



Typological Analysis of Wooden Minaret Mosques in Tokat

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Abstract

Anatolia is a region that has hosted many civilizations since the beginning of history and has different climatic and geographical features. From past civilizations to the present, buildings, and ruins built using very different techniques and materials, showing rural or urban characteristics, and having public or civil use have remained. These cultural assets are valuable as they are documents of these civilizations. Mosques with wooden minarets, as witnesses of the past, exist as architectural works that include the technical, material, and technological development of the Ottoman period public life. However, they are disappearing day by day due to the scarcity of users triggered by migration, the problems of finding masters and materials for their protection use, and financing problems. This article aims to document and make a typological analysis of mosques with wooden minarets in the province of Tokat, where very few examples are still available. For this purpose, a field study was carried out to cover the whole province; The data obtained are presented by evaluating through the table.

1. INTRODUCTION

Anatolia has hosted many civilizations since the beginning of history and defines a rich geography. These civilizations in Anatolia have created a large number of movable and immovable cultural assets that can be said to have been built with high technical and aesthetic knowledge and experience. The material used in most of these historical monuments is mostly stone and brick, which has been an important reason for their preservation for many years. The use of mudbrick is seen in very few cultural assets from ancient civilizations to the present day, and they are usually unearthed as a result of excavations. On the other hand, Timber has found more usage area than mudbrick since it is both light and durable and easy to access in regions with dense forest texture. The oldest examples in Anatolia, where wood was used in construction, are known as wooden mosques from the Anatolian Seljuks and Principalities period. These structures, in which the çantı (Çandı) technique is used, were created by stacking wooden logs or lumber on top of each other. The oldest of these mosques, which are densely seen in the Black Sea region, especially in Samsun and Çarşamba regions, was dated to 1206 as Gökçeli (Göğçeli) Mosque, according to the determination of "P.İ. Kuniholm", a dendrochronology expert [1]. The Çantı technique is more common in coastal areas where forests are located. Another usage method of timber, which is used as a construction material in the Black Sea region, is the timber frame (local material filling between the timber frame) method. This construction system, which is generally encountered in civil architectural examples, is generally common in Anatolia; it is not specific to certain regions, such as the "çantı" system.

The province of Tokat, where the fieldwork of this study was carried out, is located in the Black Sea region, and it is located in the regions where the çantı and timber frame technique is seen, and wood is used extensively. It is seen that the wooden frame system was used in the majority of the civil, cultural assets in the urban site, especially in the late Ottoman period and in the mahal masjids and mosques. A small number of cultural assets are also made in the Çantı technique in the city. In this context, Niksar Gültepe village Alçakbel mosque can be shown as an example of a mosque built using the çantı

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technique. Another cultural asset in which the Çantı technique is used is the burial structures (graves) in Büyükyurt Village of Niksar district of Tokat province [2]. As a result of the tests, the oldest graves, seen as Sarcophaguses, were dated to 1871.

With the effect of being on the caravan routes, the city of Tokat, which has been important culturally and socially for centuries, has survived to the present day by preserving many cultural assets. Most of these cultural assets are mosques. There are publications containing a general review of the mosques in Tokat. Researchers working in this context include Aksulu [3, 4], Aksulu and Kuntay [5], Şimşirgil [6], Uysal [7], Seçgin [8], Erkaya [9], Akın [10]. However, studies on wooden minaret mosques are limited; the survey for the Tokat region is limited to a single one. Within the scope of publications on wooden minaret mosques in Anatolia, a Master's thesis including wooden minarets mosques in Sivas by Çeşnial [11], Ph.D. thesis including Wooden Minarets and Prayer Prayers in Konya Masjids by Sündüs [12], an article examining rural mosque minarets in Akseki district of Antalya by Sağiroğlu [13] and a doctoral thesis by Gülü [14] that includes the analysis of the structural system properties and earthquake behavior of wooden minarets. The publication "Mosques with Wooden Minarets in Tokat," specially prepared by Atak in 2016 for the mosques with wooden minarets in Tokat, is the only study on the subject [15]. However, this article examined the subject in terms of art history together with mosques, did not touch on the architectural features, and did not make a typological examination. There are also mosques with wooden minarets different from those documented in Atak's study, and they are evaluated within the scope of the article.

This study aims to document all the wooden minarets in the province of Tokat, on which a very limited number of studies have been made, and to evaluate them in terms of typology. In this context, the minarets were visually documented in situ with a field study covering the whole city; detailed drawings were made by taking sketches and surveys when necessary and analyzed within the scope of the data obtained through literature and document research and presented in tables.

2. THE USE OF WOOD IN RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AND WOODEN MINARETS

The word mosque derives from the Arabic root 'cem' and means collecting and bringing together [16]. The word masjid, on the other hand, is derived from the root of secûd, which means "to bow down in ruku, to rest one's forehead on the ground" in a way that means "place of prostration" [17]. Approximately eight centuries after the birth of Islam, the word mosque began to be used instead of the word masjid. The word masjid, on the other hand, started to be used in the sense of a "shrine without a pulpit," where prayers other than Friday prayers are performed.

The first mosque, with its known meaning, is a gazebo made of date branches placed on palm tree poles in the courtyard of the Prophet's house, and it is known as the Masjid-i Nabawi in Medina [18]. Starting from Masjid-i Nabawi, a section where the call to prayer (ezan) is announced, has been determined/designed in every mosque. It is known that Hazrat Bilal recited the ezan by climbing a rope from a high platform called "üstüvâne" on the qibla side of the Masjid i-Nabawi. In the first mosques, the call to prayer was announced from a high place, mostly from the roof. [19]. During the period of the Prophet Muhammad and the four caliphs following him, the minaret has not yet attained an architectural form. With the rapid spread of Islam and the increase in the number of Muslims in the conquered cities, high towers were needed to announce the ezan to a wider environment. The first minaret, known to have been built out of necessity, was built in Syria during the Umayyad period [20].

The first minarets were thought to be inspired by church bell towers or modeled after the lighthouse and similar towers. However, regardless of its inspiration, the minaret element, shaped as the most rational way to announce the call to prayer to more people and farther, does not show the same formal characteristics all over the Islamic world [21]. Minarets, which were started to be built in Islamic countries, were added to hangahs, tombs, and madrasas, as well as mosques. Although it is said that the pioneers of Turkish minarets are their ancestors in Central and Inner Asia [22]. They showed regional differences in different regions in terms of shape, form, and decoration [23].

Minarets are architectural elements that are shaped by culture as well as the effect of climate and geography. In this context, Anatolia's examples differ from those in other geographical and cultural regions. Sözen [24], Eyice [25], and Atak [15] stated that the square-section and bulky minaret type was seen in Egypt, Palestine, Maghrib, and Syria; similar ones are also found in Anatolia; Diez, on the other hand, states that the minaret type, which is called "Malviya style" and is climbed with spiral stairs from the outside, remains in a limited number of examples such as the Great Mosque of Samarra (848-52), Ebu Dulef Mosque (861-62) and Tolunoğlu Mosque (789) [26]. It is stated that the type of minaret, called "Mimber minaret" by Eyice and can be climbed by stairs, is encountered in various examples in Anatolia and Egypt [25]. On the other hand, the examples in Anatolia are generally cylindrical and thinned over the centuries, starting with the Ghaznavid and Karakhanids and reaching the most aesthetic and delicate appearance in the classical period of the Ottoman period.

As in mosques, the use of materials in minarets has been shaped and varied by culture and political will, as well as by climate, geography, and vegetation. Stones are seen in the minarets in the early examples of Egypt, Syria, and the southeast region of Anatolia [15, 25]. However, in regions dominated by the Great Seljuks and Anatolian Seljuks, minarets' most commonly used material can be determined as brick, with the influence of political will. Bakırer states that in this period, brick was used both as a building material and as a decorative material in terms of aesthetics [27]. Although the use of brick in minarets continued in the principalities and early Ottoman periods, as the classical period approached, stone material increased and became the main building material.

There is no information about the use of wood in minarets in the early period of Islam. However, considering that the climate and geographical conditions are important in this context, it seems possible to say that its use may be limited in the regions where Islam first spread. Knowing the use of wood in early mosques in Anatolia suggests that it was also used in minarets. In the literature research on wooden minarets in Anatolia, The earliest information is found about the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque after the conquest of Istanbul. It is known that after the conquest of Istanbul, Mehmet the Conqueror had a wooden minaret built in the Southwest corner of Hagia Sophia. Then he removed this minaret and built a polygonal brick minaret instead [28, 29]. Eyice states that the existence of a wooden single balcony minaret near the northwest corner of the building, which was converted into a mosque by Hırami Ahmet Pasha at the end of the sixteenth century on Wednesday, is evident from old paintings [30]. The wooden minarets that have survived until today are generally from the late Ottoman period and are dated to the 19/20 century.



Figure 1. The different types of minarets are according to their location. (a) Belenalan village minaret, (b) Ferhuniye Hacıkaymak Mosque minaret, (c) Acepşir mosque minaret, (d) Köprülü mosque minaret, (e) Arpacı Hayreddin mascid minaret.

Wooden minarets in Anatolia generally constitute two different types. The first of these types is the minaret type identified by Sağiroğlu (2016) in the Akseki ibradı basin; There is no information about where else it is found in Anatolia or the regions where it spreads. In this type, the main carrier of the

minaret is not closed around the main pole (seren), and the ladder is designed to reach directly from the ground, with or without relation to the main pole (seren) (Fig1a).

The other type of wooden minaret has cylindrical geometry and a closed outer wall. This type is common in Anatolia in general and in regions where wood is available throughout Anatolia. The main carrier of this minaret type is designed as a pillar formed by a solid wooden tree trunk. The wooden steps, which were positioned to surround the pillar all around, were surrounded by wooden covering boards and continued to the balcony. The finish of the minaret, which is completed with the şerefe and cone part, is usually covered with wood or metal material (Fig1 b,c,d,e).

Wooden minarets are designed in 4 different ways, depending on their location. Minarets can be located independently of the building or adjacent to the building. The examples designed adjacent to the building can be seen in 3 different ways. In the first two of these, the minaret is positioned on the main wall of the building and rises from the main wall (Fig1b) or, in a different way, from the upper cover (Fig1c). Another type of minaret, designed adjacent to the building, is the balcony-shaped "kiosk minaret." Examples of this type of minaret can be found in Köprülü Mosque (Fig1d) and Arpacı Hayrettin Masjid (Fig1e) in Istanbul [30].

3. THE TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE WOODEN MINARETS IN TOKAT

3.1. The Characteristics of The Study Field

The province of Tokat is located in the Central Black Sea Region, surrounded by the provinces of Samsun, Ordu, Sivas, Yozgat, and Amasya. Tokat has eight districts: Almus, Artova, Erbaa, Niksar, Reşadiye, Sulusaray, Turhal and Zile.

Although the exact date of establishment of Tokat is unknown, the cultural assets from the Chalcolithic Age indicate that the beginning of human settlement in the region may have started in 5400-3000 BC [31]. Hittite and Phrygian civilizations dominated the city between 2500-4000 and established important centers [32]. Tokat, which continued its existence as a border city during the Roman and Byzantine Empire periods, functioned as a garrison. Sheikh Meknun Lodge, which was built in the 12th century, is the oldest work that has survived the zoning activities in the city, which was under the rule of the Anatolian Seljuk state. Great structures such as Ebul Kasım Masjid and tomb, Sefer Pasha mosque and tomb, the second-degree trade route in the east-west direction, Ebu'ş.Şems Hangah, Pervane Bath, Gök Madrasa, Sümbül Baba Lodge and Halef Sultan Lodge; It was located on the plains around the main caravan route extending in the north-south direction in the 13th century. From the functions of these structures, it is seen that Tokat was an educational and cultural center as well as a commercial city in this period [33]. In the city, which came under the rule of Mongols as of 1243, Eratna Principality, Kadı Burhanettin State, and Akkoyunlu municipality ruled, respectively. Tokat was included in the territory of the Ottoman Empire in 1398 during the reign of Yıldırım Bayezid. As a result of the administrative regulations made in the 19th century, Tokat, which was administered as a county affiliated to the Sivas Province Central Sanjak, was raised to the status of a sanjak on January 12, 1880, by the will of Sultan Abdulhamid II, and continued its current administrative structure until 1920 [34].

Twenty-seven mosques with wooden minarets have been identified and documented in Tokat city center and its districts. Eight of these mosques are located in the city center of Tokat, and the others are in its districts. In the study, it was determined that the original minarets of 3 of the mosques found in the area did not exist, and new minarets were built with non-original materials after they were demolished. (Niksar Derebağ Mosque (Fig2n), Sulusaray Dutluca Village Malum Seyid Mosque (Fig2v), Zile Molla Yahya Mosque(Fig2ac)). Data on the original minarets of these mosques were obtained from the General Directorate of Foundations. [35].

3.1. The Typology of The Wooden Minaret Mosques in Tokat

Within the scope of the article, a field study was conducted in Tokat city center and its districts. In this study, 27 wooden minaret mosques were identified. These mosques are graphically and visually

documented; has been studied in detail. It has been determined that there are common and different features in the detected mosques and their minarets. All documented mosques and minarets are typologically classified according to these characteristics.



Figure 2. The wooden minarets of the mosques in the center of Tokat (Acepşir Mosque (a), Ahi Paşa Mosque (b), Akdeğirmen Mosque (c), Bozatalan Village Mosque (d), Gözova Village Mosque (e), Hoca Ahmet Mosque (f), Seyid Necmettin Mosque (g), Yolbaşı Mosque (h)); wooden minarets in Almus Province (Almus Gümeleönü Mosque (i)); wooden minarets in Artova Province; Yukarı Güçlü village Mosque (j)); wooden minarets in Niksar province (Akıncı Village Mosque (k), Alçakbel mosque (l), Çilhane Mosque (m), Derebağ Mosque (n)[35], Gazi Ahmet Mosque (o), Halil Efendi Mosque (p), Hanegah Mosque (q), Hüsam Mosque (r), Nalbantlar Mosque (s), Siragöz Mosque (t)); wooden minarets in Reşadiye province (Kızılcaören Mosque (u)), wooden minarets in Sulusaray province (Malum Seyyid Mosque (v)[35]); wooden minarets in Turhal province (Necip Village Mosque(y)), wooden minarets in Zile province (Behram Ağa (z), Beyazid Mosque (aa), Cedit Mosque (ab), Molla Yahya Mosque (ac)[35])

According to the results of the research, it has been seen that the oldest one of the documented mosques is the Beyazid Mosque in the Zile district. The building has two separate inscriptions showing the years 1206 and 1305. The construction year of the Şeyh Ethem tomb, located northeast of the mosque, is unknown. However, it is known that Şeyh Ethem Çelebi, who was buried in the tomb, died in 1356. The research determined that the Acepşir and Known Seyit mosques were built in the 14th century and the Bozatalan mosque in the 16th century. There are Ahi Paşa, Akdeğirmen, Seyid Necmeddin, Gümeleönü, and Molla Yahya mosques that have survived from the 18th century; Gözova Village Mosque, Artova Yukarı Güçlü Village Mosque, Niksar Gültepe Village Akçabel Mosque, Niksar Derebağ, Niksar Gazi Ahmet, Niksar Hanegah, Niksar Hüsam Necip Village Mosque and Niksar Nalbantlar mosques from the 19th century. Cedit Mosque, Zile Behram Ağa Mosque, Reşadiye Kızılcaören Village Mosque, Siragöz Mosque, Halil Efendi Mosque, Çilhane Mosque, Akıncı Village Mosque, Yolbaşı, and Hoca Ahmet Mosques are mosques with wooden minarets that have survived from the 20th century.

Table 1. The typological analysis of the wooden minarets in Tokat

NAME OF THE MOSQUE	CONS. DATE	LOCATION		OWNERSHIP		CONDITION			CONST. OF MOSQUE			CONST. OF MINARET		LOCATION OF MINARET				LOCATION OF ENTRANCE			
		RURAL	URBAN	DIR. GEN. FOUNDATIONS	VILLAGE LEGAL ENTITY	GOOD	MED.	BAD	WOODEN MASOHRY (GARTI)	MASOHRY	TIMBER FRAME (GATKI)	WOODEN MASOHRY (GARTI)	TIMBER FRAME (GATKI)	SEPERATED		ATTACHED		INSIDE		OUTSIDE	
														COURT YARD	LIFE COLUMNS PORTICO	MAIN WALL	ROOF	ADJES PRAYER HALL	PRAYER HALL	COURT YARD	LIFE COLUMNS PORTICO
1. Acepşir Mosque	M.1318 14.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓		✓		
2. Ahi Paşa Mosque	18.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓				✓
3. Akdeğirmen Mosque	M.1791 18.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓		✓		
4. Bozatalan Village Mosque	16.cent.	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓		✓							✓
5. Gözova Village Mosque	19.cent.	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓					✓	✓			
6. Hoca Ahmet Mosque	1911 20.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓		✓		
7. Seyid Necmettin Mosque	18.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓	✓			
8. Yolbaşı Mosque	1922 20.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓	✓			
9. Almus Gümeleönü Village Mosque	M.1795 18.cent.	✓			✓			✓		✓		✓		✓							✓
10. Artova Yukarı Güçlü Village Mosque	M.1803 19.cent.	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓		✓							✓
11. Niksar Akıncı Village Mosque	20.cent.	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓					✓	✓			
12. Niksar Gültepe village Alçakbel Mosque	19.cent.	✓			✓			✓	✓			✓		✓							✓
13. Niksar Çilhane Mosque	1938 20.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓	✓			
14. Niksar Derebağ Mosque	19.cent.		✓	✓			✓				✓	✓					✓	✓			
15. Niksar Gazi Ahmet Mosque	19.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓					✓	✓			
16. Niksar Halil Efendi Mosque	1947 20.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓			✓			✓			
17. Niksar Hanegah Mosque	1870 19.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓					✓			
18. Niksar Hüsam Mosque	1890 19.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓			✓			✓			
19. Niksar Nalbantlar Mosque	19.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓				✓	✓				
20. Niksar Sıragöz Mosque	20.cent.		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓								✓
21. Reşadiye Kızılcaören Village Mosque	20.cent.	✓			✓	✓					✓	✓	✓								✓
22. Sulusaray Dutluca vill. Malum Seyid mosque	14.cent.	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓	✓								✓
23. Turhal Necip village Mosque	19.cent.	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓	✓								✓
24. Zile Behram Ağa Mosque	1938 20.cent.		✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓							✓	
25. Zile Beyazıt Mosque Şeyh Ethem Tomb	M. 1206 13.cent.		✓	✓			✓				✓	✓					✓	✓			
26. Zile Cedid Mosque	1922 20.cent.		✓	✓			✓				✓	✓					✓	✓			
27. Zile Molla Yahya Mosque	1795 18.cent.		✓	✓			✓				✓	✓					✓	✓			

According to the results obtained from the research, 9 of the mosques are located in rural areas, and 18 are in the urban area in Tokat city center and district centers. The ownership of the buildings in the rural area is in the Village's Legal Entity, and the ownership of the buildings in the Urban Area is in the General Directorate of Foundations.

In the examination carried out in the area, it was determined that 14 buildings were in good condition; and didn't have problems in terms of structural or structural may require limited repairs such as material and components. 4 of the mosques were determined to be in the middle case that needs repair about floor, ceiling, equipment or components. Nine of the mosques are in bad condition. These mosques have structural problems, and they are at risk of collapse. In the study carried out in the area, it was determined that three mosques (Niksar Derebağ Mosque, Sulusaray Dutluca Village Malum Seyid Mosque, and Zile Molla Yahya Mosque) have minarets made of reinforced concrete or similar non-original materials. However, the literature review determined that the wooden minarets found in old photographs and archive records were demolished and turned into non-original materials. The visuals of the original minarets of the buildings were obtained from the archive records. The Mosque, located in Turhal Necip Village, is not

used today because the village has moved to a close location. The building has recently suffered a fire. During the investigation, the ruins of the original minaret were found.

When the mosques are examined in terms of the construction system, it is seen that 25 mosques have the same construction system as a "timber frame system filled by local materials (wood, mudbrick, brick or stone). The construction system of the Almus Gümeleönü Mosque was determined as stone masonry. Niksar Gültepe Village Alçakbel Mosque, on the other hand, was built with the wooden masonry (Çantı) technique and differed from the others. This mosque is out of use today, and its minaret was destroyed.



Figure 3. Mosques with different construction systems are available in the study area. Niksar hanegah mosque (timber frame - a), Almus Gümeleönü Mosque (stone masonry-b), Niksar Gültepe Village Alçakbel Mosque -c)

When the construction system of the minarets is examined, it is seen that they were mostly built in the wooden frame system. However, the minarets of the Bozatalan Village Mosque, Artova Yukarı Güçlü Village Mosque, and Turhal Necip Village Mosques were built in the wooden masonry (çantı) technique.



Figure 4. The photographs of the Bozatalan village mosque

When the position of the minarets relative to the mosque is examined, it is seen that 10 of the 27 minarets were built separately from the mosque. In contrast, the others had a physical relationship with the mosque. Among the other minarets adjacent (attached) to the mosque, Niksar Halil Efendi and Niksar Hüsam Mosque minarets were built adjacent to the main mosque wall and the others to the roof.



Figure 5. *Almus Gümeleönü Mosque, located in the latecomers' area (a), Niksar Halil Efendi (b) and Niksar Hüsam Mosque (c) Minarets located adjacent to the mosque.*

The entrances of the minarets are positioned in 2 different ways, inside or outside the mosque. The entrance to the 18 minarets is from inside the mosque, the sanctuary, and the women's quarters. Among these structures, the entrance of the Acepşir mosque, Akdeğirmen mosque, Hacı Ahmet mosque, and Zile Bahram Ağa mosques can be accessed from within the mosque, and the others from the women's lounge. The nine minarets' entrance is from the mosque courtyard and the last congregation area. Among these structures, Ahipaşa mosque, Almus Gümeleönü village mosque, and Niksar Gültepe village Akçakbel mosque minarets can be reached from the previous congregation place and the others from the courtyard.

4. CONCLUSION

The Central Black Sea Region, where Tokat Province is located, entered into an accelerating urbanization process after 1950, as in all of Turkey. In this process, the region migrated to big cities, which are thought to contain relatively better and diverse employment opportunities, living-cultural conditions, and urban standards [36]. The second factor that plays a role in the slowdown of urbanization is that labor migration to European countries, especially Germany, creates a separate option for the rural population. The fact that Germany's demand for unskilled labor has created an essential market for Turkey has created a new alternative for those who will migrate to the cities within the country, and this demand continued through official channels until the mid-1970s [37]. This situation has created a threat to the preservation of the buildings due to the decrease in the use of mosques in the rural area. In regions where population density increases, it is observed that new mosques and minarets are built depending on the demand for use and the ease of construction system. This system accelerates the destruction process of wooden structures. In the examination made in the area, it was determined that the wooden minarets of 3 mosques (Niksar Derebağ Mosque, Sulusaray Dutluca Village Malum Seyid Mosque, Zile Molla Yahya Mosque) were demolished and converted into reinforced concrete.

Twenty-seven mosques were documented in the study area. Nine of these mosques are located in the rural area, and 18 are located at the border of the urban area. The ownership of the buildings in the rural area is in the Village's Legal Entity, and the ownership of the buildings in the Urban Area is in the General Directorate of Foundations. The restoration costs of the buildings under the control of the General Directorate of Foundations are financed by the state. For this reason, these structures are generally in good and usable condition. However, it was determined that the buildings in the village's legal entity could not be restored due to budgetary problems. Therefore, they were dilapidated, and the correspondences made in the documents examined mostly demanded the demolition of the building by removing it from registration. Turhal Necip Village Mosque can be given as an example of this situation. The mosque remained idle after the village's relocation and recently suffered a fire. During the investigation, the minaret wreckage was found.

As in the world, interest in rural architectural heritage is increasing daily in our country, and studies on the protection of rural heritage are intensified. One of the most important reasons for this interest is the provision of the most effective, appropriate, and economical solutions with the material obtained from the immediate environment and constructing structures according to the needs. However, research on rural architecture in Anatolia mostly covers civil architecture, and studies on rural religious architecture are very limited. When the literature is examined within the scope of this study, it is seen that Aksulu and Sağiroğlu (2014) identified six mosques with wooden minarets in Tokat City Center in their research on the late period mosques built in the city center of Tokat between the 18th and 20th centuries [33]. Atak, who conducted a 2016 study, stated that he identified wooden minarets in 6 mosques in the city center, 2 in Niksar Center, and one mosque in Reşadiye Kızılcaören village and that these structures were dated to the 19th and 20th centuries [15]. However, this study has documented that the number of mosques with wooden minarets in Tokat province and its districts is 27, and these mosques have been brought to the literature.

As a result of the research, it has been concluded that the minarets are the least remarkable part in terms of the lost rural cultural heritage. When the registration slips approved by the Conservation Boards were examined, it was determined that the wooden minarets of the registered mosques were mostly not mentioned. None of the minarets in the study area are actively used today. However, many of the mosques and masjids in question still maintain their originality regarding construction systems and material usage.

Historical artifacts are one of the most important assets that reflect the past of a society or country and reveal its culture and civilization today. Despite the introduction of the legal regulation on urban conservation in Turkey in the 1970s, the desired goal could not be achieved as a result of not allocating the necessary resources for conservation, not providing technical assistance to the owners of cultural assets, carrying out the practices in this area by people who did not receive conservation training, and not realizing the inspection. The research shows that the practices for protecting ancient artifacts in the province of Tokat have been done more consciously in recent years. Still, the public's awareness of conservation has yet to develop fully, how the repair process of the ancient artifact should be in terms of functioning is not guided correctly, and the application stages are not known.

With the studies carried out throughout the province of Tokat, the original characteristics of many buildings and areas have been determined and taken under protection. However, there are regions where detailed research has yet to be carried out, and it has been determined that there are yet to be registered structures in these regions with the characteristics of cultural assets to be protected. For this reason, it is necessary to make a detailed examination, especially in rural areas. Thus, wooden minarets, considered cultural assets to be protected, will be demolished and replaced with reinforced concrete minarets, and registered structures will be protected.

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