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Impact of the Cultural Changes After the Population Exchange on Spatial Organization and Use of Spaces: Case of Trilye Houses

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Abstract

Turkey has hosted different cultures and societies throughout history, which is reflected in their buildings in all the cities in the country. However, modern adjustments are implemented by acknowledging the building as it is, or by completely renovating it. Trilye is a Greek town that was turned into a Turkish one after the population exchange between Turkey and Greece. Thus, while Trilye houses have the appearance of traditional Turkish houses, they were organised according to the Greek lifestyles. These buildings are on the verge of losing their authenticity due to the destructive effects of time and restorations. This study aims to examine the unity of the lifestyles, the space designs of different cultures, and the harmony and changing methods in the case of disharmony. It is an assessment of the method of survival and protection of historical values in Trilye by visiting and photographing many houses in Trilye, among others.

Keywords: Greek-Turkish culture, lifestyles, living spaces, renovation, restoration.

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1.Introduction

Mudanya has 24 villages, its' crop is olive and there are many vineyards in there. There are pomegranate and lemon trees around some of its terrains. The soil is favorable. The half of the population of the town is Muslim and the other half is Christian (Katip Celebi, 17th century) Trilye, currently called Zeytinbagi, is one of the 24 villages of Mudanya, located in the south coast of the Marmara Sea. It is 40 km away from Bursa and 10 km from Mudanya, corresponding to the definition of Celebi. Trilye, like many other similar places that can be seen throughout Turkey, is one of the settlements that endeavour to preserve its historical assets with its numerous features. With its prehistoric background, it functions as a culture museum and plays a crucial role in cultural transmission to the posterities.



Figure 1. Trilye – General View (Personel Archive (P.A.))

It is known today that many civilisations like Greeks, Phrygians, Lydians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans lived on this land. Seven churches, three monasteries, three aghiasmas (holy spring of Orthodox Greeks), wineries, olive oil workshops, public bathes and hundreds of houses, which still exist, reflect the multiculturalism of these lands. It has also an important position with its historical Byzantine period churches.

Apart from being a cradle of religions, a cultural treasure and a seaside town, Trilye was a settlement that have had mostly Greek habitants. However, by the proclamation of the Republic, it turned into a Turkish town due to the population exchange between Turkey and Greece. Most of the departing Greeks left most of their belongings behind as well as their homes. It is still possible to see some of their stuff in the houses. Thus, Trilye houses have the appearances of traditional Turkish houses, and are buildings that reflect Greek culture with regard to organisation of space and some of their structural features (Figures 1). Because of this, the town has become a protected area and is put under protection. But the protection law has not been implemented practically to date in Trilye. Although the two or three storyed houses located in the narrow streets were refurbished and

restored, their authenticity had considerably depreciated. Some of them had been worn down and outdated by years, and their windows were sealed off with woods. Owing to the destructive effects of the time and restoration works, these buildings are about to lose their authenticity.

1. The History of Trilye and the People of Trilye

The precise date in the history of Trilye are not known. Also there have been many assumptions on the origin of its name since its historical roots are unclear. According to the first assumption, the name Trilye which was registered as 'Trigleia', 'Bryllion' and 'Trilya' in the historical records, was derived from the name of 'trigla', which means 'red mullet' in Greek and is an abundant fish species found in that region. The second assumption claims that Trilye is the successor of the ancient settlement called 'Bryllion'. Finally the third assumption asserts that the name Trilya originated from three excommunicated priests called Aya Yanni, Aya Yorgi and Aya Sotiri, who fled from the seventh consul of Christianity (4th–8th centuries A.D) due to the controversies in iconoclasm and settled in the valley in the west of Mudanya. There is not much information about Trilye for the period from the 9–14th centuries in the historical records. But, 'it is argued in a different view that does not have any references to the ancient ages of the town, the people of three villages (Sivzi, Kapanca and Ketendere) established Trilye (tri-three) to protect themselves from the attacks of Genoese pirates' (Duvenci, 1947). With the Agreement of Nymphaeum in 1261, Mikhael Palailogos granted the right of trade to Genoese merchants along the shore of the Marmara Sea. Since it is known that the Genoese merchants used Trilye and Apomeia (Mudanya) ports for the importation of salt acquired from the north of the Appolonia Lake, Trilye is assumed to be an important port city during this period (Buyukogen, 1969). In 1326, Turks took the possession of the region after conquering Bursa, Izmit and Iznik (Nicene), but the Christian population continued to live there.

Western travelers visited the region between the 17th and 19th centuries and noticed that all churches in Trilye, which were mentioned as a prosperous Greek village in the records were active. According to records of annuals of Hudavendigâr Province there were 1,715 people, 1,660 non-Muslim and 55 Muslim, living in Trilye in 1870. At the end of the 19th century, 199 Muslim and 3,657 non-Muslim were living in the town. In 1920 there were only 20–25 Muslim dwellings in Trilye which was called the town of Mahmut Sevket Pasa for a while after his assassination in 1909. Then, with the population exchange, immigrants from Crete, Thessalonica, Usturumca, Dedeagac (Alexandroupoli), Serez, Tikves and Karacaovali settled in the region (Dostoglu, 2000). According to the 1927 census, there were 2,516 people living in the town, most of whom made their living from viniculture, olive-oil and vinegar production as well as sericulture and fishery. However, specifically after the 1950s, due to the decrease observed in the availability of income sources and job opportunities, and the paucity of higher-secondary education institutions, the population of Trilye did not undergo any growth; on the contrary the rate of teenagers and middle-aged people decreased. In the census of 2000, the population of the region named as 'Zeytinbagi Township' since 1963 was 2,387.

Besides its important role of being a port town, Trilye had become a major religious centre by hosting many sacred structures like three monasteries, seven churches, three aghiasmas and the cemetery of Orthodox Greeks. A school (Tas Mektep) constructed in 1909, a public bath possessing features of 16th century, a historical city texture accommodating 100–200 years old houses led the town to be protected by the Higher Council of Immovable Antiquities and Monuments in 10.05.1980.



Figure 3. Trilye and Trilye Houses (www.jollytur.com)

Iskele Street takes the name of Karacabey Street from the middle of the town and reaches out to the southwest, and then links to its parallel Mudanya highway after taking a U turn. The street is the main axis of the town with 15 great plane trees and many public buildings like coffee houses, a wedding hall, the municipality, post office, city park located on it. It extends along to the port through the sea direction and to a fountain through the land; all the roads come down to the main road like a 'fishbone' or 'veins of a leaf', also the roads following the slope lines link to the fountain square from the both sides of the valley (Dostoglu, 2000) (Figures 2 and 4).



Figure 4. Iskele Street, North-South view (P.A.)

In Trilye, since the parceling of street directions was not determined in terms of perpendicular placement, the gaps and quasi-square spaces occurred through the texture of organic convolutions serve as a device that strengthens the communication of people in the neighborhood. In some cases, this kind of spatial expanses especially located at the end of streets and enriched by some urban accessories like a plane tree or fountain are convenient for the returns from the narrow streets which were designed for transportation by animals as required for the traditional city life instead of motor vehicle traffic (Figure 6). Trilye streets act as gardens for the houses which lack actual gardens and sustains the 'urban outdoor living' tradition as spaces which are decorated with colorful flowers and used as socialising corners (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Building-green association (P.A)

Considering the topographic structure of the land, wide squares or green areas were not planned within the street texture of Trilye. Since the houses are located adjacently, they could not have large gardens (Figures 2, 3 and 4). However, the collacation of buildings and greenery could be achieved by means of grapevines that overflow from the gardens and envelop the houses. The public necessity for green areas is satisfied (Figure 5).

3. General Features of Trilye Houses

Situated compatibly with the street texture, the Greek–Turkish houses generally face outward and are as inviting buildings. Mostly having three stories, the houses are constructed with masonry and wooden framework. Wood sidings used in the facades and, surrounding the windows, make the plan and construction features of the houses explicit. The floors are raised by making cantilevers in most of the cases. The ground floor of the houses serves as stony ground (taslik), cooking oven, shed, store, olive granary and kitchenware. Households prefer to live on the ground floors since they are quite cool in summertime. Before 30–40 years, silkworms were being bred and the maintenance of cocoons was being held on the second floors. Also, the second floors were used for drying fruits. The major living spaces are the third floors with high ceilings. These floors are facing outward with many thin and long windows. Instead of protecting the personal privacy, the few and small-sized windows on the lower floors are assumed to be designed to protect the olive granary from the effects of outer factors (Figures 6 and 19). There is no separate space for a bath in the buildings, but there is a bathing area at the corner of a room which is called the gusulhane (bathing cubicle). Gardenless Trilye houses with adjacent system plans have double-leaf doors. The half round pediments turn these normal sized doors into more gorgeous sizes. The vitreous pediments ensure the lighting of the interior space. Embroidered woodworks are seen to be used in the drip moulds and interiors of houses, ceilings, frames of windows and doors and also ceilings covering bottom of cantilevers and wooden pillars bearing bay windows (Figures 6–14).



Figure 6. Two-three stories wood framed-masonry Trilye houses (P.A)

4. House Samples

This study about the Trilye houses is prepared by investigation of the houses onsite. In the study, the plan systems and building structures of the houses are examined and their common and distinctive features are scrutinised. According to the findings from the chosen samples, it is aimed to present the buildings comparatively some of which exist in their authentic state, survive by keeping up with the times and as well as those completely lost their authenticity.

4.1. *The House of Cepneli Mehmet*



Figure 7. Cepneli Mehmet Bey House (P.A)

There are two rooms situated on both the sides of the entrance, a store and a space serving as a kitchen as well as a granary at the ground floor of this house which was bought by farmer Mehmet Bey during the years of the Independence War and was not renovated due to financial difficulties (Figure 7).



Figure 8. Cepneli Mehmet Bey House – Oven (P.A)

The cooking oven reflects the lifestyle of old days even it is not in use anymore (Figure 8). The ground floor, which is actually suitable for production and preserving, is preferred by family members to live in during the hot summer days. Stained glass of transom windows and ceiling ornaments are the remarkable details. The building itself is 101 years old, as it can be seen from the date 1915 written above the door, which is extremely heavy and made with bullet-proof material. The stairs were covered by a PVC-based material and the authentic texture is concealed resulting as a negative treatment in order to meet the contemporary needs (Figure 9).

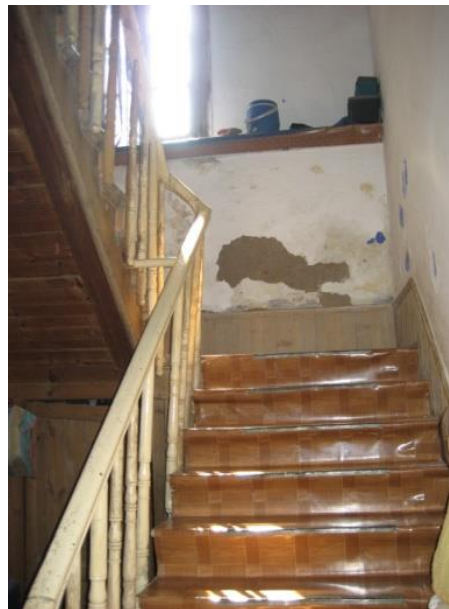


Figure 9. Cepneli Mehmet Bey House – Pvc covered stairs (P.A)

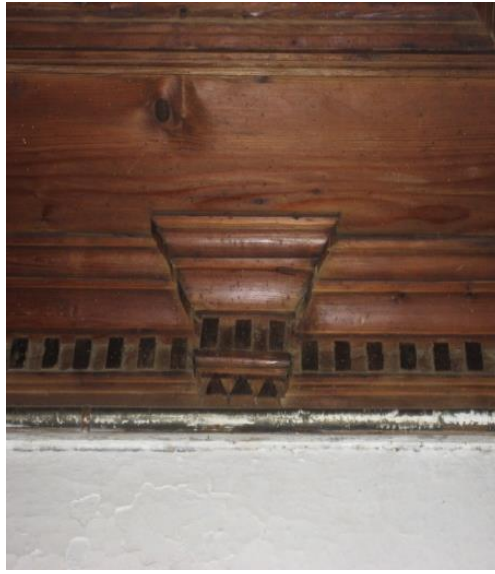


Figure 10. Cepneli Mehmet Bey house– Ceiling detail (P.A.)

There are four rooms, an iwan and a large hall in the middle of them at the major living upstairs. The window and ceiling ornaments that can be seen in the part of iwan (eyvan), which is now used as balcony, are not bearing resemblance to Turkish ornamentation art, and carries a Greek influence (Figure 11). One of the rooms connected to the hall is transformed into a kitchen. One of the rooms situated on both sides of the iwan is used as living room and the other one is bedroom. The presence of stove in the living area and its' pipes that pierce through the windows are unfavorable intervention of today's conditions (Figure 7). The door and built in wardrobe in other room used as bedroom reflect the typical Greek style (Figure 10). The ceiling ornaments with various designs are well-preserved and reflect the wooden ornament style of early 20th century. Although, one of the corners of the building facing the front facade is in danger of decay since it started to leak water.



Figure 11. Cepneli Mehmet Bey house– Window detail (P. A.)

4.2. The House of Huseyin Cebi



Figure 12. Huseyin Cebi house (P.A)

This construction, which is regularly renovated by its owner is one of the best protected examples in Trilye. Thus, it could be observed that while the house reflects the characteristics of Turkish architecture with the size of its windows, cantilevers, wardrobes and shelf arrangements within the rooms, it also reflects the features of Greek architecture with ornaments on the windows pediments, pillars and lower ceiling cantilevers. Conserved ceiling ornaments and balustrades exhibit the handicrafts of the period. The details above the doors (Figure 13) do not possess the features of Turkish houses, in a similar manner, the height of the shelf were arranged unlike the Turkish style. The shelf called 'sergen' located in reference to underneath of windows.



Figure 13. Huseyin Cebi house – Door top detail (P. A.)

Considering the needs of nowadays, it can be said that the adjustments are suitable. For instance, the entrance from the front facade of the building that has two facades through the store and granary is closed and the entrance relocated to the side frontage, since this area turned into a living space (Figure 12). As the bathroom started to be implemented as a distinct space in daily life, gusulhane were transformed into pathways which reaches to the roof (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Huseyin Cebi house – “Gusulhane” Bathing cubicle (P.A)



Figure 15. Huseyin Cebi house – Old oven (P.A)

Floor plans originally consist of two rooms and a hall. Depending on the needs, one of the rooms in the middle floor is incorporated to the hall. It is indicated that across the stairs, there was a passage to the adjacent house in which other family members were used to live in the ledge on the wall which was assumed to be half window box and half built in wardrobe. But the passage was closed when the houses were bought by different owners. The space serving as a kitchen was transformed into a modern form to meet the current requirements. The old oven (ashane) bare the stamp of old times, but it is being used for different purposes (Figure 15).

4.3. Renovated House on the Beach



Figure 16. Renovated house on the beach (P.A)

As seen from the post renovation photographs of the building that are acquired from the municipality, the former state of the building was completely changed since it was renovated and turned into a hotel by its latest owners. While the building seems to preserve room-hall feature on its plan, it was designed as a small hotel with room-bathroom mould. Either room design or material usage is rather far away of being authentic. Its ceilings were built according to original design but with different materials.



Figure 17. Renovated house on the beach – New ceiling detail (P.A)

Spaces like bathroom-restroom were added and simply artificial settings were created by using unfamiliar materials like ceramics and wet floor components like toilet bowl, lavatory and shower. It became an unsuccessful sample of restoration wandered away from the features of Turkish houses (Figures 16–18).



Figure 18. Renovated house on the beach – Bathroom (P.A)

4.4. The House of Saffet Bey



Figure 19. Saffet Bey house (P.A.)

This is a typical Trilye house with its few windows on the ground floor and cantilevered upper floors (Figure 19). However, the building underwent quite comprehensive renovation that the authentic form completely changed with regard to construction techniques and used materials. (Figure 21). The ground floor consisted of two rooms and a hall is considerably evolved, since one of the rooms transformed into a kitchen equipped with latest technology (Figure 20) and the hall is minimised by adding a restroom beneath the stairs (Figure 21). Wall panels were installed, grounds and stairs were covered by polished woods. This spatial configuration resembles the current summer suits in Turkey (Figures 20 and 21). In the middle floor, the original two rooms-hall-iwan plan is conserved and in one of the rooms sitting layout of the Turkish home is organised with the sofas set all along the windows. Nevertheless, windows, ceilings and materials are not authentic (Figure 20). The top floor which was previously a living space, serves merely as a sleeping area. The iwan in this floor was closed by incorporating to one of the rooms. Thus, the iwan disappeared and the light flowed from the iwan was blocked.



Figure 20. Saffet Bey house – New modern kitchen (P.A.)

Like other floors, there is no shelf and built-in wardrobe arrangements at the top floor which has higher ceilings and a larger area owing to cantilevers. During the renovation, the concept of folding steps system attached to attic, elegance spotlights and photocell lights that expedite finding latchkeys led to the disappearing of many of the elements like shelf which concretise the identity of Turkish and Greek homes in a building. Thus, it could be said that the house lost its authenticity substantially despite its brand-new state.



Figure 21. Saffet Bey house – Added restroom (P.A)

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, considering an overall evaluation including all examined constructions, the majority of the houses have significantly deteriorated over time and lost their authentic structural features by the insensible interventions. Social life, technologic opportunities, the differentiation of traditional family patterns, production and occupation of individuals, distinctive work areas differentiate the usage and evaluation manners of house spaces. The organisation of spaces and the relations between spaces underwent a change in time. Although the outer cover of the building remain unchanged, the configurations modified by adding or removing partition walls. Other important problem seen in the urban spaces is the mandatory increases at the height of the ground floors due to the changes on the road elevations (sinking in a sense), and the interventions on facades accordingly. For instance, space was gained by removing a wall between several adjacent windows. This gap which does not match with the proportion of windows of traditional Turkish houses and the town was covered by a modern joinery which does not refer to the original sizes. In some cases, the wings of the entrance gate were being changed, the deteriorated balustrades were being replaced with poor conditioned ones and wooden shutters were being removed and transformed to shop windows. Stove stacks drilling the walls, breakup, breakaway and loss of some wooden elements, crumbling plasters, missing roof tiles, the broken downspouts and water spouts are the most important devastations which lead to deterioration of houses and urban aesthetic. On the other hand, renovation without demolition, existing with the old by having no need for the new, coexisting, conveying by preserving are not an arduous and challenging work. All the problems observed in interior and outer spaces are in a condition that could be eliminated by some interventions. Accomplished restoration with the permit of the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board clearly indicates the contribution of these historical values which was protected by adopting modern life conditions to the town, and the advantages of using and preserving of all these houses – by their own inhabitants – in a similar manner.

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