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Conservation and Repair Process of Turkish Islamic Artifacts: Kayseri Ulu Mosque Ali Saim Ülgen Repairs

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Abstract

Kayseri Ulu Cami (The Great Mosque of Kayseri) was built in the Middle Ages and is one of the most important buildings of Turkish-Islamic architecture as a spatial representation of Kayseri's urban identity and social belonging. The mosque a foundation building, has been able to preserve its existence thanks to the repairs it has undergone from its construction to the present day. In this study, the historical and architectural features of the building are described, and a brief cross-section of the repair practices it underwent from its construction until the end of the Ottoman Period is given. The conservation and repair process that the building has undergone until today is described in chronological order by taking into account all the data, such as documents, drawings, photographs, etc., belonging to the building, especially the Presidential State Archives, the General Directorate of Foundations Archive, Salt Galata Ali Saim Ülgen Archive, and especially the early Republican Period repairs of Ali Saim Ülgen are emphasized in detail. This study, which focuses on the early conservation practices of Kayseri Ulu Cami, aims to evaluate the building within the framework of the periodic conditions; in this way, it seeks to shed light on an essential section of the history of conservation and repair in Türkiye and to create a scientific basis for future interventions.

Keywords: *Conservation history, Turkish Islamic Arts, Kayseri Great Mosque, conservation, preservation.*

Türk-İslam Eserleri Koruma ve Onarım Süreci: Kayseri Ulu Cami Ali Saim Ülgen Onarımları

Öz

Kayseri Ulu Cami, Orta Çağ'da inşa edilmiş olup Kayseri kent kimliği ve toplumsal aidiyetin mekânsal bir temsili olarak, Türk-İslam mimarisinin en önemli yapılarından biridir. Vakıf yapısı niteliği taşıyan cami inşa edildiği dönemden günümüze uzanan süreçte geçirdiği onarımlar sayesinde varlığını koruyabilmiştir. Bu çalışmada, yapının tarihî ve mimari özellikleri tanımlanarak, inşa edildiği dönemden Osmanlı Dönemi sonuna kadar geçirdiği onarım uygulamalarının kısa bir kesiti verilmiştir. Yapının günümüze kadar geçirdiği koruma ve onarım süreci başta Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri, Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi, Salt Galata Ali Saim Ülgen Arşivi olmak üzere, yapıya ait belge, çizim, fotoğraf vb. tüm veriler göz önüne alınarak kronolojik sıra ile anlatılmış, özellikle Ali Saim Ülgen'e ait Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi onarımları üzerinde ayrıntılı biçimde durulmuştur. Kayseri Ulu Cami'nin erken dönem koruma uygulamalarını odağına alan bu çalışma, yapının dönemsel koşullar çerçevesinde değerlendirilmesini amaçlamakta; bu sayede Türkiye'de koruma ve onarım tarihinin önemli bir kesitine ışık tutarak gelecekte gerçekleştirilecek müdahaleler için bilimsel bir zemin oluşturmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Koruma Tarihi, Türk-İslam Sanatı, Kayseri Ulu Cami, koruma, onarım.*

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1. Introduction

When considering the formation and architectural development of Turkish Islamic cities, one of the most crucial factors determining cities' Islamic, cultural, artistic, and historical value is the Great Mosques, the city's largest mosques. These mosques, which are generally named after the person who commissioned their construction or referred to as “Cami-i Kebir” (Great Mosque), have existed since the early periods of Islamic history (Çam, 2012, p. 80). Although the great mosques built in Anatolia during the Principalities Period and the Seljuk Period have different plan types, they are generally architectural compositions consisting of perpendicular or parallel courts to the mihrab and having a domed plan typology in front of the mihrab (Çam, 2012, p. 81).

Great mosques play a critical role as worship centers in Islamic societies, often reflecting the symbolic importance of cities. Throughout history, mosques and masjids, as the fundamental structures of religious architecture in the newly conquered lands, were constructed in varying scales and dimensions depending on the geographical conditions, building materials, and construction techniques of the regions in which they were built (Ekinci Dağtekin, 2024, p. 250). Kayseri Ulu Cami is one of the most comprehensive and oldest religious monumental buildings in the center of Kayseri. At the time of its construction, it was the largest mosque in the city, and even though the Hunat Hatun Mosque was built later, it continued to be called the Great Mosque. Although many historical buildings in Kayseri bear traces of Islamic civilization and architecture, the Great Mosque, which has a special position among these buildings, stands out as one of the rare monumental buildings that has preserved its importance from the early Islamic period to the present day.

Foundations, which have a vital place in Islamic States, have played an active role in ensuring the functional continuity of the architectural heritage, including mosques, and transferring it to future generations. For this reason, most of the buildings built in the past were supported by foundations or transferred to foundations (Yediyıldız, 1986, p. 153-172). One of the most crucial factors in the formation, shaping, and preservation of Anatolian Turkish art and architecture is the institution of “foundation” (Kunter, 1969, p. 9-15). Looking at the history of conservation in Türkiye, it is seen that the foundations of architectural conservation practices are based on repairs conducted within the framework of the foundation system. In the Seljuk and Principalities Periods, although there was no conservation consciousness in the modern sense, maintenance and repair activities carried out through foundations were the primary determinant in ensuring the continuity of buildings and preserving their physical existence. This institutional continuity is secured not only by tradition, but also by administrative regulations and job descriptions introduced by foundation law. In the waqf system, repairing foundation properties that were damaged or at risk of collapse was unconditionally accepted as one of the most fundamental responsibilities of the trustee.

In some cases, even if it was explicitly stated in the waqf that no repairs were to be made, this provision was not valid in practice; on the contrary, it is noted that the repair of waqf buildings took precedence over all charitable works (Akgündüz, 1994, p. 115). This understanding continued in the Classical Period of the Ottoman Empire, when the foundation system significantly protected immovable cultural assets. In this period, approaches to the conservation of buildings were shaped in line with the general understanding of governance and social needs of the period; cultural assets, especially the preservation of foundation buildings, were approached from a utilitarian point of view based mainly on their “use value” (Madran, 1985, p. 513).

The foundations, which play an active role in forming and repairing Turkish Islamic monuments, also prominent in following the conservation, maintenance, and repair changes. The foundation institution experienced its heyday in the 17th century, and a new structuring was introduced in the 18th century for assorted reasons (Durukan, 2004, p. 23). During the Westernization process, the tendency towards institutionalization and centralization manifested itself in foundations as in all fields (Akşehirlioğlu, 2022, p. 68). The most prominent indicator of institutionalization is the adoption of specialization for institutions that had lost their qualities and functions following the Tanzimat Period and the establishment of supervision for different fields. In this context, one of the first departments to be

established was the "Nezareti Evkafı Hümayun" which was to undertake the maintenance, repair, and restoration of foundations (Madran, 2002, p.4).

In the Republic's first years, the government had to work on conservation as it did on every other issue. However, it was not possible to ignore the existing system as it would have been a significant waste of time to abolish all the legal and institutional arrangements of the Ottoman Empire, create new ones, and implement them accordingly (Durukan, 2004, p. 29). With the arrangements made in the initial period of the Republic, the two leading institutions responsible for conservation in the Empire continued their duties, and the Ministry of Education was established instead of the Ottoman Ministry of Education. Instead of the "Nezareti Evkafı Hümayun" the Ministry of Sharia and Evkaf was created (Madran, 2002, p. 96). With Law No. 429 of 1924, this Ministry was affiliated with the Office of the Prime Minister as the General Directorate of Evkaf (Öztürk, 1995, p. 379). Within this framework, mosques, masjids, lodges, and tombs were first affiliated with the Directorate of Religious Affairs, and the management of these structures was transferred back to the General Directorate of Evkaf in 1931 (Madran, 2002, p. 101).

Some of the laws, institutions, or experts working in institutions that the Empire had established in the field of conservation continued to exist with minor adjustments. Ali Saim Ülgen, one of the most important actors of the Early Republican Period in the field of conservation, who worked on many works in the 1950s, took an active role in the preservation and restoration of Turkish Islamic monuments both in the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums (EEMGM) under the Ministry of Education and the General Directorate of Foundations (VGM). One of the critical buildings he dealt with in this context was the Kayseri Ulu Cami, and the repair protocol and works of the building in 1956 are among the essential documents of the period. Although the conservation practices in the 1950s are not expected to match today's conservation criteria, it is a crucial document reflecting the period's conservation understanding and repair techniques. Today, the healthy preservation of historical monuments and their transfer to the future with their original qualities largely depends on the documentation of the repair processes of the past and the analytical evaluation of these processes.

This study briefly summarizes the conservation and restoration process of Kayseri Ulu Cami from its construction to the present day. It examines the restoration works planned by Ali Saim Ülgen in the 1950s. This study, which aims to explore the legal, administrative, and organizational functioning system of the conservation history of Türkiye through the maintenance, repair, and conservation works of Kayseri Ulu Cami, firstly provides information about the historical and architectural features of the mosque, which has an essential place in Turkish Islamic history. Then, according to the information obtained from various archives, documents and photographs, the conservation and repair history of Kayseri Ulu Cami in the Seljuk, Ottoman, and Early Republican periods is explained, and the infrastructure of the repairs made in the 1950s is revealed. The work and documents of the building carried out by Ali Saim Ülgen in the 1950s are given in detail, and notes from the post-repair state of the building are shared to evaluate the process correctly and to provide a basis for future studies.

2. Material and Method

In this study, the conservation and repair process of historical buildings is examined in a historical context, such as the case of Kayseri Ulu Cami, one of the Turkish Islamic monuments. This study, which examines the repair phases of the Kayseri Ulu Cami in a historical sequence and reveals the nature of these interventions and their relationship with the conservation understanding and practices of the period, adopts a qualitative research method; literature review, examination of archival documents and historical analysis techniques were used together. First, books, journals, academic theses, dissertations, peer-reviewed articles, project reports, and conservation legislation were systematically scanned to obtain information on the subject; a general framework for the building was created in light of the opinions and evaluations in the literature.

The location, historical development, spatial organization, and architectural features of Kayseri Ulu Cami are evaluated; the repairs that the building underwent during the Seljuk, Ottoman, and Republican periods since its construction are examined in detail. In particular, the repairs carried out by Ali Saim Ülgen during the Early Republican Period are discussed in detail, supported by documents,

and subjected to an analytical evaluation. Within the scope of the archival research, which constitutes the original aspect of the study, documents related to the building were accessed and analyzed in the Ottoman Archive and the Republican Archive of the Presidency of the State Archives, the Archive of the General Directorate of Foundations, the Archive of the Kayseri Regional Directorate of Foundations, the Archive of Salt Galata and the Archive of the Kayseri Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural Assets. In line with the information obtained, the interventions made through the repair processes determined according to the historical sequence, the conservation approaches of the period, and the problems encountered were discussed in detail; thus, a holistic evaluation of the conservation process of the building was made (Figure 1).

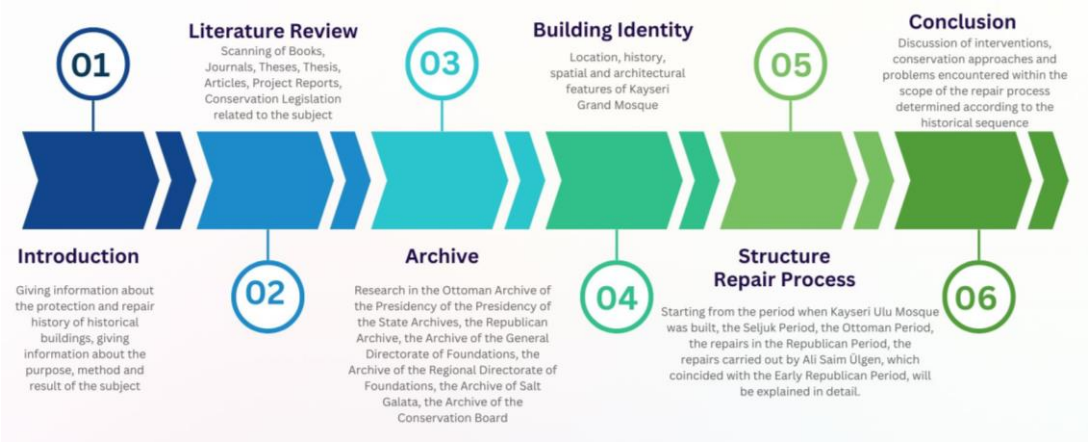


Figure 1. A flowchart systematically summarizes the research's methodological process and the stages of data collection and analysis (Created by the author)

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Kayseri Ulu Cami (Cami-i Kebir/Sultan Mosque) Historical Background

Kayseri Ulu Cami is in the city center, in the Cami Kebir neighborhood near the covered bazaar (Figure 2). The Great Mosques in Islamic cities are usually known by the city's name or the person who built the mosque, but they have also been known as Friday mosques (Çam, 2012, p. 80). The Kayseri Ulu Cami, the largest mosque of the period, was built and known as Cami-i Kebir and Sultan Mosque (Tanman, 1993, p. 475). Although it is thought that the building, which is referred to as "Sultan Mosque" in old records, was converted from an old church, it is stated that the Roman and Byzantine capitals seen on the bearing columns are spolia (Turan, 1993, p. 59).



Figure 2. Kayseri Ulu Cami general view (Kayseri from the air, 2023)

Although there are different opinions about the construction date of the mosque built by the Danishmendids (Tok, 2014, p. 66-67), it is thought that it was built by the Danishmend Emir Melik Mehmed Gazi (1134-1141/42) in the second quarter of the 12th century, between 1135-1142, when Kayseri was the Danishmendid capital (Ahmed Nazif Efendi, 1987, p. 14). The building called Melikgazi Madrasah, which was built adjacent to the south facade of the mosque and dated to the same period as the mosque, has not survived to the present day. Since the area around the mosque was used as a trade area during the Ottoman Period, there are critical monumental buildings around it, such as the Vezir Inn, built by the famous grand vizier of the period, Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Pasha, dated 1727, and the Raşit Efendi Library built in the 19th century (Tok, 2014, p. 67).

The construction inscription, which has a prominent place in the dating of the building, has not survived to the present day, and the oldest inscription on Kayseri Ulu Cami is located on the wall near the door opening to the north of the building. The inscription reads in Turkish: "*This mosque was repaired by Muzaffereddin Mahmud, son of Kılıçarslan, the great Sultan Keyhüsrev - may Allah glorify his help - in 602 (1206)*" and refers to the repairs and maintenance (Eldem, 1982, p.46).

Meinecke (1976, p. 1787) gives 1100-1150 as the first construction date, while Halil Edhem (1982, p. 57) states that Melik Mehmed built the mosque Gazi from the Kayseri Sher'i Court Registers, in which case Emir Muzaffereddin Mahmud repaired the mosque built by his grandfather. Gabriel (1954, p. 41), citing the mosque's construction style and architectural features, believes it was built in the first half of the sixth century AH (12th century AD), much earlier than the date on the repair inscription. Aslanapa (1991, p. 15) claimed that the inscription is a repair inscription and that the first mosque was built in the mid-12th century by Yağıbasan, who built the domed madrasas in Niksar and Tokat. Mehmet Çayırdağ (1992, p. 55) and Kadir Özdamarlar (1979, p. 9). In parallel to Edhem, they stated that Melik Mehmed Gazi of Danishmendli built the mosque. However, differently, they state that the person who commissioned the repairs was not Emir Muzaffereddin Mahmud's grandson but his nephew.

Kuban (2002, p. 132) cited that the repair inscription dates to the 1200s as evidence that the mosque was built in the 12th century. Like other researchers, Kuban (2002, p. 132) thinks that the builder of the building was Melik Muhammed (1135–1142), the son of Melik Gazi, the most prominent of the Danishmend dynasty, to whom Sultan Sancar gave the title of Melik. Çakmakoğlu Kuru (1998, p. 51) also supports this view and dates the mosque's construction to the same period.

3.2. Architectural and Artistic Definition

The Ulu Mosque, has a rectangular plan in the north-south direction, five pitches extending perpendicular to the qibla wall, and a dome in front of the mihrab. The opening in the center of the Harim on the Mihrab axis is also covered with a dome, while the other pitches are covered with wooden beams and flat ceilings. The upper cover is carried by spolia columns and pillars connected with arches; cut stone, braided pillars, or marble columns are in different shapes. Although the arches extend in the east-west direction, there are arch arrangements in the north-south direction perpendicular to the qibla wall in the pitches on both sides of the dome in front of the mihrab. The pitch perpendicular to the mihrab is wider than the others and gradually expands towards the dome in front of the mihrab. The dome in front of the mihrab is carried by two legs adjacent to the wall in the south and two L-shaped legs in the north. The transition to the dome covering the dome in front of the mihrab and the middle opening is provided by pendants (Figure 3).

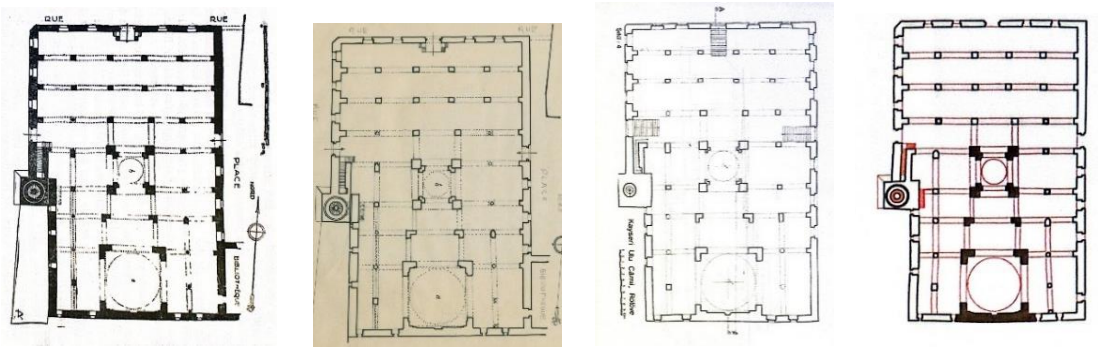


Figure 3. Plans of the Kayseri Ulu Cami (Gabriel 1954, p.40; ASÜA, Ali Saim Ülgen, n.d.a; ÇakmakOğlu Kuru, 1998, p. 1015; Kuban, 2002, p. 132)

There is a minaret with a square pedestal near the middle of the western wall, and due to this irregularity, the irregular rectangular mosque is entered through the doors in the middle of the north wall and the fifth stage of the east and west walls from the south. The façade of the mosque is arranged, and it is seen that dark-colored cut stone was used in the construction, brick was used in the minaret, and spolia was used in the column capitals.

The eastern façade of the mosque has three windows with flat arches, stone jambs, iron railings, and a crown door placed towards the north of the mosque, and it is connected to the library in the southeast direction. There are four rectangular framed windows with flat lintels on the south façade, and the most prominent feature on the west façade is the minaret in the center. The south of the west façade narrows inward due to the minaret, and the west crown gate is symmetrically located to the east crown gate. There are six windows with flat arches and a closed door on the west façade. The minaret south of the west façade has a square base, octagonal lugs, a cylindrical body, and a single balcony.

3.3. Notes from the History of Repairs

Information on the conservation activities of the mosque until the Ottoman Period is limited, and the primary sources on the construction processes and repairs of the building consist of construction and repair inscriptions and the endowments of the buildings. The first source of information on the repairs of Kayseri Ulu Cami in that period is the four-line marble inscription dated 1205-1206, written in thuluth, located next to the door of the north façade. Although the inscription does not explicitly provide information about the repair, the fact that the word "ammare" also means "rebuilding and repairing a destroyed building" has led to the evaluation of the inscription as a repair inscription (Eldem, 1982, p. 46). Ömür Bakırer (1971, p. 337-362) believes that the minaret adjacent to the west wall was added during the repairs carried out between 1205-6. There are also opinions that the north of the mosque was expanded during the Seljuk Period and that the north façade belongs to these repairs, while the north façade took its present form during the repairs carried out in 1722 during the Ottoman Period (Arslan, 2007, p. 753).

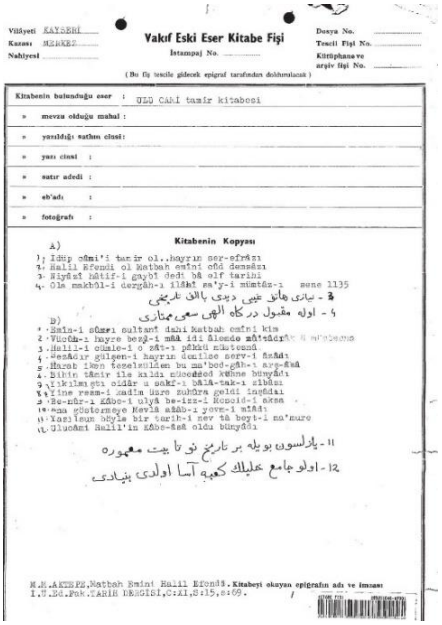
Like other mosques, a foundation system managed Kayseri Ulu Cami during its construction and the Ottoman Period, and documents dated 1500 and 1584 contain information on the foundation of Ulu Mosque (Demircan Özırmak, 1992, p. 66-67). The documents provide detailed information on the returns of the land, houses, villages, etc., endowed to the mosque, the officials' wages, total income, and expenditure. In the 16th and 17th centuries, there was information on the various properties endowed with the building and their rental income. Still, the amount spent on maintenance and repair and detailed information are unavailable (Peşter, 2001, p. 56-57).

There is also various information about Ulu Mosque in Kayseri Sher'iyye Registers on different subjects. This information is found in the Kayseri Sher'iyye Registry Books for Ulu Mosque, which were created in 1609, 1625, 1640, 1644, 1687, 1744, 1748, 1856, and 1871 (Özgen Fidan, 2007, p. 8). The information in these documents generally relates to the shops and land donated to the mosque, the foundation officers, and changes in the mosque officials. These documents have no information about which institutions or individuals carried out the repairs and how much they were paid.

Kahraman and Dağlı (1999, p. 235) refers to the mosque as "Abi Muhammad ibn Talip Mosque" and states it is popularly known as the Ulu Mosque. He states that the building is the oldest structure in the city and refers to the mosque: *"... It has a long brick minaret that is similar to the minaret of the Melik Gazi Mosque in the city of Niksar. There is no bigger and older mosque in the city of Kayseri. It is a completely solid masonry structure. All its walls are covered with (---). Its courtyard is decorated with weeping willow trees throughout. Boyacı Gate and Kadı Hamamı are close to this mosque*" (Kahraman & Dağlı 1999, p. 235). Although there is no information about the repair, it is noteworthy to emphasize the critical place of the building in Turkish Islamic Architecture and provide information about its use in that period.

The first record of the repair works of the mosque during the Ottoman Period is found in the repair inscriptions on the north gate of the building (Aydın, 2013, p. 104) (Figure 4). The inscription on the eastern entrance of the building indicates that an earthquake occurred in 1714-1715, which caused considerable damage to the building (Aydın, 2013, p. 105). The building was repaired in 1722-1723 by Haci Halil Efendi, the Matbah Emir in the palace, and two separate inscriptions were added on the north door. From the inscription on the building; *"... While this ma'bed resembling the sky was destroyed by the zelzel / He renewed this ruined building with the best repair, its beautiful dome, wall and upper cover were destroyed / Again the building was formed like its old shape..."* detailed

information can be obtained that the dome, wall and upper cover of the building were repaired. Another vital point that draws attention in the inscription is that it clarifies how the building was repaired and that the repair was made while remaining faithful to the original (Aydın, 2013, p. 106). It is thought that the mosque acquired its Ottoman Period appearance after the 1716 earthquake, and the door close to the qibla on the west façade was added during this period (Tok, 2014, p. 66-67).


Vilâyeti KAYSERİ
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Vakıf Eski Eser Kitabe Fişi

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Tescil Fişi No.
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(Bu fiş tescile gidecek epigraf tarafından doldurulacak)

Kitabenin bulunduğu eser : ULU CAMİ tamir kitabesi
» mevzu olduğu mahal :
» yazıldığı sathın cinsi :
» yazı cinsi :
» satır adedi :
» eb'adı :
» fotoğrafı :

Kitabenin Kopyası

A)

1) İdüp cāmi'i tamir ol..hayrın ser-efrāzı
2) Hallī Efendi ol Katbah emīni ofd denāzı
3) Hijrāt hātif-i gaybī dedi bā elf tarihi
4) Ola makbūl-i dergāh-ı ilāhī sa'y-i mümtāz-ı sene 1135

3 - نیازی هاتف غیبی دیدی یاالق تاریخی
4 - اوله مقبول درگاه الهی سعی ممتازی

B)

1 Emīn-i sūmrı sultānī dahi Katbah emīni kim
2 Vücūh-ı hayre bezl-i mālā idi âlemde mûteâzir
3 Hallī-i cümle-i o vakt-i pākīzā sıfatzenāt
4 Nedādır gülşen-i hayrın denilse serv-i āzādı
5 Harab iken fezlullāhen bu ma'bed-gāh-ı arş-sā
6 Bitin tāmir ile kaldı cedīdden nakşına binyādı
7 Tikilmişti oldūr u sakf-ı bālā-tak-ı zibāsı
8 Eline resm-i zadın üzre sudūra geldi inşādası
9 Be-ehr-i kābe-i ulyā be-izz-i Kıbleid-i arsa
10 Ana yüzlerneye Kevlā abāb-ı yevm-i mīādı
11 Yazılmış böyle bir tarih-i nev tā beyt-i ma'mure
12 Ulucāmi Hallī'in kābe-sā oldu bünyādı

11 - یازلسون بویله بر تاریخ نو تا بیت معموره
12 - اولو جامع خلیلك كعبه آسا اولدی بنیادی

M.M.AKTEPE,Katbah Emini Halil Efendi. Kitabeyi okuyan epigrafın adı ve imzası
I.Ü.Ed.Fak.TARİH DERGİSİ,C:XI,S:15,s:69.

Figure 4. The repair inscription on the north door of the building in the foundation repair receipt (VGMA, n.d.b)

Another information about the repairs carried out during the Ottoman Period can be learned from the inscription dated 1814-15 on the building. The inscription states that repairs were carried out by Salih Pasha, but does not give any information about the details of the repairs (Aydın, 2013, p. 108). It is learned from Ahmet Nazif Efendi that these repairs were mostly simple repairs, such as plastering and painting in the mosque's interior (Ahmed Nazif Efendi, 1987, p. 15). Ahmed Nazif Efendi (1987, p. 189) states that the Ulu Mosque of Kayseri was affected by the earthquakes of 1835 and that the minaret was partially damaged, while Aydın (2013, p. 108) suggests that the stone part of the minaret's nave may have been built during the repairs made after this earthquake. From the same source, it is learned that Kayseri Naibi Nuri Efendi repaired the building in 1837-1838 and that Hacı Torun Efendi repaired the small door in the center of the building in 1857 (Ahmed Nazif Efendi, 1987, p. 15).

The inscription on the dome in front of the mihrab of the building, which is thought to date back to 1874-1875 (H. 1291), indicates that charity lovers carried out a repair, and it is believed that the repair was carried out on the east side of the dome in front of the mihrab (Aydın, 2013, p. 109). Another source of information about the building after this date is Edmund Naumann, a traveler in the 1890s. The traveler visited Kayseri Ulu Cami and stated that the spolia from the Roman and Byzantine periods were used in the Ulu Mosque as in many other buildings (Eravşar, 2000, p. 324).

The most important source of information about the extensive repairs carried out on the building is the documents in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (BOA, 1901) (Figure 5). A document dated May 6, 1901, provides information about the repairs in 1885-1886 and 1898-1899. Ahmed Nazif Efendi (1987, p. 17) states that in the 1885 repairs, the gate on the eastern façade was widened, and in the 1898-1899 repairs, the rotten wooden poles forming the upper cover of the building were renewed by the locals for 8000 kuruş. A 1901 document in the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry of the State Archives proves these repairs and states that the upper cover of the Ulu Mosque was repaired for 3000 kuruş. Aydın (2013, p. 110) attributes the difference between the amount stated by Ahmed Nazım Efendi and the official document to the public's help. From this document, it is also learned that repairs such as plastering and painting were carried out within the scope of simple maintenance, and 10500 kurus was required for the repair of the mihrab (BOA, 1901).

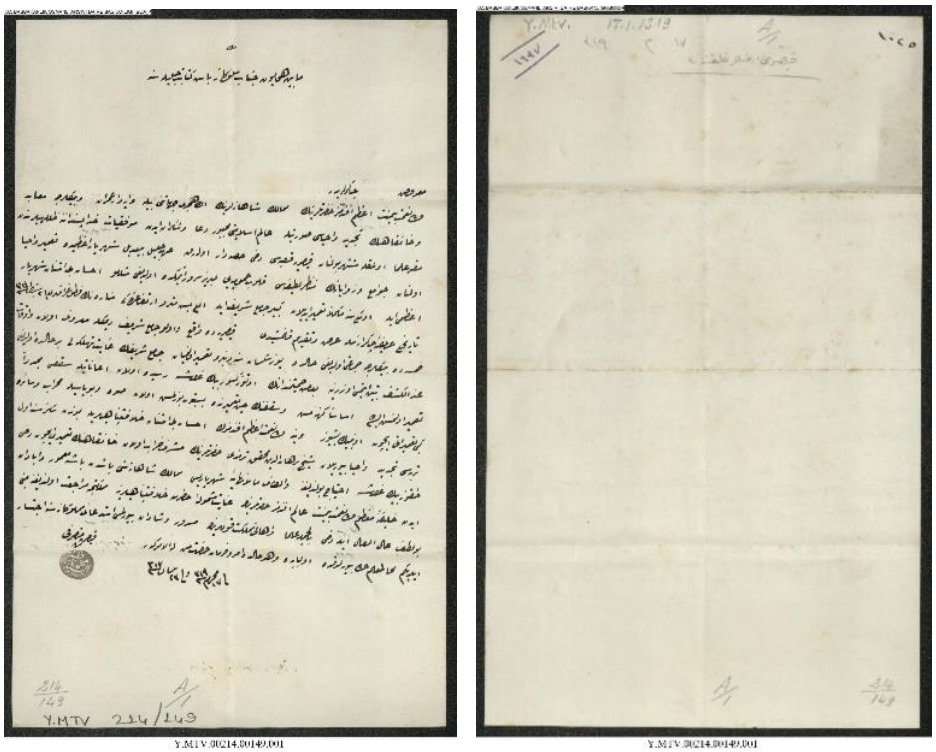


Figure 5. Repair document in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives dated May 6, 1901 (BOA, 1901)

One of the most fundamental features of the foundation culture is that it enables the regular maintenance and repair of buildings by ensuring the sustainability of financial resources, thus making it possible to preserve and transfer these buildings to future generations. It is observed that this system, which was meticulously implemented in classical periods, suffered various disruptions and delays with the Westernization process. The reflections of this situation can be seen in the repair process of Kayseri Ulu Cami, one of the critical Turkish-Islamic monuments in Kayseri in the late Ottoman Empire. The fact that the repairs of the buildings damaged by the corrosive effects of time were not carried out on time caused some of the buildings to become dilapidated and revealed the functioning problems in the system in question. One of the most prominent examples of this attitude can be found in the 1901 document record of the Kayseri Ulu Cami, which states that "the mosque, which has not been repaired for one hundred and eighty years, is in a perilous state..." (BOA, 1901).

The last information on the repairs of the building during the Ottoman Period is provided by a poem by Mufti Zade Mehmed Sa'id Efendi, who served as the orator of the building. According to the information from the poem, the building was repaired in 1915 by Kayseri Mutasarrıf Zekayi Pasha, and the mosque decorations were renewed (Güven, 1993, pp. 58-59). After these documents, Halil Eldem Bey, then Director of the Istanbul Museums, conducted the first study on the building in 1918 in his book "Kayseriye City." In his book, Eldem included information confirming the repairs (Eldem, 1982, p. 45). In the 1906 inspections, he stated that the roof of the building was flat and covered with an earthen roof and had two domes.

Regarding the interior, he stated that the wooden pulpit, although richly decorated, was ugly, painted, and deteriorated. During the examinations, he noted that the suras written in relief on the side of the pulpit were later removed, and some hung on the wall (Eldem, 1982, p. 46). From this information, it is more likely that the repairs mentioned by Eldem belong to the repairs in the State Archives Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives in 1901, which were carried out before the repairs mentioned by Müfti Zade Mehmed Sa'id Efendi. Edhem also stated that there was a “Melik Gazi” Madrasah on the qibla side of the mosque and that the tomb in it was the tomb of Melik Mehmet Gazi, according to rumors. No remains of the madrasah exist today, and the mausoleum has been reopened to visitors.

In the summer of 1927, the esteemed German scholar Franz Taeschner made a significant observation during his visit to Kayseri. He pointed out that the Kayseri Ulu Cami, unlike the typical Arab mosque, featured a central courtyard and a dome that was added later. His keen eye also noticed the presence

of a well beneath the central dome and the connection of piers by arches, adding to the mosque's unique architectural features (Eravşar, 2000, p. 324).

During the Republic's early years and the World War II period, the poverty in the country was reflected in the construction and repair practices, which also led to a slowdown in conservation and repair practices, and Kayseri Ulu Cami was also affected. It was only after 1950 that the first comprehensive repairs were carried out. Until then, Albert Gabriel carried out the first research and documentation on the building (Figure 6a, 6b). Gabriel (1954, p. 39) noted that the mosque has a plan typology common in the Islamic World and Architecture, consisting of equally spaced and parallel rows of piers and arches holding the upper cover, but that the plan order and regularity of similar period examples are not seen in this mosque (Figure 6c).



Figure 6. **a)** Minaret of the Ulu Cami (ASÜA, n.d.b), **b)** View from the interior of Ulu Cami (VGMA, n.d.a), **c)** View from the interior of Ulu Cami (Ministere De La Culture, 1908-1934) **d)** Ulu Cami Plan and Section (ASÜA, n.d.a)

Gabriel (1954, p. 39) attributes the differences in the span between the piers and the irregularities in the parallel rows between the duplicate rows of piers in the same direction to the fact that the building was constructed by experienced craftsmen with limited technical means and had undergone many repairs over time. Disagreeing with the view that the building is an old Byzantine church, Gabriel states that the building has a purely Islamic character in terms of its architectural form and structural elements. He stated that the mihrab dome was built simultaneously with the mosque and that the central dome was added to the structure later by adding four legs; he argued that this area, originally an open lighting section, was later closed. The sectional drawings he prepared to support these views clearly show these structural changes (Gabriel, 1954, p. 39-40; ASÜA, n.d.a).

Another essential piece of information we learned from Gabriel about the condition of the building at that time is that the ceiling beams consisted of reeds placed on pine of dozens of different diameters and a thick layer of soil on top of the reed. This upper cover must have belonged to the repairs made on May 6, 1901, as recorded in the Ottoman Archives. Gabriel also stated that the arch legs, columns, mihrab, and minbar were painted with unpleasant decorations and inappropriate paint. The floor was filled with 1.50 meters of soil but remained much lower than the adjacent road level.

3.4. Ali Saim Ülgen's Repair Process in the 1950s

The current state of the building in the 1950s and the conservation works carried out at that time are learned from the Ali Saim Ülgen Archive at Salt Galata. The 1950s are critical in reading the history of conservation in Türkiye and in analyzing the restoration process of historical monuments, including Turkish Islamic Monuments. This period constitutes a vital date range in terms of the formation of new laws and institutions, the increase in the financing allocated to conservation compared to the past, the increase in the number of Turkish Islamic Artifacts with maintenance and repair practices, and the understanding and approach of the period in the techniques and methods in conservation projects (Akşehirlioğlu, 2022, p. 163).

Undoubtedly, one of the most important developments at the beginning of the new era in the 1950s was the establishment of the Supreme Council of Real Estate Antiquities and Monuments in 1951 (Akozan, 1977, p. 21). In the 1950s, Ali Saim Ülgen, the Director of the Monuments Branch of the EEMGM, was assigned to draft the law. In his notes and reports, Ülgen explained that all historical monument repairs should be carried out in consultation with a board of experts and according to scientific principles (Ahunbay, 2016, p. 15) and made corrections to the GEEAYK Instructions (ASÜA,

n.d.c). In addition to this period's legal and administrative processes, Ali Saim Ülgen also took an active role in studies on how project processes should be carried out. He also included his views on the subject in his book and articles. After working at the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums (EEMGM) under the Ministry of Education for nine years, Ülgen was appointed as a consultant on June 21, 1956, to the Department of Monument and Building Works of the General Directorate of Foundations upon an offer. Before receiving the offer, Ülgen presented his opinions on many historical monuments belonging to the General Directorate of Foundations, served as a consultant, and contributed to repair projects (Yücel, 2015, p. 30). During this period, a certificate of assignment was issued to repair foundation monuments and Hayrats within the Directorate of Construction of the General Directorate of Foundations. In his new role, he acted as an "expert consultant" and led the maintenance and repair works of all foundation monuments throughout Türkiye (Ahunbay, 2016, p. 15). One of the most important of these works is the Kayseri Ulu Cami (Figure 7).

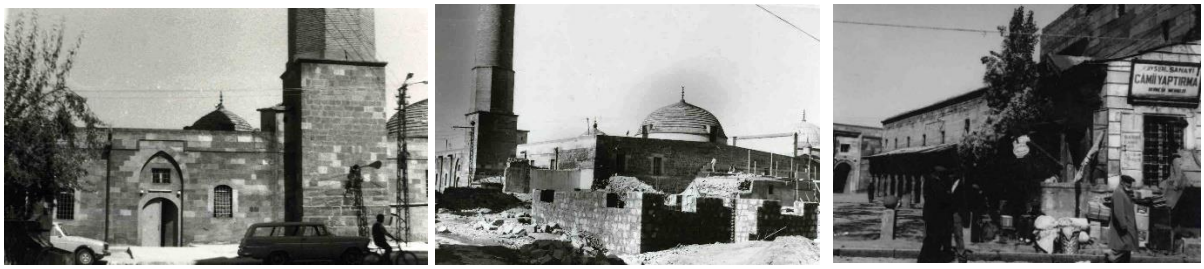


Figure 7. Photographs of Kayseri Ulu Cami:are believed to be from the 1960s (VGMA, n.d.a)

On Thursday and Friday, August 9-10, 1956, the public examined and evaluated the Kayseri Ulu Cami 's repair activities. As a result of the discussions between Hacı Ahmet Kirazoğlu, the president of the mosque repair association, Arif Molu, Cemal Hattati and other board members, and the supreme architect Ali Saim Ülgen representing the Directorate of Foundations and Museum, a draft protocol consisting of 30 articles was prepared (Figure 8), followed by the final protocol (ASÜA, 1956; ASÜA, 1944-1956). The protocol in question is a valuable document as it sheds light on the legal and administrative functioning of the period, the methods of repair practices, and the project drawing processes.

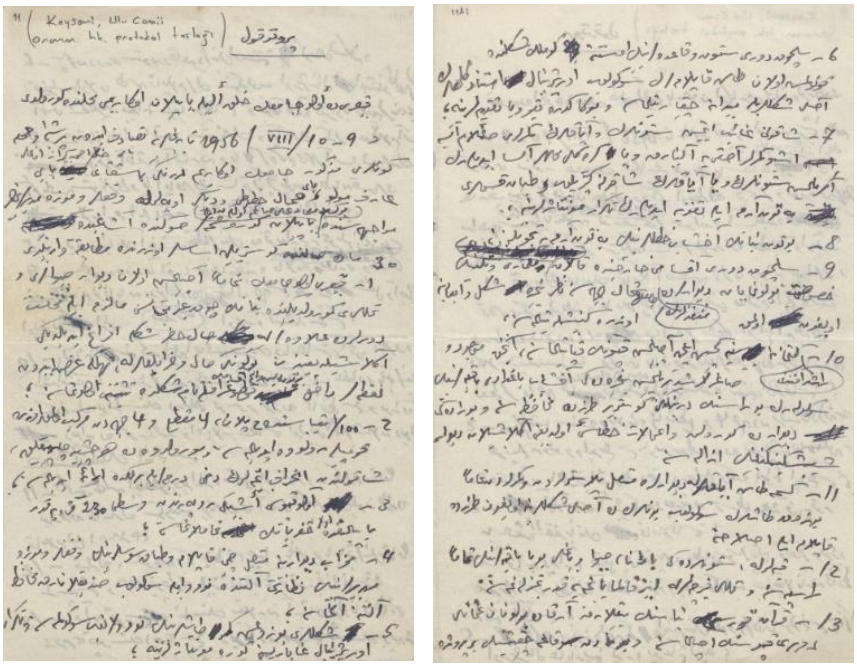


Figure 8. Draft protocol of Kayseri Ulu Cami in 1956 (ASÜA, 1944-1956)

From the first article of the protocol prepared for the Kayseri Ulu Cami, it is understood that the wall plasters and foundations, which were exposed entirely, were examined on-site and that the building reached its current state as a result of repairs carried out in different periods with incompatible and various materials. These repair practices are primarily based on the Ottoman Period maintenance and

repairs discussed in detail in the previous section. The mosque's importance not only for its architectural and artistic qualities but also for its functionality made it necessary for various people to carry out repair works at different times to ensure the continuity of the building. This situation parallels the conservation approach of the Ottoman Period. It should not be forgotten that Ottoman Period repairs were carried out not with the current conservation approach, but with the ideas of continuity of use, usefulness, and heirlooms.

In the continuation of the first article of the protocol, it was requested to document all the interior and exterior parts of the building, including its current condition, dilapidated and dangerous places, with photographs. As a matter of fact, in the last article of the protocol, the importance of documentation and expertise was emphasized; it was decided that all the surveys and photo collection and the various application projects calculations and drawings to be made in the future would be made by the mosque repair association to the graduate architect engineer assigned at the construction site (Figure 9).

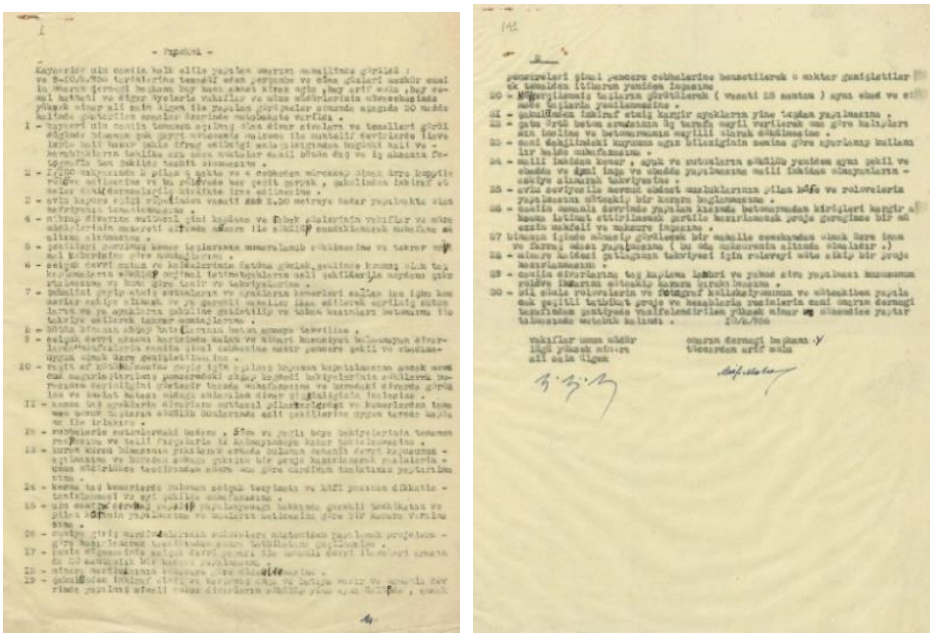


Figure 9. Protocol text of Kayseri Ulu Cami in 1956, (ASÜA, 1956)

In many articles of the Protocol, it is emphasized that the existing condition of the building should be documented with drawings, and all applications should be carried out based on these drawings. Accordingly, in the first phase of the repair process, it was requested to prepare 1/100 scale survey drawings consisting of two plans, four sections, and four façades to cover the entire building and to show in detail all kinds of deterioration, deviation from the vertical and deformation in the current state of the building. The protocol also stipulates that the entrance stairs to the mosque should be constructed in line with the projects to be prepared based on the surveys, after approval by the relevant institutions. A separate project was to be prepared for the rearrangement of the minaret staircase following the existing survey and for the reinforcement of the crack in the pedestal, while the stone cladding, paneling, or plaster to be applied on the mosque walls were listed among the issues to be decided after the survey process was completed.

In another article, it is stated that the Qur'anic course building, which was added later, should be demolished, the Ottoman gate behind it should be reopened, and the staircase should be constructed after the transition from here to the street is designed and submitted to the general directorate for approval. The preparation of plan elevations and surveys regarding the courtyard level and the existing ablution taps were also evaluated within this framework. However, due to the conditions of the period, not every project could be prepared as described, project drawings could not be carried out in parallel with the program created, and the repairs of some buildings in this period were carried out only based on survey drawings or draft drawings prepared. Unfortunately, the drawings for the repairs of Kayseri Ulu Cami in 1956 are not found in the General Directorate of Foundations, the Regional Directorate of Foundations, the Ali Saim Ülgen Archive, or any other sources.

One of the most noteworthy items in the protocol created during the repair process is the clear expression of the recommended materials used in the interventions. In this context, there are various applications where reinforced concrete is envisaged. In the case of the columns and piers that have deviated from their plumb lines, it is recommended that the arches be suspended or secured with appropriate supports and then that the skewed piers and columns be brought to vertical alignment and their lower parts be reinforced with reinforced concrete and reassembled. It was also suggested that all the wooden beams of the building should be replaced with reinforced concrete elements, and the roof should be rebuilt as a reinforced concrete cover with a three-slope system. In line with this approach, which was widespread in the 1950s, it is observed that the use of cement and reinforced concrete intensified in restoration practices.

In various works written during this period, Ali Saim Ülgen drew attention to the serious drawbacks of cement and reinforced concrete for historical buildings, emphasizing that the rigid structures of these materials could cause structural problems in monuments built with flexible and traditional materials (Ülgen, 1943, p. 51). Ülgen also referred to the incompatibility of color and texture and suggested that such materials should be used in a limited manner only in the invisible load-bearing parts of buildings. In his article “Repair and Reinforcement of Stones,” he elaborated on cement's low elasticity, water impermeability, and negative interactions with stones and bricks (Ülgen, 1974, p. 17). However, the articles in the protocol stipulating reinforced concrete use show that Ülgen made recommendations that contradict these warnings. This approach, which is open to criticism within today's conservation approach, should be evaluated as solutions appropriate to the requirements of that period, considering the time's technical possibilities and restoration paradigm.

When the protocol articles are examined, it is seen that the building had serious structural problems at that time. In this context, various decisions were taken regarding repairs; it was decided that the disfigured arch stones would be numbered and dismantled and reassembled according to their original gauge, and that the arches, piers and columns that were about to collapse would be dismantled and rebuilt in the same shape and size with the same construction system. Those that were not in danger of collapse would be suspended and reinforced. The use of modern materials in the structural reinforcement of the building can also be seen in the list of iron sizes and prices used in the repairs of the Kayseri Ulu Mosque in the Ali Saim Ülgen Archive (ASÜA, n.d.d) (Figure 10).

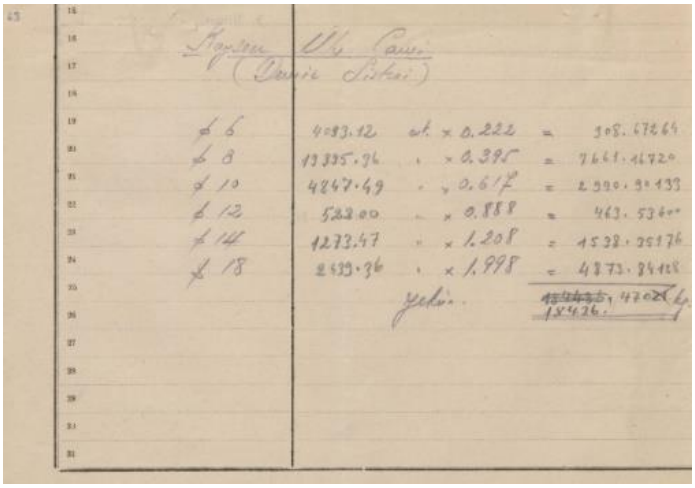


Figure 10. Iron list prices for the Kayseri Ulu Cami repairs by Ali Saim Ülgen (ASÜA, n.d.d)

In the protocol articles on the principles to be followed during the restoration process, it is clearly stated that priority should be given to the preservation of the original qualities of the building, which is in line with contemporary conservation approaches. In this context, it is emphasized that all interventions should be carried out without damaging the original identity of the building, taking into account its historical, architectural, and material characteristics. This approach is a transition from the Ottoman Classical Period, when the responsibility for protecting foundation buildings was systematically maintained, and the buildings were repaired according to their use value, to the more technical and documentation-based approach to conservation that developed in the early Republican

Period. Therefore, the principles proposed in the protocol reflect an attitude based on physical interventions and the preservation of authenticity in surveying, project design, and implementation processes. They are considered to be early examples of the modern conservation approach.

In this direction, it was decided to remove the stone coatings added later on the columns and pedestals of the Seljuk Period to reveal the original elements in their original form and then carry out repair and reinforcement works following these original elements. In addition, the stone blocks that have lost their function due to wear and tear over time are planned to be decomposed to a depth of approximately 25 cm and replaced with stones of the same type and size. The fact that it was decided to improve the stones in the cut stone piers and arches, which were damaged to a level that would disrupt the structural and aesthetic integrity, by coating them with methods following their original forms shows the importance given to the historical identity and original material texture of the building during the repair process. However, within the scope of the interventions made in previous periods that negatively affected the authenticity of the building, it was requested that the whitewash, plaster, and oil paint residues on the dome and columns be scraped entirely. Then the surfaces be cleaned with wire brushes so that no traces remain. In addition, the plastered rubble walls on the east and west façades, which were built during the Ottoman Period, were to be dismantled and reconstructed per the original construction technique, as they were weakened in bearing capacity and deviated from their alignment. The only suggestion that contradicts this idea is the decision to reconstruct the windows on the entire façade from the foundation in the same width as the north windows.

In the 1956 repairs, repair decisions were also taken regarding the door and window openings of the building. It was decided to enlarge the holes in the walls, except for the Seljuk Period parts which have no architectural importance, following the shape and size of the windows on the north façade of the mosque, and to close the door opened for the passage to the Raşit Efendi Library to reveal the depth of this place by removing the remains of the wooden bagdadi in the currently closed window and to eliminate the bulging in the wall, which was detected on the wall here and understood to be a manufacturing defect.

The repair protocol between Ali Saim Ülgen and the Mosque's trustees also includes decisions concerning the decoration of the building. In this context, it was requested that the tile coating and plate ornaments adjacent to the mihrab wall be removed and created under the supervision of the Foundations and Museum Directors, and that the Seljuk ornamentation and kufic writing on the cut stone arches be cleaned and well protected. Çayırdağ also stated that the minbar was restored by the General Directorate of Foundations in 1955-56 and made active in its original place inside the mosque (Çayırdağ, 1992, p. 55). In the March 4, 1960 issue of Yeni İstanbul Newspaper, which is in the archive of the General Directorate of Foundations, Tahsiz Öz wrote the article "In Kayseri: Ulu Cami, Gülük Cami" (Öz, 1960, p. 1), it was stated that although the pulpit of the Ulu Mosque was lovely, it had recently been painted with oil paint and had deteriorated, as was the case in other parts of the mosque (Figure 11). Based on this information, it can be inferred that the repair work on the minbar could not be started immediately in 1956, when the protocol was prepared, but only after the 1960s.


İSLAMİYET'İN KURULUŞUNDAN BU YANA

CAMİ ve MESCİTLER

Kayseri'de: ULU CAMİ, GÜLÜK CAMİ

Tahsin ÖZ

Hangisi Üstün

YAPAKA

Figure 11. Newspaper about Kayseri Ulu Cami (ASÜA, 1960)

In the 1956 repair protocol, it was decided to create a step of approximately 30 cm between the Seljuk and Ottoman flooring. This practice reflects an important approach to the conservation understanding of the period by emphasizing the architectural features of different periods and aiming to preserve their authenticity. In the same context, the construction of a muezzin mahfil matured in the Ottoman period section, supported by reinforced concrete beams. The construction of an imam and a fresh room using glass partitions within the building stands out as new functional additions.

The protocol also calls for the completion of the excavation from the threshold of the courtyard door, the investigation of the feasibility of drainage, the determination of the plan elevation, and the protection of the well inside the mosque by arranging it per the ground. Although there is no conclusive evidence that all of these decisions were put into practice, these items are essential both for reflecting the understanding of repair in the period and for shedding light on the history of conservation by documenting the spatial and structural transformation of Kayseri Ulu Cami (Figure 12).

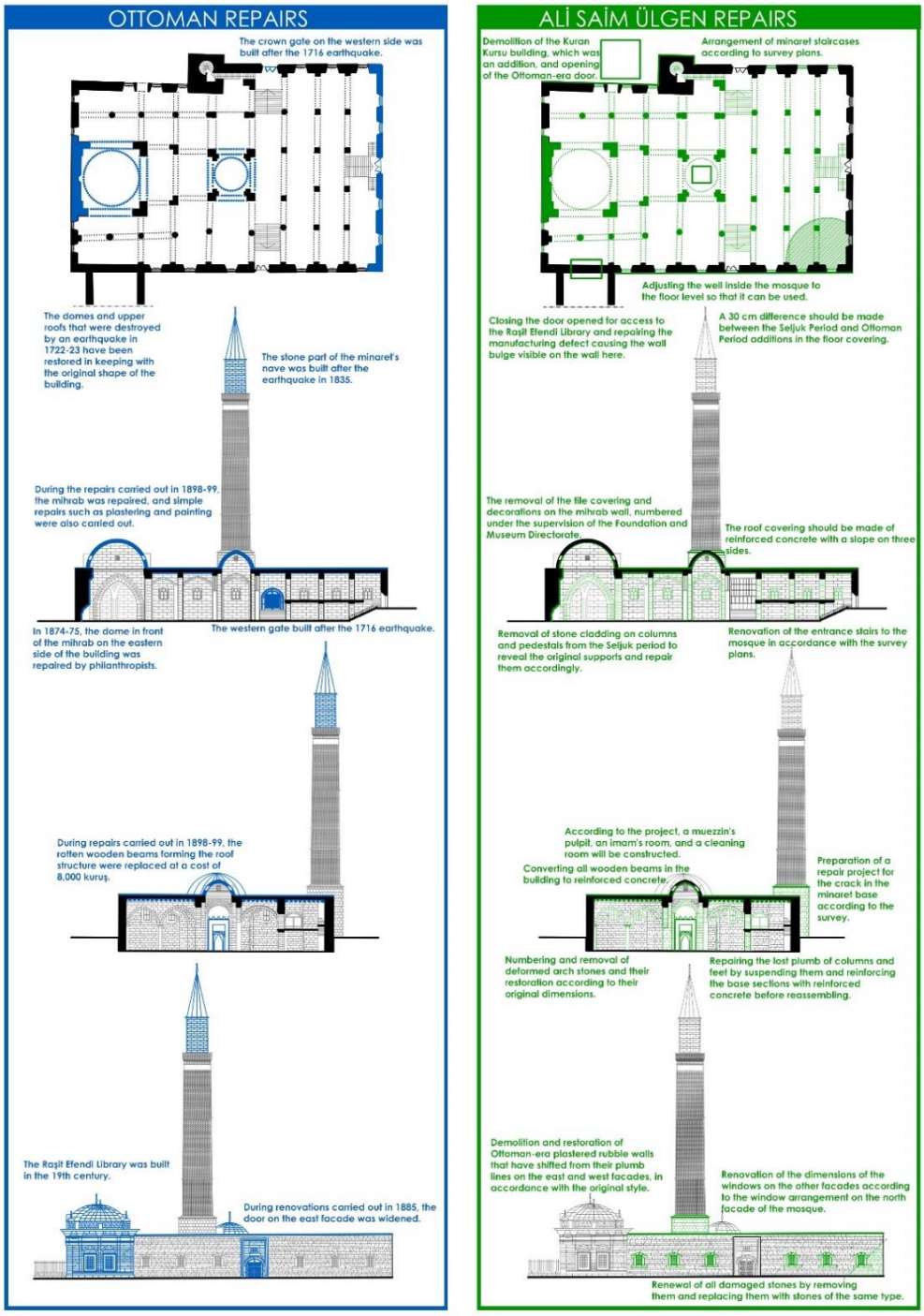


Figure 12. Intervention analysis of Kayseri Ulu Cami Repairs (it was arranged schematically by the author)

3.5. Next Developments

The first document from the Archives of the General Directorate of Foundations on the conservation work of Kayseri Ulu Cami after the 1956 repairs is the Foundation Antiquities Fiche (VGMA, 380201040: TF001) dated 1966, filled in by İhsan Akçay and about the Ulu Mosque Fountain (Figure 13a). It was noted that the fountain, located on the east of Ulu Mosque, on the wall of the Vezir Khan, has 7 round arches and that the ceiling has lost its original form and has been replaced by a simple roof. It is stated that the fountain, whose columns are pretty simple and do not have a specific style, is neglected but still in use (Figure 13b).

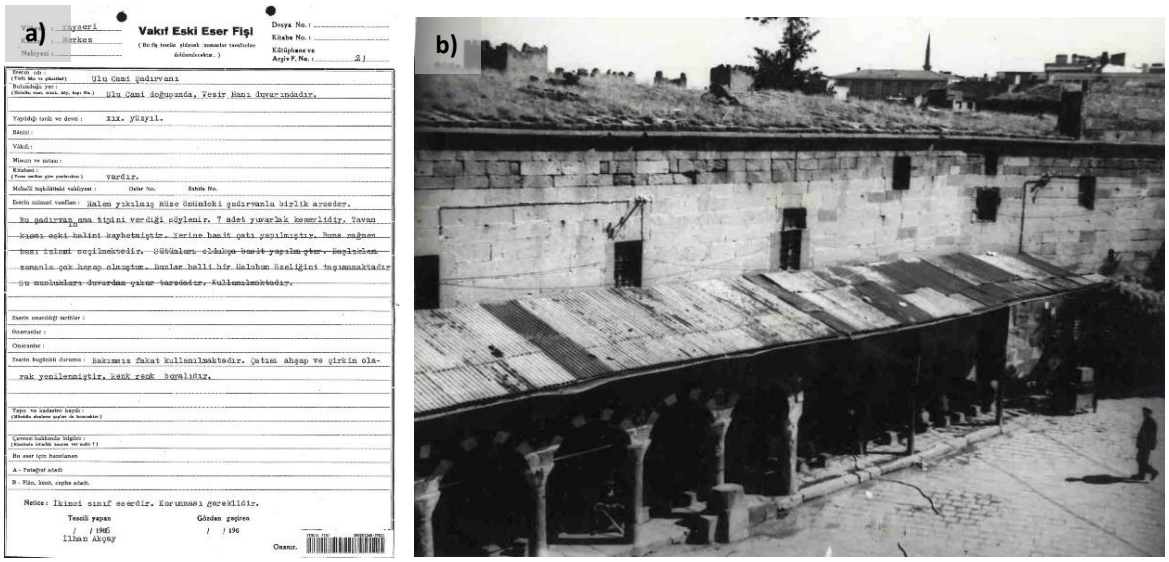


Figure 13. a) Foundation Old Work Fiche for Kayseri Ulu Cami Fountain (VGMA, n.d.a), **b)** Photo of the Ulu Mosque Fountain (VGMA, n.d.c)

The first document in the Archives of the General Directorate of Foundations regarding the repairs of Ulu Mosque is a report dated 26. 11. 1984, written by Toygar Yılmaz, a technician, to the Directorate of the Abide Branch (VGMA, 380201040: RP001) (Figure 14). In the report, it was requested that the brick honeycomb part of the minaret up to the balconies be completed with stone masonry, that the honeycomb part was dangerously cracked eight rows downwards starting from the cone molding, that the cone and honeycomb were repaired, and that electrical installations and lightning rods be built on the minaret.

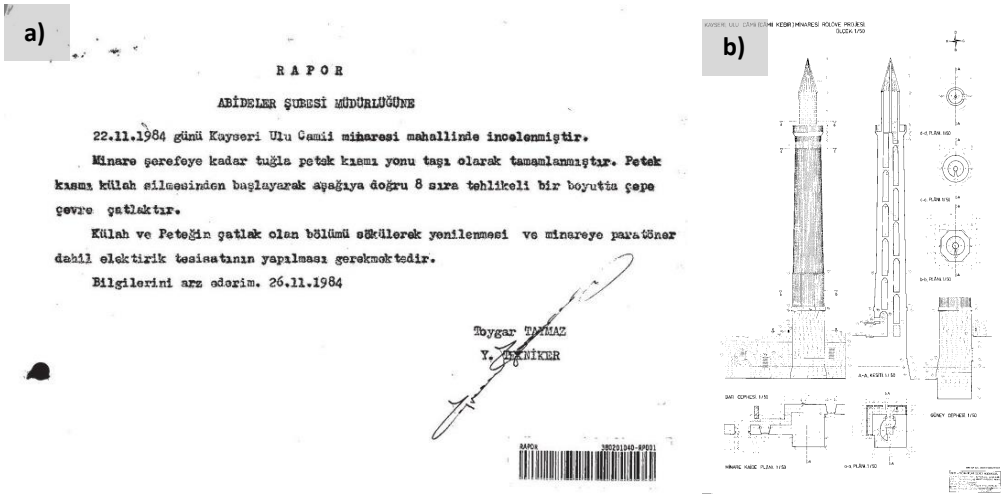


Figure 14. a) Report on Kayseri Ulu Cami Minaret Repair (VGMA, 1984), **b)** Ulu Mosque minaret repair drawings (VGMA, 1985a).

In response to this request, a Monument and Antiquities Repair Fiche was filled out by Pelin Girgin on 30.04.1985 (VGMA, 1985b) (Figure 15a). A budget of 2.250.000 TL was allocated and the works to be carried out in 1985 were stated as follows; "The minaret honeycomb will be dismantled eight rows downwards starting from the cone molding, the lead cone and the realm will be removed, the lead cone and the realm will be replaced after the damaged stones of the honeycomb part are repaired, lightning rod and electrical installations will be made to the minaret" (VGMA,1985b). The repair was approved by the decision of the Regional Board dated May 31, 1985, and numbered 113, to be carried out per the repair ticket and survey (VGMA, 1985c) (Figure 15).

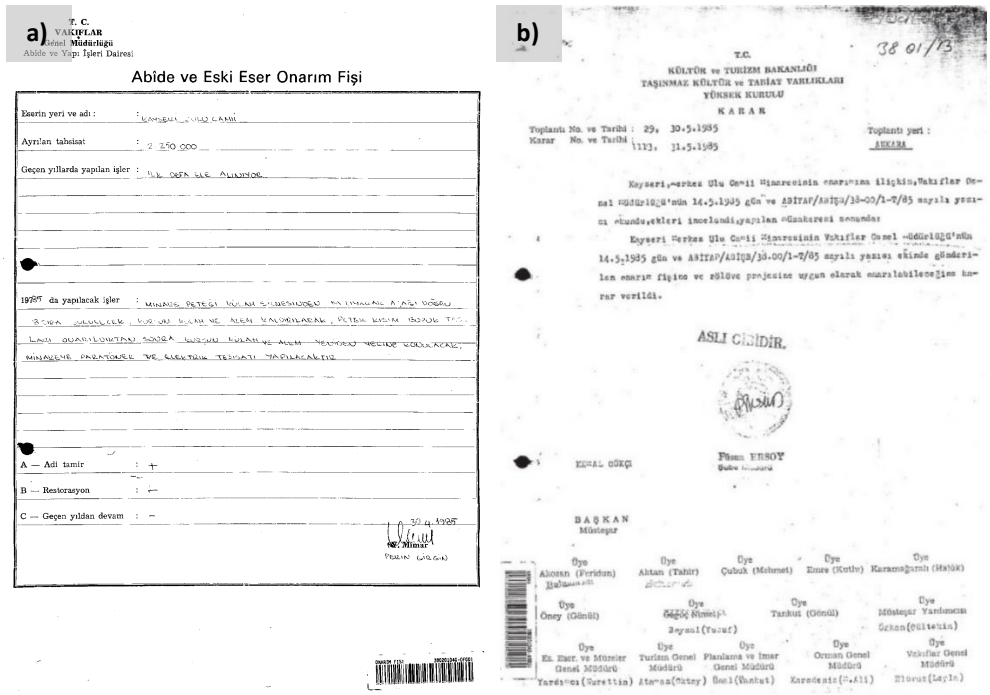
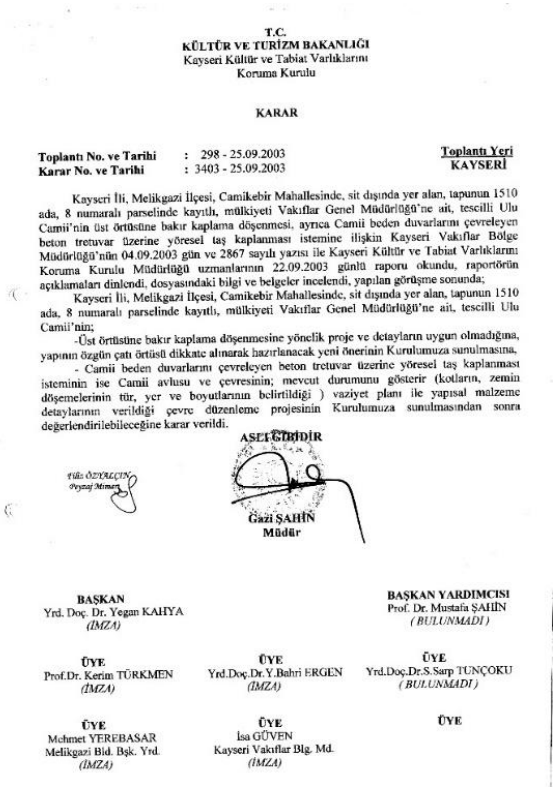


Figure 15. a) Repair fiche for the Ulu Mosque (VGMA, 1985b), **b)** Decision on Kayseri Ulu Cami Minaret Repair (VGMA, 1985c)

The next piece of information about the Ulu Mosque is found in the decision of the Kayseri Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets dated December 03, 1998, numbered 2375. It is related to the merger of the registered Ulu Mosque and the surrounding parcels belonging to the General Directorate of Foundations (VGMA, 1998). The preservation of the wooden pulpit, one of the most essential components of the building, came to the agenda again in 2003. KTVKBK's decision, dated March 14, 2003, and numbered 3261, requested that a project to repair the wooden pulpit of Ulu Mosque be designed and submitted to the board. Shortly after this decision, a request was made for a copper coating on the upper cover of Ulu Mosque and a local stone coating on the concrete pavement surrounding the body walls of the Mosque (VGMA, 2003). The request was discussed at the regional board on September 25, 2003, and decision numbered 3403; it was decided that the project and details for the copper coating on the upper cover of the mosque were not appropriate and that a new upper cover proposal should be submitted to the board, considering the original roof cover of the building. In the continuation of the same decision, it was requested to submit a site plan showing the current conditions of the mosque courtyard and its surroundings and structural material details for the local stone coating on the concrete pavement surrounding the mosque body walls (Figure 16).

In July 2012, the renovation of the fountain and restrooms located to the northwest of the Ulu Mosque came to the agenda of the Board. The KTVKBK's decision dated July 16, 2012, and numbered 292 (VGMA, 2012a), it was accepted that silhouette drawings showing the relationship of the fountain and toilet unit with the Ulu Mosque should be made to make this renovation (VGMA, 2012a). The same issue was brought up again in September, but it was noted that it did not comply with the principles of project preparation and should be prepared again (VGMA, 2012b). As a result of the arrangements made, the fountain and toilet renovation project was discussed by the board at its meeting held on November 26, 2012, and numbered 33 (VGMA, 2012c); it was requested to be redrawn due to inconsistencies between the plans, sections, and elevations in the prepared projects. The decision also stated that it was appropriate not to convert the existing upper cover of the fountain to a dome. The same issue was discussed again a month later, but it was rejected with the Board's decision dated December 26, 2012, and numbered 456 because the prepared project did not include information about the construction system; it was not understood which elements would be preserved and which would be changed, the measurements were incomplete, and the distance from the registered building and the details were not specified (VGMA, 2012d). The same issue was discussed at the April 18, 2013,

board meeting, numbered 45. However, it was requested to be redone because materials should be selected harmoniously with the historical environment (VGMA, 2013).



T.C.
KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI
Kayseri Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını
Koruma Kurulu

KARAR

Toplantı No. ve Tarihi : 298 - 25.09.2003
Karar No. ve Tarihi : 3403 - 25.09.2003
Toplantı Yeri KAYSERİ

Kayseri İli, Melikgazi İlçesi, Camikebir Mahallesinde, sit dışında yer alan, tapunun 1510 ada, 8 numaralı parselinde kayıtlı, mülkiyeti Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü'ne ait, tescilli Ulu Camii'nin üst örtüsüne bakır kaplama döşenmesi, ayrıca Camii beden duvarlarını çevreleyen beton tretuvar üzerine yöresel taş kaplanması istemine ilişkin Kayseri Vakıflar Bölge Müdürlüğü'nün 04.09.2003 gün ve 2867 sayılı yazısı ile Kayseri Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kurulu Müdürlüğü uzmanlarının 22.09.2003 günlü raporu okundu, raportörün açıklamaları dinlendi, dosyasındaki bilgi ve belgeler incelendi, yapılan görüşme sonunda;

Kayseri İli, Melikgazi İlçesi, Camikebir Mahallesinde, sit dışında yer alan, tapunun 1510 ada, 8 numaralı parselinde kayıtlı, mülkiyeti Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü'ne ait, tescilli Ulu Camii'nin;

-Üst örtüsüne bakır kaplama döşenmesine yönelik proje ve detayların uygun olmadığına, yapının özgün çatı örtüsü dikkate alınarak hazırlanacak yeni önerinin Kurulumuza sunulmasına,

- Camii beden duvarlarını çevreleyen beton tretuvar üzerine yöresel taş kaplanması isteminin ise Camii avlusu ve çevresinin; mevcut durumunu gösterir (kotların, zemin döşemelerinin tür, yer ve boyutlarının belirtildiği) vaziyet planı ile yapısal malzeme detaylarının verildiği çevre düzenleme projesinin Kurulumuza sunulmasından sonra değerlendirilebileceğine karar verildi.

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ÜYE
İsa GÜVEN
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Figure 16. Decision on the restoration of Kayseri Ulu Cami (VGMA, 2003)

In 2014, the issue of construction around Ulu Mosque was discussed at meeting no. 91 on October 31, 2014, and it was decided that the construction facade should not exceed the eaves level of Ulu Mosque (VGMA, 2014). In 2018, the Board discussed the practices detected in the fountain of the Ulu Mosque.

A critical agenda related to the Ulu Mosque was discussed in the decision of KTVKVKB dated January 27, 2021, numbered 4944; it was requested to evaluate the survey, survey report, and material analysis sheets prepared for the registered Ulu Mosque. Similarly, in the Board's decision dated January 30, 2021, and numbered 5430, the survey, damage analysis, material analysis sheets, restitution projects, and reports of Ulu Mosque were discussed. However, no repair process has started for the building. As a result of the negotiations with the Regional Directorate of Foundations, it was learned that the projects were canceled due to a lack of funding and that they will be started immediately when funding is available. After this date, the only development that can be traced in the board documents is the decision to evaluate the projects and reports prepared for the gates of the Registered Ulu Mosque in KKTVKBK, decision no. 7487 on February 21, 2024. All conservation and restoration interventions related to the Kayseri Ulu Cami are systematically presented in the chart below, reflecting the practices in the historical process (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Kayseri Ulu Cami Conservation and repair timeline (Created by the author)

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Kayseri Ulu Cami, one of the most characteristic examples of Turkish Islamic Architecture, owes its existence to its maintenance and repair processes from its construction to the present day. In the Principalities, Seljuks, and Classical Ottoman Periods, the main driving force was the idea of maintaining the existence of the buildings and the functioning of the foundation system, which did not act with today's conservation ideas and criteria. Elements such as the articles in the foundation principles stipulating the continuous maintenance and repair of buildings and the prioritization of repair costs in the list of needs reflect a very advanced approach for the period. These principles were similar to the periodic maintenance approach in today's conservation approach and contributed to the continued preservation of the buildings.

It was only in the middle of the 19th century that conservation became scientifically based in Türkiye, and the establishment of legal, managerial, and institutional processes within this scope began during the Westernization Period. In this period, it is observed that some initiatives related to conservation emerged, and efforts were made to establish a new organization. However, these efforts could not be fully established practically, and a conservation heritage based on weak foundations was left behind in the Republican period. For this reason, comprehensive repairs of buildings could not be realized in the early Republican period, and it was necessary to be patient until the 1950s for such works to be carried out. In 1951, the High Council of Real Estate Antiquities and Monuments, the first board to make decisions on conservation, was established. Legally, the Asar-ı Atika Regulations, which were created and used for many years during the Ottoman Period, were abolished with the adoption of the Law on Antiquities No. 1710, the first protection law of Türkiye. In 1983, to overcome the previous law's shortcomings, Protection Law No. 2863 was adopted, which is still valid today.

The data about Kayseri Ulu Cami provide a clear reading of the development, change, and transformation of the conservation history of our country, the important breaking points in this period, and the effects of the actors. In particular, the protocol prepared by Ali Saim Ülgen in 1956 with the trustees of the building's foundation, which is also emphasized in the study, is like a projection reflecting the perspective of the period. Although it cannot be determined whether all of the repair items specified in the protocol were realized due to the long intervening time and subsequent repairs, it is essential to illuminate the approach to conservation of the period. The most striking items in the protocol of Kayseri Ulu Cami at that time, and the approach that can be criticized the most in the context of today's conservation criteria, is the recommendation and encouragement of cement and reinforced concrete materials in the repairs of the building. It should not be forgotten that these practices, which seriously damaged the building and were very difficult to reverse, were carried out following the existing legal, administrative and technical details of the period, and it should be taken into consideration that it is a document that enables us to understand that period in the conservation history of the country.

Another important point to be emphasized during this period is the project preparation, documentation, and drawing techniques. When the projects for the repair of buildings are evaluated in the process, the documentation of monumental buildings, which are the most vital component of our cultural heritage, and the realization of repairs by experts constitute the first stage of conservation work. Although the importance of documentation is emphasized in this protocol, it is seen that although it is a recent past, the works carried out in that period do not have projects such as survey, restitution, and restoration, which are realized in current conservation practices, and a comprehensive archive is not kept on this subject. Considering the architectural conservation practices that monumental buildings have undergone throughout history, it is seen that the repairs have caused various changes in the physical integrity, plan organization, architectural elements, and materials of the buildings. In the 1950s, this issue was evaluated, and it was emphasized that these works of religious and cultural value should be preserved with their original characteristics. However, contradictory statements or implementation decisions exist even in the protocol articles. This situation indicates that the theoretical and legal approach to conservation has not yet been fully established and is in transition. The fact that there have been various attempts to repair the building in the

following processes, but that the repair proposals have been returned from the boards responsible many times because they do not comply with sufficient technical details, is an important point that needs to be considered about the process of conservation.

As Kayseri Ulu Cami is one of the most important examples of Turkish Islamic Architecture, examining the past repairs in detail is crucial to preserving the original features of this valuable cultural heritage monument and transferring it to future generations. In this context, internationally recognized qualified maintenance, repair, and conservation processes must be meticulously implemented to maintain the building. Considering today's understanding of conservation and globally accepted conservation standards, future repair works must be carried out with professionals specialized in their fields, adopting a multidisciplinary approach. In this process, it should be emphasized that the margin of error should be minimized, and each stage should be carried out with great precision, considering the positive and negative aspects of past repairs.

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