

## **An Evaluation of the Harput Archeological Region by Means of the Landscape Architecture Discipline**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author CKS designed the study, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors CKS and EC managed the literature searches, analyses of the study, performed land visits and questionnaire works. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Aims:** Harput is one of the first settlement places in Anatolia, Turkey, and its history dates back to 2000 B.C. So, Harput has experienced many invasions throughout its history. In this study, urban design and the protection concepts of historical heritages of Harput Township are examined.

**Study Design:** The research subjects were created by national and international sources related to Harput and its archeological reputation. The research findings are evaluated by using the tools of the landscape architecture discipline

**Methodology:** A number of stages have been followed to examine Harput's historical heritage and archeological assets. These stages are;

- Conducting a comparative review of the past and present status of Harput and its vicinity,

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- Tours of the historical assets and a detailed analysis of those structures carried out on site,
- After all physical observations had been made of the region, literature information and previous studies were evaluated and then some recommendations are made for implementation of beneficial landscape architecture.

**Results:** Harput and its surroundings contain numerous monuments including a castle, sanctuaries, churches, mosques, and tombs that provide unique examples of art. However, due to its notable historical heritage, Harput and its near vicinity has already been proclaimed as a *First Degree Archeological Site Zone*. There are many structures belonging to former periods in Harput, which have succeeded to survive until the present day. These monuments vary in size and number. The following are some of the important historical structures that are still standing in Harput: Virgin Mary church, Surp Agop church, Harput (milk) castle, Grand (Ulu) Mosque, Esediye mosque, Alacalı mosque, Fethi Ahmet baba masjid and tomb, Mansur baba tomb, Arab baba masjid and tomb, Lady Sara (hatun) mosque, Kurşunlu mosque, Kale and Cemşit bey baths, and so on. Religious centers, archeological residues and monuments taking into account the architectural features that could be improved with landscaping. It became clear that landscaping and maintenance plans are necessary to improve aesthetic appearance of the region.

*Keywords: Harput; Turkey; archeological zone; castle; monument; history mosque; church.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological site could be defined as 'a place where materials remains of past human activities exist'. Many different types of archaeological sites can be found worldwide. Some sites are as small as a pile of stones or tools left by prehistoric people who used their equipment on that site or as large and complex as the prehistoric settlements like Pompeii, Italy. Even very small archaeological sites might contain important information for ancient civilization and cultures [1]. Archaeological materials might be broadly divided in two groups namely *portable and non-portable objects*. The *portable objects* that were made or used by people are analyzed by archaeologists to obtain information about those people. The *non-portable objects* also called '*features*' are important sources on archaeological sites [2].

The natural environment has undergone cultural changes and it has come to the present day by assuming shape during the historical process. For that reason, the historical cultural heritage has become an important subject. Archeological studies cover a large area such as structures, art, architecture, lifestyle and settlement practices, and so forth. Considering the world's cultural diversity, Turkey has very large part of the archeological heritage and exhibits of the historical city settlements look like open museums in many places.

Ever since people began wondering about ancient civilizations and cultural heritage, numerous types of archaeological sites that reveal much information have been found. These

studies give people a unique perspective on the historical development of human cultures. Archaeological studies range from single monument determination to the study of residues of complex ancient cities. Hence, those include shipwrecks, battlefields, old towns, cemeteries, castles, and so on [1]. However, even at the present time, many archaeology sites could still be located in areas as densely populated as Istanbul (Turkey) or below the surface of a river or lake, (i.e., Runkale, Gaziantep city, Turkey).

The Landscape Architecture discipline studies both natural environments and environments constructed by human beings. The natural landscapes are environments that have not been altered by humans. On the other hand, cultural landscapes are environments that have been altered in some manner by people. Moreover, many methods could be utilized to analyze archaeological sites that are relevant to the analysis of landscape designs. Hence, archaeology of landscapes incorporates multiple research methods into its analysis in order to ensure that information are gathered from multiple sources [3,4].

Due to rich archeological texture in Harput Township, the landscape values of Harput Township were examined. This study could be viewed as a core study and serve as a base for future studies that will be conducted in that region.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material of this study is Harput Township located in Eastern parts of Anatolia, Turkey.



**Fig. 1. Location map of Harput and its vicinity**

The basis of study is urban design; the concepts of protecting historical heritages were also examined at the same time. However research subjects were identified by national and international entities related to Harput and its archeological reputation. A number of stages have been followed to examine Harput's historical heritage and archeological assets. These stages are;

- A comparative review of the past and present status of Harput and its vicinity was conducted,
- Site tours of the historical assets and detailed analysis on those structures were carried out in situ,
- After all observations were made in the region, literature information and former studies were evaluated and finally some recommendations were made based on the Landscape Architecture discipline.

## 2.1 Workspace Properties

Harput township's historical structures have been selected for this study within the scope of the Landscape Architecture discipline. Harput is a small town and administratively belongs to Elazığ city, Turkey. It is approx. 1300 m above the sea level and located in the upper Euphrates river basin, a part of Eastern Anatolia. However, there are numerous cultural and historic structures in Harput dating back to 2000 B.C. (*Urartu period*) [5-7]. Throughout Harput's history, *Urartus, Hittites, Artuks, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks, and Ottomans* lived in this region and left many cultural and historic heritages behind. It was also a capital city during *Çubukoğulları and Artuks periods*. Moreover, Harput and surroundings have many monuments of historical significance like an open-air museum. These traces of structures and residues bear much information

about former civilizations and eras [3, 8-10]. The location map of Harput is given in Fig. 1 above.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Harput hosted various civilizations and has a very rich archeological heritage. The cultural and historic structure of town was formed by *Urartus, Hittites, Artuks, Seljukian and Ottomans*. Some traces of cultural and historic heritages belonging to these periods have survived until today. It was realized that the misuse of this region without recognizing and appreciating their value, will result in the destruction of the cultural and historic heritage and over time such wealth will be lost forever. It was found that many of the historical monuments have been seriously damaged and suffered from environmental conditions - some of them are even in danger of collapse. But unfortunately, numerous historical monuments have disappeared in that zone and only some fractions of the city center have remained. These are the castle, some religious buildings, structures, houses and fountains [3].

Due to Harput's rich historical heritage and important archeological assets and monuments, it was first declared to be an *Urban Protection Site Zone* which had to be protected by the administration, in 1975. Then, in 2005, Ministries Board of Turkish Republic declared that Harput and it near vicinity as a *Cultural Tourism Conservation and Development Region*. Regarding this declaration, Harput's Conservation and Urban Design Project was prepared and established for protecting and restoration of historical architectural features. Finally, Diyarbakır Regional Conservation Council of Cultural and Natural Heritage declared that Harput was *First Degree Archeological Site Zone* in 2007 [12,13]. With having this legislations, legal protection, management and

monitoring of the Harput region fall within the scope of national and regional governmental administrations. Hence, the regional conservation councils are responsible for keeping the register of monuments and sites, including carrying out all tasks related to the legal protection of monuments and listed buildings and the approval to carry out any restoration related works [13,14]. In this zone, all landscape plans such as: squares, parks, city furniture placements, urban related design plans, and so on, are supervised and need permission from Diyarbakir Culture Natural Heritage Conservation Council. Harput's conversation and developing plans are shown in Fig. 2.

### 3.1 Historical Developments of Harput and Its Vicinity

According to findings from former literature, the first settlement of Harput Township by the *Hittites* dates back to the BC. 2000s. After a short time they were replaced by the *Urartus*. It was proposed that *Urartus* had already settled to East Anatolia back to 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. before they invaded Harput. The Harput castle also called the 'milk castle' was built during the *Urartus* period. It is realized that castle which is one of the most important structures and has the

greatest reputation among the structures in Harput, was at least 4.000 year old. It still stands at the edge of the city.

After the battle of Manzikert (Malazgirt) at 1071 A.D, the region was occupied by Turkish tribes and held by *Turkish Seljuks*. However, later on, the town was invaded by the *Artukids* in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, many monuments were built including the *Grand (Ulu) mosque*. In 1085, Harput fell under the domination of *Turks of Seljuks*. After that it fell under the domination of *Çubukoğulları, Dulkadiroğulları* and lastly it fell under the domination of the *Ottomans* in the period of Yavuz Sultan Selim in 1516.

It was realized that Harput and its vicinity had already hosted many cultures and civilizations throughout its history and it is one of the oldest settlements in Turkey. It has many important historical heritage assets. Some of them are the *Virgin Mary church, a Castle (milk castle), Great (Ulu) mosque, Esendiye mosque, Alacalı mosque, Feti Ahmet baba Masjid and tomb, Mansur baba tomb, Arab baba mosque and tomb, Lady Sara (hatun) mosque, Kale and Cemşit bey baths*, so on. Fig. 3 shows some of the important historical structures and archeological assets in Harput.

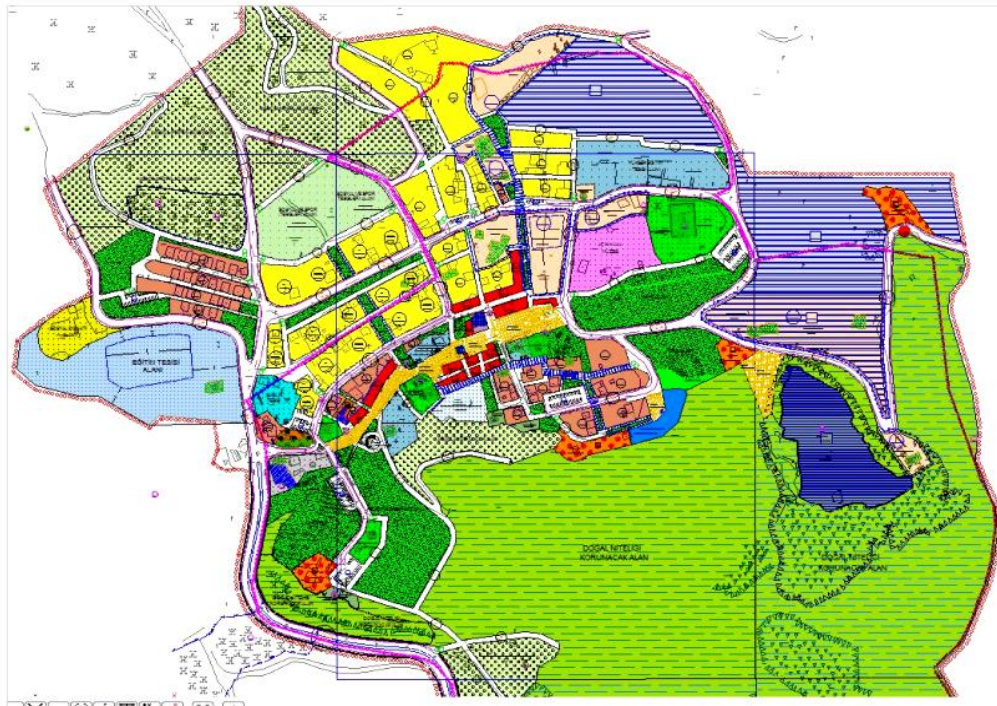
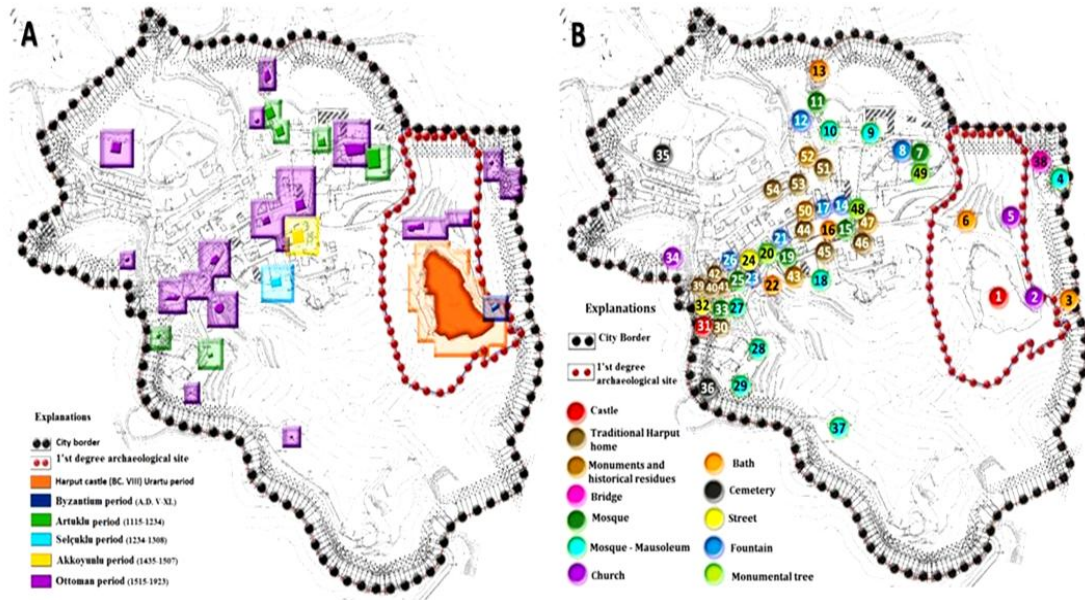


Fig. 2. Harput's conversation and developing plan [3,13-15]





**Fig. 3. The map of Harput and its vicinity (A: Historical civilization settlements B: Archeological monuments) [3, 12,15]**

**3.1.1 Traditional Harput Houses**

Harput Township was located on rocky ground. Very basic and simple plans were used for constructing residential structures. Hence, digging of rocks is difficult so, wherever possible, a sloping terrain was built on rocks. Moreover, according to the land studies, it looks like basements of houses were built by using large stones with plaster mortar and lime. But for walls, hardwood based, wooden beams were also used for interior design [13].

It was found that many of the old traditional residential houses that are still being used in town center date from around the 9<sup>th</sup> century. These houses usually have two stories when

the mezzanine floor is not considered to be a story. Interior courtyard, stables, barns, toilets and service units are located on the first floor level. At the upper floor (the 2nd floor) various size rooms and openings are found (Fig. 4).

Since it has been declared an Archaeological site, a new urban design project has already been established. Hence, new buildings and architectural structures should be strictly following this plan. However, although Harput and its near vicinity are protected by strict rules, in recent years, many new residential buildings and structures have been found to be constructed in the town and that do not match to the prescribed plans.



**Fig. 4. Old Harput's houses**

### 3.2 Harput's Archaeological Structure

The beginning of the settlement goes back to the Urartus period, when a castle called the "Milk castle" was built. The residential constructions by inhabitants expanded surroundings of this castle.

As mention above, Harput is a well-known and highly reputed archaeological site. Hence, it has archeologically important monumental buildings, bridges, mosques and masjid-tombs, and churches. Some of them are still in service. Having all these monumental structures in a town makes it famous archeologically not only nationally but also internationally. These assets are culturally enriching. The majority of these structures are located in city center (old town) and some of them are briefly described below.

#### 3.2.1 Harput's castle

The Harput castle is a well-known archeological structure worldwide. However, it is heavily damaged but some traces survived from the ancient times and they retain valuable information from those past eras. Moreover, the castle was mostly built by rough-cut and chipped stone blocks with numerous rooms and secret passage-ways carved into the rock walls. According to a story milk was mixed in the mortar during construction and since then it has been called the 'milk castle'. The castle is comprised of an interior and exterior section and has a rectangular shape. It has three entrances but only the main entrance on the east side opens to Harput town. It is located strategically to control the Ephesus river basin; it is surrounded by high cliffs.

The castle typically has an internal and an outer part. Some of the columns are round and some are square in shape. The inscription found in

south parts of castle ruins clearly indicated that it was built by *Urartus*. Moreover, external parts are greatly damaged and only some fractions of residues are to be found [3,7,12]. Although it had already been restored and repaired throughout its history, at the present new restoration work is in progress (Fig. 5).

#### 3.2.2 Harput's mosques

Numerous historical mosques are found in Harput town. Most of them were built during the periods of Seljuks and Ottomans. Some of the important old mosques are; Grand (Ulu) mosque, Kurşunlu mosque, Ağa mosque, Alacalı mosque, Lady Sara (hatun) mosque, Arslanlı (Esadiye) mosque, and Ahmet Bey Mosque.

##### 3.2.2.1 Grand (Ulu) mosque

It is located in the center of Harput, is one of the oldest mosques in Anatolia and is still in service. Indeed, it is also one of the historically important monuments. It was constructed by Artuk sultan Fahreddin Karaaslan in 1157. It was found that it had a tall minaret, which in part collapsed and was rebuilt in a leaning position. The older part of the grand mosque was decorated with fine brickwork. Architecturally, the mosque square shaped, placed on rectangular shape and it is covered with a large dome (Fig. 6A). Furthermore, the Artuk's traditional architectural structures are seen in thick stone walls. Since it was built, many cultural groups settled in this region and this is seen in the way repairmen placed blocks in minarets. Hence, basket weave brick placements, plug establishment, a six-corner design and star pattern, can all be seen in minarets. But, it was important to note that masterpiece of the mosque's pulpit made from ebony wood, was moved to the Kurşunlu mosque [3].



Fig. 5. Harput's castle (A: Main entrance, B: Edge of castle; C: Restoration works in progress) [3,15]

### 3.2.2.2 Lady Sara (hatun) mosque

It was found that Lady Sara (hatun) the mother of Akkoyunlu ruler Bahadur Khan supported building this mosque in 1465. Hence the name of mosque comes from Lady Sara (hatun). According to documents, it was restored in 1585, then in 1843. It was realized that numerous structures were built together with the mosque, but only the mosque survives at the present time. The minaret was only added to the main building in 1898. The mosque was placed on a rectangular basement with four thick columns and a square dome on the top. The pulpit has looks a masterpiece and precious stone workmanship is evident. The minaret with its cutting colored stonework construction is still used today (Fig. 6B) [3].

### 3.2.2.3 Kurşunlu mosque

This is a beautiful example of Ottoman period's mosques in Harput. The mosque was built in 1739 by Osman Aga. It was located near and west of the old government mansion. It has a square shaped structure and is covered by a big dome with three small domes on the portico area (Fig. 6C). The mosque took the name from surface plating lead in these domes. As mentioned above, the pulpit once belonging to the Grand mosque, was brought to this mosque as a gift from the Sultan 4<sup>th</sup> Murat. This pulpit is a very fine example of woodworking. The meticulous calligraphy works on the walls display impeccable detail and a noteworthy, unique pattern. Kurşunlu mosque has also a monumental tree in its entrance garden area (sycamore tree) (Fig. 6C) [3].

### 3.2.2.4 Alacalı mosque

It is a small, square structured mosque of which the wooden work is quite attractive. This mosque also displays different architectural styles. It was built in 1204 by Artuks and it was restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. West entrance is rectangular in shape topped by a clover leaf. Although the minaret is placed above the door, it is made up of black and white stones. Therefore, 'Alacalı-Albino' name given and has been used. This mosque was once used as Harput's first museum building (Fig. 6D) [3].

### 3.2.2.5 Arslanlı (Esadiye) mosque

This mosque also known as the Esadiye mosque is located northwest of the city. It

was found that the mosque had numerous connected buildings in past but they collapsed or were removed; these days only the main mosque building survives in a ruined condition. Although there is no precise information about the construction date of the structure, but it was believed to be built by the Artuks hence the first possible historical date is 1566. Its name comes from lion's patterns (sign of the Artuks) that are found at the main entrance. The main entrance and some walls are still standing (Fig. 6E) [3].

### 3.2.2.6 Aga mosque

It was also known as *Pervane mosque*. Its elegant minaret has survived to the present day but the dome has already collapsed. The Aga mosque is located at the entrance of Harput. According to its inscription that is displayed in the Harput museum, it was built in 1559. It remained a ruin until 1999, when it was restored and opened as a place of worship and faith. The minaret in north side looks like it was added to mosque later. Minaret is built on a rectangular base/foundation and it is in the form of a two-stage minaret with cylindrical stem (Fig. 6F) [3].

## 3.2.3 Harput's Baths

There are a number of baths in Harput. Some of the most important are: Hoca (Fig. 7A), Cemşit (Cimşit), Yeni (Arslaniye), Kale (Fig. 7B) and Dabakhane baths. However, the Cemşit and Dabakhane baths have already been restored and are in service at the present time [3].

### 3.2.3.1 Cemşit bath

It is located next to the Lady Sara (hatun) mosque. It was built by Ottoman sultan Selim's cavalryman Cemşit Sipahi in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It has two doors and seems to have an Ottoman style structure with a frame covered by a dome (Fig. 7C).

### 3.2.3.2 Dabakhane bath (water)

It is located within the castle area. However, it is not clear who and when the Dabakhane wooden building (bath) was built. It was restored to its original shape and put in service in 1998 (Fig. 7D).





**Fig. 6. Harput's mosques (A: Grand (Ulu) mosque; B: Lady Sara (hatun) mosque; C: Kurşunlu mosque and monumental tree; D: Alacalı mosque; E: Arslanlı (Esadiye) mosque; F: Aga mosque)**

### **3.2.4 Harput's Churches**

There were a number of churches in Harput and its vicinity. But only a few of them survive until today [8]. The important churches are described below.

#### **3.2.4.1 The Virgin Mary church**

It was built in 179 A.D. according to the stone tablet written in Syriac. This church is located on the east side of Harput castle and also called the *Red Church, Syrian Church or Yakubi Church*. The west wall of the church was built entirely within the stone fortress. A design of her face on a sculpture of the Virgin Mary includes an olive branch and three doves to symbolize peace and friendship; it stands at the top of the stairs. It was also realized that this church was once linked to a multi structured complex of (monastery), connect to each other (metropolitan, schools, guesthouses). These have been abandoned.

A small door at the main gate entrance looks like it was added later to the original structure. The church was positioned to have the rectangular apse in east-west direction; it was covered by a half-dome and its main entrance was hewn out of rock. To the right of the apse where the front entrance is situated, a Syriac written Bible "Goğulto" (cilcile) on a stand can be seen. In 15

August of every year, a festival takes place to celebrate Virgin Mary when pilgrims visit from neighboring provinces. It was also found that the Metropolitan of Harput, Dioscoros Theodoros, donated a calligraphic written Bible to the Church in 1250 A.D.

The church was found to have been repaired (restored) a few times (in 1134, in 1950, in 2000) since it was built. Not many of the original features in its structure have been retained. However, it has been opened for worship during certain periods. This church has also been considered as healing place and used mostly for healing mental diseases and women sickness.

Currently, the church has been managed as a foundation since 1936. This foundation includes a board of seven people. It was realized that all of the religious themes on the walls have destroyed over time and the original icons can no longer be found. These icons were supposed to be tables, wall drapes depicting Christ's crucifixion, and sacred food, Christ's ascension into the sky, the baptism, and resurrection after death. Fortunately, these items have survived until today. This is one of the most important ancient churches and not just for Turkey, but it is part of the world's most important cultural heritage (Fig. 8A) [3].





**Fig. 7. Harput's baths (A: Hoca bath; B: Kale bath; C: Cemşit bath; D: Dabakhane bath)**

#### 3.2.4.2 Surp Agop church

This church is located in the old Şehroz neighborhood where the valley slopes down on the left of the road. It was found that the construction date is approximately 1859. It is a classical type church and its walls are made from heavy igneous rocks. However, there are no signs of the special-shaped dome today. Due to its size and location, this church was one of the most important churches in Harput (Fig. 8B) [3].

#### 3.2.4.3 Surp Karabet church

It is located between the castle square and the grand mosque in the so-called Gürcü neighborhood. It was originally built with wooden elements in 1850. In that plan, some of the houses were also added to the main building to make a massive church. But it appears the original plan was not carried out. After the declaration as national heritage site, main building and parsonage were rebuilt covered with a large dome (Fig. 8C) [3].

### **3.2.5 Harput's Masjid and Tombs**

Harput is a very rich region for masjid and tombs as well. There are numerous masjid connections to with tombs. Some of the important masjid and tombs are described below and shown in Fig. 9.

#### 3.2.5.1 Arab baba masjid and tomb

There is very little knowledge about who Arab baba was. However, Seljuk Sultan Kayhusrav III had built a small Tomb for Arab baba and covered it with a masjid in 1279. The masjid looks like a modern reconstruction, but it retains an elegant portal. The stones look as if they are

soft and seem to have lost some of their original shape over time (Fig. 9A).

#### 3.2.5.2 Ahi Musa masjid and tomb

There is not much information on that structure but it was realized that it was built during *Ahi groups* and so it is an important indicator of the wealth of Ahi in this region (Fig. 9B).

#### 3.2.5.3 Fethi Ahmet baba masjid and tomb

It is thought the tomb was built in 1314 when Fethi Ahmet baba's death occurred. It is located approximately two km away from the center of Harput. It was built on a rocky basement and with a small worship house. The shape of the tomb is hexagonal and has a big sarcophagus. Although some parts of tomb have collapsed, it is still in service and very popular among visitors (Fig. 9C).

#### 3.2.5.4 Mansur baba tomb

The tomb is octagonal in shape and its walls were made with hewn stone. The original interior part of the tomb is still preserved. The structure has two floors and housed a sarcophagus which is believed to belong to the *Artuk dynasty* (Fig. 9D).

#### 3.2.5.5 Murat baba tomb

It was located in the western side of Harput and just south of the Aga mosque. It was covered with a hexogen dome structure. These structures are believed to have been built in 15 or 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was also known as the Şeyh Şerafeddin tomb — who was a Fethi Ahmed baba's sheikh (Fig. 9E).

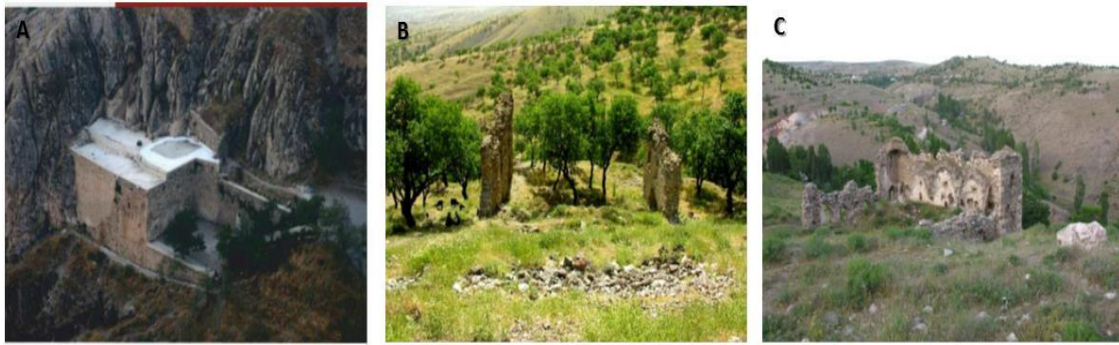


Fig. 8. Harput's churches (A: Virgin Mary church; B: Surp Agop church; C: Surp Karabet church)



Fig. 9. Harput's masjid and tombs (A: Arab baba masjid and tomb; B: Ahi Musa masjid and tomb; C: Fethi Ahmet baba masjid and tomb; D: Mansur baba tomb; E: İmam effendi tomb; F: Beşikli (Hırkalı) baba tomb; G: Ankuzu baba tomb; H: İmam efendi tomb)

### 3.2.5.6 Beşikli (Hırkalı) baba tomb

It is located in Balak Gazi Park. Unfortunately, the original shape of tomb was destroyed in 1980's. It had an eight-corner exterior but it looks like rectangular shape that is covered by a pressed dome shape (Fig. 9F).

### 3.2.5.7 Ankuzu baba Tomb

It was located on the east side of Harput and on the Ankuzu rocky area. According to documents, a man named Ankuzu lived in Harput in 1523.

The tomb was built with stones of rectangular shape (Fig. 9G).

### 3.2.5.8 Imam efendi tomb

This tomb is located at the north side of Harput and inside the Turkler cemetery. It has a square plan and covered by a dome. According to its inscription, it was built for Hacı Hafız Osman Bedreddin Erzurumi in 1924. The tomb is well preserved and reveals its original structure (Fig. 9H).

#### 4. CONCLUSION & RECOMENDATIONS

Although Harput was declared as a *Cultural Tourism Conservation and Development Region and First Degree Archaeological Site*, the efforts to improve archaeological value and the protection of the region since then, seems to be inadequate. This is primarily due to absence of good infrastructures and a lack of service quality. However, the conservation plan was never completed and could therefore not help to development the area. Hence, new plans should be prepared for Harput and its surroundings to reveal natural and cultural heritage of region and to promote sustainable tourism.

After detailed determination of site's archeological value, further new projects should be created and co-operation with UNESCO should be pursued for economical support. For that purpose, Harput could be nominated as archeological city for *World Heritage Preservation Zone* like other places, worldwide. With these improvements, cultural and historic structure of the city should be transformed into an open air city museum.

Most of the Harput's archeological structures are located in the city center that is subject to use for everyday life. Tourists coming to the region tend to travel to these structures (i.e. castle) with local transport vehicles. Currently, these vehicles are not professionally operated. Another important issue is supplying suitable information to visitors. For that reason, the transportation to specific areas (archeological site) should be well organized and information on Harput and vicinity should be supplied to visitors. In the archeological area, depending on tourist origin, a range of languages should be used on information boards and signs. Specific trip itineraries for visitors should be organized and presented.

However, a number of visitors have also visited Harput's archeological site with their own vehicles. But, there are limited parking lots and facilities in Harput and its vicinity. This situation is confusing and has negative impacts on visitors. The parks around Balak gazi and Grand mosque especially on hot summer days are extensively used. Moreover, walking on the street is difficult due to haphazard parking by a great number of vehicles. So the transportation and parking facilities should be examined carefully and their improvement should be made a priority issue for this region.

In an archeological site like Harput, visitors could have different expectations. Hence, visitors should access historical fields on foot. The walkways and roads should be well organized and made user-friendly for all users; easily recognized route plans should be posted at appropriate places.

Harput has a cool and relaxing summer climate, which makes it suitable for recreation. Therefore, it is necessary to create new picnic and recreational areas in this region. But a historical zone is not the appropriate place for picnic areas and walkways. Random access of motor vehicles should not be allowed in an archeological zone. These disrupt the ecological balance by their negative impact on the natural and historical assets. In this regard, city municipality and even the Regional Directorate of Forestry are required to conduct a study and propose how to deal with vehicles in this area. Kaserciler stream and its near environs where Almond trees (*Prunus dulcis*) are planted could be considered and organized for a recreational area. Hence the northern slopes (Old Şehroz district) could be terraced all the way down to the creek. The southern part of the main stream may be considered for picnic areas as well.

In the east side of the castle, scenic hiking trails are available all the way to Dabakhane bath. Then there is a path at the castle's west side from Sal Creek to Ulukent. This path has steep limestone blocks. This route should be improved to be used as hiking trails. Moreover, due to its high heat absorbance and the creation of heat along streets, asphalt should not be used to pave hiking trails and streets. Instead, rocks or parquet stones must be preferred due to their good heat absorbance and humidity retaining properties.

It is clear that the landscaping and maintenance plans are necessary to improve the aesthetic appearance of the region. Religious centers, archeological remains and monuments are architectural features that improve with landscaping. In this context, commercial businesses around Lady Sara and Grand mosque should be removed, and combined into a single unit with integrity towards the surroundings. The gardens and open spaces in the region should be reorganized and the contour of the field converted to regular structures by using landscape architecture plans. The incompatibility of mode of travel and the preservation of cultural assets and the lack of urban integrity between residential use and the



preservation of assets (next to the insufficiency of urban furniture) have been identified as the weakest aspects. In addition, the presence of the randomly discarded waste and garbage creates visual pollution that diminishes the attraction of the area.

The combination of archaeological and urban sites of Harput makes it very unique for a housing settlement. However, Harput has authentic structures and special street life where houses stand out against each other as the most powerful ways. This is one of the most important characteristic forms of the Harput's identity and makes it a living city. For extending the identity of Harput town the open spaces should be reorganized to express the traditional Anatolian lifestyle. Hence, neighborhood culture should be developed. For that reason, some well-organized historical structures could serve as socio-cultural centers in order to encourage cultural activities (i.e. library, museum, vocational course centers, etc.). These centers should be reorganized for different age groups.

Harput has very rich religious cultural assets. So, this region could become an important religious center. Virgin Mary church that connects to one wall of the castle has survived due to its specific construction style. Other churches in the region such as Surp Karabet, Şehroz, Surp Agop churches are all important places in terms of religious tourism.

The rehabilitation of infrastructure and streets should be seen as an important factor for improving the quality of town life. However, the original features of the entrance of Harput Township should be recreated. It is important to improve street elements should be organized. Hence, information boards should be erected along roadsides, waste bins supplied, street elements added, urban furniture should be placed where needed. In addition, information offices and toilets should be located in the area. Another major problem is the lack of infrastructure for lighting. This adversely affects movement of people on foot; is detrimental to walking safety. Also there are not enough trash cans seats, etc. and such street furniture.

Some of the important cultural and historical assets of Harput have been seriously damaged due to wars and occupation during different periods. Hence, the open-air museum nature of Harput displays various periods and presents a combination of historical monuments belonging

to different faiths. These themes are a very important issue to protect and to display the many cultural, archaeological, ethnographic features at the same time. Hence, Harput could be reorganized as an open-air museum. This will provide a significant contribution to tourism. Increasing the number of foreign visitors may offer marketing opportunities for traditional products. This can be seen as an opportunity for Harput and the national economy.

The Harput's castle is an important archeological monument and is a symbol for the town. It had already attracted and housed many civilizations throughout its history. Hence, many cultures and civilizations could be met inside castle. The settlements began and spread around the castle that was the core of ancient city center of Harput. The later settlements and archeological structures were erected around the castle. For that reason, the restoration of this monumental structure is important. Besides the castle, other historical and archeological monuments should also be carefully restored made accessible to tourism.

Harput has also potential in terms of the health tourism. It has already been proposed that Dabakhane's water heals *rheumatic diseases, mental disorders and stomach pains as well as bowel disease*. Hence, this place is frequently visited by the public. This knowledge should be extended and place reorganized for better service to visitors. For that reason, current buildings should be restored around the bath and landscape plans should be drawn up.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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