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Examination of Architectural Heritage Centered Around Bilecik Province

Bilecik İl Merkezli Mimari Mirasların İncelenmesi

ABSTRACT

The concept of architectural heritage, which is considered a common asset of humanity and has reached us with its unique qualities that need to be preserved and passed on to future generations, is one of the most important concepts. It is crucial to preserve these works that have been caught amidst the rapid urbanization and urban sprawl, ensuring they take on sustainable functions and serve the community. A society that does not know its past cannot progress. Structures and groups of structures with historical qualities in cities breathe life into otherwise uniform urban environments. Therefore, studies on architectural heritage are conducted within the framework of urban conservation concepts.

In this study, the plans, facades, past restorations, and current conditions of architectural heritage in Bilecik were examined in detail, highlighting the historical fabric of the city and its significance for tourism. Evaluating the study from a historical perspective emphasizes the importance of applying the cultural values of urban fabrics accepted by all residents of the city and creating a culture of preservation accordingly.

Keywords: Bilecik, Cultural heritage, urban conservation concept, architectural heritage, Urban Conservation

ÖZET

İnsanlığın ortak malı olarak görünen ve günümüze özgün nitelikleri ile ulaşmış ve geleceğe aktarılması gereken en önemli kavramlardan biri de mimari miras kavramıdır. Sürekli gelişen ve yenilenen şehirlerin meydana getirdiği çarpık kentleşmenin arasında kalmış olan eserlerin korunması ve sürdürülebilir işlevler yüklenerek topluma hizmet etmesi oldukça önemlidir. Geçmişini bilmeyen bir toplum gelişemez. Şehirlerdeki tarihi niteliklere sahip yapı ve yapı grupları, tek düze şehirlere bir nefes olmaktadır. Bu yüzden mimari miras, kentsel koruma kavramları üzerine çalışmalar yapılmaktadır.

Çalışma da; Bilecik mimari mirasının planları, cepheleri, geçmiş restorasyonları ve günümüz durumları detaylı incelenerek şehrin tarihi dokusu ve turizm için önemi ortaya konmuştur. Çalışmayı tarihsel açıdan değerlendirdiğimizde, kentsel dokuların kültürel değerlerinin şehirdeki tüm yaşayanlar tarafından uygulanması, kabul görmesi ve bu doğrultuda bir koruma kültürü oluşturulması bağlamında önem arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilecik, Kültürel miras, kentsel koruma kavramı, mimari miras, Kentsel Koruma.

1. INTRODUCTION

Heritage is a beacon of a society's past; it reflects a mirror of the past. "Architectural heritage consists of structures that are a common asset to all people and must be passed on to future generations. These structures need to be preserved without losing their values and uniqueness" (ICOMOS TURKEY-2013). Protected within the scope of architectural heritage, these structures do not necessarily have to serve the purpose they did in the past. Today, they can be repurposed for appropriate institutional use. An example is the Rüştüye School in Bilecik, currently serving as the municipal building. Embracing the concept of architectural heritage is necessary to prevent many historical structures from becoming invisible due to rapid urban growth and unplanned urbanization. Preserving the structures that have survived from the founding of the city to the present day is crucial not only for tourism but also for the identity of the city. The concept of architectural heritage encompasses all these purposes.

Architectural heritage represents the most significant and tangible representatives of a society's cultural heritage. Therefore, passing down architectural heritage to future generations will ensure cultural transmission and continuity in modern society. Architectural heritage shapes the soul of cities, influencing the atmosphere they exude. For these reasons, architectural heritages hold national significance and also international value and importance. Today, the value of architectural heritage elements increases when they

are given new functions without compromising the structure and style of the building, making them functional for modern life (Kalay et al., 2018, pp. 65-66).

Architectural heritage encapsulates many aspects of a society's history, politics, social dynamics, religion, economy, culture, etc., and carries traces of these elements. Therefore, examining and evaluating architectural works is not only an endeavor in aesthetic and artistic values but also sheds light on the society itself. Every society has developed its architectural understanding and style based on its geography, traditions, and culture. Each architectural work bears traces of cultural and artistic understanding that have evolved and developed over previous periods.

Culture is a constantly evolving and changing concept. It is a fact that past achievements and values cannot remain the same, but they will also serve as a source and accumulation for new cultural understandings. Measures that will reconcile the past and the future will ensure cultural continuity. In the context of our topic, it is not difficult to say that the urban planning and environmental regulations of cities will affect the value and aesthetic presence of architectural heritage structures. Therefore, the concept of cultural heritage preservation encompasses not only past structures but also the harmonious and sustainable planning of existing environments and cities.

Everything that exists is sustained in relation to its environment. This applies to cities and structures as well. It is insufficient for structures classified as architectural heritage to preserve themselves alone; preserving their value and aesthetics also requires modern cities to be compatible with these structures, which possess both aesthetic value and cultural significance. Undoubtedly, this compatibility will enhance the livability of cities.

2. URBAN CONSERVATION CONCEPT

The concept of conservation, within the framework of the World Heritage Convention, is defined as "understanding the cultural heritage defined by monuments, groups of buildings, and sites, ensuring the preservation of its material, and encompassing all methods used for promotion, restoration, and development when necessary." Debates concerning the definition and scope of cultural heritage, which is the object of conservation and the components forming cultural assets, intensified from the late 18th century onwards, necessitating the consideration of conservation as a discipline in its own right (Polat and Can, 2008, p. 178).

Urban conservation involves not only the repair or preservation of ancient artifacts but also valuing the region within a coherence that ensures its past and continuity with its parts. Urban conservation is defined as "ensuring that the physical structure reflecting the social and economic conditions of societies in the past, along with their cultural values, does not disappear under today's changing social and economic values, enabling them to integrate with contemporary society and developments" (Kasap, 2022, p. 7).

The concept of conservation in our country emerged later compared to Western countries. Initially, the concept of conservation emerged solely in the form of protecting monuments, buildings, etc., but later evolved into an understanding of environmental conservation that affects urban integrity together with historical and cultural assets. In other words, it aims to prevent the disappearance of cultural assets that reflect the social, cultural, and economic values of society today, while also giving functionality to these cultural assets in modern life (Sargin, 2005, p. 254). In the urban conservation approach, it is possible to say that the concepts of "protecting" and "using" complement each other, therefore, it is not only a matter of physically preserving the artifacts and architectural heritage that constitute cultural assets but also integrating them into social life (Avcıoğlu, 2016, p. 700).

Urban conservation and sustainability emerge as a serious process that requires careful and detailed policies to manage. Strategic spatial planning is necessary to ensure the continuity of cultural heritage values in a way that will facilitate cultural transmission and preserve social life and diversity. Thus, the transmission of values that shed light on the past and represent cultural value in its own right to future generations emerges as a comprehensive issue encompassing social, cultural, economic, and many other issues, not just physical preservation (Özcan, 2009, p. 2).

3. BİLECİK PROVINCE

3.1. Location and Geographic Structure

Bilecik province is located at the intersection of four regions and is the only province that borders all four regions: the Black Sea, Marmara, Central Anatolia, and Aegean regions. Bilecik province borders the provinces of Bursa, Sakarya, Eskişehir, Bolu, and Kütahya. Bilecik, one of Turkey's smallest provinces, covers an area of 4321 km², with the central area covering 844 km². Nearly half of Bilecik province's territory is forested. Despite having few plains, the abundance of rivers allows for the cultivation of various crops. Bilecik province, situated 500 meters above sea level, includes microclimatic zones. The city receives approximately 450 kg/km² of annual rainfall. Summers are hot and dry, while winters are cold and rainy. The highest amount of rainfall typically occurs between January and May, with an increase in rainfall also observed during the autumn. The location and climate of a city play a significant role in shaping its architectural characteristics. Climate and location are factors that influence everything from the materials used to the pitch of the roofs. Therefore, understanding the location and climate is crucial when examining architectural heritage (www.bilecik.gov.tr).

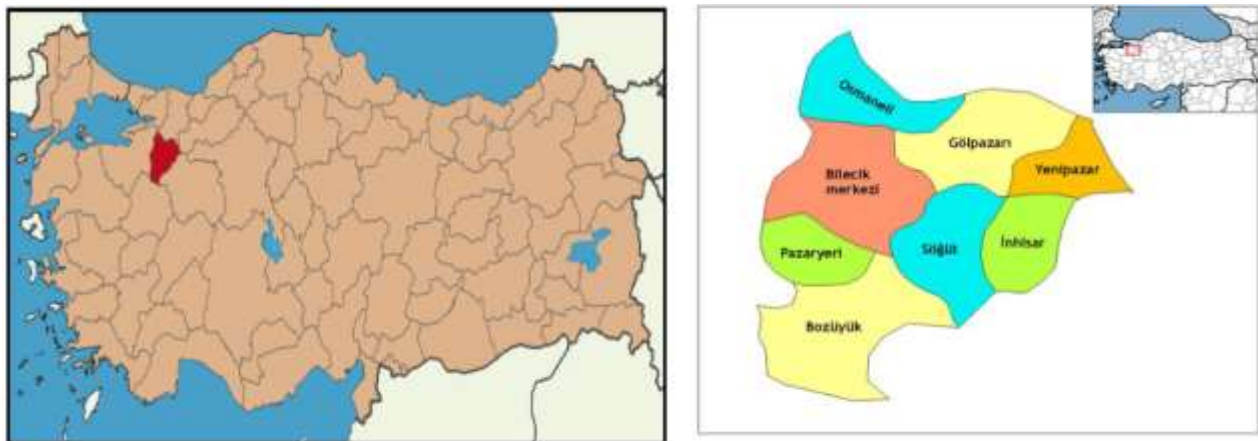


Photo 1. Bilecik City Map (Anonymous)

3.2. Historical Development

Within the boundaries of Bilecik province, the oldest settlement known in the region, located approximately 4 km southwest of present-day Bilecik, is called "Agrilion" (or Agrillum), which is considered the site where the city was first established (Emecen, 1992, p.154). Additionally, during the Byzantine period, there was a castle named "Belakoma" situated between the valleys of Hamsu and Dabaghane (Tabakhane) (Güneş, 1999, p.89).

Bilecik province was generally included in the region known as Bithynia. In the 7th century BC, this region fell under the rule of the Lydians, and later, during the time of the Achaemenid King Cyrus, it came under Persian control. The region remained under Persian dominion for a long time until Alexander the Great came and defeated the Persians. After Alexander's death, the country was divided among his eight generals, and the region remained under the rule of Lysimachus. During this period, the Bithynians began to strengthen politically after the Persian rule. Alexander the Great's satrap Kalas set out to capture Bithynia, but he was defeated by Bithynian prince Bas (377-327 BC). Later, under the leadership of Bas's son Zipoites, the Kingdom of Bithynia was established. The kingdom, which lasted for approximately three hundred years, came to an end in 74 BC when the last Bithynian king, Nicomedes IV, bequeathed it to the Roman Empire (Haralambos, 2016, pp.17-19).

In AD 375, the Roman Empire split into the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) and Western Roman Empires. As a result, the region remained under Eastern Roman rule, within the boundaries of the Obsequium province, with Nicaea (İznik) as its capital (Haralambos, 2016, p.26). In subsequent years, the region of Bithynia was seized by the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid, and like other cities, Bilecik came under Abbasid control. As a result of these Muslim incursions, the city changed hands several times between the Abbasid and Umayyad Caliphates and Byzantium (www.bilecik.ktb.gov.tr). In the region, various Muslim and later Turkmen raids occurred from time to time. The first ruler of the Anatolian Seljuk State, Kutalmışoğlu Süleyman Şah, conducted various conquests in Anatolia and captured İznik and its surroundings in 1075 (Sevim, 2020, pp.104-105). However, during the reign of Sultan I. Kılıçarslan, the Crusader army, in agreement with Byzantium, arrived in Anatolia and besieged İznik, which was the capital of the Anatolian

Seljuk State at that time. Despite Kılıçarslan's arrival in the İznik region during the Malatya campaign, the siege was unsuccessful, and İznik was surrendered to the Crusaders. Due to the agreement with Byzantium, the region was returned to Byzantine rule (Sevim, 2020, pp. 114-115). Later, Yarhisar, along with the Belakoma castle, was conquered in 1299 by Osman Gazi, the son of Ertuğrul Gazi, who had been settled in the region by the Seljuks (Cezar, 2021, p.44). Despite briefly remaining under Timurid rule after Yıldırım Beyazıt's defeat at the Battle of Ankara, the city returned to Ottoman rule after Çelebi Mehmet came to power and ended the interregnum period, reclaiming the region.

4. ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF BİLECİK CITY

4.1. Bilecik Clock Tower

In the 19th century, the concept of Westernization was widely embraced. While previously limited to technical knowledge, from the 19th century onwards, Western examples began to influence education and architecture. With the Tanzimat Edict, the Ottoman Empire began taking serious steps towards Westernization. The number of buildings constructed in Western styles increased significantly. State buildings and notable structures in cities were built with Western influences. Clock towers were prominently used as modern structures among the city's notable buildings. According to historical records, clock towers were seen in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 16th century. The tradition of constructing clock towers entered the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century and spread eastward to the 19th century. The main reason for the proliferation of clock towers was Sultan Abdulhamid II's decree to governors regarding the construction of clock towers. The state viewed clock towers as symbols of its authority over the people and territories. Therefore, they were typically placed in city centers, near public buildings, or at the highest points of settlements. Clock towers served not only to display time but also functioned as directional indicators during overcast weather and as observation towers for various purposes. Most clock towers consist of sections such as the base, pavilion, pedestal, and lattice. The base often includes a room and stairs leading upwards, continuing through the pavilion section. The pavilion houses the clock mechanism, with windows for audible signals (Halaç and İlhan, 2014, p.191).

The Bilecik Clock Tower was commissioned by Musa Kazım Bey in 1907. The clock tower, which still stands today in 2024, underwent restoration in 1987 and was restored again in 2007, marking its 100th anniversary since construction. The clock tower, with its surrounding landscaping, attracts numerous visitors from within and outside the province (www.aa.com.tr).

Clock towers are categorized according to their architectural plans. They are classified into balcony and non-balcony types, further categorized based on the number and positions of balconies. The Bilecik Clock Tower falls into the category of multi-balcony structures. Among the clock towers that continue to exist today, there are only two multi-balcony clock towers, with another located in Edirne. The Bilecik Clock Tower has two balconies. Balconied clock towers progressively diminish upwards, with each reduction creating flat areas used as balconies (Halaç and İlhan, 2014, p.193). The height of the Bilecik Clock Tower is 20 meters, comprising four floors of a rectangular prism. Access to the upper floors is provided by an internal wooden staircase.

The Bilecik Clock Tower, shaped like a rectangular prism, features cut stone corners for the first and second floors, with rubble stone used for the facade. The third and fourth floors are made of wood. The entrance to the clock tower is on the west side, using a round-arched, double-leafed rectangular door made of cut stone. There is a section above the door reserved for inscriptions. A similar type of door is also found on the second floor. The first floor features a balcony above it, with no other openings on this level. The third floor, made of wood, sits above the second floor and has a balcony. The balconies are fitted with iron railings. The third floor, entirely made of wood, has single-leafed doors on all four sides. The topmost floor is also made of wood and features a square-dialed clock on all four sides. At its highest point, there is a dome and a flagpole. These architectural features have remained unchanged, making the clock tower a significant part of Bilecik's architectural heritage up to the present day (www.bilecikhaber.com.tr).



Photo 2. Front View of Bilecik Clock Tower (Left), Side View of Clock Tower (Right)

4.2. Bilecik Governorate Building

II. Abdülhamit had a considerable interest in Bilecik, which was the Ertuğrul banner territory. His influence was significant in the construction of many works in Bilecik. Compared to its districts, there are fewer architectural heritages in the center of Bilecik. Located in the city center, the building that has served as the Bilecik Governorate for the past 95 years holds a significant place in the concept of architectural heritage, akin to a gateway to the past. Built during the reign of Sultan II. Abdülhamit, the building was destroyed during the War of Independence and was rebuilt between 1922 and 1924 to its present state. Upon examination of its architectural features, the current governorate building is understood to belong to the First National Architecture Period. Over time, the building underwent deterioration but has been reflecting the city's historical texture in modern times through comprehensive restoration efforts conducted between 2017 and 2022 (www.bilecik.gov.tr).



Photo 3. Governorate building restoration works (July 6, 2017) (www.bilecik.csb.gov.tr)

During the First National Architecture Period, architects aimed to establish a national architectural language, incorporating details such as arches and domes used in the Ottoman and Seljuk periods into their constructions. During this period, emphasis was placed more on facade designs than on floor plans. The Governorate building is among the works that exhibit the period's plan and facade characteristics. The building's floor plan was conceived symmetrically, with wings extending to either side from a centrally placed entrance. The entrance was designed as the most magnificent part, leading to a wide hall that branches out to rooms through parallel doors. Stairs ascend from the middle of the hall to the right and left

sides, converging at a landing before reaching the first floor via a single staircase. A large gallery space with ample windows provides brightness in this area.

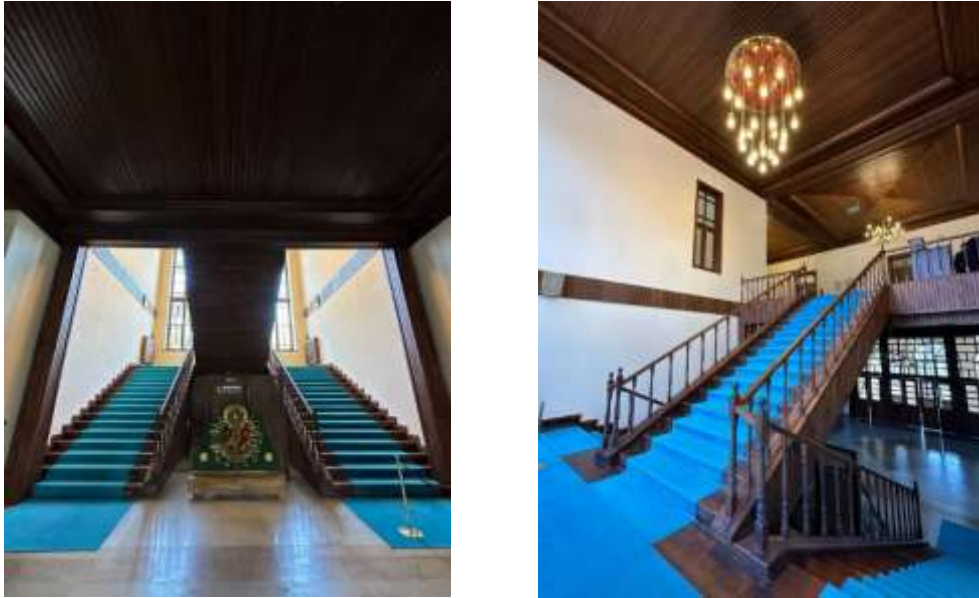


Photo 4. Stairs of Bilecik Governorate Mansion

The ground floor features a hall of the same width as the lower floor, with parallel doors opening into rooms, similar to those on the lower level. The structure consists of a basement, ground floor, and first floor. The basement contains 6 rooms, while the ground floor houses 16 rooms arranged in parallel, with 8 rooms on each side. The first floor mirrors the layout of the ground floor. The architectural design is centered around a spacious hall, with doors opening from the hall to the rooms, extending symmetrically to the right and left. The building is perfectly symmetrical when divided down the middle. There are exits to the garden from the right and left side facades, each with doors arranged in parallel. When examining buildings from this period, there are many structures with similar architectural layouts to the Bilecik Governorate Mansion (Çolak and Erarslan, 2021, pp. 206-207).



Photo 5. Plan layout of Bilecik Governorate Mansion (Left), Garden Exit Door (Right).

Constructed as a rubble masonry building, the governorate mansion reflects the architectural influences of its time in its facade design. Influenced by the national architectural movement, the facade features arched windows and doors, while the upper windows are rectangular. Access to the entrance is through 10 steps leading to a large wooden door flanked by two small arched doors on either side. Similarly, windows above these doors are arranged with two small wooden windows on either side of a larger central window. The windows on the front facade of the building are identical on both the left and right sides. Arched wooden mullioned windows are on the ground floor, with five on the right and five on the left. On the

upper floor, the windows are again arranged with wooden mullions, but in a rectangular shape rather than arched, aligned with those on the ground floor. The basement floor has small arched windows that are similarly aligned. The side facades feature double-winged wooden doors leading to the garden, with small windows beside them, matching the size and alignment of the upper-floor windows directly above the doors. The side facades mirror each other. The rear facade also follows the same window arrangement. In the middle, the gallery space features tall, narrow windows extending from the ground to the first floor. When viewed, the facade of the building divides symmetrically like a butterfly wing. The window arches of the cream-colored building are white. All doors and windows are wooden and have large openings.



Photo 6. Front View of Bilecik Governorate Mansion (Left), Left Side View (Right).

4.3. Orhan Gazi Mosque in Bilecik

The Orhan Gazi Mosque holds significant importance for Bilecik. Although the exact date of its construction is unknown, it is believed to have been built in 1331. The mosque, which underwent restoration in 1814 during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II, has its original minaret located on the rock 30 meters away. In 1889, during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, additional restoration work was carried out, and twin minarets were added. These minarets are not particularly suited to the mosque's architectural style. The mosque, which has also undergone restoration and repair works in 1973 and 2023, reopened its doors in the 724th year of the conquest of Bilecik. As one of the oldest structures in Bilecik's architectural heritage and an important cultural tourism site, the mosque is never without visitors, especially due to its proximity to the Edebali Tomb, located just 75 meters away (www.islamansiklopedisi.org.tr).



Photo 7. Orhan Gazi Mosque in Bilecik (www.x.com).

The mosque, designed in a close-up square format, has a simple plan measuring 17.35x16.50 meters. The last congregation area of the mosque has not survived to the present day.



Photo 8. Orhan Gazi Mosque in Bilecik, 1967 (www.facebook.com)

Among the monumental works of Ottoman architecture, the body walls of the mosque were hollowed out to a depth of 2.40 meters to expand the interior space, creating a wall appearance with depth rather than a solid wall. Thick body walls formed at the corners enabled the construction of a domed roof with a flattened dome measuring 9.50 meters in diameter.

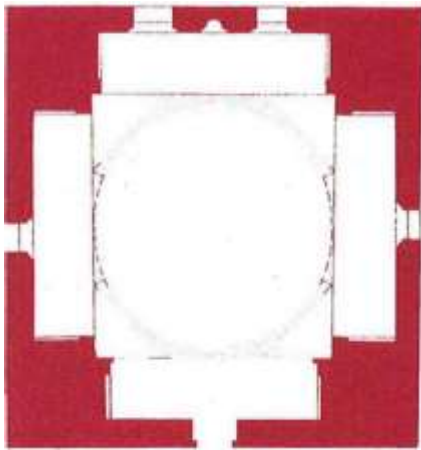


Photo 9. Orhan Gazi Mosque Plan (www.okuryazarim.com)

The mosque has high pulpit-like, cylindrical-bodied, single-gallery stone minarets on either side of its front facade. These minarets are not present in the 1882 dated photographs, suggesting they were later constructed along with the wooden last congregation area. The mosque, designed with a simple plan, has an arched entrance provided by a double-winged wooden door. The corners of the minarets are built of cut stone and brick, giving them a different appearance from the mosque, indicating that the minarets were added later. The mosque's right, left, and rear facades feature arched brick-built, but plain wooden lattice windows. The last congregation area is wooden, with its ceiling decorated with wooden laths (Solak, 2023, p. 8).



Photo 10. Bilecik Orhan Gazi Mosque Front View

4.4. Şeyh Edebalı Tomb

Located on a hill immediately next to the significant Orhan Gazi Mosque in Bilecik, the exact construction date of this structure is unknown, but it is presumed to have been built during the time of Orhan Gazi. During the fieldwork conducted at the Edebalı Tomb, inside the tomb, there are six additional sarcophagi belonging to Edebalı, Molla Hattab Karahisari, Şeyh Muhlis Baba, Dursun Fakih, Şehzade, and these sarcophagi are related to Şeyh Edebalı (Bilgili, 2022, p.10). The tomb is reached by steep stone stairs, and upon ascending the stairs, Şeyh Edebalı's phrase 'keep the people alive so that the state survives' welcomes visitors on the right (Yılmaz, 2017, p.22).

In 1854, during the reign of Abdülmecid, repairs were made to the tomb, and II. Abdülhamit, the Ertuğrul Sanjak governor, Mustafa Nuri Bey, requested a report. According to archive records, on March 25, 1903, repairs were requested for the Edebalı Tomb, the arrangement of the room for visitors, and the renewal of the sarcophagus covers. In 1913, the covers of Edebalı and Mal Hatun sarcophagi were also renewed. The tomb has undergone various repairs and restorations from the time of II. Abdülhamit to the early years of the republic. Indeed, under the leadership of Ali Saim Ülgen in the republican era, both the Şeyh Edebalı Tomb and the Malhun Hatun Tomb were extensively restored (Bilgili, 2022, p.10).

Due to its location on a hill, the tomb is open and constantly receives sunlight. The tomb is accessed by steep stone stairs. The Şeyh Edebalı Tomb, mosque-monastery and shaykh's lodge, oriented north, are aligned in an east-west direction in an open-fronted wooden columned hall; separately constructed from them, the Mal Hatun Tomb is located in the eastern part of the hall. It is evident that the walls of the tombs built with rubble stones are connected to the main construction period of the mosque-monastery, and the Baghdad wall style shaykh's lodge took its final form in the 19th century. The Şeyh Edebalı Tomb, located at the western end of this mass, has a rectangular plan developed in the qibla direction. The tomb is covered with a low dome between two barrel-vaulted iwans. The only decorative element seen in the tomb is the plaster window in the classical style from the 16th or 17th century crowning the window on the south wall. Adjacent to the east wall of the tomb-monastery, which opens to the hall, is a nearly square rectangular plan and a smaller space than the tomb. A window has been placed on both sides of the mihrab to the north and south of the door. Above the door opening to the hall, the tughra of Abdülhamid II and the date 1307 can be seen. The plaster window crowns in the Empire style wood ceiling, which is likely from the second quarter of the 19th century, are more recent than those in the tomb.



Photo 11. General View of Şeyh Edebâli Tomb (Left), Stairs of Şeyh Edebâli Tomb (Right) (www.ensonhaber.com).

The sheikh's chamber, located to the east of the mosque-tekke, consists of a small courtyard opening to life and two larger rooms connected to it. The larger one should be the sheikh's room, and the smaller one could serve as a service unit like a coffee room. With its Baghdadi walls equipped with rectangular windows and wooden ceilings, this section forms an interesting contrast against the masonry units of the zawiya and adds a civilian architectural flavor to the exterior appearance of the structure. The Mal Hatun Tomb, which is sunken compared to other sections, is descended into by stairs. The tomb, where only one wooden coffin belonging to Mal Hatun is found, is small, square-planned, and domed. Its door opens onto the courtyard to the south; transition from walls with small windows placed on the north and east sides to the dome is ensured by a band consisting of prismatic triangles.

4.5. Rüşdiye School

Secondary School As a result of the modernization movements initiated by Sultan Mahmud II, secondary schools began to emerge towards the end of his reign (Bilirli, 2021, p. 3838). Accordingly, upon the proposal by the Meclis-i Umur-ı Nafia established in 1838, it was decided to open new schools initially named Sınıf-ı Sani, later renamed Rüşdiye, to educate students beyond elementary education (Demirel, 2011, p. 16). The Rüşdiye school of Bilecik is the Ertuğrul Province Rüşdiye. The building constructed in 1905 currently serves as the municipality building. It was liberated from Greek occupation on September 6, 1922. However, upon leaving, the Greek army caused significant damage to the city. The Greek army that set fire to the city also largely burned and destroyed the Ertuğrul Province Rüşdiye. Therefore, there is not much information available prior to 1922 (www.meb.gov.tr). As part of architectural heritage, a survey has been conducted to transfer and preserve the building for future generations. In documenting the structure, traditional and optical methods were combined. Thus, three-dimensional models were produced; plans, elevations, sections, and details were extracted ready for drawing with measured precision, and two-dimensional architectural drawings were produced in digital format. Subsequently, each space of the building, its architectural elements, and surroundings were meticulously documented through detailed photography.



Photo 12. Secondary School, Point Cloud View (from the survey conducted in 2019)

The building, with stone masonry walls and an approximate footprint area of 900 square meters, is constructed as a two-story structure above a basement. The facades of the plastered and painted building indicate it was built as a Secondary School (Rüştiye İdadisi) in 1905. After being used as a school until 2001 and subsequently abandoned, it was restored in 2005 and began serving as a municipal building.

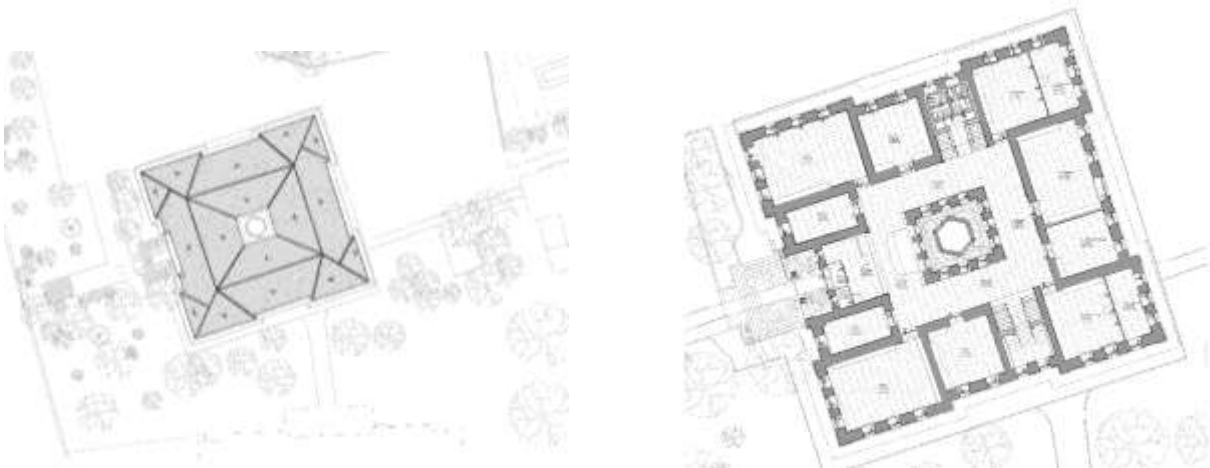


Photo 13. Secondary School Site Plan (Left), Ground Floor Plan (Right).

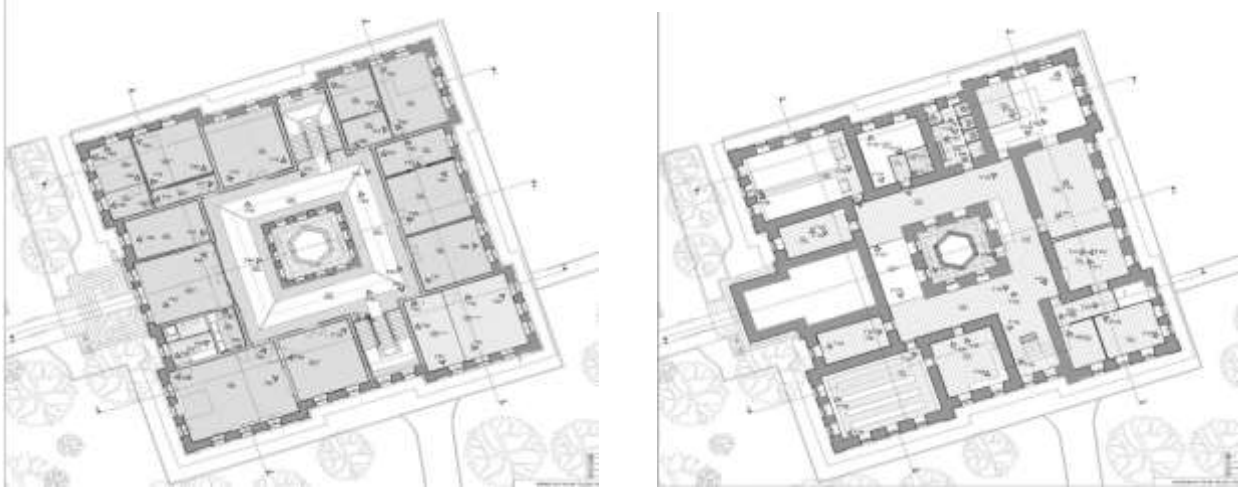


Photo 14. Secondary School Ground Floor Plan (Left), First Floor Plan (Right).

The main entrance facade of the building faces west. The facade, approximately 2920 cm wide, rises to a height of about 1010 cm at the eaves level. Massively, the facade protrudes forward in three parts and recedes. The northern part of the facade, approximately 777 cm wide, and the southern part, also 777 cm wide, are about 75 cm further forward than the middle section. In the middle, a staircase rises in three directions, emphasizing the main entrance, leading to an outer entrance hall defined by three semi-circular arches supported by two stone columns. This arched decoration is positioned 30 cm forward from the wall surfaces of the central section. Above the arched section, there are three flat-arched wooden windows, with decorated jambs flanking the central double-winged wooden door. Above the arched entrance section, the central part features a higher pediment-like jamb decoration, while the sides have simpler flat-arched wooden windows with upper eaves cornices. The projecting masses on the north and south sides of the facade are symmetrical to each other. On both sides, there are nine flat-arched windows each at the level of the upper floor, ground floor, and basement level.

The south facade of the building is approximately 3063 cm wide and rises to a height of about 1055 cm at the eaves level. The facade, considered as three parts in mass, has the eastern and western parts protruding more than the middle section. The facade features stone stringcourses at the level of basement windows, ground floor flooring, and upper floor flooring, all plastered and painted. In the western part, at the corner of the west facade, there is a beaded corner cornice visible on the west side of this mass (the projecting part), while the corner cornice remaining in the east corner of this mass is straight-lined and undecorated. This mass also includes nine flat-arched windows each at the level of the upper floor, ground floor, and basement level. In the remaining eastern part of the front parts, there are also nine flat-arched windows each at the level of the upper floor, ground floor, and basement level. However, unlike the western side, the basement windows are longer. In the center of the facade, set further back, there are four windows at the upper floor level and four at the ground floor level, with four openings in the basement, two of which are windows and two are doors. However, traces around the doors suggest that these were originally window openings enlarged to create doors. Under the eaves, there are modern wooden buttresses: four in the western part, three in the middle, and four in the eastern part.



Photo 15. Rüştüye School / Bilecik Municipality Service Building West Facade (Left), South Facade (Right).

The east facade of the building can also be read in three parts massed like the south facade. It is approximately 2940 cm wide and rises to approximately 1116 cm in height at the eaves. On the facade, there are plastered and painted stone string courses at the basement window level, ground floor slab level, and upper floor slab level. The masses on the north and south of the facade are more prominent compared to the central mass. Both the northern and southern corners of the northern part have plain, undecorated corner cornices. This mass has nine depressed-arched windows: three at the upper floor level, three at the ground floor level, and three at the basement level. The prominent mass in the south also has the same features as the northern part. The corners of this mass in the south have plain, undecorated corner cornices similar to those in the north. This mass also features nine depressed-arched windows: three at the upper floor level, three at the ground floor level, and three at the basement level. The first-floor windows in this section have sills, with rectangular insets below the sill and jambs where the keystone is raised above the arch. The ground floor sills do not have under-sill decoration, only the keystone is raised. The basement sills are made of rusticated stone with rectangular relief above the keystone. There are also preserved wooden struts under the eaves: four in the southern part, four in the central part, and four in the northern part. The entire facade is plastered and painted. There are scattered paint losses and damp spots below the basement string course.

The northern facade of the building resembles the southern facade. The parts on the east and west sides of the facade, which can be considered as three parts massed, are more prominent than the central part. On the facade, there are plastered and painted stone string courses at the basement window level, ground floor slab level, and upper floor slab level.

In the western part, there is a rusticated corner cornice seen on the western corner of the western part; the eastern corner cornice of this mass (the prominent part) is plain and undecorated. This mass also has nine depressed-arched windows: three at the upper floor level, three at the ground floor level, and three at the basement level. The first-floor windows in this section have sills, with rectangular insets below the sill and jambs where the keystone is raised above the arch. The ground floor sills do not have under-sill decoration, only the keystone is raised with a rectangular relief on this stone. The basement sills are made of rusticated stone. The eastern prominent part of the facade also has nine depressed-arched windows: three at the upper floor level, three at the ground floor level, and three at the basement level. However, the basement windows are longer than those in the west. The first-floor windows on the facade have sills, with rectangular insets below the sill and jambs where the keystone is raised above the arch. The ground floor sills do not have under-sill decoration, only the keystone is raised with a rectangular relief on this stone. The basement sills are made of rusticated stone. In the central mass, there are four windows at the upper floor level, four at the ground floor level, and four at the basement level. The first-floor windows in this section have sills, with rectangular insets below the sill and jambs where the keystone is raised above the arch. The ground floor sills do not have under-sill decoration, only the keystone is raised with a rectangular relief on this stone. The basement sills are made of rusticated stone. The entire facade is plastered and painted. There are preserved wooden struts under the eaves: four in the western part, four in the central part, and four in the eastern part (These informations are taken from the survey study conducted in 2019).



Photo 16. Rüştüye School / Bilecik Municipality Service Building East Facade (Left), North Facade (Right).

5. RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Research has been conducted on the cultural heritage in the city center within the selected study area, identifying the current conditions and the conservation and restoration efforts it has undergone. Based on on-site evaluations within the scope of the study:

- Conservation Decisions and Architectural Heritage Sustainability: The protection and sustainability of architectural heritage can be significantly enhanced by considering the implementation of large-scale conservation decisions. These decisions, when coupled with increased surface studies and planned conservation applications in the short, medium, and long term, can pave the way for a more robust conservation strategy.
- Assessment of Current Criteria in Bilecik City Center: While the conservation criteria primarily appear to be met, some areas still require improvement. International conservation laws, such as the ICOMOS and Venice Charters, and national laws, such as Law No. 5226 must preserve many historic buildings and associated beliefs and cultures in the settlement. Although there are restored buildings in the area, some areas have not yet undergone any restoration work. These areas should be restored following the mentioned charters and laws.
- Awareness and Education of Local Community: It is imperative that the local community living in the study area is actively involved in the preservation of cultural heritage. This can be achieved through various methods such as awareness, education, and promotion. Our study reveals that cultural heritage is a subject of research in various scientific disciplines and that different methods are employed in studies related to cultural heritage. In this context, conducting multidisciplinary studies using different methods related to cultural heritage from various fields would be beneficial, as it would involve the perspectives of experts from different areas in the same study.
- Creation of a Cultural Heritage Route in Bilecik: Although architectural heritage is quite dense in Bilecik, many historic structures in the district center have remained in the background. In this context, it is essential to create a cultural heritage route in the settlement and promote it by categorizing it into housing, baths, administrative buildings, religious structures, fountains, bridges, etc., to highlight and preserve these structures.
- Design and Planning in New Construction: The need for new structures should be addressed with appropriate designs considering the existing architectural heritage and historical fabric. This requires considering the development process and future planning of the settlement on a planning scale.

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