
SIGNIFICANCE OF DAYRO D-MOR HANANYO AND MOR GABRIEL MONASTERIES WITHIN THE SCOPE OF BELIEF TOURISM

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Abstract

While tourism sector turns into a huge and growing market, the purpose of tourism goes beyond the triangle of sea-sand-sun and develops its range by including gastronomical tourism, historical tourism or religious tourism. As one of the most primordial tourism types, religious tourism emerges from people's need to visit places that they assume holy and divine according to their religious belief, as mean(s) of worship and to take spiritual pleasure. Its extent and participants are still growing fast all over the world.

Assyrians, who live in Mesopotamian lands, which gave birth to many religions, are the first people who accepted Christianity as a clan. Mardin, which is one of the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, where people from different languages, religions, cultures or ethnic backgrounds live together, is a good candidate to be a visiting place for cultural tourists. Dayro D-Mor Hananyo (Deyr-ul Zaferan) and Mor Gabriel (Deyr-ul Umr) Monasteries, which are significant for Christendom and especially Assyrians, are two most attractive religious places. However, the lack of presentation and marketing prevents world heritage Mardin and its two mentioned monasteries from being known and adequately recognized.

Keywords: belief, tourism, Mardin, monastery

1. Introduction

Belief tourism can be defined as “apart from the places they live, work and meet their daily needs; the trips people take to the spiritual centers of attraction in order to satisfy their religious needs and the overall relations that emerge from their using products, services and accommodations provided by tourism establishments” [1]. It includes religious travels, pilgrimages, religious meetings and other facilities, sightseeing, missionary travels, holidays and recreations. Belief tourism is also referred to faith tourism, religious tourism, religious welcoming, religion based travel, religious holiday, sectarian travel, faith trip or religious accommodation. Belief tourism still faces a growing

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demand with various participants [2].

Belief tourism organizations are one of the most primordial types of tourism. The reasons directing people to this kind of tourism can be: psychological motives, the richness of religious supply sources, religious holidays and festivals, missionary activities [3]. At this concept, the places assumed to be holy by congregations are visited in order to receive absolution, recovery from the illnesses or personal and spiritual development. At present day, followers of many religions accept and promote this kind of travels, as well. The significance of the places that are accepted as divine makes this tourism form gain importance and results in increasing prestige. Churches, mosques, temples, graves, caves, mountains, gardens, locations that presumably witnessed divine miracles can be listed among these places. These spaces are assumed to be sacred and respected, as a result, become important targets for religious foundations. Moreover, while lots of people accept them as holy places for worship, there are also visitors attracted by their historical and esthetical value. Therefore, some significant cultural centres in Europe, Middle East, Asia and Latin America are also noted as indigenous religious bases. The temples and monasteries in Thailand; mosques and churches in Jordan, Turkey and Egypt; cathedrals in Latin America and Europe are parts of a whole which attract both religious and non-religious visitors as historical heritages. In England a package tour, not including Westminster Abbey or Canterbury Cathedral is incomplete. Similarly, a tour to Bangkok, Thailand should cover a trip to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha or the Temple of the Reclining Buddha. In this concept, UNESCO has added many religious places all over the world into its world heritage list [4].

In the academic culture of the West, the link between tourism and religion is assumed to be determined by to role of the pilgrimage. One attention-grabbing point in the literature is that the pilgrimages do not have a stable feature.

Backwell claims that the pilgrimages in 19th century had to be an attempt full with adventure and distress [5]. Indeed, for this hard journey the only motivation is the spiritual pleasure. Today it is also believed that pilgrimages are not also an earthy act with faith and relations, but also a divine act strengthened by a sacred impulse. This point of view is in accordance with Durheim's [6] claim that contains the instructions of primary religion education, religious rituals require celebration and solidarity to reinforce social life. Some other theorists like Shinde draw attention to the fact that the time that is spent on getting souvenirs, eating-drinking, shopping outweighs the time spent for religious activities and therefore a pilgrim is similar to a tourist [5].

It is indispensable to show the effects of religion, which is the main source of social rules, on touristic acts as well. When almost all of the religious guides instructed their followers to visit sacred places as a religious must in medieval times, they not only implemented a religious obligation, but also created an economic movement. The Christianity belief during Middle Ages showed the feature of extending beyond its borders. The emergence of missionary activities, the transform of Crusades into a mass movement, the increasing numbers of

Muslim pilgrim journeys resulted in many actions to arise among Europe, Anatolia and Middle East. There is no doubt that today the most significant belief tourism centre on Earth is the city of Jerusalem, which is considered sacred by all three monotheistic religions. Along with that, other important belief tourism centres are Rome and Istanbul for Christians, and Saudi Arabia lands which has Mecca and Medina for Muslims [7].

The 'Belief Tourism Project' conducted by Culture and Tourism Ministry of Turkey has detected that among 316 works with religious value, 167 works are Islamic, 129 works are Christian and 20 works are Jewish.

2. Mardin

Mardin, with an area of 8891 km², is located between 36°55'–38°51' north latitudes and 39°56'–42°54' east longitudes. It takes place in the northern side of ancient Mesopotamian area. Within the borders of present day Turkey, its neighbours are Diyarbakır and Batman at the north, Siirt at the northeast, Şırnak at the east, Şanlıurfa at the west and Syria at the south (Figure 1). Its districts are Kızıltepe, Nusaybin, Midyat, Ömerli, Derik, Mazıdağı and Dargeçit.

Mardin geography is a centre which has maintained its significance throughout history as an intercept of ancient trade routes and cultural relationship networks. Mardin area, which is located in the 'Fertile Crescent' where the agriculture was first born, is the only passage between Mesopotamia at its south and Diyarbakır plateau at its north. The city is on a hill where you can see a route which is also known as the Silk Road [8].

It is a known fact that the area that includes Mardin was referred to as Tur Abdin with its noted Kaşari mountains in the epigraphs about Assyrian king Adad Nirari I and his son Salmansar I (1305-1244 BC). In those Assyrian writings, the middle of Tur Abdin was defined with a geographical term Nirbu. And the term Izala, found again later in cuneiform tablets, in Roman and Byzantine writings, is supposed to be used for Mardin Mountain. We come across the same term as İzela in Assyrian texts and as cebel-al-izal in Arabic writings [7]. The word Mardin as a place name is used for the first time by the Romanian historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who was leaving this place to go Nusaybin when Sasanians surrounded Diyarbakır in 359 [9]. As from 4th century, Mardin has become one of the most important centres of the area covering the upper basin of rivers Tigris and Euphrates, which is named as Al-Jazeera by Muslim geographers [10].

Mardin and its surroundings has so far accommodated the Mitanni, Hittites, Assyrian-Aramaeans, Scythian-Cimmerian-Medes, Babylonians, Persians, Alexander the Great, Macedonians, Seleucids, Abgars (Urfa Kingdom) Dikrans, Romans, Sasanians, Arab-Umayyad-Abbasid, Hamdanids, Merwanids, Seljuk Turkomans, Artukids, Kara Koyunlu Turkomans, AkKoyunlu Turkomans, Safavids and Ottomans in historical order [11].

Being a military station till Arabic-Islamic conquests, Mardin started to develop after Arabic conquests and became a real and glamorous 'city' when it was the capital of Artukids.

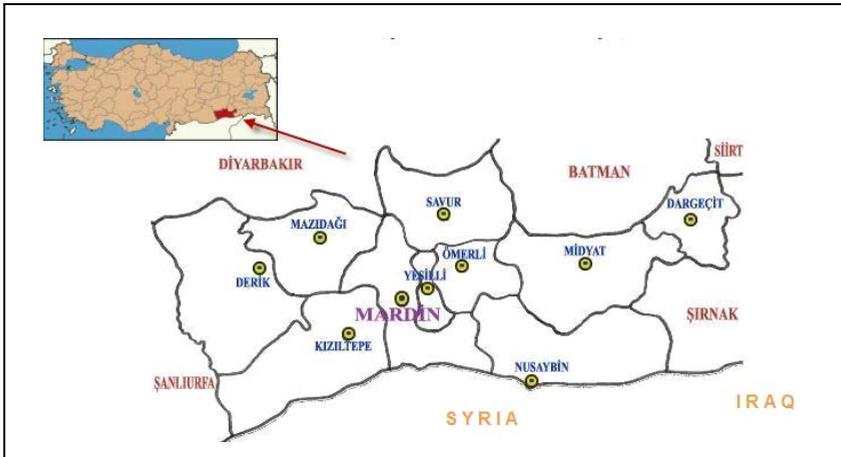


Figure 1. Mardin Map.

3. Religion and ethnical structure

Since the early ages, Mardin and its surroundings have been a multireligious place where lots of ethnic groups and religious communities live together and many mystical beliefs coexist. The Yazidi who believes in the Peacock Angel, the Şemsi who worshipped the Sun and people with monotheistic religions have been living together as the main elements of this city. Structures like the Sun Temple in Dara, the Zoroaster Temple on which the Dayro D-Mor Hananyo was built, places like Tur Abdin area, now called Abidler Mountain, are important indicators pointing at the fact that this region has been hosting mystical elements for thousands of years. As a reflection of this tradition, we can refer to the knowledge that Assyrians, who ran from Roman pressure and cruelty, accommodated in Tur Abdin and built religious places. Aramaic, which is recognized as Jesus Christ's language, is still spoken in this region [12].

After polytheistic religions, mystical beliefs, monotheistic religions emerged and Assyrian Orthodox, Assyrian Catholics and Assyrian Protestants, Chaldeans, Armenian Catholics, Armenian Gregorian and Armenian Protestants, Jews and Muslims constituted the religious and sectarian structure of the region [11]. It is possible to speak of a traditionalized toleration in Muslim – Non-Muslim relationships. When we go through court registries during Ottoman rule, we can see that Muslims and Non-Muslims had regular trade relations by buying and selling property regardless of their district and when a case was taken to ecclesiastical court, each person had to swear over their own holy scripture [13]. Tur Abdin region, where also Mardin is located, has a significant place in the history of Christianity. During the Monophysite Byzantine war, prisoners were

sent to Upper Mesopotamia around Mosul and Tekrit was ruled by Sasanian. By his ruler Husrev II (590-628) gained majority in this region in 8th and 9th century and spread their religious beliefs by also convincing Nestorians to switch to their sect. Thus, this Tur Abdin region becomes their centre and they build many monasteries here. The most famous of them are Mor Gabriel (Deyr-ul Umr) of Tur Abdin and Dayro D-Mor Hananyo (Deyr-ul Zaferan) which is located 5 km south of Mardin. This sect called Assyrian Church of West or Monophysite-Yakubi Church, has its most brilliant period during 8th century [14].

The region has great importance for Assyrians as well. Though they experienced pressure and oppression from the Byzantine, they have good relationships with Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen. It is confirmed by Assyrian resources that between 1125 and 1165, during the period of Mor Yuhannon, who was working as Mardin Metropolitan bishop, that 50 churches and monasteries were restored [15].

Assyrians are descendent from the Sami and they speak the Turoyo language, which belongs to Eastern Aramaic branch of Neo-Aramaic language which belongs to the group of Semitic languages. They play an important role in the development of the Islamic concept and philosophy during the period of Abbasids. They were honoured in palaces of caliphs and sultans and given important missions. The language Assyrians use for religious transactions and rituals is Syriac which is called 'lišanoktobonyo' and has been written with the Western Aramaic alphabet. This group is also called 'Assyrians of the west'. The members of the community from the west side of Tur Abdin and around Mardin use Qiltu dialect of Arabic as a daily language. And for liturgy they use the Arabic language written with Syriac alphabet which is called Karşuni. Today some Assyrian villages speak Kurdish and they even write in Kurdish using Syriac alphabet [15].

Mardin became a patriarchate centre of Syriac Orthodox Church in 1056-1091 and 1166, became metropolitan from 1125 and by maintaining its position as a patriarchate centre between 1293 and 1932 earned the right to be the sacred city for Assyrians. Officially Ottoman Empire acknowledged Syriac Orthodox Church in 1874 and the patriarchate was started to be built in 1850. Syriac Orthodox authorities built up relationships to Europe, especially to England in order to modernize religious teachings. From World War I to World War II Assyrian population decreased dramatically and so Assyrian schools were closed and churches were used for different purposes [13].

Among Syriac Orthodox people of Mardin, transition to Catholicism began in the end of 18th century and lasted till the end of 19th century. Syriac Catholics built Saint Mary Church in 1860 and Mor Efrem Monastery in 1880s. Today a part of Saint Mary Church is used as a museum. Assyrians mostly live in Midyat with 33 villages and a minority live in Mardin city centres, Savur, Killik, İdil and Nusaybin. In the 18th century, Assyrians made up a significant part of Christian community but after they started to migrate to Istanbul and Europe (mostly Sweden, Germany and Holland) by the end of the 19th century, their population decreased.

Another Christian community living in Mardin city centre and Midyat is named Chaldeans. Formerly, a member of Syriac East Church (Nestorian) separated Chaldeans from Nestorians in 489 and became a part of Syriac West Church in Roman Empire. Finally, it became Catholic in 1445. When Greek Catholic Church was founded in 1830, Chaldean Catholics were also acknowledged by Ottoman Empire. They separated themselves from Roman Church in 1858 and they presently live in İdil, Silopi, Midyat and Mardin city centre. They have one church in Mardin. The language they mostly use is Sürit, which is a part of Semitic group and a branch of Neo-Aramaic. For liturgy they use Eastern Syriac writings [10].

After Ottoman Empire gains the control of this region, they made a comprehensive population census. According to this study, Mardin had 9 districts with 48% Christians, approximately the other half (45%) were Muslims who were Arabs, Kurds or Turks, and a remaining small part were Şemsi and Jewish. It is a known fact that between 1608 and 1694 approximately 4000 Non-Muslim people lived in Mardin. It is also remarkable, that at this period Non-Muslim population that lived in the villages was higher than the one living in the city centre [16].

Mardin of 19th century was composed of 13-15 districts. Nevertheless, all different communities living in the city centre did not feel a social or physical threat that would have led them to live in an isolated place separated from other communities of the society. The communities, ethnical groups and congregations who were not marginalized thanks to that distinctive feature of Mardin resisted assimilation to a large extent and have carried their existence to the present they [17].

Most Christian missionaries and travellers who came by Mardin to write a travelogue in the 19th century like Adrien Dupre, Kinneir, Southgate and Buckingham report that while Chaldeans, Syriac Catholics and Armenians each had one church in Mardin, Jacobites had many; the Şemsi started to adapt to Syriac Catholics and numerous Christian communities had sectarian infightings among themselves [18].

4. Touristic assets of Mardin

Thanks to its rich historical heritage, Mardin poses a significant attraction for tourists in present day. According to reports, the ratio of religious facilities in the city regarding the total city area seems to be 2.21%. If we assume that the average number for Turkey is 0.79%, the importance of Mardin regarding to the belief tourism becomes clearer. Due to the cultural heritage potential, the historical part of the city has been protected as an urban conservation area by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism since 1974 [19].

Today it is possible to see structures going back to 4500 BC from Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Mitanni, Assyrian, Persian, Byzantine, Arab, Seljuk, Artuqid and Ottoman periods in Mardin. The city has become a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage list and its areas like Mardin city centre,

Midyat centre, Savur district and Dara ruins are under protection as urban conservation sites. Mardin is also an important religious centre for both Muslims and Christians. Ulu Cami (Cami-i Kebir), Abidin Mosque and Tomb, Koçhisar Mosque (Kızıltepe Ulu Camii), Malik Mahmud (Bab Es Sur) Mosque, Abdul (Latifiye) Mosque, Zinciriye (Sultan Isa) Madrasah, Şehidiye Madrasa and Mosque, Sitti Radviyye (Hatuniye Madrasa), Cihangirbey Zawiya, Sultan Musa Tomb, Mor Behnam (Kırklar) Church, Saint Mary Church and the Patriarchate, Mor Joseph Church (Surp Hosvep), Deyrulzafaran Monastery (Mor Hananyo), Deyrulmr Monastery (Mor Gabriel), Mor Joseph monastery (Nusaybin), Midyat Saint Mary Monastery and the Monastery of Mor Dimethyl can be counted among significant religious structures. However, the most important two structures that attract many visitors are without doubt Dayro D-Mor Hananyo (Deyr-ul Zaferan) and Mor Gabriel (Deyr-ul Umr) monasteries, due to their religious significance.

5. Key indicators for tourism

According to data provided by Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, between the years 2008 and 2012 the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting Mardin is indicated in the Table 1. According to the data received, in 2012 the numbers of tourists staying in Mardin are: 126693 domestic, 11,380 foreign and 138,073 in totals. According to the indications provided in Table 1, the largest decline in the number of tourists that have occurred since 2008 was listed in 2009 with a rate of 8.7%. In the following year 2010, we observe an increase with a rate of 53.6%. This was the highest number seen in the last five years and also the highest number compared to the previous years. This ratio is much higher than the rate of increase held in Turkey's average rate in the same year (12.17%). However, the same increase does not exist in any other year with the same stability. Increases are observed in 2011 with 23.1% and 2% in 2012.

Table 1. The tourist numbers accommodating in Mardin.

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2008	70,216	8,151	78,367
2009	64,735	6,811	71,546
2010	100,320	9,608	109,928
2011	125,598	9,719	135,317
2012	126,693	11,380	138,073
2013	172,859	16,589	189,448

The number of visitors at Mor Hahanyo and Mor Gabriel monasteries, which attract the highest numbers of tourists, are given in the Tables 2-4. First, it should be stated that the records held at Mor Hananyo are found much more reliable than the records of Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism. The numbers show that almost every tourist, visiting the city, goes to see Mor

Hananyo monastery. On the other hand, Mor Gabriel is visited less because it is located in an area which is 15 km away from Midyat centre which is also 60 km away from Mardin city centre and there aren't enough vehicles to provide a regular transportation.

Table 2. The visitor numbers of Mor Hananyo monastery between 2010 and 2014.

Date	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
January	3,000	2,314	2,019	3,997	2,689
February	4,500	3,807	1,594	4,003	3,207
March	7,000	8,412	4,503	5,986	6,784
April	22,200	18,491	16,178	20,131	20,541
May	30,800	21,286	18,551	25,048	25,124
June		9,700	10,847	8,513	10,682
July		4,000	5,779	7,008	7,983
August		8,000	5,532	3,589	5,142
September		8,500	7,268	8,921	9,401
October		15,000	7,241	7,013	13,208
November		7,000	4,090	4,574	14,491
December		2,500	2,486	2,784	4,251
Total	67,500	109,010	86,088	101,567	123,503

Table 3. The visitor numbers of Mor Gabriel Monastery between 2010 and 2013.

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Persons	51,403	41,375	63,362	59,081	67,008	81,633	63,550	55,759	81,897

Table 4. Detailed numbers for the ethnical background in 2013 at Mor Gabriel Monastery (persons).

Year	Assyrian	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2013	3,735	71,691	6,471	81,897

The Assyrian visitors shown in Table 4 are not the community members of monastery but foreign visitors which live abroad. When we consider that there are about 4000 Assyrians living around Mardin today, the fact that 3735 Assyrian people come to visit Mor Gabriel in a year needs to be taken into account.

6. Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel monasteries

Monastery etymologically comes from Greek word ‘monzein’ which means ‘living alone’. Monastery life basically comes from the thinking that one abandons the world in order to submit to the God by following only Him. Monks and nuns living there work, pray and fast for the salvation of themselves and the whole humanity [20]. This solitary life of monks and nuns in Christianity history begins in the East, in 4th century on Mesopotamia. Izlo Mountain which holds Nusaybin can be counted as the first nest for monks. Monasteries and

temples spread from this place by increasing in the number throughout Tur Abdin and Mardin [21].

6.1. Mor Hananyo Monastery

Mor Hananyo, or as it is also called in the region Deyr-ul Zafaran Monastery, is located 3 km east side from the Mardin city centre (Figure 2). The length of the monastery is 71 meters and its width is 63 meters. It is surrounded with water and its yard has porches on its four sides facing each other. In the middle of the yard, there are two big wells where the spring water is carried from the Eastern mountains through pipes and watercourses is poured [21]. Monastery is composed of Domed Church known as Mor Hananyo, Saint Mary Church, the Saints' Cemetery, Mor Peter's Church, rooms and courts designed for Patriarch, Metropolitan and the priests [22]. However, one of the most striking parts of the monastery is without doubt the Şemsi temple under the yard, which was built in ancient ages and monastery was later built on top of it. This place is also known as the Sun Temple. The huge stones that hold the ceiling are brought together with locking methods without using any soil mixture and they have preserved their stable shape for thousands of years.

6.1.1. Significance of the monastery

Mor Hananyo Monastery has the position of a tourism centre which hosts visitors from both Turkey and the world all over the year. It has very important features which make it one of the most significant religious spots in Mesopotamia like its founders being saints. Additionally, that it is a Syriac Patriarchate Centre for seven centuries and so hosting the patriarch who ruled the church and the community, training many clergy and writers from Syriac Church, having a famous library which holds original and rare manuscripts. And that it is one of the most striking samples of early Christian architecture.

6.1.2. Historical background

The place was used as a castle at early ages but in the end of 4th century a priest, called Şleymun, started to use the place as a monastery and the place was called Mor Şleymun Monastery afterwards. Mor Hananyo Church, also called Domed Church, and Beth Kadişe (Saints' House), which is located on its south and used as a graveyard, were built by two Assyrian architects, Theodore and Theodosius. In 607, when the Persians take the region from Romans, the monastery was devastated. In 793 Saint Honanyo became a metropolitan bishop of Mardin and Kafartut. In his time, the monastery was restored and a great library which had many original manuscripts was built. The number of monks living in the monastery rose to 80 and the place started to be regarded as an important religious centre. Since then, it was called Mor Hananyo Monastery.

The region was conquered by Islamic Arab armies in 640 and in 1106 Artukids gained control over it. In 1125 the monastery was restored by Mardin Metropolitan Yuhanon and its library was extended. The place became Syriac Patriarchate Centre in 1166. The region was demolished by Mongolian invaders in 1394 and even in the next years. At the same period, Patriarch Abhohom II brought bones of saints from the churches and monasteries around to Mor Hananyo.

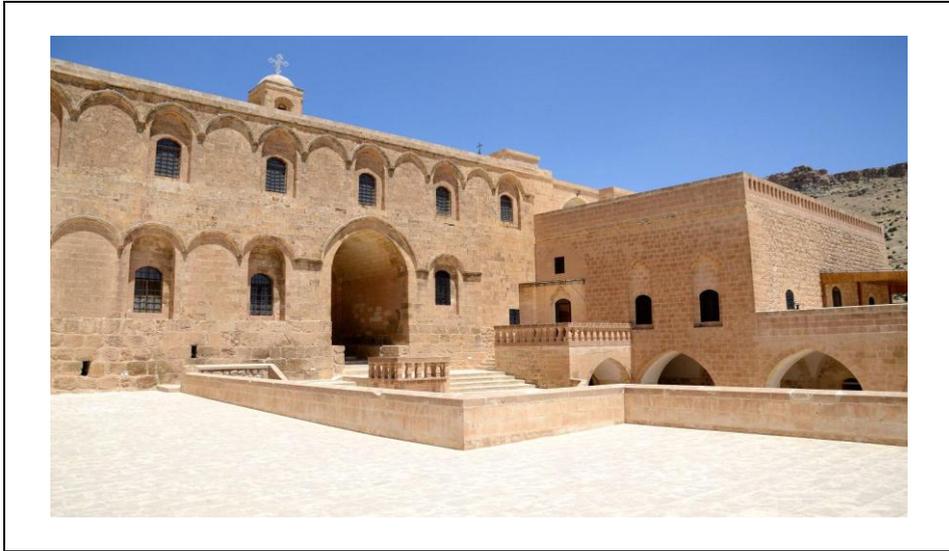


Figure 2. Mor Hananyo Monastery.

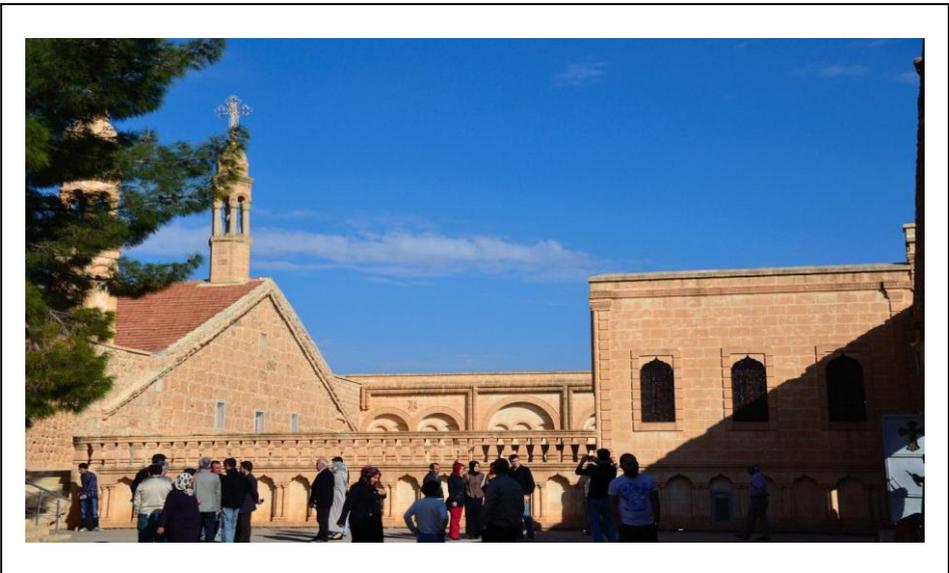


Figure 3. Mor Gabriel Monastery.

In the 15th century, the monastery started to be called as Deyr-ul Zafaran because of the saffron flowers surrounding the building or because this flower was used during the restoration of the building as an ingredient in the soil mixture. In 1516, Ottoman Empire gains control over the region. After this, the monastery got restored several times and outbuildings were added. In 1875, Patriarch Petrus IV met Queen Victoria in London and brought a printing machine he bought there to the monastery, founding the first printing house of the region.

When the last Assyrian Patriarch living in the monastery, Ingatius II (IlyasŞakir) died in 1932, his successor Inatius Afrem Barsavm carried the Patriarchate Centre from Mor Hananyo to the Homs city of Syria. The monastery is still active with its Metropolitan Bishop, monks, nuns and trainees [23].

6.2. Mor Gabriel Monastery

Mor Gabriel (Figure 3), which was also known as Mor Şmuel Monastery when it was built the first time, is located at the 15 km south of Midyat, on Idil road, nearby Katmin village. There is a seclusion tower, Estuno, at 300 km north of the monastery, where monks retire to seclusion. Most of the terraces, porches, abbara works, bell towers and stonework motifs adorning those structures were left from the 5th and 6th century [20, p. 93].

6.2.1. The significance of the monastery

Mor Gabriel is one of the rare ancient monasteries in the world that is still active. It is at least 400 years older than the monasteries located on the Athos Mountain, Greece. Another important feature of the place is that for 1600 years prayers and rituals have been realized here with the language of Jesus Christ, Aramaic. The Monastery has become one of the most important religious centres for Syriac Church thanks to the saints, patriarchs, priests, calligraphers, writers and trainers. Throughout its history, it has not only been one of the most important Syriac monasteries in the Tur Abdin region, but also in the whole Mesopotamia because of its famous institute, rich library, important religious location between Euphrates and Tigris. Mor Gabriel Monastery was called ‘the sun of eastern monasteries’ and so Tur Abdin region was recognized as the ‘second Jerusalem’ by Assyrians. The famous Mabuğ (Menbeç) Metropolitan Mor Filuksinos, who lived in the 6th century, wrote in a letter to his closest friend Eustochios (Sturiyos) that “whoever visits this Monastery seven times with faith will be accepted as he/she had visited Jerusalem” [24]. Today’s leader of Syriac Orthodox Church, Patriarch Mor Ignatius Zakka I of Kadasetl mentions Tur Abdin region where Mor Gabriel Monastery is located as “the most sacred place to be visited after Jerusalem” [25].

6.2.2. *Historical background*

The monastery was built in the 4th century by Mor Şmuel and Mor Şemun in the size of a Beth Slutho (prayer house). The tombs of those founders are still kept in Beth Kadişe (Saints' house) in the monastery. Later it was extended with the help of Roman and Constantinople Empires and after the 5th century it became a central monastery school not only for the trainees in Tur Abdin, but also in whole Mesopotamia. Between the end of the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th century, the control of the region changed hands several times between Persians and Romans, therefore, like any other churches or monasteries in the region Mor Gabriel was also demolished and despoiled many times. During these invasions, lots of objects symbolizing the wealth of the monastery were taken and its library had massive damage.

After 615, the monastery became a religious administration centre of the whole Tur Abdin region. The Metropolitan of the Mor Gabriel Monastery was also the Metropolitan of the Tur Abdin region. In 634, Saint Gabriel was portrayed as the Monastery's Metropolitan Bishop. Due to his successful management and the miracles he performed after 15th century, the monastery was named after him. At the end of the 8th century, an epidemic spread out in Tur Abdin and the monastery lost 95 monks. In order to stop the epidemic, they got Saint Gabriel's corpse out of his tomb and the illness stopped. In the 10th century, the forgotten calligraphy style Estangeloyo was reanimated in the monastery and because of that many original manuscripts were left to the Monastery [20, p. 46].

Between the 11th and the 15th century, the region was invaded by the Seljuk and the Mongolians plundered the monastery many times, killing many of the monks. In the 16th century, when Tur Abdin was despoiled by marauders, the valuable silver, gold and silk objects in the monastery were stolen. In 1915, during the period in which Ottoman Empire started deporting Armenian people, Assyrians were also affected by the conjecture. In that period when Assyrians were called as Seyfo (sword), the monks and residents of the monastery were killed by some of the tribes in the region and the Monastery was under invasion for 4 years. In 1923, the whole area was gathered in one religious centre, Tur Abdin Metropolitanship, since the population of the communities was reduced dramatically. In 1970, immigration started from Tur Abdin to Ankara and Istanbul. After 1980, the migration rate increased and lots of villages belonging to Assyrians were emptied [20].

Mor Gabriel Monastery is still the residence and head office of Tur Abdin Metropolitan Bishop. Today, lots of Assyrians come to Mor Gabriel to visit the tombs of saints in order to gain welfare and they listen the monks' prayers. Also the Muslim and Yazidi visit the monastery from time to time in order to find cure for their illnesses and problems [20].

7. Method

7.1. The objective and significance of the study

The Monasteries Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel have great historical and religious significance for all Christians and Assyrians, in particular, since they are the oldest monasteries that are still active; they are located in the original lands of Assyrians who are the first clan to accept Christianity as a religion; they wrote the Bible in Jesus Christ's language and still pray and make rituals in this language. However, so far they haven't been subjects for international studies and they are only studied in local terms by people who wanted to analyze their historical backgrounds.

And in these former scientific studies, these two monasteries were analyzed in historical, cultural, archaeological and architectural dimensions, not in terms of tourism. This study is significant because it analyzes Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel monasteries in tourism and promotion terms; presents the activities and efforts of public-private institutions and organizations who implement promotional facilities and refers to foreign visitors opinions regarding whether these promotional facilities are sufficient or not.

7.2. Research hypotheses

According to the objectives determined through the research, we developed the below presented hypotheses.

- The majority of people visiting Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel monasteries are domestic tourist groups who have an interest in historical places. The second place is taken by Assyrians who are citizens of other countries and third place is taken by foreign tourist groups who are interested in cultural tourism.
- There are significant differences among the visitors in terms of their nationalities, religions and purposes of visit.
- The visitors believe that these two places are not promoted enough.
- The satisfaction visitors get from their trip to Mardin and those two monasteries change dramatically according to their ages and educational backgrounds.

7.3. Population and sample

The population of the research is composed by domestic and foreign tourists visiting Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel Monasteries. In order to define the population of the study, the visitor statistics of 2013 held by those two monasteries were examined and it was found out that Mor Hananyo was visited by 109,010 and Mor Gabriel by 81,897 domestic and foreign tourists. On the other hand, it became clear that the nationalities of those visitors were not recorded and so it is not possible to correctly detect the number of foreign

tourists visiting these two monasteries. However, during the interviews with the authorities of those places it was ascertained that approximately 20% of those visitors were foreign.

It was aimed in this study to use probability sampling method, in which all of the units in population have an equal chance to be chosen as a sample, for sample selection and to determine a sample which will be able to present the population. In this direction, taking some features of the study into consideration, it was preferred to choose random sampling method. The fact, that the units chosen as sample were randomly determined, has great importance regarding the impartiality of the research. In this study, because of some limitations faced during data collection, it was aimed to provide random condition by defining the units that can be used for finding a sample for foreign tourists visiting Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel Monasteries in a specific range of time.

7.4. Data collection tool

In this research, a questionnaire was administered to 396 domestic and foreign tourists who visited Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel monasteries in May-July 2014. A sample was chosen when people who come to visit the monastery in random hours of a day and accepted to take the questionnaire. 385 of those questionnaires which were suitable for data input were used in statistical analysis stage.

The questionnaire form, which was prepared in both Turkish and English, had four parts. The first part included questions to determine the demographical features (like gender, age, nationality, monthly income, occupation, educational background and religious belief) of the participants while second part focused on the person's travel pattern, cause, number of travels and the other places they visited. In the third part, to determine domestic and foreign visitors' opinions, regarding the sufficiency of promotional features of Mor Hanahyo and Mor Gabriel monasteries, a quintet Likert-type scale was developed (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). And in the fourth part, to determine domestic and foreign visitors' opinions regarding on which aspects (historical places, religious places, natural assets, shopping, etc.) they found their Mardin visit satisfying, quintet Likert-type scale was used (very satisfying, satisfying, neutral, unsatisfying and not satisfying at all).

7.5. Data analysis

After the return of the replies, the observations in application field were given to the evaluation tool and a data base was created on the computer [26]. We used Lickert measure with 5 dimensions of: 1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neutral, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree. To find out the reliability of our questionnaire, we used Cronbach Alpha and discovered that it is equal with 0.78. So our questionnaire is reliable.

Table 5. Demographics of participants.

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	140	47.9
	Female	152	52.1
Age	18-25	36	12.5
	26-35	40	13.9
	36-45	76	26.4
	46-55	60	20.8
	55+	76	26.4
Nationality	Turkish	152	62.3
	Australian	24	9.8.
	Romanian	4	1.6
	Norwegian	4	1.6
	Italian	12	4.9
	Belgian	8	3.3
	Egyptian	8	3.3
	American	8	3.3
	Kurdish	20	8.2
Syrian	4	1.6	
Income	\$1000-	76	30.2
	\$1001-2000	68	27
	\$2001-3000	52	20.6
	\$3001-4000	12	4.8
	\$4001+	44	17.5
Education	Primary school	8	2.8
	High school	96	33.3
	Bachelor's degree level	140	48.6
	Grad school level	44	15.3
Religious belief	Muslim	164	62.1
	Orthodox	36	13.7
	Catholic	16	6.1
	Other	48	18.2

Our sample size has 292 respondents of whom 140 (47.9%) are males and 152 (52.1%) are females (Table 5). The biggest two groups regarding age range are 26-35 and over 55, which is also a characteristic feature for cultural tourism. The majority of the group belong to Turkish nationality, with a percentage of 62.3%. The biggest group, considering income, are people with less than 2000\$ (57.2%). Considering education, the majority of visitors are people with bachelor's degree level or higher (63.9%). Thus, our visitors' intellectuality level is high.

The biggest group is Muslim (62.1%) followed by the Orthodox (13.7%) and the Catholics (6.1%). Since the majority of visitors were domestic tourists, it is not far-fetched to say that they are mostly Muslims. And the second biggest group is the Orthodox because the places attract a lot of Assyrian people and they are mostly Orthodox.

Table 6. Visit reasons.

		Number	Percentage
Way of travel	By travel agent	164	58.6
	Individually	116	41.4
Duration of visit	1 Day	76	28.4
	1-3 Day	156	58.2
	3-7 Day	-	-
	More than seven	36	13.4
Motivation of visit	Religious believe	12	4.2
	Rest and fun	24	8.5
	History and culture	220	77.5
	Business travel	24	8.5
	Other	4	1.4
Frequency of visits to Mardin	First time	184	63.9
	Second time	24	8.3
	Third time and more	80	27.8
Frequency of visits Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel	First time	204	69.9
	Second time	44	15.1
	Third time and more	44	15.1
Getting knowledge about Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel	Travel Agencies	104	37.1
	Travel magazines	36	12.9
	Internet	44	15.7
	Friends	64	22.9
	Advertising activities	-	-
	Other	32	11.4
Reason of visit to Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel	Being a part of tour program	196	67.1
	Religion	20	6.8
	Historical and cultural interest	20	6.8
	Other	56	19.2
Visited places in Mardin	Mor Hananyo Monastery	240	82.19
	Ulu Mosque	188	64.38
	Mor Behnam Church	68	23.29
	Mor Gabriel Monastery	120	41.10
	Hatuniye Madrasah	32	10.96
	Kasimiye Madrasah	116	39.73
	Zinciriye Madrasah	76	26.03
	Sabancı Museum	96	32.88
Mardin Museum	140	47.95	

7.6. Characteristics of the visits

The majority of visitors came by travel agent (58.6%), and the others individually (41.4%) (Table 6). Regarding to the duration, the majority stays for 1-3 days (58.2%). Considering the reason for coming to Mardin, the majority of respondents indicated that they came because of interest in history and culture.

The majority of respondents have come to Mardin for the first time (63.9%). The majority of respondents have come to Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel for the first time (69.9%). Regarding the question about getting knowledge on Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel, travel agency is the biggest source (37.1%), followed by friends (22.9%), Internet (15.7%) and travel magazines (12.9%). Regarding the motivation of visiting Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel the majority of respondents replied that they were a part of tour program (67.1%). Besides, only 6.8% of visitors came for religious reasons. The most visited place is Mor Hananyo (82.19%), followed by Ulu Mosque (64.38%), Mardin Museum (47.95%) and Mor Gabriel Monastery (41.10%). All of the data in this part show that the biggest role belongs to travel agencies, in regard to getting knowledge about the region before the visit while other elements do not play a big role in promoting this region and religious places.

Table 7. One sample test for awareness.

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
a) Public relations activities are sufficient.	-6.901	235	0.000	-0.44068
b) Introductory campaign is sufficient (poster, brochure, city plans).	-1.140	231	0.255	-0.08621
c) Saint Paul's house is advertised sufficiently through fair advertised.	-1.754	223	0.081	-0.14286
d) Advertising activities are sufficient.	-0.499	207	0.618	-0.03846
e) Sponsorship services including culture, art and sport areas are sufficient.	1.000	215	0.318	0.07407
f) Lobby activities are sufficient.	-0.780	223	0.436	-0.05357
g) Sales development activities (give away promotion products like t-shirt, hat, keychain etc. discounts on hospitality and travel rates) are sufficient.	-0.240	215	0.810	-0.01852
h) One should visit Mor Hananyo/Mor Gabriel as a part of belief tourism destination.	-15.207	223	0.000	-1.03571
Total	-4.713	243	0.000	-0.25898

7.7. One-sample test -Test value 3

To measure the efficiency and the promotion ways, we made one sample T-test with test value of 3 (Table 7). When there is a difference in the value with more than zero it results from bad performance. When it is less than zero, it means good performance and zero means neutral. We found that the whole mean differences is less than zero except of 'Sponsorship services including culture, art and sport areas are sufficient' which is more than zero. The best performance was made in 'one should visit Mor Hananyo/Mor Gabriel as a part of belief tourism destination' with a value of -1.03571, with a total level of -0.25898.

To measure the satisfaction of visitors, we made one sample T-test with test value of 3 (Table 8). If the mean difference value is more than zero it refers to bad performance. When it is less than zero it means good performance and zero means neutral. We found that the whole mean differences are less than zero except ‘Night-life and amusement facilities’ is more neutral. The best performance was for ‘Historical buildings’ with a value of -1.49057 with total level of -0.70614.

Table 8. One sample test for visit reasons.

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Historical buildings	-34.198	211	0.000	-1.49057
Religious places	-26.912	207	0.000	-1.28846
Scenic beauties and landscape	-18.763	211	0.000	-1.16981
Food and beverage services	-8.760	195	0.000	-0.65306
Shopping opportunities	-5.138	207	0.000	-0.38462
Guidance service	-9.378	207	0.000	-0.67308
Nightlife and amusement facilities	0.000	175	1.000	0.00000
Hospitality	-12.237	211	0.000	-0.83019
Cleanliness and hygiene	-2.914	211	0.004	-0.20755
Handicraft	-13.762	195	0.000	-0.79592
Transportation facilities	-7.030	203	0.000	-0.52941
Prices	-1.954	195	0.052	-0.16327
Accommodation services(hotels)	-10.774	187	0.000	-0.76596
Total	-14.987	227	0.000	-0.70614

8. Conclusion and evaluation

It is a fact that the multiplier effect of culture and belief tourism is higher than the other tourism type: sea, sand and sun tourism. While the tourists of the sea tourism spend most of their time in the hotel or the sea, the tourist profile of cultural tourism is defined by its time outside. Therefore, Mardin which has a significant potential regarding culture and belief tourism has an advantageous position since the tourists will tend to spend more money.

However, the conclusion we come after this study is that the two most significant places in the region that should be evaluated in terms of belief tourism, Mor Hananyo and Mor Gabriel Monasteries, are not promoted enough. In order for the tourism sector to be improved in the region and reach an effective level regarding its role in the development; the places that have significance in terms of belief tourism should be promoted in a satisfactory level. The infrastructure and superstructure analysis of the cultural value of the region should be put into consideration. The establishments in the region providing service and products, which are directly or indirectly related to the tourism activities, should be inspected. The international tourism demand towards the

region should be analyzed. Lots of components like success level of the promotional activities, regarding touristic products, should be examined and appropriate policies should be developed.

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