

**AN OVERVIEW OF AN ARTISTIC TRADITIONAL OTTOMAN
BUILDINGS AT TURKEY AND BALKANS***

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Abstract

As well as the historical buildings in many regions of Anatolia in Turkey, there are many buildings, built during Ottoman era in Balkans and these buildings reflect the traditional architecture characteristics of the Balkans. All of these buildings both in Turkey and Balkans represent the cultural heritage of various time zones. They were affected badly and destroyed by the natural or human made effects such as an earthquake, fire, climate conditions, false restoration or rapid urbanization. Some of them were destroyed completely. Increasing the awareness of the importance of these historical buildings will increase the protection and restoration of these buildings.

Architectural and decorative characteristics of these historical buildings made of wood and brick in the street with Albanian cobblestone which is specific name for cobblestone in Turkey, were examined in the content of this study. It is aimed to contribute information for the next studies which are dealing with the historical buildings.

In this study: a detailed literature survey was carried out, the structural and functional aspects of the architecture of these buildings were examined as well as a connection between art, culture and daily life at the houses were established. Additionally field studies were made in Turkey (Safranbolu, Kastamonu, Trabzon) and in Macedonia (Ohrid) in order to compare these historical buildings. Also traditional building materials, climate conditions, cultural effects, decorative and architectural design were taken into consideration during the field studies.

Finally an assessment of the field studies and a general conclusion were made with some recommendations for the protection of these historical buildings.

Keywords: Traditional Ottoman houses, architecture, culture, decorative art, Balkans, Turkey

Introduction

At first glance the Anatolian houses are unique to the region and from time to time, these settlements are effected by different religious, ethnic and cultural communities. The different styles in architecture and the building materials created a rich mosaic in Turkey (Algan, 2004; İmamoğlu, 2010; Cerasi1998).

A traditional Anatolian residential architecture features can be seen at the old Ottoman-dominated areas at Anatolia and outside of Anatolia. This rich mosaic of the house materials in the Anatolian Turkish society are wood at North Anatolia, brick and stone in Central Anatolia, stone and wood at South Anatolia and the stone material is used in Western Anatolia (Kuban, 1995; Leloğlu, 1987).

The traditional Ottoman architecture; which is an indicator of the daily life and the historical perspective, is very important and should be protected carefully. Christopher Alexander (2002, Book IV, 27) states that: “the goal of architecture is to intensify the degree of life in space. Function cannot then be a practical matter separate from beauty. All functional forms will also be ornamental, as they are in nature. The artist, working from this spirit, will naturally and spontaneously bring colour, detail, and ornament into his work, because it is necessary to bring that space to greater life.”

In this sense, sofas in Turkish houses are full of life. Traditional Turkish houses, people, nature and formation of the basic can be taken into consideration (Yıldırım and Hidayetoğlu, 2011). In general, a simple plan of the dominated Muslim houses for at least four hundred years was the main hall or sofa which was the nucleus for the enclosed portion of a house. It served as a major space as well as a distribution hall to sofa as the expression of elegance other rooms; on one of its sides was the harem (bedroom and family livingroom) and on the other side which is called as tokana (kitchen and winter living space). With the increasing demands of the family for another room, a new room was added relatively easily to one of the wings of the house. Basements were allocated to services and storage; a stable connected to a barn was the most common function at this level. Many of the family activities were carried out in courtyards. Rooms were oriented towards courtyards and service spaces were directly connected to them. The contrast between exterior and interior of houses was also noteworthy. Simple, powerful, monochromatic and somewhat “masculine” exterior expressions were in clear contrast with the complexity, delicacy, colourfulness and “femininity” of the interiors; they are like secret

paradises for families and individuals (<http://www.exploreturkey.com/exptur.phtml?id=345>).

Various parts of Anatolia, except Safranbolu and Cumalikizik, it is like a miracle to find an original Turkish street. Unfortunately, traditional Turkish Houses restorations are not enough. On the other hand; in Balkans, the old Ottoman Turkish cities and towns have survived until today and the municipalities increase awareness of the historical importance of the Ottoman houses and protect these houses. A detailed literature survey was made about these traditional houses of Ohrid, Kastamonu, Trabzon and Safranbolu, additionally field visits were held to Ohrid Macedonia on May 2008 and to Safranbolu, Kastamonu and Trabzon on 2010. Decorative art of these houses are compared and photographed. As a conclusion all of these houses are strong enough to cope with the earthquake, their structure material (timber, brick etc) are similar and they are very important historical places.

Traditional Kastamonu Houses

Kastamonu city has a castle which had been built during Byzantium period, this castle had been restored at 16th century by Ottomans. Generally historical traditional Kastamonu houses are located at the inner castle zone. There are many mosques, schools, libraries, bridges etc. from Ottoman time, which had been located at the center of the city. Although the city's strategically importance in the Turkish War of Independence, Kastamonu neglected socially and economically for many years because of the terrain conditions and weak transport and industrial mechanisms (1973 Kastamonu İl Yıllığı 1973:150).

Traditional Kastamonu houses have construction and decorative similarities when they are compared with the other Anatolian houses but their architecture is different. Timber is generally used at Kastamonu because there is forest at Black Sea Region (Leloğlu,1987). Stone is used for the basement foundation, timber columns are filled with brick or adobe. (Ataoguz, 1992:43).Figure:1

At the rural areas; Kastamonu village houses are different when compared with the historical urban houses in the city. Generally village houses are made of timber, pine logs are used in order to cover the roof, these pine logs are called as "bedevre" or "pedavra". Few furniture is used at these houses, timber closets placed at the rooms. Toilets are located in the houses. Gas lamps has been used at these timber houses (1967 Kastamonu İl Yıllığı 1968:171-174). There are few windows at the

first floor and many windows at the second floor, generally these houses have two floors but some houses with three floors had been built during 19th century (1973 Kastamonu İl Yıllığı 1973:247, Yaman, 1991:15-16). There are wells and water storage tanks called as “maslak” at the garden of these houses. Kitchen and pantry are located at the first floor.

Timber key locks are generally used at the outside door of these houses, iron grates are used at the windows. Decorative triangle, rectangular or arch type pediments are used at the windows. Oriel windows can be seen at some old historical Kastamonu houses. Decorative art elements such as horse, lion, pigeon shape are used under fringe (Tan, 2008:8,11-14).Figure:2

Living rooms and bed rooms are found at the second floor. Rectangular or cross shape sofa is located at the center of the second floor, bed rooms and living rooms are near the sofa. Timber closets, cookers are found in the room. Some cabinets are used as a bathroom in the rooms. Timber ceiling decorations and hubs are used at the traditional Kastamonu houses (Ataoguz, 44-45). (Figure:3 and Figure:4).

Traditional Safranbolu Houses

Safranbolu has been used as a settlement place since Paleotic era. There are graves and rock tombs from Persians and Hellenistic time in the city at Eflani region. The original ancient name of the city is Flaviopolis. Cobanoglu and Candaroglu Seigniories were lived in the city during Seljuk and İlhanid time period. Safranbolu was a district of Kastamonu city but now it is placed in the border of Karabük City. Köprülü Mehmet Paşa Mosque, Cinci Hodja Caravanserai, Suleyman Pasa Madrasa are some important historical touristic places of Safranbolu. Safranbolu is an open air museum and it is protected according to the Cultural Heritage List of UNESCO since 1994 (Ergin, Akçın and the other, 2005).

Architecture of Safranbolu Houses are similar to the Ottoman houses which are located at the west side of Turkey and the Balkans. Flat stones are used for the basement walls. Timber frames called “yeğdane” are made of fir tree. Little stones are filled between timber frames by using a grout. Main column is also made of timber as well as the beams. There is a few number of little windows at the second floor. Third floor has many windows with the timber grills with rhythmical shaped frames. The second floor with the few windows, is used generally during the winter season. There is a pantry in the houses, adobe and stone materials are used for the garden walls (Günay 1999).

Ottoman Houses are close to the outside because of Islam and the traditions, so these houses have few windows with timber cages and high garden walls. Women and men live separately at some big Ottoman houses, these rooms are called as “harem” and “selamlık”. Women live at the harem division of the house and people coming from outside can only enter “selamlık” of the house. There are two separate entrance for harem and selamlık of some big Ottoman houses (called as “konak” in Turkish). Decorative timber hubs and upper windows can be seen at Selamlık part of the house. Little pools can be found at some big Ottoman houses, generally there are two rooms at Selamlık part. Selamlık is placed at the first floor. According to Islam and Ottoman traditions woman of the house can not see the guest so kitchen is placed at harem division of the house, meals and drinks for the guest are transferred to Selamlık division by using a special timber rotating cabin. Woman in the kitchen put meals, dishes and drinks in this cabin then man of the house open the rotating cabin at the selamlık division and give them to the guest. There are few windows at the street side of the house but there are many windows at the garden side of the house (Günay,1981).Figure:5

Timber decoration can be seen at window cages, at the upper side of the windows, doors and the cooking places. Generally flower pictures were used for the timber decorations. Pine was generally used as a timber house material at these houses, sometimes timber decorations were painted. Some ceiling of the house were painted, flower and other plant pictures can be seen at the ceiling of some Safranbolu houses. Additionally some prays written by using Arabic letters can be seen (for ex: Masallah) at some houses (Günay,1989).

Traditional Trabzon House

Plan and the architecture of traditional Trabzon houses are similar to Greek, Armenian and other Christian houses. Trabzon and Caucasian region has economic, social and cultural relationship so architecture of the eastern side of Trabzon has been affected by the Caucasian architecture. Trabzon houses have two or three floors according to the slope of the ground. Generally the first floor was being used for the horses during Ottoman time. Second and the third floor have been used for the daily life. One or two side of the first floor is under soil because of the ground slope. There are two types of traditional Trabzon houses, there is a living room with pantry at one type of the house and there is a dining room at another type of the houses. Living room with pantry is called as “Hayat” in Turkish. At the first floor: all the doors of the rooms are opened to Hayat at Trabzon houses. Bedrooms are placed at the second floor. Dining room is placed at the entrance of the house, this

room has been used as kitchen so cookers are used at the dining room. There are guest rooms near the dining room (Algan, 2004). (Figure:6 and Figure: 7).

Balcony is called as “Eyvan” at Trabzon houses which had been decorated by timber carve decoration. Generally animal figures are used for the timber carve decoration. Ventilation holes can be seen on the ceiling. Timber carve decoration of Trabzon houses is different when compared with the ones at Ohrid - Kastamonu and Safranbolu houses. Figure:8 and Figure: 9

Traditional Macedonian House

Culture can be accepted as a whole of all life features and values of a certain community. Turkish culture, whose origin has been depending on the beginnings of world civilizations; has reached the advanced development level in time and played an active role in forming of all the values of the geographies it reigned. Nomadic lifestyle having a significant role on Turkish culture. Going back in history, it is known that the Turks who came to Anatolia were partly sedentaries and partly nomads. Even today, you may come across nomads in Anatolia. Nevertheless, each house has been designed so as to include suitable space for summer and winter living. The nomads which eventually settled in their winter shelters, abandoning their seasonal migration habits, were entitled to cultivate the state-owned land and in return they paid taxes and supplied the military force. Since the 15th century there was an area in the middle of Ottoman Empire where the Turkish element became dominant. The genesis of the Turkish House was indeed heterogeneous. It occupied the area of the first Ottoman expansion. The Turkish house form was adopted but the local tradition continued in the Peloponnese. But in Plovdiv (Filipe), the Turkish house prevailed because Turks dominated the social life there. While a city like Ohrid seems exactly the same as Safranbolu, the plans of its houses are different. This shows that the image of the other form was taken from the culture of the dominant group, but the local exigencies dictated the interior organization (Kuban, 1995).

Home is inseparable element of culture. One of the most significant social values of these are shelters and houses fulfilling the needs. These values are taken part in planning features, floor use, sofas, rooms, windows, revolving cabinets, doorknockers etc. equipment and accessories.

These examples that would be accepted as significant images in traditional Turkish houses of which the values take place in Turkish life culture (Hidayetoğlu and Yıldırım, 2009). There is insufficient research based on documentation regarding

the origins of the house type. The answers to some questions such as: "is this a type of house which the Turks used to have in the regions from which they originated, or is it something they have developed after having similar examples in Anatolia and the Balkans" are not very clear. In studies carried out at Harzem, it has been pointed out that the timber frame and mud-brick infill system of construction has been in use since the 8th century. Since we do not come across this house type in areas which have never come under Turkish rule, would it be right to claim that it does not originate from a foreign source? On the contrary, wherever the Turks went, even in areas where the strong traditions of domestic architecture already existed, the Turkish house emerges in all its authenticity, with a completely different character from that of the local one. This house is different from the European one. A European house likes a closed box, it is austere and schematic. The Turkish House is organic; it is in continuous interrelation with its environment and the landscape through its closed, semi-closed and open areas. These houses have no similarities with ancient Greek, Roman or Balkan houses. In all current publications on vernacular architecture in Yugoslavia as well as in Greece, it is clearly expressed that these houses have come into being with the Turks. Another evidence in this respect is the fact that, in most Balkan countries building elements, architectural space and house furnitures are still mostly referred to with their Turkish names or with words which have been derived from Turkish. The political and cultural powers alongside other influences which have prevailed throughout history within the geographical boundaries where the Turkish house existed have caused the regional variations. (<http://www.exploreturkey.com/exptur.phtml.id345>) Figure:10.

In the whole region of the northern Balkans also traditional Bulgarian architectural style which is also grafted Greek, Turkish, and other Balkan motifs was popular during the times of the Ottoman dominion when these lands were part of the Ottoman Empire until the 2nd half of 19th century. Wallachia, the southern province of Romania, where Bucharest is located, was influenced by this type of architecture. Especially in its market towns, where traders from all over the Ottoman Balkans met to exchange goods. Many of them got established in the Wallachian towns and built mansions in this style familiar throughout the region. With the onset of modernization on European lines in late 19th century of Romania, this style was identified as belonging to the Ottoman past and consciously replaced by West European looking 'Little Paris' style buildings. Just a handful of traditional Bulgarian and Ottoman style buildings survive in modern Bucharest. (<http://historo.wordpress.com/2009/11/22/daily-picture-22-nov-09-traditional-bulgarian-style-veranda>)

After the settlement of the Turks at the territory of Ohrid, they inhabit the plain parts of the city, so the Macedonian population had to move to the hilly part of the city. Confronted with the bad and uneven terrain, in Ohrid was beginning to develop one of the most revolutionary types of popular architecture in Macedonia. UNESCO added Ohrid town and Lake Ohrid as cultural and then natural World Heritage Sites in 1979 and in 1980.

The Christian Ohrid houses are southeast oriented, towards the lake and the mountains. They all have quality insulation, and because of the hilly terrain, they have beautiful view of the lake. The houses are original and don't have determined typically, but the space organization is common for all of the houses. In the basement floor; the firewood, the wine, the brandy, winter supplies were stocked. The family lived on the first floor. The family was preparing the food and resting in those rooms.

The upper rooms were representative and wealthy decorated. They are the largest and have the most beautiful view towards the lake. They served for reception of the guests, family holidays, baptisms and other big family events. Some of the houses had a special room with the most beautiful view "Belvedere" which is connected with the beauties and the richness of the lake, the fishermen had special types of houses.

One of the most famous and most representative house in Ohrid is the house of the Robevci brothers. The house is built by the artisan of Galichnik Todor Petrov in the middle of the 19th century. The last level, beside the belvedere has special rooms for the young ladies, called `the girls rooms`. The rooms at the upper floors are enlarged where with is getting playful and interesting façade. Beside the principles of the Macedonian popular architecture, this house had accepted western characteristics..<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/hilltop-university-threatens-ohrid-s-unesco-status>

Due to its unique geographical location Macedonia these links between two entirely different civilizations. From this point of view , The Macedonian house is of interest not only as a topic of Yugoslav folklore and architecture, but also as an issue in general housing culture with a specific place in general history. There are also smaller differences between Macedonian (Slavic) and Turkish houses. The Macedonian house is more like a home more open towards the external world, sometimes several houses are grouped around a common courtyard which is never the case with Turkish houses. Two basic types of Macedonian house may be distinguished:

1. A low Veles type with rooms on the ground and upper floors and within the courtyard (the summer living area with çardak is on the upper floor). The ground plan is irregular.
2. A high Ohrid type house with a summer kitchen, privy and cellar on the ground floor, a winter living area with 'çardak' in front of a two storey 'trem' and a summer living area with çardak on the upper floor. The ground plan is compact.

Differences between Oriental Bosnian and Macedonian houses are chiefly due to different ways of living, which are reflected in the organization of the living area. From the outside it can be seen that the oriental house is closed towards the street and is open to the courtyard around which it is built. Whereas the Macedonian house is closed on the ground floor but is open towards the street from all the rooms and çardak of the upper floor. The greatest differences in reception rooms. The Macedonian receives guests in the "çardak" while the Bosnian receives them in the "selamlık", The means apartment located near the courtyard gate. The "haremlık" women apartment serves only for family life. The Macedonian houses is more open and serves as a place for work while the Bosnian house is closed and designed for enjoyment.. The oriental house fulfills its intendent and whereas the Macedonian house reflects the dilemma between two differing ways of life, oriental and European. As a transition or link between the two the latter house design offers more possibilities for development (Grabrijan,1986).

Conclusion

There are two types of Kastamonu houses, at one type: sofa and hayat are placed at the outside of the house, sofa is inside of the house at the another type of Kastamonu houses. Ground slope and climate are importing factors effecting the plan of Kastamonu houses. Living room "Sofa" is an important room at Kastamonu, it is the largest living room. Family members meet at Sofa. Other rooms are special bedrooms used by the family members. One room contains cooker and timber cabin, this room is used as kitchen.

Geographical, cultural and climate conditions effect the architecture of the houses at the Northern Black Sea Region and Balkans. Turkish daily life is important factor for the house design. If the house has one floor then floor has been constructed high over the ground level. High garden walls protect the traditional Ottoman houses.

Generally there is an oven at the kitchen. Northern Black Sea Region is colder than the South Anatolia so generally sofa is placed at the inside of Kastamonu, Trabzon and Safranbolu houses. On the other hand Balkan Ottoman Houses have sofa at the outer side of the houses. There are open air rooms at the traditional houses near

Balkan coastline. Number and dimension of the rooms differ according to the wealth of the family and number of the family members. Climate conditions affect the roof style of the traditional houses, rain and snow cover is important for the roof design. Main building material is a timber at Black Sea Region, on the other side cubic stone is the main building material at Balkan countries. Additionally roofs are flat at the traditional Balkan houses. There are many tree species at the garden of Balkan houses.

Results and Recommendations

1. Many civilizations affect the architecture style of the houses at Anatolia and Balkans, urban life has also been effected by these civilizations so all of these historical houses are cultural and natural heritage. These houses must be protected.
2. The Ottoman houses at Anatolia and Balkan must be protected against fire, earthquake and restoration studies must be made. State organizations and architecture division of the universities can make restoration projects. UNESCO can give a financial support to these restoration projects.
3. Urban modernization destroy the historical houses in the cities especially in the last century.

Historical houses are destroyed in order to built new apartments. State organizations do not support all restoration projects. So local people submit to pressures for rent, and the old buildings are demolished and replaced by new structures to quit. But financing mechanism that will help to protect undeveloped, lack of assistance provided by the state.(Figure 11)

4. Empty historical buildings have tourism center potential so these traditional Ottoman houses can be used as a culture and art center, touristic hotel, fine arts show room and restaurant after a proper restoration.
5. Some people who are living at these traditional Ottoman houses do not know the importance of these historical buildings, so they can make false restorations to these historical houses. Municipalities had to control these houses and punish the false restorations.
6. Internet, architecture softwares and e-information data system are very important for the proper restoration planning, data storage and public relationship studies. Photographs of the historical houses can be shown at the web page of the municipalities after the restoration. For example “Safranbis” is a data storage system which stores archive information about historical Safranbolu houses. Information

share and cooperation can be done with the other countries about the restoration of these historical Ottoman houses. Artists, architectures, people dealing with the fine-art history can study together for the restoration projects.

7. Urban plans, high apartments, new highways destroy the traditional view of the historical cities so restoration and the protection of these houses is very important, new high apartments must not be constructed near the old historical houses. State organizations and international organizations (for example UNESCO) can financially support the municipalities for the restoration projects.

8. False restorations can damage the traditional Ottoman Houses, restoration material and paint color must be suitable to the original house.

9. Inside ceiling decoration of Safranbolu house is richer than the Macedonian, Trabzon and Kastamonu houses.

10. Further studies about new techniques to improve earthquake behavior of existing rural structures are needed. In the Balkans must be necessary to strengthen the traditional structures against earthquakes. Those methods must be simple and economic such that owner of the house can manage to apply it. At this point education is very important. Continuous seminars, courses are needed. Also brochures must be prepared and distributed to the villages and towns about the conservation of these traditional houses.

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Figure 1. Kastamonu Traditional House



Figure 2. Kastamonu Household Ornament



Figure3: Saraclar City House in Kastamonu



Figure4 : Atatürk was at this guest house at Daday -Kastamonu



Figure 5:Safranbolu



*Figure6: The old architecture built home Trabzon Sürmene district
(East Black Sea Region).*



*Figure 7 Trabzon Sürmene Memiřaęa Mansion
Trabzon Sürmene district
(East Black Sea Region).*



Figure 8 Trabzon Sürmene Memiřaęa Mansion windows and wall ornaments



Figure 9 Trabzon Sürmene Memişağa Mansion ceiling ornaments



Figure :10 Ohrid Traditional Ottoman Mansion



Figure 11 Ohrid traditional old house



Figure 12: Transition from the oriental to European House in Macedonia

REASONS BEHIND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TURKISH URBAN DWELLINGS IN THE BALKANS