

VERNACULAR DWELLING FROM ANATOLIA TO THE BALKANS; A COMPARISON BETWEEN SAFRANBOLU AND PRIZREN

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Abstract

In a certain period ruled by the same administration, in different places but proximately the same distance from the capital, the dwelling formation as a process linked to the center developed at the periphery increases the issues of the way of building within similarities and differences. This study aims to provide data on 19th-century peripheral cities due to the center of the Ottoman Empire, which is the city of Istanbul, places such as Prizren and Safranbolu. The study focuses on the general design principles of the Anatolian house in Safranbolu and in the city of Prizren, the characteristics of these cities are that inherit the traditional dwelling units. In the analysis of the traditional houses in Safranbolu has been selected three most eminent samples to have a more detail description of the house. In the same manner, has been done at the second part is related to the Balkan traditional house, whereas the characteristic city has been choosing the city of Prizren, with its most eminent three examples of traditional houses. For both areas has been developed table that shows the characteristics and then has also comprehensive tables to see the similarities or the differences between these traditional houses from different areas.

Keywords: Vernacular architecture, Dwelling, Typology Anatolian and Balkan dwelling.

1 Introduction

This study aims to provide knowledge of the development of the traditional house by heaving a comprehensive study on the creation and development of the traditional wooden house from Anatolian to the Balkans. The comprehensive study is based on the definitions of the house, space creation used materials, and the design principles reflecting plans, façades, and sections.

The first part of the study focuses on the general design principles of the Anatolian house in Safranbolu, the characteristic city that inherits traditional houses. In the analysis of the traditional houses in Safranbolu has been selected three most eminent samples to have a more detailed description of the house. In the same manner, has been done at the second part is related to the Balkan traditional house, whereas the characteristic city has been choosing the city of Prizren, with its most eminent three examples of traditional houses. For both areas has been developed table that shows the characteristics and then has also comprehensive tables to see the similarities or the difference between these traditional houses from different areas.

In this study, various sources have been used for the Anatolian traditional houses in Safranbolu among others the study of the R.Gunay with its book traditional houses in Safranbolu, also to have the general perception of the development of the traditional houses has been used the S.H.Eldem's [1] and D.Kuban's studies for the typology of the Anatolian traditional houses. Regarding the Balkans, Kosovo, and especially for Prizren traditional houses have been used in the studies from the author N.Akin, with their book Balkan traditional houses in the Ottoman Period, then E. Riza's study of traditional houses in Kosovo in the 18th -19th century. Also has been used the documentation, drawings, and archive documents from the Institute of Protection of Monuments in Prizren and my observations and drawings are used in this study.

2 Definition of the Traditional House

House as shelter, the primary need of the human being, through time and space has been developed differently, but remaining the same concept and providing shelter to humankind from outside factors. Beyond the physical meaning of the house, worldwide is commonly known as *the form of human existence* [2]. In this context development of the house, depends on the physical aspects like the geographical characteristics, climate, used materials, and construction techniques and the social aspects like the culture of the population, and social-economy conditions and it is an ongoing process providing conformity of accommodation of life itself. Traditional houses are all houses put up without a formal design process. Their form, plan, and method of construction, simply follow a tradition for the time and place of their conceptions.

The relationship between humans and nature, in different periods, brought different styles of life; different technologies brought different house environments. The need of making people's lives safer and protected from the outside, depending on the numerous physical and social factors, the house always has been a shelter that is interpreted in different manners, due to the time and space.

The built vernacular heritage is important; it is the fundamental expression of the culture of a community, of its relationship with its territory, and, at the same time, the expression of the world's cultural diversity.

The vernacular building is the traditional and natural way by which communities house themselves. It is a continuing process including necessary changes and continuous adaptation as a response to social and environmental constraints. The survival of this tradition is threatened worldwide by the forces of economic, cultural, and architectural homogenization. How these forces can be met is a fundamental problem that must be addressed by communities, and also by governments, planners, architects, conservationists, and by a multidisciplinary group of specialists. [3]

3 General Design Principles of Anatolian Houses in Safranbolu

The city of Safranbolu is located in the northern part of Turkey in the Black Sea region, 65 km, away from the sea. The city is shaped by the valleys that are created from the separation of the three different rivers, making the place attractive for different civilizations through the ancient times that used to populate this region. Within the continental climate, that is the very cold winters and dry summers, the city is organized in two separate settlements for different usage; one for the winter period and one for summer. The Winter part includes the houses located on the slopes of the valley, which are organized to not interrupt each other by using more of the sun light and heaving the opened view. (Fig. 2) The summer parts of the city are tied sloped to the south which makes cooler during the summer. This part does not show so many variants. [4]



Figure 1. Plan of Safranbolu

People of the Safranbolu with their traditions are representing the general Turkish society. Regarding this, the excellent and detailed constructed houses show the wealth of the people of the Safranbolu.

Agriculture, farming, leather, cooper working, and weaving are the main products of the people developing the trade market of the city. The development of trade created the marketplaces like Cinci Han, Arasta, cooper bazaar, etc., which were the main indicators of the economic development of the city.

Within the urban settlements the Anatolian houses in Safranbolu, are organized as two-story buildings, where mainly the ground floor is for service use, while the first floor is organized as a living area. Anatolian houses include multi-functional organization in the spaces, mainly the rooms are lightened with several two-wings wooden windows and interior space enriched with wooden ornaments that create the depth of the space.



Figure 2. Houses near the Akcasu River (R.Gunay)

The traditional houses at the Safranbolu as an integral part of the Anatolian houses are organized with the same principles and have the same facilities to make people live inside of it. These general principles here in Safranbolu are interpreted in that way, aiming the responding to the demands of the social aspects, members of the family, economics, and insulation, and this also is created the pattern of the city. Houses in the city are located parallel to the street, above a wall at the street, while the living spaces are organized on the upper floors. The principle of these houses is not to show the inner life to the outside, for this there is no window on the ground floor. The ground floor wall is following the street by shaping it, while the upper floor is regular with extensions to have rectangular forms. The ground floor is not used for living, it is the entrance to the house and the place that serves for the protection of the animals.



Figure 3. Street at Safranbolu (R.Gunay)

The main spaces in the design of the traditional Anatolian houses to respond to the functionality of the house are the main hall so-called Sofa, rooms, stairs, kitchen – toilets, and warehouse stalls.

The sofa is the common area upon reaching the rooms. Depending on the place of the sofa it is created different types of planning are shown next paragraph. One of the most important and decisive elements of the traditional house is room. Rooms at the Anatolian houses are used as space of multifunctional, by containing sitting, resting, food preparation, eating, heating, and sleeping. In general, rooms are placed at the upper stairs, so that the ground floor no matter in what condition is placed, the rooms have been adapted to a regular rectangular form. Toilets and kitchens are often organized separately from the main building, while the water has been carried out with cooper buckets. Stairs are often wooden and if the house is with an exterior sofa, connecting with it in single arm staircase. While the inner or middle sofa houses often it is a two-arm staircase with a landing. Also, the warehouse and stall are important spaces for life in a traditional house and often are organized on the ground floor of the building.

In general, the plan of the Anatolian houses varies in different aspects of the organization but can be grouped into four types of design. At the house the rooms are not so different in the design aspect, the main hall called “sofa” is the main determinant of the organization and design of the house. S.H.Eldem and D. Kuban have categorized the plan types of the traditional houses depending on the “sofa’s place so that we have these four groups:

- Plan type without sofa
- Plan type with exterior sofa
- Plan type with Interior sofa
- Plan type with Middle sofa

ORTA SOFALI PLAN TİPİ



BÖLÜMLÜ EVLER

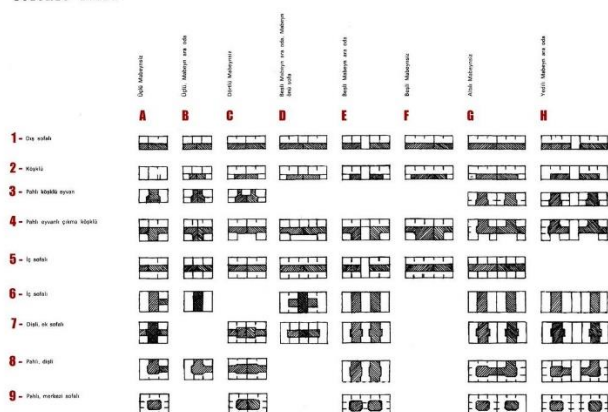
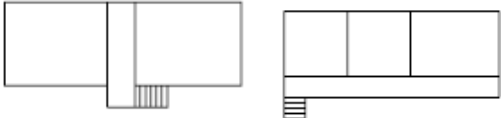

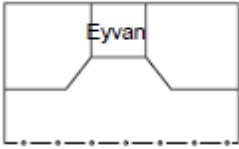

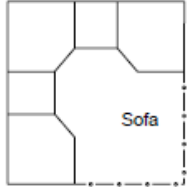
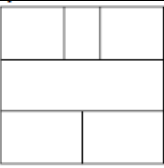
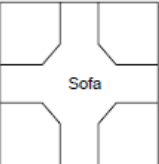


Figure 4. 1) Schematization of Turk Evi by Dogan Kuban; 2) Sedad Hakki Eldem Typological Works

Table 1. Anatolian Traditional House typology (S. Eldem)

WITHOUT SOFA	
EXTERIOR SOFA	   
INNER SOFA	
MIDDLE SOFA	

The typology of the traditional houses of Safranbolu mainly is affected by the climate conditions, culture, family structure, and economic and social structure. The traditional house in Safranbolu is grouped as the exterior, inner, and middle sofa houses. [5] This study has taken some of the eminent examples that are considered more characteristic with their design concept, technique, and material representing the common features of the traditional house.

The middle sofa plan type is the most used one within the traditional houses in the city of Safranbolu. This plan type is organized in such a way that the rooms are around the middle space called the sofa. Rooms are opening at this sofa that is lightened with the extraction called *eyvan*. This part is located on the first floor and has windows, and it is used as a dining area. In general design, the house is planned within a symmetrical concept. As common area sofa has a ceiling higher than *eyvan* and rooms, and it is more decorated than *eyvan*. On the other hand, *eyvan* is usually used as a resting place, and often it is separated from the sofa with its level higher.

The inner sofa plan type is designed to the main role of the sofa, where the opening of the rooms is at this space. Usually, the sofa has an extension, lightened with natural light. Within the traditional design, the house is built above a stone wall that is parallel to the road, sloping terrain, with no opening on the ground floor, whereas the main living is concentrated on the first and second floor. The concept of the design of the house is the middle sofa plan type. This sofa has its *eyvan* space and it is lightened with three windows.

The house with an exterior sofa plan type, whereas the rooms are opened to the sofa, while the sofa is opened to the outside and covered with the roof of the building. The sofa's space has another space of rest called *sekili kat* the corner that can be reached from the sofa with stairs. This type of house is commonly used as a summer house.

Table 2. 1. The house of Saraclar; 2) The house of Arap Hacilar; 3) The house of Kabakcilar (R. Gunay)

	<i>middle sofa</i>	<i>inner sofa</i>	<i>exterior sofa</i>
<i>main floor</i>			
<i>second floor</i>			
<i>ground floor</i>			

In Safranbolu, as it is usually in Anatolian traditional houses it is directly fulfilling the functionality of the human life, whereas each room is a sufficient unit as a work room, living area, dining room, and bedroom. The entrance to the room usually is from the corner to the space that is at the same level as the door and then the main space of the room is one step higher than shows the perception of the special area of the room. Always there is a classification between rooms. On the main floor, one room is more detailed, bigger, and decorated form the other. Usually, the main room is lightened also from the upper windows that are treated with decorative glasses and inside the room, the wall containing the well-decorated fireplace is full of cupboards and niches for storing and displaying functional or decorative objects. Almost every detail in this room is treated in a specific manner and well decorated.

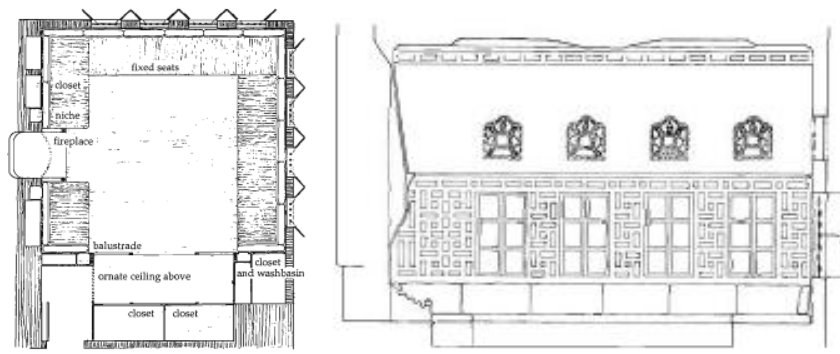


Figure 5 Plan and Section of the Main Room (R. Gunay)

3.1 Environmental characteristics in Safranbolu

The main factor of urban development is the gathering of people to leave together, by this sharing common spaces to fulfill the requirements that make livable these areas. The inner house space, also the exterior space near and far to the house or working place is of the same importance and determines the quality of life.

Traditional houses of Safranbolu, usually are organized following the line of the street, always heaving in consideration of the Islamic traditional home life, by being protected their privacy from the outside. The main characteristics of the environmental organization of the urban area of Safranbolu lie at the narrow streets that are defined with the walls of houses and yard walls that are higher than 2m, and also the extractions of the upper floor of the building and its proportion of extraction, windows, and the wooden eaves, gives the identity of the street, providing the circulation in a way or another more safety, comfort and purposive.

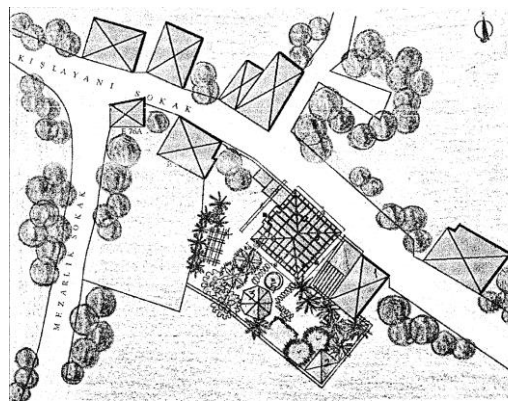


Figure 6. Safranbolu Traditional Street of "Hidirli Yokusu" (N.Kocan, 2003)

4 General Design Principles of Anatolian Houses in Prizren

The city of Prizren is in the southern part of Kosovo. The position of the city lies near the Shar mountains from the southeastern and the Dukagjin plane from the north and west side. The city is shaped near the hill, where the castle is, and has the river that divides the city determining the linear growth of the urban area. The city through the centuries was the intersection of important roads, therefore from ancient times remains to be one of the important points of the different civilizations. The advantages that exceptionally suitable natural basis offers within the morphological characteristics of the relief, favorable compound range, and a rich vegetation cover made the place in continual colonization since the early Neolithic till now. Therefore, the area as an urban settlement developed from Roman times and passed to the Byzantine and Ottoman period, inheriting the elements of each civilization, and used as a common heritage reflecting the physical development of the city [6].

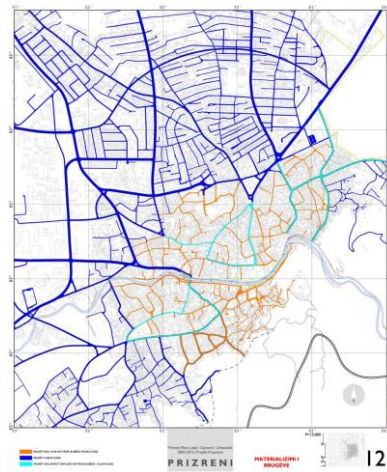


Figure 7. Plan of the Prizren (Historic Center Law)

Prizren as the city of the different civilizations bears the marks of old treasures that shaped the environment and inherited it till nowadays. The variety of the houses and details used shows the level of the development of the city with its importance in legal-administrative and as a trade center of the region. Different types of craft have been developed in the city of Prizren; like the cooper, leather, cutter, etc. even that we had the names of the suburbs depending on what they are doing in it, like the suburb of blacksmiths, tanneries, etc.

The Ottoman Empire by ruling areas from Anatolia to the Rum Eli (Balkans) brought similarities in various parts of life. The architecture was one of the products of common interaction that inherited these areas. In this concept during the 19th century Prizren was important city under the rule of the Ottomans, characterized by its traditional houses.



Figure 8. General view of the Traditional Houses

There is a various type of traditional house in Prizren that differs from the user, and position, but always being designed with common characteristics. In the 19th century, Prizren was an important administrative and trade center, which used to leave many senior functionaries and rich landowners in well-done houses. These houses mostly were in the typology of the inner sofa [7]. Houses built at this time are considered as the reflection of the typology of Turkish houses with some exceptions [5].

In Kosovo, different types of traditional houses mostly are developed in the cities. These traditional houses are organized as complexes of buildings within the yard, where the main building is usually a two-story building. Here it is obvious the impact of the Turkish traditional house in the window composer, the proportion of the extensions, etc. The ground floor usually is used as serves area, but sometimes it has also room, while the first floor is the main floor where the people live.

In general, the inner sofa type of plan has common use in Prizren. The sofa is in the direction from north to south and often has the extraction to the yard. The main facade of the building is one of the entrances, where the main openings are concentrated too. In the general plan scheme, the main role has room. Always there is the most important room or guest room that is treated more specifically with its ceiling, cupboards, fireplace, and windows. Except for the room, also the sofa is important in the space organization of the house. Prizren often has the inner sofa, the plan type that justifies the cold winter conditions, so that spaces could be more connected and compact with each other.

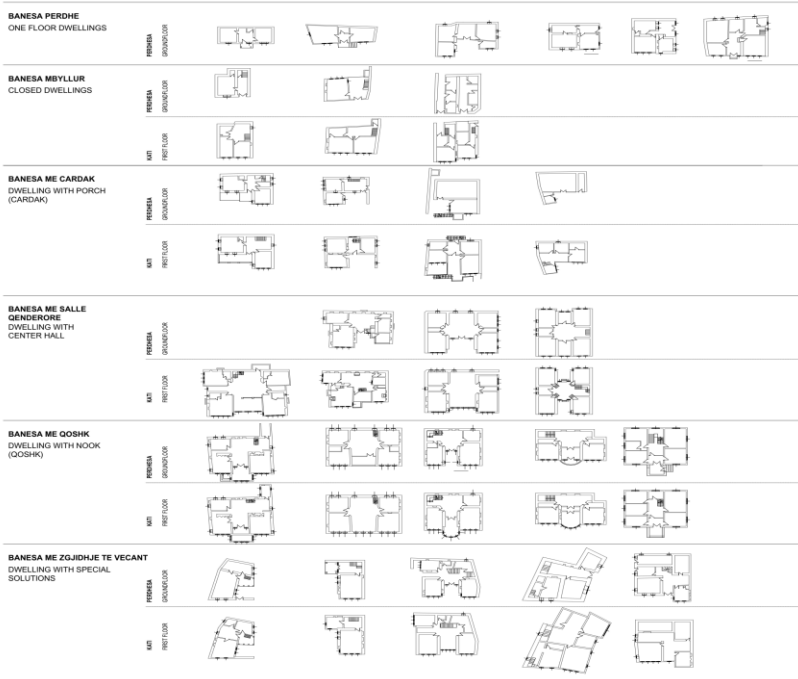
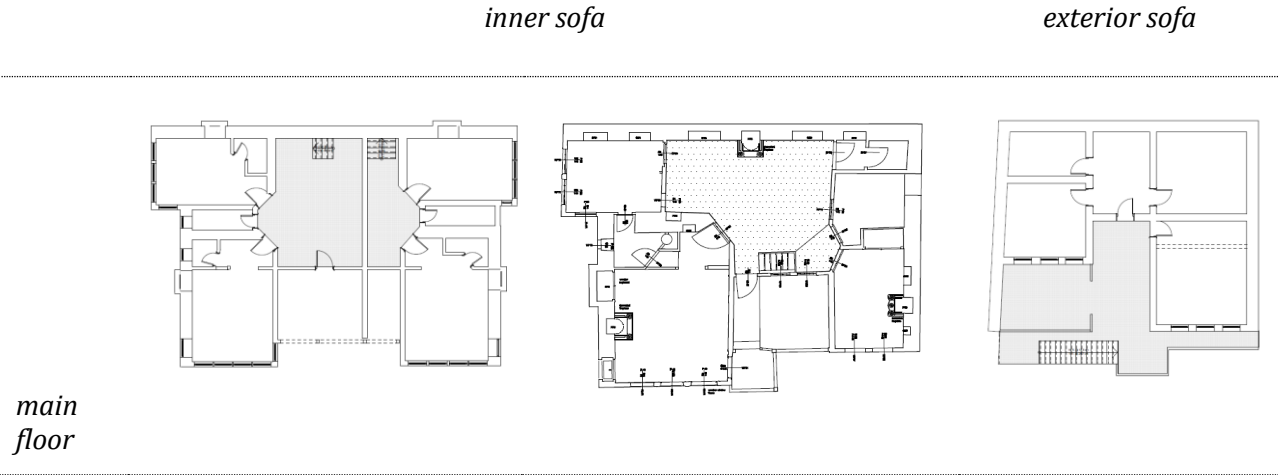
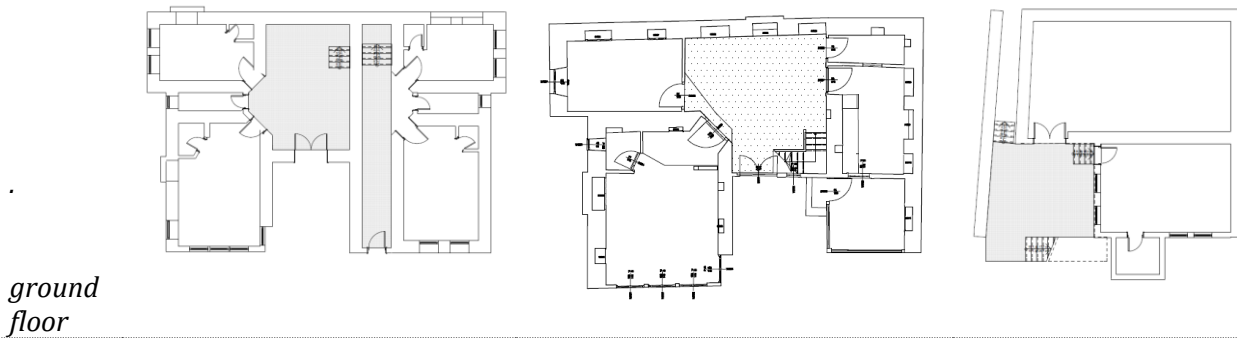


Figure 9. After E. Riza (reorganized from B. Ceko)

Table 3: 1) The house of Adem Aga; (E. Riza) ;2) The house of Shehzade B.Ceko);; 3) The Old house (S. Nedadovic)





As it is in the Turkish traditional house the room is the most important place, including the main function like resting, sitting, eating, and sleeping as a multifunctional space. Rooms differ from each other. While the guest room is more detailed, bigger, and lightened, the other is not so detailed and big. The room has a sitting place, has the fireplace as the most dominant element of the room, has niches, and cupboards and the ceiling are usually very good hand woodcraft. The main room has its bath, where is placed also the heater the water, in a mechanism that provides heat also to the room.

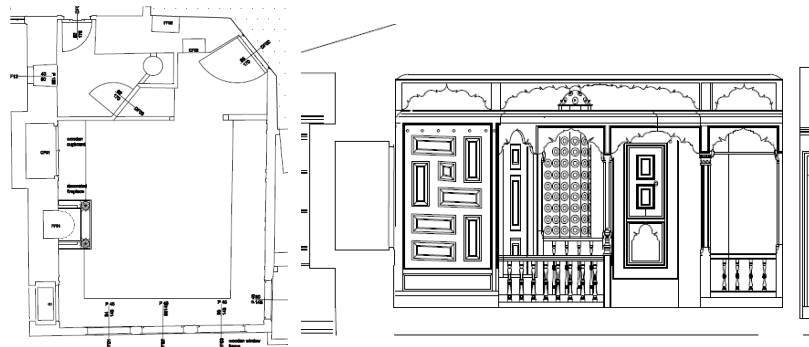


Figure 10. Plan of the room; Section from the room (B.CEKO)



Figure 11. Shehzade House Facade; Adem Aga house; Shuaip Pasha house facade (after, B.Ceko , after E.Riza)

As it is in plan the main factors of the traditional houses are the dimensions of the rooms that reflect the facades with their extensions, creating the common identity of the traditional house. The main characteristics of the facade are the wooden framed windows, wooden frames, wooden fences at the windows, and wooden railings on the balcony. The rest of the wall is wash lime plaster in different colors like white, yellow, bright blue, and red.

The material and built technique shaped the vernacular architecture of the 19th century as a common value, heaving in mind the economic difficulties that did not allow for different choices. Therefore, in the mountain areas, stone and wood have common use, in a technique separately or both. At the lowland's settlements for the same reason, more can find the use of lime and adobe [7].

At the traditional houses in the Balkans, as is in Prizren too, the main materials are: stone, wood, adobe, clay, and lime. Stone is used for the foundation as it is resistant to water and provides stability. In some

cases, also stone is used on the ground floor walls. Wood has wide use in the construction of the house, starting from the wall as beams and columns, then at the construction of the floor, a wooden system of the wall with infilling adobe bricks (figure10) and as interior element wood is the most important and used material. Adobe also is important for the construction of the house and it is used after a fabrication process as bricks, usually as filling elements and constructive elements of the walls. Clay is usually used as the aggregate for the stone in a stone wall; also, it is used as mortar at the walls. Lime is another important material that shapes traditional houses; lime is used in two-way hydraulic lime and air lime, and it is used as aggregate and as the lime mortar for the walls.

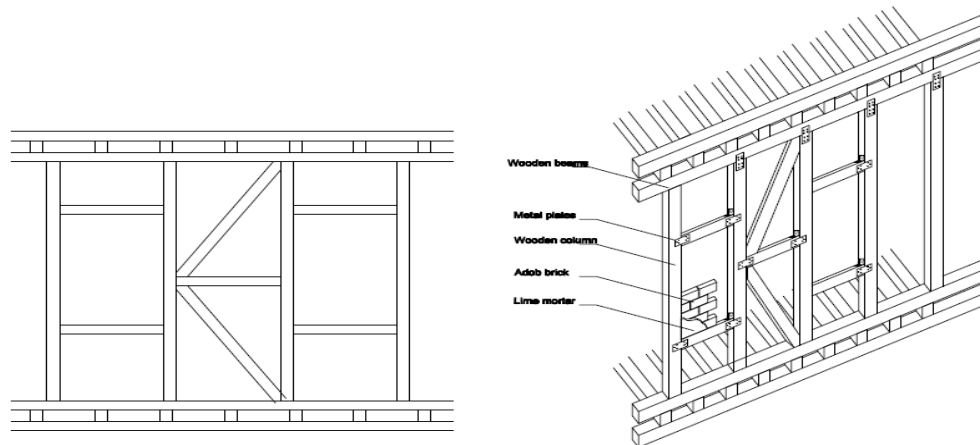


Figure 12. Wood Construction (B.CEKO)

4.1 *Environmental characteristics in Prizren*

The location and the placement of the building have a significant role in identifying the traditional development of Prizren as an urban area. The settlements grew up with religious buildings, administrative buildings, and based on geographical conditions [8].

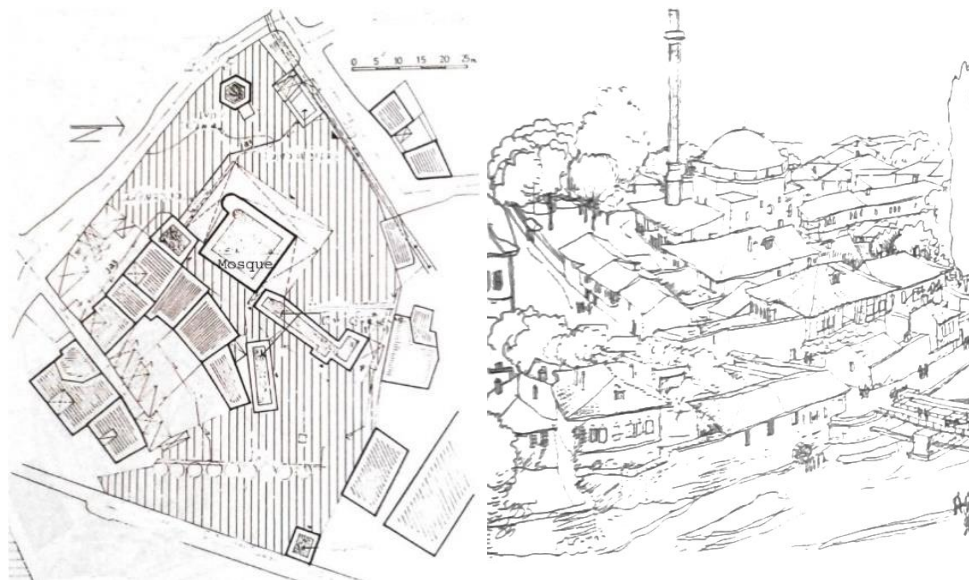


Figure 13. Plan and Perspective from the City part of Prizren (Z.Petrovic, 1955)

In Prizren, traditional houses are formed in a way that enables life to develop based on traditional values, freely, but always within the space of the building and within the garden that is surrounded by high (proximately 2m) walls and the entrance to the property is from street and not directly from to the house. Figure 18 shows some alternatives in different cases of the approach to the house from the street.

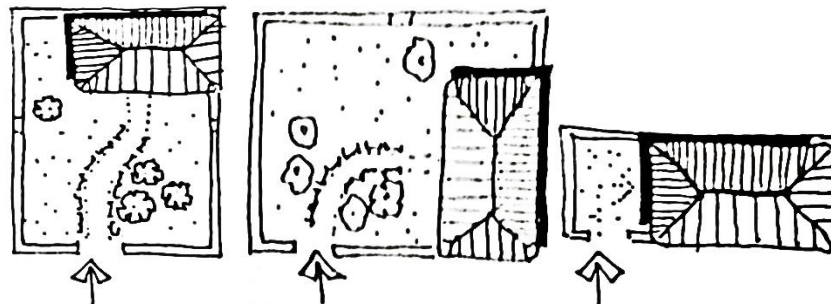


Figure 14. Sketch of the Situation Plan of 1. Shehzade House; 2. Saray House; 3> House of Family Qyse. (B. Ceko)

5 Comparison between both Elements of Traditional House

A Safranbolu traditional house is representing the Turkish traditional house and has its place in the Turkish literature of the traditional house. In this study can be seen the characteristics of both areas Safranbolu and Prizren provide similarities in the concept of vernacular architecture. The development of the houses, now considered traditional houses of the 19th century within the area ruled by the Ottoman empire, however, can be seen differences between them. While the general acceptance of the typology of the Turkish traditional house applies to the Prizren traditional houses, the way how the space is organized and designed is different from Safranbolu. The table below (table 4) shows the difference between the Safranbolu and Prizren traditional houses.

The difference is also in the main rooms, whereas the Safranbolu traditional house has upper windows and the high of the main room is more than that of one of the Prizren, which does not have the upper window. In general, the same elements as the fireplace, windows, niches, and preparatory space are used at both houses.

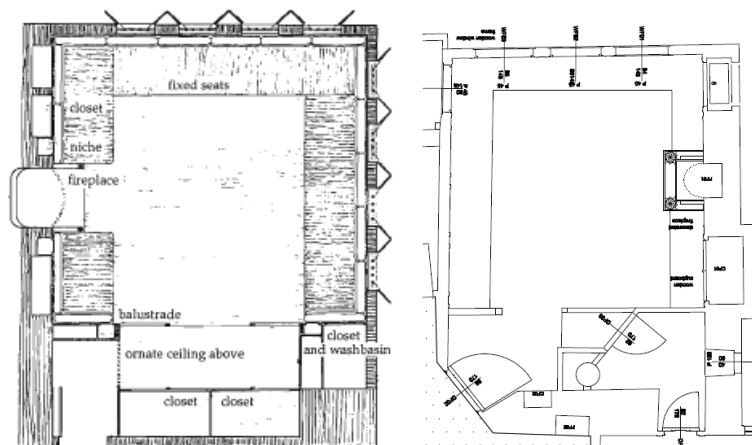


Figure 15. The Plan of the Main Room from Safranbolu and from Prizren

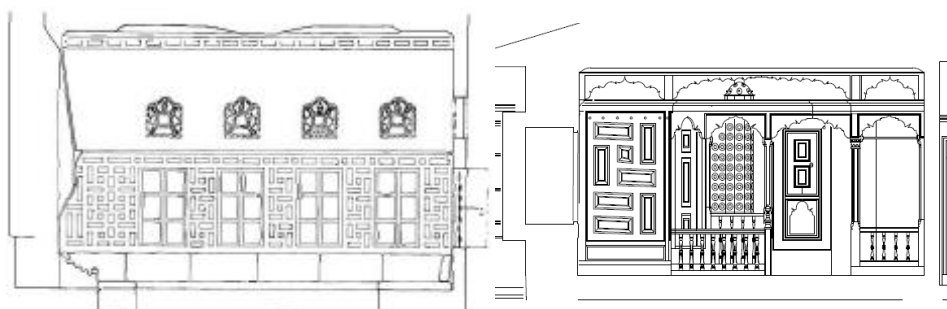





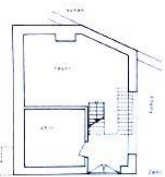
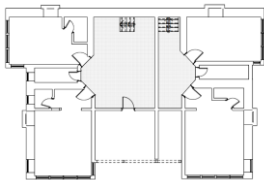
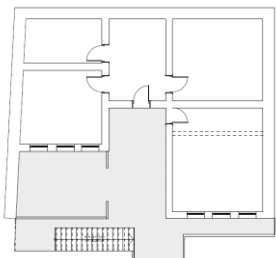
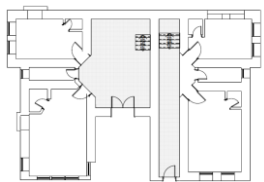
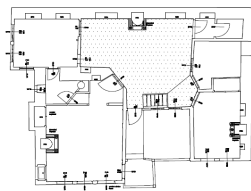
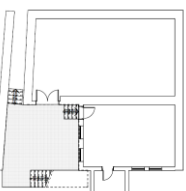
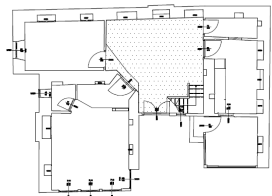


Figure 16. The Section of the Main Room from Safranbolu and from Prizren

Table 4. The comparison of the plan types in Safranbolu and Prizren

SAFRANBOLU TRADITIONAL HOUSE	Middle Sofa Main Floor 	Inner Sofa Main Floor 	Exterior Sofa Main Floor 
	Ground Floor 	Ground Floor 	Ground Floor 
PRIZREN TRADITIONAL HOUSE		Main Floor 	Main Floor 
		Ground Floor 	
		Main Floor 	Ground Floor 
		Ground Floor 	

Conclusions

The design of the traditional house has been developed depending on the human demands of the time, culture, environment, climate, materials, and technique. This study focuses on the concept design of the 19th century-traditional houses, comparing both areas in Safranbolu and Prizren. Safranbolu is a city of Anatolian and has inherited the traditional houses from the 18th-19th century which shows most of the characteristics of the traditional houses of that time. So, it is Prizren, located in the south of Kosovo,

shares similarities with the traditional houses in Anatolia, as the time of 19th century was under Ottoman rule.

In the traditional house of Safranbolu on the creation of the spaces, the main factors are the users, way of life, demographic conditions, and culture. Even though the plans differ within the typology it is quite simple and towards to life easier. Every unit in the house can be used for dining, eating, sleeping, and cleaning which makes cohabitating families. These characteristics are worthy also for the Prizren traditional house that shows the similarities of the concept design of the traditional house. A study of the traditional house in both areas in Safranbolu and Prizren appears similarities and differences between each other. While the design on responding to demands of the life of that time related to the factors are treated in the same manner, by heaving the units gathered around the common space called sofa and depending on the place of the sofa has been developed variations as typology. On the other hand, differs the relation between the entrance to the building, where in Safranbolu examples is through the building, while in Prizren is first the garden and then the building. The privacy of life is shared attribution that has two of the cities, but the differences lie in the position of the house in the parcel. This makes less usable, small, and darker the ground floors of the traditional houses in Safranbolu, while the privacy issues remain important the ground floor is not so dark, the spaces have windows, living rooms, and the corners called cardak in a functional terrace.

The way of design used technique, and material makes these building environmentally compatible and could be a source of inspiration for the next designers.

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