

Tombstones in the Burial Ground of Gebiz Yıkık Mosque

Gebiz Yıkık Camii Haziresindeki Mezar Taşları

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Abstract: Before their conversion, the Turks of Central Asia, mainly because of their interactions with those who lived around them, followed the religious practices of Tengrism, Shamanism, Animism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Judaism. Among various religious differences, these groups had a variety of burial practices. Towards the end of the XIth century, with their evolving religious beliefs and acceptance of Islam, Turks who came to Anatolia erected tombstones showing their spiritual and practical ideas. It is known that during the reigns of Mehmed the Conqueror and Bayezid II, tribes living in Karaman were scattered all around Teke, where the herding Yoruks could transfer their knowledge and practices of arts and crafts to the following generations, among which tombstone carving and ornamenting is of importance. In this study, the tombstones in the Burial ground of Gebiz Yıkık Mosque in Serik, Antalya, are investigated following a surface exploration at the end of which a total number of 101 tombstones were recorded. Most of these tombstones were fashioned as examples of the frame type, characterised by erecting blocks of stones on the surface. This study concludes that the use of various geometric designs on these tombstones suggests that these tombstones followed the material traditions of Yoruks.


Keywords: Antalya • Gebiz • Yoruk • Burial Ground • Tombstone • Ornamentation

Öz: Orta Asya Türk toplumları, yaşadıkları coğrafi bölge ve kültürel etkileşim nedeniyle, İslamiyet öncesinde, Gök Tanrı, Şamanizm, Dinamizm, Budizm, Maniheizm, Zerdüştilik, Hristiyanlık ve Musevilik gibi dinlere inanmışlardır. Bu dinler arasında ölü gömme gelenekleri de farklılık göstermektedir. MS XI. yüzyıl sonunda Anadolu'yu yurt edinmek üzere gelen Türk toplumunun İslamiyet'i kabulünden sonra değişen inanç ve yaşam biçimleri mezar yapılarına da yansımıştır. Fatih Sultan Mehmet ve II. Bayezid dönemlerinde, Karaman Eyaleti'nde yer alan aşiretlerin Teke iline dağıtıldığı bilinmektedir. Bu bölgede, hayvancılıkla uğraşan Yörüklere, uygun bir yaşam alanı oluşturularak yaşam ve süsleme geleneklerini nesilden nesile aktarma imkânı sunulmuştur. Bu çalışmada, Antalya ili, Serik İlçesi, Gebiz Mahallesi'nde yer alan Yıkık Camii'nin haziresindeki mezar taşları konu edilmektedir. Yapılan yüzey araştırmasında toplam 101 adet mezar taşı tespit edilmiştir. Mezarların geneli, blok taşların toprak üstüne konumlandırılmasıyla oluşan çerçevesiz tipten meydana gelmektedir. Mezar taşlarının yüzeylerinde, Yörük geleneğine ait olduğu düşünülen geometrik motifler dikkat çekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Antalya • Gebiz • Yörük • Hazire • Mezar Taşı • Süsleme

Introduction

Before their conversion, the Turks of Central Asia, mainly because of their interactions with those

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who lived around them, followed the religious practices of Tengriism, Shamanism, Animism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Judaism¹. Among these various religious differences, these groups had a variety of burial practices. Towards the end of the XIth century, with their evolving religious beliefs and acceptance of Islam, the Turks who came to Anatolia erected tombstones showing their spiritual and practical ideas. The designs employed on the tombstones suggest that these Turks did not leave their previous beliefs behind but provided a synthesis with their pre-Islamic practices within the context of the development of Islamic civilisation².

Because of its geographical location and the richness of its fauna, it is known that the Antalya region has been an area which numerous civilisations struggled to control. Among these, Kılıçarslan III, paved the way for capturing the city as he gained control of Isparta in 1203³. Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev I, with the support of the Eastern Romans who were not satisfied with Latin rule, gained control of Antalya on March 5, 1207⁴. Finally, in 1221, Alâeddin Keykubat, captured Alaiye, present day Alanya and started serious building activities⁵.

It is possible to talk about the existence of Turks in the Antalya region prior to 1207. In 1148, the Antalya-Korkuteli road and Düden River were under the control of the Turks. The Crusaders, when they chose the Düden River as their camping site during their attack to Antalya's walls, gained the permission of Turks who lived in the region prior to doing so. Furthermore, two groups of 3000 to 4000 soldiers who wanted to reach Tarsus could not finalize their aim because they could not pass across the Köprü River as it was controlled by the Turks. As there were no bridges over the river and it was not feasible to swim across and fight with the Turks at the same time, they were captured on their way back or killed⁶. The Seljuks were settled in Sillyon as soon as they captured Antalya and because the door to the castle looked dark black, called the settlement "Karahisar-ı Teke"⁷. Similarly, Teke Karahisar is mentioned in Evliya Çelebi's travelogue⁸. After the capturing of the region, the Seljuks built masjids in Sillyon which showed the Islamization of the region. According to the archive records, the region was populated by two Turkish groups, namely, "Cemaat-ı Etrak-ı Serik" (Serik's Turkish Group) and the "Kökez" the latter who settled in present-day Aspendos⁹. Such settlements helped the region to become populated mainly by the Turks.

Antalya was an important center during the reign of the Seljuks and the period of Beyliks, but it became, along with the Lakes Region, a part of the territory controlled by the Hamidoğulları, a tribe of Turkmen descent, after the collapse of the Seljuk dynasty¹⁰. During the reign of Yıldırım Bayezid, in 1390 to be more exact, the city was captured by the Ottomans¹¹. After that, Antalya became one of

¹ Eroğlu & Kılıç 2005, 750-770; Güngör 2021.

² Sağıroğlu Arslan 2017, 1936.

³ Moğol 1991, 18.

⁴ Emecen 1991, 233.

⁵ Bostan 1989, 339; Uzunçarşılı 2003, 5.

⁶ Hellenkemper & Hild 2004, 129-130.

⁷ For additional information on Sillyon Citadel, See Taşkiran 2020, 1-32.

⁸ Kahraman 2016, 169.

⁹ Şahin 2016, 1.

¹⁰ Moğol 2010, 113.

¹¹ Armağan 2004, 9-34.

the 14 districts whose governing center was Kutahya and was then called “Teke District”¹².

During the reigns of Mehmed the Conqueror and Bayezid II, groups of troublesome people such as the Varsaks were scattered around Teke District and this territory provided the Yoruks with the natural resources that were conducive to animal herding and creating arts and crafts that could be passed from one generation to the other¹³. Records indicate that tax-free trade and production was proclaimed in 1475 throughout Alanya. The tribes in the region that passed their winters on location were the İneşe (Efteşe) Yoruks in the Sedre region; the Yoruks of Alanya in Teke, the Çakal Kuzu Yoruks in Karacalar; the Sevinç Hac religious community in Manavgat, the Gencek Yoruks, the Kızıl Dağ Yoruks, and the Hasad religious community. These groups belong to the Oguz’s Yüregir, Yıva, Salur, Peçenek, Eymir, Avşar and Bayındır tribes who used this region as their winter settlements throughout the 16th century¹⁴.

Starting in the 13th century, Pamphylia became a winter settlement for Teke Turkmens, Eski-yoruks and Karakoyuns. These new settlers, with their original cultures and beliefs brought from the Far East, developed a rather original blend of culture mixed with the local cultures they found in the region. Although they accepted Islam, the Yoruks could not get rid of the effect of their previous belief, Shamanism, which was mainly characterized by their close contact with nature¹⁵. As can be seen in the cadastral books of 1455 and 1568, non-muslims who later converted to Islam are mentioned.¹⁶ Situated in the southern part of Anatolia encompassing Antalya, Finike, Kaş, Kalkan, Milli, Elmalı, Gömbe, İstanoz (Korkuteli) and Karahisar (Serik)¹⁷, the region mentioned as “Teke-eli” is known to possess various tombstones that belonged to the Yoruks¹⁸. Ertaş argues that the tombstones found in Serik might have belonged to a tribe called Teke Oğulları¹⁹.



Fig. 1. Gebiz Yıkık Mosque and its Burial Ground

Tombstones in the Burial Ground of Yıkık Mosque

Situated in Gebiz district, 18 kilometers to the north of the ancient city of Sillyon, a total of 101 tombstones were found and recorded in the burial ground of the Gebiz Yıkık Mosque²⁰. These tombstones

¹² Çimrin 1999, 53.

¹³ Şahin 2016, 7-8.

¹⁴ Erdoğdu 2013, 33.

¹⁵ Seyirci & Topbaş 1996, 116; Doğan & Doğan 2011, 15-29; Palalı 2020, 210.

¹⁶ Karaca 2002, 138.

¹⁷ The name Serik comes from the Serik Yoruks who lived in the region starting in the 15th century. Karahisar-ı Teke, is the former name of Serik which was an administrative unit during the reign of the Ottoman Empire. See, Ak 2014, 313.

¹⁸ Ertaş 1983, 21.

¹⁹ Ertaş 1983, 28.

²⁰ Yıkık Mosque and its cemetery, were accepted as cultural assets in 2010 with the decision made on December 27, 2010, with number 4690 by the Antalya Cultural Heritage Preservation Regional Board.

are located to the north, east, and west of the mosque and can be categorized under three types (Fig. 1.):

1. Those with rectangular pediments
 - 1.1. Those with a rectangular shape
 - 1.2. Those with sliced patterns (fluted)
2. Those with crowns
3. Those in the shape of Balbals

Today, a road passes through the Southern side of the mosque. Towards the North East of the road appears a burial ground fenced by Antalya's municipality in 2018 (Fig 2). When the road is studied carefully it can be seen that the mosque's burial ground is situated towards the northeast. The burial ground includes 118 tombstones.



Fig. 2. The Burial Ground to the Northeast of Gebiz Yıkık Mosque

1. Those with Rectangular Pediments

1.1. Those with a Rectangular Shape

1.1. These tombstones are 0.28 m in width and 0.10 m in thickness. No identifications or dates were found on the surfaces of these tombstones. On the front surfaces of these tombstones, two or three layers of carved ornamentations were found the top of which included small embellishments framed by two cartouches, the sides of the cartouches are decorated with zig-zag motifs, at the centre of which appears a flower. At the bottom is a cartouche that is wider at the centre of which appears a larger floral motif that looks like a star, around which, again, zig-zags are used. The back surface of the tombstone is left undecorated while the sides are again decorated by means of zigzags (Fig. 3-4). In the burial ground situated in the northeast, there appear type 1 tombstones all of which are decorated with a different style of ornamentation. The front side of these tombstones is framed whose four corners contain embellishments in cross patterns. In each of these cross patterns that form triangles, a flower motif is placed. At the bottom of these tombstones, there appear reliefs containing flower motifs (Fig. 5).



Fig. 3. Type 1.1 Tombstone



Fig. 4. Type 1.1 Tombstone



Fig. 5. Type 1.1 Tombstone in the Burial Ground to the Northeast of Gebiz Yıkık Mosque

1.2. Those with Sliced Patterns (Fluted)

1.2. These tombstones are 0.27 m in width and 0.10 m in thickness. The tombstones for children in this group are 0.22 m in width and 0.10 m in thickness. The sides of these tombstones are decorated through sliced patterns that get thinner and thinner towards the bottom. Seyirci and Topbaş argue that these slices represent the shoulders, arms, and waists of the human body²¹. In the front sides of these tombstones there appears triangles turned upside down while at the bottom rests large flower motifs. The center of these triangles are usually decorated with checkered, flower motifs that represent the sun. In some tombstones a series of braided hair are visible²². All this composition is framed by means of zig-zag motives (Figs. 6-8). Such zig-zag and flower motifs are also found on the carpets woven in this region (Fig. 9)²³.



Fig. 6. Type 1.2 Tombstone



Fig. 7. Type 1.2 Tombstone



Fig. 8. Type 1.2 Tombstone with a dreadlock pattern



Fig. 9. Carpet from Antalya Döşemealtı Kovanlık Village (from Zaimoğlu)

2. Those with Crowns

The crowns of type 2 tombstones are displayed either as singular or double layers. The width of those with single layers is 0.20 m, height 0.15 m, and the neck 0.07 m. In the two-layered tombstones, the top side is 0.10 m in height while the second layer is 0.15 m in height. The height of the neck is 0.15 m in height. The width of both types of tombstones is 0.28 m. The front sides of these tombstones are decorated with geometric and floral designs. Especially in the top side where pointed arches are visible, there appears a circle. In the centre, a triangle that moves from the sides to the centre appears followed by two circle-shaped tombstones. Studied iconography, this might stand for a human being whose hands are crossed at the centre (Fig. 10). In some of the tombstones that follow this style, triangles are used in place of circles. The tombstones with crowns are similar to the other two types in

²¹ Seyirci & Topbaş 1996, 118.

²² It is believed that tombstones of the braided hair type belong to young females. See: Seyirci & Topbaş 1996, 118.

²³ Zaimoğlu & Teker, 2010, 169-182.

terms of how the front surfaces are decorated. The major difference that separates this type of tombstone from the others is that they contain dates. The following years were recorded on the tombstones studied: H.1231/M.1815-1816, H.1256/M.1840-1841 and H.1307/M.1889-1890 (Figs. 11-12).



Fig. 10. Type 2 Tombstone



Fig. 11. Type 2 Tombstone Dated 1256 (Hijri)



Fig. 12. Type 2 Tombstone Dated 1307 (Hijri)

3. Those in the Shape of Balbals:

The third type of tombstones are very similar to the balbals that were previously and popularly used by the nomads of Central Asia. In terms of decoration and how the script is formed, these tombstones are simple in design and are made of slate stone. Usually, they are 0.65 m in width and 2.20 m in height (Fig. 13).

Discussion and Conclusion

A total number of 101 tombstones were studied in Antalya, Serik. Three kilometers to the north of Gebiz neighborhood, the tombstones were found in the burial ground of Gebiz Yıkık Mosque. When combined with the tombstones in the burial ground located across the modern road, the number increases to 219. The tombstones studied were produced differently from those found in other parts of Anatolia²⁴. These differences suggest that stone carvers who worked these tombstones possessed a highly skilled manner.



Fig. 13. Type 3 Tombstone

It is interesting to see the tombstones of type 1 and type 3, do not record the deceased person's name or year of death. Evliya Çelebi claimed that there were around 70 tribes of Turkmen origin in Silyon²⁵ Mehmet Ak on the other hand, mentions that there were around 34 villages 27 oymaks and obas in the region²⁶. Gebiz which carries the name of one of the oldest oymaks of the region and the center of this settlement is Macar Köy which hosted Macar Oba along with 20 other villages²⁷. By using this information, we can estimate that there could have been some hostilities among different groups of people. Hence, the names and death years of the deceased were not written to ensure that

²⁴ Biçici 2008, 297-324; Çal 2015, 295-332; Sağıroğlu Arslan 2017, 1923-1937.

²⁵ Kahraman 2016, 169.

²⁶ Ak 2014, 313.

²⁷ Ak 2014, 313.

the tombstones were not vandalized by their enemies. It can be noted that the tombstones with crown heads have the date of demise incised. In comparison to type 1 and type 2 tombstones, these tombstones were most likely erected either in the first quarter or in the last years of the 19th century. As such information shows, it can be estimated that the Turkmen who lived around Sillyon from the 13th century and distributed their cultures in the region, as with the making of their tombstones, suggests they were erected around the beginning of the 14th century. Similarly, just as the thickness of the walls that surrounded Yıkık Mosque on three sides and the Mihrab of it being simple, in comparison to Ottoman mosques, together with how the planning and technical qualities contributed to the formation of the mosque, it is most probable that the mosque was itself constructed in either the 14th or the 15th centuries, during the reign of the Tekeoğulları or the Karamanoğulları.

Well-planned ornamentations are visible on type three tombstones. Such ornamentations are mostly zig-zags, triangles, flowers (the sun), and braided hair. These motifs carry various similarities with those found on carpets and quilts, sarays, kiosks, hamams, terracotta vessels, and flags that belonged to the Tekeoğulları and the Karamanoğulları. However, it cannot be estimated to which Turkmen tribe these tombstones belonged because the signs used on these were created for their designs rather than for providing information. When the motifs are studied from an iconographic perspective the zig-zag motif, for instance, could either represent a water line or concepts such as well-being and legitimacy²⁸. It is already known that water in Turkish culture stands for rebirth both spiritually as well as physically continuity in life and being cleared away from one's sins²⁹. The flower motif that looks like the sun might also signify eternal light³⁰. Duggan argues that although these motifs are often interpreted by using their similarities, their roots should be considered a part of pagan lore but re-used in a Muslim context carrying a different set of associations³¹.

The surfaces of the tombstones found are simple in style but it is known that starting in Antiquity including the Ottomans, many civilizations painted their tombstones. Keeping this in mind, it is estimated in the analysis of this study that the tombstones studied were painted as they were erected, but the paintwork has been erased over the passage of time.

In the course of field study, it became obvious that similar tombstones were visible in the following locations: Serik's Gebiz, Haşgebe, Kızılören, Hacıosmanlar, Töngöşlü, Büğüş, Tekkeköy, Yanköy (Kocagözler), Eskiörük, Nebiler, Yukarıçatma, Cumalı, Kuşlar, Çandır, Şatırlı, Alacami, Yukarıkocayatak, Kayaburnu, Çanakçı, Berendi, Kürüş, Sariabalı and Abdurrahmanlar (Figs. 14, 15, 16, 17).

In conclusion, as can be inferred from the discussion of the historical background and from the study of the tombstones given above, the Serik region was populated by Yoruks from the 13th century until the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkmen who lived in the area, followed their ancestors' cultural traditions, as exemplified by the crafting of their tombstones.

²⁸ <https://www.bilgipedia.com.tr/su-yolu-ve-zikzak/> (Accessed: 16.02.2022).

²⁹ Uçar 2020, 24-47.

³⁰ Çal 2021, 645-690.

³¹ Duggan 2019, 72-119.



Fig. 14. Tombstones in the Central Burial Ground of Gebiz



Fig. 15. Type 1.1 Tombstone in the Central Burial Ground of Gebiz



Fig. 16. Tombstones in the Burial Ground of Tekke Village



Fig. 17. Tombstone (Type 1.2) in the Burial Ground of Tekke Village

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