

UNDERSTANDING INTANGIBLE ASPECTS OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE; LIVING CULTURES OF NORTHEAST KAYSERİ VALLEYS*

Kültürel Peyzajın Somut Olmayan Yönlerini Anlamak; Yaşayan Bir Kültür Olarak Kayseri'nin Kuzey Doğu Vadileri

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ABSTRACT

Sustaining cultural landscapes requires the conservation of socio-cultural characteristics as well as their physical manifestations. It is essential to document and conserve tangible and intangible elements of heritage in an integrated manner as cultural heritage consists of “both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of a people finds expressions”. These include but may not be limited to social practices, daily lives, rituals, traditional craftsmanship, know-how, techniques and skills, historic places, buildings, public spaces and objects. Finding the means of understanding and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and its transmission to next generations is vital for the preservation of tangible heritage and its characteristics. This paper reviews the development of the concepts of intangible cultural heritage and cultural landscapes, and the interrelationship between tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Their interaction opens up new approaches to cultural heritage and its conservation. The case study focuses on the cultural landscape features of Kayseri's Northeast Valleys, Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk, in terms of their tangible and intangible heritage elements and values. The methodology, therefore, proposes the integrated documentation and analysis of these tangible and intangible cultural heritage characteristics. The area had a multi-cultural, ethnic and religious social structure, which shaped its elements through human-nature interaction. However, demographic changes within the last century transformed daily-life practices. The research is based on in-depth interviews with local residents, analysis of archival sources and documentation of the physical remains in the field. The results highlight the traditional crafts and production techniques as daily-life practices; some of these are still continued at the present while others are not practiced anymore. Those practiced in the recent past are carried to our day through the remembrances and accounts of the elders. The documentation of these practices forms the first step for their revival and sustainability for the future and provide valuable tools for the development of principles and strategies with this purpose. Understanding the physical, natural and socio+ layers of tangible and intangible cultural heritage is essential in this context. Their promotion and the inclusion of local stakeholders in the conservation process is the only solution for the integrated conservation of these cultural landscapes in terms of a living heritage approach.

Key Words

Intangible cultural heritage, cultural landscapes, traditional craftsmanship, production landscapes, Northeast Kayseri Valleys, Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk Valleys.

ÖZ

Kültürel peyzaj alanlarının sürekliliği, sahip olduğu fiziksel değerler kadar sosyo-kültürel özelliklerinin de korunması ile mümkündür. Hem somut hem somut olmayan miras değerlerinin bütüncül olarak belgelenmesi ve korunması temel bir yaklaşım olarak değerlendirilmelidir. Kültür mirası “insanların yaratıcılığının ifadesi olan tüm somut ve somut olmayan eserleri” kapsar. Bunların arasında, sosyal pratikler, gündelik yaşam, ritüeller, geleneksel zanaatlar, bilgi ve yetkinlikler, teknikler ve beceriler, tarihi yerler, yapılar, kamusal alanlar ve nesnelere yer alır. Somut olmayan mirasın korunması, anlaşılması ve gelecek nesillere aktarılması için yöntemler geliştirilmesi, somut kalıntılar ve özelliklerin korunması için hayati önem taşır. Bu makale, somut olmayan

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kültür mirası ve kültürel peyzaj kavramlarının gelişimini ve somut ve somut olmayan miras arasındaki ilişkileri gözden geçirmektedir. Bunların arasındaki etkileşim kültür mirası ve korunması konusunda yeni yaklaşımlar ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Örnek çalışması, Kayseri'nin Kuzeydoğu Vadileri olan Koramaz, Gesi ve Derevenk'in kültürel peyzaj özelliklerine odaklanmakta ve somut ve somut olmayan miras unsurları ve değerlerini incelemektedir. Bu nedenle yöntem, somut ve somut olmayan değerlerin bütüncül olarak belgelenmesi ve analizini içermektedir. Çalışma alanının çok-kültürlü, çok-dinli ve farklı etnik kökenli toplumsal yapısı, insan-doğa etkileşimi içinde miras unsurlarını biçimlendirmiştir. Ancak geçtiğimiz yüzyılda meydana gelen demografik dönüşümler günlük yaşam pratiklerini de değiştirmiştir. Bu araştırma, yerel halkla yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler, arşiv kaynaklarının analizi ve sahadaki fiziksel kalıntıların belgelenmesi araçlarını kullanmaktadır. Sonuçlar, günlük yaşamın parçası olan geleneksel zanaatları ve üretim tekniklerini ortaya çıkarmaktadır; bunların bazıları bugün günlük yaşam etkinlikleri olarak sürdürülürken, diğerleri artık uygulanmamaktadır. Yakın geçmişte uygulanan pratikler, yaşlıların hatıra ve anlatıları ile günümüze kadar ulaşmaktadır. Bu pratiklerin belgelenmesi, yeniden canlandırılmaları ve gelecekte sürdürülebilmeleri için ilk adım olup, bu amaçla geliştirilecek ilke ve stratejiler için önemli bir araçtır. Yerleşimlerin somut ve somut olmayan mirasını oluşturan fiziksel, doğal ve sosyo+ katmanların anlaşılması, bu kapsamda vazgeçilmezdir. Bunların tanıtımı ve yerel paydaşların koruma sürecine dahil edilmesi, bu kültürel peyzaj alanlarının yaşayan miras yaklaşımı ile bütüncül olarak korunması için tek çözümdür.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Somut olmayan kültür mirası, kültürel peyzajlar, geleneksel zanaatlar, üretim peyzajları, Kayseri'nin Kuzey-Doğu Vadileri, Koramaz, Gesi ve Derevenk Vadileri.

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage [ICH] reflects on the collective memory that humanity has kept alive throughout history, handing it down from generation to generation. Culture itself is defined as a living and evolving entity, and therefore, cannot solely be composed of tangible or physical elements. What defines the unique or distinguishing aspects of a culture includes living practices, their historic evolution and continuing development. (Lenzerini 2011: 102) ICH and “cultural landscapes”, which are formed through history as a result of the interaction between human beings and nature are the key concepts, defining the methodology of this research. The main aim, therefore, is to emphasize the need to document the oral testimonies of the people living in an area as a sub-component of the cultural landscape (Figure 1).

This article documents traditional past practices of crafts and production, and identifies the processes of change in rural lifestyles. The findings could serve as a guide for local administrators to include inhabitants in efforts to conserve such traditions as a part of their contemporary lives and as a testimony of their living heritage. In the case of the Northeast Kayseri Valleys, the traditional craftsmanship and production techniques tell us about everyday life in the region and the transformation of communities that have lived in the area for centuries. The Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk valleys that have been selected as case studies for this article, form a unified cultural landscape in Central Anatolia with unique tangible and intangible heritage values. The methodology includes both oral and archival documentation of physical features and related cultural expressions as well as the transmission of the daily life activities to future generations.

1.1. Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Landscapes

UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003: Article 2) defines ICH as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to gener-

ation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.” Therefore, “the cultural heritage of a people is to be understood as including both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of that people finds expression: languages, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries. It consists of, *inter alia*, ‘(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the ICH; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship’, on the condition that they are “compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.” (2003: Article 2).

The concept of cultural landscape has the potential to bring the tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage as living and sustainable heritage. Production landscapes, traditions and methods of production, various types of physical heritage created by these activities, and the communities directly or indirectly involved with them and their sustainability become elements of cultural landscapes.

Fowler (1999: 56) expresses that the “cultural” in “cultural landscape” covers human interaction with the environment and all tangible and intangible values. Rössler (2006: 333) states that “cultural landscape, culture and nature are the interface of tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity, and represent the close network of these relationships, the essence of culture and human identity”. Cultural landscapes, simply described as products of tradition may seem ordinary but they are usually produced unconsciously and collectively. Von Droste, Rössler and Titchen (1999: 20) accentuate the integrity of the cultural landscape, that of nature and the reality of human influence, in other words, the continuity between the people who lived at a certain place in the past and who live there today. The intangible cultural heritage of a cultural landscape makes it possible to understand the places, traditions and activities that create a rich cultural diversity and the daily lives of the ordinary people. The Cultural Landscape Conservation Workshop (2003), organized by ICCROM in Rome, emphasized the importance of comprehensive documentation and recognizing intangible values based on cultural traditions that are evident as well as tangible values that have cultural and spiritual influence on cultural landscapes. The preservation of cultural heritage is not possible through the protection of solely the physical environment, but an integrated approach including the intangible activities and values that make a place unique.

1.2. The Relationship between Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Landscapes

UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) was criticized for having a too narrow scope because it excluded “immaterial” heritage. *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies* (1982) made a holistic description including “spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features”, which included “modes of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs”. *UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore* (1989) became the first international legal instrument for the conservation of ICH although folklore was a less comprehensive concept. *UNESCO Living Human Treasures* (1994) and *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* (1998) programmes broadened the scope, and eventually led to the *UNESCO*

Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). (Lenzerini 2011: 104-107)

On the other hand, in terms of tangible heritage, *Nara Document* (1994) was the first international declaration to recognize cultural heritage diversity and the social aspects of authenticity, such as collective memory and their intangible expression, and extending the values and their sources to “form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors”. However, these are considered valuable as input and factors concerning the tangible heritage. *Valetta Principles* (2011), following the *Quebec Declaration* (2008), defines inseparable interrelation of the tangible and intangible heritage, and made the spirit of place and all intangible input and values important in terms of the continuity and sustainability of heritage areas. The intangible elements are defined as “activities, symbolic and historic functions, cultural practices, traditions, memories, and cultural references that constitute the substance of their historic value”. The concept of heritage setting or context was also enlarged to include all “natural and/or man-made” elements “that influence the static or dynamic way these areas are perceived, experienced and/or enjoyed, or which are directly linked to them socially, economically or culturally”. This understanding is extended especially for industrial and rural areas, where production is the main activity for the design, creation, preservation and sustainability of the tangible heritage. (*Dublin Principles*, 2011; *ICOMOS-IFLA Principles*, 2017)

The ICH definitions are inherently related with a number of factors, which are valuable in drawing their connection with tangible cultural heritage and its conservation. These include: “(a) the self-recognition or self-identification of ICH as part of their cultural heritage; (b) the constant recreation of ICH as a response to the historical and social evolution of communities; (c) the connection of ICH with the identity of its creators and bearers; (d) the condition of ‘authenticity’ as an implicit requirement for ICH; and (e) the interrelationship of ICH with human rights”. (Lenzerini 2011: 108-118) These factors do not only help the identification and/or understanding of tangible cultural heritage and its relationship to ICH but provides a comprehension of the past communities, who created them, and the present communities, who maintain them and would be able to carry them to the future through cultural evolution.

Cultural landscapes provide physical support for intangible assets whereas the latter contribute to the preservation of tangible heritage. (Poulios 2014: 13) To understand what constitutes ICH, the interrelationship of communities with their cultural landscapes need to be defined. (Caballero 2017: 3) Accordingly, an acceptable approach for the preservation of cultural landscapes requires developing integrated methodologies. Focusing on traditional craftsmanship and production techniques, such an integrated methodology entails understanding and preserving the know-how, knowledge and skills in their physical manifestations and built environments. According to Fairclough (2012: 5), “new heritage” concerns daily-life, and as it is constantly recreated, heritage is also constantly changing and has a dynamic structure. The research presented in this article acknowledges traditional craftsmanship and production techniques, and current challenges posed by changing trends as a part of daily-life. However, there is a lack of archival documentation of the intangible heritage existing in collective memory.

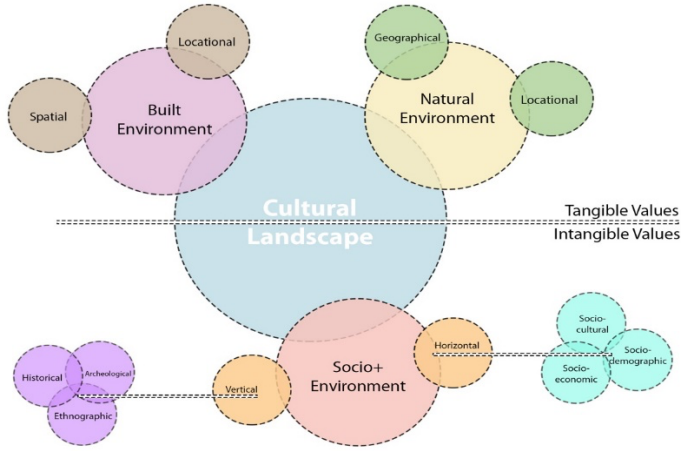


Figure 1: The Relationship between Cultural Landscape and Intangible Cultural Heritage

Figure 1 defines subsets of tangible and intangible heritage values as components of the cultural landscape. The tangible heritage value set and natural environmental components are structured accordingly while the socio plus component is defined as a part of the ICH value set. The socio+ component is also separated into two vertically and horizontally. Vertical components are historical, archaeological and ethnographic; horizontal components are sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociodemographic.

The production landscape of the Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk valleys presents traditional crafts and agricultural practices that have created the socio-economic and cultural networks and bring together tangible and intangible heritage values. Traditional crafts and daily-life practices, the need for the conservation of which are emphasized within the *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* and the *System of Living Human Treasures* frameworks, form the focus of this research. This article emphasizes the importance of the production landscapes of historic rural environments in the conservation and continuity of cultural narratives, and recommends a perspective that presents the *UNESCO System of Living Human Treasures* as a tool in conservation processes.

2. Case Study: Northeast Kayseri Valleys – Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk

2.1. General Information

Understanding the historic and cultural layers of Kayseri, an industrial city of the 20th century, requires looking at the historic continuity of former practices. Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk valleys, which were selected as the case study area, illustrate the multicultural and layered structure of Kayseri province in its built, natural and socio-cultural environments. These valley settlements are located 20 km northeast of the city center, and are rural and semi-urban in terms of morphology. The settlements are Germir and Tavlusun in Derevenk Valley; Mancusun, Nize, Darsiyak, Gesi, and Efkere in Gesi Valley; and Ağırnas, Vekse, Ispıdın, Üskübü, Turan, Büyükbürüngüz, and Küçükbürüngüz in Koramaz Valley. (Image 1) A total of 14 settlements in the valleys have survived to the present day with their tangible and intangible heritage characteristics.

The first settlements in and around Kayseri date back to the Neolithic Period as in the rest of Anatolia. The Bronze Age settlement of Kanesh-Karum, the Hittite city and the Assyrian trade colony, is located on the Gömeç Plain about 6 km north of the valleys. Early settlements in the valleys include rock-cut spaces, churches and tombs (*Kayseri Underground Structures Inventory*, 2017), most of which have survived to the present day. These spaces are mostly used for agricultural purposes today. The population of the valleys included people of different ethnicities and religious beliefs. This cultural diversity and tradition of living together continued until the first half of the 20th century; the population relocation in 1915 and the population exchange in 1923-1926 radically transformed the social and demographic structure. A 17th century census indicates that approximately 2/3 of the area identified as Koramaz district were non-Muslim while in 1914, according to the last Ottoman census, Kayseri province had a total of 184,292 Muslims, 26,590 Greeks, and 52,192 Armenians (Güler 2000: 201).

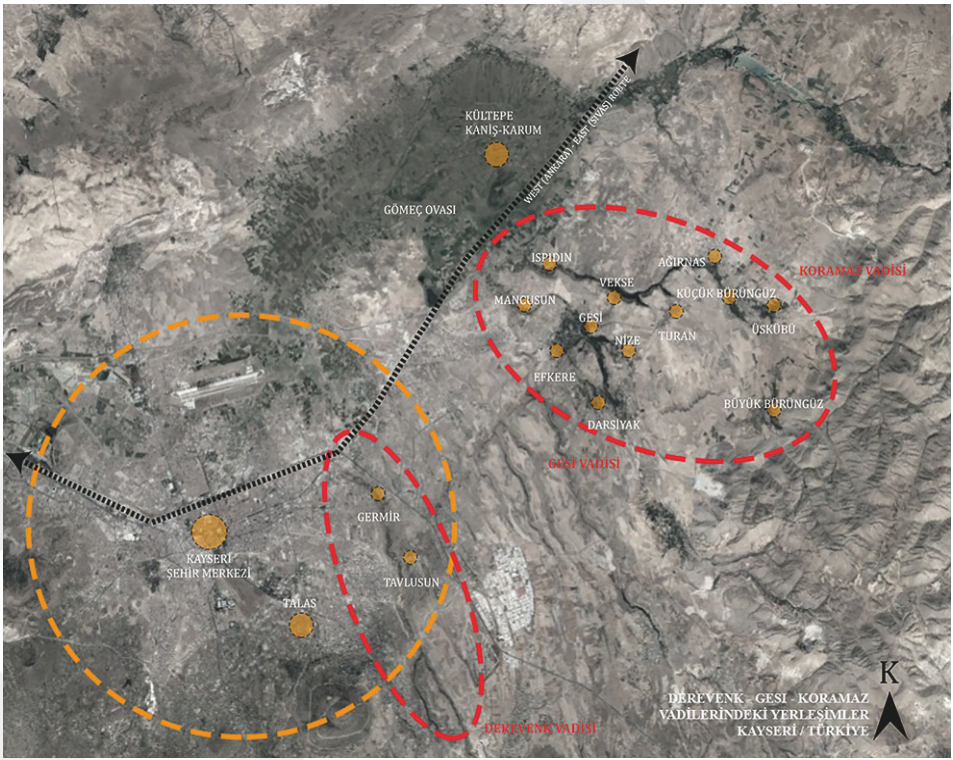


Image 1: The location of the case study areas.

The topography and the presence of water have made these valleys desirable settlement areas, invisible on the plateau and, therefore, protected and safe form settlement, in a manner similar to the valley settlements in the rest of the Cappadocian Plain. This situation has also hindered urban expansion, and protected the valleys, although they form the periphery of the city at the present with recent housing development on the plateau. The settlements on the slopes of the valleys are 1,100-1,500 m above sea level; however, they are shielded against the cold and strong winds, creating a milder and more humid micro-climate with vineyards and orchards close to the streams on the valley floors. The

natural and cultural landscape developed as a result creates a unique heritage niche. Derevenk, the valley closest to the city is under pressure from Kayseri's urban development, and has been somewhat more transformed compared to Gesi and Koramaz valleys. On 14 April 2020, Koramaz Valley was accepted to UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative List under criteria (v) as "an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change". (*Operational Guidelines*, 2019: Article 77) However, this first step for the inscription of one of the valleys on WHL, is not holistic in its approach, and completely disregards the historically, naturally, physically and socio-culturally closely related larger area.

2.2. The Intangible Elements of Northeast Kayseri Valleys

UNESCO (*World Heritage Cultural Landscapes*, 2009: 19-20) defines cultural landscape areas as unique places where nature and culture, tangible and intangible heritage, and the interface between biological and cultural diversity are visible and protected; they represent a strong relationship that is the essence of cultural and social identity. Such heritage environments are produced by the interrelations between tangible and intangible values through their production landscape. There is a wide range of similar landscape areas around the world that represent cultures and cultural traditions. Rural landscapes may be better protected compared to urban areas due to the presence of lower development pressure. However, their sustainability may be more problematic due to the same reason. Lack of economic development and diminishing populations may result in termination of production and daily-life activities, which have originally created them.

Rural landscapes are defined as living and dynamic areas, where know-how and traditional production methods continue (*ICOMOS-IFLA Principles*, 2017). These may include tangible and intangible heritage values, including production landscapes, settlements, built environment and their morphology and technology, water management, infrastructure, flora, fauna, transportation and trade networks as well as cultural and practical knowledge, crafts, traditions, beliefs, rituals, and other collective activities. These complex and integrated natural, socio-cultural and structural interrelations need to be understood and protected. (Kayın 2012: 46).

In the case study areas selected for this research, the documentation and evaluation is carried out under UNESCO ICH definitions/domains of "social practices, rituals and festive events", "knowledge and practices on nature and the universe" and "traditional craftsmanship" with a focus on their relationship and continuity in the living culture. These are discussed in more detail below and summarized in Mapping 1 and 2.

The research on intangible heritage elements and cultural memory mapping was based on in-depth interviews with local residents, conducted in 2019-2020. From the 14 villages, a total of 30 residents representing at least two different generations were interviewed; it was ascertained that at least one of these SPs was old enough to remember and provide information for the period before 1950. 15 of the interviewees were 75 years of age or older whereas 15 were 50 years of age or younger. Gender wise, 20 interviewees were men while 10 were women. Memory walks were conducted in each village with people representing both generations as well, during which questions were asked about spatial use and intangible daily-life activities. The interviewees were referred as S.P. (source person) in the text, and identified with their residency location, age and gender information at the end of the Bibliography section.

2.2.1. Social Practices, Daily-life Activities, Rituals, and Festive Events

Just as daily-life activities occur in public spaces in urban areas, they happen in production landscapes in rural areas. Common services like fountains and common production spaces such as threshing places, where wheat is processed after harvest, ovens and technological elements related with them, are shared by the community. For instance, the threshing stone (*seten*) indicates the differentiation between neighborhoods. This is a millstone, which is vertically rotated by animal or water power and used to separate the bran of the grain and to make ground wheat (*yarma*) and cracked wheat (*bulgur*). *Soku* is another type of wheat threshing technology, and may be described as a large hollow stone container like a mortar, in which the grain is pounded with a gavel by human force. It may be used for wheat, ground wheat, or dried pepper. Although not used anymore, examples exist in various locations in the harvest gathering areas of the villages. (Image 2) The people of the village worked collectively (*imece*) at these places and sang songs while doing so. Most agricultural activities were collective in nature. In *Kayseri's Armenians Speak* (2018), an oral history anecdote provides the following information:

The road passes through the middle of the village as if it divides the village in two. At the crossroads, there was a huge and hollow stone called "soku". After the harvest in the fall, wheat was filled in the "soku". The men of the village, three-four of them together, picked gavels in their hands, and in harmony, while singing a song, crushed the wheat. (translated by Ö. Kevseroğlu)



Image 2: Threshing stones: *seten* (left) and *soku* (right).

One of the other activities retrieved through in-depth interviews with villagers (S.P. 1) is clearing the water source from grass collectively each year; this event symbolized the beginning of the spring, and is called "opening the eye of the water" (*suyun gözünü açmak*). Following collective work, the families had a picnic together at the water source to celebrate the event (S.P. 2). Another activity was washing carpets in places where water was collected into ponds on the valley basin or close to the fountain in the village (S.P. 3). Collective food production included making and baking *tandır* bread in neighborhood ovens and boiling molasses from grape juice (*pekmez*) in the courtyards of the houses or at the common agricultural spaces that served this purpose (*şirehane / şirane*; Image 3). The agricultural products were preserved for the winter also through collective work (S.P. 4).



Image 3: Stone basins for grape juice; *şirehane / şirane*

The multicultural and religious structure of the communities resulted in the collective celebration of different rituals. Some of these were geographical in nature, such as the healing of people from diseases and preventing natural disasters and famines. One of these ritual places is a healing house, popularly known as *Arap Ocağı* in the village of Ağırnas in Koramaz Valley (S.P. 5). Mothers left outfits of their children here to heal them. The “perforated stones” (*deliklitaş*) in the villages of Küçükbürüngüz and Nize, also in Koramaz Valley, served as healing places as well (S.P. 6). There was a pilgrimage route, which started from the village of Mancusun in Koramaz Valley and ended in Gesi Paşapınarı or *Dua* (Prayer) Square, the source of water in Gesi; this ritual was accepted to be effective against natural disasters, especially famine or drought (S.P. 7). The villagers gathered and prayed, and threw horseshoes in the water, where it pooled at the source.

2.2.2. Knowledge and Practices on Nature and the Universe

The traditional methods of agricultural production may be listed in this domain. The production landscapes, frequently used until the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries in valley villages selected as case study area, include places for livestock, such as pigeon halls (Image 4), haystacks and barns, and for herb processing, such as dye and oil mills or *bezirhanes*. Mills, warehouses, cellars, and ovens as well as wells, fountains, threshing stones (*seten, soku*) were used collectively (S.P. 8). The cultivated and collected plants include *cehri* (buckthorn; *Rhamnus*), clover, grape vines and willow, walnut, poplar, mulberry trees and wheat fields on the Gömeç Plain. Special craft occupations were derived from these production types, such as millers, farmers, livestock breeders, viticulturists, etc.

In addition to agricultural production, food processing and preservation was also a traditional collective activity: These included drying fruits and vegetables (apricots, plums, mulberries, eggplants, peppers, beans); making molasses from grapes and mulberries, and drying these in thin sheets as *pestil*; making vinegar and wine from grapes; making butter and yoghurt in stone containers called *dorak* (Image 5); storing fruit (apples,

grapes) for the winter in caves; making tomato and pepper paste (*salça*); making jams and preserves of various fruit; pickling and preserving various vegetables, grape leaves for *sarma*, and *gilaburu* (an endemic plant and its berry) in brine (S.P. 9).



Image 4: Pigeon halls (*columbaria*).

2.2.3. Traditional Craftmanship

Historic rural landscapes are products of the way in which craftsmanship handled local sources and conditions, or in other words, the interaction between environmental features and cultural practices and narratives. The volcanic activity of Mount Erciyes, which continued until 2000 years ago, has resulted in volcanic and sedimentary rock formations in the geological structure, along dominant wind directions towards the valleys. The visible bedrock is mostly formed by the sedimentation of these pyroclastic formations; these are porous and softer rocks such as tuff and ignimbrites. This geological structure enabled the creation of a rock carving tradition in the valleys, similar to the tradition in Göreme and Zelve valleys on the western side of the Cappadocian Plain. Underground and cave structures were used as houses, mausoleums, churches/mosques, and production and storage spaces, such as *columbaria* (Image 4), mills, cisterns, grape juice and wine presses, and oil presses or *bezirhanes* (Image 6). Due to the later development of settlements over the former caves, the rock-cut underground spaces were reduced to animal pens, barns, and depots for various goods and products. The agricultural technology was also based on the easily carved stones; threshing stones (*seten, soku*; Image 2), basins (*şirehane / şirane*; Image 3), yoghurt containers (*dorak*; Image 5), ovens (*tandır*), and other kitchen equipment were also made from stone. Most of these crafting traditions continue at the present.

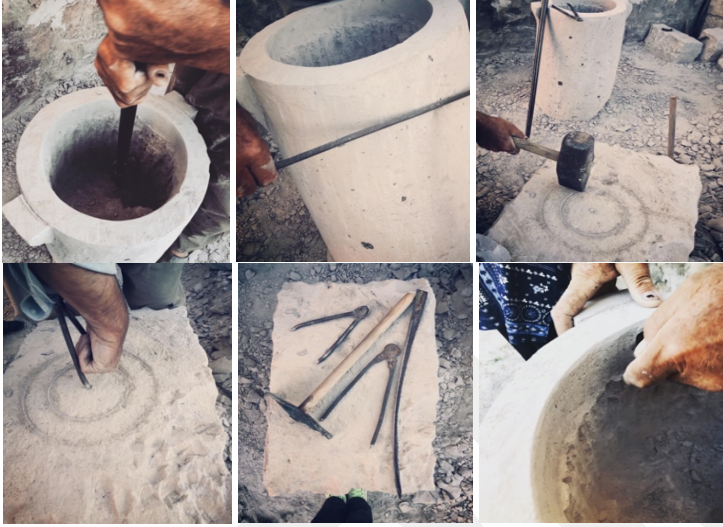


Image 5: Making stone yoghurt containers (*dorak*).

Oil presses or *bezirhanes* are among the most typical production places unique to the region. Historic sources list production areas in Kayseri as Koramaz, Sahara and Cebel-i Erciyes (İnbaşı, 1992). The oil, known as *bezir*, was produced from rocket seeds (*Eruca cappadocica*), flaxseeds (*Linum usitatissimum*), bluebottle (*Centaurea cyanus*) and safflowers (*Carthamus tinctorius*), which are endemic plants in the region; they were cultivated until the mid-20th century.

There were several different methods of pressing the seeds to produce oil. The production process at the oil mills in the area included the following steps and spaces: (1) The collected plants were dried by stoves in a separate area; (2) the lightly burned seeds were turned and milled with a millstone, powered by an animal or with running water; the millstones could weigh up to 3 tons; (3) the oil was extracted through compression between timber beams; there were up to 6 juniper beams at each mill for this purpose, and each of these were 13m long in length and weighed about 1 ton; (4) the extracted oil was stored in carved basins or pits; (5) there were various storage spaces and animal pens. (Image 6) The produced *bezir* oil was used locally and sold commercially; it was used as cooking oil, lighting fuel, for grooming animals, in balms for healing the wounds on animals, and in paint and soap production.



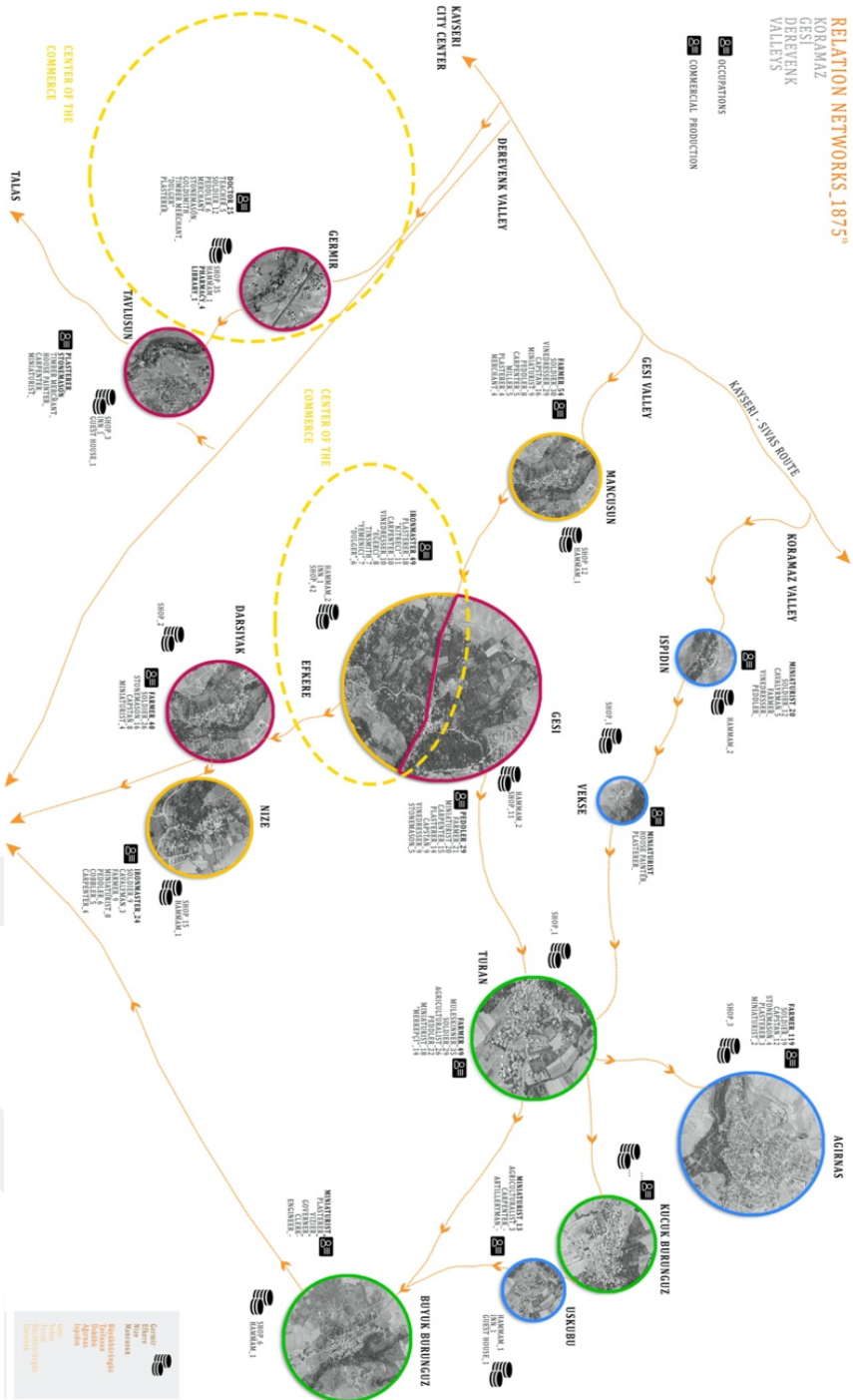


Image 6: The production process at the oil mills (*bezirhanes*).

The rock carving and cutting tradition has resulted in the dominance of construction-related crafts: quarrymen, stonemasons, stone cutters (*nakkaş*), plasterers, painters, blacksmiths, tinkers, and carpenters. The area has several unique building traditions, also different from the techniques observed in the rest of the Cappadocian Plain. One of these is the use of comparatively lighter stones (*saltası*) for floor and roof claddings over timber beams, and the similar use of timber floor structures for façade projections with stone walls. These practices were probably made possible as a result of the availability of lighter tuff and pumice stones. (Baturayoğlu Yöney *et al.* 2017: 348-353) The heritage of building activity in the valleys includes examples dating to the early 19th century although the subterranean structures carved into the rock and later only used as service spaces may be dated earlier. The resulting tangible architectural heritage in the villages, mostly dated to the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries is not rural in character. The densely located houses along the streets with small gardens are similar to a historic town context. (Elagöz Timur *et al.* 2019: 653)

There were a great number of workers from Kayseri Province at construction sites in Istanbul at the end of the 16th century, and some of them may have become permanent immigrants in Istanbul in mid-17th century. (Faroqi 2011: 271) The situation was similar in the 19th century as many men skilled in construction crafts went to Istanbul during the winter season to work and earn an additional income, staying at the dormitories provided by the church and returning in time for agricultural activity in the spring. (Verheij 2017: 25-29) It was perhaps no coincidence that the most famous royal head-architect of the Ottoman Empire during the Classical Period, Sinan (1489-1588) was from the Village of Ağırnas in Koramaz Valley, and, the royal head-architect of the Ottoman Empire during the Tulip Period, Kayserili el-Hac Mehmet Ağa (d. 1742) was from the Village of Nize also in Koramaz Valley (Topçu 2012: 48). However, this production technology and tradition is about to disappear as stone masonry houses are no longer built in the area while many have been abandoned and not repaired.

Faroqi (2011: 174) states that the crafts people in Istanbul were bound more by their point of origin in Anatolia rather than their ethnic and religious ties. Muslims and non-Muslims originating from the same cities or regions specialized in the same crafts at



Mapping 2: Occupations and commercial activities in 19th century

Handicrafts, mostly practiced by the women at home included needlework, canvas embroidery and carpet weaving. Carpet weaving was especially profitable for bringing an extra income. Special root dyes were produced in the valleys to be used in weaving: oads (*Isatis tinctoria*) for blue, buckthorn (*Rhamnus*) for brownish-red, mullein (*Verbascum*) and milfoil (*Achillea millefolium*) for yellow, nettle (*Urtica dioica*) for greyish-brown, onion peel and walnut (*Juglans*) for brown, and madder (*Rubia tinctorum*) for purple.

3. Conclusion: Sustaining Practices for the Future

As of January 2021, there are 584 elements corresponding to 131 countries on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. These are grouped under three lists: The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. However, national and local elements probably amount to millions. Hafstein (2015) uses ICH metaphorically as a diagnosis of heritage preservation problems, and their safeguarding as treatment or solutions for these problems. The loss of ICH has indeed become a sickness that communities all over the world are facing, with many practices rapidly becoming extinct. Its conservation as treatment is also problematic as illustrated by various authors. Such activity generally leads to a loss of meaning and authenticity, making the practices decontextualized, museumified, overcommercialized, disneyfied, mummified and theatrical through touristification, nationalization and lack of social and cultural dialogue. (Hafstein 2015: 284-296; Ölçer Özünel 2017a: 361-363)

However, the living and evolving nature of culture and the communities, who define these elements, sometimes transform beyond recognition. According to Poullos (2014: 139-141), the concept of “living heritage”, as opposed to the former “material-based” and “values-based” approaches to heritage, challenges our existing notions in three major areas: (1) the conservation process may still be defined by the conservation professionals but the control and decision-making mechanisms are transferred to the communities; (2) the emphasis of preservation is transferred from that of tangible heritage to the maintenance of the intangible relationship between communities and heritage; and (3) heritage is no longer considered a monument of the past that needs to be protected from the interventions of the present community for the sake of future generations, but an inseparable part of the life of the present community and their charge to protect. This approach removes the conceptual and physical discontinuity between the past and the present-future in favor of a unified and present continuity. Thus, the focus of heritage conservation shifts from monuments to people, “from the tangible fabric to intangible connections with heritage” while social transformation is reflected in the evolution of culture. The loss of some ICH elements may be compensated with the creation of new ones, and the petrified negative conservation of ICH becomes impossible.

Lenzerini’s (2011) factors of ICH, cited in Section 1.2 of this article, define a comprehensive framework. The first factor, self-recognition and self-identification with ICH is important for the present and the future, and if directed in a sustainable manner it may lead to the second factor, the constant recreation of ICH. These are desirable and sustainable approaches to conservation. The third factor, the connection of ICH with the identity of creators and bearers may prove problematic: In the case of the valley settlements in Kayseri, the original community of creators and bearers have been replaced almost a century ago. Whether the existing traces of the ICH may be re-connected with the replacement community appears as the central conservation problem. The fourth factor questions if authenticity is an implicit requirement for ICH: The continuation and revival of ICH

by another community, with a different socio-cultural structure may be problematic and may lead to a question of authenticity. But even in cases where there is a continuity of community, the authenticity of ICH becomes problematic through the process of institutional conservation, in which practices become theatrical performances or solely economy and tourism-oriented. The fifth and last factor concerns the interrelationship of ICH with human rights: In terms of self-recognition or self-identification as well as in the connection of ICH with its creators and bearers, ICH is a human right. Its loss and extinction, whether intentional or unintentional becomes a violation. Thus, self-reidentification and sustainable recreation of new connections with transformed communities, which may also attract descendants of the original creator and bearer communities, may itself become a tool in overcoming human rights questions as much as it is possible to create new identifications and new connections between these communities.

These are all possible if the ICH is sustained as living heritage. The transformation from memory to daily practices also provides meaning for the tangible heritage and would make them living heritage rather than fossils or theatrical decoration. In this context, the transformation of communities from those who originally created the cultural landscape to the communities who are using it today becomes acceptable. The conservation professionals' focus is reduced to creating an awareness in the present community about their responsibility, defining the characteristics and quality of the heritage through the physical remains, existing values and existing social practices and lifestyles. Thus, the act of conservation, itself, is delivered to the community and local stakeholders.

United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) considers the problem as a global concept rather than focusing only on developing countries. *Our Common Future (UN Brundtland Report, 1987: 3/27)* defines sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The dichotomy between the local and the global in terms of SDGs appears to focus on “daily life practices” in terms of socio-cultural identification and expression. The holistic and human-centered approach of the SDGs places ICH at the heart of the problem, however, without specifically mentioning them. “Culture”, itself is mentioned only four times in the 17 goals and 169 targets. (Ölçer Özünel 2017b: 25) Goal 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” refers to the strengthening of “efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage” in target 11.4 and to supporting “positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning” in target 11.a. (*UN Transforming Our World, 2015: 21-22*) The relationship between urban, peri-urban and rural areas is central to the research presented in this article. The concepts of “social inclusion and protection”, mentioned many times in the SDG document, comply with the conservation of ICH. Traditional lifestyles and practices support the culture of sharing, solidarity and social justice as well as multi-cultural and multi-religious communities, shared rituals, festivals and sacred spaces; traditional crafts and agricultural production still bring income and livelihood to many people; local practices with nature protect ecological systems and biodiversity rather than rapidly usurping them, while traditional culinary applications provide safer food, a natural diet and natural methods of food preservation. (Ölçer Özünel 2017b: 28-29) Practices documented from the Northeast Kayseri Valleys of Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk, provide good examples in this context, the sustainability of which would be useful for future development.

The human-nature interaction at cultural landscapes is more evident in rural areas, where a tradition of such mutual interaction produced unique conditions. Some of these activities may be abandoned as a result of socio-economic conditions. However, they are retained in collective memory for a more extended period as elements of the behavior and life-style of communities; life-long practices and learning are powerful tools for remembrance. Such intangible know-how, knowledge and practices need to be documented and analyzed with their tangible manifestations in order to understand and sustain cultural heritage, which is formed of physical, natural and socio-cultural layers integrated in various ways. Analyzing cultural landscape areas with a holistic approach is very important in terms of developing the right conservation methods for both tangible and intangible heritage.

Some of the production practices and related activities documented and analyzed for Derevenk, Gesi and Koramaz valleys have disappeared partially or completely as a result of the changes in demography, socio-cultural characteristics, and economic conditions and resources. Oil presses and other agricultural production infrastructure such as mills are no longer in use; some types of livestock, wild pigeons and water buffalos, are no longer bred; some plants are no longer cultivated; and some commercial activities and crafts, such as stone-cutting and building, have declined to the point of vanishing, to be replaced by more global practices. However, they are retained in collective memory and may be remembered through in-depth interviews with the elders. In order to preserve the uniqueness and integrity of these valley settlements, where the practices documented in this article continued until at least the mid-20th century, ensuring the sustainability of these practices is very important, and this must be carried out with an integrated approach to tangible and intangible heritage characteristics and values. Documentation of ICH elements, identification of threats and opportunities, and determination of principles and strategies for sustainable conservation of development, are some of the steps in this process. In the long term, preparing a cultural heritage management plan and “living human treasures system” for the region should be among the objectives.

The ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of the valley settlements in Koramaz, Gesi and Derevenk, produced a unique way of life as well as traditions of production and crafts, defining the identity of the area. Each tangible and intangible element, used or practiced individually or collectively in the valleys is of equal value and importance. They are also essential for ensuring the sustainability of these areas in the future as economic and socio-cultural tools. The changes in the demographic structure cannot be undone. The cultural diversity of the population was lost by the mid-20th century; it lives in the collective memory of the elder inhabitants. There also are frequent visitors, who come to the area to see the places where their ancestors lived. This creates a potential and a great opportunity for re-integrating the past life-styles and practices into the collective memory of the younger generations. The practices that have declined and ceased are still part of collective memory and preserved with their physical manifestations, and may be revived through new interactions with careful work, planning and management. The living heritage approach, which leaves the act of conservation to the community, may provide an efficient and sustainable model in this context. Socio-cultural transformations and changing human-nature interaction may, thus, provide an opportunity rather than a threat. The documentation of past and present practices with their physical, natural, economic and socio-cultural layers, focusing on production, forms a starting point. Conservation of cultural landscapes becomes sustainable through the integration of three parameters: the built environment, the natural environment and the socio plus environment.

INFORMANT:

- S.P. 1:** Female, 75 years old, Mancusun Village, interviewed on 25 July 2019.
S.P.2: Male, 80 years old, Efkere Village, interviewed on 05 October 2020.
S.P.3: Male, 76 years old, Germir Village, interviewed on 28 July 2020.
S.P.4: Male, 85 years old, Tavlusun Village, interviewed on 05 November 2019.
S.P. 5: Female, 80 years old, Ağırnas Village, interviewed on 25 June 2020.
S.P. 6: Female, 75 years old, Subaşı Village, interviewed on 20 August 2020.
S.P. 7: Male, 76 years old, Gesi Village, interviewed on 10 August 2020.
S.P. 8: Male, 75 years old, Germir Village, interviewed on 28 July 2020.
S.P. 9: Female, 77 years old, Nize Village, interviewed on 12 August 2020.

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