

The Role Of Women As A Carrier Of Intangible Cultural Heritage In Earthen Architecture, Çıldıroba Village, Kilis Province



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ABSTRACT

Soil is a building material that people have primarily preferred for building since prehistoric times. The fact that adobe can be prepared easily at the place where the building will be built and that it can be done by everyone are the reasons why soil is a widely used building material. Adobe; It is obtained by pouring the mud mortar, which is formed by mixing soil, water and straw, into molds and drying. Mud mortar has also been used for decoration purposes in traditional buildings, apart from making adobe blocks. The traditional methods applied by the local people in building construction and the decorations that reflect their unique values create the authenticity of traditional buildings. These practices, which are based on the knowledge and experience of local users and transmitted from generation to generation, are called intangible cultural heritage. Women, who are actively involved in almost every aspect of traditional life, also have a great role in keeping the intangible heritage items alive, teaching and protecting them. Women, who are involved in every stage of the production of adobe structures that make up the traditional texture in the village of Çıldıroba in Kilis, which is the subject of a completed master's thesis, are the guardians of the intangible cultural heritage elements in this region. In this study, the plaster renewal method regularly performed by women in Çıldıroba village and the shelf decorations in the “yatak odası” units of the buildings are discussed in the context of the techniques, materials and tools used. It is aimed to make a documentation in this field, which has never been studied.

Keywords: Kilis, Çıldıroba, Adobe Shelf Decorations, Women’s Labor, Earthen Architecture.

1 INTRODUCTION

Traditional architecture generally consists of structures built with knowledge based on experience and experimentation [1]. Adobe is one of the most preferred building materials in traditional architecture from prehistoric times to the present day. The fact that adobe can be prepared easily at the place where the building will be built and that it can be done by everyone are the reasons why soil is a widely used building material [2]. As an earth-based material, adobe is still preferred in our country, especially in rural areas of Anatolia. Adobe, which is obtained by mixing soil, water and straw in certain proportions, is obtained by completely natural means by pouring it into molds and drying it in the sun. These rates, which do not have a fixed value, vary from region to region and according to the type of soil. Mud mortar, which is easily prepared and shaped easily, is used for plastering walls, decorating on plaster and for decoration purposes in the building as well as for making adobe blocks. In the traditional adobe buildings in Çıldıroba village, it is seen that the mud mortar prepared by the local people is used both for plastering the adobe walls and for the

decorative shelves where they display their belongings in the main living spaces they call the "yatak odası".

Local building materials and traditional construction techniques used by local builders in rural settlements constitute the authenticity of traditional building culture. In addition, the methods and practices used by the local people in the maintenance and decoration of traditional buildings are also a part of this originality [3]. The continuity of these methods and practices is very important in terms of preserving originality. Therefore, these cultural values, together with their tangible and intangible aspects, should be documented and protected.

Traditional crafts and handicrafts are recognized as intangible cultural heritage items in the 2003 UNESCO Convention [4]. The knowledge of the local builders and the techniques and skills they use in rural architecture are intangible cultural heritage elements [5]. In addition, traditions and practices maintained by users for generations also have intangible cultural heritage value.

In this study, the regular plaster renewal methods applied by the local women in the village of Çıldıroba, which is the subject of a completed master's thesis, in traditional mudbrick structures and the construction techniques of ornamented shelves were examined in the context of the building materials.

2 ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF HOUSING IN ÇILDIRROBA VILLAGE

The village of Çıldıroba, which is 27 km from Kilis and 6 km from the town of Elbeyli to which it is affiliated, is a plain village on the Syrian border (Figure 1, 2). It has been learned from the oldest source that the village was founded by the Elbeyli Turkmens. The exact date of establishment is not known.

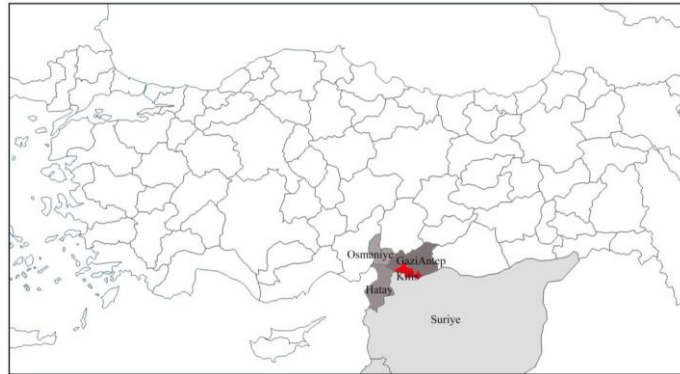


Figure 1. Locations of Kilis on Turkey map

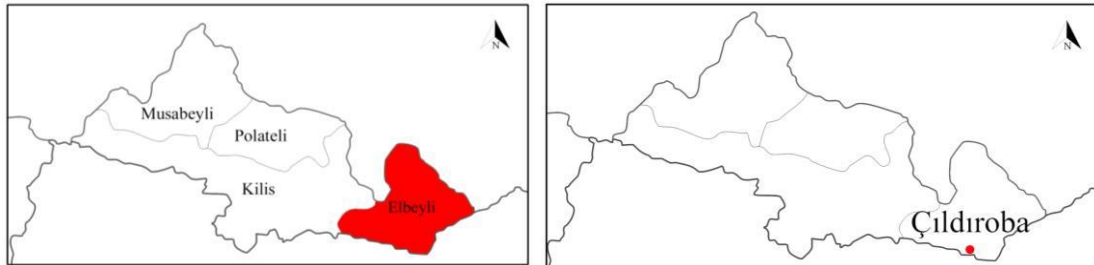


Figure 2. Locations of Elbeyli district and Çıldıroba village on Kilis provincial map

The unique texture of the village consists of single-storey mudbrick structures built around a courtyard and built with the traditional method (Figure 3). The buildings consist of living spaces and service units. The main living spaces are the “room” where daily life takes place, and the units called “bedroom” where beds, quilts and kitchen utensils are put. Barn, hearth, woodshed and haystack units are service spaces (Figure 4).



Figure 3. View of the eastern and northern part of the village from the mosque minaret of Çıldıroba village, 2020

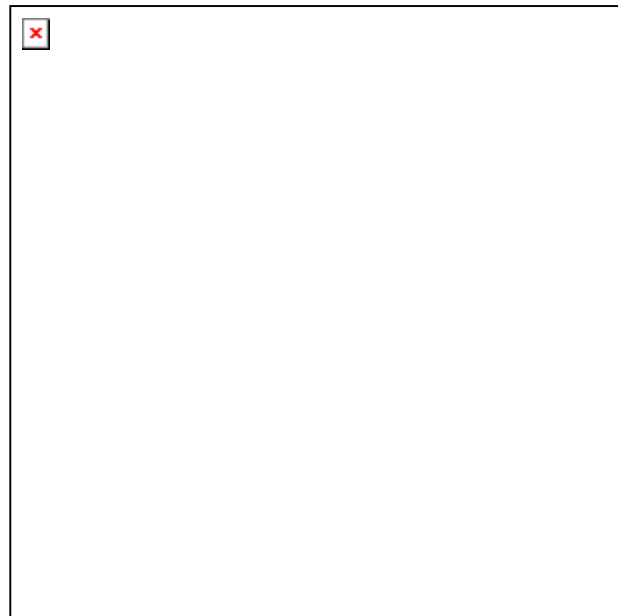


Figure 4. Building units in traditional residence

All structures were built with mudbrick blocks on a stone foundation (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Stone foundations in traditional buildings, 2019.

The mudbrick blocks were made by the local people from the soil excavated while the foundation was being excavated or from the black soil found in the surrounding area. While adobe blocks are being made, soil, water and straw are mixed and kneaded, then they are kept covered for a day. The next morning, the adobe blocks work begins. The poured mud bricks are dried in the sun for a

week. It is waited for a week to dry the other sides. At the end of 10-15 days, the blocks are ready for construction (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Adobe molds used for traditional buildings, 2019.

After the walls were built, the inner and outer parts were plastered with a mud mortar called "sıvak" (Figure 7). In the village, the walls are not performed in all of the plaster refreshes each year, only deteriorated places are re-filtered. White soil, which is defined as both concise and strong, is used for plastering the walls. Village residents obtain the white soil from the border area south of the village.



Figure 7. Facades plastered with mud plaster, 2019.

After the walls are finished, wooden beams, which the locals call "pillars", are placed. Intermediate layers, which change according to the period, are laid on the beams (Figure 8). A 50 cm thick soil layer is laid on it and leveled. Finally, the mud made with black earth used in the construction of adobe blocks is plastered with mortar (Figure 9). This plaster is renewed every year.



Figure 8. Beams and interlayers, 2019.



Figure 9. Traditional flat earthen roofs, 2019.

2.1 Plaster Renovation in Traditional Buildings

Women play a major role in every stage of the construction of traditional buildings in the village of Çıldıroba. Women, who take part in every stage from the construction of adobe blocks to the construction and plastering of the walls, also take an active role in the maintenance and repair of the buildings.

In the traditional construction tradition of Çıldıroba village, the plasters of the walls do not have to be renewed every year, they are the building elements that are renewed as the walls deteriorate. But the plaster of flat earthen roofs is renewed every year. The mud mortars required for renewal are also prepared by women. Although white soil is used for wall plasters and black soil is used for roof plasters, the preparation methods of plasters are the same.

Straw, soil and water are mixed, and the mixture is kneaded by hand so that the mortar is well mixed and compacted. It is covered with nylon and left for a day or two. The more the mortar is absorbed, the longer its life will be. The ready mortar is applied to the application area and plastered with a trowel. After waiting for half an hour, water is sprinkled on the mortar on the wall and plastered again with a trowel. The second plastering job is called “polishing”. All of this process, which is done entirely by women, is called “sıvak hazırlama” [6] (Figure 10).



1. Soil, water and straw mixed.



2. The mixture is kneaded by hand for consolidation.



3. It takes a while for it to fully merge.



4. The mortar is adhered to Wall to the plastered.



5. The mortar is plastered with a trowel. It is plastered again after half an hour.

Figure 10. Mud plaster preparation shown by local user.

2.2 Decorative Shelves in Traditional Buildings

Motifs are the name given to each of the elements that form a whole by coming together in works such as decoration and decoration [7]. Throughout history, human beings have always expressed themselves on two- and three-dimensional forms, and in primitive times, they have tried to give meaning to events by making them concrete through art. They did this with symbols [8].

These symbols, which have been passed down through generations and survived until today, appear in different areas of traditional life. In the "yatak odası" unit, which is one of the main living spaces of traditional buildings in the village of Çıldıroba, these motifs, which carry traces of the past, can be seen on the decorated shelves made by women from mud mortar with their own hands (Figure 11). Under the decorated shelves, there are motifs made by women from mud mortar (Figure 12). Very few examples of this practice, which has been passed down from mother to daughter in the village for generations, have survived. There is no one who remakes these shelves today.



Figure 11. Original shelf decorations made by women with white earth and wheat straw, 2019



Figure 12. Distorted original motifs made by women with white soil under the shelves, 2019

These decorated shelves were made with mud mortar prepared with white soil mixed with straw and wheat stalks with reinforcement function. Pieces of wood of that size were also used instead of wheat straw. The details of the construction are as follows: Wheat litter or wood chips are cut into pieces of the same length. The mixture prepared with white soil is glued on these pieces, covered by hand and shaped. The mortar must be solid for this process. A board is placed on the wall, the top is plastered with the same mixture prepared. The models made are glued to the wood, and they are attached with the same mud from the bottom side. No bonding material or nails other than mud are used. The motifs under the shelves, on the other hand, are made with the same white mud without garbage. Again, women roll and shape the mud with their hands as if they were making a

type of cookie called "kahke" in their local language. They stick them on the wall [6]. These shelves are used to stack large plates and trays.

3 CONCLUSION

As a soil-based building material, adobe is easily accessible, easily applicable and ecologically preferred in the past and today. The village of Çıldıroba, which is the subject of the study, is a rural settlement whose traditional texture is composed of adobe structures. The mud mortars used in the construction of adobe blocks in the village of Çıldıroba are also used in the plastering of the walls and the original flat earthen roofs and in the construction of the ornamented shelves inside the buildings. Women, who take an active role in every stage of the traditional architectural construction process in the village, also make these practices themselves. The maintenance and repairs made by the local women in the village for the preservation of traditional buildings and the ornamented shelves that are part of the originality of the buildings are intangible cultural heritage elements that need to be preserved and maintained.

Many studies are carried out to maintain intangible cultural heritage in the world and in our country. The "Conservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage [4]" convention, prepared by UNESCO in 2003, aims to preserve and sustain these values. Our country became one of the countries that accepted this convention on March 27, 2006. Many types of crafts are the original products that cultural expressions and diversity are reflected in [9]. In October 20, 2005, "Convention on the Protection And Promotion Of The Diversity of Cultural Expressions [10]" in Paris accepts the cultural diversity as a decisive nature of humanity and it should be protected because humanity is the common heritage of humanity [11].

In our country, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has identified the cultural heritage carriers to promote production in intangible cultural heritage areas and to determine the cultural heritage carriers for traditional culture and have certain criteria to the People's Culture Information and Document Center. The "artist introducing card" is given to those seen by the board [12].

Studies for intangible cultural heritage in our country and the world are very important for the sustainability of this heritage. Holistic documentation and preservation of these methods and architectural elements, which are under the threat of disappearance, with their tangible and intangible aspects are important in terms of not forgetting these traditions and transferring them to future generations.

The traditional adobe buildings in Çıldıroba village have different values in terms of their construction techniques, desing concept, uses and historical backgrounds. These structures that need to be preserved have various conservation problems due to natural causes and behaviours of its users [13]. Decorative shelves in traditional buildings and traditional plaster technique made with mud mortar are also cultural heritage values that are under the threat of disappearance.

With this study, it is aimed to document these practices carried out by local women in this area, where no work has been done, in the context of the construction methods, materials and tools used in the center of women's being the carrier of intangible cultural heritage.

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