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Traces of the Anatolian Housing Culture in the Balkans: A Comparative Analysis

Balkanlarda Anadolu Konut Kültürünün İzleri: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz

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Abstract: The traces of the traditional Anatolian housing culture are easily seen in every region where the Ottoman Empire reigned. In almost every region within the Empire, residences specific to Anatolian culture were built, as well as public buildings such as madrasahs, mosques, dervish lodges, inns, baths, bridges and fountains. Also ethnic, social and cultural differences were blended, and a multi-layered culture with a wide variety –but also with many similarities– has emerged. This cultural interaction is probably most common in the Balkan countries. From the mid-14th century onwards, the empire settled the nomadic Turkish tribes in the newly conquered Balkans, and the interaction of these tribes with indigenous communities, has made the emergence of a common culture inevitable. This was a natural consequence of the settlement policy of the Empire, and it was also a way of spreading its own culture. As a result, the Ottoman Empire left the traces of the Anatolian housing culture in the Balkans. Therefore, certain similar features that constitute the spatial and morphological identity of the Anatolian House are the common ground on which the Balkan and the Anatolian culture meet each other. In this paper, the spatial organizations, structural features and similar aspects of the traditional houses –which are the common cultural product of the Balkan people and Anatolian people who have lived together for centuries– will be examined through the case studies within a conceptual framework. In this context, traditional houses in various regions of Macedonia have been selected as examples of the traditional houses of the Balkans; and in the same sense, traditional houses of Bursa İznik region were chosen as examples of the traditional Anatolian houses. The aim is to make a comparative analysis of these houses, in terms of spatial and cultural aspects. In this paper, as a research method, we will draw on literature review and documentation-examination. And the characteristics of the common cultural heritage will be emphasized within the context of the case studies. So within the scope of this study, it is aimed to ensure that, future generations can also adapt and sustain the common cultural heritage formed by intertwined cultures.

Structured Abstract: The formation of the Anatolian houses is affected by the cultural codes of the geography that they were built, as well as various factors such as topography, climate and local materials. Beginning from the mid-14th Century, the Ottoman Empire reached the Balkans and started to settle the Turkish tribes brought from Anatolia in various regions of the Balkans. The Empire had the chance of imposing the Turkish culture without having to change the local language and the religion of the native Balkan communities. Turkish tribes to the territories they occupied in the Balkans and placed them in various cities and towns. In addition, land was given to these Turkish farmers and craftsmen, so that they could connect to their new homeland and survive. This policy made possible to emergence of a new culture in various regions of the Balkan Peninsula, which was blended by indigenous Balkan culture and Turkish culture. This blended culture has left significant

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traces in the Balkans, especially in the social life, culinary culture, traditional buildings, identical words and of course housing culture. The housing culture in the Anatolia covers a span of ten to twelve thousand years. The most important concepts in the formation of the traditional Anatolian house are the inhomogeneous Anatolian culture, as well as the climate and material. The Anatolian house varies by region due to its climatic conditions and regional material.

The Traditional Anatolian House usually faces the sunrise, and the interior furnishing and equipment are arranged according to the climatic conditions. The arrangement of open, semi-closed and closed volumes offers the possibility of living the all characteristics of the four-seasons of the local climate. This also establish a balance between light – semi light – and shadow. There are two basic elements that constitute the traditional house type: the rooms and anterooms. Anterooms are the common living spaces where the rooms are connected. They provide connection with the other rooms as well as being gathering spaces inside the house classifies the Traditional Anatolian house. The most important feature of the rooms of traditional Anatolian house is that it responds to many actions and it is multifunctional. The structural system of the building, determines the size, shape and the external relations of the rooms such as windows and doors; as well as the interior arrangement. In traditional Anatolian houses, there is a certain withdrawal due to social beliefs and social life. The facades are usually directed to the street and the upper floor windows are kept as wide as possible, while the lower floor windows are smaller and inward. Likewise, the windows bays on the facade are the other elements that provide connection to the external environment.

The common features of the traditional Anatolian houses and the houses of Balkans are not accidental. This is the result of a life culture and a market unity, which has been achieved over the barriers of language and religion in a fairly large area which was under the Ottoman rule. The most important common feature of these traditional houses --which were built according to the Anatolian culture and the common living conditions-- is that they are compatible with nature, environmental conditions and human relations. In principle, these houses were designed by considering many factors such as climate, production, living conditions, social relations, and environmentally compatible material. Although traditional houses vary according to the local materials, climate and topography, the essential characteristic is the life culture and human relations. It is also very common to use wooden material in the framework system. The timber framework system can be found in the Balkans, The Princes' Islands and in all of Anatolia. The difference is the filling material used in the timber frame system. In addition, in some regions of Anatolia such as Ürgüp, Hasankeyf, Zelve, houses were built on carved rocks thanks to the convenience provided by the nature. Some parts of these houses were formed by building stone walls, which resulted in the creation of very unique textures.

Both in Balkans and Anatolia, the connection of the house to the street is provided through a large courtyard door and as long as the climatic conditions are appropriate, daily life activities take place in this courtyard. Also the sofa of the house is the most important place both in Anatolian and Balkan traditional houses. As in the Traditional Anatolian House, the rooms enriched with niches, wardrobes and closets are multifunctional; depending on the time of day, they are used for sitting, eating and sleeping activities As a result, although the material usage differs according to the geographical conditions of each region; various aspects such as plan types, facade characteristics, interior furnishing and equipment, and woodwork, shows a significant similarity in Anatolian and Balkan traditional houses. Rooms are the most important units in both the Balkan houses and the traditional Anatolian houses. Each room is arranged according to the main family's daily life needs. They are specially designed to accommodate daily needs such as eating, sleeping, washing, heating, and spending recreational time. Almost all rooms have the same qualities and they do not differ from each other. The rooms that accommodate all these activities are arranged in the same place but they have certain limitations.

As a result of Ottoman domination in the Balkans, unignorable similarities emerged in the civilian housing architecture. By any means, this situation likely developed as a result of Ottomans' life culture reaching these regions and meeting with the local culture. As the study demonstrated, it is clear that the Balkans' traditional houses (especially in Bulgaria, Northern Greece and Macedonia), and the traditional houses of Western, Central and Southern Anatolian have many common aspects in terms of spatial organization, plan typology, construction techniques, and facade characteristics. Despite all these similar features, these traditional houses built by a common culture necessarily do not bring researchers together on a common ground. Turkish researchers associate these structures which are very similar to the housing culture of Anatolia

with the Ottoman housing culture, while researchers in the Balkan countries argue that these similarities are not originated to the Ottomans. The formation of the Ottoman House was influenced by various countries' peoples, climatic and topographic conditions, and other external factors, but it is the Turkish element, the Turkish art and the Turkish life culture that combines these different factors and creates the Ottoman-Turkish House. On the other hand, authors from various Balkan countries do not accept that these similarities originate from Ottoman culture; for example the traces of the traditional residential architecture with similar characteristics of the Balkan and Anatolian houses date back to Byzantium times. And some Bulgarian writers argue that the Bulgarian mansions of the period, which show remarkable similarities with Istanbul mansions, are the works of the national style called the Bulgarian Renaissance.

It is impossible to say anything definite about the origin of these traditional houses, as research on the subject is relatively new and the oldest houses that have survived to the present day only date back to the 18th century. Under any circumstances, the fact that the Ottoman Empire remained in the Balkans for centuries, created an inevitable interaction between these cultures and gave birth to a common life and housing culture regardless of their origin.

Keywords: Architecture, Housing Culture, Traditional Housing, Ohrid, İznik, Comparative analysis

Öz: Geçmişten günümüze, geleneksel Anadolu konut kültürünün izlerini, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun sınırları içinde yer almış her bölgede görmek mümkündür. İmparatorluğun ulaştığı her yerde, medrese, cami, tekke, han, hamam, köprü, çeşme gibi yapıların yanı sıra, Anadolu kültürüne özgü konutlar da inşa edilmiş; etnik, sosyal, kültürel farklılıklar harmanlanarak, çok çeşitli, aynı zamanda pek çok benzerliği barındıran, çok katmanlı bir kültür oluşmuştur. Bu kültür etkileşimine herhalde en çok Balkan ülkelerinde rastlanmaktadır. İmparatorluk, 14. Yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren fethettiği Balkanlar'a konar-göçer Türk kavimlerini yerleştirmesi sonucunda, Türk kavimleri yerli topluluklarla etkileşim içerisine girmiş ve böylelikle ortak bir kültürün doğması kaçınılmaz olmuştur. İmparatorluğun iskân politikasının doğal bir sonucu olan bu durum, aynı zamanda kendi kültürünü yayma yöntemidir. Yaklaşık 550 yıl Balkanlar'da hüküm süren Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Anadolu'nun yaşam biçimi ile birlikte Anadolu geleneksel konutlarının izlerini de Balkanlar'da bırakmıştır. Dolayısıyla günümüzde Anadolu evinin mekânsal ve biçimsel kimliğini oluşturan bazı benzer özellikler Balkan kültürünün ve Anadolu kültürünün ortak paydasıdır. Bu çalışma ile, yüzyıllar boyunca birlikte yaşamış olan Balkan halklarının ve Anadolu halklarının ortak kültür ürünü olan geleneksel konutların mekân kurgularını, yapısal özelliklerini, benzer yönlerini içeren kavramsal bir çerçeve oluşturulup örnekler ile çıkarımlar yapılacaktır. Bu kapsamda, Balkanlar'daki geleneksel konutlara örnek oluşturması açısından Makedonya'nın çeşitli bölgelerinde bulunan geleneksel konutlar, geleneksel Anadolu konutlarına örnek oluşturması açısından ise Bursa İznik bölgesine ait geleneksel konutlar seçilmiştir. Bu çalışmada, "yapım tekniği ve malzeme", "cephe karakteri", "mekân kurgusu ve odalar" başlıkları altında seçilen konutların karşılaştırmalı olarak analizlerinin yapılması hedeflenmiştir. Gerçekleştirilen bu çalışmada araştırma yöntemlerinden literatür taraması yöntemi ile dokümantasyon incelenmesi yapılacak, karşılaştırılan örnekler çerçevesinde Anadolu ve Balkan kültürünün kaynaşması ile meydana gelmiş ortak kültür mirasının özellikleri vurgulanacaktır. Bu bağlamda çalışmada, iç içe geçmiş kültürlerin bütünleşikliğinin oluşturduğu ortak kültürel mirasın gelecek kuşaklara aktarımını ve sürdürülebilirliğini sağlamak amaçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mimarlık, Konut Kültürü, Geleneksel Konut, Ohrid, İznik, Karşılaştırmalı Analiz

Introduction

Traditional Anatolian houses, which are integrated with the history of Anatolia, are intertwined of a wide variety of cultures of a large geography. The formation of the Anatolian houses is affected by the cultural codes of the geography that they were built, as well as various factors such as topography, climate and local materials. These traditional houses share the characteristics and motifs of a common culture independent of the geography they exist.

This common culture is particularly evident in the Balkans and Anatolia. Beginning from the mid-14th Century, the Ottoman Empire reached the Balkans and started to settle the Turkish tribes brought from Anatolia in various regions of the Balkans, as part of "Turkification" policy. These

settlements probably continued on for centuries at different densities. In some regions, the Turkish tribes were separated and grouped within themselves; while in some regions, there was an absolute fusion among the indigenous communities.

As a natural consequence of this policy, the Empire had the chance of imposing the Turkish culture without having to change the local language and the religion of the native Balkan communities. As (Artun, 1998: 28) narrates, according to the settlement policy, the Ottomans brought migrant-settler Turkish tribes to the territories they occupied in the Balkans and placed them in various cities and towns. In addition, land was given to these Turkish farmers and craftsmen, so that they could connect to their new homeland and survive. This policy made possible to emergence of a new culture in various regions of the Balkan Peninsula, which was blended by indigenous Balkan culture and Turkish culture. This blended culture has left significant traces in the Balkans, especially in the social life, culinary culture, traditional buildings, identical words and of course housing culture.

The Empire had ruled the Balkans for about five centuries. In the XVI century, the borders of the empire encompassed Romania and Hungary, reaching the borders of Austria (Slovenia and Western Croatia) in the northwest, and the Adriatic Sea in the west (Akin, 1996: 32). As a natural consequence of staying for centuries in Balkan regions, Ottomans and local communities formed very strong ties and the Turks had significant contributions to the formation of the Balkan cities.

Some traditions and behaviours which are observed in today's Anatolia, and which are the remnants of archaic social forms, can also be observed partially in the Balkan ethnography (Akin, 2001: 12). This common culture had also influenced the formation of a similar housing culture, including the structural characteristics. A stylistic analysis of the traditional houses, which are both the heritage of Anatolian and Balkan culture, would demonstrate these structural similarities.

The General Characteristics of The Traditional Anatolian Houses

The housing culture in the Anatolia covers a span of ten to twelve thousand years. The most important concepts in the formation of the traditional Anatolian house are the inhomogeneous Anatolian culture, as well as the climate and material. Thus, the Anatolian house varies by region due to its climatic conditions and regional material (Gabriel, 2014: 14), however mostly a common character is observable (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Traditional Anatolian/Ottoman houses from left to right: Bursa, Amasya and Safranbolu (Url-1, Url-2, Url-3)

As a matter of fact, the most distinctive feature of the Anatolian traditional house is being extremely suitable for geographical and climatic conditions and is nature/environment-friendly by its very nature. While building his house, the Anatolian man acted as if he was not the only living being in the nature (Bektaş, 2013: 38) describes this as follows: “He sees himself as just one of the other beings, who exists with them and who should be in a balance with them. As the one wing of

the door of the house is opened for a horse-carriage, the other is opened for a human, and a smaller one is opened for a cat.”

The Traditional Anatolian House usually faces the sunrise, and the interior furnishing and equipment are arranged according to the climatic conditions. In some places, the rooms have names such as the *lodos* (southwester) room and the *poyraz* (northeaster) room; or rather, they are placed according to these directions. The arrangement of open, semi-closed and closed volumes offers the possibility of living the all characteristics of the four-seasons of the local climate (Fig. 2). This also means to establish a balance between light – semi light – and shadow. In advanced solutions, the volume, which is to be protected from the heat or the cold mostly, namely the sofa (anteroom), is located in the middle of the house. An air cushion is created between the roof and the ceilings of the top floor rooms. There are sometimes chimneys that evacuate the hot air from the bathroom and the kitchen. For example, the bay windows of Izmir houses are the source of heat in the winter, and they insulate the heat in the summer (Bektaş, 2013: 38).

Figure 2. Behram Paşa Mansion, Diyarbakır, East Anatolia (Url-4)

However, if we were to roughly classify the traditional houses, perhaps we should describe the housing configuration according to the anteroom types. In fact, there are two basic elements that constitute the traditional house type: the rooms and anterooms. Anterooms are the common living spaces where the rooms are connected. They provide connection with the other rooms as well as being gathering spaces inside the house (Eldem, 1972: 182) classifies the Traditional Anatolian house as follows (Fig. 3): (1) without anteroom, (2) with an exterior anteroom, (3) with an interior anteroom, and (4) with a middle anteroom.

Figure 3. Typology of the traditional Anatolian/Ottoman house plan (Eldem, 1972, p.182)

The most important feature of the rooms of traditional Anatolian house is that it responds to many actions and it is multifunctional. The structural system of the building, determines the size, shape and the external relations of the rooms such as windows and doors; as well as the interior arrangement. According to Küçükerman (1996: 73), rooms are formed as a result of the various relationships of the “Room Concept-Room Elements-Building System” trio. The formation of the internal arrangement is closely related with the structural arrangement of the building (Küçükerman, 1996: 73). In other words, regardless of the material used, there is a unity of principle and integrity in terms of planning.

In traditional Anatolian houses, there is a certain withdrawal due to social beliefs and social life, but there is also a tendency to open up to the outside environment and the street. The facades are usually directed to the street and the upper floor windows are kept as wide as possible, while the lower floor windows are smaller and inward. Likewise, the windows bays on the facade are the other elements that provide connection to the external environment. Usually the floors are kept plain, but the ceilings are meticulously shaped. Various types of woodwork and pencil decoration can be seen on the ceilings (Fig.4).

Figure 4. A wooden ceiling ornamentation in a traditional Anatolian house (Url-5)

Common Characteristics of the Traditional Anatolian And the Traditional Balkan House: A Comparative Analysis

The houses of the inhomogeneous Anatolian culture, which includes all the above-mentioned general characteristics, are spread to almost every region where the Ottomans invaded. (Eldem, 1972: 182) defined the geographical extension of the Ottoman-Turkish house, from Anatolia to Bulgaria, Northern Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Indeed, traditional houses in these stated regions have almost the same characteristics as the traditional houses found in the many cities of Central, Western, Northern and Southern Anatolia (Eldem, 1984; Akin, 2001). While the most important center in Bulgaria is Plovdiv, the most important centers in Macedonia are Köprülü and Skopje. Ohrid, Monastery and Prilep can also be counted --though indirectly-- as influenced by these centers. House plans had a similar development as those in Anatolia, beginning from the open anteroom to the central anteroom plan (Eldem, 1984: 40). Moreover, beyond the design features,

room furnishing and ornamental details almost replicate each other from Anatolia to Albania. In addition, it is necessary to add the resemblance of the terminology in regards to construction and domestic use (Akin, 2001: 269).

The common features of the traditional Anatolian houses and the houses of Balkans are not accidental. Bektaş explains the reason for these common features as follows; this is the result of a life culture and a market unity, which has been achieved over the barriers of language and religion in a fairly large area which was under the Ottoman rule (Bektaş, 2013: 37). The most important common feature of these traditional houses --which were built according to the Anatolian culture and the common living conditions-- is that they are compatible with nature, environmental conditions and human relations. In principle, these houses were designed by considering many factors such as climate, production, living conditions, social relations, and environmentally compatible material. The mankind who created the house does not see all other creatures, the universe, and everything as an environment created for him; he sees himself as one of the other beings with whom he must be in balance and exist (Bektaş, 2013: 37). Although traditional houses vary according to the local materials, climate and topography, the essential characteristic is the life culture and human relations. From this point of view, it is inevitable that plan typologies and spatial organization will have common features.

In this part of the study, it is aimed to reveal these common features, and a comparative analysis of the traditional Anatolian houses and Balkan houses has been done in terms of:

- Building method and materials,
- Facade characteristics,
- Spatial organization and the rooms.

Building Method and Materials

Both in the Balkans and in almost every region of Anatolia, the main principle in building a house was to use the closest materials in the environment. Although the material used in the construction of a traditional Anatolian house is mostly wood (Küçükerman, 1996: 28), it differs in various regions of Anatolia. For example, in the Marmara Region and Northern Anatolia (Black Sea) the most commonly material used for construction was wood, while in Central Anatolia these materials were adobe and stone, in Western Anatolia (Aegean) were wood and stone, and in Southern and Eastern Anatolia was stone (Küçükerman, 1996: 28).

It is also very common to use wooden material in the framework system. In many regions of Anatolia and in the Balkans, mostly timber frame system was preferred (Figure 5, 6, 7). The timber framework system can be found in the Balkans, Adalar (The Princes Islands) and in all of Anatolia. The difference is the filling material used in the timber frame system. Timber frame system is preferred due to its lightness, low material usage, saved space due to thin walls, short construction time, workmanship and ease of insulation. On the ground floor, a stone wall with a horizontal bonding timber is preferred, while the upper floors have a complete timber frame. Between the timber frames; adobe, brick, crushed stone, wood, reed, screed, tree branches and/or plasterboard can be applied as a filling material, and the surfaces are covered with plaster (Bektaş, 2013: 75). In addition, in some regions of Anatolia such as Ürgüp, Hasankeyf, Zelve, houses were built on carved rocks thanks to the convenience provided by the nature. Some parts of these houses were formed by building stone walls, which resulted in the creation of very unique textures.

Figure 5. Wooden Frame System, Safranbolu (Url-6)

Figure 6. Wooden Frame System, İznik (Selma Tunalı's archive)

Figure 7. Wooden Frame System, Berat, Makedonya (Akın, 2001, s. 176)

Facade Characteristics (Relationship Between Interior and Exterior)

In the traditional houses of Anatolia, the characteristic identity of a facade is created by the design of facade elements, the material used, their proportions, the relationship of the openings with each other, and the functions of interior spaces. In architecture, the usage purpose of the structure is quite effective in the formation of the facade. Therefore, it is only natural to regard the facade as a symbolic form of the house. The walls of the ground floors of these structures, which are very compatible with the environment, do not over-extend into the streets due to widely built streets. In addition, these ground floors are not generally used as living spaces; they mostly serve as barns, cellars and storage. Therefore, the facades of the lower floors are usually closed to the street, while the upper floors move towards the street, creating an integrated form with the street (Figure 8). The exteriors of the houses have remarkable similarities as the ground floors being isolated and massive, but however the upper floors opening to the street by bay windows with usually row windows (Akın, 2001: 170).

Figure 8. A Traditional House in Safranbolu (Küçükerman, 1996: 83)

Figure 9. A Traditional House in Polvdiv, Bulgaria (Akın, 2001: 45)

Figure 10. A Traditional House in Kesriye, Greece (Akın, 2001: 81).

One of the most important facade features of traditional buildings is the bay windows. A bay window --which is always on the upper floors-- is the part of a room or anteroom that protrudes from the main walls of the building, forming an enclosed bay (Turani, 1980: 27). The small ones were called "oriel" and all three sides of these bays were windowed and you could sit here and watch the street. (Arseven, 1994: 186) (Göynüç, 1996: 266). In this way, through the use of bay windows, the dimensions of the rooms or anterooms were expanded, and an important element which brings

symmetry and movement to the facade was added. The bay windows were usually formed in the parts of the room or anteroom facing the street, and their lower sections were supported with buttresses. This feature always provided a unique dynamism to the facade (Figure 11, 12).

Figure 11. A Traditional House from Bursa (Tanyeli, 1999: 229)

Figure 12. A Traditional House from İznik (*Photograph by Selma Tunalı*)

The larger surface of the bay is usually equipped with larger windows. The size and height of the windows vary depending on the facade of the house. If the facade directly faces the neighbouring house, then the windows are usually placed above eye level or closed with wooden

lattices. On the side surfaces of the bay, there are generally rectangular windows that has the width and height of the protrusion. In some bay windows, the sizes of these windows are the same as the windows on the front surface. The inner side of the bay window is on the same level with the room. It's the same with the fringe, the ceiling and side areas (Çetin, 2006: 108). Such facade features are frequently seen in the Balkans houses as well as traditional Anatolian houses (Figure 13, 14, 15).

Figure 13. Traditional Houses in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (Photograph by Emel Cantürk)

Figure 14. A Traditional House in Ohrid, Macedonia (Photograph by Belma Alik)

Figure 15. A Traditional House in Siyatitsta, Greece (Akın, 2001: 75)

In the traditional housing structure of Anatolia, the climate conditions are one of the most important factors in shaping the facade. The rooms in the building are used either continuously or only for a certain period of time due to climate change. Therefore, both “open and cool” and “closed and well-protected” rooms are arranged in the houses. (Küçükerman, 1996: 45). Accordingly, “open-cool” rooms are located on the upper floors and at the corner, and they are situated in a direction facing cool breezes. They are designed high and wide, and they open to outside with large windows. The “closed-well-preserved” rooms are located on the middle floors, and they are situated in a direction closed to cool breezes. They are designed narrower or lower and have smaller windows (Küçükerman, 1996: 16). A similar arrangement can also be found in traditional Balkan houses (Figure 17, 18).

Figure 16. A traditional house in Safranbolu. The rooms with small windows on the right are for winter use, those on the left for summer (Küçükerman, 1996: 44).

Figure 17. An open-cool upper floor and well-protected lower floor of a traditional house in Safranbolu (Küçükerman, 1996: 47).

Figure 18. On the right a traditional house in Safranbolu and on the left a traditional house in Ohrid; the floors for winter use have smaller windows and less height than the floors for summer use (Bektaş, 2013: 120)

Exterior doors are also similar in the traditional structures of Anatolia and the Balkans. These doors, separating the house from the nature and the external environment, are shaped with movable components that can be opened and closed depending on preference. Doors are the vertical building elements that both define the boundaries and add symbolic features to the building. The doors of traditional houses are usually large and double-winged. The wings are mostly mirrored and contain considerable amount of woodwork. In some buildings, the doors are built into a garden wall and are usually covered with a fringe. There are usually metal figures hung on these doors with various mallets, rings and symbols.

Another important symbol of the facade is the windows. The windows are created using wood and plaster, and skylights are also added over the floor windows to provide more light. In traditional houses, there is generally not much difference between window types and usually 1/2 ratio is applied. Depending on the width of the space, the windows are arranged in a horizontal order, and this interior layout is also reflected in the exterior. Most of the windows, especially the ones in living spaces, are arranged with railings, wooden lattices and wooden shutters. Using the window element at different intervals has a great effect on the person who is deeply dependent on geometric and

numerical values (Izgi, 1975: 77). Windows with this kind of an arrangement, the windows represent a certain rhythm and order on the facade of the building. The facade is usually made of materials found in the natural surroundings of the house. As we have mentioned before, wood was used around forested areas, while stone was used in areas where the stone was dense, and soil and mud plaster were also used in certain regions.

Spatial Organization and Rooms

The elements of the plan typology of traditional Anatolian houses are found in various regions of the Balkans, such as symmetrical or asymmetrical plan with middle, inner or outer “*sofa*” (anteroom), as well as the facade characteristics (Figure 19, 20). Both in Anatolian houses and Balkan houses, the *sofa* is the most important element that forms the spatial configuration. As well as providing a passageway inside the house it also serves as a meeting space (Küçükerman, 1996: 59)

Figure 19. Outer anteroom plan example (left) Koprivštitsa, Bulgaria (Akın, 2001: 40); (right) İznik/Bursa Drawing by Selma Tunalı

Figure 20. Middle (inner) anteroom plan examples (left) Karlovo, Bulgaria (Akın, 2001: 50); (right) Siyatista, Greece (Akın, 2001: 99)

Most of the traditional Balkan houses having sections like *haremlık-selamlık* (separate rooms for men and women) is a remarkable aspect which can be related to the influence of Ottoman lifestyle and Islam. The lower floors and the upper floors of the traditional Anatolian houses are not

functionally similar, while the lower floors are usually used for stables, cellars, storage; upper floors for living. This functional approach can be also observed in traditional Balkan houses. The upper floor (s) are the actual floors and have always been superior to other floors (Figure 21, 22).

Figure 21. The ground floor of a house in Safranbolu (Küçükerman, 1996: 60)

Figure 22. Kastoria, the ground floor of a house in Greece (Akın, 2001: 271)

Both in Balkans and Anatolia, the connection of the house to the street is provided through a large courtyard door and as long as the climatic conditions are appropriate, daily life activities take

place in this courtyard. Also the sofa of the house is the most important place both in Anatolian and Balkan traditional houses.

In almost every example, the second important place in the upper floor is the main room (*baş oda*). This room, which differs from the others with its dimensions, stove, decoration and bay window is emphasized in all diagrams. As in the Traditional Anatolian House, the rooms enriched with niches (alcoves), wardrobes and closets are multifunctional; depending on the time of day, they are used for sitting, eating and sleeping activities (Akin, 2001: 270) As a result, although the material usage differs according to the geographical conditions of each region; various aspects such as plan types, facade characteristics, interior furnishing and equipment, and woodwork, shows a significant similarity in Anatolian and Balkan traditional houses (Figure 23).

Figure 23. A main-room of a traditional house in Saraybosna (Bektaş, 2013: 42) and that in Bursa (Küçükerman, 1996: 162)

Rooms are the most important units in both the Balkan houses and the traditional Anatolian houses. Each room is arranged according to the main family's daily life needs. They are specially designed to accommodate daily needs such as eating, sleeping, washing, heating, and spending recreational time. Almost all rooms have the same qualities and they do not differ from each other. The rooms that accommodate all these activities are arranged in the same place but they have certain limitations. This configuration is extremely ergonomic and built to an extent that can respond to human activities. For example; the bed laid on the ground at night is removed to the closet, and the food tray placed on a base is also removed after eating, and all the items are placed in storage and the middle of the room is left empty to allow for such activities. A room often contains sections such as a closet, *sedir* (a very large couch), stove, *güsülhane* (a small bathing unit), and various storage units. Bathing unit is a small washing area inside the room cabinets, and it is usually around the closet that is close to the stove. The door is usually like an integral element attached to the room. It's most important feature is that --in terms of the whole interior of the room-- its surroundings are worked out together with all elements of the room. The upper boundary of the useful area of a room is

considered as the upper boundary of the door installation, and the element that determines the upper boundary and circles the room in a horizontal direction is associated with the door and the top of the casing (Küçükerman, 1996: 135). Generally, the installation of wardrobes and closets are associated with the door and they are installed around the door. Thus, both the entry function is worked out in detail, and the storages that will respond to necessary functions are equipped with fine wood workmanship. These cabinets which serve the purpose of storing the items in the room are known by names such as *yüklük* (closet), *peşkirlik*, *kavukluk*, *çubukluk*. The *sedirs* (couches) are one of the fixed sitting areas of the room and their heights are adjusted according to the windows, and they are designed to have a full view of the outside, and sometimes their lower sections are used for storage purposes. Another important part of the room in a traditional house is the hearth. They are located on the surface of the wall and usually situated around the cabinet. Hearths are used for cooking, and heating the room, and sometimes they are covered with a wooden ventilation hood. The floors in the houses are covered with wood and the most interesting element is the ceilings. Examples of meticulously crafted ceilings are usually found in the main room. Ceilings became a “decoration and care” surface which is completely separate from the rest of the structure (Küçükerman, 1996: 161-162). The ceilings are shaped according to the importance of both the building and the room in which they are located. In very plain rooms, the lower part of the ceiling beam system is left without any coating. Here, a certain level is formed depending on the beam arrangement of the ceiling. In more elaborate rooms, the lower part of the ceiling beams is covered, thus forming an upper cover (Küçükerman, 1996: 164). Over time, the upper covers have become the most spectacular examples of woodwork and decoration. One of the most important elements in the interior planning of a house is the anteroom. This is the section that opens to the rooms, and it is a common area where the daily life is shared and the relationship with the rooms take place. Anteroom is also known as *sergah*, *sergi*, *seyvan*, *çardak*, *divanhane*, *hayat*. This area is also a strolling area, which allows access between rooms, and the sections outside this area are reserved for sitting. Over time, these segments became more and more specialized and concepts such as *eyvan*, *sekillik*, *taht*, *köşk* became popular.

Table 1: Common characteristics of the Traditional Anatolian and the Traditional Balkan houses

<i>Building Method and Materials</i>	<i>Anatolian Houses</i>	<i>Balkan Houses</i>
	Use the closest materials in the environment	
<i>Facade Characteristics</i>	Wooden frame system	
	Compatible with the environment	
	Ground floors that are not used as living spaces (mostly serve as barns, cellars and storage)	
	Lower floor facades closed to the street	
	Upper floors move towards the street, creating and integrated from with the street	
	The exteriors of the houses ground floors being isolated and massive	
	Upper floors opening to the street by bay windows with usually row windows	
	Open and cool closed and well-protected rooms	
	Large and double-winged exterior doors	
	Windows that represent a certain rhythm and order on the facade of the building	
	Horizontal windows created using wood and plaster	
<i>Spatial Organization and Rooms</i>	Inner or outer anteroom “sofa”	
	Separate rooms for men and women “haremlık-selamlık”	
	Large courtyard door	
	Main room “baş oda”	
	A very large couch “sedir”	
	A small bathing unit “gusülhane”	
	Hearth	

Concluding Remarks

As a result of Ottoman domination in the Balkans, unignorable similarities emerged in the civilian housing architecture. By any means, this situation likely developed as a result of Ottomans' life culture reaching these regions and meeting with the local culture. As the study demonstrated, it is clear that the Balkans' traditional houses (especially in Bulgaria, Northern Greece and Macedonia), and the traditional houses of Western, Central and Southern Anatolian have many common aspects in terms of spatial organization, plan typology, construction techniques, and facade characteristics. Despite all these similar features, these traditional houses built by a common culture necessarily do not bring researchers together on a common ground. Turkish researchers associate these structures which are very similar to the housing culture of Anatolia with the Ottoman housing culture (Eyice, 1955, Akın, 1996, Akın 2001, Eldem, 1984, Bektaş, 2013), while researchers in the Balkan countries argue that these similarities are not originated to the Ottomans (Akın, 1996; Akın, 2001). According to S. H. Eldem, who put forward the concept of Turkish-Ottoman House (1984); "The formation of the Ottoman House was influenced by various countries' peoples, climatic and topographic conditions, and other external factors, but it is the Turkish element, the Turkish art and the Turkish life culture that combines these different factors and creates the Ottoman-Turkish House (Eldem, 1984). On the other hand, authors from various Balkan countries do not accept that these similarities originate from Ottoman culture; for example, Deroko (1955) claims that the traces of the traditional residential architecture with similar characteristics of the Balkan and Anatolian houses date back to Byzantium times. And some Bulgarian writers argue that the Bulgarian mansions of the period, which show remarkable similarities with Istanbul mansions, are the works of the national style called the Bulgarian Renaissance (cited by Akın, 2001).

It is impossible to say anything definite about the origin of these traditional houses, as research on the subject is relatively new and the oldest houses that have survived to the present day only date back to the 18th century. Under any circumstances, the fact that the Ottoman Empire remained in the Balkans for centuries, created an inevitable interaction between these cultures and gave birth to a common life and housing culture regardless of their origin.

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