A Rare Earthen Architecture Settlement in Diyarbakır: The Case of Atalar Village


Dilan KAKDAŞ ATEŞ[1] Sevilay AKALP[2]
[1]Bitlis Eren University, Bitlis, Turkiye
[1]dilankakdas91@gmail.com
[2]Harran University, Şanlıurfa, Turkiye
[2]sevilayakalp@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the settlement of Atalar Köyü, which stands out as one of the rare surviving examples of earthen architecture traditions in Diyarbakır today. The primary objective of the research is to document the current condition of the traditional adobe architecture in the village and to evaluate the preservation potential of this unique architectural heritage. Earthen construction, using natural materials such as soil, straw, and water, has historically been one of the most widespread building techniques in rural settlements due to its low cost, accessibility, and climate-responsive qualities.

Within the scope of the study, the adobe building stock in Atalar Village was investigated in detail. The spatial organization of the houses, construction materials, wall-building techniques, and roof systems was analyzed to understand the settlement's architectural character. In addition, the distribution of adobe buildings within the village fabric and their distinctiveness compared to other rural settlements in Diyarbakır were evaluated. The findings reveal that Atalar Village is one of the few rural settlements where traditional earthen construction techniques have largely survived and continue to define its identity.

The research methodology is based on field observation and on-site architectural examination. The collected data were evaluated together with the existing literature on traditional earthen architecture. The results demonstrate that adobe buildings provide climatic comfort by offering cool interiors during summer and thermal insulation during winter. Furthermore, these structures present sustainable, ecological, and economical characteristics that are increasingly important in contemporary architectural discourse.

However, the spread of reinforced concrete construction and changing rural living conditions threaten the continuity of this architectural heritage. In this context, the study emphasizes that Atalar Village should be recognized as an important cultural and architectural heritage site, requiring preservation and sustainable conservation strategies for future generations.

KEY WORDS: earthen architecture, Diyarbakir, Atalar village, conservation