

# Preliminary remarks on the Late Ottoman Churches in Aintab

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## Abstract

Aintab was historically a multi-ethnic and multi-religious city. In the 19th century, missionary activities were added to its multi-layered tableau. Mainly American Congregationalists but also Latin Catholics and some Anglicans settled in the city, building their religious, educational, and health institutions and giving birth to new syntheses in the architectural vocabulary. Meanwhile, local Christians also, put new church projects into realization. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, seven new churches were designed and six were built in Aintab.

However, the radical change in the ethnic and religious character of the social structure after the War of Independence had negative impacts on the state of these buildings in the 20th century. Most of them were confiscated and then either used by the government for different functions or sold and passed into private property. This paper seeks to examine these church buildings and to trace their histories of construction and re-use/demolition through archival documents, newspapers and writings of the ex-inhabitants of the city. The paper presents the preliminary findings of ongoing research that focuses on the transformation of the city's multicultural character within its urban planning activities of the early 20th century.

## Keywords

Late Ottoman Architecture, Aintab, Christian Religious Architecture.

Aintab --Ayıntab, or today's Gaziantep-- of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious city. The Byzantine, Umayyad, Abbasid, Seljuk, Ilhanid, Mamluk, and Dulkadiri rulers that had taken control of the city during different periods (Yiğit, 2007) had all brought different accents to its cultural production. Being an important center of agricultural and industrial production close to main trade routes had also made it open to cultural transitions. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, missionary activities were added to its multi-layered tableau. Mainly American Congregationalists but also Latin Catholics and some Anglicans settled in the city, building their religious, educational, and health institutions and giving birth to new syntheses in the architectural vocabulary. The building activity they created was of considerable size and importance for 19<sup>th</sup> century Aintab. Meanwhile, local Christians also, probably with the motivation of *Tanzimat* reforms, put new church projects into realization. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, seven new churches were designed and six were built in Aintab.

However, the radical change in the ethnic and religious character of the social structure after the War of Independence had negative impacts on the state of these buildings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of them were confiscated and then either used by the government for different functions or sold and passed into private property. Today only three of the six churches from the 19<sup>th</sup> century still exist. The three others were totally demolished --or remain in a partial and unrecognizable state somewhere in the city--. This paper seeks to examine these church buildings and to trace their histories of construction and re-use / demolition. The paper presents the preliminary findings of ongoing research that focuses on the transformation of the city's multicultural character within its urban planning activities of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 1. The city, demography and neighborhoods

The early development of Aintab began mainly between the southeastern slopes of the citadel and Kürdtepe

--today's Türktepe-- hill and expanded towards the southwest during subsequent centuries. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, small neighborhoods such as İbn Eyüb, Elbehan, and Hayık, separate from the main settlement, appeared in the west of the city (Kuban, 2001). Canbakal (1999) states that one of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century governors, Gergerizade Keyvan Bey, had houses in Kayacık, an area in the western neighborhoods. The presence of the governor may have attracted new settlers and growth. However, in the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as the politico-military hierarchy was institutionally transformed, its relation to urban space was also reconfigured. The governor's office/house moved and the location of the military power became diffused in the town. This politico-military shift appears to have affected the western neighborhood negatively. In the following centuries, the eastern part of the town grew more than the western part.

Canbakal (1999) claims that residential organization in 17<sup>th</sup> century Aintab was not predicated on socio-economic segregation and that most neighborhoods retained their mixed demography until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By this latter time, however, the overall distribution of wealth in Aintab's residential topography and the ethnic composition of the wealthy had changed significantly. The gradual move of the members of the new elite toward peripheral quarters is a well-known fact observed in several Ottoman cities. It comes as no surprise that the newly wealthy and the ethnically and religiously different non-Muslim families, in search of spatial and social segregation, may have moved toward the western neighborhoods. Therefore, after the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the quarters of Hayık, Elbehan, Kayacık (Bey), and Akyol of the western part of the city constituted the Christian neighborhoods of the city. It is in this area that all of the churches --Gregorian, Catholic, and Protestant-- were built.

According to Pococke (1745) who visited the city in the 1740's, Armenians were the only Christians in the city at that time. Archival research also confirms that Armenians were the only non-Muslim community in Aintab

<sup>1</sup> Naim Güleriyüz, in his work about the Jews of Aintab, cites a local saying about a Jewish *İshak Effendi* who had owned the concession for the operation of a bathhouse situated in *Şehreküstü* district. Based on this saying, he writes that there was an established Jewish community in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, but no other sources mention it.

<sup>2</sup> While Leslie Peirce states that this “neighborhood of Armenians” corresponds to Hayik district, Canbakal, using cadastral surveys and Bishop Melkonian’s statements, locates it in the area of Şehreküstü.

<sup>3</sup> According to Hüseyin Özdeğer the total population of Aintab in the survey 1543 was 9857. However Leslie Peirce indicates that the non-Muslim population of the province was somewhat undercounted in the surveys since Armenians seem to have been recorded as such only when they clustered in an Armenian neighborhood.

<sup>4</sup> Until that time, the Armenians of Adana, Malatya, Aleppo, and Antakya were under the rule of the *Catholicos* of Sis (today’s Kozan).

<sup>5</sup> Hüseyin Çınar, using *cizye* and *avarız* registers, gives the number of 10% whereas Canbakal, using the tax registers suggests 15% for the percentage of Armenian population.

<sup>6</sup> Kevork Sarafian’s book on the history of Aintab has two different editions in two different languages, one in Armenian, the other in English. The English edition is a briefer version of the two volume Armenian edition. In this research, only the English edition could be consulted.

until the 19th century<sup>1</sup>. However, the population of the Armenian community remained small. Of the city’s twenty-nine neighborhoods in the 16th century, only one was Armenian. It was listed in the cadastral surveys as “*ma-halle-i Ermeniyan*” [the neighborhood of the Armenian]<sup>2</sup>. The survey of 1543 shows that Armenians constituted approximately 1.4 percent of the overall population (Peirce, 2003), which translates to 138 inhabitants<sup>3</sup>. Evliya Çelebi’s statement that there no non-Muslims lived in the city may be interpreted that this relatively small percentage remained insignificant throughout the 17th century (Evliya Çelebi, 1935). However, the appointment of a separate *catholicos* over the Armenians of Aintab and Birecik<sup>4</sup> in 1706 and an increase in the *cizye* yields about same year suggest a growth of the community (Canbakal, 2007). Although the impetus behind this growth remains unknown, the Armenian population reached 10-15% of the total population in the 18th century<sup>5</sup>. The upward trend continued in the 19th century, reaching 17% in 1871 and 22% in 1906—in the latter year, 18,963 Armenian inhabitants (Şıvgın, 1999). Meanwhile, the 19th century witnessed a diversification in the non-Muslim community with the inclusion of Orthodox and Catholic Greeks, Assyrians, Jews, and Copts, although in very small numbers. The Armenian population also subdivided into three groups, Gregorians, Catholics, and Protestants. In the population registers published in the provincial yearbook of 1906, among the total of 18,963 Armenians, 13,903 were Gregorians; 4,584 were Protestants, and 336 were Catholics (Şıvgın, 1999). Along with increasing industry and trade capacity, missionary activities were probably one of the main factors in this growth.

## 2. Late Ottoman Churches in Aintab

### 2.1. Gregorian Church (Surp Asdvadzadzin)

Parallel to this demographic tableau, Armenian churches became apparent in the 19th century. The earliest record which mentions a church building in Aintab concerns a request for repair in 1704. It is followed by a second record

in 1739 (Çınar, 2000). According to Sarafian<sup>6</sup> (1957), Aintabian Gregorians used a cave on the east side of the Hayik hill as the base of their church. They enlarged it by hewing down the rocks on its western side and erected three pillars. Three repairs/renovations resulted in a church with the dimensions 64x32x16m. In 1873, when a fourth repair became necessary, the idea of building a new church came into consideration. Kertmenjian (2008) indicates without documentary reference that the new church was built on the site of the earlier church, and the old church stood on the west as an auditorium with a small library. Although the actual building is situated on the eastern side of the Hayik hill, such an assertion probably requires further research. According to Sarafian (1957) plans of the new church had been prepared by the imperial architect Sarkis Balian<sup>7</sup> and, despite criticism and opposition from the *catholicos* Migirditch Keifszian for its unnecessarily huge size, it was erected under the personal supervision of the executive chairman of the church Nicolas Nazaretian with the cooperation of Sarkis Kadehjian as the chief mason. The church has a cross-shaped plan with a dome in the center. Wharton (2015) defines its façade as referring to the local material identity of Aintab through its striped masonry, but also including elements of Sarkis’s 1860’s and 1870’s imperial works, such as Gothic windows, to give it a revivalist feeling. Interrupted from 1875 to 1877 due to the Turco-Russian



**Figure 1.** Gregorian church in Aintab (Surp Asdvadzadzin) (photo: Gül Cephaneçigil, 2015).



war, the construction was completed in 1893. Known as Surp Asdvadzadzin, it first constituted the main Gregorian church of Aintab and later was converted into a prison in the early Republican period and to a mosque in 1988 (Tavacıgil & Tavacıgil). It is still a dominant landmark in the cityscape (Figure 1).

## 2. 2. Armenian Catholic Church

The development of Catholicism among Aintabian Armenians is not a well-studied subject. However, the city's close relationship with Aleppo which had a strong Catholic community (Masters, 2001) suggests the latter's influence on this development. In addition, the legal recognition of the Armenian Catholics' status as millet in 1831 would have had a positive impact on the conversion of Gregorians. As a consequence of the legal recognition, Catholic Armenians were allowed to practice their religion in their own churches, separate from those of the Latins/Franks (Frazee, 1983). According to Sarafian (1957), the Armenian Catholic church of Aintab was built in 1862, with a donation on the part of Napoleon III. Although Sarafian does not cite any photographic evidence



**Figure 2.** Armenian Catholic church in Aintab (photo: Gül Cephaneçgil, 2015).



**Figure 3.** Armenian Catholic church in Aintab (photo: Gül Cephaneçgil, 2015).

that may allow identification of the building, the location that he indicates for it on the map suggests that it may be the recently discovered church in the Kozanlı neighborhood<sup>8</sup>. The photograph marked as the Armenian Catholic church in Kertmenjian's article depicts the same building. The church has a plan with three naves, covered by pointed vaults and a small dome with drum (Figure 2, 3). A belfry which does not exist today can be seen on top of the northern wall in Kertmenjian's photograph. A seriously damaged inscription still exists above the entrance gate. From the very small portions that can be read, it may be understood that the church was built during the patriarchy of the Archbishop Bedros Krikor VIII. He would have been the VIIIth Armenian Catholic Catholicos Patriarchate of Cilicia, Gregory Petros VIII Derasdvazadourian who was in charge between 1844 and 1866 (Tuzcu Ünsal, 2010).

## 2.3. Latin Catholic Church

The second Catholic church --known as Kendirli church-- was built by Franciscan *Terre Sainte* missionaries in the plot of their already built monastery near Elbehan (Figure 6). The earliest document that could be found in the Ottoman Archives during this research is a restatement of a demand of permission for building a Latin church in 1886 (BOA. ŞD.2220/23). However, several correspondences written by the *Sublime Porte* to the French embassy between 1889 and 1894 indicate that the Franciscan clergy had already built a residence in Aintab (BOA. HR .ID.1597/9,10,11,12,13,14,15). In these correspondences, *Sublime Porte* repeatedly asks the French embassy to warn the clergy and to ask them to stop using their residence as a church and school without having the necessary permissions and paying the corresponding taxes. The description of the residence in these documents as "one huge church-like building" suggests that this may be the rectangular masonry monastery building that still exists today next to the church. This supposition would be in conformity with Sarafian's statement which dates the monastery to 1884 (Sarafian, 1957).

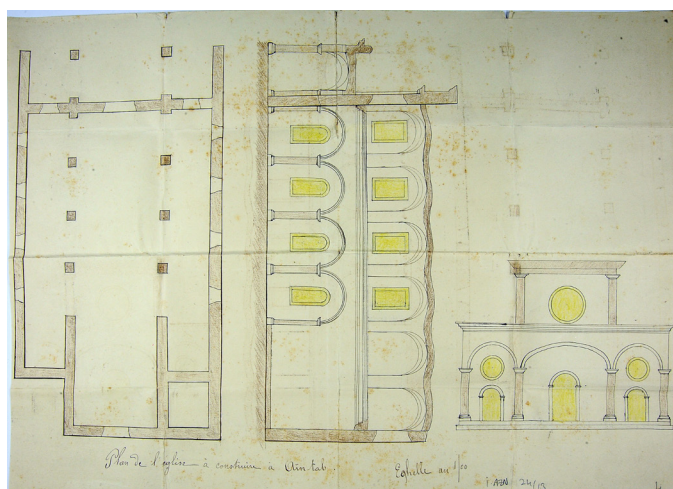
<sup>7</sup> Kevork Sarafian, Alyson Wharton, Raymond H. Kévorkian & Paul B. Pabudjian; they all note Sarkis Balian as the designer of the church but without documentary reference.

<sup>8</sup> Transferred to private property in the republican era, this church building was used as part of a textile factory and discovered incidentally during an urban renewal work in the area. Actually it is known as St. Bedros church but officially named Ömer Ersoy Cultural Center after its restoration in 2008.

The permission to build the church could not be obtained until 1897(BOA-IAZN.24/13). Two drawings were attached to the petition of that date (Figure 4,5). The first of them is a small *croquis* showing the church and its surrounding area. The place of the church in this drawing corresponds to today's Kendirli church. However, the second drawing, which consists of a church plan with three naves and sections, is apparently different from the church that was actually built and thus appears to belong to a proposal that was not realized. The actual church building is a one-nave basilica



**Figure 4.** Croquis of the Latin Catholic church (Kendirli) and its surrounding. (BOA. I.AZN. 24/13) 1. Mosque of Akyol 2. Bath 3. Monastery 4. Church that will be constructed 5. Entrance of the monastery of St Terre 6. Çınarlı Mosque 7. Well 8. Fountain 9 Ayn-ul-leben river 10. The Garden of Sarıfakıoğlu Muhammed 11. Beyoğlu quarter 12. Elbehan quarter 13. Akyol quarter 14. Kayacak quarter.



**Figure 5.** The plan and section of a proposal for Latin Catholic church (Kendirli). (BOA. I.AZN 24/13).

covered with a barrel vault. However, the basement floor of the church has a different plan which also does not fit to the plan of the ground floor. The structure and building materials which apparently differ from the upper floor make one think that the construction of the church might have begun with a different plan. Thus it seems that the construction process still bears several questions. As for the builder of the church, Kertmenjian (2008) and Tuzcu Ünsal (2010) give two different names: Nazar Usta Karayan and Sarkis Usta Karayan. It is very likely that they were two masons from the same family who worked together. Although the construction process cannot be traced clearly in the archival documents, an order to the Ministry of the Interior in 1906 mentions a construction activity in the monastery fields (BOA. DH.TMIK.M.233/5). This date again coincides with Sarafian's dating, in this case to 1905 for this church (Sarafian, 1957).

Kendirli church's close location to Çınarlı mosque, one of the most important defense points during the siege of Aintab, made it one of the most damaged churches because of the war. Its façade still bears the traces of bullets of that time. After the war, the church and the monastery were confiscated and used by the government in the early republican period as a *halkevi*. During this period, the church served as the main auditorium of the city. After their closure in 1951, both the monastery and the church passed into the property of the Ministry of Education and were used as highschool. A floor was added to the church to enable



**Figure 6.** Latin Catholic church and Terre Sainte Monastery in 1930's (retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.com/asimmihcioglu/gaziantep-aintab-data/>).



its usage as a dormitory. In 2013, the property of the church passed into the local municipality which has restored it and is using it as a cultural center<sup>9</sup>.

#### 2.4. Protestant churches

Although Kendirli church is monumental compared to its simple Protestant counterparts, the impact of the Franciscans in Aintab remained rather limited. It can be easily said that none of the missions in Aintab could attain the reach and scope of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).

Founded in 1810 in Boston by the Congregationalist branch of the Puritans, ABCFM was one of the three biggest Protestant missionary organizations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in both size and budget (Kocabaşoğlu, 2000). Considering Ottoman Turkey as the key to Asia (Bartlett, 1878), the first missionaries came to Ottoman lands in 1820. They established a press in Malta and then moved to İzmir and to Istanbul in order to undertake missionary labor among Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. This focus would shift over the next decades. During this period of establishment, Rufus Anderson as well as Eli Smith and Harrison G. O. Dwight made two important journeys through Anatolia, Caucasus, and Persia to investigate the potential for missionary work (Kocabaşoğlu, 2000). The publication of their accounts inspired the ABCFM to regard this region as a new field of labor that offered more favorable conditions than cities like Istanbul and Jerusalem. It also led to a redefinition of the mission as "Mission to the Armenians" in 1844. Mission to the Armenians was also subject to a series of reorganizations between 1856 and 1860. It was divided into northern and southern branches and then united with the Assyrian mission. The whole mission was divided again into three parts, as Western, Eastern, and Central Turkey missions. Through this process, Aintab was established as the center of the Central Turkey Mission (Kocabaşoğlu, 2000).

However, Aintab's encounter with Protestantism dates back somewhat earlier. In the 1830's British missionaries who visited Aintab had left there

some *Moscow Bibles* --written in Turkish, printed in Armenian characters--. In following years, both independent reformers --such as Michael (Sachli) Vartabed, Der Hovannes, Der Virtanes, and Bedros Vartabed (Jizmejian)-- and ABCFM missionaries --such as Van Lennep, Johnson, Laurie, and Smith-- arrived in Aintab for short stays (Arpee, 1946; Sarafian, 1957). Although they encountered opposition of different degrees, they founded the nucleus of the congregation which gave birth to the organization of the first church in January 1848 with eight members. In October of 1848, Dr. Azariah Smith of the ABCFM came to settle in Aintab with his wife. This event was the official beginning of the ABCFM's activities. Dr. Schneider joined him in 1849 (Anonym, 1877) and the congregation grew very quickly. According to Arpee (1946), in 1850 it could already be stated that the number of Protestants in Aintab was as great as in all the rest of the empire.

##### 2.4.1. First Protestant Church (Kayacık)

Gatherings for worship during this early period were taking place in the house of a believer called Kılıç Garabed. In 1854, permission was obtained for building a new church on the plot purchased in Kayacık district (BOA. C.ADL. 52/3127; BOA. C.ADL.42/2517). Sarafian (1957) states that the new church was constructed thanks to substantial gifts from Cyrus Hamlin of Istanbul and an Armenian named Sarkis Minasian, along with the subscriptions of the parishioners. The new church was completed at the end of 1854, and the opening ceremony took place on the first Sunday of 1855 (Sarafian, 1957).

Although the building does not exist today, it seems possible to identify it in photographs. A photograph in the Abdülhamid Collection recorded as the "protestant church in Aintab" depicts a rectangular building with a pitched roof and a separate bell tower (Figure 7). Its façades are patterned with alternating bands of different colored stones. When checked in panoramic views of the city, this building appears in Kayacık district and fits the place in-

<sup>9</sup> It's officially named as "Kendirli Gazi Kültür Merkezi".

dedicated for the first Protestant church on Sarafian's map (Figure 11). Another photograph, from the ABCFM Collection of Houghton Library, on the back of which "first church-Aintab" is written, depicts an interior. The church has a basilical plan with three naves. The central nave is covered with a vault. The number and the locations of the windows are similar to those of the former photograph. It is highly probable that these two photographs show the first Protestant church in Kayacık. In an article published in 1878 in *Missionary Herald*, Mr. and Mrs. Christie from New York, who had visited Aintab and addressed the congregation in the first church, express their impressions (Christie & Christie, 1878). While stating that the congregation they addressed numbered nearly fifteen hundred, they also indicate "the oriental way of seating people in church economizes room wonderfully, and obviates all the trouble arising in other parts of the world from the choice of pews." These statements clarify the reason that the floor was covered by carpets. The congregation would have been sitting on the floor, as if they were in a mosque.

From the news published in the *Missionary Herald* it can be understood that the church building was not reserved only for religious worship. Various gatherings took place in this building, ranging from the general examinations of the American College to talks by members of the Union and

Progress Party after the revolution of 1908.

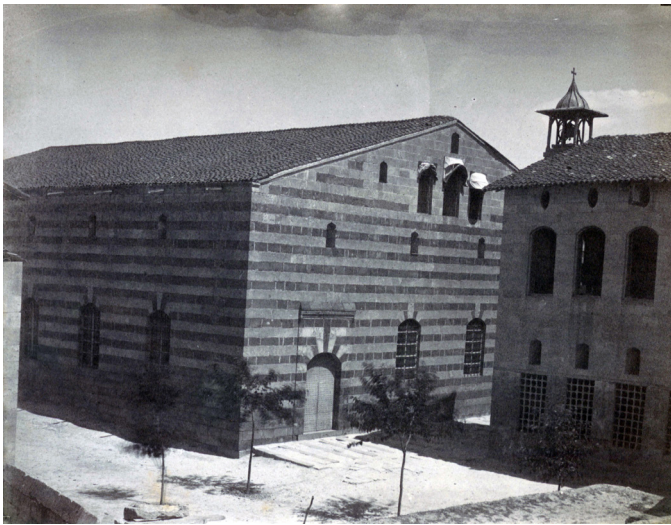
Although there is no written evidence about the later function of the building, a public announcement published in a local newspaper in October 1932 may provide a clue (Anonym, 1932b). In that announcement, it was said that stones of two kinds --*keymih* (limestone) and *kara taş* (basalt)-- from the cinema building which had been damaged by a fire were to be sold. Today, in Kayacık district there is also a street called "*Eski Sinema Sokak*" [old cinema street] that may refer to this building. Considering these two pieces of information together with its earlier usage as an auditorium, it seems possible that the first church might have been turned into a cinema and burned down in a fire.

#### 2.4.2. Second Protestant church (Hayık)

According to Sarafian (1957) in 1865, it was deemed wise and proper to divide the parish into two equal parts, with the original church retaining the church building, while the second church would take its members elsewhere. The second church held its services in temporary spaces until 1868 when a new stone edifice with a dome was erected. If checked with Sarafian's map, the church building he describes can be identified in the panoramic photographs (Figure 10, 11). However, no additional information could be found in this research. Considering its location, it is highly probable that it remains in one of the factories of the area, as does the Armenian Catholic church. However, whether or not any part of it still exists is not yet clear.

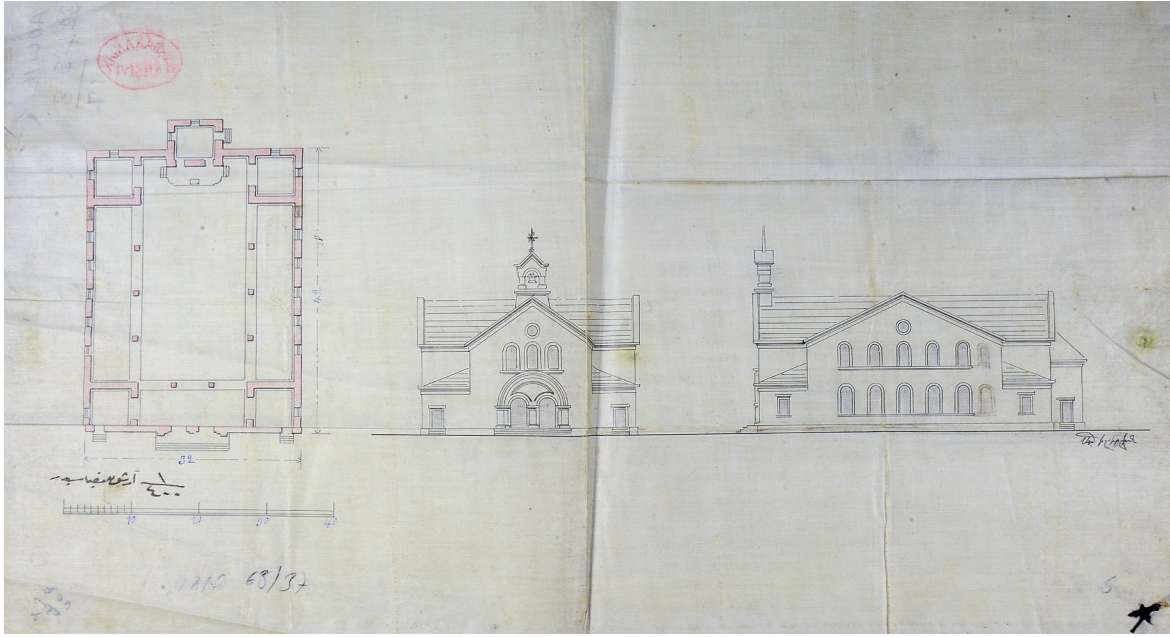
#### 2.4.3. Third Protestant church (Alay Bey & İbn Eyüp)

The third church was organized in 1880 in an unusual neighborhood for a church, in Alay Bey (Sarafian, 1957). Additionally, it can be deduced from the archival documents that there was an attempt to build a new church and transfer it to Kozanlı in 1905, but the request for permission was rejected on the grounds that there were already enough Protestant churches (BOA. BEO.2541/190564). However, in the



**Figure 7.** First Protestant Church in Aintab (Kayacık). (Istanbul University Library Abdülhamid Collection no: 90435.29).





**Figure 8.** Project for the Third Protestant church in Aintab by İzmirliyan. (BOA. ŞD. 2242/15).

following year, when a request was made regarding another plot, in İbn Eyüp, permission was granted (BOA. ŞD. 2242/15). A project signed by the architect İzmirliyan is attached to this petition<sup>10</sup> (Figure 8). This is likely the unrealized project mentioned by Sarafian (Sarafian, 1957).

## 2.5. Anglican church

According to Richter (1910) in connection with a powerful protestant propaganda promoted by Bishop Gobat of Jerusalem in 1863, Megerditch, an Armenian bishop of Aintab, joined the Anglican Church. He succeeded in attracting a good many members to his congregation, partly from the Gregorians and partly from the strong and influential protestant church of his town. He was put in charge of the Episcopal congregation (Gobat, 1884). In a circular in 1876, Bishop Gobat states that he received a present of £ 1000 for church building purposes in 1870 from an English clergyman. A suitable site was purchased with the help of the English consul at Aleppo and building was commenced immediately. But when the ground was marked out and the foundation walls were raised to the level of earth, all further progress was forbidden on the grounds that the building was planned too near to a mosque (Gobat, 1884). The necessary *firman* to overcome this problem was obtained in 1876 and the construction



**Figure 9.** Anglican Church in Aintab (Istanbul University Library Abdülhamid Collection no: 90435.30).

restarted, but it had to stop again due to lack of funds. The only Ottoman documents that could be found regarding this building is correspondence about the permission process (BOA. ŞD.2214/13; BOA. ŞD.2213/56; BOA. HR.SYS.1899/24). Although the process is yet unknown, it can be understood from photographs in the Abdülhamid collection that the building was completed toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, when Childs visited Aintab in 1917, he found that the building had been closed for several years. He reports that disputes and le-

<sup>10</sup> Isdepan İzmirliyan would design the Protestant church in Istanbul Gedikpaşa for the ABCFM a few years later.

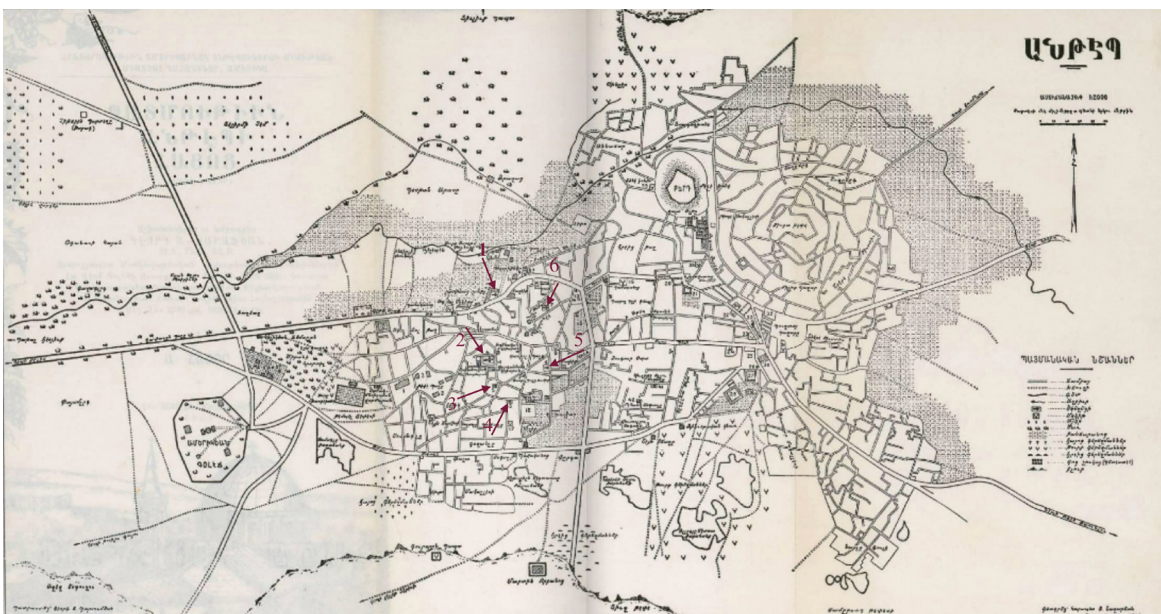




**Figure 10.** Panoramic view of Aintab from Düztepe (prepared from photo card in Başgelen, 1999) 1. Gregorian church 2. Second protestant church 3. Armenian catholic church 4. Anglican church.



**Figure 11.** Panoramic view of Aintab from Kürdtepe (prepared from photo card in Sıtkı Severoğlu Collection) 1. Latin Catholic church 2. First Protestant church 3. Gregorian church 4. Second Protestant church 5. Anglican church. (I would like to express my gratitude to Sıtkı Severoğlu for sharing with me this photo card from his collection).



**Figure 12.** Map of Aintab in 1920's (based on the map in Sarafian, 1957) 1. Latin Catholic church 2. Gregorian church 3. Second Protestant church 4. Armenian Catholic church 5. Anglican church 6. First Protestant church (I would like to express my gratitude to Murat Uçaner for sharing with me the translation of the Armenian legend of the map).





**Figure 13.** The churches district in the urban development plan of H. Jansen (Gaziantep Municipality collection).

gal processes had engulfed the church property, with some interested parties wishing to sell it and others to buy it (Childs, 1917). According to Sarafian (1957), there were only very few Anglicans in Aintab. The very fact that the members of the Congregational church were so strong, with a college, good schools, American-educated ministers, college professors, etc., was a deterrent to the spread of other Protestant sects in Aintab.

During the republican period, in a local newspaper of January 1932 a public announcement appeared, saying that the Anglican church was for sale. In October of the same year, another public announcement declared that the stones of the Anglican church were for sale. No other information could be found about its removal.

### 3. Planning works and the churches

Although the announcements about the sale of the stones from both of the churches appeared in 1932, it is highly possible that they might not have been demolished immediately. In 1939 in the same newspaper, complaints about

the extensive number of the buildings in ruins in the city were reported. The first reason that comes to mind is that the government did not have the ability to remove them due to the difficult economic conditions of the period. Alternatively, the stagnation in building activities during this period might have prevented the opportunity for their removal for re-use in new constructions. Another possibility is that the government might have preferred to wait until the end of the ongoing planning before taking any action.

The planning works in Gaziantep began about 1932. In January, the municipality contracted with a Turkish firm for the preparation of the actual plans of the city, but due to unexpected problems --such as the death of the German engineer in charge, change of the contractor, etc.-- the plan could not be finished until September 1935. In October 1935, the municipality asked Herman Jansen to prepare the urban development plan of the city. Planning works started in December 1935 and finished in 1939.

Considering his earlier works, it can

be said that one of the characteristics of Jansen's planning approach was his careful attitude towards the historical urban core. In line with this approach, in his urban development plan for Gaziantep he kept the historical urban fabric in the eastern/Muslim quarters around the citadel quite intact. However, his proposal for the government quarter was between the eastern and western parts, partly in the orchards and partly in the church area. The reasons underlying his choice of location apparently require further research. The government quarter that he proposed consisted of a *resmi geçit alanı* --a square where official ceremonies could take place-- surrounded by the buildings of the governor's office and the municipality with some green areas in between (Figure 13).

Although Jansen's plan could not be realized exactly, it would nonetheless have had an impact on the transformation of this area and hence on the way the churches, probably already in ruins, were treated. Whether or not Jansen was the sole decision-maker is another point. It can be learned from the same newspaper that in 1938, before the approval of the project, the government requested a revision for this area (Anonym, 1938). The scope and content of a possible governmental intervention remains among the many still unknown aspects of the history of the churches in Aintab.

#### Abbreviations

BOA. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri [Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives]

C.ADL. Cevdet Adliye

DH.TMIK.M. Dahiliye Nezareti Tesri-i Muamelat ve Islahat Komisyonu

HR.ID. Hariciye Nezareti İdare

I.AZN. İrade Adliye ve Mezahib

ŞD. Şura-i Devlet Evrakı

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### **Antep'te Geç Osmanlı Dönemi kiliseleri üzerine ön tespitler**

19. yüzyıl Antep'i hem çok dinli ve etnili toplumsal yapısı, hem de bu dönemde şehre yerleşen misyonerlerin katılımıyla çok kültürlü bir mimari ve kentsel karakter sergilemektedir. Ancak Bağımsızlık Savaşı sonrası toplumsal dokuda yaşanan değişiklik bu durumu da etkilemiş, söz konusu dönemde inşa edilen, özellikle dini yapıların, önemli bir kısmı kamu yapılarına dönüştürülerek yeniden işlevlendirilmiş, bir kısmı ise satılmış ve özel mülkiyete geçmiştir. 1935-39 yılları arasında Jansen'in hazırlamış olduğu imar planıyla birlikte başlayan planlama çalışmaları da kentin bu çok kültürlü karakterinin

dönüşümünde etken olarak düşünülebilir. Bu makale Antep'teki 19. yüzyıl kiliselerinin inşa ve yeniden işlevlendirilme/ortadan kalkma süreçlerine dair elde edilen bulguları ortaya koymayı ve bu haliyle, 20. yüzyılın ilk yarısında yaşanan dönüşümü anlamayı hedefleyen bir çalışmanın ön tespitlerini paylaşmayı hedeflemektedir.

19. yüzyılda Antep'te bir Gregoryen, bir Ermeni Katolik, bir Latin Katolik, üç Protestan ve bir Anglikan olmak üzere toplam yedi adet kilise tasarlanmış ve bunların altısı inşa edilmiştir. Bu kiliselerden bazı kaynaklarda Sarkis Balyan'ın tasarımı olduğu ifade edilen Gregoryen Surp Asdvadzin kilisesi Cumhuriyet döneminde önce hapisha-

neye, 1988'de ise camiye dönüştürülmüştür. Fransisken Terre-Sainte rahipleri tarafından inşa edilmiş olan ve bir manastır ile bir kiliseden oluşan yapı grubu önce halkevi olarak işlevlendirilerek manastır binası halkevi, kilise ise ona bağlı çok amaçlı salon olarak kullanılmıştır. 1952'de halkevinin kapatılmasını müteakip Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde liseye dönüştürülerek manastır binası okul, kilise ise yatakhane olarak kullanılmıştır. Yapı 2013'den itibaren Belediye tarafından kültür merkezi olarak kullanılmaktadır. Ermeni Katolik kilisesi ise Cumhuriyet döneminde özel mülkiyete geçerek bir tekstil fabrikası içerisinde kullanılmış, 2008 yılında gerçekleştirilen bir yol düzenleme çalışması esnasında fark edilerek kültür merkezi olarak kullanılmak restore edilmiştir. Bunların dışında söz konusu dönem Antep'inin en etkin misyon kurumu olan *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (ABCFM) tarafından şehirde inşa edilmiş olan Protestan kiliselerinden ise hiç biri günümüze ulaşamamıştır. Ulaşılabilen kaynaklardan anlaşıldığı kadarıyla bunlardan Kayacık'ta yer alan ilkinin 1930ların başlarında sinema olarak kullanılmış ve geçirdiği bir yangından sonra bir müddet harabe olarak kalıp daha sonra taşlarının yapı

malzemesi olarak kullanılmış olması muhtemel görünmektedir. Yalnızca yeri ve yapısı teşhis edilebilen ikinci kilisenin ise konumu itibarıyla Ermeni Katolik kilisesine benzer şekilde bir fabrika alanı içerisinde kalmış olması olasıdır. ABCFM tarafından Eyüboğlu mahallesinde inşa edilmek üzere mimar İsdepan İzmirliyan tarafından tasarlanan ancak gerçekleştirilemeyen üçüncü kilisenin projesi ise çalışmada sunulmaktadır. Son olarak yine Eyüboğlu mahallesinde bulunan Anglikan kilisesinin ise 20. yüzyıl başlarında ABCFM'in güçlü etkinliği karşısında cemaati azalarak atıl duruma düştüğü, Cumhuriyet döneminde ise 1932'de önce bina ardından yapı malzemesi olarak satışa çıkarıldığı anlaşılmış ancak tam olarak ne zaman ve ne şekilde ortadan kalktığı tespit edilememiştir. Söz konusu kiliseler Antep şehrinin batı mahallelerinin doğu sınırında bir bölgede yer almaktadırlar. Bu bölge kısmen 1935-39 yılları arasında Herman Jansen'in hazırlamış olduğu imar planında hükümet mahallesi olarak tasarlanmış görülmektedir. Bölgedeki yapıların dönüşümünde bu planın öngörülerinin muhtemel etkileri de göz önünde bulundurulması gereken bir konudur.