

Tracing Rural Transformation Through Adobe: Settlement, Migration, and Building Culture in Demirtepe Village



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ABSTRACT

Demirtepe Village, in the Gelibolu district of Çanakkale, provides a case for examining how adobe building culture has changed together with shifts in settlement, population, and construction practices. The research draws on local narratives and the remaining physical traces within the village. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six male and two female residents, focusing on the formation of the settlement, earlier housing patterns, the use and maintenance of adobe houses, the military presence in the area, migration from the village, inheritance, and changing preferences in house construction. The interviews point to several periods in the spatial development of Demirtepe. Local accounts describe the first settlement as a community formed through migration, where similar ways of living and building were maintained and adobe houses shaped much of the early village fabric. During the Second World War, the military presence in and around the Gelibolu Peninsula brought additional buildings and functions to the settlement. A different phase began from the 1980s onward, as younger generations moved to larger cities and the remaining population gradually aged. Following the death of older residents, many houses and plots passed to heirs who returned to the village only periodically. The regular maintenance required by adobe houses became difficult to sustain under these conditions. Some houses were left in ruins or demolished, while reinforced-concrete houses were built either in their place or within the same plots. In more recent years, prefabricated houses have also begun to appear. Adobe therefore offers a way of following the wider transformation of Demirtepe across changes in population, ownership, everyday use, and construction technology. Further stages of the research will compare the oral accounts with archival sources, historical records, and on-site architectural documentation.

KEY WORDS:

Adobe, rural architecture, Demirtepe Village, oral history, spatial transformation