

# TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE, and CONSERVATION: THE CASE OF KORUÇAM VILLAGE- CYPRUS

F. İlkin <sup>a\*</sup>, Ö. Özderen <sup>a</sup>, O. Şengezer <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> EMU, Faculty of Architecture , Famagusta, T.R.N.Cyprus – (fatma\_76, ozlemozderen)@hotmail.com

<sup>b</sup> EUL, Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, Gemikonağı, T.R.N.Cyprus – sengezer@lefke.edu.tr

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## ABSTRACT:

Koruçam was settled in 803 AC as a Maronite Village. Nowadays, a small number of this cultural group lives in the village, when the number was compared 1200 years ago. Young populations of the culture live in different countries because of the absence of economic, political and administrative possibilities. For this reason, Maronites are face to face with the loss of sustainability of the traditional environment and their cultural heritage. In this study, an investigation of Socio-Cultural and Physical environments of Koruçam Village will be done and urban pattern will be analyzed according to the above mentioned factors.

Analysis will be considered by using different techniques and after that, recommendations will be presented to establish the conservation and continuity of the Koruçam Village.

## INTRODUCTION

Cyprus is the third biggest island in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Due to its geographical position, it has become the main target of rich and powerful cultural groups. That its why; throughout the history Cyprus has been under the administration of these groups. Thus, Cyprus today is a country with rich cultural values, historical perspectives, and with a diverse architectural heritage. Each of the different cultural groups; Hellens, Romans, Byzantines, Maronites, Lusignan, Venetians, Ottomans and British, has constructed their own architectural style in terms of what one might call the mezzo-micro scale. Nowadays, between these cultural groups, only Maronites continue to their life who are Catholic Christians. Maronites immigrated to Cyprus from Lebanon during the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and were settled down to the north slopes of the island in 72 different villages where they had an approximate population of 18.000. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Maronites are living only at Koruçam village with a population of 150.

Koruçam village is located on the slopes of the western part of Beşparmak Mountain range, with a very rare settlement that preserves its original character. The village has an inorganic street pattern that contains one or two storey houses in an attached organization. Its square located at the center of the village is surrounded by cafes, small market, restaurant and St. George church from the period of 15<sup>th</sup> century. There exists a cultural tourism potential which is covered by physical environment that forms the traditional pattern of the village.

Today, immigration plays a major role in Koruçam because of the absence of education; insufficient economical and administrative opportunities, population of the village is decreasing day by day, which causes them to lose their cultural and architectural heritages resulting in the loss of sustainability and continuity of the traditional environment.

In the research, Koruçam is considered at the house and settlement scale, and research will be done on settlement pattern

and characteristics of space with *theoretical, typological, numerical*, analysis in terms of cultural values. Documentation, measured drawing, photographic recording, surveying, mapping, 3D model and GIS techniques will be used to realize the analysis. For the cultural sustainability and settlement continuity; physical, economical, educational, cultural and administrative recommendations will be handled and a model project will be developed, designed according to these recommendations.

This study will try to put forward the revitalization method which will be used to conserve the traditional pattern that is formed by physical and socio cultural environment for its sustainability and continuity with existing potentials.

## THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

This analysis was also supported by various interviews that were done with the villagers, information found in the literatures and observations. Physical environment and Socio-Cultural structure of the Koruçam Village was investigated with this analysis.

### Theoretical analysis of physical environment of the Koruçam Village

Koruçam is a Maronite village where located 24 miles away Southern Kyrenia and on a slope. It's settling down is based on an old history.1200 years ago, Maronites came from Lebanon and settled at the slopes of Northern Cyprus. One of the villages where Maronites settled is Koruçam. The original name of Koruçam is Kormakiti. It is called as Kormacit as well. It is an original Maronite village and today Maronite community lives at this village. At every point of the village the Maronite culture is felt and perceived.



Figure 1. 3D Model of Koruçam Village

It is possible to approach the village from two directions. Village takes its name from the Koruçam Cape. When it is approached from the east, the Koruçam village is hidden inside the slope, and cannot be perceived. Although the village cannot be perceived at the end of the curve of the road just at the entrance of the village, the whole atmosphere of the village is felt and understood easily.

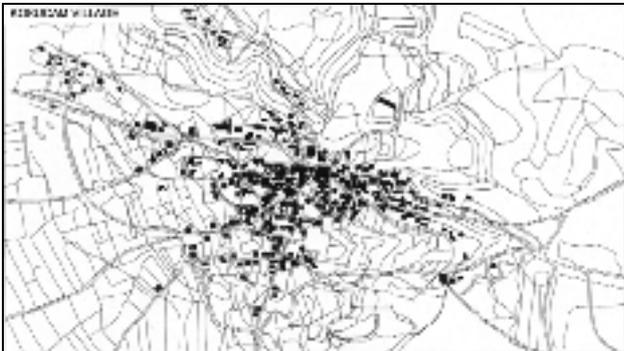


Figure 2. Circulation and Density map of Koruçam Village

Since, there are two slopes at both two directions towards the West and the South, none of the buildings affect each other's views. The buildings on slopply site are placed in a way that, they usually follow the topographical contours of the land and are taken the sea view. At the entrance of the village, the settlement density is low, whereas while approaching to the centre of the village, the density increases. The attached houses provide a nice perspective inside the village by the help of the organic and irregular urban street structure, which create a flowing dynamic exterior space.

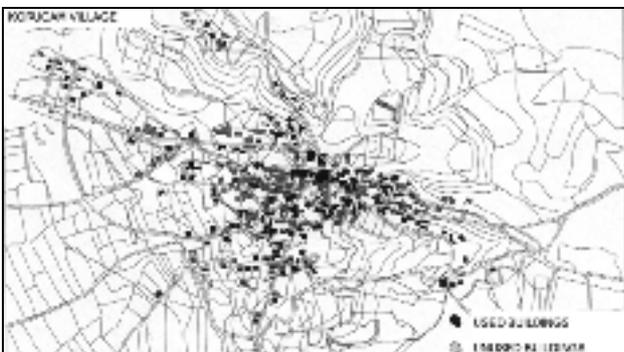


Figure 3. Used and Unused buildings in the Koruçam Village

When it is approached to the village centre that is buried in the greenery, a majestic and grandeur church is hidden. The old

church of St. George, a fifteenth-century building, is in huge dimension and monumental scale. The Church was located at the urban square of the village. The other supporting buildings of the square are a small market that provides the public shopping possibility, a fountain, and some cafes, that give the possibility to spend time to the men of the village, mukhtar's office, and a restaurant.

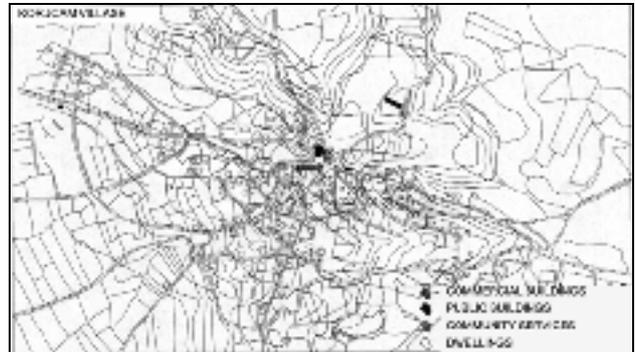


Figure 4. Existing Land Uses in the Village

The village is settled on hard and rocky lands, in addition to these, agricultural lands are located at the lower grounds of the village. These lands also shelter very productive areas where olive/carob trees and barley/wheat are grown. In Koruçam Village, olive oil and molasses production used to be an essential income for the villagers.

Since the local material is stone, generally, the local material of the traditional buildings of the Maronites is stone and the building structure is load bearing wall with wooden flat roofs. There exist some 100, 200 and 350 years old traditional buildings arranged on the narrow streets.



Figure 5. Distribution of Building Floor in Koruçam Village

Generally, all around of the island has long, hot, humid summers and short, warm rainy winters. Almost the buildings have a transitional space which is defined by an arcade that provides shade in summer time and getting sun inside during winter time. The houses without arcade have a pergola with grapevine at the front yard that creates shadow as well.

#### Theoretical analysis of socio-cultural structure of the Koruçam Village

The families of Maronite continue their life at the Northern and Southern parts of Cyprus. 1200 years ago, Maronite community emigrate from Lebanon because of some political effects and settled on title Northern hills of Cyprus. The mother language of Maronites is Arabic and they are Catholic Christian. After settling Arabic, as mentioned above, while co-operating with

the Greeks. Their daily language changed as Greek. Due to economical, political and educational reasons, the young population of the village left their original settlements. Today, there is a group of Maronites who are above the middle age and dealing with farming and herdsman ship. The Maronites living in Koruçam consist of 70 families and nearly 150 people. The age distribution of the Maronite community living in Koruçam changes between 50 and 80. The young individuals come near their families either weekends or summer holiday. By this way the family members live separate through out the week and come together at the weekends and in the summer months.

The Maronite inhabitants in Koruçam provide their living by agricultural and cattle dealing. While selling the products, growing on the yield lands, they use some portion of it for their basic needs. By this way, they provide their profits. Carob, wheat and olives are the main products. They obtain molasses from carob, boiled and pounded wheat, flour and starch from wheat and oil from olives at all of the gardens of the Maronite houses in Koruçam. There are also ovens and areas for vegetables in their gardens. Because of that, villagers provide their own basic foods by themselves and prepare their bread at the oven. They make cattle dealing and they deal with the sheep as well. The shelter of the animals and their food storages are located on Western planes of the village. Because of this, there is no possibility of coinciding with any animal shelter inside the village. In addition, hunting is done in certain periods around the village. The villagers make their own ‘Helloumi’ cheese by getting milk from their animals. In addition, the villagers either provide an extra small room or a separate room inside the house for storing their own food. Preparation of the food and on the other hand handworks of their culture is done by the women of the village. Also each Sunday, a religious ceremony is realized by the villagers and the young Maronites who come to visit their families.

**TYOPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

The grouping of the objects that are found randomly, in certain rules and logic supports the basis of this analysis. Organisation of site lay out, relation of the entrance of the house with Main Street, house relation with neighbourhood, form and plan of the main building units were investigated with typological analysis.

**Typological analysis of organization of site lay out**

The location of the house on the site was investigated. 10 different configurations were found. While the exterior frame makes clear the border of the site, the black rectangle shows the area of the house. The other pointed region represents the outer space, in other words, the garden or the courtyard of the house. Table1.

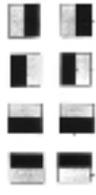
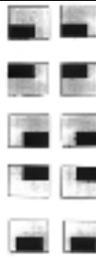
<b>Types of Site Lay Out Organization</b>	One Side Touching	
	Two Sides Touching	
	Three Sides Touching	

Table 1. Typological analysis of organization of site lay out

**Typological analysis relationship of the house entrance with the main street**

The relationship of the house entrance with the street was examined. In Koruçam Village housing and street connection are two types. These are either connection with the street directly (public space-private space connection) or street-garden- house relation (public-semi public-private connections).

**Typological analysis of house relation with neighbourhood**

End of this analysis, 7 different configurations were found. The white region shows the house and the black region shows the attached adjacent houses. Table2.

Independent	One Side Touching	Two Sides Touching	Three Sides Touching
			
			
			

Table 2. Typological analysis of house relation with neighbourhood

	<b>Types of House Entrance with Relation to Main Street</b>
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**Typological analysis of House form**

End of the analysis totally seven types of house forms were observed.

		The Integration of Forms					
		Attaching				Linking	Interlocking
		Spatial Tension	Edge to Edge	Face to Face	Combined		
Deduction	Lateral						
	From the Top						
	Comprehensive						
Addition	Lateral						
	Onto the Top						
	Combined						
Deduction & Addition	Lateral Applications						
	Top Surface Applications						
	Comprehensive Applications						
Pure Forms							

Table 3. Typological analysis of House form

### Typological analysis of House Plan

Plan groupings were formed according to the plan shape and organization. As a result of the plan groupings in the Koruçam Village, 6 types of plan are found.

		Plan Organization					
		Single Unit	Centralized	Linear	Radial	Clustered	Grid
Lay Out of Pure Plan	L-Shaped						
	U-Shaped						
	O-Shaped						
	Rectangular						
	Combined						
	Square						

Table 4. Typological analysis of House Plan

In this type analysis, elements were taken as a result of the research and based on the numerical values. Private, Semi-Public and Public Spaces which are Human-Socio Characteristic of the space were investigated with this analysis. At the same time, Open, Semi-Open and Closed spaces were investigated which are Physical Characteristics of the space.

### Numerical Analysis of Human and Socio Characteristics of Space

Plan organization of the houses are determined as; % 33 Private Space (Bedrooms), % 26 Semi-Public Space (Kitchen, Storage and Toilet) and % 41 Public Space (Living room).

### Numerical Analysis of Physical Characteristics of Space

When the Physical Characteristics of building was investigated on site lay out; %49 Open Space (Front yard, Back Yard), %9 Semi-Open Space (Arcade) and % 42 Closed Space (Main building units and Closed spaces in the courtyard such as kitchen, toilets and storage) were established.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSERVATION AND CONTINUITY OF KORUÇAM VILLAGE

Conservation of original identity of Koruçam Village, Sustainable to the topography; Settlement of houses through the sea view; Same potential usage of interior and exterior spaces; Powerful neighbourhood relationship because of the extroverted life style; Existence of well-watered lands and productive plant cover because of plentiful rainfall; There is not any problem groundwater and drinking water; Sheltered the different types of birds for observation and for hunting; Existence of the original furniture and fixture of the dwellings; Being the biggest Catholic church of the St George Church which was constructed in 15<sup>th</sup> century has visiting activity by the foreign tourists; Existence of restaurant which shelter local and foreign tourists, is cooked the foods related with their culture, are the points that considered the strength of the Koruçam village.



Figure 6. Interior Space Organization in Koruçam Village

There are 247 building in Koruçam Village. 112 units of them need repairing, renovation and maintenance. Vehicular transportation is done in difficulty because of the bad condition of the vehicular roads. Vehicular roads are not constructed expect the roads around the urban square. Also lack of street furniture, street lighting, public transportation, and in addition to the lack of shopping centres which serves the physical needs of the villagers can be the weaknesses of the Koruçam Village.



Figure 7. Dwellings in Koruçam Village

In addition to these, to provide the continuity of the Koruçam Village, to shelter the necessary units in spite of use can be one of the opportunities of the Koruçam Village. There is plenty of building stock that has the potential conservation in addition to the Koruçam Cape which forms the village border, coastal line and sea and which create potential for local and foreign tourists are the other opportunities of village.

To provide the continuity of village there are some factors as economic, educational and administrative; where the educational factor the most important one to shelter the young population in the village. For that reason lack of educational factor which provides the continuity of socio-cultural structure, constitutes a potential danger for the Koruçam village as threats.

According to the results of the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Koruçam Village;

For maintenance, repair and renovation of the existing building stock; Preventing structural destruction in buildings and preparing a maintenance hand-book that will include the definition of building materials and construction techniques to be used in repairs and considering the technical problems such as lack of building materials to be used in maintenance; Preserving the interactions among interior and exterior spaces; Providing originality in interior spaces, on renewing constructions; Preserving the identity of open spaces such as the courtyards; Providing the sustainability of behavioral privacy levels in spatial organizations; Determining new development sites for the need after existing building stock is once used and economically satisfied; Determining the sites where new buildings can be built; Determining the land-use ratios and encouraging the use of these ratios and the combinations of main building organizations in new constructions and Recommending a second centre for further development of the settlement.



Figure 8. Exterior Space Organization of the dwellings in Koruçam Village

To design exterior spaces; Improvement of street lighting and street furniture; Preserving the identity of open spaces such as the streets and squares; Providing the transportation and circulation needs; Leaving some narrow streets for only pedestrians in order to prevent parked cars in front of the old buildings that will harm the picturesque value of these dwellings; Re-assessment and re-use of values like chapels ( for using as exhibition of traditional arts and crafts), beaches, etc; Defining and evaluating the services in terms of usability; such as health center, shopping center, community center and Providing the infrastructure necessary for the considered life-style,

To develop the economical income; Providing the social needs of today's life; Pulling back the gone workmanship by improvement of job opportunities; Providing economical income for carrying the historical background into future via cultural tourism; The creation of a tourism development plan including user participation and A market analysis of the resources using local experts and educational institutions,

To educate local people; Designing facilities such as fair, festival, bazaar, tour, etc. to revitalize the economy; Improvement of hand-made & home-made products, designing production- presentation-trade models and providing sustainability; Encouraging sports facilities; Educating local people for cultural tourism; Carrying cultural facilities into the settlement; Motivating the local dwellers to contribute in cultural facilities; Giving opportunities to the local dwellers to carry the cultural infrastructure of the settlement to the future; The continuity of traditional arts and crafts; Starting language courses as Turkish and Greek; Motivating cooking courses and the use of earth ovens and Proving a community center which covers the above mentioned facilities,



Figure 8. Maronite Women in Koruçam Village  
To provide the administration of the village; Central administration (ministries of government), Local administration

(municipalities), Village representatives (Autonomous, head of cooperative, head of primary school), Sponsors and investors (local and foreign) and Volunteers (villagers and other people) must be coordinated together.

Above mentioned recommendations can be presented to supply the continuity and conservation of the Koruçam Village.

#### **References**

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