

THE MODEL OF VERNACULAR COUNTRYSIDE FROM TURKEY: MARDIN PAVILIONS

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Abstract. Mardin, which is called the “Cradle of Cultures”, is located in the southeastern part of Turkey and in the north of Mesopotamia. Throughout history, it has been the center of crossroads and hosted many different civilizations and cultures. Many important historical constructions, including earliest Christian churches and constructions that belong to Artuqid, Akkoyunlu, and Ottoman era, are located in Mardin. Churches, mosques, khans, hammams, fountains, houses and pavilions form the city texture. In Mardin, mansions that have an iwan and are surrounded by a garden with a fountain are called “pavilion”. Apart from Mardin’s traditional urban texture, traditional Mardin pavilions that are placed in interior garden have never been examined before. In this study, 24 kiosks that are placed around the city, about 2-15 km far from city center, in Bakirkiri and Zinnar valleys, have been examined in terms of historical, social and architectural properties. Some of them have been constructed during Artuqid and Akkoyunlu periods. These pavilions, which originally belonged to the prominent families of the city, have been sold or abandoned because of various reasons. Some of them have been destroyed because of the lack of maintenance. Therefore, it can be said that Mardin pavilions are in danger of disappearing because of the changing life styles of people and some internal and external factors. The present study aims to provide guidance to the applications about documenting, presenting, conserving and keeping traditional Mardin pavilions alive.

1 INTRODUCTION

The earliest account that is mentioning about Mardin is by Greek historian Ammianus Marcellinus. He refers to Mardin as one of the Rome Fortress, which is called “Marde” during the 4th century. The Episcopal Center built after a century according to the resources of Old Syrian Orthodox. According to this information, Mardin is beyond of a citadel, it was a civilian and religious functioned settlement in the 5th - 6th centuries AC [1]. (Figures 1 and 2)

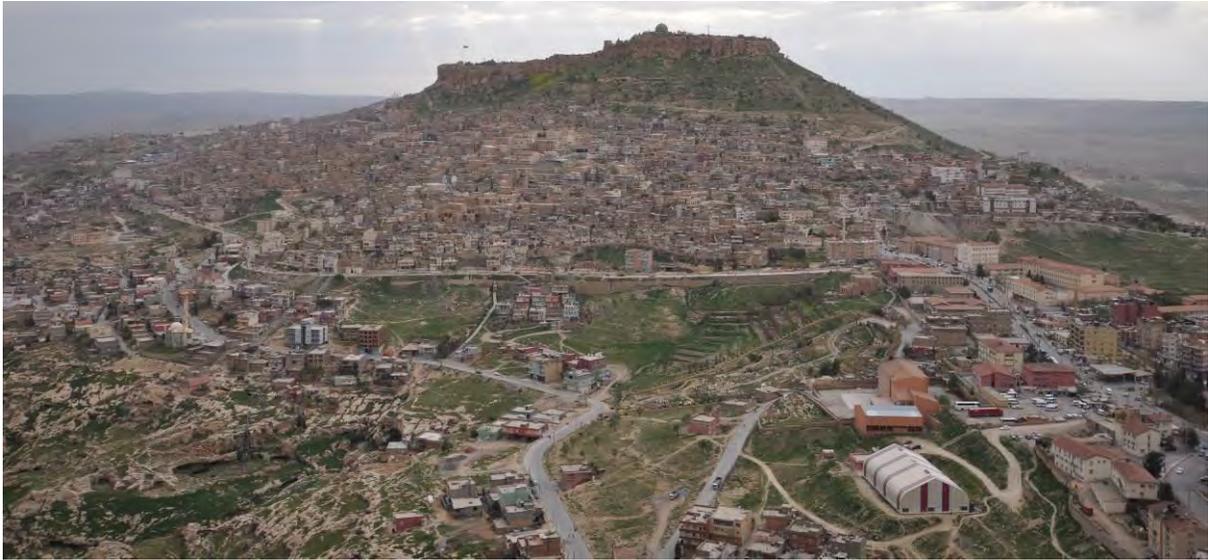


Figure 1: Landscape of Mardin.

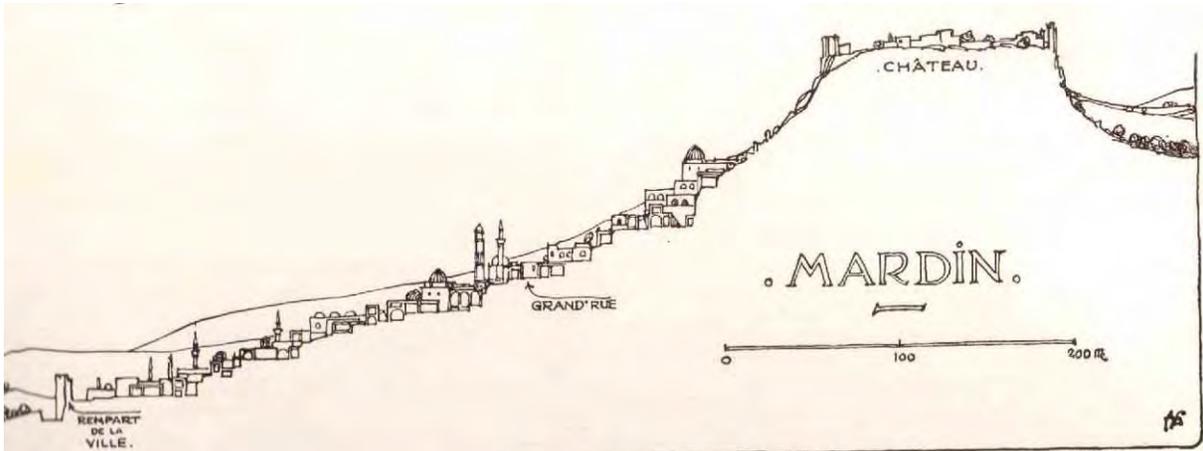


Figure 2: In 1930's Albert Gabriel's section [2].

The city had been placed in two regions. One of them is the citadel; the other is the South hillside of the citadel, which surrounded with city walls until 19th century. Today, the city is built on this area. The source of the establishment of the city of Mardin goes back to the Christian period as it is mentioned in the resources of the Syrian resources. From the period of the first Islamic colonies that administrated the city (7th century, AC) the population had increased and within

the period of Artuqs reign a unique urban fabric of the city had taken shape with risen construction activities. In this period, the traditional pavilions had been started to build in the rural area, which is outside of the city walls. These buildings are characterized with the architectural element of “iwan”, which contains a fountain. This structure was not in the interest of researchers who were more focused on the civil architecture (houses) of Mardin until now. Buildings with “iwans” were mostly seen in the Middle Asia, Middle East Africa and in the Southeastward of Anatolia (Turkey). The fountain in the “iwan” called “salsabil” is main the element of the pavilions of Mardin that appears as a cultural and climatic data. Pavilions or some vineyard houses with “iwans with salsabil” had some constructions and material differences that were called “qasr” in Mardin [3, 4]. (Figures 3 and 4)



Figures 3 and 4: Photos from Firdevs and Deyrulzafran pavilions.

The first chronicles by Ottoman historian Katip Ferdi mentions about the pavilions that are summer places (resorts), which were belonged to Artuq’s sultans. He also continues to mention that one of the Artuq Sultan, Melik Mansur Necmeddin Bin Karaaslan had gone different places in every season. According to Ferdi, the summer resort “Ravza-i Firdevs” is in the Southeast of Mardin, which is 3 kilometers away on the road of Nusaybin town. Today, Qasr Firdevs stands still with its courtyard and gardens. Another Ottoman historian Ali Emiri claims, Artuq Sultan Melik Salih Semseddin Mahmud built the pavilion according to the lost inscription. Who had ever built it; it is definitely an Artuq period (13th-15th centuries) pavilion deformed through the time [5, 6, 7,8].

Today, “fahriye”, which is on the north side of the fortress and “ravza” gardens, which on the west side of urban site zone are constructed by Akkoyunlu Sultan Kasim (15th century) to the honors of his daughters’ names. There are still pavilions in these gardens under these names. Recently, some pavilions are belonging to the grandsons of the Artuq families. One of them is located in Zinnar valley and called “Qasr Begene” or “Bayt Artuq”. The initial owner of these pavilions was belonging to Mardin gentry’ families, now most of the ownership status have been transformed. Many of these pavilions descended to uninterested grandchildren of owners who had moved to other developed cities [9, 10].

2 MARDIN'S PAVILIONS ARCHITECTURE

Today, although the city walls border Mardin's urban fabric that got only some trails, but also the pavilions are spread out of the fortified urban area. The near side of the urban border, the north side of the fortress, Zinnar and Bakirkiri valleys are the zones comprise the qasrs. Despite these fields are sloping, they have cisterns and the land is still available for agriculture. The inhabitants of Mardin chose to build the qasrs here, because the fields of the opposite side of the city center were green and irrigable in the past. The distance of the pavilions to the city center, which was 4-5 hours away for a passenger or for riding that was not so much that a strong relation between citadel houses and pavilions [11]. (Figure 5)

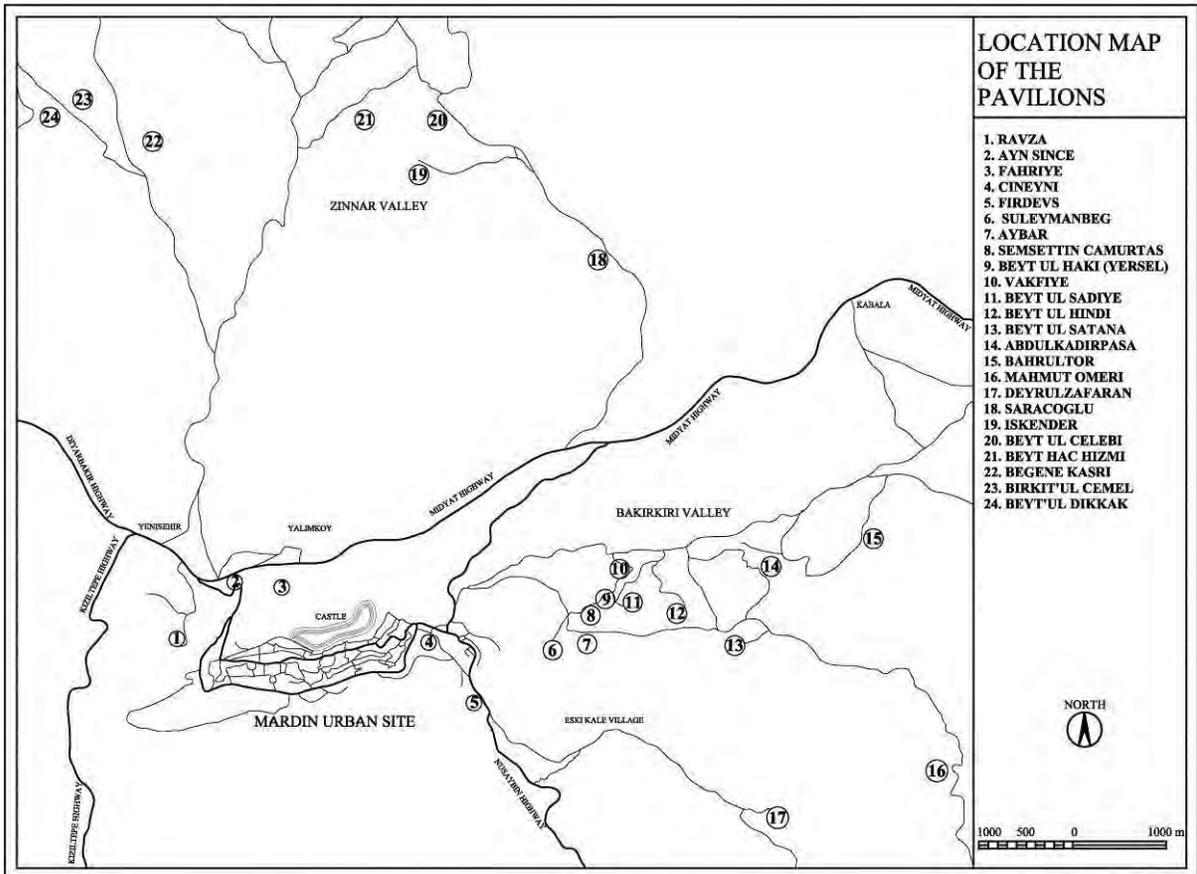


Figure 5: The Location map of the pavilions.

Despite the positions of traditional Mardin houses, the pavilions were not strictly constructed or placed to the South front direction, which is the landscape of Mesopotamia field. Nevertheless, the water gives life to "salsabil", which has a great importance for pavilion's position. If there was no water source on the field, then the water was brought to "iwan" by canals called "sarap". Some of these handmade canals are more than 100 meters. The size of the interior space of the "saraps" is about a man who can move on by creeping. As well, they contain some wells for intervention that provide the connection with the surface. Thus, if the canals are congested or collapsed, a man can easily go in and solve its problem [12]. (Figures 6,7 and 8)

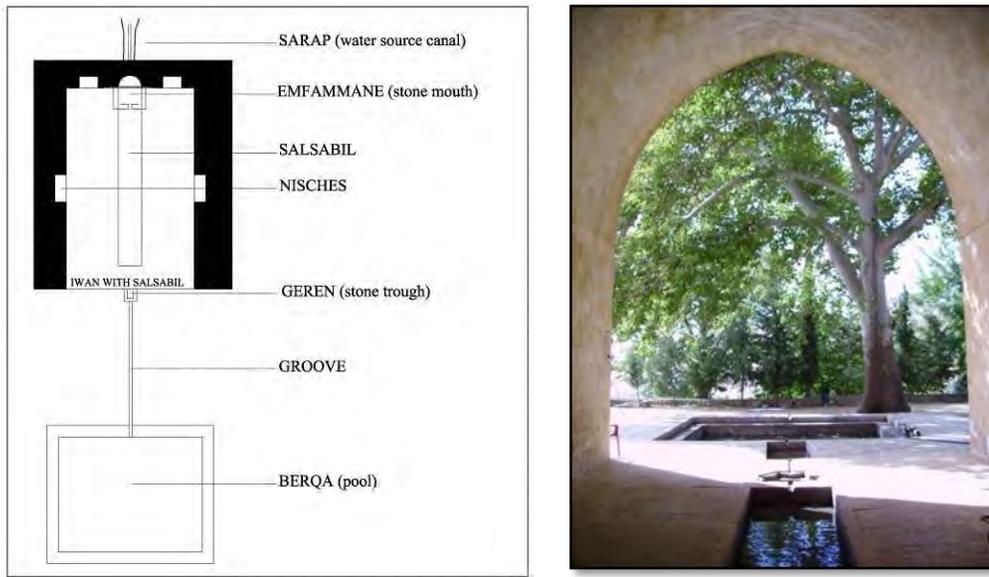


Figure 6: The plan of the pavilions' elements of the iwan with salsabil.
 Figure 7: Photo from iwan of Deyrulzafaran pavilion.

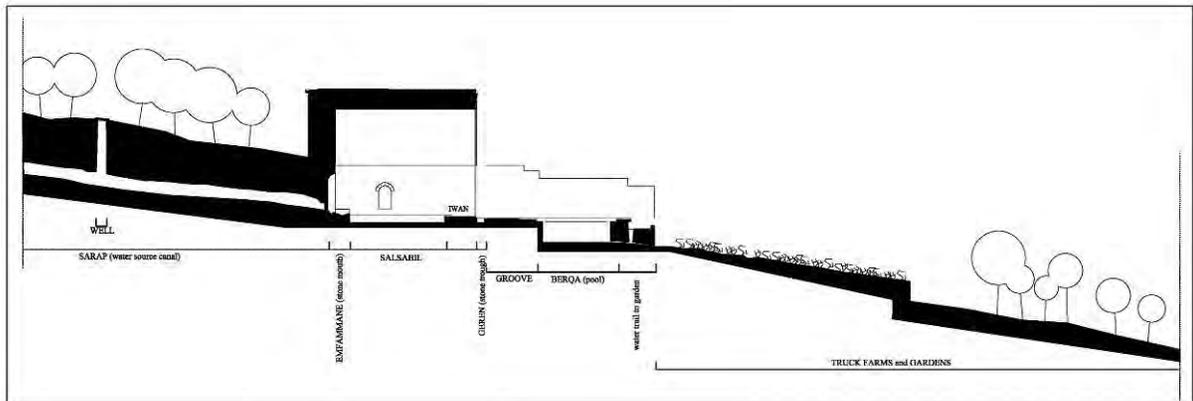


Figure 8: The section of a pavilion.

The water that comes first to the “iwan with salsabil” is poured into the stone mouth named “emfammane” (in local accent; as like the other elements salsabil, qasr, etc.). From here, it flows to “salsabil”. The water from “salsabil” flows to the stone trough called “geren” than flows by a groove to the pool called “berqa”. In the part the water comes from “sarap” and flows to the stone mouth, there is always a niche, which got some embellishment according to the family’s richness [13].

There are some generalizations when the traditional Anatolian houses are being considered in a typological frame. A house has usually two or three floors. The ground floor is planned with unconfined spaces. The entrance floor is introverted and includes the service spaces as kitchen, barn and cellar. However, upper floors are planned with extrovert and facing to streets. The rooms are organized around the common space called “sofa”. Upper floors contain especially living spaces and there are other living rooms that are opening to sofa [14].

According to the researches of traditional Mardin pavilions (qasr) I can say that there are to different results about the interior design. It seems that Mardin pavilions' ground floors do not formed only by service spaces (kitchen, barn and cellar) as I told in the preceding paragraph. The other spaces on ground floor are the main characteristic element of the ground floor "iwān with salsabil" and sometimes the living rooms. Pavilions are usually single storey planned however, in the time for requirements it had been added some floors and rooms in the courtyard. According to ground floor, upper floors are late dated and they may have iwans and living rooms. Space organization of upper floors resemble to the traditional Mardin houses located south side of the fortress. The main living rooms are niched, adorned and vaulted. The iwān and arcades seem to be similar structures in both Mardin houses and vernacular pavilions. Sometimes the upper floors can contain bathrooms and kitchens. The pavilions do not include any basement floors. (Figures 9 and 10)



Figure 9: A view from of Mardin urban fabric with traditional houses.

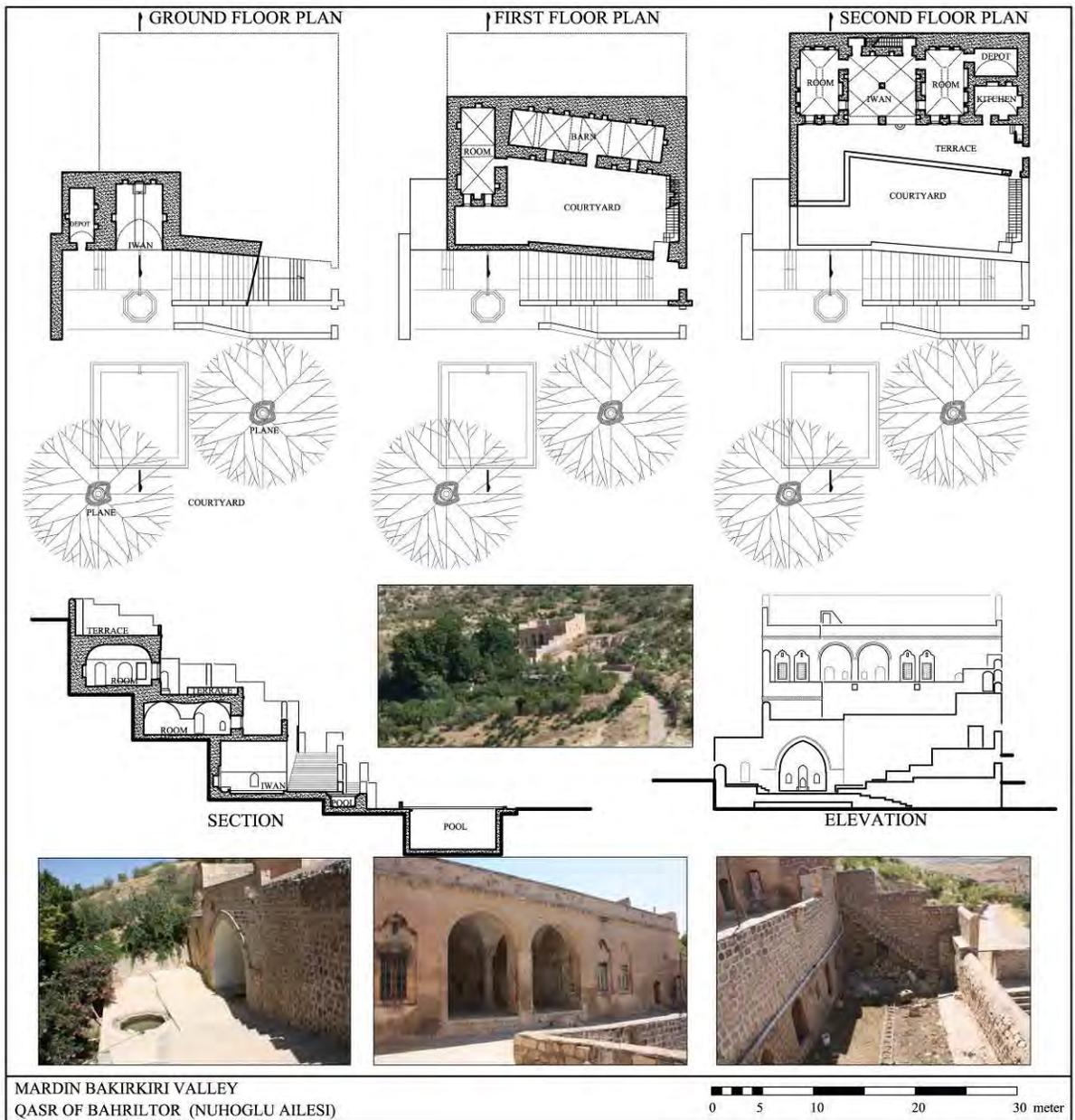


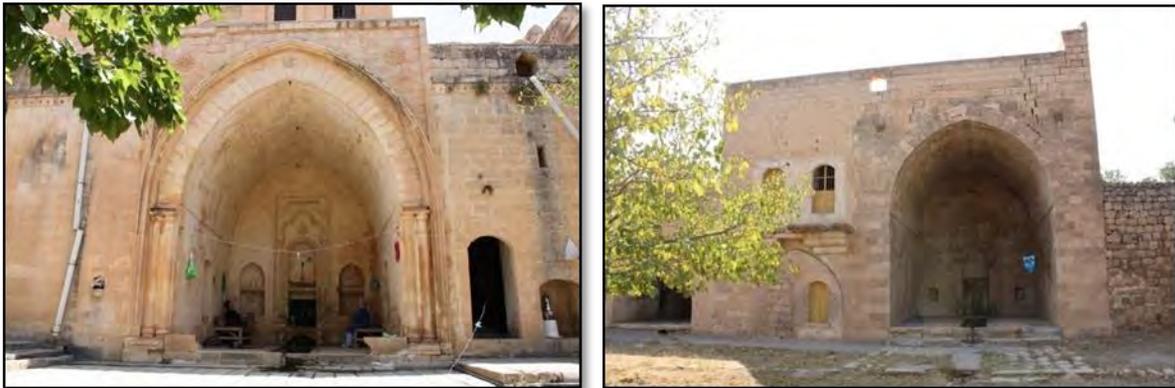
Figure 10: Survey of the “Bahriltor Qasr” located in Bakirkiri valley.

In some pavilions, there are more than one iwans. These are divided into as male and female spaces. Iwan; with small chord, unadorned, a bit niched, sometimes without salsabil is mainly for female use. Adorned, large chord and niched iwan with salsabil is for the use of male. Both of these spaces are facing to the same facade and courtyard of the pavilion. Usually, there is an additional wall for the domestic privacy that forms the courtyard. The spaces are extended by adding to iwan’s surrounding. However, there is only one example that depicts a different design where iwan is the only single element, which is the pavilions’ itself.

Walnut, sycamore trees had been planted near the pool in the middle of the courtyard. Most of the trees are aged that create shadow in the courtyard and a specific climate with the pool efficacy.

Surrounding of the pool is usually stone paved except the ground of the courtyard, which is soil. In some well-maintained pavilions courtyard is grassed, this grassed area is called “marca”. Marca is irrigated to stand always green by getting water from the pool.

Iwan that provides a specific climate is particular in warm regions. Thus, it is integrated to public life as a local venue. The architectural element design as a half closed mass “iwan” opens to the courtyard. Iwan has a protected, shady and peaceful ambience. (Figures 11 and 12) Iwan in the traditional Mardin houses is like a summer room that three sides of its are closed and the open side looks to the south (landscape of Mesopotamia). Unlike the traditional Mardin houses, iwan as a characteristic element of the pavilion is described with the *salsabil* inside. Therefore, the position of the iwan with *salsabil* is not necessarily facing to the south side, which is landscape of Mesopotamia. The position of it is completely depending to the topography of the land where the pavilions are built. The *qasr* with “iwan with *salsabil*” located to the upper dimension, which is parallel to the slope for irrigating conveniently the fields by self-flowing of the water. The water comes from the iwan that is accumulating in the pool. When the pool is filled, the water is being released and it irrigated by natural flowing to the natural sloped garden ground. In this research, there is only one different example, which is the Suleymanbeg pavilion’s iwan that has not a direct relation with the courtyard. The pavilion is inverted into T form and the iwan with *salsabil* is inside. The water flows from the inside to the outside pool by a thin underground groove [15, 16].



Figures 11 and 12: Iwans of Abdulkadirpasa and Iskender pavilions.

Other important spaces are the rooms, except the iwan and the courtyard in pavilions. There is not any design condition about positioning of the rooms. As adverted before, the rooms do not face to south as like in traditional Mardin houses. Rooms are structured next to the iwan. The entrances of the rooms lead from the courtyard with a distinct door. The additional rooms in the upper floors may look like the main living rooms of traditional Mardin houses. In some pavilions, which have more than one floor, the ground floor is reserved for the constant hedger and hedger families. The usages of the rooms on the other floors are only belonging to the property owner.

When we analyze all the data about Mardin' pavilions (*qasrs*) in order to make a typological research, two different situations occur. First, a typological work considers the mass of the pavilion and their positions on the landscape; secondly, the work considers the relationship between iwan in the middle and the rooms. When it is analyzed accordingly, the characteristic plan of the pavilions does reach to some conclusions.

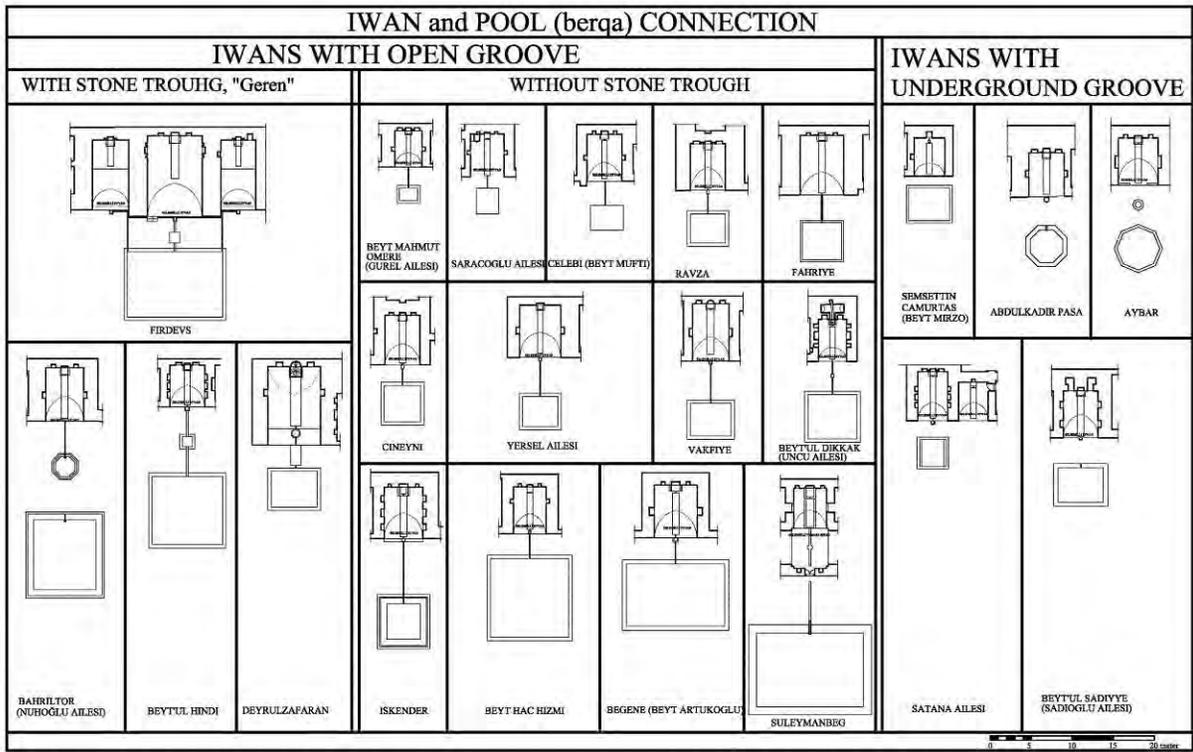


Figure 15: The connections of iwan and pool.

Although the pavilions are often considered as for summer period, some of them are for four seasons. There are additional rooms in ground and upper floors that are habitable for all seasons that are similar to traditional Mardin houses. Additional stairs in the courtyard helps passing to upper floors. In single storey pavilions, it can be passed to the roof by a few stairs from back facade that apart of buried because of sloping. However, in multi floored pavilions there are always stairs in the room or inside the wall or attached to the wall in terrace for passing to the roof.

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 20-25 years ago, Mardin gentry families used to own summer pavilions that were around the areas of outside the Mardin citadel. Products from the fields were collected; foods were prepared for winter in the summer pavilions and someone's often in use for all seasons. In 1990's, these areas of pavilions were insecure because of political conflict that caused terrorism in these rural areas. Using those pavilions was restricted that caused the cheap sales of them and their land. Thus, Mardin's gentry' families have emigrated from the city for several reasons; therefore most of these pavilions became ruins or fall apart and the ownership. Relatives of these families who migrated from Mardin inherited some pavilions. However, these people did not maintain the pavilions either. In course of time, the vacant and unused pavilions could not be listed and researched, because of the security problems and their distance from the city.

- Recently, some of pavilions have been still used by the initial owners or few of them inherited. These nuclear families were using these pavilions as weekend houses only in summers. Currently, the contemporary additions, functions; incorrect interventions have damaged the unique plan and forms of facades of the pavilions.
- Identifying the authentic architecture of traditional pavilions and the current determination of deterioration will provide the paths of conservation of these pavilions. Despite of many researches about traditional Mardin urban houses, there is still a lack of research on the pavilions. The study aims to list, introduce and preserve the pavilions. This study wish to provide a data for conservation, restoration and revitalization projects.
- There are some functional changes and interventions according to lifestyles of the inhabitants and some daily necessities in usage such pavilions. At the other hand, these pavilions need to be renovated and reorganized according to contemporary usages and current conditions.
- During the maintenance and reparation, the pavilions can be transformed into its authentic plan and function; in necessary cases, new functions can be added that will not cause any destruction in those houses. So far, there is not any existent pavilion that was restored as within new functions in Mardin. Only some pavilions that are in use for weekends or all seasons in Zinnar and Bakirkiri valleys maintained in advance. Pavilions except the used ones are vacant or neglected. They had started to be ruin.
- Recently, Mardin became an attractive city for the interest of both domestic and foreign tourists. It is an option that vacant or periodic used pavilions can serve to tourism. For example, they can be function as a regional meal restaurant with their authentic spaces like courtyards and iwans or they can serve as boutique hotels, hostels in which a person may sleep outdoor in the courtyard or on the terrace. There could be several local organizations that could guide the tourists to those pavilions as a constellation of historical attractive places. Vernacular trails of the pavilions can be used for different organization and recreation areas as like mountain cycling, trekking, etc. Nowadays organic products are very popular. As like in the past, the gardens and fields of the pavilions are still convenient for organic agriculture. In the fields of some pavilions, there are still existing flowing water sources, which can be used for growing organic products by using developed agriculture methods. These proposals provide saving the water, convenient agriculture and conservation of pavilions in the future.

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