

**THE PERCEPTION OF  
TRADITIONAL OTTOMAN DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE AS A  
CATEGORY OF HISTORIC HERITAGE AND A SOURCE OF  
INSPIRATION FOR ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE  
(1909-1931)**

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## Özet

Geleneksel konut mimarisi konusu yirminci yüzyılın erken onyıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Cumhuriyet Türkiye'si'nin "tarihsel miras" tartışmalarında dikkate değer bir yer kazandı. Bu dönemde çok sayıda araştırmacı bu tarihsel mimari kategorisini analiz edip değerli örneklerin koruma altına alınması gereğini vurguladılar. Mesken mimarisinde tarihsel geleneğin biçimlerine ve özelliklerine dayalı olarak yeni ve milli bir üslup oluşturulması gündemi de bu bağlamda gelişti ve Sedat Hakki Eldem'in 1932'de Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi'nde başlattığı "Milli Mimari Semineri"ne giden yolu açtı. Mimarlık tarihi yazını alanında konut mimarisine yönelik yükselen ilgi tarihteki büyük olaylar yerine sıradan insanların geçmişteki gündelik hayatlarına odaklanan "eskici" tarihsel tahayyüle yönelimin bir yansıması gibi görünmektedir. Bu özgün tarih algısı aynı dönemde diğer tarihsel temsil alanlarında da yansımalar bulmuştur. Ayrıca, tarihsel mesken mimarisini model alma fikri, büyük ölçüde, "milli öz"ün ifadeleri olarak görülen geleneksel gündelik yaşam ve onun maddi unsurları ile bağlı koruma arzusunun sonucuydu. Öte yandan, bu mimari canlandırıcılık hareketi düşüncesi konut alanında yaygınlaşmakta olan mimari patronaj kaygısıyla da yakından bağlantılıydı. "Eskici" tarih merakının yükselişinin ve orta sınıfın mimari taleplerinin oynadıkları roller, bu akimin temel dinamiklerinin resmi kültür politikaları değil toplumun daha geniş kesimlerinin duyarlılıkları ve kaygıları olduğunu göstermektedir.

## **Abstract**

The subject of traditional domestic architecture gained a remarkable place in Ottoman-Turkish “historic heritage ideology” during the early decades of the twentieth century. In this period, several researchers analyzed this category of historic architecture and emphasized the necessity of the conservation of its valuable examples. The agenda of creating a new national idiom in residential architecture based on the forms and characteristics of the historic tradition had developed in this context and paved the way for the “National Architecture Seminar” initiated by Sedad Hakki Eldem at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1932. The newly rising interest in domestic architecture in the sphere of architectural historiography appears as a reflection of the growing inclination towards the “antiquarian” mode of historical imagination which focuses on everyday lives of ordinary people in the past rather than major historical events. In addition, the idea of following the model of historic residential architecture was largely related to the desire to preserve a link with the traditional everyday life and its material elements which were imagined as expressions of the “national essence.” On the other hand, this agenda of revival was also closely connected to the spreading concern for patronage in the field of residential architecture. The roles of the rise of antiquarianism and the architectural patronage of the middle class reveal that the main dynamics of this trend were sensibilities and concerns of broader circles of society rather than official cultural policies.

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## Introduction

If the notion of nationality remains as an abstract idea it can not be counted as properly discovered. Those peoples that possess the national consciousness properly, display their nationality concretely in every appearing of their personal and social lives. With the architectural style of the buildings, with sculptures and paintings and even with the clothings of the women and children, the new parts of Athens that I have stayed as a guest for a couple of days acts as the reminiscence of the Ancient Greece and demonstrate the presence of the national consciousness in the Hellenes of today.

...the history, ethnography and folklore of the Slavs are well analysed. The greater cities of Russia are embellished with buildings in the national style; the national opera came into being.

The discovery of the German national consciousness has given birth to the German Empire. The rise of the Slavic national consciousness resulted in the independence of the Serbians and the Bulgarians.

In order for the past to be revitalized, it is necessary to preserve the heritage of the past properly.<sup>1</sup>

This passage is from the introduction written by Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935), one of the prominent theoreticians of Turkish nationalism, for an article on some Seljukid architectural works in Konya which was written by a famous architect of those years, A. Kemaleddin Bey in 1912.<sup>2</sup> Here, Akçura well expresses the chief role given to history writing, art history and ethnography/folklore studies in the formation and development of distinctive national identities and, by extension, in the political fates of the modern nations. His emphasis on the vitality of “concrete” reference points, which continually “remind” historical/cultural essences of nations, and hence create and recreate national consciousness in the best way, is crucial in understanding his views on historic heritage and its value for the present. For him, historic

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<sup>1</sup> “Milliyet fikri mücerred (*abstrait*) bir fikir hâlinde kalırsa hakkıyla inkişâf etmiş addolunamaz. Vicdân-ı millîye hakkıyla sâhib olan kavimler, ferdi ve ictimâî hayatlarının her türlü tecelliyâtında milliyetlerini maddî (*concret*) olarak izhâr ederler. İki üç gündür misâfir bulunduğum Atina'nın yeni kısmı, binâlarının tarz-ı mimarisiyle, heykel ve resimleriyle, hatta kadın ve çocuklarının elbiseleriyle Eski Yunan'ı hatırlatarak bugünün Helenlerinde vicdân-ı millînin varlığını gösteriyor.

“... İslavların târihi, etnografyası, folkloru iyiden iyiye tedkik olundu. Rusya'nın büyük şehirleri millî usûl-i mimârîde yapılmış binâlarla tezyîn edildi; millî opera vücûda geldi.

“Alman vicdân-ı millîsinin inkişâfı, Alman İmparatorluğu'nu doğurmuştu. İslav vicdân-ı millîsinin tekevvünü Sırp ve Bulgarların istiklâlini intâc etdi.

“Mâzînin ihyâ edilebilmesi için, mâzînin mîrâsı iyi muhâfaza edilmiş olmak lâzımdır.” Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, “Geç Kalmış Bir Başlangıç,” in *Türk Yurdu* 12, 19 Nisan 1328 [2 May 1912], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), (Ankara, 1998-), vol. 1, pp. 194-195. This introduction could not be published in the same issue with the article of Kemaleddin Bey, because the arrival of its manuscript at Istanbul was delayed. Thus, it appeared in the following issue.

<sup>2</sup> Mimar Kemaleddin, “Bir Türk Akropolü,” in *Türk Yurdu* 11, 5 Nisan 1328 [18 April 1912], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), (Ankara, 1998-), vol. 1, pp. 180-181.

buildings deserve to be preserved for the sake of “revitalization of the past” which includes the employment of historic forms in modern structures. Having referred to the contribution of Acropolis in Athens to the “revitalization” of the Greek architectural style, he designates “The Alaadin Hill” in Konya as a “Turkish Acropolis” following Kemaleddin Bey’s metaphor, and evaluates the national revivalist style of the period as one of the “material/concrete appearances of Turkish national consciousness (*Türk vicdân-ı millîsinin maddî tecelliyâtı*).”<sup>3</sup>

The conceptions of national history and heritage, and the vision of their connection with modern cultural life, exemplified in the words of Yusuf Akçura, are characteristic of the modern world. In the modern age, discussions on the meaning and the future program of visual arts, including architecture, revolved around the newly rising areas of inquiry, namely art history and ethnography, as disciplines to study and, potentially, learn from historic and anonymous artistic sources. Scientific evaluation of the material culture of societies became one of the strongest media to speculate about the characteristics and even “essences” of these societies, giving a considerable authority to art history and ethnography. Thus, these material products began to be perceived as “documents” or visual testimonies of their original milieus. The conservation programs developed for the “monuments” of the past were corollaries of this mental set. Illuminating the weight of nationalism in this phenomenon, Rudy Koshar refers to the “need to create objectified symbols of national identity that offered a point of contact and easily recognized visual referent,” behind the development of the heritage ideology.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, especially during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, traditional arts stood as primary reference points in the searches for proper national idioms. This search was certainly another form that the desire to create a concrete link with the tradition had taken. On the other hand, the strong representational quality of architecture made

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<sup>3</sup> Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, *ibid.*, p. 195.

these idioms significant visual tools of the nation-building processes. Therefore, in the architectural culture of modern societies, construction of art historical narratives, restoration and conservation practices and new design activities were shaped in close connection with each other and within the framework of encompassing discourses. These discourses, in many countries, were basically part of national identity discussions and by nature open to debates and revisions. Textual and visual rhetorical devices, selective inclusions and exclusions were in the hands of the protagonists of these discourses through preferences of whom we can read a significant component of politics of culture and identity.

In the early twentieth century, Ottoman-Turkish architectural culture was certainly dominated by “historicism.” *Millî Mimârî* (National Architecture), which was largely based on the utilization of some forms borrowed from the vocabulary of “classical” Ottoman monumental architecture in modern structures, was the officially supported style in the Second Constitutional Period and it maintained the same status during the initial years of the Republican Period. On the other hand, the Permanent Committee of Conservation of Historic Works (*Muhâfaza-i Âsâr-ı Atîka Encümen-i Dâimîsi*) was founded as the official institution responsible for the conservation measures for historic monuments in 1917. In addition, after the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*, which was written in 1873 with governmental initiative and largely provided the theoretical basis of the Ottoman Revivalism with a detailed account of some major monuments of Ottoman architecture that were built in the periods before the penetration of Western forms,<sup>5</sup> the Turkish literature on the national architectural heritage was considerably enriched during the beginnings of the twentieth century. The rapid increase in the number of studies was accompanied by the broadening of the scope of the subjects

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<sup>4</sup> Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill and London, 1998), p.23.

<sup>5</sup> İbrahim Edhem Paşa (ed.), *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî/L'Architecture ottomane*, (İstanbul, 1873).

analyzed as to include pre-Ottoman (especially Seljukid) structures on the one hand, and residential architecture on the other.

During the initial decades of the twentieth century, historic residential architecture gradually gained a more significant place in the general understanding of architectural heritage in the Ottoman Empire and republican Turkey. Alongside some Western scholars, a considerable number of Turkish researchers spent effort to document scattered examples of this tradition, to reflect on its characteristics and to represent it in published media. As a corollary of the value of being documents of national past attributed to these historic residences, the necessity of conservation of representative examples of the tradition began to be voiced. Moreover, as another important aspect of the trend, we note a strong inclination to perceive the historic tradition as the ideal source to receive inspiration for contemporary designs.

By concentrating on a hitherto neglected subject in Turkish architectural historiography, this trend clearly stands as the forerunner of the “National Architecture Seminar” which was initiated at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1932 by Sedad Hakkı Eldem (1908-1988) whose significant career as an architect and as an architectural historian centered around an interest in historic residential architecture.<sup>6</sup> The objective of my study is to illuminate some historical dynamics behind the emergence and development of this trend, principally the rise of the antiquarian mode of historical imagination and closely connected to this, the sensibility about the traditional mode of everyday life and the material elements of this environment which were imagined as the sphere of the national essence. Unsurprisingly, the search for a national idiom in domestic architecture through the analysis of its past

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<sup>6</sup> For a comprehensive account of the architectural career of Sedad Hakkı Eldem, see Sibel Bozdoğan et al., *Sedad Eldem: Architect in Turkey*, (Singapore, 1989).

coincided with a spreading concern for architectural patronage in this field. This observation is a key to understand the broad (largely urban middle-class) social basis of the trend which seems to have been influential also on the transformation of the vision of the national past by bringing more sensibility about everyday lives of ordinary people in addition to major historical events.

In the first chapter, I aim to present a more detailed introduction of the question of the relationship between the definition of national identity and the interest in historic residential architecture. I point to the visions fabricated in different contexts, especially before and after the period I focused on, and also review the basic arguments of contemporary scholars about this question. In the second chapter, I analyze a number of texts, produced between 1909 and 1931, as the core material of an inquiry into the meaning of the rising interest in traditional domestic architecture during the period in question. My intention is to locate these texts, by illustrating their main themes, arguments and intertextualities, into the broader development path of the notion of the “Turkish House” as a category of historic heritage and a source of inspiration for architectural practices. After having a close look at the discursive elements of these texts, in the final chapter, I aim to reach a more profound understanding of this phenomenon with references to a wider range of spheres in the same period, such as the place of traditional dwellings and urban ensembles in the imagery of the Ottoman-Turkish painters, the agenda of reinvigorating several traditional crafts and the transformation observed in the modality of historical representations.

## Chapter 1

### The Question of National Identity and the Interest in Traditional Domestic Architecture

#### a. “The Houses of the People of Anatolia:” The Kemalist Vision towards the End of the 1920’s

In his major work *Türk Sanatı* (Turkish Art; 1928), Turkish art historian Celal Esad [Arseven] (1875-1971), concludes the section devoted to the general characteristics of different periods of Turkish art with a criticism of the dominant style of the recent decades, Ottoman revivalist “National Architecture” (“*Millî Mimârî*”). He then discusses the prerequisites of developing a new and alternative program of national architecture.<sup>1</sup> In C. Esad’s periodization, roughly the last half century, starting with the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz and reaching his own day, acquires the name of “The Period of Awakening” (“*İntibah Devri*”), since this was the period when the idea of reviving (*ihyâ*) the art of ancestors instead of following “European Renaissance” first emerged and gained momentum. C. Esad evaluates the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* (published in 1873),<sup>2</sup> the works of Vedad and Kemaleddin Beys, and the employment of this style in a wide range of public buildings with governmental initiative as important cornerstones in the development of the consciousness of national awakening in architecture. However, in the eyes of C. Esad, this movement remained far from the ideal of a modern Turkish national architectural style and he attributes a number of reasons to this failure.

First of all, according to C. Esad, the vision that the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* provided had remained imperfect, because it was not based on adequate historical analysis, and

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<sup>1</sup> Celal Esad, *Türk Sanatı* (İstanbul, 1928), pp.171-182.

<sup>2</sup> İbrahim Edhem Paşa (ed.), *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî/L’Architecture ottomane*, (İstanbul, 1873).

moreover, its scope of interest was confined to the “religious” monuments of Istanbul, completely neglecting the houses of the “people of Anatolia” and the decorative program found in them. Hence, this book could not be a true guide for Turkish architects.<sup>3</sup>

In his view, the failure of prior attempts to fabricate a Turkish national architectural idiom was also largely due to the dominant tendency to reduce national expression simply to the use of certain historic architectural forms such as domes and arches in an anachronistic way. These forms were constructional necessities in the past, and since contemporary technology was radically more developed, these same forms became signs of architectural dishonesty under the new conditions.<sup>4</sup> He declares this attitude as an enemy of ideals of nationality in Turkish architecture, by arguing that constructional rationality was one of the most significant characteristics of Turkish architecture throughout centuries in history.<sup>5</sup> At that point, he proposes an alternative “awakening in national art,” vaguely formulated as “the application of old forms in line with contemporary requirements,”<sup>6</sup> and follows:

In order to do so, rather than being content with the elements and components drawn solely from mosque and tomb architecture, the ones observed scattered in civil architecture and in people’s art are in need to ascend to the platform of art. Their negligence strips new art from a great source of inspiration.

We will undoubtedly create a more national art by analysing the objects and forms used in the houses of the people and by collecting the elements of decoration found throughout Anatolia and finally by transforming them in order to conform to the standards of the contemporary age.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>“ Bâhusûs bu eserde sivil mimârîye ve halkın Anadolu’daki evlerine ve tezyînâtına âid anâsır mühmel bırakıldığından yalnız İstanbul’un dînî mebânîsi hakkında bir fikir veren bu kitâb tam bir rehber olamamıştır.” *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup>“Eskilerin zarûret-i inşâiye olarak kullandıkları kemerler, istitâlât, sütunlar, kubbeler, revzenler, pencereler yeni mimârîde sırf eskiye benzemek için ve hiçbir zarûret-i inşâiyesi görülmeyen yerlerde kullanılmış ve eserlere taklîd ve yalan tesîrini vermiştir. Halbuki asrımız betonarme ve demir inşâât asrı olmak itibâriyle inşâât usûlleri deęişmiş ve Kurûn-ı Vusta’da bir zarûret-i inşâiye olan kemerler, kubbeler, kalın pencereler ve revzenlerin şimdiki mimârîde yeri kalmamıştır.” Celal Esad, *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>5</sup>“Türk Sanatı ise bir maksad-ı inşâiye hizmet etmeyen gayr-i mantıkî olan her şekilden nefret eder.” *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>“eski şekillerin şimdiki ihtiyacâta uyar bir sûretde tatbiki.” *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>“Bunun için de şimdiye kadar olduğu gibi yalnız câmi ve türbe mimârîsindeki anâsıra atf-ı ehemmiyet etmeyib sivil mimârî ve halk sanatında mebzûlen görülen mevzû’ların da artık sanat sahnesine çıkması zamanı gelmiştir. Bunların ihmâli yeni sanatı büyük bir menba’-ı ilhâmdan mahrûm bırakmaktadır. Hiç şübhesiz ki halkın evinde, eşyasında kullandığı ve sevdiği mevzû’ları tedkik etmek ve Anadolu’nun her tarafında mebzûlen tesâdüf edilen anâsır-ı tezyîniyeyi toplamak ve bunları asr-ı hâzıra uyacak şekillere koymakla daha millî bir sanat vücûda getirmiş olacağız.” *Ibid.*

He then goes on by explaining the birth of national architectural traditions (“Renaissances” of different nations) in Europe with the revolutionary dethronement of the authority of religion and the church in social, political, and cultural areas of life, at the end of the Middle Ages. Therefore, secularization appears to be a fundamental issue in the logical path for a true Renaissance in Turkish architecture, as well. In this way, the forms of classical Ottoman architecture are defined as outcomes of not only technological, but also “social” (*ictimâî*) conditions of a pre-modern period, hence material products of a religiously oriented society. Nevertheless, “old art” was still to be a prime “source of enlightenment” (*menba’-ı feyz*) for the future Turkish architecture, in C. Esad’s view. What had to be learned from tradition, however, were not the forms themselves which were meaningless outside their historical context, but the “ideal” (*mefkûre*) and the “spirit” (*rûh*) with which Turkish artists used to create their art throughout history. Defined in quite mystical terms, surprisingly including some references to religious sentiments, the aesthetic sensibility and creativity in the Turkish architectural past, in his words “the artistic mystery, the norms, and the spirit of all previous centuries”<sup>8</sup> could be penetrated only through long and comprehensive studies. The potential outcome of this approach to national architectural heritage is contrasted by the author to the condemned recent designs, sources of which were nothing other than some “colourful albums.”

It is interesting to note that C. Esad severely criticizes the vision of national identity, fabricated “through foreign eyes,” as essentially stuck in an exotic outlook:

When we are about to construct a building today to be in the ‘Turkish Style,’ we actually do not know what we really want. (...) Just as a European cannot conceive a Turk without a turban, breeches and a water-pipe, in the same manner he cannot conceptualise an Oriental building that does not have a dome or a minaret. The interesting thing here, however, is that Europe has managed to spread this way of

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

thinking even to ourselves. We have begun seeing the art of our ancestors with foreign eyes and taste. Even in the ‘Tulip Night’ prepared for recreating the past, the role we assigned to our women wearing breeches and turbans resemble the cover of *Illustration*. The buildings we have constructed under the banner of national architecture resemble the buildings one would come across in the Oriental districts of European exhibitions with their unnecessary domes and meaningless arches.<sup>9</sup>

He concludes this section with his longing for a genius architectural historian, “a Viollet-le-Duc,” who will discover the past of Turkish architecture in comprehensive manner, and provide a new guide for the development of modern Turkish architecture.

Written by a professor of architectural history at the Academy of Fine Arts, this essay reflects the complexity of Turkish architectural culture at the time. In a somewhat ambiguous structure of argumentation, a number of new ideas gaining currency in those years (concerning the vision of architectural past, inclinations in design practices, and the relationship between the two) are expressed in the writing of C. Esad. His discussion includes references to a number of approaches intensely debated at the time of its publication, indicating a significant transformation in the Turkish architectural sphere. One of the major ideas that C. Esad proposes here is to abandon the “National Architecture” based on the revival of forms found in Ottoman monumental/religious architecture, thus advocating a phenomenon actually taking place in architectural practice exactly around the end of the 1920’s. Formulated and practiced in the final decades of the empire as part of the state elite’s agenda of identity-construction, the Ottoman revivalist style preserved its prominent official role as a proper visual language of the nationalist regime in the initial years of the republican period. C. Esad echoes here the atmosphere in which the republican regime began to emphasize the idea of secession from the Ottoman dynastic past stressing instead the secular

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<sup>9</sup> “Bugün bir binâ yapacağımız vakit “Türk üslûbunda olsun”u istemekle berâber ne istediğimizi bilmiyoruz. (...) Bir Avrupalı bir Türk’ü nasıl sarık, şalvar ve çubuksuz düşünemezse bir Şark binâsını da kubbe ve minâresiz tasavvur edemez. Fakat garîbi şu ki Avrupa şu düşünüşünü bize bile sirâyet etdirdi. Ecdâdımızın sanatını yabancı gözle, yabancı zevkle görmeğe başladık. Mâziyi ihyâ için yaptığımız “Lâle Gecesinde” bile sarıklı ve şalvarlı

character of the new system at an unprecedented level. Hence, Esad sees an incompatibility between the new “social” order and references to the forms of Ottoman dynastic/monumental architecture, which were being rapidly eliminated from the vocabulary of practicing architects. As Sibel Bozdoğan clarifies, the “New Architecture” (“*Yeni Mimari*”) which replaced Ottoman Revivalism in the late 20’s and the early 30’s, took its vocabulary largely from “International Modernism” and the new idiom became one of the symbols of the progressive discourse of republican ideology, while the former became increasingly associated with all evils of the *ancien regime*, especially among the professional circles.<sup>10</sup>

However, although the signs of belonging to the international community of modern nations multiplied, with the abolishing of the old script and of “exotic” architectural forms for instance, the search for a proper definition of national architecture remained a primary question in Turkish architectural culture throughout the following decade. C. Esad’s was among several attempts in this direction. It is interesting that while contemporary scholars evaluate Ottoman Revivalism as a result of the modern historical consciousness of the late Ottoman elite and their desire to construct a modern identity through references to a unique vision of history they fabricated in the role of “self-knowing subjects,”<sup>11</sup> C. Esad projects exactly these dynamics to the future program of national architecture, and condemns the identity of Ottoman Revivalism as indistinguishable from the image of the Orient. According to C. Esad, like many of his Turkish contemporaries in the field, simplicity and rationality were the essential characteristics of Turkish architecture in history, distinguishing it from

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kadınlara verdiğimiz vaziyet bir *Illustration* kapağını andırıyor. Millî mimârî diye yaptığımız binâlar, lüzûmsuz kubbeleri manâsız kemerleriyle Avrupa sergilerindeki Şark mahalleleri binâlarına benziyor.” *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan, “Yeni Mimari: Modernist Bir Mesleğin Oluşumu,” in *Modernizm ve Ulusun İnşası: Erken Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi’nde Mimari Kültür*, (İstanbul, 2002), pp. 171-211.

<sup>11</sup> See Ahmet Ersoy, *On the Sources of the “Ottoman Renaissance:” Architectural Revival and its Discourse During the Abdülaziz Era (1861-76)*, Harvard University, Unpublished Ph.D Diss, (2000).

irrational and ornamentalist Arab and Persian traditions.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in his formulation, the future national architecture was going to be modern, rational and certainly devoid of Oriental allusions.

On the other hand, as quoted above, Celal Esad is also representative of a broadening in the scope of studies on traditional architecture through the inclusion of the “houses of the people of Anatolia” as a necessary part of the recipe of developing a true national architecture - indeed as the first item in the list. At this point, we should remember that the idea of analyzing traditional domestic architecture and discovering the principles of this tradition for the sake of developing a modern national idiom was the basic the agenda of “The National Architecture Seminar” initiated by architect Sedad H. Eldem at the Academy of Fine Arts, in 1932. Therefore, in C. Esad’s essay we find a significant forerunner of the career and discourse of Sedad H. Eldem who graduated from this academy exactly the year when *Türk Sanatı* was published. Interestingly, in 1928, C. Esad defines the vernacular tradition primarily as the potential source of decorative designs. Although it is not clear whether he proposes this revival for other typologies as well as house architecture and domestic object designs, his call for an interest in vernacular architecture seems to be meaningful, once again, largely in the context of the Kemalist definition of national culture.

Structured around its chief ideologue Ziya Gökalp’s (1876-1924) views, Kemalist republicanism stressed the contrast between the “official culture” and “people’s culture,” in the Ottoman past. In this view, Ottoman high culture and its products are portrayed as

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<sup>12</sup> Celal Esad, *ibid.*, pp. 3-10.

corrupted with foreign influences, whereas the people's culture was defined as the true source which preserved the national spirit in its purest form.<sup>13</sup>

As S. Bozdoğan notes, the self-identification and legitimization of the new republic was based on some dichotomies. Along with the basic idea of the triumph of novelty and progress over backwardness, the republican discourse also strongly emphasized the contrast between cosmopolitan imperial culture, equated with corrupt dynastic rule, and the moral and cultural superiority of the new regime which was based on the purity of the nation.<sup>14</sup> The latter was also often presented as the rediscovery and the enthronement of "Turkishness." Bozdoğan points at the fact that in this environment, the new capital, Ankara, began to be imagined as a symbol or even the embodiment of these ideals. It is not surprising, therefore, that the urban development and renewal of this town in the heart of Anatolia was one of the foremost sources of pride in the republican discourse. On the other hand, among the numerous studies on traditional domestic architecture that were published in the second half of the 20's we find a number of articles which concentrate on the old houses of Ankara, reminding the possibility of a direct link with this new cult of the Anatolian capital.

An article by Nureddin İbrahim, the author of a number of ethnographic studies and some articles on Seljuk art, published in January 1928, openly expresses this point.<sup>15</sup> The author dwells on the contrast that he supposes to have existed in Ottoman times between the tradition of craftsmen in Ankara and that of the imperial center. In this explanation, due to the indifference of dynastic rule towards the material well-being of "the people" in Anatolia, an autonomous artistic tradition was developed there in the hands of local craftsmen:

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<sup>13</sup> Ziya Gökalp, "Halk Medeniyeti I: Başlangıç," in *Halka Doğru* 14, 10 Temmuz 1329, republished in Ziya Gökalp, *Makaleler VIII*, Ferit Ragıp Tuncor (ed.), (Ankara, 1981), pp. 5-7.

<sup>14</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan, "İnkılap Mimarisi: Devrime Biçim Vermek," in *Modernizm ve Ulusun İnşası: Erken Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Mimari Kültür*, (İstanbul, 2002), pp. 71-121.

In Ottoman times the efforts spent for advancing the works produced in the centres of government could not spread over to Anatolia. The development of genuine Turkish cities was neglected. On the other hand, rather than those artists who made their crafts in much pomp and circumstance in the Istanbul palaces, there emerged among the people of Ankara and its vicinity skilled frescoists who were entirely self-trained.<sup>16</sup>

This statement is fully consistent with the republican discourse as well as historian Akos Moravanszky's observation concerning the discussions about national art in Europe around the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Moravanszky argues that "intellectuals, searching for the roots of national form, identified in almost every country a secluded [...] region as the sanctuary of their identity. A myth-surrounded region was always the heart of the cult..."<sup>17</sup> However, it is impossible to argue that Ankara gained a status parallel with Zakopane and Kalotaszeg in the search for vernacular architecture in the Polish and Hungarian nationalist circles respectively, since N. İbrahim's sloganistic statement above stands alone in the remarkably rich Turkish literature on traditional domestic architecture which appeared in the second half of the 20's. Even among the essays particularly on Ankara houses, we do not find a similar strict polarity constructed between the imperial and local traditions. Architect Hikmet (Koyunoğlu) for instance, sees "private architecture" (*hususî mimarî*) as a tradition that exists along with "official architecture" (*resmî mimarî*) in the hands of rooted nations that "have an art history," and defines it as formed "within the same frame and the same spirit" with the latter, while he attributes the varieties in "private architecture" to the geographical conditions of different regions.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, N. İbrahim too, does not try to explain the characteristics that make the *école* of Ankara distant from its counterpart in the old capital, and apart from the quotation above, his article stands as a quite typical example of the contemporary literature with its subject matter

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<sup>15</sup> Nureddin İbrahim, "Yeni Ankara'da Eski Türk Evleri," in *Yeni Kitap* 9, January 1928, pp. 28-32.

<sup>16</sup> "Osmanlılık edvârında merâkiz-i hükümetde vücûda getirilen eserlerin yükselmesi için sarfedilen mesâî, Anadolu'yu istilâ edemedi. Öz Türk şehirlerinin imârı ihmâl edildi. Buna mukâbil İstanbul saraylarında debdebe ve tantana ile eserlerini meydâna getiren sanatkârların yerine Ankara'da ve civârında kendi tahsîl ve tettebbuâtıyla halk içinde yetişmiş birçok sanatkâr nakkâşlar sahne-i faâliyete geçiyorlardı." *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Akos Moravanszky, *Competing Visions: Aesthetic Invention and Social Imagination in Central European*

and main points. He deals with eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses, an artistic tradition which was no longer alive at the time, and his focus of attention is primarily the decorative program of interiors, especially stucco windows with coloured glasses, fireplaces with stucco reliefs, ceiling and wall ornaments, and some objects such as iron works and chiseling. Therefore, this paragraph seems to be almost artificially added to a text which is otherwise quite consistent with the already well-established genre of writing on the “Turkish House.”

### **b. The Vision of Ottoman Identity in the 1873 Vienna Exposition and “A Dwelling in the Ottoman Style”**

The *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*, commissioned by the Ottoman government and written by Montani Efendi and Marie de Launay, was a part of the Ottoman Exhibition in the Vienna International Exposition of 1873. The content and the discourse of this book and the two accompanying scholarly studies, architecture of the pavillions and the objects in the Ottoman section may be seen as indicative of the imperial elite’s vision of identity and self-representation in that period. As mentioned earlier, the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* was an unprecedentedly comprehensive study on Ottoman architectural history. The creation of this work was a part of the Ottoman ruling elite’s efforts to fabricate a distinctive national identity with references to the dynastic past, and to its material achievements.<sup>19</sup> The “scientific” character of the study in accordance with the norms of the newly emerging discipline of architectural history was crucial in representing this identity as competent with the “cognitive standards” of modern civilization. On the other hand, this study stood as the main theoretical text of the Ottoman revivalist movement in the sphere of architectural practice. According to Ahmet Ersoy, it was actually the refined textual outcome of a strong

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*Architecture 1867-1918* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), p. 248.

<sup>18</sup> Mimar Hikmet, “Ankara Evleri,” in *Türk Yurdu* 17-18/211-212, May-June 1929, pp. 45-47.

inclination already highly productive in the 1860's.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* stands as a decisive text in the development of history writing on Ottoman architecture and in the initial phase of Ottoman-Turkish nationalist architecture.

However, as Celal Esad rightly points at in 1928, the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* totally omits residential architecture from its dynastic narrative, and deals exclusively with monumental architecture. Nevertheless, the program of Ottoman exhibits in 1873 includes an important reference to traditional residential architecture in the form of a pavillion erected according to the proposal of Montani Efendi. The passage quoted by A. Ersoy from Montani Efendi's report concerning the pavillion designs he proposed, submitted in 1871 to the commissions responsible for decision, is invaluable for allowing us to understand his approach towards the question of traditional domestic architecture:

When a house is to be built in Ottoman style ... it is necessary to apply both its organization and its general appearance solely to Ottoman architecture ... to conform its painted decoration and variegation of both its walls and ceilings to the Ottoman style and fashion ... I have myself taken the houses that were built hundred and fifty years ago and examples of which can still be found today in Istanbul as the source of the design of this house. The reason behind this lies in my desire to display the Ottoman architecture as it was, without incorporating anything from European architecture. Since it is still possible to construct elegant buildings in Ottoman architectural style, I have permitted myself to keep this style out of consideration.<sup>21</sup>

In accordance with the dominant discourse in the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*, Montani Efendi idealizes "the pure Ottoman idiom" far from any European influence, in the case of residential architecture as well. His design concerns comprise both questions of structure and planimetry and the style of painted decoration and variegation. His own design for the

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<sup>19</sup> A. Ersoy, *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> "Âdet-i Osmâniyye üzere bir hâne inşâ edileceği zamân ... bunun gerek taksîmâtını ve gerek hey'et-i umûmiyesini yalnız Osmanlı usûl-i mimâriyesine tatbîk eylemek ... gerek dıvarlarının ve gerek tavanlarının boya ve nakışlarını dahı Osmanlı usûl ve âdetine tevfiğ etmek iktizâ eder ... bu hânenin resmine me'haz olmak üzere yüzelli sene evvel isti'mâl olunmakda ve elyevm numûneleri Dersaâdet'de mevcûd bulunmakda olan hâneleri misâl ittihâz eyledim ve bundan murâdım dahı Osmanlı usûl-i mimâriyesini 'alâhâlihi teşhîr edib içine Avrupa usûl-i mimariyesinden hiçbir şey katmamaktır Osmanlı usûl-i mimâriyesiyle pek güzel binalar inşâsı

pavillion which was realized in the exposition, representing an urban dwelling of Istanbul, was modelled after houses that were built, in his words, one hundred and fifty years ago, which roughly corresponds to the 1720's. Unsurprisingly, exactly this period, which later came to be known as the "Tulip Period," was portrayed in the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* as the last epoch of flourishing in Ottoman architecture immediately before the penetration of Western forms with decisively corrupting effects.<sup>22</sup> The most prominent Ottoman pavillion in the Vienna Exposition, on the other hand, was an exact replica of a major monument of the Tulip Period, namely the Fountain of Ahmed III in the vicinity of the imperial gate of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. The fact that Montani Efendi had based this *konak* representation on his studies on the surviving examples of this particular architectural idiom in Istanbul, makes it comparable to the studies held by the team of the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* on monumental works of Ottoman architecture. Moreover, he even refers to the possibility of utilizing this style in designs of new buildings in desired quality - in other words, he calls for a kind of revival. Therefore, Montani Efendi's stance regarding residential architecture appears to be quite parallel with the discourse of the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* concerning Ottoman monumental architecture. However, the complete exclusion of residential architecture from the study published and exhibited, is an obvious evidence that, by 1873, significantly different levels of priority were given to residential and monumental (basically mosques, mausoleums and monumental fountains, since even palatial architecture was omitted in the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*) architectural traditions in the Ottoman elite's agenda of self-representation and artistic reform.

The entrance of this issue into literary and visual spheres of public discussion and its accessibility to wider circles of Ottoman-Turkish society was to take place in the initial

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elhâletü hâzihi mümkün olduğundan bu usûlü nazar-ı ehemmiyetden uzak tutmağı tecvîz etdim." Quoted in A. Ersoy, *ibid.*, p. 85 [ftn. 110].

decades of the twentieth century. In that period, traditional domestic architecture gained a remarkable and broadening emphasis among the subjects of analysis that engaged the Turkish writers interested in exploring the national artistic past. In addition, the necessity of the preservation of valuable surviving examples began to be expressed. Especially by the 1920's a call for a revival of this historic architectural tradition that was to be based on thorough studies on its principles of design began to be voiced at a considerable level in literary media. This steadily growing interest in residential architecture gave its richest products in the 1920's.

The scope of the Ottoman exhibits in the 1873 Exposition, the strategies of self-representation utilized by the Ottoman elite at the time, and the role played by Montani Efendi's house within the totality of the vision formed with these strategies are very useful in order to better comprehend the nature of the growing interest in residential architecture about half a century later. Montani Efendi had initially proposed four items to be built/installed in the exhibition.<sup>23</sup> Among these, there were a village house from the region of Thrace and a cemetery composed of typical Ottoman tombstones, alongside the replica of the Fountain of Ahmed III (which was the main pavillion of the Ottoman section) and the Istanbul dwelling. When the project was reduced in scale because of financial problems, the realization of the former two items was cancelled, probably because they were not seen so favourable or necessary for the representation of the empire. On the other hand, we observe three other pavillions constructed in the exhibition. These were, a kiosk in which objects selected from the imperial treasury were displayed, a coffee house and a "Bazar turc" where several Ottoman souvenirs were sold. In addition, three scholarly works mentioned earlier, one of which was the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*, were among the most crucial components of the

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<sup>22</sup> A. Ersoy, *ibid.*, pp. 256-260.

<sup>23</sup> A. Ersoy, *ibid.*, pp. 84-92.

Ottoman exhibits. The Ottoman section in the Palace of Industry, on the other hand, was filled with various craft objects from around the empire. One of the three scholarly works, *Constantinopel und der Bosphorus*, was an account of the historic monuments and some contemporary edifices of Istanbul by P. A. Dethier, and A. Ersoy evaluates this book primarily as an effort to present the post-Tanzimat identity of the Ottoman state as an enlightened political entity, respectful to the non-Islamic heritage of the empire, since the book included some Byzantine monuments of the capital, as well.<sup>24</sup> The third study, on the other hand, was on traditional costumes in the empire. The *Elbise-i Osmâniyye*, prepared by M. de Launay and Osman Hamdi Bey,<sup>25</sup> was aimed to be a kind of ethnographic study on the ordinary subjects of the empire. Ersoy emphasizes the fact that the genre of costume albums for centuries in the West, was among the forms of representation of different societies and cultures and it occupied a significant place in the visual representations of the Orient, as well. However, *Elbise-i Osmâniyye*, just like *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*, was intended to follow modern scientific methods and conventions “turning what might have been viewed merely as an exotic spectacle into an organized and encyclopaedic whole.”<sup>26</sup> Ersoy takes this study meaningful also in relation with the Ottoman state’s new rhetoric of political participation of diverse groups in the empire.<sup>27</sup> In this way subjects/citizens appear among the reference points of Ottoman proto-nationalism, in addition to the dominant concern for the representation of the past and present of the dynasty. Still, Ersoy finds in this album traces of a relation of alterity and domination between the elite team which prepared the work and the

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95-97.

<sup>25</sup> Osman Hamdi Bey and Marie de Launay, *Binikiyüzdoksan Senesinde Elbise-i Osmâniyye/Les Costume populaire de la Turquie en 1873*, (İstanbul, 1873).

<sup>26</sup> A. Ersoy, *ibid.*, p. 101-102.

<sup>27</sup> A. Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute to Late Tanzimat Ottomanism: The *Elbise-i Osmâniyye* Album,” in *Muqarnas* 20, 2003, 187-207.

ordinary people, especially the most marginal groups like Bedouins, who were objects of display, sometimes in an exoticizing visual language.<sup>28</sup>

In short, the program of Ottoman the exhibits in 1873 was a kind of conglomeration of several objects which were thought to be material embodiments of the imperial/national identity and some narratives concerning them. Here, there are two significant points: The first one is the fact that objects and buildings presented as the material symbols of Ottoman identity were quite parallel with the Western Orientalist imagery about the Ottoman world. All three of the cemetery, the coffee house and the bazaar were some spaces very frequently found in Western visual representations describing the Oriental/Ottoman world. Examples of monumental and residential architecture and people depicted in various costumes were also very prominent elements of this image. Therefore, this exhibition program proves that an appropriation of the Orientalist imagery had provided the basis of reference for the visual repertoire of nationality. In other words, an already existing visual language was utilized as a vehicle of self-identification in the hands of Ottoman agents. An observation that I want to emphasize is the fact that during the initial decades of the twentieth century, a wide range of Western representations, from scholarly works to postcards, seem to have continued to nourish the Ottoman-Turkish nationalist imagery, to a significant extent. As will be discussed in more detail below, this is valid also for the image of residential architecture. On the other hand, the scholarly standards carefully observed in most of the Turkish studies on this subject, produced during the period in question, reveal the essential desire to commit to the virtues of the scientific approach.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

The second significant point about the 1873 exhibition is the definition of Ottoman identity that we can argue the agenda of this display was reflecting. The most central reference points of this identity were, beyond doubt, the dynastic state and “monumental history” which was associated with it. The architectural representations in the exhibition reflect this point very well. Imperial architectural heritage was not only placed at the center of the exhibit with a physical replica of one of its examples, but also further emphasized with a grand scientific narrative which was one of the most important elements of the “message” of the Ottoman State in the exhibition. However, residential architecture, which can be considered as a more “ethnographic” category remained completely outside this narrative. The only physically represented dwelling, on the other hand, was an Istanbul *konak*, that is an instance of the domestic spaces closest to, if not directly belonging to, the imperial elite.<sup>29</sup> The representation of a village house could more easily be sacrificed. At this point, the *Elbise-i Osmâniyye* should be remembered. As mentioned above, the *Elbise-i Osmâniyye* was an ethnographic study, and while introducing the ordinary man into the picture of Ottoman identity, preserved the privileged vantage point of imperial authority.

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<sup>29</sup> At this point we should remember that one of the Ottoman pavillions in the 1867 Paris Exposition was designed with a façade reminiscent of the Tiled Kiosk in the Topkapı Palace and an interior that was probably modelled after the rooms of eighteenth century wooden palaces and *yalis* on the Bosphorus. The program of Ottoman exhibits in this exposition as a whole stands as the forerunner of its counterpart in 1873. The designs of the pavillions were based on historic Ottoman structures built in the periods before the western influence, and among them was a bath which was a popular subject in the written and pictorial representations of the Ottoman empire in the Orientalist sources. See Zeynep Çelik, *Şark'ın Sergilenişi: 19. Yüzyıl Dünya Fuarlarında İslam Mimarisi*, (İstanbul, 2005), pp. 102-111.

**c. The Rise of Antiquarianism and “the People who are Willing to Spend Their Wealth in Construction of a National and Functional House”<sup>30</sup> by the Early Twentieth Century**

It is clear that the “literary public” in Ottoman-Turkish society grew considerably during the beginnings of the twentieth century. As the rapid increase in the number of publications testify, the sphere of political and cultural debates has become accessible to much wider circles of the society. Certainly the development of “heritage ideology” took place in this historical context. It is significant to note that, this “democratization” of the cultural life coincided with the remarkable rise of the reflections of the “antiquarian attitude” in historical representations. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, in the fields of painting, theatre and historiography, subjects related to everyday life in the past progressively gained a more important place besides the important events and figures glorified by nationalist history. I interpret the rise of domestic architecture largely as a reflection of the antiquarian sensibility in the field of architectural historiography which hitherto focused exclusively on monumental architecture.

Friedrich Nietzsche, who has invented this notion, views the antiquarian approach to history as primarily in the service of man’s conservatism, and distinguishes it with the characteristic focus on “[t]he small and limited, the decayed and obsolete,”<sup>31</sup> unlike the focus of monumental history on the great achievements in the past. For him, opposing the “restless cosmopolitan choosing and searching for novelty and ever more novelty,” antiquarians

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<sup>30</sup> A. Süheyl (Ünver), in 1925, defines the creation of a comprehensive account of traditional domestic architecture that he strongly suggests to professional architects as “a duty towards the people who are willing to spend their wealth in construction of a national and functional house.” Ahmed Süheyl, “Türk Evi,” in *Millî Memûa* 41, 15 Temmuz 1341, p. 670. (See Chapter 2).

<sup>31</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* [transl. by Peter Preuss], (Indianapolis, Cambridge, 1980), p. 19.

represented the sentiment of “the contentment of a tree with its roots.”<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Stephen Bann emphasizes that the antiquarians “passionately cared for the neglected and decayed objects that they were salvaging”<sup>33</sup> with the aim of resurrecting the “organic totality” of the past ages in different forms of popular historical representations, including museum displays.<sup>34</sup> Significantly, Bann evaluates the emergence and development of this particular sense of history with reference to the democratization of the “view of the past,” in other words, the growing availability of the historical “prospect” for the bourgeois reading public, especially in the nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup>

Since domestic spaces and related objects were major referents in these efforts to “resurrect” the “texture” of the lived life in the past, the development of Turkish literature on traditional domestic architecture may comfortably be evaluated as a trend closely connected to the antiquarian mode of historical imagination. Moreover, the agenda of developing an idiom for domestic architecture based on the “authentic” forms and characteristics of the national tradition which had decayed in the recent past clearly stands as a significant form of a desire to preserve a link with the milieu of traditional life. On the other hand, the weight of this agenda of artistic reform in the newly emerging literature on traditional domestic architecture is also an indication of the growing public concern for new designs in this field. Uğur Tanyeli’s study on domestic architecture in Istanbul in the twentieth century reveals that a growing involvement of professional architects and engineers is observed in this field,

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Bann, “‘Views of the past’: reflections on the treatment of historical objects and museums of history,” in *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), p. 130.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Bann, “Poetics of the museum: Lenoir and Du Sommerard,” in *The Clothing of Clio*, (Cambridge, 1984).

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Bann, “‘Views of the past’: reflections on the treatment of historical objects and museums of history,” in *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), p. 124.

also involving the design of single-family houses, during the early decades of the century.<sup>36</sup> This trend was also highly visible in older districts that were formerly dominated by wooden structures. At this point, we should also consider Tanyeli's significant emphasis on the fact that "taste" is a basic medium in modern societies for the display of individuality.<sup>37</sup> Tanyeli adds that the idea of proposing new alternatives for condemned idioms is essential for such an aesthetic claim. He points to the importance of this factor behind the desire to replace the "traditional" idiom in domestic architecture with a range of "modern" alternatives, but we can argue that the suggestions for a national revival in this field shares the same point of departure. If we consider the broad public audience that the protagonists of the idea of revival address in this period (see Chapter 2), we may evaluate the rise of the interest in domestic architecture as connected to the reflections of the newly developing middle-class sensibilities in the sphere of cultural life. It seems that, the growing place that the traditional life centered around domestic environment gained in the frame of historical imagination has to be evaluated in the same context of the tendency towards *enbourgeoisement* in the Ottoman-Turkish society. Therefore, the considerable rise of the subject of domestic architecture in Turkish architectural historiography seems to be related to the shift of agency, to an important extent, from the state center to the broader circles of the society in the continuous formation of the heritage ideology. However, it should be underlined that, this development did not challenge the position of the monumental architectural works in the evaluation of the national architectural heritage until the full ascension of the Kemalist ideology to the scene. In addition, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, the important place that the imperial palaces and the vezirial *yalıs* and *konaks* occupied in the writings of the most productive researchers of the period, Ahmed Süheyl Ünver (1898-1986) and Rifat Osman (1874-1933), besides the weight of the modest single-family houses, was due to their associations with the events and

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<sup>36</sup> Uğur Tanyeli, *İstanbul 1900-2000: Konutu ve Modernleşmeyi Metropolden Okumak*, (İstanbul, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

figures of monumental history, and the sophistication of design found in them. This sophistication was to be appropriated in the movement of revival which they envisioned to serve the needs of middle-class patrons in the field of residential architecture.

#### **d. Contemporary Scholars' Accounts of the Development of the Notion of "Turkish House" and the Vision of Sedad Hakkı Eldem**

Historian Carel Bertram presents an account of the meaning attributed to the traditional wooden houses in the Second Constitutional and the Early Republican periods.<sup>38</sup> She rightly observes the symbolic role given to these old-fashioned houses as tokens of national identity due to their associations with the traditional life-style in the past. However in discussing the process of turning this symbol of traditional life into a national symbol, she, quite unconvincingly, attributes a central role to the desire to cultivate a Turkish identity distinct from the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman whole. For her, C. Esad's account of the traditional houses, which was published in 1909,<sup>39</sup> "did not give a national voice" to these houses, simply because he designates them as "Turkish" and "Ottoman" interchangeably.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, she considers the speech given by Hamdullah Subhi (Tanrıöver) on the same subject in 1914 as a true turning point in the nationalization of the discourse on the historic residences, since H. Subhi refers to these houses exclusively as "Turkish."<sup>41</sup> Moreover, she surprisingly fails to realize the weight, in the majority of contemporary sources, of the agenda of reinvigorating various physical components of the traditional domestic environment: an agenda that reflects the crucial aim of contributing to the very survival of the "national essence." In her view, the dominant function of the image of the old houses in the period before S. Eldem was to support the fabrication of the idea of a

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<sup>38</sup> Carel Bertram, *Turkish House, an effort of memory*, UCLA, Doctoral dissertation, (1998).

<sup>39</sup> Djelal Essad, *Constantinople: De Byzance a Stamboul*, (Paris, 1909), pp. 242-251.

<sup>40</sup> C. Bertram, *ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

common national past that binds the members of the nation together. For her, "...these nationalists had truly conceived of 'the Turkish House' as an image in the imagination, for it was not to be rebuilt or restored. Rather, it was conceived of as an inspirational image."<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, for Bertram, the use of the forms of traditional domestic architecture in the 30's "was purely an external message of national identity and national unity."<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, a geneology of the notion of "Turkish House" and its changing meaning in architectural culture was presented by Sibel Bozdoğan and her study provides a significant basis for my inquiry.<sup>44</sup> She does not consider the material I focused on, leaving the period of the 1910's and the 20's as a gap in her account. Therefore, I aim to improve our understanding about the development of the Turkish house notion with a close analysis of the debates that formed around it in this specific period.

In her study, Bozdoğan rightly emphasizes the significance of Western representations in the formation of the notion of "Turkish house." She refers to eighteenth century representations such as Jean Jacques Lequeu's *L'habitation turc*, and especially to the works of nineteenth century artists such as Thomas Allom, William Bartlett and Antoine Ignace Melling. She points at the possibility of a direct role played by Melling's *Voyage Pittoresque* as a source of inspiration for S. Eldem. But views of everyday life and various spaces in Istanbul created by the mentioned nineteenth century artists must have been quite influential in the formation of the collective historical imagination about the pre-modern atmosphere of this city for the Ottoman-Turkish public earlier on, since they and some other Orientalist visual sources were quite often utilized in the Turkish publications of the period I

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 348-350.

<sup>44</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan, "Vernacular Architecture and Identity Politics: The Case of the 'Turkish House'," in *TDSR* 11, 1996, pp. 7-18.

studied. Therefore, Bozdoğan is right in pointing out the crucial contribution of Western representations in what I have defined as the phenomenon by which some artworks and architectural spaces began to be perceived as material embodiments of national identity, or in R. Koshar's words, became a part of "national optics."<sup>45</sup> Still, to state that "the 'Turkish House' was initially a Western construct"<sup>46</sup> may carry this argument too far. Because Ottoman builders and users of the products of this tradition (or regionally diverse traditions) certainly must have had their own commonly held aesthetic and architectural language, standards and abstractions before the issue entered the literary sphere of art history and conservation. It would be a serious mistake to assume that approaching elements of the physical environment (or any other kind of phenomena) with a cognitive "distance" was not something to be expected in any society before the rise of historicism. Certainly defining any tradition with reference to its counterparts elsewhere in addition to references to historical changes, in other words locating it in spatial and temporal tables of knowledge, are distinctively modern ways of thinking and latecomers to the cultural scene. In this sense, Western representations preceded Ottoman-Turkish attempts to construct the idea of the "Turkish House" and certainly this precedence had a serious impact on the latter. This is a relationship that is typical for all non-western contexts. However, we should still be cautious in evaluating the nature of this relationship. It should be well comprehended that not only the sensibility concerning historic house architecture but the development of the idea of architectural heritage can not be seen as a passive emulation of the Western language, since the emergence of these agendas primarily developed as responses to different aspects of the experience of modernity in the Ottoman-Turkish society itself. The question of national identity certainly had a great significance, but equally importantly, as a major characteristic of modernity, the anxiety created by the sense of sudden loss of past tradition, roots, and

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<sup>45</sup> Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill and London, 1998), p. 17.

identity was among the prime motivations behind the large scale documentation and conservation programs held for various elements of traditional material culture. The romantic idea of preserving a “spiritual bridge” with the past through its objects, spaces and images emerged in the Ottoman context as a natural result of the penetration of modernity, comparable to similar cases elsewhere. As emphasized above, movements of architectural revival are meaningful within the same framework. While being conscious about the danger of any oversimplification in historical understanding, I would like to suggest a very broad model for the development of the heritage idea in Turkey and its relationship to Western sources of all kinds. It seems that in the earlier phase of the process, for instance in the program of Ottoman displays in 1873, the “appropriation” of an already established Western imagery with the aim of emphasizing national distinction had been more dominant, whereas in the later decades a strong longing for a disappearing cultural aura and hence its spaces and objects had gradually become more important in heritage ideology. Since heritage ideology had developed in a multi-layered manner, not only the interest in “monumental history” and its relics, but also the power of Western representations (some of which were being newly created) of all kinds had survived. However, these had lost their initial predominance in the later period with the rise of a sensibility that put more emphasis on the past and present of “everyday life,” and I interpret this inclination as a symptom of the penetration of heritage ideology to broader circles of society.

In her study, S. Bozdoğan moves from Le Corbusier’s *Voyage d’Orient* which she views as “a last link” (disregarding a number of European studies on Ottoman house architecture published in those decades) in the long legacy of Orientalist representations, to S. Eldem and others’ approach to the “Turkish House” in the 1930’s. I am going to try to

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<sup>46</sup> S. Bozdoğan, *ibid.*, p. 10.

integrate the European studies of the period into my inquiry, since they were known to and utilized by a local audience, but Ottoman-Turkish figures and their works in this significant phase for the fate of “Turkish house” are definitely going to constitute the focus of my attention and problematization.

S. Bozdoğan’s evaluations are very useful for my purposes, because they provide important questions of analysis and her discussions especially on the 30’s enable me to compare and link the period I studied to its aftermath. Bozdoğan points at the particularities of Le Corbusier’s *Voyage* that set it apart from typical Orientalist accounts. She finds, in Corbusier’s approach, parallels to the approach towards traditional domestic architecture in Turkey in the 30’s:

Notwithstanding its overt Orientalist postures [...] the appreciation of architecture in *Voyage* is still more experiential than stylistic, spatial rather than decorative, and universalist rather than culturally relativist. As such, it provides a precursor to the modernist readings of the vernacular Turkish house that were to be the centerpiece of the nationalist architectural culture of the early Turkish republic.<sup>47</sup>

Bozdoğan emphasizes the fact that forms of Ottoman revivalist architecture, which carried references to the high culture of the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic past, were abandoned around 1930 because they were seen as inappropriate for the identity of the Kemalist Republic and resulted in the penetration of the Modern Movement into the Turkish architectural scene. She argues that due to the inherent contradiction of Kemalist nationalism, in the late 1930’s, with the growing discontent with its cosmopolitan associations, the “cubic architecture” was severely criticized as well, and “in this climate, the Turkish residential vernacular was posited as the most appropriate alternative source of identity.”<sup>48</sup> In her view, “its associations with the rural folk of Anatolia were comfortably distanced from Ottoman palace culture, favorably matching the romantic populism and antiurban sentiments of the

Republic.”<sup>49</sup> She rightly points at the role played in those years by the rising interest in the issues of dwelling and housing, and she relates this also to the reforms of architectural education at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1926, giving an end to the dominant influence of the Beaux-Arts system.

Bozdoğan also makes an important distinction between the two approaches towards the Turkish house in the 30’s, both favoring it as a source to learn from. She finds the first approach in the works and ideas of two Central European architects worked as successive heads of the Architectural Section of the Academy in those years. She emphasizes that in Ernest Egli’s understanding, architectural context was defined without any reference to “culture” or “history” but solely to physical circumstances of nature to which traditional Turkish house was a rational response. Similarly, Bruno Taut used to praise simplicity and utility of Turkish (as well as Japanese) vernacular architecture and he called for the rejection of the stylistic fashion of the “cubic.” Bozdoğan stresses the fact that Taut’s was not a quest for a new Turkish “national style” but an “antistylistic and antichauvenistic posture,” formulated in his statement “all nationalist architecture is bad but all good architecture is national.”<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, Sedad Hakkı Eldem’s stance had an evidently more nationalist tone. Throughout his career Eldem struggled to discover in great detail the formal characteristics of urban dwellings (especially in the regions of Western Anatolia and Thrace, including Istanbul ) such as planimetry, proportion or window order, projections and roofing. In addition, as a renowned architect, he applied the principals extracted from his research and reproduced many of these forms in his designs, always with modern materials and without including elements of ornamentation found in traditional examples. Therefore, Eldem’s

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in S. Bozdoğan, *ibid.*, p. 12.

approach appears to be a more “spatial rather than decorative” approach to the interpretation of the Turkish house, but still his stress on some formal *leitmotifs* made him closer to “stylistic” concerns. This formalist tendency must have been related to his nationalist agenda, whereas his exclusion of ornaments was meaningful primarily in the context of the new “modern” standards of architecture. At the core of Eldem’s discourse was the idea that the basic characteristics of traditional Turkish houses were very close to the ideals of modern architecture. Decades later he summarized this view as follows:

The traditional Turkish house is remarkably similar to the modern conceptions of the house. Ample windows and light, free plan, priority of comfort over ostentatious display, honesty of materials, the relationship of the house to nature through porches, courtyards and gardens.... Aren’t these the very qualities we look for in a modern house?<sup>51</sup>

Along with this idea of the “essential modernity” of the traditional Turkish house, we find Eldem pointing at the supposed superiority of the Turkish nation as evidenced in the historical precedence of these architectural features over their counterparts that emerged much later in modern West.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, as Bozdoğan remarks, towards the end of the 30’s Eldem had called for a strong state support for the development of the new national style. She rightly adds that in the 30’s many theses on vernacular architecture began to be written at Istanbul Technical University, as well. As a result, Bozdoğan locates the rise of residential vernacular as a category to be studied and to emulate especially to late 30’s and views it as closely related to the Kemalist version of Turkish nationalism. However, the corpus of Eldem’s historical studies makes the agenda of the leading figure of this movement seem contradictory in itself, if we accept that a primary objective of the movement was a quest for “associations with the rural folk of Anatolia comfortably distanced from Ottoman palace culture.”<sup>53</sup> In his corpus, however, Eldem gave enormous place to Ottoman palatial

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in S. Bozdoğan, *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in S. Bozdoğan, *Modernizm ve Ulusun İnşası: Erken Cumhuriyet Türkiye’si’nde Mimari Kültür*, p. 285.

<sup>53</sup> S. Bozdoğan, “Vernacular Architecture and Identity Politics: The Case of the ‘Turkish House’,” in *TDSR* 11, 1996, p. 11.

architecture, “kiosks and *kasırs*,” not to mention his preoccupation with the *yalis* and *konaks* of Istanbul alongside more modest urban dwellings, while almost completely disregarding peasant architecture. *Yalis* and *konaks* were among the chief models of his designs as well; actually many of his projects were new examples of these residence types.

In an interview in 1986, S. Eldem reported that during the years when he was a student of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts, he used to spend considerable time and energy to observe and reflect on the architectural qualities of the old houses in Istanbul:

To understand the meaning and the beauty of the materials and to discover a modern character in those old buildings, I was spending all my Sundays and most of the weekdays wandering in the streets of Istanbul...<sup>54</sup>

The remarkable number of Turkish studies on Ottoman traditional domestic architecture, published from 1909 onwards and especially during the 1920’s, reveal that Eldem’s interest in old houses (which determined the main axis of his career in later decades) was certainly part of a broader trend. Moreover, several important constituents of his vision about the nature of Turkish house and its value for contemporary designs, including the idea of “essential modernity” of the national tradition, have precedents in this very literature. On the other hand, except the above mentioned book by C. Esad, none of these texts present the idea of receiving inspiration from traditional domestic architecture as an alternative to Ottoman Revivalism.

In my analysis of the texts that appeared between 1909 and 1931, I am going to dwell on the above mentioned questions such as spatial versus decorative approaches, distance from Ottoman palace culture and definition of residential vernacular as an “alternative” source of identity, in order to illuminate the position of these texts within the broader context

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Sibel Bozdoğan et al., *Sedad Eldem: Architect in Turkey*, (Singapore, 1989), p. 26.

of the historical development of the category of the Turkish house. By doing this, one of my aims is to revise S. Bozdoğan's widely accepted explanation for the fate of Turkish house in the 30's, primarily by recontextualizing the phenomenon of Sedad Eldem through a better understanding of his intellectual precursors. I am going to propose the idea that the discourse of Sedad Eldem was shaped not only under the impact of the Kemalist definition of Turkish nationalism and some western architects like Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, but also, perhaps more importantly, with the legacy of an already remarkably productive interest in traditional domestic architecture. A significant portion of these texts largely differ from the Kemalist cultural ideals in many respects. Through various intertextualities, Eldem's indebtedness to this previous phase, principle representatives of which were Dr. Ahmed Süheyl and Dr. Rifat Osman is evident. By stressing the continuity with the milieu in which documentation activities and discussions on the Turkish house had taken place, (especially in the 1920's when Eldem was a young student of architecture at the Academy) my alternative explanation will put more emphasis on the sensibilities of wider social groups rather than the policies of the state center. By defining Eldem largely as a product of this popular milieu, I also aim to point at the capacity of popular currents to influence state-sponsored, institutionalized cultural investments in those decades.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Main Texts of the Period 1909-1931**

In this chapter, an analysis of the main texts on Ottoman historic residential architecture produced between 1909 and 1931 will be presented in the chronological order. The aim is to shed light on the stances of the authors of these texts with respect to a number of crucial questions that shape the contours of the vision cultivated about this tradition. A basic one among these questions is the place it occupied in the broader vision of historic Ottoman-Turkish architecture vis-à-vis other building types. Some important clues in these texts help us penetrate the social and cultural context in which the significance of residential architecture had grown during the process. The new emphasis on modes of everyday life in the past as a reference point for national identity was decisive behind the growing attachment to the material culture of this environment, and hence the elevation of traditional domestic architecture within the scope of heritage ideology. This attachment is crucial in explaining the increasing weight of the revivalist agenda in the literature of the period, as well. On the other hand, the weight given to its different categories in the efforts of discovery and representation of historic residential architecture, ranging from imperial palaces to peasant architecture, provide valuable insights about the reference points of the vision of national culture and identity. The question of the historicity of the dwelling tradition and the phases of development it underwent gradually attracted more attention in the process. Another question that comes to the fore in this analysis is the relative importance attributed to spatial characteristics and the decorative idiom in historical accounts and in the agenda of artistic reform, since this illuminates the weight of the search for visual icons of national identity vis-a-vis more modernist and universalist readings of Turkish house.

I am going to try to avoid the danger of superimposing a homogeneous outlook to these texts, produced in a long time span and by various authors. Instead, I aim to illuminate different stances and to reflect on the cultural meanings of these different views as crystallizations in the remarkably dynamic cultural atmosphere of the period. Nevertheless, there is no need to undermine the fact that some figures and their ideas appear to have been more prominent in the process. Therefore, we can still try to reach a general historical evaluation without falling into the trap of linear schemes of explanation. In this effort, I find it useful to consider some texts dealing with the traditional urban fabric, of which historic houses were essential components, as well as the *mescids*, since these issues were thought to be akin with the question of domestic architecture by all contemporaries.

#### **a. Hans Wilde and the Houses of Bursa (1909)**

As mentioned earlier, the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* (1873) does not include any discussion of Ottoman residential architecture. In 1906, architect Kemaleddin Bey published a lengthy article on the qualities of Seljuk and Ottoman architectural works,<sup>1</sup> but he does not discuss the subject of vernacular domestic architecture either. The earliest two essays devoted to this subject were published in 1909, both as parts of broader studies. One of them was a chapter in Hans Wilde's book on the Ottoman architectural works in Bursa.<sup>2</sup> Following the sections on other Ottoman building types, where he discusses the general features and major monuments of the Ottoman tradition, Wilde devotes his last chapter before the one on constructional technology to domestic architecture. His study must have taken shape in the context of the rooted interest in non-classical traditions and the widening of the field of

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Kemaleddin, "Mimârî-i İslâm" in *Hüdâvendigâr Vilâyeti Salnâme-i Resmîsi*, (Bursa, 1324 [1906]), pp. 142-187.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Wilde, "Der Wohnhausbau," in *Brussa: Eine Entwicklungsstaette Tuerkischer Architektur in Kleinasien unter den Ersten Osmanen*, (Berlin, 1909), pp. 106-125.

architectural history as to include vernacular architecture in nineteenth century Germany.<sup>3</sup> A summary translation of this detailed chapter and the one on *hans* was published in the Turkish periodical *Yeni Mecmûa*'s special issue on Bursa in 1923.<sup>4</sup> The appearance of this translation is indicative of the remarkable place that the subject of historic house architecture had gained in the Turkish public agenda in those years.

In Wilde's account, the spatial organization and volumetric qualities of the houses and the style of their decoration are given almost equal place. Plans of different floors are closely dealt with alongside the question of uses of different spaces. The rich visual material that accompanies the text includes several scaled plans and a section drawing; most probably these were the earliest published examples of their type describing Ottoman domestic architecture (fig. 1). We can comfortably argue that the universalist approach of an engineer is dominant in his discussions of volumes, spaces and their relationship with gardens and streets. For instance, he pays attention to the widespread use of projecting bays and explains this practice (which reminds him Gothic) by emphasizing the basic rationale behind it, namely the desire to have a better panoramic view from inside the houses and the will to give a more regular geometric shape to the living spaces of houses constructed above masonry basements which followed the borderlines of irregular building plots. He is also interested in the quantity of window openings found in different parts of houses and stresses the dominant role of built-in furniture.

The author's discussion on decoration comprises doors, windows and ceilings. The largest part is devoted to an account of ceiling decoration, where he analyzes forms and

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<sup>3</sup> See Barbara Miller Lane, "National Romanticism in Modern German Architecture," in *Nationalism in Visual Arts*, Richard A. Etlin (ed.), (Hanover and London, 1991), pp. 111-147.

<sup>4</sup> Mühendis ve Doktor H. Vild, "Hanlar ve Evler Hakkında Bir Tetebbu," in *Yeni Mecmûa* 75-9, 1 Mayıs 339-1923, pp. 190-193.

colours in considerable length and distinguishes some design types of this craft. At the beginning of the section on ceilings we find the author echoing typical Orientalist assumptions about the creation and experience of art in the Orient. Having argued that Islamic architecture displays the best creativity in ceiling decorations, he attributes this to particularities of the Oriental life style and follows:

The oriental who has lived in happy times, after finishing his work spends most of his time reclining on his mattress or sofa, resigning himself to a state of serenity and repose, exhilaratingly smoking a water-pipe, and finally as his tired and pleasant glances circulate the room, they naturally would rest on the colorful and ornamented embossments of the ceiling.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that Wilde finds universal virtues in the spatial qualities of the Ottoman houses, but still, he openly interprets the decorative idiom as being a reflection of Oriental/Turkish culture and life style. On the other hand, although he deals with the monuments of specifically early Ottoman Bursa in other sections of his study, the author does not concentrate on any particular period of domestic architecture. The examples that he gives belong to distant points in history, ranging from the early Ottoman period to most recent times. Changes in the characteristics of this craft tradition are not problematized and thus the examined material as a whole appears to belong to a single unchanging idiom. Conceiving domestic architecture as an “ethnographic” category might have been decisive here.

#### **b. Celal Esad’s *Constantinople* (1909)**

The other text on historic Ottoman houses that appeared in 1909 was written by the first Turkish researcher on this subject, Celal Esad (Arseven), and published in French as the last section of the second part of his book on Constantinopolitan architecture in Byzantine

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<sup>5</sup> “Mesûd devirlerde yaşamış olan şarklı işini bitirdikten sonra evinde, vaktinin büyük bir kısmını minder veyâ sofasına uzanıp istirahatla bir taraftan çubuğunu içerek “keyf” tesmiye ettiği sükûn ve istirahata kendini terk ettiği zamân, yorgun ve hûlyâlı nazarları bir müddetcik etrâfi dolaşdıktan sonra tabiatıyla tavanın renkli ve süslü kabartmalarında dinlenir.” *Ibid.*, p. 191.

and Ottoman periods respectively.<sup>6</sup> The initial sections of this second part which is devoted to Ottoman architecture were already published in Turkish on the daily newspaper *İkdam* in 1906-07.<sup>7</sup> In the French edition, it is noted that the book was translated by the author from Turkish. Thus, it seems that the initial three articles that appeared in *İkdam* were to be followed by subsequent sections had the series not been interrupted. The first part of C. Esad's *Constantinople*, dwelling on Byzantine monuments, was published in Turkish in 1914,<sup>8</sup> whereas the latter part on Ottoman Istanbul may be considered the basis of his *Türk Sanatı* (1928). Sections on vernacular domestic architecture in his two books bear some similarities as well as differences.

C. Esad was the son of Ahmed Esad Paşa. Having graduated from the Military Academy, he was appointed as the aide of Sultan Abdülhamid II. During and after the years when he was a student at the Military Academy, where he became a pupil of painter Hoca Ali Rıza (see Chapter 3), he was interested in painting. He worked at some important positions of the Istanbul Municipality and became the mayor of Kadıköy in the 1910's. He was a member of the Committee of the Preservation of Historic Works (*Muhâfaza-i Âsâr-ı Atika Encümen-i Dâimîsi*), which was founded in 1917, and appointed as a professor of architectural history at the Academy of Fine Arts after the proclamation of the republic.<sup>9</sup>

In his memoirs, C. Esad informs us that his researches on the architectural heritage of Istanbul, which paved the way for the book that was published in 1909, had begun in the first years of the 1900's when he decided to prepare an entry to the project competition for

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<sup>6</sup> Djelal Essad, *Constantinople: De Byzance a Stamboul*, (Paris, 1909), pp. 242-251.

<sup>7</sup> Celal Esad, "Arab Sanâyi-i Nefîsesi," in *İkdâm*, December 18, 1906; Celal Esad, "İran ve Türk Sanâyi-i Nefîsesi," in *İkdâm*, December 24, 1906; Celal Esad, "Osmanlı Mimârîsi," in *İkdâm*, January 3, 1907.

<sup>8</sup> Celal Esad, *Eski İstanbul: Âbidât ve Mebânîsi*, (İstanbul, 1909).

<sup>9</sup> Celâl Esad Arseven, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım*, Ekrem Işın (ed.), (İstanbul, 1993).

the Ottoman section to be built in the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904.<sup>10</sup> The content of the project, which was determined before the competition, was basically a representation of daily life in Istanbul. C. Esad defines it as “a representation of Istanbul with its houses, shops, market place and people in Turkish costumes, like the city of Venice as it was reproduced in Vienna.”<sup>11</sup> We learn from the “World's Fair Bulletin” that C. Esad's architectural designs comprised eleven sections of streets in the Grand Bazaar (*Kapalıçarşı*) of Istanbul besides a typical Turkish street outside of it.<sup>12</sup>

The contents of C. Esad's 1909 book reflect his vision about the hierarchy of the categories of national architectural heritage and also the fact that the concern to address the Orientalist imagery of a Western audience was quite influential in his agenda of self-representation at the time. Major sultanic mosques, unsurprisingly, are given prominence in the text and followed by fountains, the second building category extensively dealt with in the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*. Then, he gives place to descriptions of cemeteries, baths and the Grand Bazaar respectively, the three major themes recurrently found in visual and written representations of Istanbul in Orientalist sources. The place given to cemeteries among “les edifices Ottomans” (the third among seven items) reveals, in my view, the author's willingness to communicate with his audience largely within the framework of their exoticist expectations. A similar concern must have been influential in the determination of the program of Ottoman exhibits in St. Louis by the government. Still, the exclusive focus on the spaces of ordinary people might also have been related to the growing weight placed on everyday life and material culture in nationalist historical imaginary.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> “The Bazaars of Stamboul,” in *World's Fair Bulletin*, July, 1903, pp. 35-36.

The final two sections of the book are devoted to imperial palaces and neighborhood dwellings respectively. Unlike the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*, C. Esad's study included palatial architecture. In the section on palaces, the author criticizes the architectural features of nineteenth century palaces, Dolmabahçe and Yıldız, as deviations from the essence of Ottoman architecture, and evaluates the Çırağan as an experiment in the renaissance of Ottoman art (in line with the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî*).<sup>13</sup> The initial and the most extensive part of his section on Istanbul palaces is a description of the Topkapı Palace.<sup>14</sup>

At the very beginning of the section "L'Habitation," he claims that one can distinguish two genres in Ottoman architecture: "religious" and "civil." Immediately following this observation, he remarks that it is possible to discover the periods of the religious genre whereas it is not the case for the latter since its products suffered from the devastating effects of time. Still, in his view, surviving structures or their vestiges in Bursa and other towns of Asia Minor could give an idea about early Ottoman residences. With this willingness or at least a future hope, to come up with a periodization of domestic architecture, C. Esad differs from H. Wilde. His willingness implies a consciousness about a tradition that had underwent changes throughout history. In this way, the tradition appears as a category of historical as well as ethnographic inquiry. The historicity of domestic architecture is expressed with references not only to the recent process of corruption, but also to phases of its development in the distant past. However, in the two decades that followed, discussions on domestic architecture were to remain around the basic dichotomy of "uncorrupted Ottoman-Turkish houses" and "the inferior products of modern times that replaced them." An extensive effort to distinguish different periods other than these two did not take place in the texts before the year 1931. C. Esad's reference to the use of Byzantine

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<sup>13</sup> Djelal Essad, *Constantinople: De Byzance a Stamboul*, p. 238.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 232-237.

dwelling after the conquest, and his argument about the possibility of a link between the *cumbas* of Istanbul houses and the projecting bays of Byzantine buildings,<sup>15</sup> may be seen as efforts to penetrate the very origins of the Ottoman vernacular tradition. But the most interesting idea that he puts forward about the origins of forms in traditional houses is that the characteristic form of roofs seems to have roots in Chinese architecture, which in turn is related to nomadic tents. Thus, the Inner Asian roots of Turks are attributed a role in the development of residential architecture in Asia Minor, already in 1909.<sup>16</sup>

Like Wilde, C. Esad extensively describes the typical spatial configuration and plans of traditional dwellings. He emphasizes the fact that rooms, the basic units of these houses, are undifferentiated in their furnishings. It is interesting to note that his text is almost indifferent to the question of decoration and does not address the style(s) employed in ornament. On the other hand, C. Esad deals with the details of the configuration of room interiors and some domestic objects in the manner of ethnographic description. Niches used for water jugs and vases, organization of kitchens which are “radically different from their Western counterparts,”<sup>17</sup> or the way in which tables are set with *sinis* and beds prepared with mattresses in traditional *wohnkultur* occupy a significant place in his descriptions. Long tobacco pipes (*çubuks*), calligraphic works and shelves used for *kavouks* are also mentioned in his descriptions, reminiscent of the weight of the Orientalist imagery which does not seem to have been dominant in his rendering of domestic architecture.

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<sup>15</sup> Celal Esad, *Türk Sanatı* (İstanbul, 1928), p. 116. This must be related to the idea that some old masonry houses in Galata and in some districts on the Golden Horn reflect the characteristics of Byzantine domestic architecture. This idea was expressed in L. de Beylie’s *Les anciennes maisons de Constantinople*, (Grenoble, 1903).

<sup>16</sup> The theme of the Inner Asian roots of Turks has found place in the textbooks of the national education system of those years, as well. See Ahmed Refik, *Küçük Tarih-i Osmânî* (İstanbul, 1328).

<sup>17</sup> Djelal Essad, *ibid.*, p. 246.

One other feature of these old houses that C. Esad views as connected to the *wohnkultur* of their residents is the abundance of windows. He notes that this abundance was a desired quality because Turks had always been aware of the good effects of light and air on health and thus demanded as many windows as the façades allowed. He adds that the hygienic nature of this disposition found parallel in contemporary European domestic architecture and claims that façades of modern English houses displayed a similarity with Turkish houses with their large number of windows. The German architectural theorist Hermann Muthesius' groundbreaking study *Das englische Haus* (1904-05)<sup>18</sup> which contributed much to the development of avant-garde modernism by pointing at English residential vernacular as an ideal source to learn from,<sup>19</sup> must have been influential on this early claim that traditional Turkish houses shared some qualities with the ideals of modern domestic architecture, since an ideal relation with light and air that Muthesius finds in English houses was an important part of his discourse. It is clear that in the following decades, Muthesius' work was widely known and most probably perceived as a model study among Turkish intellectuals who had given a significant place in their agenda to the question of domestic architecture. The contribution of Muthesius to the development of the literature on Turkish house will be dealt with in more detail below.

One additional observation about C. Esad's text is that the author does not give more weight either to *konaks* or *evs*, and he points to the similarity of the essential architectural features of the two types despite the difference in dimension. At the end of the section he emphasizes that dwellings in the idiom that he described in detail had almost disappeared in

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<sup>18</sup> Hermann Muthesius, *Das englische Haus: Entwicklung, Bedingungen, Anlage, Aufbau, einrichtung und Innenraum*. 3 vol.s (Berlin, 1904-1905).

<sup>19</sup> See Stanford Anderson, "Style-Architecture and Building Art: Realist Architecture as the Vehicle for a renewal of Culture," introduction to Hermann Muthesius, *Style-Architecture and Building-Art: Transformations of Architecture in the Nineteenth Century and its Present Condition*, (Santa Monica, 1994), pp. 1-43.

Istanbul, and condemns houses of the recent decades as “tasteless” structures.<sup>20</sup> C. Esad mentions some districts in the old town and especially a number of Bosphorus villages where some surviving examples could be found and particularly refers to the *yalı* of Prince Ypsilani which was being used as the French Embassy at the time where “the French had proven their character of being sensitive about preservation of valuable art works.”<sup>21</sup> In short, the idea of the corruption of the exalted vernacular idiom in recent times is a central theme in C. Esad’s text, which interestingly lacks in Wilde’s account. This theme was to remain as the backbone of Turkish literature on the subject in the following two decades. The written and visual descriptions by C. Esad promote the idiom of eighteenth and early nineteenth century dwellings of Istanbul as the uncorrupted form of Turkish house (fig. 2 and 3).

### c. Abdurrahman Şeref and the Topkapı Palace (1911-12)

Works of Ottoman palatial architecture attracted considerable attention and gained a prominent place in the Turkish literature on built heritage in the 1910’s and the 20’s. Historian Abdurrahman Şeref’s (1853-1925) extensive study on the Topkapı Palace, serialized in the *Târîh-i Osmânî Encümeni Mecmûası* in 1911 and 1912,<sup>22</sup> should be remembered in this respect.<sup>23</sup> Abdurrahman Şeref was the first chairman of The Committee of Ottoman Historians (*Târîh-i Osmânî Encümeni*) which was established in 1909 and this periodical was the official publication of this committee from 1911 onwards. Among the

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<sup>20</sup> Djelal Essad, *ibid*, p. 247.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>22</sup> Abdurrahman Şeref, “Topkapı Sarây-ı Hümâyûnu,” in *Târîh-i Osmânî Encümeni Mecmûası* 5-12 (1326-27/1911-12).

<sup>23</sup> Around the same years, amateur researcher Dr. Rifat Osman has written a monumental study on the history and architecture of the Edirne Palace, which remained unpublished until 1957. (Dr. Rifat Osman, *Edirne Sarayı*, Süheyl Ünver [ed.], [Ankara, 1957]). Dr. Ahmed Süheyl (Ünver) published a summary of R. Osman’s manuscript in 1923: Ahmed Süheyl, “Edirne Sarayı” in *Yeni Mecmua* 86, 15 Teşrin-i Evvel 1923, p. 409-411. We may also mention Ahmed Refik’s article “Bağdat Köşkü,” (in *Yeni Mecmua* 15, 18 Teşrin-i Evvel 1917, pp. 288-92) and Mehmed Refik’s articles on three edifices in the Topkapı Palace: “Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn Devâir-i Aliyesinden: Arz Odası,” in *Târîh-i Osmânî Encümeni Mecmûası* 38, 1 Haziran 1332, pp. 110-116; “Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn Kütübhânesi,” in *Târîh-i Osmânî Encümeni Mecmûası* 40, 1 Teşrin-i Evvel 1332, pp. 236-241; “Topkapı Sarây-ı Hümâyûnu’nda: Sofâ=Mustafâ Paşa Köşkü” in *Târîh-i Osmânî Encümeni Mecmûası* 46, 1 Teşrin-i Evvel 1333, pp. 209-214.

articles published in this periodical in the 1910's we find a remarkable number of studies on the inscriptions found in buildings and on other kinds of artworks such as *minbers* and studies on numismatics alongside articles that narrate important historical events based on primary sources. Extensive research on ancient inscriptions, especially by Halil Edhem [Eldem] (1861-1938), the director of the Imperial Museum at the time, and some other figures, were based on the rooted understanding of inscriptions as crucial sources of historical knowledge. This corpus helped the broadening of public imagination of the national past as to include Turcoman Emirates and the Rum Seljuk State. It also contributed to the perception of a wide range of historic buildings as “monuments” of the national past. Abdurrahman Şeref's monumental study on the Topkapı Palace, the center of the Ottoman state for centuries, is the longest account of a group of architectural works that appeared in *Târîh-i Osmânî Encümeni Mecmûası*. The contribution of this leading historian of the time to the literature on architectural heritage with this extremely detailed study deserves a close attention.

At the very beginning of his text, A. Şeref defines the aim of his work as describing the palace as it stood at the time and, in addition, to narrate some “historical reminiscences” about these spaces. One of the basic features of Abdurrahman Şeref's study is the centrality of a full account of the inscriptions found in the palace. He presents his account of these spaces and inscriptions in a spatial order. A. Şeref frequently refers to aesthetic qualities and artistic talent observed in various spaces of the palace as important elements of his account of this most representative monument of Ottoman imperial history. In many cases, his descriptions of this kind are expressions of admiration for these artworks in an amateur tone and far from questions of art historical analysis.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, we find some evidences

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<sup>24</sup> His description of the arcade behind *Bâbü's-selâm* may be given as an example: “Orta kapudan girilince Târîh-i Atâ'nın Eski Dîvân Yeri tesmiye eylediği mermer sütunlu ve sakıflı müzehheb ve musanna ve divarları

of the author's familiarity with the questions and the terminology of the studies on Ottoman art, especially in his description of the Harem.<sup>25</sup> In his description of the palace's topography (including some non-existent structures) he extensively uses some primary sources such as the ones by Tursun Beg or Atâ Beg as well as oral testimonies of some surviving servants of this old palace. Primary historical sources provide the basic information that the author conveys about another focus of this text as well, namely the places of particular structures and spaces in the functional organization and the ceremonial of the palace and in the life of its inhabitants. In this way, this long study acquires the character of an account of some institutional aspects of Ottoman imperial history in accordance with the basic identity of the periodical. In addition, the palace appears as the stage of these occasions and the important historical events which are narrated in relation to particular spaces they had taken place. As far as it is observed in various texts of the period, such as some articles of the leading popular historian of the period Ahmed Refik Altınay (1880?-1937), it may be argued that this perception of some historic buildings in connection with reminiscences of the grand narrative of Ottoman history and its leading figures had a significant, if not primary, role in the development of architectural heritage idea in Turkey. Significantly, A. Süheyl (Ünver), in 1923, finds a crucial virtue of Rifat Osman's study on the Edirne Palace, the finished manuscript of which was an important counterpart of A. Şeref's study, but remained unpublished until 1957,<sup>26</sup> in its quality of visualizing the physical environment of important phases and events of Ottoman history:

This study opened a new road in our histories. Our histories deal solely with the affairs of individuals. The environment in which they lived was not revitalized. The illustrated studies like this one will without a doubt revitalize these phases and

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İstanbul ve sâire mesîrelerinin menâzırıyle münakkaş ve müzeyyen, tarz-ı mimârîsi güzel ve muhteşem bir mahall-i müferrah şâyân-ı temâşâdır." Abdurrahman Şeref, *ibid.*, p. 333.

<sup>25</sup> For instance in his description of the *Şehzâdegân Dâiresi*, he notes that the tiles found in this unit of the palace display instances of all epochs of the Ottoman tile industry: "Burası çinilerin yalnız yeşil ve bilâ-nakş olanından tablo hâlinde nukûşu hâvî ve rengârenk olanına kadar yani bizde çinicilik sanatının edvâr-ı evveliyesinden terakkiyatının derece-i nihâyeye vâsıl olduğu zamâna kadar bütün numûnelerini hâvidir." *Ibid.*, p. 591.

<sup>26</sup> See footnote 23.

especially the samples of edifices included in the palace will be accurate and beautiful models to our national architecture and painters.<sup>27</sup>

#### **d. Hüseyin Zekai Paşa and “Old Style Pompous Dwellings” (1913)**

Painter and antiquarian Hüseyin Zekai Paşa’s book *Mübeccel Hazîneler* (1329/1913) composed of several essays may be considered as another significant source that provides an idea about the scope and the content of the architectural heritage ideology at the time. Zekai Paşa (1860-1919) was among the important “soldier painters” of his generation and he was also known for his interest in antiquities. He had accompanied the German Kaiser in his journey to Syria as an inspector of antiquities, he was appointed to the membership of The Committee of Fine Arts (*Sanâyi-i Nefîse Encümeni*) in 1917.<sup>28</sup> Zekai Paşa presents his book as a study on the Ottoman historic monuments that he defines as “the artful and embellished foundations [...] which are the signs of the ancestors’ life style and their admirable traditions of civilization.”<sup>29</sup> He points at his ideal of determining the artistic values of these abundant artworks through meticulous research, and the major aim that he attributes to this kind of a program is to carry out conservation policies based on these extensive studies. The idea of contributing to the development of public consciousness on the conservation of historic heritage occupies a central place in the agenda of Zekai Paşa. He evaluates this consciousness as a crucial component of “civilization,” and calls for a stronger movement to prove, in the eyes of foreign peoples, the conformity of the Ottoman society with this requirement of civilization.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> “...tarihimizde bu eser bir çığır açtı. Târîhimiz yalnız eşhâsın ahvâline bâhîstir. Yaşadıkları muhît canlandırılmamıştır. Bu gibi resimli eserler şüphesiz o safhaları canlandıracağı gibi bilhâssa sarâyın muhtevî olduğu binâların örnekleri de millî mimârîmize ve ressâmlarımıza pek doğru ve güzel bir numûne olacaktır.” Ahmed Süheyl, “Edirne Sarayı” in *Yeni Mecmûa* 86, 15 Teşrin-i Evvel 1923, p.411.

<sup>28</sup> Şehâbeddîn, “Zekai Paşa,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 16, 12 Haziran 1340, p. 253.

<sup>29</sup> “...ecdâdımızın alâyim-i ef’âl-i hayâtiye ve nişâne-yi me’ser-i medeniyeleri olan [...] müessesât-ı musanna’a ve müzeyyene...” Ressâm Zekâî, *Mübeccel Hazîneler*, (Dersâadet, 1329), p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

His essays comprise a wide range of subjects including the major mosques of Istanbul and Bursa, fountains and *sebils*, old cemeteries and city walls of Istanbul, castles on the Bosphorus, ancient ruins of Troy and Baalbek and Seljuk art. It is interesting to find an essay on an “old style” (*kâr-ı kadîm*) dwelling among these short chapters.<sup>31</sup> This essay should be considered together with the two preceding essays on “arabesque”<sup>32</sup> and “Ottoman”<sup>33</sup> decorative styles and the one on questions of conservation that follows it.<sup>34</sup> In this essay, Zekai Paşa describes the decoration of a grand room of this dwelling that he had the opportunity to observe while the dwelling was being demolished, about twelve years ago, and he narrates how he could not prevent valuable pieces of this room from being destroyed.

In the first of these essays the author defines the Arabesque as above any other decorative style and complains about the fashion of Art Nouveau, a style that he views as not even comparable to the former.<sup>35</sup> In the second essay, he defines Ottoman decorative style as another important school and praises especially stucco and woodworks created in this idiom. He goes on with a description of this style where he emphasizes ceiling designs, mural paintings and chiseling works. He expresses his wish to see a good instance of rooms in this idiom as a site displayed to the public in order to improve consciousness and taste about this artistic genre.<sup>36</sup> He concludes by condemning the indifference towards the dwellings that house these qualities that are either left to be destroyed by fires or demolished by people themselves who did not recognize their value.

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<sup>31</sup> “Kâr-ı Kadîm Bir Hâne,” pp. 26-31.

<sup>32</sup> “Arabeskî Üslûb Müzeyyenâtı,” pp. 22-23.

<sup>33</sup> “Tarz-ı Tezyînât-ı Osmâniye,” pp. 24-26.

<sup>34</sup> “Emr-i İdârede Dikkat Olunması Lâzımadan olan Bazı Husûsât,” pp. 31-39.

<sup>35</sup> “Şurasını dahi beyâna hâcet yokdur ki Arnuvo tesmiye olunan tarz-ı tezyînin arabeskî usûl-i müzeyyenâtı nezinde kâle alınması bile gülünc bir keyfiyet olur.” p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> “...gayr-i kâbil-i tavsîf bir güldeste hâne-i nazar-ribâ şeklini ahz eder ki insân böyle bir mevkii tenvîr ve teâlî-i efkâr için ihzâr kılınmış bir meşher-i bedîyyât hâlinde görmek ister.” p. 25.

The subject of the following essay is an “old style pompous dwelling” and Zekai Paşa evaluates the artistic creations housed in it as “an appearance of the ideas of ancestors.”<sup>37</sup> In addition, he claims that these artworks had the potential of providing a guidance to contemporary designs in Ottoman architectural style. Then, he deals with the details of this grand room’s decoration including garland forms and mural landscapes. Having narrated the fate of the room’s pieces, he concludes this section with reference to another “old style rich dwelling,” a “monument of elegance,” the *yalı* of Amucazade Hüseyin Paşa and stresses the necessity of the conservation of the invaluable Ottoman style interior decoration found in this *yalı*. In the next section, where he discusses official measures to be taken, concerning the issue of conservation, he defends the expropriation of art pieces in dwellings to be demolished and repeats his proposal for their display in public exhibitions in museum collections with the aim of enlightening the people.<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note that Zekai Paşa differs from C. Esad by being interested exclusively in the interior decorations of old houses. Conservation, exhibition and revival of this idiom are essential elements of his agenda. The centrality of his stress on the revival of the old idiom for interior designs might be connected to an already existing trend observed in an important number of domestic interiors created in the Ottoman capital when different versions of Islamic-Ottoman revivalism was dominant in the sphere of architecture between 1860 and 1930. Most probably following the example of the Çırağan (1871) and Beylerbeyi Palaces (1865), several *konaks* and *yals* constructed in this period were embellished with ornaments, especially ceiling designs, closely resembling the models found in the *Usûl-i*

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<sup>37</sup> “...seleflerimizin tulûât-ı fikriyeleri olan âsâr-ı sanat...” p. 26.

<sup>38</sup> “...müze ve meşher-i nefâis olan mahallerde istifâde-i umûmiyenin temîni maksadıyla enzâr-ı halka irâe edilmiş olsa memleketimizde sanâyi-i nefîsenin aksâm ve şu’bât-ı muhtelifesine mensûb mütehasıslar ve amatörler bulunduğu cihetle zikrolunan eşyânın teşhîrinde bu misillü heveskârân ve alâkadârân-ı ma’rifetin tenvîr-i efkârına hıdmet edilmiş olacağı...” p. 32.

*Mimârî-i Osmânî* with their forms and colours.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, a furniture style based on many of these stylistic elements had emerged in this period. Zekai Paşa's writings helps to understand the approach of patrons and amateurs towards this style at the beginning of the twentieth century. Zekai Paşa's aim concerning residential architecture is to contribute to the strengthening of this trend, to enlarge its basis of inspiration with authentic examples and to publicize it to the broadest possible audience. It should be strongly underlined that the proposal of public exhibitions clearly reveals the scale of the audience of this movement at that date. On the other hand, it is surprising to note that Zekai Paşa does not distinguish "classical" Ottoman style decorative program and its successor where Baroque and Rococo forms were used in configurations similar to the former. Unlike Montani Efendi, he frequently refers to forms borrowed from Western vocabularies (although without designating them as "Western") as elements of the ideal idiom. The evaluation of Western decorative forms appears as a question on which a consensus is not found in the texts of the 1920's.

#### **e. The Türk Ocağı Circle in the 1910's**

The idea of public education about domestic architecture was discussed in the 1910's in the *Türk Ocağı* circle, as well. We learn from Yahya Kemal (Beyatlı) that during the war years he and Hamdullah Subhi (Tanrıöver) had discussed the possibility of initiating comprehensive studies by Turkish architects to help the "conceptualization" of the "new Turkish house" as in the case of "English house." The outcomes of these researches were to be published in the press in order to stimulate a public consciousness about the "plan and style" of the new house designs to be commissioned by citizens:

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<sup>39</sup> See Turgut Saner, *19. Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarlığında "Oryantalizm"*, (İstanbul, 1998).

...we are longing for a new Turkish house. Which architect of ours is going to make this dream come true? We wanted to bring to life such an idea seven or eight years ago with Hamdullah Subhi; we desired that the Turkish architects would assemble and conceptualize a 'Turkish House' much like the 'English House' in line with the new Turkish way of life.

The outcome then would be engraved onto the dream of every Turk through the written press. (...) As a result, in the new life, a new house would come into being.<sup>40</sup>

The reference to the investigation of "English house" as a model clearly reveals the impact of Muthesius. Since Muthesius' vision of modern architecture excluded the use of ornaments,<sup>41</sup> the project envisioned in the *Türk Ocağı* circle at the time must have been sensitive about questions other than interior decoration, as well.

*Türk Yurdu*, the journal of the *Türk Ocağı*, published an article by Tevfik Nureddin entitled "Old Istanbul," in 1328/1912.<sup>42</sup> The author has written a number of articles for the same journal on the subject of national economy, but this essay appeared in the "Geography and Ethnography" section. The first part of the essay discusses old houses of Istanbul and the second part deals with another ethnographic subject, namely the particularities of the local linguistic accent used by the inhabitants of the city. In the part on the old houses, he mainly criticizes the rejection of the idiom in domestic architecture which carried the national taste and spirit for the sake of emulating Europe around mid-nineteenth century. For him, with the condition of "improvement" (*tekemmül*), this idiom had to be preserved, although he does not explicitly refer to the possibility of a revival after an interval. At this point, it is crucial to note that the reason he attributes to the necessity to preserve this idiom is the fact that it represented the life of the past centuries and the aesthetic sensibilities of ancestors. On the

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<sup>40</sup> "Bununla berâber yeni bir Türk evine müştâkız. Hangi mimârımız bu güzel hayâle vücûd verecek. Yedi sekiz sene evvel Hamdullah Subhi ile böyle bir fikri kanadlandırmak istiyorduk; arzu ediyorduk ki Türk mimârları toplansın, Türk'ün yeni hayâtına göre "İngiliz Evi" gibi bir "Türk Evi" tasavvur edilsin. Bulunacak neñice matbûâtda her Türk'ün hayâline nakş edilsin. (...) Hasılı yeni hayâtda yeni bir ev tecellî etsin." Quoted in Dr. Rifat Osman, "Edirne'de Türk Evleri," in *Milli Mecmû'a* 74, 15 November 1926, p. 1195.

<sup>41</sup> S. Anderson, *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Tevfik Nûreddîn, "Eski İstanbul," in *Türk Yurdu* 16, 14 Haziran 1328 [27 June 1912], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), vol. 1, (Ankara. 1998-), pp. 269-271.

other hand, he underlines the inability that the “middle class” had displayed to preserve their national taste, due to the harmful example of the upper classes in their patronage of residential architecture:

Since this architectural style represents the old life style of several centuries and illustrates the aesthetic sensibility of our ancestors, with the condition of improvement it had to be preserved.

While statesmen remained far from the sensibility and taste of Turkishness, middle-class people could not display their national conscience. Indeed, that national conscience could not grow. And thus old Galatan edifices have started to surround Istanbul.<sup>43</sup>

The way in which the author describes the architectural features of this idiom is also worth to dwell on. He historically locates the national idiom of domestic architecture to the period until the mid-13th century of the Islamic calendar, or the time of Sultan Mahmud II. He refers to the French Embassy at Tarabya as a representative example of this style. Another point that he echoes C. Esad’s 1909 account of traditional domestic architecture is the author’s reference to the use of frequent and wide windows on the façades, a “modern” feature of these houses according to C. Esad. T. Nureddin also refers to the disappearance of gardens in the process of decay. It is interesting to note that, as an amateur researcher, he suggests an explanation for the initial appearance of smaller *cumbas* by connecting it to the emergence of houses built adjacent to others, and dates it to the period of Sultan Abdülmecid. For him, simplicity was a basic characteristic of house exteriors and interior designs and he shortly dwells on the talent that craftsmen displayed on their ceiling designs and chiseling works.

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<sup>43</sup> Bu tarz-ı mimarî, birkaç asrın hayat-ı güzêştesini canlandırdığı ve dedelerimizin fikr-i bedî’ a-perestîsini hikâyeye ettiği için, tekemmül etmek şartıyla muhafaza olunmalıydı. (...) Devlet ve orta sınıftan yüksek düşünen devlet adamları Türklük hissinden, Türklük zevkinden uzak ve gafil kaldıkça orta sınıf ahâli de vicdân-ı millîsini gösteremedi. Daha doğrusu o vicdan neşv ü nemâ bulamadı. Ve böyle eski Galata binâları İstanbul’u ihata etmeye başladı. *Ibid.* p. 270.

Also in *Türk Yurdu*, we find a speech given by Hamdullah Subhi (Tanrıöver) about old houses, published in 1329/1914.<sup>44</sup> At that time, H. Subhi was the president of the *Türk Ocağı*, a leading nationalist organization which concentrated on cultural issues. H. Subhi worked as a teacher of Islamic, Seljuk and Ottoman history and literature in various educational institutions, including the *Dârümuallimîn* (School of Pedagogy) and the *Dârülfünûn* (University).<sup>45</sup> This speech provides the most significant clue for understanding the nature of the collective memorial function attributed to old houses and the material culture related to the domestic environment in that historical milieu. It helps much to understand, in particular, the connection that T. Nureddin imagines between these houses and the mode of life of ancestors, and in general, the rapid rise of researches on traditional domestic architecture and the relevant suggestions towards a revivalist movement in those decades:

If I enquired how deeply you are emotionally attached to the dwellings in which we live, there's no doubt you will say 'the bonds that link us to our environment are our memories.' When we need to abandon a house in which we were born and raised, we feel a genuine profound sense of detachment, grief of parting, since it embodies memories on its each corner of our own, of our mothers, fathers and our loved ones. It is necessary to convey and extend this example which is more than blatant in truth, from homes to cities, cities to countries. The more we know our country and are cognizant of its past, the more extensive and solid its place will be in our hearts. ...Before we were defeated on the battlefields and expelled from our homeland we were vanquished in our spirituality. We were driven away from our homes. A nation that is accustomed to perceive itself as despicable and miserable, indeed, will ultimately be despicable and miserable no matter how heroic it is by means of its blood and heritage. Oblivion of the past, oblivion of the nationality, oblivion of the religion in is sufficient enough to take out fugitive souls from a mighty, triumphant nation.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Hamdullah Subhi, "Eski Türk Evleri," in *Türk Yurdu* 60, 20 Şubat 1329 [5 March 1914], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), vol. 3, (Ankara, 1998-), pp. 203-205; Hamdullah Subhi, "Eski Türk Evleri," in *Türk Yurdu* 62, 20 Mart 1330 [2 April 1914], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), vol. 3, (Ankara, 1998-) pp. 242-244.

<sup>45</sup> Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)*, (İstanbul, 2004), pp. 58-59.

<sup>46</sup> "İçinde yaşadığımız yerlere ne sùretle rabt-ı kalb ediyorsunuz' desem, hiç şüphe yok ki 'Bizi etrafımıza bağlayan rabitalar hatıralardır' diyeceksiniz. Çocukluktan beri içinde büyüdüğümüz bir ev terkedilmek iktiza ettiği vakit, kalbimizde hakikî derin bir ayrılık hissi, bir ayrılık acısı duyarız. Çünkü onun her köşesinde kendimize, anamıza, babamıza, sevdiklerimize ait hatıralar vardır. Lüzumundan fazla hakikati aşıkâr bu misali evlerden şehirlere, şehirlerden memleketlere nakl ve teşmil etmek iktiza eder. Memleketimizi ne kadar tanır, mazarisine ne kadar vâkıf olursak onun kalbimizde tuttuğu yer o kadar sağlam, o kadar genişir.

"... Biz muharebe meydanlarında mağlup edilmeden, memleketlerimizden kovulmadan evvel maneviyâtımızda mağlup edildik. Evlerimizden kovulduk. Kendini zelil ve sefil görmeye alıştırılmış bir millet, kanı ve tarihi itibariyle ne kadar kahraman olursa olsun, o nihayet hakikaten sefil olur, zelil olur. (...) Nisyân-ı mazi, nisyân-ı

In this speech, H. Subhi primarily discusses the recent decay of the traditional crafts that used to produce elegant domestic objects and elements of interior decoration. One major theme that he dwells on is the great economic burden created by the penetration of Western industrial products that replaced works of national crafts. An aesthetic and especially a moral concern are strongly underlined with reference to this decay of national industries, as well. For him, the true reason behind the defeat of the nation in military and economic fields was its spiritual defeat in the form of “forgetting” the national past and the national/religious essence. It is crucial to note that here the domestic environment is not referred to merely as a metaphor signifying the fatherland, while personal feeling of attachment through memories obviously stands for a knowledge of and attachment to the national past. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this speech is the definition of the notion of national past with particular references to the experiences and daily life of ordinary people. In other words, he dwells on the past of the anonymous culture centered around domestic life, rather than major political events and military achievements. This certainly indicates the impact of the antiquarian attitude in historical imagination, and since this mode of historical imagination implies a “democratization of the ‘view’ of the past”<sup>47</sup> (see Chapter 3), the introduction of this content to the nationalist discourse may be evaluated as related to the broadening of the social basis of nationalist sensibility in those years. Actually, with its thousands of members,<sup>48</sup> *ocaklıs*, the *Türk Ocağı* itself stood as a major institution of this phenomenon. On the other hand, even without Yahya Kemal’s above quoted testimony about H. Subhi’s direct involvement in the early phase of the trend, we could comfortably argue that considerably extensive studies on

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millî, nisyân-ı din, büyük, muzaffer bir milletten kaçak ruhlar çıkarmaya başlı başına kifâyet eder.” Hamdullah Subhi, “Eski Türk Evleri,” in *Türk Yurdu* 60, 20 Şubat 1329 [5 March 1914], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), vol. 3, (Ankara, 1998-), p. 203.

<sup>47</sup> Stephen Bann, “Clio in part: on antiquarianism and the historical fragment,” *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), p. 124.

<sup>48</sup> F. Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)*, (İstanbul, 2004), pp. 51-69.

traditional domestic architecture constituted a major instance of the efforts to invert the spiritual defeat of the nation. This reversion would be made possible by penetrating with sound methods the material component of national life in the past (“remembering” it) and ultimately restoring one aspect of the lost spirit through reviving that architectural idiom for modern dwellings.

H. Subhi’s emphasis on the necessity to preserve the link with the physical environment of national life in the past found important parallels in the same years in the discussions on modern urbanism. Painter Nazmi Ziya (Güran) wrote an article on this issue in 1913, in which he argued for the necessity to theorize a modern idiom of city planning particular to Turkish cities, based on the rules followed by ancestors.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, a leading architect of the period, A. Kemaleddin Bey finds the true path for ideal solutions in inquiries into the historical developments of urban centers.<sup>50</sup>

#### **f. Karoly Kos and the Streets of Istanbul (1918)**

The prominent Hungarian architect Karoly Kos (1883-1977) has written an extensive account of historic architecture of Istanbul which was published by the Hungarian Institute of Sciences in Istanbul (*A Kostantinapolyi Magyar Tudamanyos Inteszet*) in 1918.<sup>51</sup> As Antal Hekler, the director of the institute, remarks in the preface, one of the main aims of Kos was, reflecting an avant-garde agenda, to point to the fact that the western language of forms was not the only possible frame of artistic creativity.<sup>52</sup> The fourth and the last part of the study is devoted to a detailed discussion of the traditional urban fabric and domestic architecture and

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<sup>49</sup> Nazmi Ziya, “İstanbul Şehri Muhibblerine,” in *Şehbâl* 87, 14 December 1913, p. 298-99.

<sup>50</sup> Ahmed Kemâleddin, “İmâr-ı Belde Fikrinin Yanlış Tatbikinden Mütevellid Tahrîbât,” in *Türk Yurdu* IV-3, 15 May 1913, pp. 490-95.

<sup>51</sup> Karoly Kos, *İstanbul: Şehir Tarihi ve Mimarisi* [trans. by Naciye Güngörmüş; orig. *Sztambul, Varostörténet es Architektúra* (Issues 4-6 of: *A Konstantinapolyi Magyar Tudamanyos Intezet Közleményei* – Budapest-Constantinople, 1918)], (Ankara, 1995).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.

to the author's suggestions about the future of the urban development in the city.<sup>53</sup> If we consider that the section of Kos's book on Ottoman monumental mosque architecture was translated into Turkish by Semih Rüstem, one of the Turkish architects educated in Hungary in those years,<sup>54</sup> it is most probable that this essay could reach at least one part of the audience that it intended to address.

In this text, Kos pays more attention to the urban fabric than domestic architecture. His central argument is that the structure of the urban fabric in Istanbul, throughout its long history, was continuously formed with best responses to needs and conditions, rather than with artificially imposed, unrealistic grand projects. Therefore, in his view, the "system" of the urban form in Istanbul was constructed by "the past," hence this was a "natural" solution.<sup>55</sup> A trust in the virtue of pre-modern, anonymous solutions is a basic point of departure of the author and in accordance with his idea that "civilization," the realm of technique, have enslaved "culture" in modern times. He claims that urban planning can not be considered merely as a technical issue and historic cities are artworks where the spirits of nations and past ages live. With his stress on the idea to benefit from the rationality of historic cities, he argues that old cities that had larger cores than others in the past, like Istanbul, stand as best sources of inspiration for modern urban developments. For him, to transform Istanbul according to basic modern requirements was an inevitable task, but Turkish architects and urbanists had to consider in their designs "the magical scene" that traditional houses and streets constituted.<sup>56</sup> Among the characteristics that create this magical scene, the Hungarian architect dwells on the harmony with the natural topography that prevents monotonous views,

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-144.

<sup>54</sup> Semih Rüstem, "Osmanlı Türkünün Camii," in *Dergah* 5, 20 June 1921: pp. 74-76. S. Rüstem was one of the members of "The Society of Turkish Graduates of Hungarian Schools" (*Macaristan Türk Mezûnîn Cemiyeti Nizâm-nâme-i Esâsîsi*, [İstanbul, 1338], p. 2.) and a close friend of A. Süheyl Ünver. (Ahmed Güner Sayar, A. Süheyl Ünver: Hayatı, Şahsiyeti ve Eserleri 1898-1986, [İstanbul, 1994], pp. 140-141.)

<sup>55</sup> K. Kos, *ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

the volumetry of houses, the “artistic” and “peaceful” qualities of streets created by the effects of light and shade, and the dominance of greenery in the urban area, completely disregarding the embellishment of interiors. This essay is enriched by several images of Istanbul streets and wooden houses, some of which are his own drawings (fig. 4), and it expresses the idea of analyzing traditional domestic architecture with the aim of extracting energy to develop a Turkish national idiom in this field. It is interesting to note that, he points to the necessity to build new dwellings in masonry while trying to preserve the basic pleasant artistic qualities of traditional wooden houses.

#### **g. Ahmed Süheyl and Rifat Osman (1925-27)**

A long series of articles written by two medical doctors, Ahmed Süheyl (Ünver) and Rifat Osman, and published in *Millî Mecmûa* between 1925 and 1927, constitute the most extensive account of Ottoman traditional domestic architecture that appeared in those decades. Despite the remarkable difference of age between them, these two devoted researchers of national cultural heritage were close friends for a long time until the death of R. Osman in 1933, and they frequently corresponded with each other on this wide subject when the latter was resident in Edirne.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, it seems to be quite legitimate to evaluate their writings as a whole.

In these articles, they present a detailed depiction of the architectural features which, in their view, form the fundamental character of authentic Turkish house that decayed in the last century. A fundamental feature of the corpus of writings by A. Süheyl and R. Osman that gives them a particular significance is the weight of the idea to develop a modern and national idiom for domestic architecture based on the authentic form of Turkish house.

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<sup>57</sup> A. G. Sayar, *ibid.*, pp. 155-159.

Besides this emphasis on the potential of revival, several aspects of A. Süheyl and R. Osman's account of traditional domestic architecture clearly stand as precedents of Sedad H. Eldem's discourse from the 1930's onwards. On the other hand, with their professional middle-class backgrounds and impressive contribution to the development of the architectural heritage idea, they represent the expanding social basis of discussions on cultural issues. *Millî Mecmûa*, in which these articles were published, stands as a significant public platform for the expanding frame of cultural discussions. A. Süheyl and R. Osman's studies constitute a major case in which a question concerning the everyday life of broad segments of society in the domestic environment is brought to a considerable place in the public agenda. Their grand scale work perfectly exemplifies the transformation of the collective imagination about the national past and its value for the present by putting more emphasis on the traditional mode of life and on the necessity to guarantee the survival of the national essence preserved in the language of everyday life. In light of these observations, I evaluate the corpus of A. Süheyl and R. Osman as a critical source to decipher the nature of the growing interest in traditional domestic architecture.

Tosyavîzâde Rifat Osman (1874-1933), as a medical officer in the army, was appointed to Edirne in 1903, where he lived until his death. Throughout these decades, he had devoted enormous time and energy to study historic architectural works in Edirne, dwellings being just one group of buildings he was interested in. In 1920, he published *Edirne Rehnümâsı* (The Edirne Guide),<sup>58</sup> but several of his extensive studies on historic monuments of Edirne, such as the one on the palace which was mentioned above,<sup>59</sup> and the one on mosques and *mescids*,<sup>60</sup> remained unpublished for decades. The dates of some

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<sup>58</sup> Tosyavîzâde Doktor Rifat Osmân, *Edirne Rehnümâsı*, (Edirne, 1336/1920).

<sup>59</sup> Dr. Rifat Osman, *Edirne Sarayı*, Süheyl Ünver (ed.), (Ankara, 1957).

<sup>60</sup> Dr. Rif'at Osman, *Edirne Evkâf-ı İslâmiye Tarihi: Camiler ve Mescidler*, (Ankara, 1999).

drawings by him, published by A. Süheyl Ünver in 1983, reveals that his article on historic Edirne dwellings serialized in 1926-27 was an outcome of his decades long researches.<sup>61</sup>

The son of a high ranking civil servant at the State Telegraph Department, A. Süheyl Ünver studied medicine between 1915-21 and in the same years became a pupil of painter Hoca Ali Rıza Bey and attended the School of Calligraphy (*Medresetü'l-Hattâtîn*).<sup>62</sup> We learn from Ahmed Güner Sayar that in those years he had turned his study room into an archive of traditional Ottoman arts and used it as a permanent exhibition place for his own works.<sup>63</sup> Another main axis of his life in the late 1910's and the 1920's was his excursions in traditional quarters of Istanbul, in search of the rich architectural heritage of the city.<sup>64</sup> Following the example of A. Rıza Bey, he began to keep sketch-books which well reflect the scope of his personal world of images.<sup>65</sup> In the sketch-books that he kept between 1919 and 1923, depictions of historic buildings, especially mosques and several old houses, occupy a significant place. Copies of some ornaments found in such buildings, his own *études* in the same line, religious calligraphies, some traditional domestic objects, historic costumes (usually copied from Western sources) and cemetery scenes constitute other major elements of his imagery (fig. 5-9). In my view, the sketch-books of Ünver is a typical case where “[t]he small and limited, the decayed and obsolete receives its dignity and inviolability in that the preserving and revering soul of the antiquarian moves into these things and makes itself at home in the nest it builds there.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Dr. Rifat Osman'a Göre Edirne Evleri ve Konakları*, A. Süheyl Ünver (ed.), (İstanbul, 1983).

<sup>62</sup> A. G. Sayar, *A. Süheyl Ünver: Hayatı, Şahsiyeti ve Eserleri 1898-1986*, (İstanbul, 1994).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201-204.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-145.

<sup>65</sup> Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *1923 Yılı Notları, Defter no: 227; Defter no: 251; 1919 Yılı Notları, Defter no: 258; Kırganbar, Defter no: 263; 1920 Notları, Defter no: 334* (The Süleymaniye Library).

<sup>66</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, [trans. by Peter Preuss], (Indianapolis, Cambridge, 1980), p. 19.

Rifat Osman's article on Edirne dwellings was published in five parts.<sup>67</sup> The group of articles by A. Süheyl, on the other hand, was initiated by an essay on the traditional organization of room interiors<sup>68</sup> and followed by the ones on general spatial and decorative characteristics of Turkish house,<sup>69</sup> on the *yalı* of Amûca Hüseyin Paşa,<sup>70</sup> on the houses of İzmit,<sup>71</sup> on the sultanic *kasır* of Yeni Cami,<sup>72</sup> two articles on traditional ceiling and hearth designs respectively,<sup>73</sup> and finally an article on Aynalıkavak Kasrı.<sup>74</sup> We may also include his article published in the *İstanbul Şehremâneti Mecmûası* (The Journal of the Istanbul Municipality), which stands as almost a summary of the earlier ones in many respects.<sup>75</sup> We may also mention Rifat Osman's article on İncili Köşk, once stood as a part of the Topkapı Palace.<sup>76</sup> Besides the *yalı* of Amûca Hüseyin Paşa and the sultanic *kasır* of Yeni Cami, A. Süheyl expresses the necessity of conservation of one of the İzmit dwellings to be selected by the local *Türk Ocağı*.<sup>77</sup>

As they repeatedly remark, R. Osman and A. Süheyl envisioned their amateur researches as early contributions to the discovery of Turkish house which would flourish and produce truly comprehensive accounts in the professional circles of architecture, in the future. They locate the aim of benefiting from traditional examples in new house designs to the

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<sup>67</sup> Rifat Osman, "Edirne'de Türk Evleri," in *Millî Mecmûa* 71, 15 October 1926, pp. 1147-1149; *Millî Mecmûa* 73, 1 November 1926, pp. 1178-1180; *Millî Mecmûa* 74, 15 November 1926, pp. 1194-1196; *Millî Mecmûa* 76, 15 December 1926, pp. 1227-1230.

<sup>68</sup> Ahmed Süheyl, "Şark Odası," *Millî Mecmûa* 38, 1 Haziran 1341, pp. 626-627

<sup>69</sup> Ahmed Süheyl, "Türk Evi," *Millî Mecmûa* 41, 15 Temmuz 1341, pp. 668-670

<sup>70</sup> D. A. S., "Amûca Hüseyin Paşa Yalısı," *Millî Mecmûa* 68, 1 September 1926, pp. 1098-1101.

<sup>71</sup> D. A. S., "İzmit Hâtıraları," *Millî Mecmûa* 72, 22 October 1926, pp. 1163-1165.

<sup>72</sup> D. A. S., "Eminönü'nde Bir Kasır," *Millî Mecmûa* 77, 1 January 1927, pp. 1243-1244.

<sup>73</sup> D. A. S., "Türk Tavanları," *Millî Mecmûa* 80, 15 February 1927, pp. 1293-1294; D. A. S., "Eski Türk Evlerinde Ocak," *Millî Mecmûa* 81, 1 March 1927, pp. 1306-1308.

<sup>74</sup> D. A. S., "Aynalı Kavak Kasrı I," in *Millî Mecmûa* 88, 15 June 1927, pp. 1421-1422; "Aynalı Kavak Kasrı II," in *Millî Mecmûa* 89, 1 July 1927, p. 1443; "Aynalı Kavak Kasrı III," in *Millî Mecmûa* 93, 1 September 1927, pp. 1501-1503.

<sup>75</sup> D. A. S., "Türk Evi Mimârîsi Hakkında Birkaç Söz," *İstanbul Şehremâneti Mecmûası* 36, August 1927, pp. 732-737.

<sup>76</sup> Doktor Rifat Osman, "İncili Köşk'ün Resmi hakkında Tedkikât," in *Millî Mecmûa* 79, 1 February 1927, pp. 1273-1277.

<sup>77</sup> D. A. S., "İzmit Hâtıraları," *Millî Mecmûa* 72, 22 October 1926, p. 1165.

center of this program's agenda, by defining it as in the words of A. Süheyl "a duty towards the people who are willing to spend their wealth in construction of a national and functional house".<sup>78</sup> This was a program of reform in residential architecture after a devastating phase of corruption by reintroducing "national forms and character" which are also "functional and elegant" in nature.<sup>79</sup>

One of the implications that we find in their writings is the growing public concern for domestic architecture in those years. As noted in Chapter 1, it is evident that in Istanbul, during the early decades of the twentieth century, the involvement of professional architects and engineers in the field of domestic architecture grew considerably.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, A. Süheyl and R. Osman's main aim is to direct this spreading concern for patronage in domestic architecture to the ideal solutions by developing a consciousness about the national artistic past. With this attitude, they follow Zekai Paşa and the *Türk Ocağı* circle, of which both of them were members. It should also be considered that these medical doctors well represent the social segment in which the concern for patronage in domestic architecture must have been especially strong.

The idea of public education through publications and exhibitions that they frequently express, therefore, seems to have corresponded to a true audience. The prominent place that these articles were given in *Millî Mecmûa* may be viewed as another sign of the growing sensibility about this subject. But, it is interesting to note that a nurturing period in journals and exhibitions was envisioned in Hermann Muthesius' reform program for domestic

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<sup>78</sup> "Bu husûsda böyle birkaç resimli makâle ile değil; mimârî ile alâkadâr zevât-ı muhtereme büyük ve resimli eserlerle servetini millî ve kullanışlı bir ev inşâsına sarf etmek isteyen diğer insanlara rehberlik vazîfesini i'fâ etmiş olurlar." Ahmed Süheyl, "Türk Evi," in *Millî Memû'a* 41, 15 Temmuz 1341: p. 670.

<sup>79</sup> "Ekseriyâ kalfalarımız Avrupa müelliflerinin koleksiyonlarını açarak çalışdıklarından memleketimiz hem millî eşkâl ve evsâfını kaybetmekte ve hem de çok kullanışlı ve zarîf ev parçalarından mahrûm olmaktadır." Rifat Osman, "Edirne'de Türk Evleri," in *Millî Mecmûa* 73, 1 November 1926: p. 1179.

<sup>80</sup> See Ugur Tanyeli, *İstanbul 1900-2000: Konutu ve Modernleşmeyi Metropolden Okumak*, (İstanbul, 2004).

architecture, as well.<sup>81</sup> As noted above, we have clear evidence that Muthesius' influential study on English middle class residential architecture in the nineteenth century (in which the author points to the characteristics of this idiom as a true model for the development of modern architecture in Germany) was familiar to Turkish intellectuals, including A. Süheyl and R. Osman.<sup>82</sup> A more interesting observation with respect to this familiarity is that C. Esad in 1909 and later A. Süheyl and R. Osman in the 20's emphasized a number of features of traditional Ottoman domestic architecture that they perceived as parallel to "English house" as described by Muthesius.

As Stanford Anderson notes, the main goal of the movement envisaged by Muthesius was "the creation of a contemporary middle class art," in the service of the "spiritual aristocracy" of the time,<sup>83</sup> and he believed that German *burghers'* houses of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "still could serve as a model for contemporary conditions."<sup>84</sup> For Muthesius, the English did create a "modern and national art" by preserving the qualities of middle class architecture that matured around the same time with Germany. Muthesius found in these idioms "the most complete fulfillment of the demand of functionality, comfort and health – in one word, practicality [*Sachlichkeit*]."<sup>85</sup> Elimination of ornament was another ideal feature in the eyes of Muthesius. According to Anderson, the "wholehearted embrace of the middle-class as the agent and the destination of the new art [...] leads Muthesius [...] to a unique focus on the single-family house."<sup>86</sup> Muthesius' program was intended to produce an

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<sup>81</sup> S. Anderson, *ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>82</sup> "Bu makâlemizde projelerini neşrettiğimiz (Edirne Türk evleri) gösteriyor ki "İngiliz evi" gibi geçmiş asırlarda Edirne'de Türk halkının da bir "Türk evi" var imiş. Elyevm ziyâretle içlerinde birkaç sâat oturduğumuz ve hattâ senelerce ikâmet ettiğimiz bu güzel evler cidden kullanışlı ve hakikaten "derli toplu" yuvalardır." Rifat Osman, "Edirne'de Türk Evleri", in *Millî Mecmûa* 74, 15 November 1926: p. 1195.

<sup>83</sup> S. Anderson, *ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in S. Anderson, *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in S. Anderson, *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>86</sup> S. Anderson, *ibid.*, p. 33.

idiom not only *sachlich*, but also national in character and alternative to dominant trends in the German architectural scene since the mid-nineteenth century.

The insistent stress on the functionality and health of the traditional Turkish house, usually accompanied by a reference to the maximization of the benefits of light and air stands as a central constituent of the discourse of A. Süheyl and R. Osman, developed in clear connection with the ideas of Muthesius (and his important precedent Robert Dohme, who had written an earlier account of English residential architecture in 1888).<sup>87</sup> In addition, I argue that the weight given to the configuration of spaces in C. Esad's and the doctors' accounts of traditional Turkish house might have been, to some extent, related to the approach of the model study by Muthesius. On the other hand, although they do not define the movement they envisage as a search for a middle class art, the considerable place that A. Süheyl and R. Osman give to historic single-family houses in their researches and the broad audience that they address in their suggestions for revival stand as significant parallels to Muthesius.

At this point, it must be underlined that Muthesius' *Das englische Haus* served primarily as a scholarly model for attempts to reflect on the nature and the value of traditional domestic architecture, rather than as the initiator of the interest in this subject among Turkish intellectuals. The growing concern to preserve a link with the traditional mode of everyday life, which was imagined as the essence of national identity and the increasing demand for patronage in the field of domestic architecture appear as the truly decisive factors behind the movement. In the age of nationalism, one crucial component of this demand must have been, a national character, and the essence of national domestic architecture was certainly to be sought in the past. We should also underline the typical middle-class concern for "self-

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<sup>87</sup> S. Anderson, *ibid.*, p. 7.

representation” in the domestic environment with an emphasis on the refinement of “taste.” The impressive volume and comprehension of the studies by these two researchers who had professional middle class backgrounds stand as a major crystallization in this process. Since at the focus of this inclination were the culture and everyday life of broad segments of society, it is no surprise to observe that modest single-family houses, “*derli toplu yuvalar*” in R. Osman’s words,<sup>88</sup> have an important place in their discussion of the tradition as well as in the future program of architecture they suggest (fig. 10).

Therefore, the main role played by Muthesius’ study was to provide a model for scholarly representation. A. Süheyl and R. Osman’s frequent remarks about their desire to see a monumental study on Turkish house seems to be a reference to Muthesius’ example. It is clear that S. Eldem’s *Türk Evi* (1984) (with the subjects it discusses such as the periods of the tradition’s development, techniques of construction and characteristics of Turkish cities) was intended to be a true counterpart to Muthesius’ *Das englische Haus*. On the other hand, Muthesius’ work and some other contemporary Western studies on domestic architecture, (perhaps including H. Wilde’s account of Bursa houses) might have been influential in attracting considerable attention to the question of planimetry, since Zekai Paşa, in 1913, completely omits this issue. However, it is certainly difficult to speculate that spatial configuration would not have an important place in the imagination about historic houses without such a foreign impact, especially if we remember that the tectonic qualities of Turkish architecture were strongly emphasized in contemporary Turkish literature on Ottoman monumental architecture.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, A. Süheyl and R. Osman’s stress on the qualities of functionality and the abundance of light, air and greenery is meaningful primarily as an effort to prove the potential of traditional Turkish house as a basis for a modern as well

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<sup>88</sup> Rifat Osman, *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Among several examples, see Ahmed Kemaleddin, *ibid.*; Celal Esad, *Türk Sanatı*, (İstanbul, 1928), pp. 3-10.

as national architecture. This idea of the “essential modernity” of Turkish house was to acquire a crucial role in S. Eldem’s discourse. A. Süheyl and R. Osman appear to be the precursors of another aspect of S. Eldem’s approach when they stress the need to utilize modern materials and technology of construction and modern facilities, for instance for heating.<sup>90</sup> It should be noted that, their suggestion is to modernize some features that are thought to be purely technical, while defining the essence of the Turkish house in its spatial organization and decoration.

At this point, it should be underlined that, with their strong emphasis on ornamentation, A. Süheyl and R. Osman are clearly distinguished from Muthesius. While artistic creativity without the help of ornament is one of the basic ideals of modern building-art for Muthesius, A. Süheyl and R. Osman prefer a selective way in their agenda of pointing to the consistency between the characteristics of traditional Turkish house and the ideals of modern architecture. Interior decoration occupies a very large place in their representation of Turkish house, approximately equal to that of spatial characteristics. We should remember that R. Osman stresses the essential role of ornamentation before spatial configuration in his introductory account of the basic characteristics of traditional houses.<sup>91</sup> Both he and A. Süheyl, frequently express the idea that the true jewel of these houses are found inside them. Therefore, decorative designs of ceilings, hearths and wall surfaces are, in their perception, indispensable constituents of the essential character of historic houses. This sensibility seems to be connected to the strong concern for the value of authentic ornaments that found expression as early as in the report of Montani Efendi for the model Ottoman dwelling to be

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<sup>90</sup> “Bu güzîde mecmûanın içine yüzlerce resim sıkışdırmak mümkün olsaydı eski evlerimizin ne câzib ve suhhâr güzellikleri hâvî olduğunu ve bunların kârgîr olmak şartıyla nasıl asrî bir hâle getirilebileceği anlaşılırdı.” Ahmed Süheyl, “Türk Evi,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 41, 15 Temmuz 1341, p. 670; “Türk tarzında ev tertîb ve tanziminde numûne olacak odada böyle bir ocağın mevcûd olması temenniye şâyândır. Eski vesâitsiz devirler gibi odun yakacak değildir. Hâricî şekli Türk tarzında bir ocak yapılı, fakat içinde türlü teshîn vâsıtası kullanılabilir.” Ahmed Süheyl, “Eski Türk Evlerinde Ocak,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 81, 1 March 1927, p. 1308.

<sup>91</sup> Rifat Osman, “Edirne’de Türk Evleri,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 71, 15 October 1926: pp. 1147-1149.

constructed in the 1873 exposition and in Zekai Paşa's reference to traditional domestic architecture in 1913, which exclusively deals with decorative program. We should remember that the leading texts on historic monumental architecture, the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* (1873) and Kemaleddin Bey's article published in 1906, despite their stress on architectonic qualities of the national tradition, display a strong effort to analyze the decorative idiom. This attitude must have been influential in the formation of the general perception of architectural heritage. It should also be underlined that, the decorative program is a central element of the movement of invigoration that A. Süheyl and R. Osman envision for domestic architecture, reminiscent the weight placed on the revival of ornamental forms in the historicist movement around the decades when the *Usûl-i Mimârî-i Osmânî* was written.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, the approach of the most productive researchers of Turkish house in the period between the study of Le Corbusier in 1911 and the seminar of S. Eldem, began in 1932, is simultaneously "decorative" as well as "spatial." At this point, we should remember that architect Vedad (Tek)'s own house at Nişantaşı (1914) and the presidency kiosk at Çankaya (1924), also designed by him, stand as sophisticated examples of the nationalist idiom envisaged for residential architecture in those years. These buildings display a rich interior decoration composed of traditional forms. Equally importantly, S. Eldem, in some of his earlier sketches for domestic interior designs, dated between 1926 and 1930, employed some decorative elements such as stained glass windows and wall paintings, although in novel, stylized and "modernized" forms.<sup>93</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the value attributed to the two main styles found among the decoration of historic houses appears as an issue on which there was no consensus. According to A. Süheyl, "Turkish" ornamental style was certainly a purer expression of the national

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<sup>92</sup> See Ahmet Ersoy, *On the Sources of the "Ottoman Renaissance: " Architectural Revival and its Discourse During the Abdülaziz Era (1861-76)*, Unpublished Ph.D Diss., Harvard University (2000); and T. Saner, *19. Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarlığında "Oryantalizm"*, (İstanbul, 1998).

<sup>93</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan et al, *Sedad Eldem: Architect in Turkey*, (Singapore, 1989), pp. 41-42.

sensibility and the adoption of Baroque and Rococo forms in the eighteenth century resulted in a wave of corruption in the national taste.<sup>94</sup> Still, he evaluates some designs in Western-inspired styles in the Topkapı Palace, Aynalıkavak Kasrı and some buildings on the Bosphorus, as quite elegant artworks.<sup>95</sup> Zekai Paşa too, highly praises such forms in his essays stressing the elegance and value of traditional decorations of domestic interiors. Painter H. Avni Lifij, on the other hand, severely criticizes Rococo forms as reflection of a “cosmopolitan aesthetic” and strictly contrasts it to the pure Turkish style.<sup>96</sup> We should remember that Montani Efendi had defined one of his aims in his design of the urban dwelling exhibited in Vienna as display of wall and ceiling decorations in the Ottoman style by completely excluding the European idiom. The inclusivist attitude towards the Western-inspired forms in the writings of Zekai Paşa and A. Süheyl appears as a result of the shift in the point in history that was considered to define the end of the “tradition.” Montani Efendi located the pure idiom around 1720, whereas A. Süheyl, in 1925, remarked that traditional organization of domestic interiors had survived until about “eighty years ago.”<sup>97</sup> Similarly, according to Tevfik Nureddin, the corruption of domestic architecture had begun after the time of Mahmud II.<sup>98</sup> It seems that, with the passage of time and the progressive disappearance of older dwellings, even Baroque and Rococo ornamental forms (which had replaced earlier forms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries without creating a change in the characteristic configuration of room interiors) entered the category of valuable artworks.<sup>99</sup> However, under the weight of nationalist sensibility, their status remained highly

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<sup>94</sup> Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Türk Tavanları,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 80, 15 February 1927, pp. 1293-1294.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Ressam H. Avni Lifij, “Nâbî'nin Evi,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 72, 22 October 1926, pp. 1157-1158.

<sup>97</sup> Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Şark Odası,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 38, 1 Haziran 1341, p. 626.

<sup>98</sup> Tevfik Nureddin, *ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> It is difficult to argue about the role of the newly emerging inclusivist attitude towards “Ottoman Baroque” for the evaluations of monumental architecture on this discussion. Most probably appropriating this idea from Karoly Kos (K. Kos, *ibid.*, pp. 98-101), art historian Vahîd Bey argued in 1923 that western decorative forms were fertilized with the “Oriental clime” in eighteenth century Ottoman architecture. (Vahîd, “Türk Sanatı ve Bursa'daki Mahsûlâtı” in *Yeni Mecmûa* 75, 1 May 1923, p. 174.) Similarly, urbanist architect Burhan Arif wrote in 1931 that encounters of the Turkish taste with European styles produced successful exchanges, including the

controversial. On the other hand, we observe that the traditional scheme of room interiors with *sedirs*, hearths, niches and other characteristic elements (fig. 11) and freestanding location of dwellings in gardens remained as strict criteria of “authenticity” in A. Süheyl and R. Osman’s vision of the Turkish house, limiting it to the periods before the middle of the nineteenth century. This is also indicative of the growing tendency to evaluate the spatial features of traditional houses and room interiors as essential constituents of the national character of the idiom.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, the recurrent references to stucco second row windows, which disappeared from the scene of new constructions after the middle of the nineteenth century,<sup>101</sup> in the majority of the texts analyzed here and its employment in several contemporary paintings that represent the subject of historic houses (see Chapter 3) must have made it, in those years, as an easily noticed sign of authenticity.

A. Süheyl and R. Osman’s insistence on envisioning the traditional decorative program as an indispensable part of the immanent movement of revival must also be connected to the ongoing perception of this idiom as a chief sphere of artistic creation where the national spirit is embodied. On the other hand, in contrast to the visions of H. Wilde and Zekai Paşa, the development of the interest in the spatial qualities resulted in a similar association between these qualities and the national essence. It is significant to note that A. Süheyl and R. Osman’s interest in the spatial characteristics of historic Ottoman houses is far from being a “universalist” approach. Their insistence on the parallelism between some characteristics of the national tradition and some ideals of modern architecture appears, rather, as a stress on the supposed superiority of the Turkish culture, an idea which was to be openly

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style of the period of Damat İbrahim Paşa (Burhan Arif, “Türk mimarisi ve beynelmilel mimarlık vasıfları,” in *Mimar* 11-12, November-December 1931, p. 366.)

<sup>100</sup> H. Avni Lifij argues that the house that is attributed to Poet Nâbî, the decorative style of which he condemns due to the dominance of Western forms, has to be conserved, because it is in Turkish “constructional style.” Ressaym H. Avni Lifij, *ibid.*, p. 1158.

<sup>101</sup> U. Tanyeli, *ibid.*, p. 84.

expressed by S. Eldem, as well.<sup>102</sup> In my view, the iconization of some volumetric qualities of traditional houses and the authentic configuration of room interiors paved the way for the employment of some elements, such as projecting bays, wide eaves, *sedirs*, and hearths, as *leitmotifs* in the style of S. Eldem which differs from the universalist and “antistylistic” approach of Ernest Egli and Bruno Taut towards traditional domestic architecture, with its formalist tendency and nationalist tone (see Chapter 1).

Another important aspect of A. Süheyl and Rifat Osman’s discourse that deserves attention is the scope of their analyses which is not confined to single-family houses. R. Osman is the author of the most extensive study on the imperial palace at Edirne.<sup>103</sup> In addition, splendid vezirial *konaks* constitute an important part of his account of historic Edirne dwellings. More importantly, both of the doctors frequently remark that best decorative designs created for elements of interior spaces, such as hearths and ceilings, are found in certain parts of the Topkapı and the Edirne palaces. For A. Süheyl, the *divanhane* of the *yalı* of Amûca Hüseyin Paşa is an invaluable reservoir of decorative patterns to be used in new houses.<sup>104</sup> In addition, he directs attention to a *mescid* supposedly designed by Sinan, in order to gain a reliable insight about the decoration of vanished vezirial palaces built by the sixteenth century master.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, in their vision of future domestic architecture, which would primarily serve urban middle class, residences of the higher strata of the society in the past, (certainly including imperial palaces), were perceived as ideal sources, especially for decorative designs. In other words, the middle class architecture that they envisaged was to

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernizm ve Ulusun İnşası: Erken Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi’nde Mimari Kültür*, p. 285.

<sup>103</sup> Dr. Rifat Osman, *Edirne Sarayı*, Ord. Prof. Dr. Süheyl Ünver (ed.), (Ankara, 1989)

<sup>104</sup> “Türk tezyîn tarzında evlerimizi süslemek ihtiyâcı içinde bu nefis eserin temâşâsı kalbde doyulmaz bir san’at heyecânı uyandırmaktadır.” Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Amûca Hüseyin Paşa Yalısı,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 68, 1 September 1926, p. 1101.

<sup>105</sup> Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Mimâr Sinân’ın Bir Şâheseri,” *Millî Mecmûa* 75, 1 December 1926, pp. 1212-1214.

appropriate the sophistication of aristocratic art rather than idealizing the humbler appearances of more modest dwellings.

In this respect, we should also remember R. Osman's insistent argument that some architectural elements found in several urban dwellings in Edirne were modelled after examples in the palace. One indication of this emphasis is that for Rifat Osman, historic residential architecture of different classes constituted a unity and more sophisticated examples of this single idiom had influenced the production standards and norms of the houses of the lower social strata in the past, as well. The inclusion of imperial palaces and vezirial *konaks* and *yalis* in A. Süheyl and R. Osman's vision of national residential architecture in the past, and their choice of giving them the most prestigious position, is particularly important. This clearly reveals that the reinvigoration of national domestic architecture that they envisioned was far from being "comfortably distanced from Ottoman palace culture." Moreover, by sharing the attitude of several writers such as A. Şeref and A. Refik, they attribute a particular value to certain spaces due to reminiscences of some historical figures from the Ottoman ruling class.<sup>106</sup> Needless to note that the movement of revival they were dreaming of was not envisioned as an alternative to Ottoman Revivalism.<sup>107</sup> As A. Süheyl remarks, they objected to the use of some forms of Ottoman monumental architecture in the search for a national expression in domestic architecture. Their aim was to direct this consciousness towards a comprehension and reinvigoration of the authentic form

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<sup>106</sup> This attitude is clear especially in A. Süheyl's "Amûca Hüseyin Paşa Yalısı" (*Millî Mecmûa* 68, 1 September 1926, pp. 1098-1101) and "Eminönü'nde Bir Kasır," (*Millî Mecmûa* 77, 1 January 1927, pp. 1243-1244) which describes the sultan's kiosk of Yeni Cami and in R. Osman's description of Kum Kasrı in the Edirne Palace which he claims to have been the model of a particular kind of *şahnişins* and summer *divanhane*s found in Edirne dwellings (Dr. Rifat Osman, "Edirne'de Türk Evleri," in *Millî Mecmûa* 76, 15 December 1926, p.1230).

<sup>107</sup> R. Osman himself was an architect who designed the club of the Committee of Union and Progress in Edirne in the idiom of Ottoman Revivalism. Tosyavizade Rifat Osman, *Edirne Rehnüması/Edirne Şehir Kılavuzu*, Ratip Kazancıgil (ed.), (Edirne, 1994), p. 5.

of residential architecture.<sup>108</sup> They never criticized the employment of the Ottoman revivalist style in public edifices. Another difference between the approach of these researchers and the republican discourse about national architectural culture (which was to dominate the scene from the late 20's onwards) is that they willingly accepted the Oriental character of Turkish art and architecture. A. Süheyl designates the traditional organization of room interiors as “Oriental,”<sup>109</sup> and R. Osman uses the adjectives “Oriental” and “Turkish” interchangeably.

On the other hand, A. Süheyl points to the necessity to include peasant houses into studies on national residential architecture. This must be related to the desire to comprehend the origins and the earlier, primitive phases of traditional domestic architecture as well as to the strengthening of the nationalist thinking in those years. In his article published in *İstanbul Şhremâneti Mecmûası*, A. Süheyl points to the question of “changes” that Turkish house had undergone “according to environment and time” and argues that towns and villages of Anatolia had to be studied in this respect.<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, in his article on hearths, he remarks that “in the far corners of Anatolia simple hearths still survive. However, as the taste had developed with the increase in wealth, these hearths acquired more beautiful and aesthetic forms and in every century acquire different new shapes.”<sup>111</sup> However, he himself spends almost no effort to discover and represent peasant architecture, and together with R. Osman, they direct their attention to the more refined structures found in urban areas.

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<sup>108</sup> “Yalnız câmilerden ve taşdan yapılan binâlardan mülhem olarak kendimiz için muvakkat kâşaneler yapmak lüzûmsuz bir gayretkeşlikdir.” Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “İzmit Hâtîrâları,” *Millî Mecmûa* 72, 22 October 1926: 1163.

<sup>109</sup> Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Şark Odası,” *Millî Mecmûa* 38, 1 Hazîrân 1341, pp. 626-627.

<sup>110</sup> Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Türk Evi Mimârîsi Hakkında Birkaç Söz,” in *İstanbul Şhremâneti Mecmûası* 36, August 1927, pp. 732-737.

<sup>111</sup> “Anadolu’nun en uzak diyarlarında bile eski basît ocaklar hâlâ mevcûddur. Fakat refâh ile berâber zevk de artınca bu ocaklar daha güzel ve bedîf şekillere bürünmüş ve her asırda yeni bir şekil ile tecellî etmişdir.” Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Eski Türk Evlerinde Ocak,” *Millî Mecmûa* 81, 1 March 1927, p. 1306.

## **h. Mübarek Galib and the *Mescids* and the Dwellings of Ankara (1925-28)**

Another important source of these years dealing with the issue of historic domestic architecture and decoration is *Anadolu Türk Âsâr ve Mahkûkâti Tettebbuâtına Esâs: Ankara*, written by Mübarek Galib Bey in two volumes in 1341/1925 and 1928 respectively. M. Galib Bey was a nephew of Osman Hamdi Bey, and signed the first volume as the Director of Cultural Affairs (*Hars Müdîri*) and the second volume as the Director of Antiquities and Museums (*Âsâr-i Atîka ve Müzeler Müdîri*). In other words, he was one of the most high ranking bureaucrats of the initial years of the republic concerning the issue of national artistic heritage. As he remarks in the introduction, this study was envisioned primarily as part of an effort to continue the studies on historic inscriptions initiated in the 1910's by scholars such as Halil Edhem (Eldem). This endeavor constituted the first step of "the corpus of Anatolian inscriptions."<sup>112</sup> A considerably large part of the book on Ankara is devoted to cemeteries and tombstones. The book includes sections on mosques, *mescids*, baths and dwellings, as well. Here, the author evaluates the architectural properties of these edifices as well as their inscriptions. In terms of the aims of my study, the section on *mescids* which covers a larger part of the book than those of mosques and baths is highly significant.<sup>113</sup> One of the basic points that the author makes is the dominant simplicity of these structures which are usually far from displaying impressive talent, technique or art. For him, these simple yet beautiful structures could still be conceived among the artworks born out of the national spirit. He notes that especially ornaments of some of these *mescids* are really attractive.<sup>114</sup> (fig. 15-16) Another point he strongly underlines is that these modest artworks were created by artisans who were educated in traditional craft organizations for centuries. In this tradition, master artisans who were in love with their arts shared the same style. Another interesting

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<sup>112</sup> Mübarek Galib, "Anadolu Türk Âsâr ve Mahkûkâti Tettebbu'âtına Esâs: Ankara," vol. I (İstanbul, 1341), p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-42.

<sup>114</sup> "Vâkıa mescid inşâsında büyük bir maharet sarf edilmemiştir; bunlarda fen, sanat mefkûddur. (...) ...sâdelik içinde bir güzellik gösteren bu mebâni rûhdan doğmuş millî Türk eserlerimiz meyânına *idhâl kılınabilir* ve hakîkaten bazı mescidlere tezyînâtları i'tibâriyle güzeldir denilebilir." (Emphasis mine) *ibid.* p. 29.

observation about his account of *mescids* is that he frequently refers to historic dwellings as a relevant building type and points to the unity of the tradition that created the decorations of the two building types. He also underlines that this tradition in the hands of master artisans who had a good nature had come to an end in the time of Mahmud II. Apart from the Ruskinian tone with which he praises traditional craftsmen and their attachment to their creations, we note the similarity of the definition of this tradition to a broad vision of popular art as distinct from high art. When we remember the prominent place given in the book to the subject of *mescids*, this high ranking bureaucrat's attitude seems to be a meaningful republican gesture by which he directed attention to the category of popular art developed in an Anatolian town which recently became the capital. However, the author never expresses a belief in the polarity between Ottoman imperial architecture and local Anatolian traditions. Moreover he claims that a "Nakkaş Mustafa ecole" had developed in the decorations of several mosques, mescids and dwellings after Mustafa Sâ'î Çelebi, who was a friend of Sinan, decorated Zincirli Mosque in Ankara.<sup>115</sup> In addition, it should be remembered that the author also describes monumental mosques in the town including Sinan's Cenabi Ahmed Pasa Mosque which he designates as a "magnificent artwork."<sup>116</sup> In my view, M. Galib's intense interest in modest *mescids* in Ankara did indeed signify a willingness to attract more attention to the works of Anatolian artists with humbler backgrounds and, with a republican impulse, to enlarge the vision of national architectural heritage. Yet, the metropolitan tradition, far from being excluded in these early Republican studies, preserved its image as the most refined level of the monolithic national art that overarched all segments of society in the past.

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>116</sup> Mübarek Galib, *Anadolu Türk Âsâr ve Mahkûkâti Tetebbu'âtına Esâs: Ankara*, vol. II, (İstanbul, 1928), p. 34 (ftn. 1).

The final section of the second volume is a discussion of historic Ankara dwellings.<sup>117</sup> M. Galib published an article specifically on this subject in 1926.<sup>118</sup> When taken together, these two texts reveal his approach to the subject of domestic architecture. Firstly, in accordance with the prevalent attitude in the Turkish literature on the subject in those decades, he describes eighteenth century houses and excludes products of the recent periods. He includes structural features and plans in his description, but his main focus is certainly the decorative program of these dwellings. He claims that these decorative designs were created by the group of artisans who also used to work in the embellishment of mosques and *mescids*.<sup>119</sup> He describes at length ceilings, window and wardrobe frames, shelves, coloured windows and hearths. Painted decoration occupies a central place in his account and interestingly, and unlike other writers on the subject, he gives detailed information about the materials and techniques of this disappeared craft that he highly admires.<sup>120</sup> For him, some valuable pieces in the Rococo style had been created, but in general their quality remained inferior to the designs in Turkish style. Another decorative element that he is interested in is inscriptions in verse found in some rich konaks. He concludes his 1926 article with a stress on the necessity of conservation of these houses and with the suggestion to turn one of these dwellings with all sorts of domestic objects used in it into a museum. He does not refer to any kind of architectural revival, but the way in which he discusses the value and techniques of the historic decorative idiom may be viewed as an implication of a desire in that direction.

### **i. Celal Esad's *Türk Sanatı* (1928)**

One of the most significant texts on traditional domestic architecture was *Türk Sanatı* (1928) by C. Esad which was the earliest Turkish textbook that was intended to be a

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>118</sup> Mübarek Galib, "Ankara'nın Evleri," in *Mu'allimler Birliği* 8, February 1926, pp. 354-359.

<sup>119</sup> Mübarek Galib, *Anadolu Türk Âsâr ve Mahkûkâtî Tetebbuâtına Esâs: Ankara*, vol. II, (İstanbul, 1928), p. 50.

<sup>120</sup> Mübarek Galib, *Anadolu Türk Âsâr ve Mahkûkâtî Tetebbuâtına Esâs: Ankara*, vol. II, (İstanbul, 1928).

comprehensive account of Turkish art throughout history. It is clear that the section on Ottoman art in the author's study on Istanbul, published in 1909, provided the basis of this latter book especially with respect to his views on the characteristics of Turkish art that distinguish it from other Oriental traditions. Still, the scopes of the two books are quite different. We observe that the section on domestic architecture in 1928 is basically an enlarged version of its 1909 counterpart.<sup>121</sup> Still, the place given to this latter text in the general structure of the book and some additions that it includes deserve attention.

In his introduction, the author declares the richness and the achievements of the national artistic past as evidence of the ability of Turks to create works of civilization and emphasizes simplicity and rationality as characteristics of Turkish art, echoing two quite widespread arguments of Turkish writers on the subject in those decades.<sup>122</sup> One other crucial point that he puts forward here is the continuity of the essential character of this art throughout history and in different geographical locations. In accordance with this stress on the unity of the nation and its material culture in time, the first section of the book is a short history of Turks beginning with the pre-Islamic period, and the following section is an account of Turkish art in Inner Asia and Eurasian steppes from the artifacts of pre-Islamic times to the monuments of the Great Seljuks and Timurids. The next section is devoted to Seljukid architecture and minor arts in Anatolia. An interest in history and archaeology of pre-Ottoman Turkic dynasties and societies was observed already in the 1910's, for instance in *Türk Yurdu*, and this inclination gained momentum with the cultural discourse of the republican regime. In this linear narrative, Ottoman art appears as just one phase of the national art history among many. Interestingly however, C. Esad argues that the best aesthetic formulas that reflect simplicity and rationality were ultimately found in this particular period,

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<sup>121</sup> Celal Esad, *Türk Sanatı* (İstanbul, 1928), pp. 115-129.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-10.

whereas the “Ancient Orient” was more influential with their excessive ornamentation and display on the earlier periods.<sup>123</sup>

The three main parts in which Ottoman architecture is dealt with are on general architectural features of various building types, periods and their major monuments and an analysis of architectural elements and their configuration, respectively. In the first part, a section on residential architecture follows those on religious and then “social” (*ictimâi*) building types such as *hans*, medreses, libraries, fountains, baths and bridges. It is interesting to note that, in the section on residential architecture, contrary to his 1909 book and with a more “republican” attitude, C. Esad discusses houses before he dwells on the Topkapı Palace and *kasırs*.

A large part of the text that describes historic house architecture is almost identical with its 1909 counterpart. I have already noted that C. Esad does not give a significant place to the issue of ornamentation and focuses more on planimetry and uses of different spaces of houses in 1909. One of the major differences of the latter text is the presence of a discussion on ceiling designs and painted decoration, added towards the end.<sup>124</sup> It is almost certain that this addition was primarily due to the influence of the recently published writings of R. Osman, A. Süheyl Ünver and M. Galib, who evaluate ornamental elements as indispensable constituents of the character of Turkish house. Even the examples that C. Esad gives as best works in these categories are taken from the doctors’ studies. Besides, having mentioned the old dwellings of Edirne that housed valuable ornamental pieces, C. Esad specifically refers to R. Osman and his emphasis on summer *dîvânhânes* found in some Edirne dwellings. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 1, C. Esad refers to decorative motifs where he points to the

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

necessity of documentation, analysis and revival of forms found in “popular art” and domestic architecture in the path towards a true national art.<sup>125</sup> These observations give an idea about the power of influence that these amateur researchers created on a renowned professor of architectural history at the Academy.

Another interesting point expressed by C. Esad for the first time in his 1928 text is the identification of the house type with an open *sofa* (or *hayat*), instances of which had survived in some Anatolian towns, as he notes.<sup>126</sup> This may be taken as a sign of the broadening of the discovery of traditional domestic architecture as to include towns other than the former Ottoman capitals Edirne and Istanbul. Quite interestingly, among the visual material presented with the text, there are two scaled plans that belong to such a rich dwelling in Kütahya, drawn by a student of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts (fig. 17).<sup>127</sup> This case reveals that studies on traditional domestic architecture had been initiated at the Academy years before S. Eldem’s seminar. Unfortunately, any further information about the nature and scope of these studies could not be reached.

One significant observation about the representation of traditional domestic architecture in *Türk Sanatı* is the abundance of visual images that accompany the text. The place that these forty images occupy in the book is comparable only to that of mosques and *türbes*, far exceeding other building types. When we consider the power of the use of visual images as a representational strategy, we may deduce that this abundance reflects the prominent place that the subject of domestic architecture had gained in Turkish architectural historiography and heritage ideology since 1909 (fig. 18). The scope of these images gives an idea about the vision of C. Esad concerning the issue in question at that time. Exterior and

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130 and p. 131.

interior views and plans of single-family houses in Gebze, Bursa, Ankara, Edirne and Gümülçine constitute an important portion of these images. The plan of one of the *vezir konaks* that R. Osman describes is also presented. An interior view of a house in Akşehir, a hearth in a village dwelling and exterior view of another peasant house find place at different points of this disorganized group of images, alongside residences of the other extreme of the Ottoman society, namely an interior photograph of the *dîvânhâne* of Amcazade Yalısı and a wooden *cumba* in the harem of the Topkapı Palace.<sup>128</sup>

When we consider the fact that images of mosques and *türbes* are given place after the section on the general features of building types where domestic architecture is discussed, we can deduce that in this way, domestic architecture was intended to be perceived by the readers in a radically more prominent position than in the 1909 book. This configuration is in accordance with the emphasis that C. Esad, at the end of the section on periodization, puts on the necessity to include “the people’s art” in the sources of inspiration for the creation of a true national architecture in near future (this alongside his severe criticism towards the Ottoman Revivalism) (see Chapter 1). His designation of these artworks as “belonging to the people” and “scattered throughout Anatolia”<sup>129</sup> have to be evaluated primarily as a reflection of the author’s willingness to incorporate into his evaluations, a crucial element of the republican discourse: the exaltation of the folkloric culture of Anatolia in the definition of national identity. This attitude is certainly akin to his effort to enlarge the vision of national artistic past by including pre-Ottoman and pre-Islamic periods, and his condemnation of Ottoman Revivalism as an idiom that carries the reminiscences of the religiously-oriented society in the past. Therefore, C. Esad, as a professor at an official institution, superimposes

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<sup>128</sup> Examples of ceiling designs, upper row windows, niches and cupboards constitute another subgroup, some of which were already already dealt with in his 1909 text, whereas the presence of ceiling decorations reflects the new emphasis he puts on the subject.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

the ideological viewpoint of the new regime, a completely novel association, on the account of the value of traditional domestic architecture. Few images of peasant houses included in the book is another reflection of his new agenda. Nevertheless, his short identification of Anatolian houses with *hayat*, a few images of this kind of houses and the interior view of a house in Akşehir taken from another researcher stand as additional signs of the deepening of Turkish intellectuals' interest in those years in traditional domestic architecture found in environments other than their own. In addition to the agenda of enlarging the vision of national domestic architecture as to reach the broadest possible geographical and social scope, this search must have been an outcome of the desire to comprehend the developmental phases of the tradition in history, voiced as early as in 1909 by C. Esad and by A. Süheyl in the 1920's. The crucial point here is that this search does not seem to have been for an idiom that preserved its purity despite the corrupted or cosmopolitan idiom in the former capital and in the residences of the imperial elite. We should remember that the description of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses and *konaks* of Istanbul is still the core of C. Esad's text in 1928. Moreover he argues that the most "mature" (*mütekâmil*) and "classical" form of Turkish house is found in Istanbul and Bursa.<sup>130</sup> His inclusion of a *yalı* of a paşa and a part of the imperial harem in his visual representation seems to imply the survival of the perception of these structures as the most refined products of the monolithic national tradition.

This attitude parallels the historical and architectural discourse of Sedad H. Eldem, the most significant inheritor of the discussions in the 1910's and the 20's. With an impressive comprehension, Eldem further penetrated the earlier periods of domestic architecture through observations on surviving examples in Anatolian towns and came up with a convincing periodization.<sup>131</sup> On the other hand, he defines the Marmara region and

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>131</sup> Sedad Hakkı Eldem, *Türk Evi*, 3 vol.s (İstanbul, 1984).

especially Istanbul as the area where the “classical” Turkish house was developed and had “lead” other regions. He highlights the dwellings built in the eighteenth century (“The 2nd Period”) as “the most developed and mature” form of Turkish house.<sup>132</sup> Unlike his predecessors, he finds pleasant qualities even in some late nineteenth century Istanbul houses as products of the cross-fertilization of the local tradition with Western influences. On the other hand, the majority of his new designs follow the idiom of eighteenth and early nineteenth century dwellings and *yahıs* of Istanbul.<sup>133</sup> *Yahıs* and even palaces are treated in his historical studies as building types to be analyzed for a true comprehension of national residential architecture.

#### **j. Professional Architects: Arif Hikmet, M. Vedat and Sedad Hakkı (1928-31)**

Towards the end of the 1920’s and around the beginning of the 30’s, we ultimately observe the participation of a group of professional architects to the discussion on the value of traditional domestic architecture and urban ensembles for modern and national designs in these fields. A number of writings in this group share some dominant ideas cultivated in the preceding decades.

Architect A. Hikmet (Koyunoğlu), who had written several other articles for the same periodical on subjects including Ottoman monumental architectural works and the art of Sinan, published two articles on the subject of historic houses in 1928 and 1929 in *Türk Yurdu*. The main aim of his first article is to point at the necessity to develop an idiom for modern Turkish domestic architecture based on the historic tradition.<sup>134</sup> He explains this necessity by echoing the rooted idea that in cultural fields “the spirit of the people” had to be

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<sup>132</sup> S. H. Eldem, *Türk Evi*, v. I (İstanbul, 1984), p. 135.

<sup>133</sup> But his design for Raif Meto House (1941) was basically a reinterpretation of central Anatolian houses with open *sofa*. Sibel Bozdoğan et al, *Sedad Eldem: Architect in Turkey*, (Singapore, 1989), p. 149.

<sup>134</sup> Mimar Hikmet, “Türk Mimarisi,” in *Türk Yurdu* 198-37, 4 April 1928, reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), vol. 13, (Ankara, 1998-), pp. 219-220.

followed instead of emulating foreigners, and he refers to the example of Hungarian studies on the reinterpretation of folkloric music. However, as noted in Chapter 1, for him, “private architecture” of rooted nations displayed characteristics “within the same frame and the same spirit” with “official architecture,”<sup>135</sup> in other words, he underlines the essential unity of monumental and vernacular genres of national architectural tradition. It is also important to note that, for him, the “essential modernity” of Turkish houses comprised the questions of both plan and decoration:

These buildings, which conform to the contemporary aims and objectives in terms of their plan and decorations, are being destroyed and wrecked day by day. We are certain that by being inspired by these buildings, it would be possible to successfully determine the form of the modern Turkish house. The outcome of a thorough and serious analysis leads undoubtedly to success. The investigations to be conducted by our architects and artists who have analysed the sanitary and social requirements of civilization and worked for generating an artistic innovation in their country will produce a national identity in our new buildings.<sup>136</sup>

The first professional architectural journal in Turkey, *Mimar*, began to be published in 1931. This journal served as a significant platform for the discussions about the questions of modern housing, urbanism and the value of national architectural past as well as other issues in the agenda of professional architects. An article by M. Vedat (Tek), who was one of the leading architects of Ottoman Revivalism like A. Hikmet, largely echoes the discourse on the historic Ottoman houses that flourished in the 1920’s. The author argues that the aesthetic and functional value of the houses in that tradition were far beyond those of contemporary dwellings.<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, in an article published in the first issue, S. Eldem, stresses the need to enlarge the scope of conservation measures as to include *yahıs* and other kinds of

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<sup>135</sup> Mimar Hikmet, “Ankara Evleri,” in *Türk Yurdu* 17-18/211-212, May-June 1929, p. 45.

<sup>136</sup> “Plan ve tezyînât itibâriyle bugünün maksad ve gâyelerine bile uygun olan bu binâlar günden güne mahv ve harâb olmaktadır. Şuna emîiniz ki, bu binâlardan alınan ilhâmıla asrî Türk evinin şeklini muvaffakiyetle tesbît mümkün olabilecektir. Derin ve ciddî tedkîkâtın muhassalası şübhesizdir ki muvaffakiyetdir. Medeniyetin sıhhi ve ictimâî ihtiyâcâtını tedkîk etmiş ve yurdunda bir sanat yeniliği vücûda getirmek üzere çalışan mimâr ve sanatkârlarımızın yapacakları tedkîkât yeni binalarımızda millî bir benlik temîn edecektir.” Mimar Hikmet, “Türk Mimarisi,” p. 220. It should also be noted that, he designates the hearths in the Ankara houses as the “magic” (actually *tılsım*) of them. “Ankara Evleri,” p. 46.

<sup>137</sup> Prof. Mimar M. Vedat, “İstanbul İkametgâhları,” in *Mimar* 10, October 1931, 322-325.

dwellings, and argues that until the second half of the nineteenth century and the incursion of Western influence, the traditional urban fabric in Istanbul displayed a perfectly rational response to the question of the relationship with the nature.<sup>138</sup> He concludes his article by emphasizing the urgent need to form the basis of a better approach to urbanism and to enlighten the inhabitants of Istanbul about the architectural virtues of traditional houses, this time formulized in a more explicitly nationalist tone:

“Who is the one to reinject the purest character and taste of the Turk in architecture?”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Alişanzade Sedat Hakkı, “İstanbul ve Şehircilik,” in *Mimar* 1, January 1931: 1-4.

<sup>139</sup> “Türkün mimarideki en temiz hassa ve zevklerini yeniden aşılacak kimdir?” *Ibid.*, p. 4.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Related Cultural Currents of the Early Twentieth Century**

The aim of this chapter is to help clarify the historical dynamics behind the development of Turkish literature on traditional domestic architecture created at the beginning of the twentieth century by briefly discussing a number of related currents observed in the same period. The status of being a significant visual symbol of national identity that historic houses were given in the field of painting, and the agenda of revitalizing a wide range of traditional crafts are instrumental in understanding the growing emphasis on the traditional life-style as the sphere of national essence and the dominant desire to preserve a crucial link with that essence through the survival of its characteristic material components in modern life. A major objective of this chapter is to illuminate the general growth of the reflections of the antiquarian attitude in different fields of historical representations, which appears as a decisive factor behind the rise of old houses and neighborhoods as chief symbols of traditional life.

#### **a. The Rise of the Subject of Traditional Houses and Neighborhoods in Ottoman-Turkish Painting**

Although ‘internationalism’ is advocated in science and scholarship, in the artistic works that are the products of the identity and the sensitivity of a social environment, more than ‘internationalism’ it is necessary for the nationality and the local accent to be sovereign.

(...) However, local and national art can not be determined solely by the strangeness of costumes nor by the forms unique to that locality. Some of our painters, for instance, understanding national art in this manner, place a person wearing a turban or breeches at the centre of a landscape or at some point of an interior without any conceivable reason (...) It is obvious that national taste and national art should be derived from the wholeness of the work, and that the artist should always make his racial personality be felt in every part of his work.

(...) It is not possible to come across masters like Rıza Bey among the few emerging artists who understands this problem as he had.

Rıza Bey Efendi paints landscapes. He is in love with the peanut trees which create a harmony through a gradational coloration in the midst of the blue elements of the Bosphorus, with the plants of the warm, scarlet slopes where Asia leans out towards the sea, and with the tiny old houses built across the sunset, on the slopes where they are be enframed by the Marmara and the Bosphorus, by those erstwhile master builders who had created delightful things by appreciating Istanbul's sky, sea, sunset and its whole poetry of colours and those old houses that unfortunately disappeared. (...) God knows how many works of his feature thorough Turkishness and Orientalness.<sup>1</sup>

This passage is from the introductory article by Galib Bahtiyar<sup>2</sup> in the special issue of *Osmânlı Ressâmlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi* dedicated to the painter Hoca Ali Rıza (1857-1930) that was published in 1914. The pages of this issue were embellished with several paintings of A. Rıza Bey who was celebrated by many of his contemporaries as a champion of the ideal of national expression in art. Like Galib Bahtiyar, Celal Esad, a pupil of A. Rıza Bey,<sup>3</sup> identifies him as a great painter who had a “unique style reflecting the Turkish spirit.”<sup>4</sup> The romantic subjects he employed in his paintings include traditional wooden houses, *yalis*, fountains, cemeteries, urban neighborhood scenes from Istanbul and Bursa and villages in the vicinity of Istanbul as well as landscapes and Bosphorus scenes. Traditional houses and neighborhood scenes occupy a remarkable place in his works and thus it may be argued that these images might have played an important role in the perception of his works as reflecting

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<sup>1</sup> “Fen ve ilimde ‘beynelmilel’lik iddia olunursa da bir muhît-i ictimaî şahsiyet ve hassasiyetinin mahsalası olan âsâr-ı sanâyiye beynelmellelikten ziyâde milliyetin ve şîve-i mahallînin hükümân olması iktizâ eder. (...) Fakat sanat-ı mahalliye ve milliye yalnız kıyâfetin garâbeti, o muhîtin kendine mahsûs olan eşkâli ile tayîn etmez. Bizde bazı ressâmlar sanat-ı milliye bu noktada anlamak isteyerek meselâ bir peyzajın ortasına yâhut bir enteriyörün bir tarafına belli olsun diye hiç münâsebeti olmaksızın sarıklı, yâhut şalvarlı birisini kondururlar. (...) Şurası malûm olmak icâb eder ki zevk-i millî, sanat-ı milliye eserin heyet-i umûmiyesinden intişâr etmeli, sanatkâr şahsiyet-i irkiyesini eserinin her zerresinde tesbît etmelidir. (...) Bizde az yetişen sanatkârân içinde üstâd-ı şehîr Rıza Bey kadar bu dakikayı anlamış hissetmişlere tesâdüf edilemiyor.

Rıza Bey Efendi bir peyzajistdir. O Boğaziçi'nin mavi unsurları arasında bir tadrîc-i ahenkdâr-ı elvân teşkil eyleyen fıstık ağaçlarına, Asya'nın denize doğru sarktığı kızıl ılık yamaçların mahlûkât-ı nebâtiyesine (...) ve maatteessüf adedi hiç kalmayan eski evlerimizi, ve İstanbul'un semâsını, denizini gurûbunu ve bütün şiiir-i elvânını pek güzel anlayarak bedî'alar vücûda getirmiş olan eski kalfalarımızın tam Marmara ve Boğaz'ın çerçeve teşkil edeceği sûrette yamaçlar üstünde, gurûblar karşısında oturmuş oldukları evciklere eski evlere meftûndur. ...bilmemnekadar eserin en ufak zerresinde tamam bir Türklük bir Şarklılık nümâyân olur.” Galib Bahtiyar, “Sanâyi-i Nefîsenin Milliyet Nokta-i Nazarından Tedkiki” in *Osmanlı Ressâmlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi* 18, 1 Temmuz 1330, pp. 276-77.

<sup>2</sup> He was among the first graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts (*Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi*) but his later career is not well known. Turan Erol, *Başlangıcından Bugüne Türk Resim Sanatı Tarihi*, v. I (İstanbul, 1980), p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> Celâl Esad Arseven, *Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım*, (İstanbul, 1993), pp. 46-47.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

the secret spirit of the nation, probably not always far from the vulgar “iconographic” understanding of the question that G. Bahtiyar condemns (fig. 19-21). A. Rıza Bey’s pupil A. Süheyl Ünver sees the strength and the value of his art in the ability to capture and document ancient beauties and more importantly the ancient character of Istanbul.<sup>5</sup> When we notice that the subjects of traditional houses and neighborhoods had a significant weight among the works of several other Turkish painters active in those decades, it is revealed that the growing interest in traditional domestic architecture observed in the fields of architectural history writing, conservation and new designs were part of a broader cultural milieu. Especially if we consider the fact that several figures were either active in different fields or personally connected to others, the necessity to have a closer look at the developments in the sphere of painting in order to decipher the milieu in question becomes apparent.

A. Rıza Bey was a graduate of the Military Academy who worked as a teacher of painting at the same academy and some other schools in the subsequent decades.<sup>6</sup> His pictorial style is usually evaluated as a major instance of inclinations towards Impressionism in Turkish painting before “The 1914 Generation.”<sup>7</sup> He certainly stands apart from many of the “soldier painters” of the nineteenth century whose pictorial approach is distinguished with relative scarcity of narratives and figures in their representation and an obsession with copying nature in photographic reality.<sup>8</sup>

With their more “interpretive” approach in their representations of the outer world and their interest in narration of various themes, the group of painters who had turned back to Turkey in 1914 from their education abroad, is attributed a crucial role in the development of

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *Ressam Üsküdarlı Hoca Ali Rıza: Hayatı ve Eserleri*, (İstanbul, 1949).

<sup>6</sup> Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *İstanbul ve Boğaziçi Ressamı Ali Rıza Bey*, (İstanbul, 1930); republished in Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *İstanbul Risaleleri*, (İstanbul, 1995), pp. 25-32.

<sup>7</sup> Nurullah Berk, *Başlangıcından Bugüne Türk Resim Sanatı Tarihi*, v. II (İstanbul, 1981), p. 24.

Turkish painting.<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that two of the leading artists of this group, Hüseyin Avni Lifij (1889-1927), Nazmi Ziya Güran (1881-1937), who was a pupil of Rıza Bey, extensively dealt with the subjects of traditional houses and neighborhoods of Istanbul in their works, so that painter and art historian Nurullah Berk designates them, along with Hikmet Onat (1882-1977), as “painters of Istanbul.”<sup>10</sup> Berk argues that Nazmi Ziya had found best scenes for his Impressionist technique in spaces such as cemeteries, neighborhood coffeehouses and shaded streets.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, for Berk, the artistic identity of Anvi Lifij and his poetic pictorial expressions are reflected best in his Istanbul scenes, in his *cumbas*, gravestones, and “houses in the middle of evening purple in an old neighborhood.”<sup>12</sup> (fig. 22) However, the considerable popularity of these subjects in early twentieth century Turkish painting, also observed in some creations of Namık İsmail (1890-1935), Ruhi Arel (1880-1931), Osman Asaf (1869-1935) and Mehmet Ali Lâga (1878-1947), demonstrates that some historical dynamics beyond the personal artistic sensibilities and choices of these two painters must have been at work here.

The first of these dynamics that I argue to have been influential in the phenomenon is the role of nationalism. The growing interest in spaces of traditional life of the Ottoman society should be interpreted primarily as a continuation of the nationalist appropriation of the Orientalist pictorial language, a significant early representative of which was Osman Hamdi Bey. O. Hamdi Bey’s paintings are usually evaluated as gestures meaningful in the context of Ottoman nationalism, since in his works he used to compose various elements of the Orientalist visual language such as buildings, objects or costumes in a radically different manner in order to create an alternative image of the Ottoman society as a group of rational,

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<sup>8</sup> See T. Erol, *Başlangıcından Bugüne Türk Resim Sanatı Tarihi*, v. I (İstanbul, 1980).

<sup>9</sup> N. Berk, *ibid.*, pp. 9-67.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

intellectually active, dignified individuals portrayed with the icons of their national distinction.<sup>13</sup> G. Bahtiyar's observations clearly point to the power of the idea to employ in paintings some elements of the traditional physical environment as symbols of national distinction. The emphasis put by his contemporaries on the "national" character of Rıza Bey's style reveals the crucial impact of nationalism, although later art historical accounts usually ignore this aspect. Moreover, painters of the younger generation can not be imagined outside the framework of Turkish nationalism, as well.

On the other hand, it should be noted that several other Ottoman-Turkish painters from the generation of Rıza Bey were quite often depicting historic architectural works in their paintings, during the years when O. Hamdi Bey was creating his above mentioned images. This trend certainly should be interpreted as closely connected to the nationalist sensibility shared by the prominent Ottoman painters of the time. It may be comfortably viewed as a sign of the rise of the heritage ideology, as well. Art historian Şehâbeddin (Tekindağ), in his article on H. Zekai Paşa, published in 1924,<sup>14</sup> defines him as a leading Turkish "archaeologist" after Hamdi Bey, since he had spent a remarkable effort to study ancient artworks such as mosques, tiles, *türbes* and fountains. These were the predominant subjects of this paşa's paintings as well. Several other painters of the same generation, such as Muallim Şevket (1856-1893), Ahmed Ziya Akbulut (1869-1938), similarly gave a prevelant place to the subjects of historic mosques and *türbes* commissioned by or belonging to members of the Ottoman ruling elite, sultans or viziers, in their works.<sup>15</sup> A. Z. Akbulut has

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> See Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2003), and Ahmet Ersoy, "Osman Hamdi Bey ve Osmanlı kültüründe oryantalizm," in *Toplumsal Tarih* 119, November 2003, pp. 84-89.

<sup>14</sup> Şehâbeddîn, "Zekâî Paşa," in *Millî Mecmûa* 16, 12 Hazîrân 1340, pp. 252-254.

<sup>15</sup> Although the roles of nationalism and heritage ideology are not problematized by the author, see T. Erol, *ibid.*

also written an unpublished short treatise on the history of Ottoman architecture and the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne, to be presented to the reigning sultan Abdülhamid II.<sup>16</sup>

This trend can easily be distinguished, however, from the growing interest in other elements of the traditional urban environment, observed especially in later decades. Like the majority of his contemporaries and in accordance with the relative weight he gave to these subjects in his *Mübeccel Hazîneler* (1327/1913), Zekai Paşa dealt with examples of historic monumental architecture more often than those of domestic architecture in his paintings. Although monumental architecture of the past remained as a popular subject, it is clearly observed that wooden houses, old streets, *mescids*, coffeehouses and neighborhoods attracted a considerable interest in the hands of the following generation of painters. In the art of the above mentioned leading figures of the 1914 Generation, neighborhood scenes occupy even a more prevalent place than the former category of historic heritage. Perhaps, it would not be wrong to argue that Rıza Bey stood as “a bridge” between the two generations in this respect, as well.

The question of explaining this change in the content of nationalist imagery arises at this point. It should be remembered that, this development in the field of painting coincided with the rise of domestic architecture in the field of architectural history as to gain a place comparable to that of monumental architecture in the same period. Discussions on their conservation and on the possibility of a revival based on the architectural features of traditional houses took place in the same milieu. It is not surprising to find Rıza Bey as the teacher of A. Süheyl Ünver who was himself an amateur painter and a significant pioneer of the revivalism idea in residential architecture, whereas another pupil of Rıza Bey, N. Ziya

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<sup>16</sup> Hâmit Er, “Ahmed Ziya Akbulut ve Târîh-i Mimarî-i Osmanî ve Edirne Sultan Selim Cami-i Şerifi,” in *Edirne: Serhattaki Payitaht*, Necdet İşli, M Sabri Koz (ed.), (İstanbul 1998), pp. 353-361.

Güran was the author of one of the earliest articles that echoes the ideal of “national urban planning.”<sup>17</sup>

An explanation for this shift might be the rejection of Ottoman monumental architectural works in search for more appropriate symbols of national identity, due to their associations with the imperial elite. In the early republican period, subjects related to life in towns and villages of Anatolia were more often treated by Turkish painters than before, in accordance with republican ideology.<sup>18</sup> However, it is difficult to argue that traditional houses and neighborhoods of Istanbul, in other words, anonymously created architectural spaces that belonged to ordinary people, were primarily given the status of being material symbols of national history and culture, “alternative” to works of Ottoman monumental architecture. H. Avni Lifij died in 1927 when Ottoman Revivalism was still the state sponsored national architecture in Turkey and we find examples of Ottoman monumental architecture such as *türbes* depicted in some of his paintings. Similarly, Rıza Bey was creating many of his typical Istanbul scenes with old dwellings and coffeehouses long before the republic and he had displayed no sign of being a propagator of the anti-monarchic ideology. A sketch for the logo of the Academy of Fine Arts by N. Ziya Güran, in which he employed a column with a muqarnas capital and a woman figure holding a model of Süleymaniye Mosque reveals the relation of this painter with the forms and monuments of Ottoman monumental architecture (fig. 23).<sup>19</sup> A. Süheyl Ünver’s personal note-and-sketch-books that he had kept between 1919 and 1923 include several images belonging to examples of Ottoman monumental architecture alongside abundant representations of domestic architecture and related objects; the two categories occupy roughly equal places in his world

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<sup>17</sup> Nazmi Ziya, “İstanbul Şehri Muhiblerine,” in *Şehbal* 87, 1 Kânûn-ı Evvel 1329 [14 December 1913], pp.298-299.

<sup>18</sup> Especially about the “D Group,” see N. Berk, *ibid.*, pp. 92-123, and Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernizm ve Ulusun İnşası*, (İstanbul, 2002), pp. 271-275.

of images.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is clear that traditional houses and urban fabric were by no means imagined by these painters as alternative categories of built heritage to be cultivated instead of monumental architecture.

On the other hand, the popularization of these subjects in the hands of the “Turkish Impressionists” brings to mind the possibility to find a parallelism with some basic characteristics of Impressionism in the West. As Hugh Honour and John Fleming note, recording everyday themes and “concentration on the fleeting and usual at the expense of the enduring and monumental”<sup>21</sup> were among the essential features of the Impressionist movement as it was observed in late nineteenth century Europe. Everyday world, spaces and lives of ordinary people were certainly the prevalent themes in the paintings of Turkish Impressionists, as well. N. Ziya Güran created some monumental compositions depicting important historical events such as the Siege of Szigetvar or the passage of Turks to the Balkans,<sup>22</sup> but scenes of everyday world have a far more prominent place in his art. Moreover, it may be noted that in the paintings of A. Lifij and N. Ziya Güran, monumental architectural works such as mosques are usually represented as a part of the broader urban fabric. At this point, we should remember the critical role attributed to the bourgeois sensibilities and the “democratization of art” behind the development of Impressionism and the inclination towards everyday themes that it displayed. We can argue that the arena of Turkish painting had underwent a comparable transformation in the initial decades of the twentieth century. Annual Galatasaray *salons* and similar exhibitions organized later in Ankara reflect the remarkable publicization of the art of painting in the Second Constitutional Period and the early years of the republic. Equally importantly, the prominent painters

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<sup>19</sup> Turan Erol, *Nazmi Ziya*, (İstanbul, 1995), p. 244. The date of the sketch is not indicated.

<sup>20</sup> Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *1923 Yılı Notları*, *Defter* no: 227; *Defter* no: 251; *1919 Yılı Notları*, *Defter* no: 258; *Kırkanbar*, *Defter* no: 263; *1920 Notları*, *Defter* no: 334 (The Süleymaniye Library).

<sup>21</sup> Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *The Visual Arts: A History*, (1991), p. 612.

discussed here and many others active in those years had social backgrounds that can be considered within the Ottoman-Turkish “middle class.” Üsküdarlı Rıza Bey was son of an army officer,<sup>23</sup> Avni Lifij was newly born when he had moved to Istanbul with his father who worked as the director of the Galata Bridge for years,<sup>24</sup> and N. Ziya Güran was born in Horhor district as a son of a bureaucrat.<sup>25</sup> In addition, all of these painters worked as professional teachers at different educational institutions unlike many of their predecessors who were higher military officers. Therefore, their concentration on everyday life and its spaces in Istanbul, traditional wooden houses being frequently used elements of these images, should be evaluated as closely related to these painters’ strong impressionist sensibilities about mundane experiences. This content, moreover, can not be viewed as simply imported alongside the “techniques” of Impressionism; it must have developed, to a significant extent, in the context of the local dynamics of the sphere of painting.

Honour and Fleming emphasize the preeminent position of “modern” images of contemporary life in French Impressionist painting. Similarly, several Turkish painters from the 1914 Generation such as İbrahim Çallı, Feyhaman Duran and N. Ziya Güran showed interest in representing images of this kind.<sup>26</sup> N. Ziya Güran’s famous painting that depicts the Taksim Square may be remembered in this context. However, a much larger group of Güran’s works represent historic quarters of Istanbul, old streets, *sebils*, wooden houses, street sellers and typical inhabitants of these quarters. Certainly, these spaces and different aspects of the traditional life experienced in those spaces were alive in the time of Güran; in other words, they were “contemporary” to him. Yet, the contrast between these traditional

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<sup>22</sup> T. Erol, *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *İstanbul ve Boğaziçi Ressamı Ali Rıza Bey*, (İstanbul, 1930); republished in Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *İstanbul Risaleleri*, (İstanbul, 1995).

<sup>24</sup> Mehmed Mesih, “Ressâm Hüseyin Avni Lifij Merhûm,” in *Millî Mecmûa* 89, 1 July 1927, pp. 1437-1439.

<sup>25</sup> T. Erol, *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> See N. Berk, *ibid.*

quarters and the newly developing “modern” districts and by extension, the contrast between the virtues and evils associated with these two worlds occupied a significant place in the collective imagination. At this point, we should remember that A. Süheyl Ünver strongly underlines the effort to “document” the rapidly disappearing “reminiscences” of Istanbul behind the art of Rıza Bey.<sup>27</sup> Rıza Bey himself was defining the aim and the essence of his art as follows:

...since my sole pleasure and sentiment is to prevent Ottoman houses, neighborhoods, landscapes, groves, sublime historic works which sing a local and national language of life, scattered in the greenery under the sweet skies of my country, from dying and give them a life at length...<sup>28</sup>

In light of these observations, I argue that a critical dynamic behind the remarkable popularity of the subjects of traditional houses and neighborhoods in early twentieth century Turkish painting must have been the growing desire to preserve a link with this decaying world. As clearly expressed also by Hamdullah Subhi in the same years (see Chapter 2), material elements of this world were associated with a particular “language of life” that represented roots and identity and threatened by modernity. Evident in the case of Rıza Bey, the agenda of “documenting” the material appearances of this “language of life” may comfortably be viewed as an effort to “conserve” or “salvage” it by encapsulating in pictorial representations. Suggestions for actual conservation of traditional houses, historical studies on their architectural characteristics and the desire to employ these rediscovered characteristics in new designs were other appearances of this struggle to preserve a link with roots in modern times. It is no surprise to find N. Ziya Güran, as noted above, expressing the need to formulate an approach of urban planning based on the principles observed by

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<sup>27</sup> A. S. Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup> “...yegâne zevk ve hissiyatım memleketimin tatlı semaları altında zümrüdün menazırına serpilmiş yerli ve millî bir lisanı hayat söyliyem Osmanlı âşîyanlarını, mahallelerini, manzaralarını, meşcerelerini asârî âliye ve tarihiyelerini öldürmemek ve onlara bir hayatı duradur vermek olduğu için...” Quoted from his short autobiography in Ord. Prof. Dr. A. Süheyl Ünver, *Ressam Ali Rıza Bey'e göre Yarım Asır Önce: Kahvehanelerimiz ve Eşyası*, (İstanbul, 1967), p. 7.

ancestors.<sup>29</sup> Güran also argues for the necessity to express local sensibilities in artistic creations.<sup>30</sup> These examples reveal the value attributed to forms of traditional physical environment and the close connection between the field of painting and other fields discussed here.

### **b. The Agenda of Reinvigorating Traditional Crafts**

Celal Esad Arseven evaluates another painter from the same generation, Ruhi Arel, as follows:

He was a fervent nationalist and belonged to the people. He loved everything that elonged to the Turk with great affection. Turk's way of life, belongings, clothes were a source of inspiration for him. He was not westernized despite being educated in Europe, and remained as an idealist, national painter. The most conspicuous characteristic of his works was that they were reminiscent of the colors and the harmony of Turkish embroideries and carpets.<sup>31</sup>

As in the case of Ruhi Arel, material elements of traditional life other than residential architecture, especially objects and craft works, attracted a considerable attention in the agenda of Turkish painters.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, personal sketchbooks of A. Süheyl Ünver, dated between 1919 and 1923, clearly reveal that a wide range of traditional domestic objects were indispensable parts of his documentation efforts alongside domestic architecture and ornamental motifs often taken from Ottoman monumental architecture. As noted in Chapter 2, a speech by Hamdullah Subhi (Tanrıöver), which was published in *Türk Yurdu* in 1914, perfectly exemplifies the collective memorial function attributed to traditional domestic objects by defining their disappearance as a major aspect of the decay of the national spirit as

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<sup>29</sup> Nazmi Ziya, *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> "Sanat ne kadar beynelmilel ise de muhitinin hissiyatını ifade etmedikçe sanat sayılamayacağı bütün dünyaca kabul edilmiş bir hakikattir." Nazmi Ziya, "Resim Sergisi Hakkında," in *Cumhuriyet*, 12 September 1937, quoted in T. Erol, *ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>31</sup> "Koyu bir milliyetçi ve halk çocuğu idi. Türk'e ait her şeyi büyük bir bağlılıkla severdi. Türk'ün yaşayışı, eşyaları, kıyafetleri ona bir ilham kaynağı idi. Avrupa'da tahsil ettiği halde Batılılaşmamış, idealist bir milli ressam kalmıştır. Yapıtlarında en göze çarpan özellik, Türk işleme ve halılarındaki renkleri ve uyumu hatırlatmasıdır." Quoted in N. Berk, *ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to note that, in some of his paintings, Ruhi Arel depicted artisans involved in traditional crafts.

well as a drastic economic loss.<sup>33</sup> We find some other significant traces of this context on the pages of *Osmânlı Ressâmlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*. Galib Bahtiyar, in the latter part of his introductory article in the special issue dedicated to painter A. Rıza Bey, argues that the ideal of national expression has a particular importance in the fields of architecture, decorative arts, weaving and furniture since these arts and crafts have broader audiences.<sup>34</sup> He goes on by pointing to the economic success gained in southeastern European countries by reforming the traditional industry of embroidery, and claims that these craft works are nothing other than *hesâb* works found in some parts of Anatolia. In addition, he expresses his admiration towards *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi* for its contribution to the reinvigoration (*ihyâ*) of Ottoman arts. We observe in this journal, especially from 1913 onwards, an intense interest in traditional Ottoman decorative arts, such as calligraphy and gilding. In the following pages of the same issue, we find an article written by a certain teacher Vahyî.<sup>35</sup> This teacher defines nationality as the affiliation of members of a nation to the greatness of their ancestors and he believes that the best manifestations of this greatness are found in literature and arts. For him, the discovery of the rich national heritage in these fields was to be achieved with “pen and brush,” in other words, by scholarly researches and pictorial representations. People who are involved in “scientific” (*usûl-i fennî dâiresinde*) collection and categorization of this type of “documents” were fulfilling a significant duty. Therefore, “Scientific Turkism” (*İlmî Türkçülük*) had to consider with great care the program of the Academy of Fine Arts, national literature education at the *Darülfünûn* and the instruction of embroidery and handicrafts at the schools for girls. The author strongly emphasizes the necessity to study art works in the final category in order to reinvigorate them in modern

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<sup>33</sup> Hamdullah Subhi, “Eski Türk Evleri,” in *Türk Yurdu* 60, 20 Şubat 1329 [5 March 1914], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), v. 3, (Ankara, 1998-), pp. 203-205; Hamdullah Subhi, “Eski Türk Evleri,” in *Türk Yurdu* 62, 20 Mart 1330 [2 April 1914], reprinted in *Türk Yurdu*, Murat Sefkatli (ed.), v. 3, (Ankara, 1998-), pp. 242-244.

<sup>34</sup> Galib Bahtiyar, *ibid.*

institutions and gain economic benefits, following the model of some southeastern European nations. These two texts well reflect the agenda of reinvigoration in the discussions on a range of traditional crafts paralleling the issue of domestic architecture. The envisioned flourishing of these crafts are conceived as a necessary aspect of the preservation of the national spirit and as an economic program at the same time. It is also important to note that G. Bahtiyar underlines the necessity to observe “the contemporary requirements and feelings” in this reinvigoration program, and thus reveals the desire to guarantee the dynamism and hence the survival of the national arts in the modern age,<sup>36</sup> various formulas of which are voiced in the sphere of architectural culture. To reach a sufficient understanding of the nature and development of the arts-and-crafts movement in Turkey, the program of the craft schools founded from the final decades of the empire on and the level of their economic and social effects are beyond the aim of my study. But it is interesting to find Mehmet Mesih Bey, the owner of *Millî Mecmûa* which published the group of articles on traditional domestic architecture by A. Süheyl Ünver and R. Osman, has written in 1926 a series of articles on Kütahya,<sup>37</sup> and gave a major place to a discussion of the tile and carpet industries in that town, further clarifying the connection between these concerns.

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<sup>35</sup> Muallim Vahyî, “Milliyete Doğru,” in *Osmânî Ressâmlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi* 18, 1 Temmuz 1330, pp. 286-292.

<sup>36</sup> “Sanâyi-i nefisede milliyet, şîve-i mahallî meselesini tedkîk sırasında dâimâ bir hakikat-i insâniyeyi derpîş etmek zarûrîdir. O da ihtiyâcât ve hissiyât-ı zamânî kollamak! Her devre-i ictimâînin temâyülâtı, intibaâtı o devrenin eserlerinde gözüktür. Bu hakikatı nazarı dikkate almamak, ve bâhusus son zamanlar herâsâver bir süratle akan cereyân-ı medeniyet ve terakkî ihtiyâcâtını ihmâl etmek eserlerin yeknesak, ve bi'l-netice gayretlerin akîm kalmasını intâc eder.” Galib Bahtiyar, *ibid.*, p. 277.

### c. Coffeehouse Architecture Reinterpreted

A. Süheyl Ünver published in 1967 a number of charcoal drawings by A. Rıza Bey representing traditional coffeehouses in Istanbul and a full range of objects used in them.<sup>38</sup> When we remember that a coffeehouse was included in the Ottoman exhibits in 1873 Vienna Exposition, this leading painter's and some others', such as N. Ziya's, remarkable effort to "document" these traditional spaces of public life appears as a significant forerunner of the trend of designing new coffeehouses between the 1930's and the 1950's, the most well-known example being Taşlık Kahvesi (1948) by Sedad H. Eldem. Therefore, the interest in and ultimately the revival of coffeehouses stands as a phenomenon largely parallel to that of domestic architecture. However, unlike the latter and probably due to the perception of their architectural qualities as below a certain level of sophistication, traditional coffeehouses did not attract an attention in the field of architectural historiography. Hence, it is interesting to note the other historic sources on which the designs of the new coffeehouses were based. Architectural journal *Mimar* published a coffeehouse project by Arif Hikmet in 1931 (fig. 24).<sup>39</sup> With pointed arches, muqarnas capitals and tiles employed, this project appears as an instance of Ottoman Revivalism which was excluded from the officially supported architectural language employed in more representational building types from around 1928 onwards. This project brings to mind the idea that Ottoman Revivalism may have been viewed by A. Hikmet as an appropriate idiom for this space of leisure time, reminding the Orientalist utilization of non-western idioms in the Western world. Another important observation about this project is that it closely resembles kiosks of Ottoman palatial architecture in the "classical" period, such as Bağdat Köşkü. When we consider that Sedad H.

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<sup>37</sup> Mehmed Mesih, "Kütahya'da Birkaç Gün," *Millî Mecmûa* 65, 15 July 1926, p. 1045; Mehmed Mesih, "Kütahya'da Birkaç Gün," *Millî Mecmûa* 66, 1 August 1926, pp. 1068-1069; Mehmed Mesih, "Kütahya'da Birkaç Gün," *Millî Mecmûa* 67, 15 August 1926, pp. 1084-1085.

<sup>38</sup> Ord. Prof. Dr. A. Süheyl Ünver, *Ressam Ali Rıza Bey'e göre Yarım Asır Önce: Kahvehanelerimiz ve Eşyası*, (İstanbul, 1967).

<sup>39</sup> "Eski Bir Türk Kahvesi," in *Mimar* 2, February 1931, pp. 59-60.

Eldem's Taşlık (1948) and Beyazıt (designed in 1939-40) coffeehouses and Rıza Aşkan's Oriental Coffeehouse in İzmir (1954) were modelled after wooden *qa'as* such as the *divanhâne* of the *yalı* of Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa, it becomes clear that the most splendid parts in the residences of the former imperial elite were seen as appropriate models to provide the desired sophistication for the new coffeehouses. Therefore, this trend reveals that architectural spaces that belonged to the Ottoman ruling elite continued to be valued as a standard of quality sought in new designs. This appropriation of the idiom in question for the creation of public spaces that were to serve much broader circles of society also helps us understand the considerable place given to this category of buildings in the contemporary Turkish historiography on residential architecture, a major aim of which was to form the basis of an idiom for houses of the urban middle classes. As noted in Chapter 2, in these cases we observe the weight of the cultural norms of the former ruling class under the conditions of the democratization of the cultural life.

#### **d. The Rise of Ethnography**

Subjects related to ethnography and folklore, ranging from wedding customs to studies on folkloric music and the general characteristics of *halkiyât* as a discipline occupied a significant place in the contents of *Millî Mecmûa* as well as some other leading publications of those years, such as *Hayat* and *Muhit*. A stress on the folkloric culture of Anatolia was given a central role in the republican ideology's definition of national identity, but a remarkable interest in folkloric literature and a sensibility for identification with peasants is observed in *Türk Yurdu* from the early 1910's onwards.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Mustafa Satı Bey published an introductory book on ethnography in 1911.<sup>41</sup> A number of late Ottoman intellectuals, Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad, Ziya Gökalp and Rıza Tevfik published articles on the new

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<sup>40</sup> A "Society of Peasantists" was established by a group of the members of the Türk Ocağı in 1919. Füsun Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)*, (İstanbul, 2004), p. 111.

discipline *halkiyât*/folklore in the 1910's.<sup>42</sup> We should remember that Z. Gökalp put forward his distinction between the “official civilization” and the “people’s civilization” in 1914.<sup>43</sup> He defined *halkiyât* as “the science that investigates the moral civilization that does not have any written laws and which proceeds orally from one generation to another.”<sup>44</sup> Arzu Öztürkmen notes that, Rıza Tevfik similarly emphasizes “anonymity” in his discussion of the connection between the nation and folkloric culture, and conceives the latter as the sphere of “self-expression” of the nation.<sup>45</sup>

In the context of the intensification of intellectual interest in ethnography and folklore, and the gradual rise of the stress on the “myth of Anatolia” in the official ideology of the new republic, a museum of ethnography was opened in Ankara in 1927. Z. Gökalp expressed the need to establish such a museum already in 1923.<sup>46</sup> For him, the future museum of ethnography had to collect the full range of objects from shoes to costumes, saddles and beds in “contemporary” use from towns and villages of Anatolia. These objects had to be displayed in a chain of development from the most primitive forms to the most elegant artifacts. Models of edifices, such as houses, had to be produced for these displays. In addition, this museum was to document and preserve folk tales and melodies and the characteristics of local accents with the help of modern technical equipments.

We learn from Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, who attended ethnography lectures at the *Dârülfünûn* (University) in 1917, studied philology and Turkology in Hungary in the

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<sup>41</sup> Mustafa Satı Bey el-Husrî, *Etnografya: İlm-i Akvâm*, (İstanbul, 1327).

<sup>42</sup> See Arzu Öztürkmen, *Türkiye’de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik*, (İstanbul, 1998), pp. 22-37.

<sup>43</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Halk Medeniyeti I: Başlangıç,” in *Halka Doğru* 14, 10 Temmuz 1329, republished in Ziya Gökalp, *Makaleler VIII*, Ferit Ragıp Tuncor (ed.), (Ankara, 1981), pp. 5-7.

<sup>44</sup> “Kaideleri yazılı olmayan ve ancak ağızdan ağıza geçmek suretiyle bir soyda uzayıp giden manevi medeniyeti mütalaa eden ilim.” Quoted in A. Öztürkmen, *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>46</sup> Ziya Gökalp, “Hars Teşkilatı,” in *Yeni Gün*, 30 Mayıs 1339, republished in Ziya Gökalp, *Makaleler IX*, Şevket Beysanoğlu (ed.), (İstanbul, 1980), pp. 43-49.

following years and served as the first director of the Museum of Ethnography between 1927 and 1931,<sup>47</sup> that Hungarian Turkologist Gyula Meszaros was given the task of preparing the initial report for the foundation of this museum in 1924.<sup>48</sup> G. Meszaros was a former colleague of the minister of education and culture Hamdullah Subhi (Tanrıöver) from Istanbul *Dârülfünûn* and one of the directors of the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest.<sup>49</sup> He supervised the program of collection of artifacts together with Celal Esat (Arseven) and Halil Ethem (Eldem).<sup>50</sup>

*Hayat* published an account of the new museum and its collections in 1928.<sup>51</sup> Here, the author Ahmet Halil reports that Meszaros,<sup>52</sup> his guide during his visit to the museum, emphasizes the benefits of having a collection of “ethnographic” material that belongs to primitive peoples from remote parts of the world, which was the case here, in order to illuminate the “ethnography of the general history of civilization” before entering the halls of “the national ethnography.” The second section was confined to domestic objects, tile collection and popular ornaments. Meszaros emphasizes here the connection between the iron works displayed and the forms of their counterparts produced in the pre-historic Anatolian civilizations, reflecting the early republican emphasis on identification with the remote past of Anatolia. In the third and fourth sections, embroideries and objects that belong to dervish orders were displayed respectively. At the end of the visit, the Hungarian scholar, while referring to the connection between the past and the life in the present, invites Turkish artists to “contemplate the objects of the spirit of the people,”<sup>53</sup> and Ahmet Halil stresses the necessity to receive inspiration from the traditional motifs of Anatolia in modern and national

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<sup>47</sup> Savaş Harmankaya, “Koşay, Hamit Zübeyr,” in *Eczacıbaşı Sanat Ansiklopedisi* v. 2, (İstanbul, 1997) p. 1052.

<sup>48</sup> Dr. Phil. Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, *Etnoğrafya Müzesi Kılavuzu*, (İstanbul, 1956).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Ahmet Halil, “Etnografya Müzemiz,” in *Hayat* 108, 20 December 1928, pp. 69-74.

<sup>52</sup> In the text “Mesaruş Bey.”

textile designs.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, a basic function of the Museum of Ethnography that was envisioned in those years was to help to develop modern and national idioms in some industries with the aim of preserving a link with the national spirit through its visual referents, which constituted the basis of the revivalist movements in several fields.

At this point, I would like to evaluate the nature of the connection between the rise of ethnography and the growing interest in traditional domestic architecture. First of all, this movement brought, for the first time, a category of anonymous architecture to the sphere of architectural heritage ideology. In the process, the place it occupied grew considerably. Moreover, the level of attention paid for the uses of various spaces and objects in the domestic environment and related habits, observed in the writings of almost all researchers from C. Esad to A. Süheyl, R. Osman and M. Galib clearly reveals the weight of the ethnographic sensibility in the movement.

However, as emphasized in Chapter 2, the growing interest in rural culture seems to have had hardly any serious impact on the movement in question. It is true that painters A. Rıza Bey and Avni Lifij occasionally represented village scenes, including dwellings. Moreover, A. Süheyl, several times in his writings, refers to village dwellings while he defines the scope of the comprehensive studies on national domestic architecture that he envisages. Yet, the historical studies on this subject that were produced before 1931, almost completely omit peasant architecture in their accounts. Urban residences ranging from modest single family houses to *konaks* and even palatial structures constitute the dominant contents of the literature of this period. Interestingly, in the subsequent decades, Sedad H.

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>54</sup> “Kadınlarımız Anadolu kadınlarının işlemeciliğinden zengin ilhamlar alarak kendi elbiselerine, modalarına, süslerine başka bir renk verebilirler. Medenileşme; medenî şuur içinde millileşme demektir. Bunu anlamak zamanı artık gelmiştir.” *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Eldem did not pay a remarkable attention to village houses either. Therefore, the focus of interest of this generation of researchers and their younger colleague was primarily historic urban residential architecture, although the interest in peasant culture cultivated in other fields in those decades was incorporated into their discourse as a necessary reference point that complements the picture of national culture besides the willingness to discover the primitive phases of the national residential architecture which was thought to have reached its zenith in the former capitals before its corruption in the last century. In other words, the essence of their ethnographic sensibility was a desire to reflect on the nature of their own cultural environment with an approach of “self-alterity.” In short, “traditional roots” and “uncorrupted essence” were sought, in this case, not in the rural context but in the decaying milieu of the traditional urban environment.

#### **e. Traditional Houses and Neighborhoods as Symbols of Backwardness**

Throughout the initial decades of the twentieth century, when traditional domestic architecture and urban fabric began to be attributed in different fields the status of being symbols of national identity and a value of being perfect sources of inspiration for modern-and-national designs, the destruction of these houses and the fabric composed of them by modernizing interventions of municipal authorities went on considerably. The mayor of Istanbul (between 1912-14 and 1919-20), Cemil Paşa was famous for the radically destructive interventions realized during his terms.<sup>55</sup> Regularization and modernization of the urban fabric in Istanbul were chief items in the agenda of the republican administration until the second half of the twentieth century, and the 20's were certainly no exception to this. *İstanbul Şehremâneti Mecmûası* (The Journal of the Istanbul Municipality) in which an article by A. Süheyl Ünver where the author defends the idea to revive traditional domestic

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<sup>55</sup> See Dr. Cemil Topuzlu, *İstibdat-Meşrutiyet-Cumhuriyet Devirlerinde 80 Yıllık Hatıralarım*, (İstanbul, 1994).

architecture was published in 1927<sup>56</sup> (see chapter 2), declares the finished project of a new avenue and tram line in Fatih area as a *şeref-i umrân* (honour of flourishing) in 1929.<sup>57</sup> In this latter article, the speech given by the mayor Muhittin Bey in the opening ceremony is presented. Muhittin Bey mentions the narrow and crooked streets destroyed during the project as follows:

Every dark corner and bend, with a *gulyabânî* effect, inspired in the heart fear, sullenness and genuine boredom.<sup>58</sup>

A photograph in the article shows an old street that once stood on the site of the new avenue.<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note the similarity of this view which is employed here to exemplify the old streets that create the “*gulyabânî* effect,” to typical paintings of, for instance, Rıza Bey. With several *cumbas*, an elegant *şahnişîn*, a woman in scarf and a *hamal*, this scene might be the subject of a painting by Rıza Bey or other “Istanbul painters” active in those years (fig 25). In another photograph, an old wooden house is “accused” of delaying the widening of the street for two years (fig. 26).<sup>60</sup> This article clearly reveals the strong perception of traditional houses and fabric as obstacles before material progress in urban environment, while a group of artists and researchers devoted their energies to the cultivation of a positive sensibility about these spaces which they viewed as embodiments of the national spirit. Moreover, it is worth noting that the mayor attributes some psychological (or even spiritual) evils to these spaces in addition to the practical problems they create in modern urban functioning.

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<sup>56</sup> Doktor Ahmed Süheyl, “Türk Evi Mimârîsi Hakkında Birkaç Söz,” in *İstanbul Şehremâneti Mecmûası* 36, August 1927, pp. 732-737.

<sup>57</sup> “İstanbul şehrinde imar ve tanzim faaliyetleri” *İstanbul Şehremâneti Mecmûası* 58, June 1929, pp. 333-358.

<sup>58</sup> “Her karanlık köşe ve her dönemeç, bir gulyabânî tesiriyle gönüllere korku, kasvet ve candan bıkkınlık telkin ediyordu.” *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

This perception of old neighborhoods as symbols of material backwardness and even cultural inferiority, in other words, all evils attributed to a world that was thought to be the “ultimate other” of the modern nation, seems to have been quite common in those decades. An unsigned essay published in the popular magazine *Resimli Ay* in 1924 is an interesting example of this attitude.<sup>61</sup> This is a representation of the Edirnekapı district as it stood before the avenue project of the municipality. This essay begins with a remark that despite the widespread belief held in certain social strata that Istanbul has undergone a significant transformation, some remote districts, with their typical spaces such as coffeehouses and cemeteries and with their inhabitants, display no sign of novelty and change. The alterity that this unknown author constructs between himself and the totality of this district is obvious:

Man finds everything strange in this most slum quarter of Istanbul, he feels himself to be in a foreign locality, among foreigners, in a foreign country.<sup>62</sup>

The author goes on with the poor conditions of these neighborhoods and contrasts them with modern districts. For him, the physical environment here is composed of narrow, crooked streets, ruins and “coop-like” houses, and this environment makes him feel in an atmosphere of death. He views this place far not only from Istanbul, but also from this world. In addition, he strongly emphasizes the exclusive attitude of inhabitants towards him through various gestures due to his modern garment. One of the pictures that accompany the text shows an old street one side of which is a cemetery and at the center of the second picture is a *cumba* of a wooden house.

A short story written by Mahmut Yesari and published in another popular magazine *Muhit* in 1929 is a very similar representation of the world in old houses and

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<sup>61</sup> “İstanbul’un Mechûl Köşelerinde,” in *Resimli Ay* 6, Temmuz 340, pp. 18-20.

<sup>62</sup> “İstanbul’un bu en kenar semtinde insan her şeyi yadırgıyor, kendini yabancı bir muhîtte, yabancılar arasında, el memleketlerde zannediyor.” *Ibid.*, p. 18.

neighborhoods.<sup>63</sup> In that story, a young educated man conveys a letter to the old uncle of a friend of his from Paris. He immediately understands that this must be a *kari kadim* man when he reads his extremely long address full of old-fashioned Ottoman terms and titles in the names of streets and edifices. In his description of the way to the house of this man in one of the old neighborhoods of Üsküdar, the first person narrator of the story underlines half-ruined appearance of wooden houses and fountains, and the presence of several graves around the streets. For him, winds here carry smells of the dead and the graves. The street of the old man's house is similarly described as follows:

This was not a street, but a labyrinth. The bays of houses were almost touching each other.

It was possible to thrust a hand through the other window...

The sunshine, even when it was waning, would permeate this space with great difficulty.

As I walked, I thought that skewed fringes, dent roofs were going to collapse on me, and my suspicion was increasing.

This was a part of Istanbul and even a supposedly *close* neighbourhood. However, in this dark, wooden circle of houses, in the midst of a gravely peaceful deathly fragrance, I had forgotten not Istanbul, but the age I was living in; I had lost my living ego.<sup>64</sup>

Here he notices the fact that the entire neighborhood was observing him from behind the lattices as if this was a visit of a foreigner from a distant land, a creature from another clime. Having arrived the house, the author translates the words of the *mamadadı* (nursemaid) into standard Turkish in footnotes. During their conversation with the owner of the house, the old man ridicules him with his gestures when he learns that the visitor is from Paris and then tries to convince the latter that his nephew should leave his life abroad and come back to the atmosphere of his home:

He was pointing to the garden from the window!

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<sup>63</sup> Mahmut Yesari, "Baba Yarısı," in *Muhit* 10, August 1929, pp. 738-742.

<sup>64</sup> "Burası bir sokak değil, bir dehliz idi âdeta. Evlerin cumbaları, burun buruna idi.

"Pencereden pencereye el uzatılabilirdi...

"Güneşin ışığı, tam zevalde bile, buraya güçlkle düşer, sızardı...

"Yürüdükçe, iyik saçaklar, çökük çatılar, üzerime yıkılıverecekler sanıyor, vehmim artıyordu.

"Burası, koca İstanbulun bir köşesi, hem de *yakın* sayılan semtlerinden biriydi. Fakat ben bu karatahta ev çenberi arasında, bu ölü kokulu mezar sükûnu içinde, İstanbulu değil yaşadığım asrı unutmuş, yaşayan benliğimi kaybetmişim." Emphasis mine. *Ibid.*, pp. 739-740.

- Look, sir, to such grace. To these honeysuckles, these four-o'clocks... as one looks, his life is refreshed... is this place no longer favored sir? This place is his house, let him come here; why, father's district... Kudret probably has forgotten about these places; you write to him the grace of this place, its sweetness... He is your friend, sir, have mercy, is that life he is living? Let him come here and see the world... Look sir, here is the family cemetery... Even after you die, you will not fall away from your family...<sup>65</sup>

In these two texts appeared in popular magazines that display strong anti-dynastic and republican attitudes, we find old houses and neighborhoods represented in a radically different way from that of several contemporary researchers and painters. These spaces are portrayed as fossils of a condemned environment that essentially belongs to past but survived into modern present. Selective emphasis and evaluation of the qualities of the physical environment are contrary to the picture depicted by the group of intellectuals and artists discussed above. Moreover, these material qualities are implicitly associated with the values, the world-view and the overall character of their inhabitants which are portrayed as equally outmoded in modern world. Actually, this physical and cultural environment as a whole is depicted as the essential opposite of the modern world, in a way legitimizing the latter. At this point, it must be remembered that these selective representations reflect the vantage point of modern, westernized individuals from higher social strata, in other words typical readers of these magazines. Moreover, these latter type of depictions include emphasis on the supposedly timeless and static character of the milieu found in traditional neighborhoods and the distance of this realm of irrational conservatism and otherworldliness to the “normalized” modern life. Thus, the discourse employed here is closely akin to the Orientalist representations of non-Western cultures. The conditions of a similar hegemonic relationship, objectivization of one party by the other and the weight of the modernist discourse must have

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<sup>65</sup> “Eliyle pencereden bahçeyi gösteriyordu!

-Bakın, efendim, şu letafete.. Şu hanımellerine, şu geceseşalarına... baktıkça insanın hayatı tazeleniyor... buranın suyu mu çıktı, a efendim? Gelsin buraya, burası onun evi; öyle ya, baba bucağı.. (...) Kudret, herhalde buraları unutmuş olacaktır; siz mevkiin letafetini, şirinliğini ona yazınız.. Arkadaşımızdır, beyefendi, acıyınız, o yaşadığı hayat mı? Buraya gelsin de biraz gözü dünya görsün... (...) Bakın efendim, işte aile mezarlığı da burada... Öldükten sonra bile ailenden uzağa düşmeyeceksin ki...” *Ibid.*, p. 742.

been influential in the formation of the contours of this image. But the direct appropriation of some elements of the Orientalist language, such as the stress on cemeteries, with the aim of representing a social segment “within” the nation stands as an interesting case of the formative impact of the Western language on the discourses of internal power structure of a non-Western society. Here, it should be underlined that, as the above mentioned article in the *Şehremâneti Mecmûası* notes, in this period, old quarters were rapidly losing their more well-to-do inhabitants, and after the great fires of the early twentieth century, many of the old neighborhoods that had survived the disasters were filled by homeless and poor masses.<sup>66</sup> This observation about the peculiarity of those years helps to understand the sharpness of the tone of alterity that the authors of these narratives use. On the other hand, one of the protagonists of the urban heritage idea, N. Ziya Güran, preferred to keep his *atelier* in Süleymaniye,<sup>67</sup> while another one, A. Süheyl Ünver, did not leave his house at Haseki for decades.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, we can distinguish two opposing sets of meanings attributed to traditional domestic and urban environment in those decades. One of them represented the sensibility to preserve some links with the mode of life experienced in the earlier periods under the conditions of modernization, whereas the other attitude was a part of the passionate desire to break the ties with the traditional world. These two currents reflect the unresolved tension between the experiences of modernization and nationalism in a non-Western context. On the other hand, it should be noted that the two currents alike were observed in the circles of the urban middle classes. Although many of the representations from the two sides carry associations with religious sentiments and conservatism, and for instance, in the world of images observed in the sketchbooks of A. Süheyl Ünver, signs of Islam and his *sûfi* affiliation

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<sup>66</sup> “İstanbul şehrinde imar ve tanzim faaliyetleri” *İstanbul Şehremaneti Mecmuası* 58, June 1929, pp. 339-340.

<sup>67</sup> T. Erol, *ibid.*

have a large place alongside his images of traditional domestic architecture and related objects,<sup>69</sup> it should be underlined that the sensibility of urban heritage developed in this period not necessarily manifested signs of strong religious affiliation in all of the cases. Therefore, the antiquarian interest in spaces of traditional everyday life can not be equated with Islamic conservatism.

At this point, it should be noted that the antiquarian sensibility aimed at “salvaging” various aspects of a disappearing world and the attitude to severely condemn this same world shared the common attitude of focusing on detailed descriptions of the physical environment where the life of the earlier periods was experienced. “A fullness of texture and an absolute degree of integration” that were aimed to be achieved helped the “reality” of this life to be re-experienced by the audiences of these representations.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the condemning attitude was actually another product of the antiquarian mode of historical imagination as it is defined by Stephen Bann, a variant in the same approach to comprehend and represent the past and its remnants.<sup>71</sup> Domestic architecture was a crucial component of the stages set for these representations of the daily life of the past, appearing in many cases as the “envelop” of this milieu.

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<sup>68</sup> Ahmed Güner Sayar, *A. Süheyl Ünver: Hayatı, Şahsiyeti ve Eserleri*, (İstanbul, 1994).

<sup>69</sup> Ahmed Süheyl Ünver, *1923 Yılı Notları*, Defter no: 227; *Defter no: 251*; *1919 Yılı Notları*, Defter no: 258; *Kırkanbar*, Defter no: 263; *1920 Notları*, Defter no: 334 (The Süleymaniye Library).

<sup>70</sup> Stephen Bann makes these evaluations about the displays of Musée de Cluny, founded by Alexandre du Sommerard in 1834, which he describes as a typical antiquarian spectacle. Stephen Bann, “‘Views of the past’: reflections on the treatment of historical objects and museums of history,” in *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), pp. 122-147.

<sup>71</sup> S. Bann, *ibid.*

## **f. The Antiquarian Mode in Historical Representations: Musahipzade Celal and Ahmet Refik**

A theater play written by Musahipzade Celal (1868-1959) in 1913 perfectly exemplifies this “enveloping effect” of the antiquarian attitude as S. Bann calls it,<sup>72</sup> in another major field of representation of the past. “İstanbul Efendisi” tells us a story centered around the household of a *kadı* of Istanbul (*İstanbul Efendisi*) in the pre-Tanzimat Period. The main characters of the play are members of this household and some other imaginary figures of the daily life in that neighborhood such as the children of the *kadı*, domestic servants, shopkeepers, apprentices and some obscure jannissaries. In the booklet of this play, which was published in 1936,<sup>73</sup> we find costumes of the characters described in extreme detail in written form at the beginning, and several pictures that display characters in these costumes accompany the text. Readers are informed that the songs of the play are examples of “Turkish classical music.”<sup>74</sup> As the researchers of his art strongly underline, Musahipzade Celal reflects various forms used in popular spoken language characteristic of different groups in traditional society.<sup>75</sup> Other essential elements employed in his effort in this play to reach “a fullness of texture and an absolute degree of integration” in his representations of the mundane life of ordinary people in the past were certainly the domestic interiors and a neighborhood view designed as stages of the acts of the play. For instance, the stage set for the first act is described as follows:

The dwelling of Afet, the slave trader. An ancient style spacious terraced hall. A door each on right and left hand sides, an ancient style carved niche on the façade. On the sides windows with coloured upper rows, curtains, lattices, the sunlight enters through the upper row windows. The walls, the doors, the niches all embellished in flowery variegations. *Divans* facing one another, alongside the divan on the left, there’s a chair decorated with mother-of-pearl and on top of it an elegant tulip case with a few tulips

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<sup>72</sup> Stephen Bann, “Clio in part: on antiquarians and the historical fragment,” in *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), pp. 100-121.

<sup>73</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *İstanbul Efendisi*, (İstanbul, 1936).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, cover.

<sup>75</sup> See Sevda Şener, *Musahipzade Celal ve Tiyatrosu*, (Ankara, 1963).

in it. Next to the *divan* on the right, a small master's cushion. There is carpet on the floor, *kemençe*, *santur*, *tambur*, *tef*, *lavte* are hanged on the wall.<sup>76</sup>

This case clearly reveals the identity and the role attributed to domestic architecture and urban fabric of being “stages” or “envelops” of everyday life of broad segments of Ottoman society in the past (fig. 27). These observations help much to understand the historical and cultural context in which scholarly studies on traditional domestic architecture took place. It should be remembered that scholarly documentations and representations must have been viewed, among many others, as particularly valuable forms of “salvaging” the remnants of the past, which were intensely sought by antiquarians.<sup>77</sup>

Musahipzade Celal was certainly a true antiquarian. He points to his willingness throughout his life to penetrate the everyday life of old times.<sup>78</sup> Son of a civil servant,<sup>79</sup> he reports his “oral researches” that he carried out in his early youth among the old people around him.<sup>80</sup> He published a book in 1946 on various aspects of Istanbul folklore such as family life, costumes, marketplaces and tradesmen.<sup>81</sup> Folkloric/ethnographic material about Istanbul life constituted the backbone of his theatrical compositions, as well. It is important to note that he presents this fact as related to his search for creating a national theatrical idiom,<sup>82</sup> reminding the agenda of contemporary Turkish painters. The major point here is M. Celal's focus on the “texture” of everyday life in the past rather than representations of important historical events or heroic stories as the prime form of national expression in

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<sup>76</sup> “Esirci Afetin hanesi. Kâr-ı kadim geniş bir setli sofa. Sağda solda birer kapı, cephede kâr-ı kadim oymalı bir höcre. Yanlarda renkli tepe camlı, perdeli, kafesli pencereler, tepe camlarından güneş akseder. Duvarlar, kapılar, höcreler, çiçekli nakışlarla süslenmiş. Karşılıklı sedirler, sol sedirin yanında sedefli bir iskemle üzerinde zarif lâledanlık, içinde birkaç lâle. Sağ sedirin yanında bir küçük erkân minder. Yerde halı, duvarda kemençe, santur, tambur, tef, lavte asılı.” Musahipzade Celal, *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> S. Bann, “‘Views of the past’: reflections on the treatment of historical objects and museums of history.” in *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), pp. 122-147.

<sup>78</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, (İstanbul, 1946), introduction.

<sup>79</sup> S. Şener, *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Musahipzade Celal, *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, (İstanbul, 1946).

theatrical displays. Metin And points to the abundance of this latter type of plays written and played during the Second Constitutional Period.<sup>83</sup> “İstanbul Efendisi” and several other plays by M. Celal, therefore, reveal the rise of the “antiquarian” attitude alongside the more rooted “monumental” attitude in the historical representations in the field of theatre. We must remember that in the fields of architectural historiography and painting, representations of the spaces of everyday life in the past, which reflect an antiquarian sensibility, similarly gained a considerable weight, but certainly did not give an end to the interest in monumental works of historic architecture. This picture is quite in accordance with S. Bann’s observation that “in the nineteenth century, history derived strength from the overlapping and interfusing of [monumental, antiquarian and critical] attitudes to the past.”<sup>84</sup>

At this point, it is necessary to consider the role played by Ahmed Refik Altınay (1880?-1937) in contemporary Turkish historiography. Ahmed Refik was son of a palace *vekilharc* (commissary of subsistence) and trained at the Military Academy.<sup>85</sup> He worked as a professor of history first at the same academy and later at the *Darülfünûn* until the reforms of 1933. In 1925, he was elected as the chairman of the Turkish History Committee in the place of Abdurrahman Şeref. In his extraordinarily productive career, he gained the status of being the most popular historian in Turkey. He is also commonly attributed the achievement of popularizing the habit of reading on historical subjects. This achievement is usually interpreted as a result of his novel approach and style in history writing. Necdet Sakaoğlu emphasizes the major “axes” in Ahmed Refik’s studies and writings, namely the “Ottoman

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Sevda Şener, *ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>83</sup> Metin And, *Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu: 1908-1923*, (Ankara, 1971), pp. 199-215.

<sup>84</sup> S. Bann, “Clio in part: on antiquarianism and the historical fragment,” *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), p. 118.

<sup>85</sup> Necdet Sakaoğlu, “Altınay, Ahmed Refik,” in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* v. 1, (İstanbul, 1993), pp. 218-220.

life” in previous centuries and the “daily life in Istanbul.”<sup>86</sup> I argue that the particular attractiveness found in his writings that gave them this remarkable popularity must have been closely related to the antiquarian tone that he employs. Even in his narratives of important historical events and of the lives of significant figures from the imperial elite, we observe an intention to depict a picture that reflects a remarkable “sensory experience,” in other words, a willingness to make the readers “breath an air,” as Nietzsche distinguishes the antiquarian attitude to history.<sup>87</sup> Especially in his writings on historic edifices, his descriptions of the material environment, which he presents as connected to historical events and figures in question, well reflects this desire to “breath the air” of bygone days.<sup>88</sup>

Ahmed Refik’s historical writings are usually criticized for lacking a serious scholarly quality. His works might not have contributed much to the development of Turkish academic historiography as they did to the historical imagination at more popular level. S. Bann points to the close connection between the rise of the antiquarian attitude to history and the emergence of “age value” as a novel way of perceiving and appreciating historic monuments and artifacts in the nineteenth century.<sup>89</sup> He emphasizes that Alois Riegl, who has coined these terms, distinguishes the “age value” from more rooted “historical value” and “art value” with the dominance of emotional effect and sensory experience rather than

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<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in S. Bann, *ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>88</sup> For instance an article by Ahmed Refik on Bağdat Köşkü includes the following description: “...bahçeye mavi ve yeşil çinili nazar riba duvarları ile nâzır olan Revan Köşkü’nün de, bu hayata kanlı darbeler vuran Patrona’lardan intikâm alınan makâm olmak itibâriyle, târihî bir ehemmiyeti vardır. (...) Bağdat Köşkü’nün beyaz mermer meydanı, solunda, dalları mercanla süslenmiş zannolunan koyu yeşil çamların zerâfeti, kameriyenin yıldızlarına nazar-nevâz bir zemîn teşkil eden ağaçların zirveleri üzerinde gurûbun bütün güzellikleri temâşâ olunur. Akşam, Süleymâniye Camii’nin beyaz ve nârin minâreleri arkasında Fâtih Tepesi’nin mavi ufuklarını ateşler içinde bırakan güneşin altın ziyâları yapraklar arasında oynadığı zamân, mermer avluya bitişik havuzun zemzemesi rûhu sermest eder. İşte o zamân, birkaç asır evvel bu güzel binâlarda ömür süren, ordusuyla gevşerler fetheden muhterem hâkanı, muhabbet simâsı, müzehheb miğferi, yeşil düstârıyla göz önüne getirmemek gayr-i kâbildir. Esâsen bütün Bağdat Köşkü Sultan Murad-ı Râbi’nin zevk-i sanatkârânesini gösterecek ebedî bir âbidedir.” Ahmed Refik, “Bağdat Köşkü,” in *Yeni Mecmûa* 15, 18 Teşrîn-i Evvel 1917, pp. 288-290.

scholarly knowledge. Quite significantly, Bann finds in these developments the “implication that the notion of ‘view’ has been democratized – even though it may not be strictly a political shift”<sup>90</sup> in this period. Therefore, in my view, the weight of the emotional effect and the general antiquarian tone in the style of Ahmed Refik may be evaluated as closely related to the democratization of the “view of the past” in the early twentieth century Ottoman-Turkish society.

This democratization is observed in the subjects chosen for historical representations as well as in the production and consumption of them. In the 1930’s, Ahmed Refik published a series of books in which he presented a selection of historical documents concerning various aspects of the public life in Istanbul such as the administration of pious foundations, artisanal activities, municipal works, provision and trade life.<sup>91</sup> The books in this series were entitled “The Life in Istanbul.” Similarly, in his *Eski İstanbul* (1931) which is richly illuminated with several engravings depicting scenes from the city by European artists, he presents an account mainly of the daily life experienced by ordinary inhabitants of Istanbul.

It is interesting to find that Ahmed Refik has written, among other Western historians, on the nineteenth century French historian Jules Michelet, who may be seen as the French counterpart of Ahmed Refik.<sup>92</sup> In that essay, A. Refik points to the fact that “[a]mong the previous century’s historians the one who examined the formation of the social conditions by delegating conquests and racial struggles to a secondary state of importance is Michelet.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> S. Bann, “‘Views of the past’: reflections on the treatment of historical objects and museums of history.” in *The inventions of history: Essays on the representation of the past*, (Manchester and New York, 1990), pp. 125-126.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>91</sup> Ahmed Refik Altınay, *İstanbul hayatı: İstanbul’un düşünsel, sosyal, ekonomik ve tecimsel ahvalile evkaf, uray, beslev ve gümrük işlerine dair Türk arşivinin basılmamış belgeleri*, 4 vol.s (İstanbul, 1930-35).

<sup>92</sup> Ahmet Refik, *Fransız Müverrihleri: Michelet, Lavisse, Vandal*, (İstanbul, 1932).

<sup>93</sup> “son asrın müverrihleri arasında fütuhata, ırk mücadelelerine ikinci derecede ehemmiyet vererek en ziyade içtimaî heyetlerin sureti teşekkülünü tetkik eden müverrih, Michelet’dir.” *Ibid.*, p. 21

For him, Michelet's search was for a poetic quality and a moral value in historical accounts. "Spiritually democrat" Michelet struggled "to portray the spirit of the people" and discover the hitherto neglected experiences in history.<sup>94</sup> From then on "the people, because of Michelet's works, managed to perceive the poetry of history, as well as its sincerity. Michelet's analysis has saved history from empty scientificity. History took a moral, spiritual and artistic form."<sup>95</sup>

I would like to conclude this chapter with the argument that the "democratization" of the content of historical representations as to give an unprecedented weight to lives, spaces and objects of ordinary people in the above discussed fields of painting, theater and architectural historiography can not be comprehended without a consideration of the democratization of production and consumption in these fields. On the other hand, we should not forget that the researchers on the history of domestic architecture were far from being propagators merely of "age value" which is centered around the emotional effect of historic spaces, although this tendency is observed to an extent. They reflected the antiquarian sensibility by directing their attention to hitherto neglected historic spaces, but discovered and represented them largely within the art historical conventions. We should also remember these authors' tendency to include in their vision of historic heritage the architectural works that belong to the imperial elite. These attitudes are meaningful primarily in the context of the "multi-layered" nature of comprehension of history in modern times, "overlapping and interfusing" of monumental, antiquarian and critical modes, but also may be viewed as reflections of the willingness to observe the cultural norms of the hegemonic class while bringing new sensibilities to the cultural arena, at the same time.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18-19.

<sup>95</sup> "halk, Michelet'nin eserleri sayesinde tarihin şiiirini, samimiyetini idrake muvaffak oldu. Michelet'nin tetkikatı tarihi kuru fennîlikten çıkardı. Tarih, ahlâkî, ruhî ve san'atkârane bir şekil aldı." *Ibid.*, p. 22.

## **Conclusion**

During the initial thirty years of the twentieth century, a remarkable number of Turkish intellectuals and artists concentrated on the subject of traditional houses at an unprecedented level. Documentation and analysis of scattered examples of what was defined as the uncorrupted idiom of national architecture took place in direct connection with the development and publicization of the agenda of reviving the basic forms and characteristics of this idiom after the period of its decay. It is clear that the desire to preserve a link with the rapidly disappearing traditional cultural milieu was the principal motive behind this remarkably widespread phenomenon. This decaying anonymous culture centered around domestic environment, this particular “language of life” in painter A. Rıza Bey’s words,<sup>1</sup> seems to have been widely imagined, in this period, as the sphere of national essence. The agenda of restoring various physical components of this environment, domestic architecture being prominent among them, was basically intended to contribute to the survival of the “national essence” in modern life. The idea of finding this language of life materialized in its objects and spaces was decisive in this thinking. It should be noted that, the search for authenticity, demonstrated in the art historical accounts of traditional domestic architecture, must have been perceived as critical in the success of the construction of the spiritual bridge with the past.

I interpreted the emphasis on the mode of everyday life of ancestors in the definition of the notion of national past besides major political events, as a reflection of the rise of the antiquarian mode of historical imagination. One crucial point that I underlined is the connection of this development to the growing weight of the middle-class sensibilities about everyday lives of ordinary people in different forms historical representation, architectural

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 3, fn. 28.

historiography being one of them. The remarkably broad audience that the sources of the period address in their suggestions for revival in the field of domestic architecture is an additional indication that the agency of this trend largely belonged to the newly developing bourgeois reading public in Ottoman-Turkish society.

We observe that the vantage point of the members of the urban middle-class is reflected also in the weight of the different categories of historic residential architecture and their evaluation in the sources of the period. The imperial palaces and splendid residences of the members of the ruling elite in the past are viewed as the most refined products of national art, and for A. Süheyl (Ünver) and R. Osman who were the most productive researchers of the period, they stood as the reservoirs of decorative designs to be employed in modern middle-class houses. On the other hand, the remarkable place that the medium-sized urban houses are given in these art historical accounts reveals the weight of the question of middle-class housing, and since these accounts largely disregard peasant architecture, indicates the specific traditional environment that was particularly valued and longed for. This movement represented the idea of finding the purity of the national essence primarily in the traditional urban culture rather than in the rural environment.

It is clear that the idea of a polarity between Ottoman high culture and the unadulterated “people’s culture” that was underlined by the Kemalist ideology was injected into the literature on traditional domestic architecture at a point when the latter was already well matured. One of the main arguments of my study, therefore, is that the principal historical dynamics behind the development of the interest in traditional domestic architecture as a category of historic heritage and as a model for contemporary designs are found in the sensibilities and concerns of broader circles of society rather than official cultural policies.

Actually, in the form of the architectural and historiographical discourse of Sedad Hakkı Eldem, the main lines of the vision fabricated in the 1910's and the 20's largely influenced the field throughout the subsequent decades.