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## **HISTORICAL CONSERVATION AND TOURISM IN SAMSUN CITY, TURKEY**

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### **Abstract**

In this study, discussed the conservation of historical buildings and places and the significance of these in terms of tourism within the modern development process of Samsun city. The purpose of the study is to discuss the conservation of the historical structure inheritance that has survived so far, the inclusion of these to the modern life of the city to create attractions in the city tourism and to make suggestions on these issues. Hittite, Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, Ottoman Empire in the history of the Samsun region has a rich historical and cultural history. However, as a result of the urbanization and modernization movements, a great part of historical and cultural assets of the city's past was destroyed. The conservation works on the historical heritage that have survived to the present day have started recently. The conservation works (restorations) aim to re-use historical heritage (to participate in the modern life of the city) and increase the tourist attraction of the city. The restoration and inclusion of some historical buildings to modern life of the city has increased the attraction of the city in terms of tourism. Historical heritage which are important in terms of the historical and cultural identity of the city should be conserved within the sustainable development of the city. The restoration of historical buildings in the city reveals the potential value of tourism. This situation revives tourism, contributes to the city's economy.

Keywords: abstract, tourism, urban heritage tourism; heritage conservation; Samsun

### **Introduction**

The historical heritage is the historical and cultural assets that link the past and the present to the socio-economic and cultural structure of a certain period in the past, giving messages about the concept of art. Factors such as rapid population growth and construction in cities, public improvements and industrialization damage and destroy historical textures. On the other hand, an environmental awareness is being developed in order to understand and protect the value of our losses. Today, with the development of historical environmental consciousness, it is accepted that historical textures in cities are an integral part of the whole city, the idea of preserving the historical texture in cities' development and renewal plans becomes increasingly important. Heritage tourism can be important in cities and towns due to their concentrations of heritage resources and also because these urban centres attract many visitors (Law, 2002; Murphy & Boyle, 2006; Selby, 2004). In this study, discussed the conservation of historical buildings and places and the significance of these in terms of tourism within the modern development process of Samsun city. Samsun city is located in Black Sea coast of Turkey (Figure 1).

### Historical Heritage, Historical Conservation and Urban Tourism in Samsun City

Hittite, Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, Ottoman Empire in the history of the Samsun region has a rich historical and cultural history. The remains of the first known settlements in the Samsun region were removed from the excavations at the Dündartepe mound located in the Kılıçdede neighborhood in the present settlement area of the city. These excavations yielded settlement remains and items from the Chalcolithic, Old Bronze Age and Hittite period (Kökten, Özgüç, & Özgüç, 1945). The artifacts on the mound are displayed chronologically in Samsun Archeology Museum. One of the most important archaeological remains of the first known settlements in Samsun is located in the Karasamsun neighborhood, northwest of the city center. The ruins of the ancient city of Amisos, which is believed to have been founded in the 6th century and survived until the beginning of the 15th century (Bilgi, 1990; Atasoy, 1997). Some ruins from the walls surrounding the ancient city, which is estimated to be built by the Genoese in the area where the ancient city is located, have survived until today.

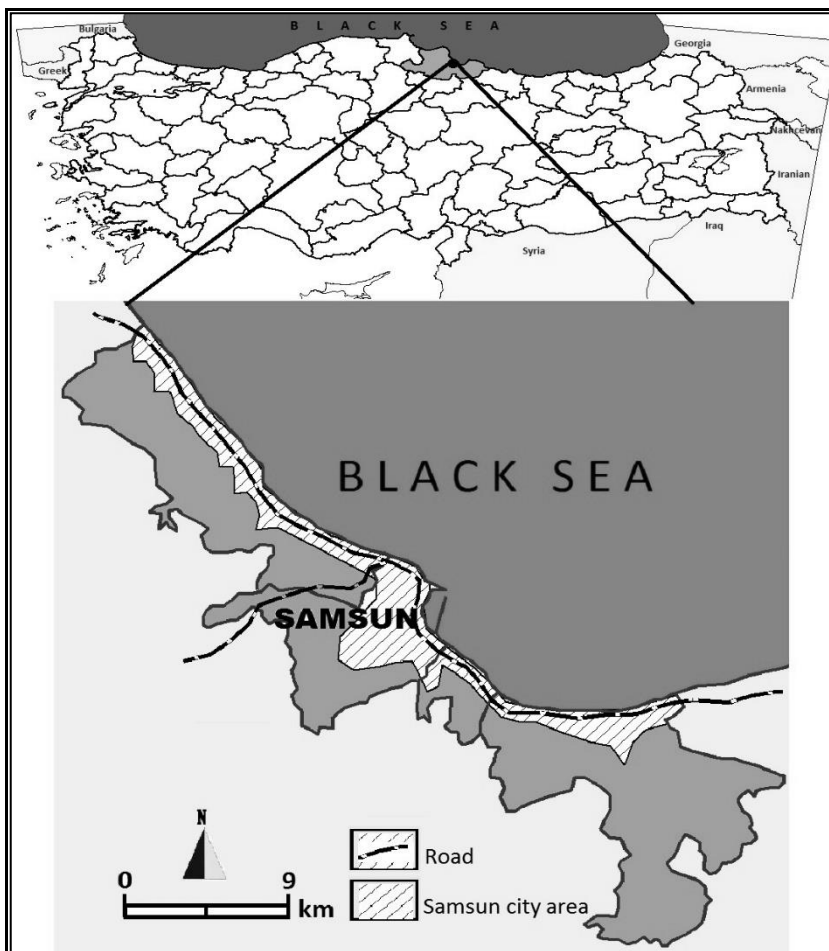


Figure 1. Location map of Samsun city.

In the area where the ancient city is located, no archaeological excavation has been carried out, however, due to illegal excavations and road works etc. rescue excavations were carried out by the Samsun Museum recover some of the remains. The floor mosaics that appeared in these excavations, a cistern belonging to the Byzantine period, column capitals, and the remains of a building with towers, various objects and gold ornaments found in five ancient rock tombs are exhibited as Amisos treasures. While the city was in the hands of the Turks, it is estimated that the Genoese settled and destroyed many buildings in the settlement. Recently, Amisos ancient ruins on the hill where an

arrangement has been done for the purpose of recreation by providing transportation from the beach to the top with ropeway has been a development that has increased the city's attraction.

The oldest building of the Turkish period in Samsun, which was founded by the Seljuks at the end of the 12th century by the sea, is the Seyyid Kutbeddin Mosque and Tomb in Kökçüoğlu neighborhood. Although the construction date is unknown, it is estimated that it has a history of seven hundred years. The Mosque of Jesus Baba (Ese Baba) and the Mosque in Kılıçdede are estimated to be one of the oldest buildings of Turkish existence in Samsun. Although there is no definite information, it is believed that they came to the region during the conquest of Anatolia (1078-1116) and were martyred. Tombs were built in the places where they fell into martyrs and mosques were built on their names. However, they have lost their original building characteristics with subsequent repairs and alterations in the mosques and tombs. However, these places with historical meanings are visited today. The oldest buildings that have survived until the present day in the original shape of the city in the 14th century İlhanlılar period in the Castle District near the Covered Bazaar are the Jewelers Mosque and Pazar Mosque Important buildings belonging to the early periods of the Ottomans in Samsun: Yalı Mosque (1485) in Hançerli Neighborhood (Figure 2), Şifa Hamam (15th century) in Neighborhood and Acem Monastery in Selahiye Neighborhood. Acem Islamic monastery, located on 100. Year Avenue has been restored after being ruined for many years.

Although Samsun is a city founded by Turks, it has become a city where people from different cultures and nations have come and settled. Especially after the second half of the 19th century, with the development of trade in the city, Greeks and Armenians and a number of European merchants settled in Samsun (Darkot, 1966; Yolalıcı, 1998). Non-Muslim population they built structures such as churches, schools, dwellings, graveyards reflect their culture and faith values. The Mother Dolorosa Church (1846), located on the 100th Anniversary Avenue in Ulugazi District, has a special importance in the historical buildings of the city. The priests of the Italian Capucin, who were expelled from Tbilisi Church by Tsar Nicholas in 1845, first founded the Santa Mariya Church in Trabzon and the Mater Dolorosa Church in Samsun. Today, the church, which is open to worship, has existed as a good example of people from different religions and cultures living together in the city since the past (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Yalı Mosque



Figure 3. Mater Dolorosa Church

As a port city, where trade has long been important, Samsun has historical commercial buildings in the form of inns covered and Ottoman bazaars. Today, Taşhan (1508) near Saathane, Süleyman Paşa Ottoman-Covered Bazaar (1807) and many historical shops and workplaces in the Hançerli neighborhood are important commercial buildings of the city's past. Taşhan, a two-storey building, stands as a fine example of civilian architecture in the Ottoman period. This structure is now being

restored within the Sathane Square Project. Again, in the neighborhood of Kale, the Süleyman Paşa Ottoman-Covered Bazaar, which is still in the commercial center of the city with jewelers, is a building consisting of shops and interconnected gates. It was used by people who work on goldsmiths, antique shops, and people in gold and silver business for a long time. The covered bazaar (Sarisakal, 2017), which was also used as Beyat Bazaar for a while, is a marketplace where apparel and various products are sold today. Important historical buildings of the commercial life in the city are the consular and bank buildings. As a result of the development of trade from the 19th century onwards, France, England, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Iran opened consulates in the city. Consular buildings, which constitute an important part of the historical heritage with their functions and architectural features, are now used for administrative, cultural purposes. The French Consulate Building at the entrance of Çiflik Street, the Austrian-Hungarian Consulate Building in the Republic Square, the German Consulate Building near Mecidiye Street and the Italian Consulate Building on Banks Street have been used for cultural and administrative purposes since the past. The important building heritage of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Samsun is the bank buildings. The Safety Fund (Ziraat Bank), the Ottoman Bank, the Bank of Athens and the Bank of Thessaloniki are located in the historical buildings. A significant part of the historical buildings in the city were built during the reconstruction of the city after the 1869 fire. One of them, the Town Hall (1913), building whose exterior side is covered with Ünye Stone is a fine example of the chipped and ornamental art. Today, it is used as the Metropolitan Municipality Building.

An important part of the historical building heritage in the city is Samsun Tobacco Factory in Kale District. Founded in 1887, the factory is one of the first cigarette factories in Anatolia. In the second half of the nineteenth century, it was established by the French (registrar's office), which had the privilege of buying and selling tobacco at that time with the development of tobacco agriculture and trade in Samsun. For more than a century (1887-1994) the factory building, where production was maintained, is an important witness to the historical identity of the city. Many people from Samsun worked in this factory and retired. This historical building, which forms nostalgia for the city's inhabitants in the city center, has been restored after being abandoned for a long time (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Samsun Tobacco Factory (after restored).

In addition to the applications for the conservation of single buildings in Samsun, a building group in the neighborhood of Kale and the street improvement (Art Street) in the form of a complete conservation of the place became an important application (Figure 5). Street workplaces and five historic mansions have been restored to urban life with administrative, cultural and commercial uses. A large part of the historical heritage in the city consists of residential buildings. The historical houses of Samsun are usually built on two floors of the ground, and the interior walls of the facade are made of chunking brick in plasterboard. The examples of civil architecture in the city are better preserved

than other public dwellings. These structures, which are generally considered in the central part of the city, have been preserved by both their owners and most of them by the central and local authorities due to the fact that most of them are public. Former French Consulate building in Samsun, Provincial Culture Directorate building, Directorate of Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Building, Çarşambalı Association Building, Elmas Hanım Mansion.



Figure 5. A building group in the neighborhood of Kale (Art Street)

Fountains and baths are important structures in terms of Turkish culture and history with their functions and architectural features. However, very few of the historical fountains and baths have survived to the present day. Today, in the neighborhood of Cedit in the late 19th century, two historic fountains are under conservation. On the other hand, the Şifa Bath on the Necipbey Avenue of Pazar Quarter is a 15th century building. The other one is the Tiled Bath in Saitbey District. A significant part of the historical heritage in Samsun is the historical monuments that witnessed the struggle for independence of the Turkish nation in recent history. Sheik Sadi Monastery, where members of the Samsun Defense of Rights Association held meetings, is one of the structures that have an important place in the history of national struggle of Samsun (Sarisakal, 2002). The building, which was in a state of disrepair for a long time and the example of civil architecture near it, was restored by the Metropolitan Municipality and put into service as the Kuva-i Milliye Museum. These structures, which are organized as a complex, consist of three sections: Kuva-i Milliye Museum, Gazi House and the Martyrs Museum, where animation shows of important events in Anatolian history are made. Again, the Mintika Palace Hotel on Mecidiye Street where he stayed when Atatürk came to Samsun on 19 May 1919 was transformed into a museum (Gazi Museum). In the museum, the objects and photographs of Atatürk are exhibited (Figure 6). The Atatürk Monument (1928 M1938), which is located in the Cumhuriyet Square park, consists of a sculpture of Atatürk on a horse and the figures that emphasize the National Struggle on all sides of the pedestal. The memorial of 19 May 1919, built by the Austrian sculptor Heinz Kreppel, became the emblem of the city of Samsun. Again, the İlkadım Monument (1981) near Cumhuriyet Square was built by the people of Samsun on the 100th anniversary of Atatürk's birth. The monument implies that Atatürk and his retinue first set foot in Samsun and the struggle for liberation from here.

The first conservation order in Samsun was taken in 1972 for the ruins of the ancient city of Amisos (archaeological site). The most comprehensive study on the historical building and other assets to be protected was made in 1985. Today, the total number of historical and cultural assets in Samsun city is 291. In addition to this, three areas where historical buildings and places are concentrated in the city are designated as urban sites.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Although Samsun is an old settlement, few buildings of the past have survived to the present day. Since the past, the tendencies of building and modernization have caused the destruction of many historical buildings in the city. Migrations from the environment accelerated the destruction of historical heritage by rapidly increasing urban population, ignoring the conservation of unplanned and historical texture. Until recently, we cannot talk about conscious conservation of the historical heritage in the city. Studies on the conscious conservation of the historical heritage in the city have recently begun. Recently, the studies carried out under the conservation of the local government and the restoration is positive developments. There are certain difficulties in preserving the historical heritage. First of all, there are corrosive and disruptive effects of climatic conditions. There is a need for a financial source for restoring, maintenance and so on. In addition, construction (rent) pressures are another challenge to be overcome.

The historical and cultural heritage of the city should be restored to the city life as attractive and functional parts of the city. Uses that will facilitate the conservation of historical buildings (tourism, traditional trade and handcrafts, housing, hotels, boarding houses etc.) should be encouraged and their use should be determined by spatial planning. The preservation of the historical heritage contributes to the economic and cultural development of the city by creating appeal for tourism as it is important in terms of the city's continuity and city identity. The restoration of historical buildings in the city reveals the potential value of tourism. This situation revives tourism, contributes to the city's economy.

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