

The elements of forming traditional Turkish cities: Examination of houses and streets in historical city of Erzurum

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Abstract

When the historical parts of cities—which are the cultural mosaics and which reflect the feelings, thoughts, tendencies, life experiences and the accumulations of the periods in which they were built—begin to disappear, it affects the historical identities of the cities negatively. Investigating, learning, documenting and transferring to the future the values of these spaces, which are bridges between past and future, are vitally important for the maintenance of the cities. This analytical study carried out in Üç Kümbetler and its vicinity in the historical city of Erzurum—where historical and traditional urban elements such as religious buildings, traditional houses, streets, and fountains are intense—aimed at fulfilling these ends.

The study contains an introduction, a description of the area of study, an investigation of the historical buildings in the site, an analysis of the streets and dwellings in the site, and conclusions. In the lights of the data obtained through the investigation and measurement of the buildings in the site, the streets were analysed and evaluated under the headings of street types and factors affecting the perception; and the dwellings were analysed and evaluated under the headings of interior space and elements-factors affecting the formation of façades.

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1. Introduction

Historical cities also has taken part in the rapid urbanization process that started in 1970 onwards, so disordered and unplanned urbanization caused damages in the historical places which are the centres of the cities. The city of Erzurum, where such problems have largely been felt for a long time, is famous not only for its rich cultural heritage but also for its Erzurum Congress that was held on July 23, 1919 by M. Kemal Atatürk in an effort to prepare for Turkey the independence war [1]. In this city which has important historical significance, cultural and social values, there are some architectural elements that should be put under investigation, learned and transferred to future generations.

Since the society is known with not only its present and future but also with its entire past, the most remarkable and authentic reflection exists in the city texture. Changes,

improvements and new trends are natural for a healthy society life. However, we often ignore to past values and their components. We will be able to find a better approach for the future when we consider the past productions and the atmosphere in which they were created. The ideas put forward by Kuban and Özer also emphasizes the importance of historical and traditional environments [2,3].

Since it has an important geographical location Erzurum has remained as a residential place from the early times (Fig. 1). So, past and present cultures have left their mark there. However, due to rapid and new urbanization process, the historical texture is gradually getting damaged [4]. The history of Erzurum which is also known as Upper Fırat Basin dates back to 4000 B.C. During its long and ancient history, Erzurum was under the reign of Med, Part, Persian, Romans, Byzantine, and Seljuk ...etc. and Ottomans. Very few ruins remained from the Roman period. The present ruins date back to Seljuk, Beylics, and Ottomans periods [5]. The traditional houses belong to the 19th century and date back to the time of Ottomans.

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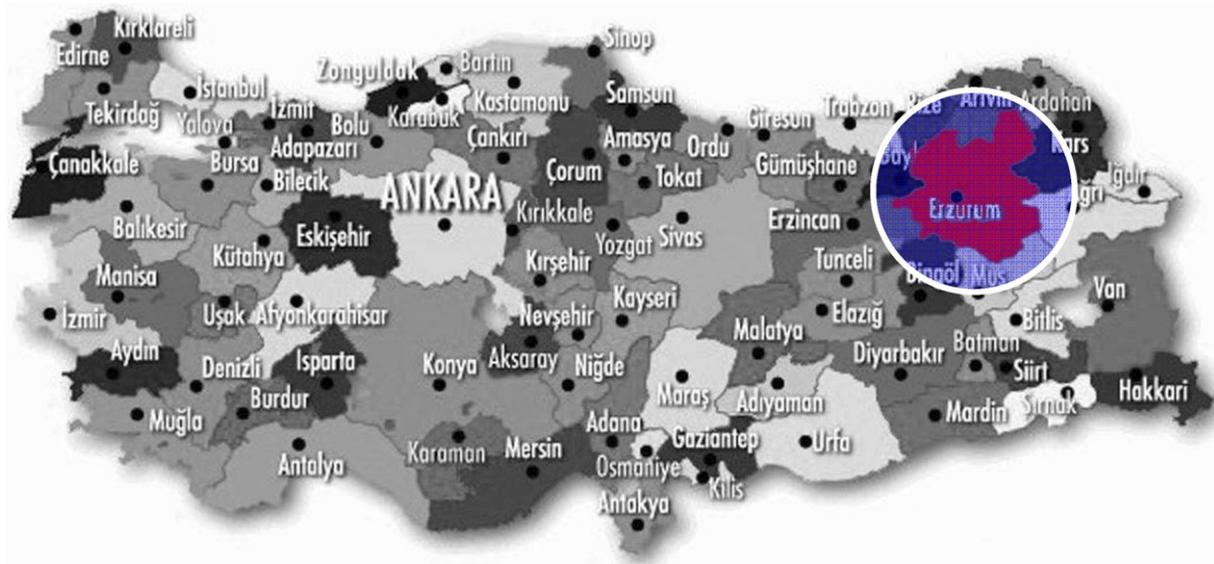


Fig. 1. Erzurum and its location on the map of Turkey.

Üç Kümbetler and its surroundings, which represent or reflect the traditional and architectural structure of the town, were chosen as the study site (Fig. 2). Traditional ones of those houses belong to Ottoman Era and historical ones to Seljuk Era.

2. Method

In the framework of this study that aims at putting forward the elements affecting traditional Turkish houses and streets, first of all; the method followed in this study which was done in Üç Kümbetler with an important infrastructure and its vicinity in Erzurum as follows:

1. Determining the original design of historical buildings and elements (total 6), streets (total 6), and houses (total 12).
2. Analysing streets: Street types have been designed in terms of such factors and features affecting the formation of straight-continuous streets and curved-continuous streets; factors determining perception under the subtitles of complete closure, and half closure features; ascent and descent, narrowing and widening, concavity and convexity, vegetations, direction changing, horizontal line factor, continuity, important emphases, back-set and ledge, elements and walls formed secondary space, space differentiation.
3. The preparation of housing typologies by investigating the characteristics of 12 houses which arrived today, representing the cities' traditional houses: General features are number of floor, horizontal and vertical bands, symmetry, materials; houses such as tandoor house (*tandır evi*), the courtyard and the chief room (*baş oda*); entrance features from the street, from the garden, under the bay window and on the flat façade; windows features in terms of locations, formations and

groups; bay window features in terms of directions, sizes and structures.

4. The presentation and interpretation of the results that have been taken from the analysis.

Street types and the elements and properties affecting the formation of interior design and façades have been analysed and tabled in terms of the criteria by means of matrixes in which each property is symbolised (Tables 1–3).

3. Research

3.1. The introduction of study area: the analysis of traditional street and houses

Üç-Kümbetler and its vicinity are one of the oldest residential places of Erzurum (Fig. 2). The most important reasons for the selection of this area are that there are historical and traditional and urban elements, religious buildings, traditional houses, streets, historical fountains, and etc. altogether in the form of a street.

The primary aim of this study is to carry out a typological work on the Erzurum houses and streets which are the traditional representations of Turkish houses and streets. Another aim of this study is to give the present samples of houses and streets which will be recorded and transferred to future generations since the traditional houses in the neighbourhood are continuously damaged through times and this damage is included in the scope of this study. The research is composed of three stages. In the first stage, Üç Kümbetler and its vicinity are introduced in relation to the historical work around. In the second stage, traditional streets are investigated and analysed. In the third stage, matrixes are created for plan-façade analyses and relief work. In the conclusion part, these analyses are evaluated and interpretations are provided.

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