

Workshop on REGENERATION: Project TAAR-2

Academic committee and organizers:

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The villages of Iran are forgetting their wise and sustainable methods of living. They are transforming from main producers to mass consumers. Neglecting the value of their vernacular heritage, the rural population is leaving for the cities. Villages are left abandoned for the sake of unbalanced development.

We tried to overcome the issue by designing a teamwork bottom-up procedure called “Workshop on REGENERATION”. The workshop aims to frame the problem in the context of conservation, sustainability, indigenous construction, and resiliency. In addition, it investigates the possible solutions through lectures, discussions, and hands-on work.

With the collaboration of INTBAU of Iran, Terrachidia Association, University of Tehran, Atelier SigmaN and The CatMap group, the workshop took place from 11 to 20 September, 2019 in Tehran, Natanz, Targhrood and Taar village. In the first two days in Tehran, seven lectures and discussions had been held about regeneration and bilateral cooperation between craftsmen and academia, by our team and professionals from around the world. The next two days were dedicated to observation and analysis of the context, visiting Natanz and Targhrood, surveying the buildings in Taar and communicating with the locals and stakeholders. The workshop was followed by 8 days of hands-on work in Taar village

Regeneration of the main watermill of the Village (Sara) is the second experience in “Workshop on REGENERATION”, since we have chosen a public space to study on and further involve local people in our project during all the phases.

Till around 60 years ago wheat was one of the most important cultivating agricultural products and economic resources of Taar village and the region, hence, the watermill as a place for wheat grinding was playing an important role in this economic cycle. According to the written information and oral history of Taar, there were more than five watermills in the village which all of them are abandoned now and some of them are completely ruined.

Sara watermill is one of the most important watermills which is located in the center of the village. It was abandoned for almost 50 years and was fully blocked with debris and trash. For “workshop on REGENERATION: Project TAAR-2” Sara watermill was chosen as the case study through its importance as a public space, its location in the rural context, its history, social significance, and physical situation.



Figure 1) The watermill after excavation © Sonia Beigi

Besides exploring and studying the site, according to the law of *Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Iran*, permission was received from the owners and heirs of the mill for the workshop procedure. Afterward, excavating of the mill was done by local worker till the first day of the 8-day hands-on work.

Almost 60 people participated in the workshop, including more than 30 students, 5 tutors, 14 lecturers, 6 local tutors, 6 local assistants, and local hosts. International partners supported the workshop scientifically and local partners took part in the execution. They all gave the event a multilayer perspective.

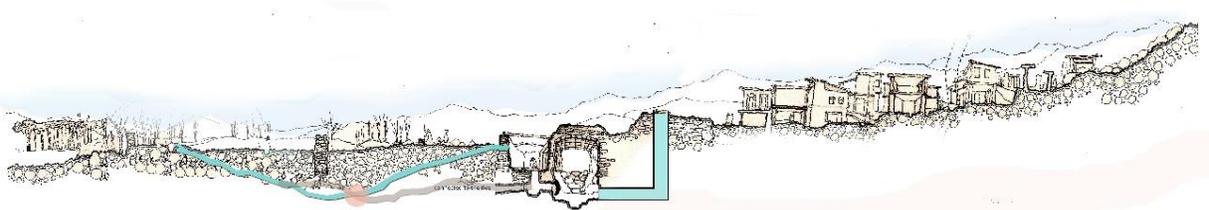


Figure 2) section of the watermill and its neighborhood ©Arkadeep Roy

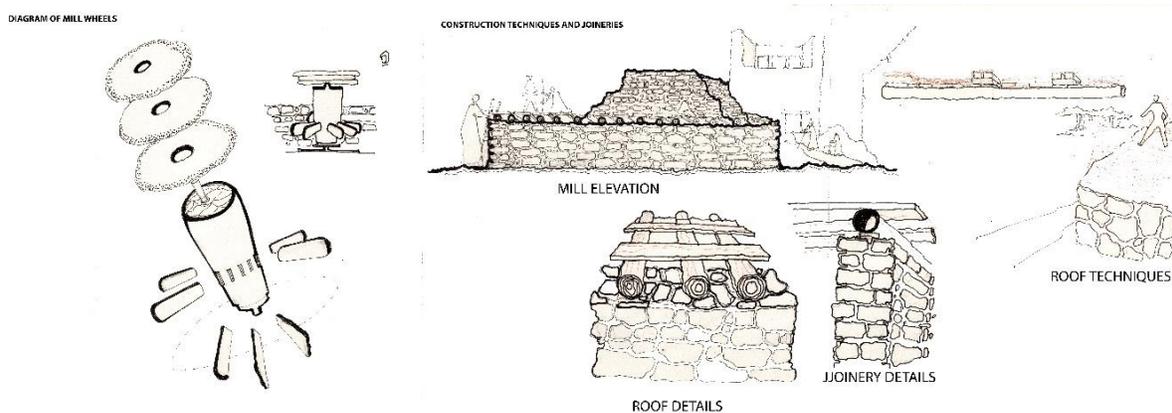


Figure 3) Detail of the watermill ©Akadeep roy



Figure 4) The main chamber after excavation ©Sonia Beigi



Figure 5) The main chamber in the middle of the wheel reassembling ©Sonia Beigi



Figure 6) Final picture of reassembled the wheel ©Sonia Beigi



Figure 7) The chamber after excavation ©Sonia Beigi



Figure 8) The storage chamber ©Sonia Beigi

The group was introduced to the different stakeholders of the building like heirs of the mill and family of the miller and also local craftsmen to understand Sarar watermill's morphology, mechanism, and anthropological roles.

The team formed a participatory procedure through surveys and sessions of discussion and brainstorm about the watermill (from various aspects), water resources of the village, and some talk sessions with locals.

Sarar watermill consisted of a water channel, wooden water wheel, blade, stone wheel, driving shaft, tower mill, wooden funnel, main chamber and storage.

After a hard-working week, the team finished by regenerating the watermill and the chamber, repairing the wooden wheel and its blades, repairing the tower mill and water channel path, redesigning the landscape and entrance of the chamber, reconstructing the wooden ceiling and reinforcing the stone arch and finally redefining the accessibility route by constructing stone stairs, all with the traditional methods of construction under the supervision of the academic and local experts.



Figure 9) The chamber after excavation
©Sonia Beigi



Figure 10) Chamber ceiling reconstructing procedure ©Sonia Beigi



Figure 11) Chamber ceiling reconstructing procedure ©Sonia Beigi



Figure 12) Chamber ceiling reconstructing procedure
©Sonia Beigi



Figure 13) reconstructed Chamber ceiling
©Sonia Beigi

Alongside the physical regeneration, it was an ongoing discussion –during the workshop- led by The CatMap group about the outlook of the watermill. Trying to play the role of facilitators, the CatMap group was investigating the probable future function of Sarar. Three possibilities were considered: working as a traditional watermill, being a watermill museum and transforming to a small tea house.

Regeneration of the watermill not only was another step toward our goal and practice but also revived one of the most important public places of the village and this ancient method of grinding wheat.



Figure 14) Collaboration of students and local craftsmen
© Sonia Beigi



Figure 15) Night-work of the students © Hannaneh Mortazian

Moreover, bilateral cooperation between local craftsmen and the academic team could increase knowledge of both sides in the related fields.



Figure 16) Final group picture of participants, local craftsmen and local inhabitants ©Arezoo Khazanbeig

While local residents were not initially interested in the future development of their village, after they have started to think about the potentials of their lands, their architecture and how they can continue the movement. Besides, participants' way of thinking had been influenced, they figured out how much values they can add to the world. The whole event was an attempt to conceive how we can globally think and locally act, with respect to traditional heritage and contemporary achievements.



Figure 17) initial condition of the abandoned watermill
©Sonia Beigi



Figure 18) The regenerated Watermill ©Amirreza Azadeh

A few weeks later, Exhibition of Regeneration was held in the College of Fine Arts, University of Tehran. The Exhibition represented the whole story in a graphical timeline made up of photos, movies, and briefs about every day of the workshop. Also, documentary movies, numerous photos, installation and drawings about the procedure and Sarar watermill were exhibited. All the works had been done by participants of the workshop.



Figure 19) Regeneration Exhibition ©Sonia Beigi



Figure 20) Documentary movies were showing in the exhibition ©Sonia Beigi