

Sustainability of the historical Ottoman village Cumalıkızık in Turkey

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Abstract

Cumalıkızık is a historical place that has very old, typical ancient streets and houses near Bursa city in the region of the northwest part of Turkey. This paper discusses the policy on the cultural and historical heritage of Turkey with this sample within the sustainable point of view. The main purpose of this study is to introduce this village's social, historical and architectural characteristics and the problems of conservation policy in Turkey. Cultural and natural heritage regulations in the aspects of sustainability within the Ottoman village Cumalıkızık will be examined. This paper implies the importance of international financial aid and the role of Non-Governmental Organizations for the sustainability of cultural-historical heritage. In conclusion, the paper argues that the sustainability of Cumalıkızık together with the economic and social structure needs a rehabilitation or renewal policy for the future perspective.

Keywords: ottoman villages, cultural heritage, conservation, Cumalıkızık, sustainability.

1 Introduction

The city of Bursa is a unique place which had been the capital of the Ottoman, and whose historical and architectural inheritance should be transferred to future. Village is one of the seven Kızık villages settled 700 years ago, by Oguz tribes, in 10 kilometres east of Bursa. It is the only undeteriorated sample which had overcome many risks like fire and earthquake. In addition to its cultural assets Cumalıkızık is also rich in natural assets as well. Some archaeological ruins were encountered to the southeast of Cumalıkızık on the slopes of Mount



Olympos (Uludag). Some artefacts uncovered here have been brought to the Bursa museum. Kırayoglu [1] discusses the document regarding the village dated 1685. Document explains that Cumalıkızık was deeded to the trust of pious foundation of Orhan Gazi, during an auditing period of the Foundation of Sultan Orhan in Bursa which the Chief of the Black Eunuchs belonged to, foundation inspector Es Seyyid Mehmed el Mevlevi came to Balıklı Valley which was situated on the land of Cumalıkızık of the Orhan Foundation. He had come to hear all sides of a dispute between Cumalıkızık and Fidyekızık and try to find a solution regarding the distribution of the water that flowed from Kırkpınar. He listened to the witnesses of those from surrounding Kızık villages, then read aloud a decree of Sultan's and had it stamped with an official seal, fig. 1. Thus, we have a better understanding that these villages were established much earlier than the year 1685.



Figure 1: The foundation document belonged to the Orhan Gazi Foundation.

Until quite recently, the village surrounded by groves of chestnut trees were attacked by a virulent disease that completely annihilated the whole plantation. Economy of the village inhabitants had gone to worst. In the architectural aspect, the houses in the village were built in harmony clustered with narrow streets. The roads in the village have been build wide enough only for pedestrians, pack animals and horses. On rainy days, the middle of the narrow cobblestone streets serve as channels for rainwater to flow. One can also encounter streets so narrow

that it is impossible for two people to walk side by side. The streets were laid out without any sort of prior planning. They were formed to suit sloping village lands. For this reason, some of the streets are cul- de-sacs. Kırayoglu and Engin [2] say that although there are actually 270 houses in the village, only 180 of these are currently inhabited. The population number declines each year as a result of economic pressures and the pull of the cities. Therefore, sustainability of the village has many difficulties like physical infrastructure that brings together fire or earthquake danger, social structure like migration and economic income problems besides of the conservation problems and rehabilitation costs for their houses.

2 Conservation policy and organization

In Turkey, natural and cultural heritages conserve with the legal procedures in different level of organization steps. For the number of 2863 law of the natural and cultural conservation the Organization of Immobile Cultural and Natural Heritage Assets have 17 regional commissions at the ministry level. Regulations and rules are given by High Council of Monuments to these regional commissions. These commissions be formed by five members of experts and universities professors that their professions are architecture, city planner, archaeology and historian of art. They are decision makers that decide according to the reports of the related units like municipality, foundations and technical people. The technical people work permanently at the regional commission unit. Commissions come together every week for the registration of the historical and cultural assets and renewal, restoration decisions in their regions also. Commission regions have at least five cities. Bursa regional commission is responsible for the Cumalıkızık village conservation procedures.

In 1980 the High Council of Monuments declared Cumalıkızık and its vicinity as a conservation area. This declaration meant the production of surveying, restitution and restoration projects by professionals and an approval of these projects and a permit for construction. These professional requirements and approval was thought to be essential for all sorts of repairs and maintenance work, because all these professional requirements and approvals were closely connected with the governmental bureaucracy and because some of the villagers just kept on with their traditional mode of construction by hiring a craftsman and having repaired or altered the building and because they were arrested and sued. The whole of the conservation and restoration approach was reluctantly perceived. This of course eliminated the construction of the new buildings in the village, but with the hampering of repairs and maintenance after years the whole village is at peril to collapse. There are collapsing houses, fire starting randomly due to the insufficient infrastructure of the Cumalıkızık village.

The historical texture and the buildings were taken under preservation in accordance with the resolution no.12730 of the Supreme Board of Monuments in 19.4.1981, and all sorts of building were made subject to permission and were declared official newspaper. The following year it was recognised as Urban and Natural Site. A project competition was arranged by the Agha Khan Foundation



and the chamber of the architects in 1983. Starting from 1992 on, it has been under close scrutiny and some improvements were realized. In 1993 The University of Yıldız prepared a preservation oriented plan 1/1000 for public improvements and this plan was put into effect after having been ratified by the Supreme Board of Monuments at the 24.10.1993 date/ no.3508.

Unfortunately, the conservation plan for Cumalıkızık was concerned only with the architectural environmental characteristics not interested in the social, cultural, economic processes. Conservation decision for Cumalıkızık and the life processes lived after those decisions were now displaying an example which had repeated itself not only in Cumalıkızık but also in other historical-cultural conservation places with the same conclusions. Especially, for the historical sustainability of settlements, we have to do analyze human resources, cultural, economic, social processes in these settlements within the conservation understanding.



Figure 2: A view from Cumalıkızık village.



2.1 A general perspective of Cumalıkızık village

This small settlement was defined as a village until recently, fig. 2. Village has 15 hectares area in use. It was included into metropolitan area with growth of the borders of Bursa metropolitan area in 1987. Although Cumalıkızık is within the Bursa metropolitan area, and in the border of the Yıldırım Municipality, still has agricultural characteristics. Today all attempts are being made to preserve Cumalıkızık as the most authentic and rare example of Ottoman Architecture. Though a decisive judgement concerning the age of the houses has not been reached, it is generally admitted that some 10 houses with skylights carry the features of the architecture of the period of Selim III (reigned 1789-1807). The number of the registered buildings is 59. Of these, two are monumental (the mosque and the public bath), 57 are the buildings which are examples of civil architecture. Akkılıç [3] says also, in addition to these there are two monumental plane trees in the village square.

The village consist of seven wards formed irregularly without following a certain plan, around a center where there are the mosque and the tea houses. The most ancient settlement having the status of the center is Orta Mahalle (central ward), where the mosque and the tea houses are located. The other six wards formed around it are called Dere, Değirmenyeri, Eğrek, Hamam, Köyüstü and Okul. The mosque is considered to be the proper center of the village; the alleys give the impression that they were so arranged as to provide the most convenient access to the mosque. Hamam and Eğrek around Orta Mahalle attract attention for being the most ancient settlements.

2.2 Social and economic structure in Cumalıkızık

This village was very rich and produced the best silk at the Ottoman times. Until 1955 was producing tobacco and chestnuts in the village. The technical infrastructure is not completed. Altunbas [4] implies that there is only a primary school because of the migrations and the village's old population (older than 50) structure. In 1940 population was 924 (480 men and 479 women) and in 1990 population decreased to 830 (420 men and 410 women). The villagers income comes from the raspberry, apple and other small farming production like jam, marmalade, fruit juice. This type of works for women, men work unqualified type jobs for very low wage. For this reason villagers have difficulties in the village life. There is a gap between incomes and expenses. Repairing expense of their house and the low life quality conditions bring the deteriorations in the sustainability of the Cumalıkızık village.

The aspects of the infrastructure in the Cumalıkızık, we can see very old channel system. Water for drink was established in 1952 with a street fountain and after that 8 more fountains were established. In 1970 electricity came to this village. Heating system with the stove in the houses is not suitable for the modern life. For the village fire risk is too high on the physical aspect. Fire brigades are not able to enter the streets since they were too narrow. Akıncıtürk [5] proposed a system to obtain the water for the fire and the position of main connections. Because of the electrical systems inside the wooden houses heating



and cooling systems are all great dangers for fire and chimneys with the dust and dried construction material of many years are the reasons for disasters.

For the economic and social reasons, villagers want to move bigger settlements. In this case, the question reminds us how the Cumalıkızık village will be alive without villagers. If we want to a place liveable, services must be served. Therefore, Non Governmental Organizations and Yıldırım Municipality put in order some programmes with the Universities. Until 1990 there were not any study for Cumalıkızık. In 1992 very old Coban Evi was restored by the Yıldırım Municipality for aim to stay the guests. Chamber of Architects prepared some project competitions for Cumalıkızık. Alptekin [6] asserts that after the Rio Conference, in the international aspects Local agenda 21, Foundation of Environment and Culture (CEKUL), work for the village life and restoration process. UNESCO Youth Association bought a house and restored in 1998. Summer schools in 1999 and student meeting in 2000 are also contribute to the sustainability of the village. At 2000, in village a television serial produced and after then change the profile of the settlement. Nowadays, Cumalıkızık is a tourism settlement for the foreigners.

2.3 Architectural structure in Cumalıkızık

The building materials used in Cumalıkızık houses are mainly rubble stone, timber and mudbrick. The ground and first floors of the houses have exterior walls of rubble, strengthened with wooden joints. On the upper floors, the walls are cross-timbered and filled with mudbrick and adobe. Coskun [7] asserts that the houses of Cumalıkızık, an important example of the vernacular architecture of the Ottoman period. In the construction of the houses, much importance was given to privacy and seclusion. The ground floor and first floor of the houses have exterior stone walls measuring three meters high and reinforced with wooden beams. It is impossible to see into the houses from the streets, fig. 3. The windows are to be found on the upper floors, and these are usually of the bay or lattice type. There are two types of plan most commonly used in the construction of the Cumalıkızık houses. With the first, the outer courtyard is surrounded by a high rubble wall, through which a gate leads into the courtyard and to the door opening into the section of the ground floor known as the hayat. Thus, the entrance of the house is indirectly connected with street. The second type of house plan has no outer courtyard, and the street door opens directly into the hayat. The hayat section leads through the house into the inner courtyard, the stables, storerooms and stairs. The main doors into these houses are always double winged to facilitate the convenient passage of farm vehicles and crops. Hayat section is surrounded by solid wooden posts which support the upper floor. Hayat is the most utilized venue in the Cumalıkızık. The harvest crops are stored here temporarily, they are separated and cleaned. Pens for smaller farm animals are here also. Farm equipments are stored here. There is no ceiling in the upper floors, with the result that the cross beams and vertical and diagonal supports all remain clearly visible from below.



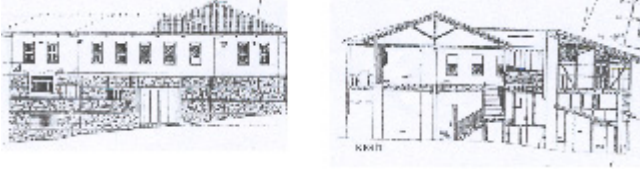


Figure 3: Sections of the houses.

3 Conclusion

Cumalıkızık village has been protected and improved as part of the historical natural and cultural heritage by the cooperation of the Municipality of Yıldırım and the Metropolitan Municipality of Bursa. Furthermore, universities preparing conservation planning for the village at the settlement scale and building scale also. Village has a plan for the infrastructure and the protection against the fire. When we make distinction among the proposals for the village and differentiated ones that will be done in short term and the ones that are thought for the long term. In short term Non Governmental Organizations and international funds will be useful for the villager. Firstly, this place must be liveable with inhabitants and with the guests of the village. Therefore, the festivals and some workshops in this village will contribute to the economies of households. Some Aid Clubs and others will be promoting both the women's initiatives and the demand for their products. In long term conservation rules and regulation have to revise and apply special regulations to this settlement for the sustainability. Villagers have better economic and social conditions with these supports nowadays and for the future of the Cumalıkızık expectations are positive.

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