of which until 1980 only three quarters were present was then repaired and completed, and it was clad with "sheet iron in lead appearance" [12]. The dome in front of the sits altar on upside down T -shaped large piers on the north and on piers that bear the vaults and separate the naves in the middle. The weight of the T-shaped piers is balanced by the removal of one adjacent pier in each case and the expansion of the arch. Maksoorah, thus gaining spaciousness through the expansion of the arch, separates from the naves and is emphasised. Artun [11] evaluates this effect as the architectural accomplishment of the building. One of the striking features of the building is the squinches in the maksoorah (Figure 3). Here, instead of the squinches cleft with the stalactites seen in Iran, the potential and the unique characteristics of the stone have been exploited and the squinches have been clad with decorations. [13] The most striking element of the main area is the meticulously ornate stone altar (Figure 4). Completely covering the south wall of the maksoorah, altar is bordered by two vast frames. While Curatola [14] marks that the stone

altar, with its shell shaped slab shows Assyrian influence in terms of style and Seljuk influence with its geometric decorations; Aslanapa [10] states that the altar niche had been completed to a marine shell form with the influence of the Zengids. (see also [15]). Ögel [13] points out that the densest area of decoration is the altar; that the altar is very wide and covered with grid decorations and that this is the first obvious difference to Iran and that the Anatolian stone characteristics are primarily apparent. Syrian and Iraqi features blend in with these as well. According to Herzfeld, the cusped arch of the altar goes all the way back to Samarra and from there on to Sasanids. At the same time, the same arch is seen in Şah Fazlı Mausoleum in Uzgend as well. The marine shell form of the altar niche also evokes the façade of Syrian influenced Cairo El Ahmer from 1125. In addition, the oil lamp motif – hardly recognisable today – within the altar niche is also found in Iraq. [13] [16] Nonetheless, the border that circumscribes the altar of the Great Mosque with ornate geometric arabesque such as openwork, has led the way for other regions in Anatolia. [17] This rather symmetrically designed building is supported by buttresses on eastern, western and southern façades. While there are similarities between support buttresses, there are also variations in protrusion measurements and in their heights. Kuban (2008: 114), has marked that the façades with few windows in a block-like appearance, supported by buttresses have character akin to Northern Mesopotamian buildings of the period. The rather plain northern façade (Figure 5) is accentuated with ornate stonemasonry. On the façade, there are seven apertures and two altar niches, vertical contours of which extend almost all along the height of the wall, only to be horizontally confined by a moulding that forms a slightly higher level above the main door. In 1971 the top part of this moulding was completely renovated and the middle layer was entirely dismantled for repair purposes. [11] Out of the seven apertures, the high middle one serves as the main portal. The portal is of a completely different style; a practice which, though not yet well settled, is one that displays the immaculate sculptural quality of the stonemasonry traditions of the region. [3] This portal attracts the attention to the centre with its sumptuous masonry and its bi-chromatic, cusped arch. In the arch that consists of bi-chromatic stones, Zengid and Ayyubid influences are visible. Dunaysır Great Mosque, accepted in consensus to be completely “homogeneous”, has the transverse plan of three naves parallel to the dome in front of the altar, which is in turn cut through along two naves in front of the altar. This form of the main area, which was tried out in Meyyafarikîn Mosque and Mardin Great Mosque and further developed, is joined with the courtyard in the north. In 13th century Anatolian Seljuk Mosques, with the exception of Konya Alâeddin Mosque, the presence of the courtyard is not absolute. [11] Therefore, the presence of the Great Mosque courtyard is a significant point in the development of Anatolian Turkish architecture. With the presence of minarets on the corners of the courtyard becoming certain through the excavations in 1970s, the importance of the building in terms of the development of Anatolian Turkish architecture has once again emerged. Thus, Dunaysır Great Mosque, considered to be the most sophisticated expression of Artuqid mosque architecture, was one of the double minaret buildings.

The Great Mosque also stands out with the richness in its stonemasonry and its decorations. The architectural decoration of the building is particularly concentrated on the northern façade and on the squinches in the altar and in the maksoorah. The bi-chromatic stone arch of the portal, on the other hand, indicates the influence of Zengid architecture. The decoration of portal frieze on the eastern façade of the courtyard, constructed from rich plantal curves, is also striking in the way it exhibits a relevance to the art of the late antiquity. [11] The restoration work initiated by Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü (Directorate of Charitable Foundations) in 1972 was carried out with occasional interruptions and completed in 1986. The restoration of Dunaysır Great Mosque, which for centuries remained in ruins, was

concluded on 12.12.1986 and it was opened to worship. [18] A second restoration was undertaken by Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü in 2005. For this, with the decree 3454 dated 16/06/2004 by the Diyarbakır Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kurulu (Diyarbakir Council for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets), the following were requested: The preparation of survey projects following the excavation work conducted in the courtyard of the mosque; restitution and restoration projects in compliance with the technique, all under the supervision of experts from Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü. [18] The first restoration practices in the Republic period, performed by Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü at the beginning of 1970s, included the re-erection of the building as well as repair. Later practices comprised small scale restoration work. In the recent practices, on the other hand, it has emerged that the building should be reconsidered and analysed together with its periphery. As for that, Aslanapa [10] notes that the recent restoration has not been successful.

In conclusion, as a result of the cultural diversity at its location, the influences of various different styles are observed in Dunaysır Great Mosque. With its plan, it is considered to be the most mature example of Artuqid mosque architecture. The fact that it emerged with this specific plan at the beginning of 13th century stresses its significance within Anatolian architecture.

Notes

The heading for notes should be printed in 12pt Arial, bold, set with an initial capital. Notes should be printed in 10 pt Arial and be numbered. Please conform to the following style:

1. I hereby give my sincere thanks to Vakıflar Diyarbakir Bölge Müdürlüğü (Diyarbakir Regional Directorate of Charitable Foundations) and Semra Hillez in particular for enabling the use of the documents from the Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi (VGMA) (Directorate of Charitable Foundations Archive) in this study.
2. Dunaysır (Kızıltepe) Great Mosque is registered under Melik Mansur Foundation in landed estate records. VGMA.423:135

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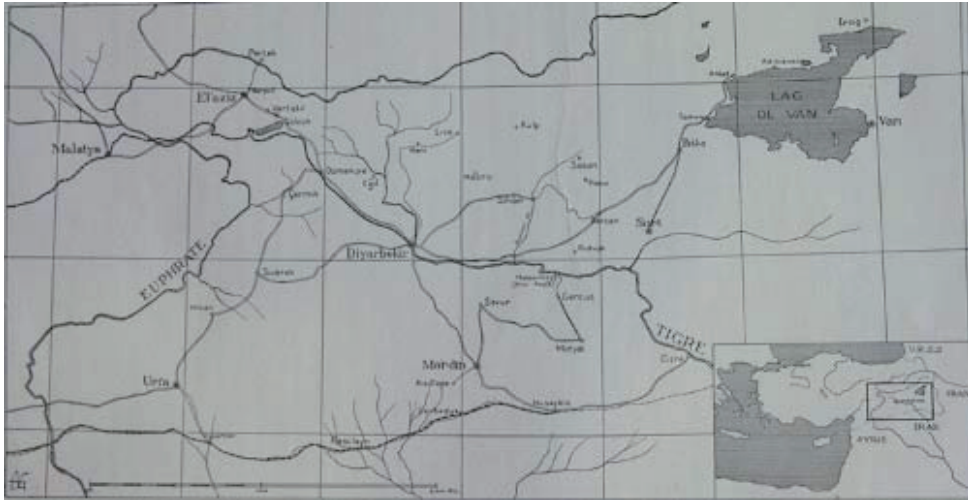


Figure 1 Gabriel, 1940.

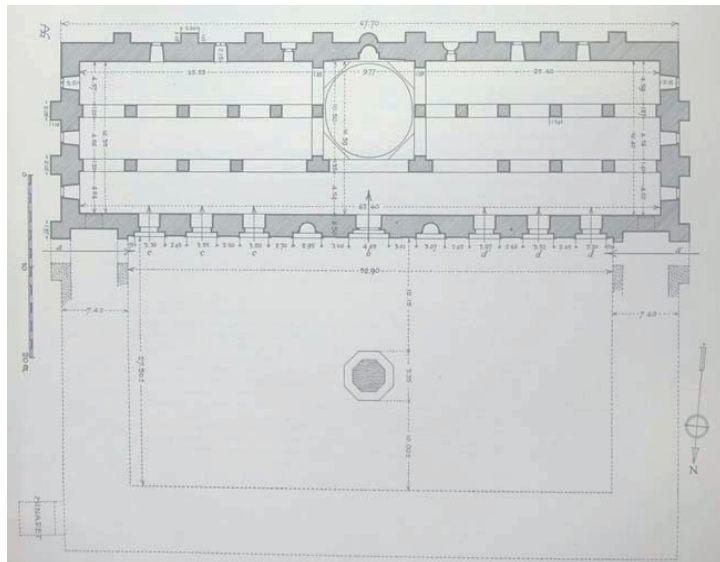


Figure 2 Dunaysır Great Mosque Plan, Gabriel, 1940.



Figure 3 Dunaysır Great Mosque Dome, Hilâl Aktur, 2009.

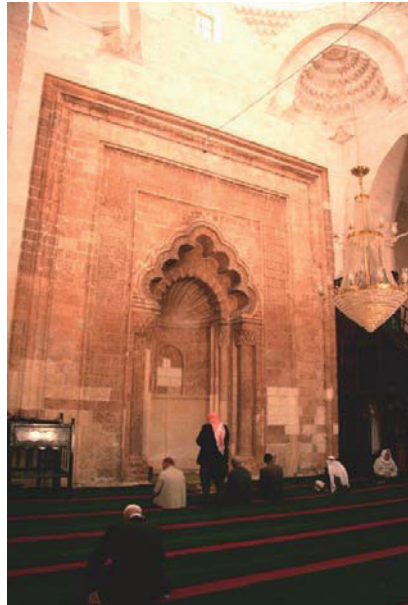


Figure 4 Dunaysır Great Mosque Portal, Hilâl Aktur, 2009.



Figure 5 Dunaysır Great Mosque, northern façade Hilâl Aktur, 2009.