

Early Tree-like Columns

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Abstract

Wood is a construction material which is widely used in traditional architecture. It can span relatively large areas with its inherent capacity of tensile and compressive strength. In traditional architecture of Southeastern Anatolia Region, wood is used as beams and joists in floor or roof organization and in making cupboards, doors and window profiles. The walls, piers, vaults and domes are mostly constructed of stone.

Soap workshop structures are among the important examples of industrial heritage in Gaziantep and in its close vicinity since ancient times. Soap production necessitates relatively wide spanning and ventilated areas. Usually because the whole building is of masonry construction, the only place that lets wider space is the area under the roof. The scarcity of wood in the environment led constructors to use tree-like columns to span areas, a functional combination between the roof construction and supporting structures. The advantage of the tree-like branching system is to have short distances from the loading points to the supports.

The tree-like part of the columns of soap workshops is of wood and mostly rest on stone pier. There are very few examples of completely wood columns. Most of these structures are demolished. The surviving ones date back to 1600 AD. These early tree-like structures will be explained in this study.