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Kinship Forever: Patrilocal Settlement of Thousands of Years, Ancestral Chamber Hishashe

Sonsuza Kadar Akrabalık: Binlerce Yıllık Patrilokal Yerleşme Atalar Odası Hışhaşi[*]

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Abstract: This study focuses on how the hishashe burial tradition belonging to the group who identify themselves as Greek-Orthodox Christians living in and around Antakya have adapted to a wider cosmology and culture over time depending on cultural interaction, the relationship between this practice constituting the group identity with religion and gender, and what these mean. Additionally, identifying and recording the reasons why this burial type which is seen to be diminishing are also among the purposes of this study. In line with these purposes, Antakya and Samandag districts of Hatay were visited in April 2018, and Altinozu district was visited in April 2019. Information related to Hışhaşi tradition were collected by visiting Antakya city center, Sarilar and Tokacli (Cneydo) neighborhoods of Altinozu and Cemal Gursel neighbourhood of Samandag. As a result, in this burial form, hishashe where the males are to be buried, in other words, "Ancestors chamber" is pre-determined. This is the place where father, grandfather, uncle and other male individuals with a blood tie who are regarded as the "Ancestor". Moreover women are placed in the family tomb either including her own mother and father or including her children and husband at her preference. In a sense, hishashe is the reuinon of individuals who are regarded to be from the family. At the same time, for a woman who is separated from her family after marriage, it is the return-back to her home after so many years. These are the houses where individuals who have migrated to many parts of the world reunite, where they return. This is the place where homesickness ends. It is reunion. It is an endless kinship, ancestral relationship. According to Christian theology, hishashe is the gateway to immortality. These are the houses where the family members gather until the day of resurrection. However, it was understood that there have been differences in the frequency of practice and the architecture of hishashes over time as a result of interactions. Today, a decline in this practice was observed due to socio-economic and health-related reasons.

Structured Abstract: The purpose of this study is to try to understand and explain the tradition of Hışhashe burial, which forms the identity of the group living in Antakya and its surroundings and defines them as Greek-Orthodox Christians, and also enables us to understand the meaning networks underlying the relationship between religion and gender. Our another purpose is to identify why this burial tradition is diminishing and to record these reasons. In line with this purpose, Antakya and Samandag districts of Hatay were visited in April 2018, and Altinozu district was visited in April 2019. Information related to hishashe tradition were collected by visiting Antakya city center, Sarilar and Tokaçli (Cneydo) neighbourhoods of Altinozu and Cemal Gursel (Zeytuniye) neighbourhood of Samandag. The oldest examples of hishashe tomb architecture and burial rituals were obtained and aspects of this practice which have changed and remained unchanged were determined.

[*] The word “Hishashe” here is a Turkish word, which is spelled in Turkish as “Hishase” or “Hishase” with letters of the Turkish alphabet “ı” and “ş”.

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Architecturally, hishashe is a tomb consisting of four walls underground, where the members of he same family are buried, and the ancestors are buried together, consisting of one or two chambers, while it is possible to find a concrete skene, adjacent to two opposite walls, on which the deceased person is laid. While the doors of some of hishashes are on top, the others are from the side. They are mostly made of mudbrick or metal. While some of them have single doors, the others have two doors. Two-door hishashes are sometimes built for two blood relatives of the same lineage (first cousins, brothers, etc.). The reason why these are built to be used common is the high number of family numbers. In socio-cultural sense, hishashe could be considered as a patriarchal burial form as the lineage is based on the father because the individuals from the paternal lineage are buried together. In this burial form, hishashe where the males are to be buried, in other words, "Ancestors chamber" is pre-determined. This is the place where father, grandfather, uncle and other male individuals with a blood tie who are regarded as the "Ancestor". And woman are placed in the family tomb either including her own mother and father or including her children and husband at her preference. In a sense, hishashe is the reunion of individuals who are regarded to be from the family. At the same time, for a woman who is separated from her family after marriage, it is the return back to her home after so many years. These are the houses where individuals who have migrated to many parts of the world reunite, where they return. This is the place where homesickness ends. It is reunion. It is an endless kinship, ancestral relationship. And in a religious sense, it is the desire for the family to resurrect together on the day of resurrection. As a result, hishashe can be explained as the reflection of the desire of all family members to be together. hishashe is the reflection of the belief that there is life after death. For Christianity, death is actually the beginning of a new life. Accordingly, the main purpose is to be together with all the members of the family on the day of resurrection. Today, it is observed that the hishashe tradition is gradually diminishing due to the changing life conditions and possible hygiene problems due to the fact that the body does not come into contact with the soil in this burial form. The location where this tradition is mostly maintained is Sarilar.

As a result, hishashe chamber tomb tradition reflects a worldview that overlaps the Christian theology. After Pagan faith was replaced by Christianity, the belief that death is a state of sleep and that there will be resurrection affected the architecture of the tombs. In other words, Greek-Orthodox Christians living in the fields of this study believe that they have beaten death, that there is not death, and that dying means resurrection. For this reason, they believe that hishashe is the second house of the dead. Because it is the body that dies while the soul is alive. Therefore, tombs are constructed in the shape of a chamber, which is the representative of the house. Sofa-like structures (skene) constructed adjacent to the right and left alls fond in some hishashe examples in Antalya confirm this idea.

In all fields of the study, leaders and members of the managerial board of the Greek-Orthodox community think that hishashe tradition is not healthy as the dead bodies do not come into contact with the soil. Accordingly, they inform the public that this form of burial should be abandoned. The activities of the clergy and church officials on this issue show that the hishashe tradition will decline in the future.

Keywords: Social Anthropology, *Hishase tradition, Altinozu, Sarilar, Tokacli, Greek-Orthodox Christians, Antakya*

Öz: Bu çalışmada Antakya ve çevresinde yaşayan, kendilerini Rum-Ortadoks Hristiyan olarak tanımlayan grubun Hışhaşi ölü gömme geleneğinin kültürel etkileşime bağlı olarak zaman içerisinde daha geniş bir kozmolojiye ve kültüre nasıl uyum sağladığını, grup kimliğini oluşturan bu pratiğin, din ile toplumsal cinsiyet arasındaki ilişkisine ve ne anlama geldiğine odaklanılmıştır. Buna ek olarak terkedilmekte olduğu görülen bu gömü tipinin hangi nedenlerden dolayı azalmaya yüz tuttuğunu tespit etmek ve kayıt altına almak da çalışmanın amaçları arasındadır. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda, 2018 Nisan ayında Hatay'ın Antakya ve Samandağ, 2019 Nisan ise Altınözü ilçelerine gidilmiştir. Antakya merkez, Altınözü'nün Sarılar ve Tokaçlı (Cneydo), Samandağ'ın ise Cemal Gürsel Mahallelerine (Zeytuniye) gidilerek Hışhaşi geleneği ile ilgili bilgilere ulaşılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu gömü biçiminde erkeklerin defnedildiği hışhaşisi diğer bir değişle "atalar odası" bellidir. "Ata" (neseb) olarak kabul edilen baba, dede, amca diğer kan bağı olan erkek bireylerinin olduğu yerdir. Kadın ise tercihine göre ya kendi anne ve babasının ya da çocuklarıyla kocasının da içinde bulunduğu eşinin aile mezarına yerleştirilir. Bir bakıma hışhaşi aileden kabul edilen bireylerin yeniden bir araya gelmesidir. Aynı zamanda evlenerek ailesinden ayrılmış bir kadın için ise, yıllar sonra ailesinin evine geri dönüştür. Dünyanın birçok yerine göç etmiş bireylerin tekrar bir araya geldikleri, geri döndükleri evleridir. Gurbetin bittiği yerdir. Kavuşmadır. Bitmeyen bir akrabalık, soy ilişkisidir. Hristiyan teolojisine göre ise

Hışhaşi, ölümsüzlüğe açılan kapıdır. Diriliş gününe kadar aile üyelerinin bir arada toplandığı evleridir. Ancak Hışhaşinin zaman içerisinde etkileşime bağlı olarak mimarisinde ve uygulama sıklığında değişimlerin olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Günümüzde bu uygulamanın sosyo-ekonomik ve sağlık nedenlerine bağlı olarak gerilediği görülmüştür.

Keywords: Sosyal Antropoloji, Hışhaşi geleneği, Altınözü, Sarılar, Tokaçlı, Rum-Ortodoks Hristiyanlar, Antakya

Section I. Introduction

Death is a phenomenon that the humanity has been experiencing for millions of years and trying to cope with this fact. However, according to legends, people are immortal at first and they lost their immortality and became mortal as they opposed the commandments of God. From the earliest forms of faith to the most advanced religions, this belief was mentioned in various mythologies. The story of *Adam and Eve* in Jewish-Christian and Islamic tradition is the most important indicator of this belief. *Adam and Eve,* regarded as the first human beings, were, at first, immortal before God. However, as they opposed the commandment of God, they were sent down to the earth and were made mortals. The phenomenon of punishing human beings with a death penalty were justified in various ways in every society. According to *Balontoks* living in *Celebes* islands, humans lost immortality as they ate bananas instead of shrimps. According to *Melanesians,* due to the killing among the first creatures, and according to South African natives, humans lost immortality as they misunderstood the God's call (Hançerlioğlu, 2003:86). Although the effort of humanity to make sense of this destiny differs from society to society, "the uncertainty of life after death" and the anxiety arising from this uncertainty are common in all societies. In other words, the phenomenon of death is an unknown phenomenon for all humanity. Approaches and beliefs of societies in making sense of the phenomenon of death and their practices related to these beliefs are the reflection of their culture. The belief that the soul lives after death is related to the burial practice. How, where and in what way the process of placing the body under the soil after it is separated from the soul differs in every society based on variables such as religion, status, gender, rich, poor, class, ethnicity, etc. “Death is crucial to the formation, manifestation, and elaboration of social structures and hierarchies. Death rituals and celebrations of new social structures can be seen as an opportunity to renegotiate and recreate society and the social order.”(Haland 2014:6).

The first examples of burying the body under ground are dated to the paleolithic period. Humans, made out of soil, should be given back to the soil. The belief that the soul will live after death resulted in the formation of various cultural structures that could comfort the soul such as coffin, embalming, and chamber tombs (Hançerlioğlu, 1993:173). Among these burial types, chamber tomb indicates a strong belief that the life changes form and continues after death due to its architecture and the practice of burying individuals from the same lineage. While chamber tomb could be related to a house, placing all the members of the same family in the same chamber tomb indicates a desire to be together in the "afterlife".

Archaeological findings reveal that the chamber tomb tradition began to be seen during the Early Bronze Age in Anatolia (Üngör, 2015:7). "Özgüç compares the one-chamber tombs seen in this period to one-chamber Anatolian houses with the idea of house of the dead" (cited in Akyurt, 2014:103). It is seen that chamber tomb tradition, which is thought to be the reflection of the perception of native Anatolian society about death-life, and life and afterlife, has been practiced in a great number of different societies. Antakya, which has been inhabited by a great number of communities since ancient ages, has been the place where a many ethnic and religious groups encountered one another. Especially the fact that the city is located at the crossroads of trade routes made it possible for different cultures to encounter one another, resulting in an exchange of cultures. At this point, "hishashe" family chamber tomb tradition practiced by Greek-Orthodox Christian

community living in and around Antakya could be regarded as the reflection of "Chamber tombs, which became widespread during the Urartian period, and transferred to Hellenic and Romanic culture by way of Phrygians" (Üngör, 2015:9) in today's world.

The subject of this study is the "hishashe" tradition, which has been practiced for community identifying themselves as Greek-Orthodox Christians, residing in Antakya, Samandag, and Altinozu districts of Hatay. This type of burial, which is also known as "Family Chamber Tomb" and "Ancestral Room" among the people, is a reminiscent of underground Chamber tomb architecture, early examples of which were encountered in the Bronze Age in Anatolia, in terms of both their architecture and their usage. The purpose of this study is to trace the "hishashe" tradition, practiced by Greek-Orthodox community living in and around Antakya, in a historical process in order to understand the pattern of meaning of this tradition, which is a cultural identity, which have changed and remained unchanged. Additionally, it is also aimed to keep a written and visual records of this tradition, which has been diminishing.

The effort to make sense of social phenomena and events is based on Max Weber's Versthen work, which is influenced by Dilthey and regarded as an important milestone in the participation of hermeneutic philosophy in social sciences (Smith 2007:286). Hermeneutic approach is more about what is understood than the observer's effort to interpret information (Edgar 2007:159). The statement of Geertz (qtd. in in Smith 2007:269) "Human is an animal suspended in the webs of meaning by himself" argues that culture is like these webs; therefore, cultural analysis should be performed as an interpretive science in search of meaning. Geertz (1973) emphasizes that cultures are texts, and just like texts, they may contain different and multiple layers for different actors and different readers; and for this reason, cultures should be read and interpreted rather than being observed and analysed. According to Geertz (qtd. in Özbudun 2007:318), the firsthand narrative is provided by the locals. The secondhand interpreter is the ethnographer. What's important here is not what people do, but how they interpret the meaning of what they do. At that point, ethnographer is only an interpreter. In other words, an ethnographer should analyse what a social event means for the people and clearly demonstrate what it indicates for the society within the obtained information. This emphasizes Geertz's "thic description" (Geertz 1973: 27) and that culture can be understood by layer-by-layer examination, just like the layers of an onion (Barfield 2006: 215). Considering religion as the summary of culture, Geertz states that religion provides models of behaviour just as it shows what the world means (Özbudun 2007:317). Geertz's methodology allows us to understand the worldview of the community with this faith, their behaviours in their burial processes, and the hishashe burial method once Christian theology is understood. Hermeneutic approach is important in terms of providing a methodology for "not only analysing texts but also understanding historical life in both artistic and social works" (Dilthey qtd. in Özbudun 2007:278). At this point, hishashe tomb architecture will act as a mediator for our understanding of the worldviews of Greek-Orthodox community living in and around Antalya, the continuity of their relations with the deceased, and their burial rituals.

A wide range of literature can be mentioned in anthropology literature on the phenomenon of death. Davies's "Death Burial and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity" (2002) analyses the importance of death in pre-Christian religions and cults as well as various funerals in the early Christian world, and examines the different meaning of life after death. Similarly, Haaland, in his work titled "Rituals of Death and Dying in Modern and Ancient Greece: Writing History from a Female Perspective" (2014) attempted to comprehend the death rituals from the male and female perspective depending on the perception of time based on gender in ancient and modern Greece. Moreover, Danforth, in his work titled “The Death Rituals of Rural Greece” (1982) written based on the findings obtained in the field study conducted in the countryside of Greece in 1979, tried to understand how the people residing in this region coped with death. Simpson (2018), in the work titled "death" in "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology" defines the phenomenon of death

as a social phenomenon rather than the disappearance of body. In a similar manner, in "Death Ritual: Anthropological Perspectives", with respect to the phenomenon of death, states that individuals in all societies demonstrate stereotypical behaviours they learn during the socialization processes and a specific period of mourning begins. In the work titled "Death, Mourning, and Burial A Cross-Cultural Reader" (2004), edited by Robben, which also includes his work titled "Death and Anthropology: An Introduction", the phenomenon of death is discussed with an anthropological approach. Additionally, Hertz (1969) emphasizes that there are social and biological reasons for the widespread use of right hand in "Death & the Right Hand". Cultural reasons for the widespread use of right hand are emphasized. Almost all the studies on burial customs in Anatolia are based on archaeological findings. The number of studies dealing with burial traditions with a comparative method is rather limited. In Şükran Sevil Şahin's study named *Death with Cultural and Demographic Dimensions in Antakya* (2006), the effects of the phenomenon of death on different groups in Hatay were discussed in comparison. However, no detailed information about hishashe tradition can be found in Şahin's study. In this study, socio-cultural, economic and architectural aspects of hishashe burial tradition, which has been practiced by Greek-Orthodox community living in the aforementioned locations for centuries, and the aspects of this tradition, which have changed and remained unchanged, are examined.

1.1. Method

In this study, qualitative research method is used. The field survey was conducted between April 2018 and April 2019. The field was visited at intervals and the interviews were conducted in households and religious places. For data collection, observation and in-depth interview techniques were used. Neighbourhood representatives (mukhtars), religious officials and residents of the neighbourhoods were interviewed. A total of 20 people, aged between 30 and 75, were interviewed as 6 in Tokacli, 4 in Sarilar, 5 in Zeytuniye, and 5 in Antakya.

Sectıon 2: Historical Background

2.1. Thousand Years of Common Tradition of Humanity: Burial of the Dead

Ontologically, human beings produce solutions in order to keep their existence safe and to stay away from uncertainty after death and the anxiety and fear resulting from this uncertainty. Belief is a universal feeling that responds to the need for trust and attachment. According to James Alcock, the human brain is a *belief machine*. He also states that "our brain and nervous system is a machine producing belief; this is a system evolved not only to ensure truth, logic, and reason but survival" (Alcock qtd. in Bates, 2009:439-440). Similarly, biologist Edward Wilson emphasizes that "the tendency to religious beliefs is the strongest factor affecting the human mind and it is possibly an integral part of human behaviour. Defending his idea that belief is one of the universal aspects of social behaviour, he states that it has continued in all cultures from hunter-gatherer communities to today's societies by changing its shape" (qtd. in Lewin, 1999:231).

Archaeological and anthropological studies demonstrate that there is a belief in life after death in most of old and modern human communities. Burial practice, developing with the awareness of death, is a reflection of human consciousness. Looking at the ritualistic burials of the Neanderthals, it can be understood that they had an advanced human consciousness. Although there is no proof of burial rituals with ceremonies before Neanderthals, archaeological evidence demonstrates that this practice is rather advanced in human beings. Despite the fact that there is no archaeological evidence, scientist believe that the burial ceremonies are held to keep the souls separated from the body after death in peace in the afterlife in many cultures (Lewin, 1999:232). Accordingly, burial tradition differs based on the way each society perceives the world.

In the anthropological literature, "burial" is interpreted as one of the cultural methods to remove a dead human body. The soil is dug and dead bodies are left in the pit (grave) and covered

(Aydın, 2003:343). Archaeological and anthropological findings have demonstrated that apart from this basic method of burial, there are various methods of burial differing from society to society based on socio-cultural and economic variables. While death refers to a physical disappearance, the concept of spirit reflects continuity. At this point, although human beings witness the disappearance of the bodies of their dead friends, they believe that they are still spiritually alive among them; therefore, they developed a burial tradition shaped by their own imaginative worlds in order to show love and respect to dead. Considering from this perspective; burial traditions shaped by a great number of cultural phenomena such as social organization, class, ethno-religious, economic differences between humans, gender roles allow us to understand the perspectives, ways of thinking, and beliefs of societies.

Archaeological findings demonstrate that the dead were buried inside or outside the settlement in ancient societies. Areas outside the settlement are usually burial grounds. The tradition of burying the dead in the burial grounds outside the settlement first emerged in the Late Chalcolithic Period in Anatolia (Durgun, 2018:44). And burial inside the settlement is the in-house burials found in Neolithic societies, which caused a social transformation by adopting settled life. Archaeological sources indicate that there was a wide variety of burial traditions in the Neolithic Period. The most distinctive one of these practices is burying the dead in the settlement, under the floor of the houses. Burial traditions of these communities which lived in 9000-8000 years BC could be said to focus on strengthening social ties. In 7000-6000 years BC, with the collapse of large settlements and the spread of Neolithic lifestyle in small towns and villages, the variety of the burial traditions diminished and more standardized practices became dominant (Lichter, 2018:21). Written sources about the burial traditions in Anatolia first appeared in the Hittite Period. Although the Hittite Period was a period when many cultural, economic and social changes were experienced in Anatolia, a great number of written sources indicate that most of the burial traditions were based on customs, which have been going on in Anatolia for thousands of years (Durgun, 2018:45).

2.2. Underground Chamber Tomb

Although the origin of chamber tombs built of stone is not known, it can be said that it was born as a natural development of the cist tomb (Yılmaz, 2006:58). These are underground tombs, which are dug into the soil, walls of which are built with stone or mud brick, and tops of which are covered with similar material, or the ones which are carved into a rock or layer of soil, and tops of which are covered with stone when necessary. The tomb may consist of one or several chambers. It could be understood that these are intended for consecutive multi and long term burials and could be regarded as a kind of family or class tombs (Mutlu, 2018:75). Similarly, Özcan (2010:44-45) defined chamber stones as a type of tomb which has an entry and an exit. She also defines them as tombs with different plans and dimensions, single or multi-chambered, generally with a rectangular or trapezoidal, and top of which are covered with large stone covers. Additionally she states that firstly a large pit is dug for the chamber tomb and stones are laid for the sides of the pit. Each of these tombs is like a cemetery used by a family or a certain class to bury multiple people. Although chamber tombs are reminiscent of cist or basic tombs, they have larger dimensions and they have continuity, superiority, and ease of use in terms of usage. Chamber tombs could at least be seen as a developed type of tomb. Their simultaneous emergence with the other types of tombs suggests that there were socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, and religious differences in the societies living in the region. It is possible to claim that due to urbanization, chamber tombs were used to bury groups of people which belonged to a social class with a specific economic level (Özcan, 2010:45). Similarly, Ensert (1995:158) defined chamber tombs are single or multi-chamber structures, which is possible to enter and exit, built under ground, plans and dimensions of which may change. She also stated that these tombs may be a cemetery built in order to bury multiple people and used by a family or a certain class. Yakar (2007:321) states that chamber tombs appeared in Early Bronze Age III-Middle Bronze Age I in Amuq Valley and South-eastern Taurus region in Anatolia could be considered as tombs

which belong to more socio-economically dominant families within the indigenous community. Üngör (2015:7) emphasizes that the chamber tombs with various architectural forms refer to a tomb tradition which could be seen in Anatolia and its vicinity since the Bronze Age. And in later periods, it is observed that the "chamber tomb" architecture practiced in Assyrian, Hittite and Eastern Anatolia were engraved on rocks during the Urartians period (Yiğitpaşa, 2010:178). Due to reasons such as the fertile soil of Amuq Valley, its proximity to wetlands, and the location at the intersection of trade routes, this region has been continuously inhabited by a great number of communities throughout history. Processes such as migration, war, neighbourhood relations, and trade allowed many societies to encounter one another. As a result of these cultural encounters and interactions, cultural exchange was made possible. It is possible to state that the chamber tomb practice, which is an Anatolian tradition, has spread large geographies during the acculturation process and it has survived as a tradition in many different cultures.

Section 3: Findings

3.1. Hishashe Tradition in and around Antakya

It was not possible to reach information about the etymology of the word "hishashe". However, some assumptions could be made when the root of the word is examined. Hishashe, which is expressed as "family chamber tomb" or "ancestral tomb" among the people must have derived from the word “hīş”. The word “hīş” in Ottoman language is of Persian origin and it means "relative" (Parlatır, 2009:630). And the word "Haşır" means the resurrection of the dead on the day of judgement (Parlatır, 2009:594). In terms meaning, these definitions of hishashe overlap with the *family tomb chamber tradition* where blood relatives are buried in the same tomb chamber. And in the Arabic dictionary 'hishashe or Haşhaşe' is firstly defined as *rustle* and secondly as *entering somewhere and be lost* (Kanat, 2009:p.314). Considering the *hishashe* word as *rustle*, it is possible to think that it may be associated with the sound produced by the seeds of the poppy when it dries. In Hittite texts, the fact that the poppy plant is derived from "*haşşika*" sounds and refers to *sleep* expresses the similarity of this word with hishashe both in terms of meaning and sound. This situation suggests the transformation of "*Haşşika*" into "*haşhaş*", which result in the formation of hishashe to survive to the present day. Both in the Hittites and in today's Turkish it is thought that “*haşhaş”* have taken this name due to the imitation of the sound produced when shaking the capsule in order to control the produce at the time of the harvest" (Taşlıgil, 2018:p.172). Poppy is a plant known since the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, which had an important place both in daily life and religious life in Hittites, Greeks and many other societies. In 2600 BC and 110 BC, in Crete civilization, statutes of *poppy goddess* with a poppy figure on its head, which are believed to bring *sleep* and *dead* were found. *Poppy* is frequently encountered in Greek and Roman mythology. The symbol of the goddess of fertility, Demeter, is poppy. The symbols of Cerces representing fertility in agriculture in Rome are poppy and wheat. Archaeological findings indicate that there was a strong poppy cultivation in Anatolia (Taşlıgil, 2018:p.172). At this point, it is possible that hishashe is the reflection of *sleep* metaphor in ancient times. Similarly, death is a state of *sleep* in Christian theology. In Sarilar, one of the study field, the tradition of sprinkling wheat on the tombs is expressed with the *resurrection* or in other words *awakening* metaphor of a grain of wheat when it reaches the soil. Regarding the other definition of the word hishashe, it is possible to think that the dead would *enter and would not be able to exit* until eternity and the *body would disappear* in time and would *get lost*. Here, the *getting lost* could be related to the disappearance of the dead body after it is placed in hishashe. In other words, the dead would *enter and disappear*. Hishashe is a place, in which it is not possible to exit when entered, and in which one would *disappear*.

Akrag[i] *Shepherd* (Bald Shepherd) story told among the people is remarkable in terms of allowing us to understand what the hishashe tradition means to its practitioners:

> "… Fleeing forty people have run away to a rather long distance. Someone said 'I guess they were only two as far as I could see'. The other said 'what do you mean two, what do you mean five hundred'. As a result, two or three brave men were chosen among them to go and explore the place. They came back, three people and their leader. What does Akrag shepherd says before reaching the entrance of the cave. 'I worked as an accountant when I was in the world. There is one penny for the forty people here. Leader of the bandits gets closer to the entrance of the cave. As soon as he reaches the entrance of the cave", Akrag Shepherd said 'there is no one left who loves me' and took the cap on his head. 'This is my poison. The bandits ran away as they saw it was real.' And then, Akrag Shepherd picked up the gold in the cave, filled them in the sack, took it and took them to his house. He went to the bazaar in the morning. He wore nice looking clothes, from the cap to his shoes. He walked around the bazaar. The Jew who saw him walking around the bazaar said 'This is Akrag Shepherd. He died last night, and we put him in his grandfather's hishashe'. He approached him and 'Aren't you Akrag Sheperd?' he asked. And he said 'Yes, I am Akrag Shepherd." "But you're dead. We buried you in the cave" (he wants to say hishashe here). 'Oh', said, 'A window was opened there, it was heaven. I went into the heaven; stones, soil and trees in there were made of gold. I filled a sack and I brought it with me. If you don't believe it, come and see it.' The Jew and Akrag Shepherd went to the shepherd's house and saw that there's a sack of gold. 'Interesting, could I bring gold if I went there?' said the Jew. 'You can bring if you could be patient like me' said Akrag Shepherd. The Jew immediately threw himself on the ground. They brought a big boiler and filled it with water. They set fire under the boiler. The water started boiling. They took off his clothes, and laid him on the table where they bathe the dead. When they poured water on him, the Jew clenched his teeth. But he died because of hot water. They stitched the cerement with a golden needle, put him in a casket and took him. They went to the cave (he intends to say hishashe) threw him and they came back.[ii].

This story is about how Akrag shepherd prevents forty bandits who wanted to enter the cave, namely the hishashe of Akrag shepherd, which is called by a cave himself to find gold. Akrag shepherd scares away the bandits. Upon this, Akrag shepherd collects the gold in the cave and takes them to his house. He encounters a Jew when he is wandering in the bazaar. The Jew tells him that he has died and they buried him in the cave. Akrag shepherd says that there is a window in the cave that opens to heaven and tells him that everything is made of gold in there by showing a sack of gold in his hand. The Jew asks him how he can go there. Akrag shepherd tells him that he can go there and fetch gold if he can be patient like himself (in other words, if he can withstand death). However, in order for the Jew to go there, first he needs to die. For this reason, the Jew dies when he's bathed in hot water. He is wrapped in a shroud and thrown into the cave.

In this narrative of the interviewee, he describes how a Chrsitian outsmarts the bandits with his wisdom and his dialogue with the Jew who risks death in order to get gold. In the story, the fact that the number of the bandits is forty and is reduced to three when the others run away, motifs such as cave, gold, and the death of the Jew reminds us the tale of "Ali Baba and Forty Thieves"[iii] included in the book "One Thousand and One Nights" translated by the French orientalist Antoine Galland, and which was probably verbally received from a Middle Eastern narrator in Aleppo. In this tale, Ali Baba discovers the cave of forty thieves full of gold by chance, and fills the gold in a sack by entering the cave when the thieves are not there, and takes the gold to his house. However, the Jew in the interviewee's narrative must be Ali Baba's brother Kasim in the tale of "Ali Baba and Forty Thieves". Kasim, learning that his brother have taken the gold, wants to enter the cave but he is caught and killed by the bandits.

In this story, the association of the cave with heaven, and the definition of heaven with its soil and rocks made of gold, the belief that those who enter this cave can pass through this window of heaven in the cave in case they are patient indicate that this tale is being reconstructed by the society by constantly adding new motifs. Additionally, "Hishashe" word in the story is frequently

expressed as "cave" by the people. The findings obtained from this story and the field study support the idea that architecturally, the original of hishashes may be from the caves carved into rock.

Most of the definitions related to the origins of the word hishashe among the people is about the physical structure of the tomb. In all the study fields, the interviewees defined hishashe as a cave and a hollow chamber. Hishashe, is a one-chamber family tomb underground. All the members of the family are placed in the hishashes, which they define as the ancestral tomb.

First examples of these tombs were made by laying stones around a pit dug on the ground. Afterward, they were continued to be made of mud brick or concrete materials. It was stated that there are sofa-shaped concrete skenes on the right and left side of some of the tomb chambers in Antakya while others are hollow. In the underground tomb chambers with a sofa, the body of the dead person is first placed in the middle. This hollow place is between the two sofas. In case one of the other family members dies, the bones of this person are collected and left on these sofas on the right or left. The newly deceased is placed in the empty space in the middle. There is no special meaning on which sofa the collected bones are to be placed. Placing the last deceased in the middle or taking the bones on the right or the left or collecting the bones to leave somewhere else due to another death is related to the need to making room. For convenience, the coffin of the newly deceased is placed in the middle. This circulation continues for centuries.

Considering the fact that the imaginative world of societies shaped the architecture of the tomb, the presence of sofas on the right and left side of the tomb is associated with the perception that death is perceived as *sleep* and burying the members of the family in the tomb is related to the desire to reunite all the members when they wake up.

In all study fields, it was emphasized that hishashe is an ancient tradition. According to Greek-Orthodox Christians living in Antakya, hishashe is defined as an isolated space, a deep and box-like closed chamber built under the ground. The chamber is built by covering all four sides of the pit dug on the soil with a wall. There is no standard dimension or plan. It is generally rectangular. At least three people can fit. On the top, there is a block-shaped sliding door, sometimes made of stone and other times made of metal. This door is usually made in the size that a coffin can be inserted. When someone dies, the door of the chamber tomb is lifted and the coffin is placed in the empty space between two sofas.

The first deceased is bathed, dressed, wrapped in a cerement and put in the coffin. The door is opened and the coffin is left in the middle of the chamber. And the door of the tomb is closed. The door is covered with soil. The floor is sometimes made of soil and other times made of concrete. In some examples, the floor is made of tiles. When someone else dies from the same family, the door is opened again, bones of the first deceased are collected and left on the side. Generally, hishashes could not be seen above the ground. Most of the time, a cross sign is marked on a marble and the name of the family is written on the hishashe to make it possible to understand the deceased. And the ones that can be seen above the ground are made in various dimensions and architecture. There are candle and incense burning areas, photographs and family names of the deceased on the hishashe. This tradition has been practiced by the Greek-Orthodox community living in Antakya for centuries. On the marble of each tomb, a cross and a photograph of the decease is kept, and there are an oil lamp and matches and wicks to light the lamp (Danforth 1982:10).

Figure 1-2: Hishashe, where the family members who have passed away on an intermittent basis as can be understood from the names and dates of their deaths on the left (Zeytuniye), Hishashe, where many family members are together (Sarilar)

George, whose father is a master of hishashe chamber tombs, has witnessed how hishashe is made since childhood. His narrative about hishashe chamber tomb is as follows:

> This is a family cemetery. My family has been buried like this for at least 300 years. We've been in the same tomb for 300 years. My mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, uncle... My father used to make these tombs for free. He only charged for the costs he incurred. We would call this hishashe. This tomb is above ground in Europe. They open the door and enter. This is under the ground. It's been like this for at least 300 years. We don't give gifts to the dead (G.H., literate, 65, hairdresser, Antakya, personal communication, 28.06. 2018).

In Tokacli, hishashe is an ancient practice, which is said to have been adopted by the ancestors. In Tokacli, there is only one hishashe other than the one built for the pastors in the church. And this one is the hshashe, the pastor built for himself and his family as the burial in the church was forbidden. Hishashe in Tokacli is a private *family house* under the ground without fixed dimensions and plan. It is generally planned as rectangular. Four sides of the tomb are surrounded by concrete so that nothing can get inside. It is built in sizes approximately 5m/5m or 5/4m.

In Sarilar, the interviewees stated that hishashe is a "house" consisting of a chamber underground where the people from the same lineage are buried. Another noteworthy point here is that hishashes were made in sizes changing from 4m/4m to 8m/10m and some of them were built with *two chambers*. The floor of some of them are made of soil or concrete. The reason why they have two chambers is that the family is crowded. It was understood that the hishashes were built with two chambers in case several people may die in the same year.

Figure 3-4-5: Semi-underground two-door hishashe in Sarilar. Front and rear view. There are two doors, and two chambers at the back.

Figure 6-7: Hishashe of an influential family in Sarilar. It is rather prominent among other tombs. There are photographs of the family members in the hishashe on the right.

Figure 8-9-10: Examples of top, side and underground doors of the hishase in Sarilar

In Zeytuniye, the interviewees defined hishashe as chamber tomb, family tomb, and tomb chamber as in the other fields of study. It was told that this practice is an ancient tradition and that each family has had a hishashe from the past. It was mentioned that hishashe is a chamber under the ground, consists of four concrete walls, a door made of a large stone door is built and the door is covered with plaster. When a new person dies, the plaster is broken and the large block stone is lifted in order for someone to enter to collect the bones of the previously deceased person and to place

them on the right or left. Afterward, the coffin is placed in the middle. The door made of a large stone is plastered with cement again. It is covered with soil. It is not noticeable from the outside. On the hishashe, there is only a cross sign, surname of the family or the names of the deceased and the photographs of the family members buried in the tomb.

Another example of chamber tomb in Zeytuniye consists of two floors. "The body is first buried on the first floor in a coffin. In case a second body is to be buried in the same chamber tomb, the bones of the previously deceased person are taken out of the coffin and are placed in the chamber in the lower floor. The bones are stacked on top of each other" (Şahin, 2006:66). This space in the lower floor is a reminiscent of the "Waste pits of Urartian chamber tombs" (Yiğitpaşa, 2010:180).

Figure 11-12: Hishashe in Zeytuniye. Stone block door on the hishashe on the left; lid covered with soil on the hishashe on the right

In all fields of the study, it was observed that hishashe was constructed in a rectangular or a square shape without fixed dimensions and plans. Only large ones and two-chamber ones were encountered in Sarilar. While in almost all of the examples, the chamber tomb is underground; only one large hishashe with two doors was constructed above ground.

3.2. Old Hishashe Architecture

G.T. of Tokacli stated that the interior architecture of the oldest hishashes was different from the Hishases we see today; and one of the walls of the hishashe was applied in the form of a cross vault. Cave-shaped hishashes, with one wall in the form of a false vault underground, and the other side of which is narrowing through the corners with an upright position, were mentioned. Narrative of G.T. of Tokacli allows us to understand the oldest examples of hishashe chamber tombs:

> "People used to live in caves long ago. Back then, it used to be a mass family tomb. Hishashe means cave-like family tomb, a chamber tomb. The tomb is built like a cave. They're laying the floor. They cover it with soil. When someone dies, they lift the stone and place the deceased inside the tomb. We also had a hishashe like this. But my father demolished it. He said there's enough room, everyone can be buried in their own tomb. Hishashe is a family chamber tomb. They don't place anyone outside the family in this tomb. They only place people from the same family. The woman is placed into her own family's tomb. Now, these are all built for a single person to be buried. There's only one hishashe left in Tokacli. There's no other left" (G.T. retired, male, literate, Tokacli, personal communication, 18.06.2019).

It was stated that the oldest hishashe in the Virgin Mary Church in Tokacli was damaged during the relocation to the new cemetery. They expressed that these tombs were built with stones in

the past, and the use of mudbricks has recently became popular. Additionally, it was also said that the burial in a coffin is rather recent, the deceased used to be taken to the cemetery on a bed and the bodies were placed in the tomb by covering them in sheets. It was stated that the tombs were built with stones or briquettes in the past due to economic insufficiency, and even special long stones were also used. The similarity of these types of tombs to "the examples of Hittite and Kultepe in Eastern Anatolia, Assyrian, Tell-Ahmar and Ugarit in Syria and Mesopotamia, in 2nd millennium in the pre-Urartian period, which are considered to be the oldest examples of underground stone-built chamber tomb architecture" is remarkable (Çevik, 2000:13-14), and in the narrative in Sarilar, it is mentioned that the same coffin was used for all the funerals in the village in the past and the body was placed without coffin in the tomb. The interviewee, associating this situation with economic insufficiency, stated that financial wealth has increased in recent years due to migration to Europe and the tradition of burying the deceased in a coffin, which was not practiced in the past, have recently begun in the village.

3.3. An Ancient Tradition of Privileged Burial: Hishashe of the Clergymen

In-church burial tradition, specially practiced for the clergymen, who have a privileged position in the society, began to appear in 4th and 5th centuries. This chamber tomb consisted of a chamber surrounded by stones on its four walls on the floor of the church. A chamber used to be built for the clergymen in the church. The bible used to be placed on the chest of high-raking clergymen (Çetinkaya, 2011:31). However, although in-church burial practice was forbidden with an imperial order dated 381 during the Byzantine Empire period, this practice of burying the clergymen in the church was maintained (Çetinkaya, 2011:p.30). Although this tradition has been maintained by the Christian community living in Antakya until today, it is no longer practiced because the burials in places of worship was prohibited in Turkey. In the past, clergymen used to be buried in hishashes constructed in the churches or gardens in the churches located in Antakya, Samandag, Zeytnuniye, Tokacli and Sarilar Neighbourhoods of Altinozu. Later, clergymen began to be buried with other people in the cemetery. However, the pastors were brought to the cemetery with a ritual different from the ordinary people. Pastors were seated in their own priesthood seats, carried around the village and taken to the cemetery. The direction of the seat was turn to the east, where Jesus was believed to come back. In-church tombs were built only for the pastors. These rectangular or square hishashe(s) are chambers which are descended by stairs under the church. About witnessing the in-church burial for the pastor, George stated the following:

> The hishashe of the pastors was under our Orthodox church. Only the pastors were buried there. It was also a chamber. Later, burial in places of worship was forbidden in the 1980s. And then, we started burying them in the cemetery. The last time when a pastor died was 60 years ago. A delegation went to Ankara and received special permission. My father made preparations until they received the permission. The door was small. As no one was able to get in the tomb, my father told me to get in and asked me to collect the bones and put them in a corner. Only I was able to get in the tomb among 2000 people. The pastor was sitting on the seat. Usually, they got the pastors to sit on their priesthood seats. And they would put the Bible and the crosses in their hands. I was 14 years old back then. The bones were cracked because of the humidity. I wasn't scared with that excitement. Everyone was asking me to do some things. Someone asked for the fingers. And I gave (G. H. literate, 65, hairdresser, Antakya, personal communication, 28.06. 2018).

In Tokacli, it was also said that the hishashe was mostly made for the pastors. It was mentioned that the burial ritual for the priests was different from that of the ordinary people, the pastors were seated on the seat, and were placed in the hishashe tied on a seat invisibly from the outside. In the old practice, it was said that the pastor was wrapped in white fabric. According to one belief, it is believed that the finger of the pastor who sanctified the people on the church won't disintegrate although the bones disintegrate over time. There's a strong belief that this is a *wisdom* of *God*. The Bible is placed before the pastor and it was said that the ritual was held by putting an

incense in his hand[iv]. Tokacli Virgin Mary Church Pastor (Abuna) Musa describes the burial ritual of a pastor, which he witnessed in the past:

> Hishashe was a special place where the pastors were placed in the past. They wouldn't do it for ordinary people. In the past, the book was placed in the pastor's hands when he died. They would dress him in formal clothes. They would place the Bible in his hands. They would seat him on a seat and tie him in a way which was not seen from the outside. And they would burn olive oil lamp next to him. They would put an incense on his hands. And they would bury him with prayers. Hishashe is next to the church. My grandfather İlyas was also buried there in 1982. I was 13 years old. There used to be a cover (a door) underground. They would push the cover. At the entrance of the church. This place is only for the pastors. Only the priests are placed in there. 5 meters to 5 meters concrete room, there are stairs descending underground. You turn and put him in the chamber. There are other pastors in the chamber. There are three pastors here. This practice is not followed anymore. Single tomb practice is followed now. The last time when our pastor died, he got himself a hishashe in the cemetery for himself. With his own money. It's a private tomb. He's there with his family. He had money to get it built. Thieves wanted to open it and steal it but they couldn't lift the concrete cover. Sliding doors used to be used in the past. It was on the top. You would slide it to open. There are stairs inside (Musa, Pastor and farmer, high school, 48, Tokacli, personal communication, 28.06.2019).

In the hishashe located in the garden floor of the Virgin Mary Church of Tokacli, only the pastors who served the church are placed. However, as the burial in places of worship was forbidden, the pastor got his own hishashe at the cemetery and was placed in there when he died. After this practice, it was observed that the pastors began to be buried with their families. Hishashe of the pastor, built with a depth of two-meter with a square plan, was constructed underground as a family chamber tomb. There are no stairs in the hishashes in the cemetery unlike the ones in the church. However, burial ritual of the pastor is carried out in the same way as it was practiced in the past for the pastors. The pastor was seated on a seat in his formal clothes, and was carried to the cemetery on this seat, and was placed in his hishashe looking at the east direction.

Figure 13: The only Hishashe of the pastor in Tokacli cemetery

The hishashe of the pastor is conspicuous compared to the hishashe of the ordinary people both in terms of its architecture and its size. Accordingly, it provides a lot of information about the social status of the family buried in the hishashe when looked from the outside. It was observed that the hishashe practice gradually diminished due to economic reasons. Today, there are in total of two hishashes in Tokacli, one for the pastors in the church garden, and one for the aforementioned pastor in the cemetery.

Another interviewee of the study, M.Ç.'s narrative provides detailed information about the fact that hishashe, only built for the pastors in Sarilar, is a peculiar practice in this region and why this practice should be removed:

> Hishashe is a religious tradition. This is the way Jesus was buried. Pastors used to be buried in a sitting position in the past. This is peculiar to our region. This tradition does not exist anywhere else. The priests are buried on a seat. The Bible is placed in their hands. Now, nobody thinks this is appropriate. We are against this practice as the new management. Seating the pastor on a seat cannot be seen anywhere else. The metropolis came before and said that this is not practiced there (M. Ç., Carpenter, male, elementary school, 55, Sarilar, personal communication, 14.07.2019).

> A.B stated that Jesus died and returned to life again in a cave and this was the particular reason why the tradition regarding burials in caves emerged. According to Christian beliefs the person who is dead will come back to life. Hishashe is related to the fact when Jesus Christ was placed in a cave during the three days between the day he died until his resurrection (A. B., 65, retired, male, elementary school, Zeytuniye, personal communication, 25. 06.2019).

3.4. Hishashe As a Category of Class

In Sarilar, it is believed that hishashe is not related to the wellness of economic wealth and that ordinary people can also built their own hishashes. There are numerous examples where all members of the family built a common hishashe by collecting money among them. By not receiving money from the family members with a bad financial status, it is made possible for the low-income family members to benefit from the hishashe.

According to Basil's narrative, who is one of the respectable people in Zeytuniye Neighbourhood, indicates that the practice of Hishashe tradition is related to financial means unlike the narratives in Sarilar:

> It is hishashe in Arabic. The tomb is a chamber underground. There are large stones there. The names of the family is written there. Like Beyluni or Çapar family... There's chamber door down there. They open the door, and they take the dead in a coffin in the chamber. Rich families are able to build this tomb. The poor cannot do this. I mean, we couldn't do it. Several families have tombs like this. Others cannot have tombs like this. There are no jobs. People are very poor. People who have the money can get this built. There's chamber door underground. They take the coffin in the chamber. There's a cemetery around the upper church. And there's also a hishashe. But it is buried underground. Upper church is there. There are three churches, and one of them is near. There's no cemetery there. There's a cemetery around the second church. A new cemetery will be built. Then, everyone can have their own hishashes. The poor couldn't do it. Only the rich could have Hishashes. The poor couldn't... There are one or two here" (Basil Capar, 95, male, elementary school, Arabic literate, Zeytuniye, personal communication, 18.05.2019).

S.D. of Zeytuniye also states that the hishashe tradition could be practiced by the families who had the financial means.

> Only the lords could have hishashes in the past. Normally, it is single. This place used to be a chiefdom. These lands belong to 7-8 families. These were large families. And then it was divided, sold (S.D., Patisserie Owner, High School, male, 45, Zeytuniye, personal communication, 14.07.2019).

In Zeytuniye, another interviewee states that the hishashe chamber tomb could be constructed by individuals who could afford it:

> You can't have it if you're poor. We don't pay for our tombs here, but there's no one to have an hishashe. And whoever has it is actually condemned by the people now. People used to have it. But now, you don't see it as much as you see in the past. It was something that the rich people had around 100, 75 years ago. Because it's costly. As the poor couldn't have it,

> the poor are buried in the soil (A.F. high school, 42, male, Zeytuniye, personal communication, 12. 07.2019).

As it could be understood from the interviews, burial methods indicate the economic status within the society. Hishashes of the families with better financial status are known by the society, and the families without the financial means are buried in single tombs under the soil.

3.5. "Ancestral Chamber" as a Patrilocal Settlement: Hishashe

The explanations for the questions of who is buried in the hishashe and who are regarded among the family provide remarkable findings in terms of understanding how gender is reflected in the burial tradition. In each of the four study fields, relatives from the "same bloodline" and "same lineage" are placed in the hishashe. Anyone from the lineage of the ancestors can be buried. Lineage of the ancestors include the grandfather, father, siblings, children, grandchildren, and women who were born into the family and entered the family though marriage. However, in some practices, some exceptions were observed. There is only one example in Tokacli, where only the relatives acquired through marriage (father and mother of the wife) is buried in the man's hishashe. In Tokacli, Sarilar and Zeytuniye, similarly, all the members of the same family were placed in the hishashe as women, men and children. A large stone block serves as a door. The door is covered with soil.

Married women often make their own decisions that where they to be buried. While men are buried in the burial chamber of their ancestors with the thought of continuing their ancestry, women who leave their father's house by getting married decide on their own place to be buried. Because the woman is considered to have left one household by getting married and entered the other. It is natural for the woman to want to be together with her children and her husband in the same burial chamber in the home she lived, after death. Although this decision seems to be taken by the woman's free will, however, the preference of the woman is between two men (father or husband). This structure can be considered as an expression of the patriarchal system.

In Antakya, Tokacli and Sarilar, women decide whether they want to be placed in the hishashes of their parents or their husbands. This practice was not observed only in Zeytuniye. In Zeytuniye, the deceased woman is placed in her husband's hishashe if she's married:

> There are differences in the hishashe tradition between Altinozu and here. For instance, here in Zeytuniye, women are buried with their husbands. For the Christians in Altinozu, women and men go back to their respective families when they die. (D. C., male, worker, 56, elementary school, Zeytuniye, personal communication, 09.06.2019).

In all four study fields, unless otherwise decided, the boys are buried in the chamber tomb of their ancestors (fathers). And if the girls get married, they decide whether they are to be placed in their husband's or father's chamber like their mothers. Women usually choose their husbands' hishashe in order to be together with their children even if they are not happy with their husbands. And the number of those who choose the hishashes of their own family is rather high. Mostly, the factor that affects the woman's decision is the relationship with her husband and his family when she is alive. However, if the woman does not make any decision into which Hishashe she is to be placed or if she suddenly passes away, she is placed in the hishashe of her husband's hishashe as she's considered to be in her husband's family. It is seen that the patrilocal settlement pattern is maintained in the hishashes. However, the woman is allowed to make her decision between father’s hishashe and husband’s hishashes. G.'s narrative regarding this matter explains the outline of patrilocal burials:

> As women are subject to their husbands, they are buried in the family chamber tomb of their husbands. If the women state that she wants to be buried with her own family, she is buried accordingly. For instance, my mother-in-law did not want to be buried in her husband's tomb. She stated in her will that she wants to be buried next to her mother. And when she died, they buried her in her mother's tomb. My mother said that she wants to be buried in her husband's tomb. The man's location is fixed. When I died, I will enter the chamber of my grandfather,

> father, uncle, my ancestors (G. F., male, high school, 52, retired, Antakya, personal communication, 19. 09. 2018).

According to the narrative of M. C., it is stated that women may be buried in the hishashe of their own family if they so prefer:

> It's a tradition here. Think about it, the woman spends 20 years with her family, and 50 years with her husband. But in the end, she goes back to her family again (M. C., Carpenter, male, Elementary School, 55, Sarilar, personal communication, 14.07.2019).

In another narrative in Sarilar, woman decides where she is to be buried depending on her relationship with her husband:

> Some women wants to be buried with her families, while others want to be buried next to their husbands. Some even say that they do not even get close to their husband's tomb. For instance, my father-in-law is a difficult person to deal with. My mother-in-law says that she doesn't even want to be buried close to her husband. The new generation doesn't even ask anymore. Usually, the elderly are building the hishashe (Z. G., 35, woman, high school, deals with the church, Sarilar, personal communication, 22.07.2019).

3.6. Reasons for Hishashe Practice

When the interviewees were asked why the tradition of Hishashe is practiced, it was observed that the reason is not clearly known. A great number of interviewees stated that this practice is a *tradition of thousands of years*.

Abuna Jan Deluller, the pastor of Antakya Greek-Orthodox Church, explained the hishashe tradition in religious terms as follows:

> It is related to living together, continuing together, and resurrecting together. That's why as we're of the same root and buried under the same soil and we will resurrect from the same soil. It is the family concept and the family tomb. That's why rather than dividing individually, for the integrity of the family, family members of the same lineage or the individuals entering the family though marriage are buried in these covered chamber tombs with soil on the floor. Because some people recommend to be buried next to their parents. And some say that they want to be buried with their spouses, families, and children; and this chamber tomb is built due to the divinity of the family concept. This is usually due to the coexistence and to have the final together in the Christian culture. It arises from the desire to resurrect together. Because we do not believe in death. We have beaten death. We call the deceased "sleeper". "Raqid". One grain of wheat is dead. It revives, sprouts when you put it in the soil. So, we are burying the deceased in the soil. It's like this grain of wheat. On the day of resurrection, the body and the soul will reunite and resurrect. That's why we're building beautiful tombs. Because we're putting our trust in there. We visit the tombs as we value them. We light candles and incense. We bring flowers. We beautify the surroundings. Because we think that our tombs are also our real houses. When someone dies, a tomb chamber is opened in the family chamber tomb. The bones are picked and placed on the side. There is no base support for the tomb. It is directly on the ground. The body is in contact with the soil. Some Christians expresses in their will that they would go back to the soil just as they are made out of soil. So, they are buried in the soil. The body is put in a coffin as an indication of respecting the deceased. Cerement is actually a sign of victory for us. That's why it is white. We have beaten death. For us, death means the resurrection of the dead. We have beaten death. Because Jesus Christ was crucified for us. He died and was resurrected three days later. He beat the death. And he also resurrected his best friend. As resurrection has importance for us, we do not accept death. That's why we call the deceased sleeper, "raqid". We bring our dead to the church. We dress them in white. For us, white is the sing of victory over death. Death is the end of life for us, that's the beginning of a new life. We live with our souls, not with our bodies. That's why we attend the rituals with our souls. Not

with our bodies (Abuna Jan Deluller, higher education, 58, Antakya Greek-Orthodox Church Pastor, Antakya, personal communication, 20.06.2019).

3.7. Changing Living Conditions and Reconstruction of Tradition

Due to factors such as changing living conditions and individuality, it is seen that hishashe tradition is less preferred in all the fields of this study. The narrative of M. R. clarifies why recently hishashe tradition is not preferred as much as it is in the past:

> Now only the pastor's hishashe is left in Tokacli. Folks stopped maintaining this tradition. Am I obliged? Why would they put me into a cave? God said to Adam that he is made of soil, his is created from the earth. In the end, you will go back to the earth. In hishashe, the dead does not have contact with the earth. They are placed next to each other in the chamber. Its interior is like a cave. They mix ash, red soil and lime and get a very strong mixture. With this mixture, the edges of the door are plastered and covered with soil (M.R., literate, Greek-Orthodox, Tokacli, personal communication, 06.07.2019).

The narrative of M.R. reveals that hishashe practice is not preferred due to religious reasons and as it is not hygienic. The narratives demonstrate that single burials in the soil has replaced the hishashe practice in the last decade. The narrative of G.T. confirms this idea.

> Hishashe is a long-standing tradition. But now, nobody follows this tradition. It's not needed. There are more hishashes in Sarilar. Hishashe is still practiced there. Soil is better at cleaning. As the interior of the hishashe is made of stone or concrete, the body does not have contact with the soil. Only the bones remain. Everyone was able to do it in the past. For example, we can have it as three families if we wish as me, my brother, and my uncle's son. Others cannot place bodies. Only the members of three family can be placed. The soil is cleaner. That's why, they returned back to burying the bodies in the cemetery (G. T., 70, literate, male, retired, Tokacli, personal communication, 28.09.2019).

It is observed that the hishashe tradition is preferred more in Sarilar compared to other fields of the study. However, in Sarilar, this practice is decreasing dramatically compared to the past. While there are almost ten hishashes in the cemetery, there is only two hishashes in Tokacli, belonging to the pastors, one in the church and the other in the cemetery, and there are four-five hishases in Zeytuniye. It is also revealed that personal preferences led to the decrease of this practice. In one narrative, a man whose daughter is deceased does not want to place his daughter in the hishashe. He stated that he only wants to light candles and incense in his daughter's tomb. And he told his children that he also does not want to be placed in the family hishashe and that he wants to have his own tomb. This is an indication that the hishashe practice, defined as *Ancestral chamber, Family tomb chamber* is not preferred by some members of the family.

In Zeytuniye, few hishashes have remained in the garden of Virgin Mary Church. It is seen that they are not able to maintain this tradition due to both economic insufficiency and the lack of space in the cemetery. One narrative provides information to assist us understand why hishashe tradition is diminishing in Zeytuniye:

> Hishashe was everywhere in the past. You can't find it anymore. We're not following it anymore. It used to be followed 6-7 years ago. And then it's over. Because there's not enough room. The chambers take up great space. Just think about it, a chamber of 3m-3m. It covers the space for the tombs of three families. Now they are opening it deep in a row. They put the bones of the previously deceased in a bag. And then, the newly deceased is buried in family chamber tomb. This is healthier. Better. I think chamber type hishashe is not healthy (K. H. high school, male, 58, furniture maker, Zeytuniye, personal communication, 24.08.2019).

As there is not enough space in the cemeteries in Antakya in recent years, families who are not able to build hishashe in each of the four study fields bury the deceased in the single tomb of their fathers. In this burial form, the women decide in whose tomb she wants to be buried on his own,

unlike men. While men and children are buried in the single tombs, where their ancestors are buried at intervals or in the place opened by collecting the bones, women may be buried in the tomb of their fathers usually including their mothers and siblings or in the tomb of their husbands. It is seen that the tombs, which appear single above the ground, constitute a new family tomb where the deceased are buried in a row by filling soil between one another in a deeply excavated pit. However, the reason for this practice is the lack of space. This practice is the new burial form where the family members are buried in single tomb structures in Tokacli, Sarilar and Zeytuniye. It is thought that this is more preferred as it saves spaces and allows the body to have contact with the soil. As there is not enough space, the tomb is deeply excavated and the burial is performed in a row by filling soil between the dead bodies. In another practice, first the bones of the deceased are collected and space is opened for the newly deceased. The collected bones are left next to the newly deceased. These tombs, which appear single from the outside, are actually used in the form of a family tomb.

Section 4: Conclusion

It was not possible to reach information about exactly what the word hishashe means. However, some variations could be proposed both in terms of meaning and phonetics. Hishashe may be derived from the Farsi "*Hīş*" word, which means "relative". Another variation is that hishashe means *rustle and entering somewhere and be lost*.

Underground chamber tomb practice is in different materials and forms in many civilizations that have inhabited Anatolia from the Early Bronze Age to Hittites, Assyrians, Urartians, Roman, and Byzantine societies. Today, it is seen that the chamber tomb tradition is still maintained by the Greek-Orthodox Christians living in Antakya and the surrounding districts. It can be thought that this type of tombs may have emerged without connection to different geographies, may affect many societies due to cultural interaction, and may survive as a result of cultural transfer. In this story, the architectural similarity of hishashe identified in the field and the continuous settlement of Antakya from the ancient ages until today, as well as making cultural encounters possible due to its location at the junction of trade routes strengthens the possibility that this tradition survived due to cultural interaction.

In each of the four study fields, architectural similarities of the hishashes were observed. The lack of fixed dimensions and plan, and the fact that it is usually constructed with a single chamber is the common feature of the hishashes seen in all the fields of this study. Only in Sarilar, tombs with two adjacent chambers were encountered due to the crowded population of the family. Although an example, which is thought to resemble a cave by the people, with a construction of one wall in the form of a false arch was encountered, it is not possible to make deductions about the tomb as it is now in ruins. Again, it is mentioned that there are skenes in the form of a sofa adjacent to the right and left walls in the hishashes built in Antakya. While the hishashes built for the pastors have stairs, there are no stairs in the Hishasees made for the public. There is no entrance in any of the hishashes. However, the most prominent example of hishashe in the majority of the study fields is the hishashe built underground in a rectangular shape and wide enough to accommodate at least three coffins. The prototype of the hishashes that are constructed in this way is also underground and its four walls are built with stones. It was stated that these stones are generally long and wide. It was stated that the burial in a coffin, which is widely practiced nowadays, is rather new in the fields of the study and that the deceased person used to be laid on the soil covered in a sheet in the tomb, four walls of which are built with stones.

Except for Zeytuniye, in three of the study fields, women may decide whether they desire to be placed in the hishashe of their husbands' ancestral chamber or in the hishashe of their own fathers. It was understood that only in Zeytuniye this choice is not made and the women is placed in their husbands' hishashe after they marriage. Actually, in all the fields of the study, a woman is considered

to be affiliated with her husband and is not placed in her own family's hishashe unless she specifically states.

It was seen that in-church burial of the hishashe is mostly practiced for the pastors. However, due to the prohibition of burials in the places of worship in Turkey, in each of the four study fields, the pastors get their hishashes built in the public cemetery. While all the pastors are placed in their own clergy seats facing towards the east in a chamber in the hishashes in the church, this turns into a family chamber in the Hishashes built for the pastors in the cemetery. While the hishashe in the church is built by the church and the clergymen are buried in that, the hishashes of the pastors in the cemetery are built by the pastors with their own minds and they are only placed in the tomb chamber with their own family members.

Except for Sarilar, hishashe was associated with the economic structure in all the fields of the study. Especially in Zeytuniye, it was seen that only the landlords, the rich, and the respectable members of the community could build a hishashe while the poor and the ordinary people are buried with a simple burial due to economic insufficiency. Therefore, the families who had the oldest hishashes today are known are influential and rich families while the poor do not have hishashes. Children and grandchildren of the families who did not have the financial means to have an hishashe in the past wants to get an hishashe today. However, church officials make public statements that this form of burial would not be healthy. These findings indicate that hishashe is a tradition which used to be practiced by the clergymen and the wealthy families.

Regarding the question as to why hishashe is practiced, almost all the interviewees stated that it is practiced as it is a tradition. Information as to why it is practiced is blurred. Although the reasons for the practice of hishashe are not exactly known, this tradition of thousands of years has survived until today as it is transferred from generation to generation in the social memory.

In all fields of the study, it was observed that the hishashe tradition has diminished compared to the past as a result of changing living conditions, the desire to mix the body with the soil, religious reasons, individual preferences and financial means. It was seen that hishashe, where all the family members are placed at intervals in the "Ancestral Chamber" or the "Family Chamber" has lost its function today, and this type of burial is replaced by individual burial underground both due to lack of space and functionality as it allows the body to be in contact with the soil. This new type of family tomb is a form of underground burial that appears single from the outside but is actually burial in stacked form going deep underground. It was observed that this form of burial is widely preferred in recent years.

As a result, hishashe chamber tomb tradition reflects a worldview that overlaps the Christian theology. After Pagan faith was replaced by Christianity, the belief that death is a state of sleep and that there will be resurrection affected the architecture of the tombs. In other words, Greek-Orthodox Christians living in the fields of this study believe that *they have beaten death, that there is not death, and that dying means resurrection*. For this reason, they believe that hishashe is the *second house* of the dead. Because it is the body that dies while the soul is alive. Therefore, tombs are constructed in the shape of a chamber, which is the representative of the house. Sofa-like structures (skene) constructed adjacent to the right and left walls found in some hishashe examples in Antakya confirm this idea.

In all fields of the study, leaders and members of the managerial board of the Greek-Orthodox community think that hishashe tradition is not healthy as the dead bodies do not come into contact with the soil. Accordingly, they inform the public that this form of burial should be abandoned. Activities of clergymen and church officials in this respect indicate that hishashe tradition will lose its functionality in the future and will decline accordingly.

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[i] Akrag is an Arabic word and it means baldin English.

[ii] This story was compiled by Mustafa DURAN, the principal of Karlısu Social Sciences High School, from the story of Ahmet Sönmez, who was born in 1933 and is not literate, in Hanyolu Village of Altinozu on 27.08.1999. and Ahmet Sönmez heard this story in 1960s from Greek-Christian Sabri, who resides at Sarilar Neighbourhood of Altinozu, who is known as İspir among the villagers, and who was selling baggy trousers around the villages.

[iii] The tale is added to *Les Mille et Une Nuits* (1704–1717) work by Antoine Galland, who is one of the European translators of *One Thousand and One Nights*. Galland is a French orientalist in 18th century, and he might have heard it verbally from a Middle Eastern narrator in Aleppo. In any case, the oldest text of the story is in Galland's French version. Richard Francis Burton added the tale in the supplementary volumes published with

the title *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, and the origins of the story is believed to be based on Cyprus Greeks.
(Source: Retrieved from https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Baba_ve_K%C4%B1rk_Haramiler, accessed on 05.12.2020)

[iv] The findings in our field study regarding the burial of the pastors are parallel with the findings of Şükran Sevil Şahin's master's thesis titled "Antakya'da Kültürel ve Demografik Boyutlarıyla Ölüm" published in 2006.