

Spatial Analysis of *Toyhane* in Traditional Divriği Houses

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Abstract: Traditional Turkish houses have been discussed in many studies. However, very limited research has been carried out on Divriği although it has an important place in traditional residential architecture of Turkey. In Divriği house, there has been a unique space named as *toyhane* that never existed in other Turkish houses. In this case, there appears a necessity to study underlying reasons shaping the architecture of Divriği houses and forming the space, *toyhane*. Purpose of this paper is to make a spatial analysis of *toyhane* by relating to Divriği's culture and housing architecture. In this context, *toyhanes* existing in various Divriği houses will be formally and functionally analyzed. The paper indicates reflections of culture and natural environment on space formation and it will contribute to raise awareness of the traditional houses and spaces of Divriği which are disappearing today.

1. Introduction

Traditional Turkish houses have been discussed in many studies (Yürekli and Yurekli, 2005; Bektaş, 1996; Kuban, 1995; Eldem, 1954). However, Divriği had little chance to exhibit its unique traditional residential architecture even though it has many successful examples of these types of houses. Originality of Divriği houses and urban fabric is interpreted by Necdet Sakaoğlu (historian, author) as; *Divriği is like a blind point, a dead end. It is difficult to go there; a man will go and return. Therefore, absolutely distinctive part of a civilization has remained there* (Çekül Vakfi, 2010).

Divriği's vernacular architecture has to be original but primitive since it was a place left to oneself throughout the centuries. Besides, there were some difficulties in finding construction materials in that environment. But, all these challenges could not prevent the development of the architecture in Divriği. Sakaoğlu (1978) expressed, in other words, that *people should have imagined the wealth in the poverty*.

Toyhane, a space shaped around the culture in Divriği, attracts attention in these houses. The *toyhane* which is not seen even in close geographies, reflects the cultural richness with its spatial diversity. It gives an idea about people's way of life, way of coping with difficulties and sense of beauty in Divriği. Therefore, it is important to examine *toyhane* in terms of its spatial features.

In order to reach a better understanding of the formation of Divriği houses, a brief description about geographical, historical and cultural characteristics of Divriği will be given in Part Two. Part Three will outline general features of traditional Divriği houses while *Toyhane* will be spatially analyzed in detail in Part Four.

2. General Information about Divriği (Physical, Historical and Cultural Features of Divriği)

Divriği, a town of Sivas, is located in the region border of Central Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia of Turkey (Sefer, 2005). Erzincan, Kangal, Zara and İmralı, Malatya locate in the east, west, north and south of Divriği, respectively (Fig.1). Its altitude is 1050-m above the sea level and it occupies an area of 2935-km² (Ünlüdil, 2005). Divriği has 26 districts in the town center and 111 villages. The town population is 23240 people for the year 2000 (Sefer, 2005).

Divriği has steep and rough topography (Fig. 2, 3). It is surrounded by high mountains on the north and west that hinder the communication with the neighborhoods. It is approximately three-hour distant to nearby city centers, even to Sivas. Railway and highway transports are available due to today's technology for going out of the town (Ünlüdil, 2005). There are risks of natural disasters such as earthquake and flood that Divriği had experienced in the past. The town has terrestrial climate that in winters, it is heavy snowy and cold; while in summers, it is hot and dry. The mountains accommodate sparse foresty of oak, juniper and pine trees. The regions' economy is based on agriculture, stockbreeding and iron mine. Mining is the most important economic activity in Divriği since the town is quite rich in underground sources (Şenol, 2007).

Divriği's documented history dates back to 9th century (Sakaoğlu, 1978). Divriği had different namings in its history, one of those is *Divrik* that takes part in the travel book of Evliya Çelebi (a traveller in 17th century). It had a strategical significance in history like a firm fortress on a high hill. It was dominated by Byzantines in 1100-1250, then by Turks



Fig 1. Turkey political map (http://maps.turkeyodyssey.com/turkey_political_map_2006.jpg)

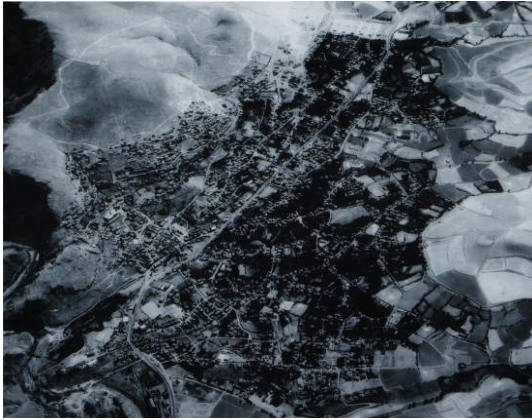


Fig 2. Aerial photo of Divriği (Sefer, 2005)



Fig 3. General view of Divriği (2010, Sinem Kültür)

(Mengücekoğulları) for a while until 1381. In this era, Mengücekoğulları (a beylic in Anatolia) constructed a large number of architectural monuments, among them, the unique architecture of Divriği Ulu Cami ve Darüşşifası (the Great Mosque and Hospital of Divriği) is remarkable. It carries the traces of Seljuk era and is the first Turkish building inscribed to UNESCO's World Heritage List. Divriği was invaded by Egyptian Memlüks in 1381, then it came under the rule of Ottoman Empire in 1516. Divriği became a town under Sivas by the proclamation of the Turkish Republic (Ünlü, 2005).

The way of life in Divriği took shape under the effects of the geography and the climate as well as Islam religion, customs and traditions and family structure. As a result of the limited systems of transport and communications, the traditional life style was highly confined and enduring in Divriği. As people in Divriği lived in accordance with their beliefs and customs, most of the districts were founded around a mosque, most of the buildings were designed considering the direction of kible¹ and certain

sections were reserved for men and women in most of the houses. Large families composed of different generations lived in those houses. As in most regions of Anatolia, in Divriği, men worked outside while women got busy doing the housework. Gathering for religious festivals, for preparing winter meals, for wedding or funeral ceremonies has an important role in social life of Divriği. Some of these customs and traditions can still be seen in Divriği.

3. Traditional Residential Architecture in Divriği

Housing history in Divriği begins in the castle which is the oldest monument in Divriği. In time, the people (Armenian, Greek and Turkmen) who could not be accommodated in the castle started settling around the castle. Houses were built as one-storey until the end of 17th century. *Hımış* (nogged-frame) technique that wood carrying holes are filled with mud bricks, was used in building these houses (METU MATPUM, 2010).



Fig 4. Traditional Divriği houses: Sancaktar House, Tevrüzlü House, Mühürdarzade House (Ünlüdil, 2005)

Although Divriği houses reflect the architectural traditions of the 13th century-Anatolian Seljuks in some aspects, the houses that could reach today are the Ottoman houses dating from the 19th century (Ünlüdil, 2005). Today, in Divriği, there are 120 traditional houses regarded as cultural assets by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

As Küçükerman (1973) stated there is a strong correlation between the structure of the society and the manner of formation of the house and its rooms. To this respect, traditional Divriği houses have an introverted structure that courtyards and gardens are organized behind walls. Houses are situated facing kibleh with their one facade. They are designed in accordance with the economical-social status and the sense of privacy of the family—restricted amount of contact with the outside world. The large families used to live in these houses carrying on their traditions. Possibilities of a family come up as main factors that specify plan, material, floor height and construction type of a building. Thereupon, one-storey houses were built as adobe masonry constructions, whilst houses which were rich in material and plan were constructed with nogged-frame technique.

There had been no adjoining houses in Divriği until 20th century. Each house with its own garden and field was located on a large detached land (Fig. 4). The foremost concern in situating the houses used to be the kibleh since it is a matter of belief to consider the kibleh not only during praying but also during sleeping, sitting or going out (Sakaoğlu, 1978).

Traditional Divriği houses generally have two-storeys. The ground floor usually consists of stable, granary, pantry, winter rooms, and kitchen while the upper floor accommodates summer and winter rooms, council-hall (*divanhane*), coffee oven (*kahve ocağı*) and guest room. There are also special parts like *nimseki* and *toyhane* that are not found in other Anatolian houses (METU MATPUM, 2010).

First entering from a huge door to a courtyard that is framed by high walls, then going upstairs by an outdoor stair, are typical plan characteristics of Turkish house. Hall (*sofa*) in Turkish house becomes smaller and different in name (*divanhane*) in Divriği house but it is used for similar reasons like doing daily housework and relaxing especially in summer. Sections for men (*selamlık*) and women (*harem*) can be seen in the houses of wealthy families (Sözen, 2006).

In traditional Divriği houses, room is named as *göz* and a unit of measure, *mağ* (3x3-m) is used in construction. Thus, houses are called as for instance three-*göz* and eight-*mağ* in order to indicate number of sections and approximate dimensions of a house.

Traditional Divriği house is famous with its wooden decoration on ceilings, doors, stores and cupboards and plaster decoration on cookers and plant stands. Built-in furniture including various functions such as storing, bathing, etc. was ornamented in harmony with the interior decoration of the house.

Wood and adobe are nondurable materials against environmental conditions. Being earth-roofed is also a factor that shortens the life of a house. Therefore, the history of the houses that can be seen in Divriği dates back only to 19th century

(Sakaoğlu, 1978).

3.1. PLAN TYPES OF DİVRİĞİ HOUSES

There are three types of houses in Divriği having inner halls, inside and outside halls or central halls (Fig. 5). The house having no hall as one of the types of Turkish houses is not found in Divriği (Bektaş, 1996).

Houses with inner halls (*iç sofalı evler*) are usually one-storey. There exists a *toyhane* in the middle of the house.

Houses with inside and outside halls (*iç ve dış sofalı evler*) have separated sections for men and women. There appear separate courtyards for summer and winter uses.

Houses with central halls (*orta sofalı evler*) have mostly two storeys. There is no *toyhane* in this type of houses (METU MATPUM, 2010).

3.2. MAIN SPACES IN DİVRİĞİ HOUSES

Divriği houses respect the basic principles of space formation of Turkish house. They can be considered in the group of Central Anatolian houses because Divriği houses reflect the history, culture, economy, way of life and technology of the Turkish community living in this region (Sözen, 2006).

Main spaces in Divriği house are described briefly as following (Fig. 6-8):

Courtyard (*Avlu*) and Main Gate (*Cümle Kapısı*): Courtyard is the first part while entering from the street to the house through main gate. If the house has a large plan and is divided into *harem* and *selamlık*, the courtyard provides the connection with a secondary door between these two units.

Ayaz and Garden: *Ayaz* is the second courtyard in front of the *harem* and reserved for only women. It also provides a passage between the courtyard and the garden. The main components of *ayaz* are outside kitchen, oven, granary, woodshed, stable, toilet and *örtme*. The garden is very important in social life of Divriği that establishes the neighbourhood relations. The tradition of garden houses still survives (METU MATPUM, 2010).

Örtme: It is a semi-open space in front of the *harem* entrance in the *ayaz*. It is generally rectangular or square shaped in plan (Fig. 6).

Council-hall (*Divanhane*): Hall (*sofa*) in Turkish house is named as council-hall (*divanhane*) in Divriği house. It is a semi-open space attached to the entrance of the *selamlık*. It has a rectangular or square shape. One side of the council-hall is open, the other sides are surrounded by walls and the entrance of the *selamlık*. There is a small corridor connecting the hall with the other rooms (Şenol, 2007).

Men's Section (*Selamlık*): Among the functions of a room, the most important one is the assembly of men (Küçükerman, 1973). The *selamlık* has generally two storeys and is located on the street side (Şenol, 2007).

Women's Section (*Harem*): As a reflection of the social values, this section was designed with less care when compared to the



Fig 5. Plan types-houses with inner halls(1), inside and outside halls(2) and central halls(3) (Şenol, 2007)

selamlık (Küçükerman, 1973). The *harem* is usually one-storey and situated near the garden (Şenol, 2007).

Main-Room (*Başoda*): Main room (*başoda*) is the primary part of the *selamlık*. It is named as summer room (*yaz odası*) after 1850s. It differs from the other spaces with its many windows and ceiling ornamentations. It is composed of *aşağı seki*, **Winter room (*Kış odası*):** As spaces are designed considering the climatic conditions, there appears a winter room in traditional Divriği houses. It has a rectangular plan and one or two clerestories on its walls. The clerestory admits limited daylight, therefore it is usually dim inside (Fig.7).

Yıldız Köşkü (*Cihannuma*): *Cihannuma* in Turkish house named in Divriği as *yıldız köşkü* (lantern tower). It is the third floor that is connected to *selamlık* with a stairs. It can be rectangular, polygonal and circular in plan. It functions as a relaxation room and provides the landscape of Divriği (Fig. 7).

kilimüstü and *nimseki*. *Nimseki* has rectangular plan and is 45-50-cm above the ground. It was the place that young men gathered and listened to talks and guests were hosted at nights. There appears no *nimseki* in Divriği houses after 1850 (Sakaoğlu, 1978) (Fig. 6-7).

Kitchen: Kitchen has the name *ocaklık* in Divriği houses. There is an inside kitchen in *harem* section. Besides, there is a little stove (*kahve ocağı*) for serving coffee to guests located close to the main room.

Outside Kitchen: Outside kitchen has a *tandır* which cooking is done. This kitchen is used during special events such as weddings.

Stairs: There are outdoor and indoor wooden stairs called as *ayakçak* in Divriği. The outdoor stairs attaches to an area called *ayakçakbaşı* at the entrance of the *divanhane* (Sakaoğlu, 1978).



Fig 6. Inside of a summer room, *Örtme* in harem, Plaster plant stand (Ünlüdil, 2005)



Fig 7. Inside of a *yıldız köşkü*, Inside of a winter room, Inside of a summer room (Ünlüdil, 2005)

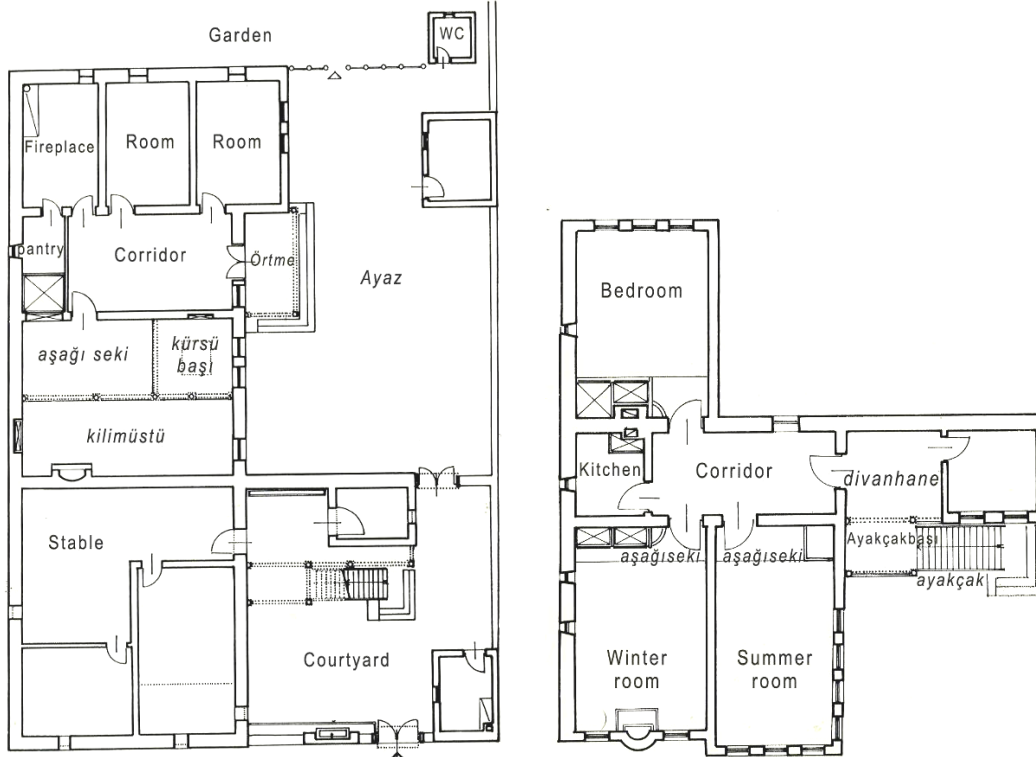


Fig 8. Hafislioğlu Ebubekir Efendi House-ground floor plan, first floor plan (Sakaoğlu, 1978)

4. Toyhane

Toyhane is the most significant unit that gives an identity to the traditional Divriği houses. *Toyhane* is a living space peculiar to Divriği houses. It was a multi-functional hall in which everything was done especially in winters, meals were eaten, guests were hosted and kids and elders slept at nights. It is thought that, due to the similarity between the names, *toyhane* has a close relation with *tabhane* which is a room or a hall of a house organized for use in winters at Seljuk era. As being large and functional enough for holding ceremonies like weddings, guest visits, circumcisions, funerals; *toyhane* is considered as the living room of the house. The *toyhane* traditions existed until the second quarter of 20th century (Özen, 2000).

4.1. SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF *TOYHANE*

Toyhane is located mostly in ground floor at women's section (Fig. 9). In town houses or houses having no divided sections for men and women, it also functions as *harem*. Its plan shows similarities with the main-room.

As one of the features of Turkish house, in *toyhane*, there are different parts due to different steppings. These parts are; lower stone base (*aşağı seki*), *kilimüstü* and *kürsü başı* (Fig. 9). *Toyhane* is approximately four small room-sized. If *toyhane* is assumed as 54-m², 9-m² of its area is occupied by *kürsü başı* and 18-m² is reserved for *aşağı seki* (Özen, 2010). *Toyhane* is supported by 3-5 posts depending on the size of the room (Fig. 10) (Şenol, 2007).

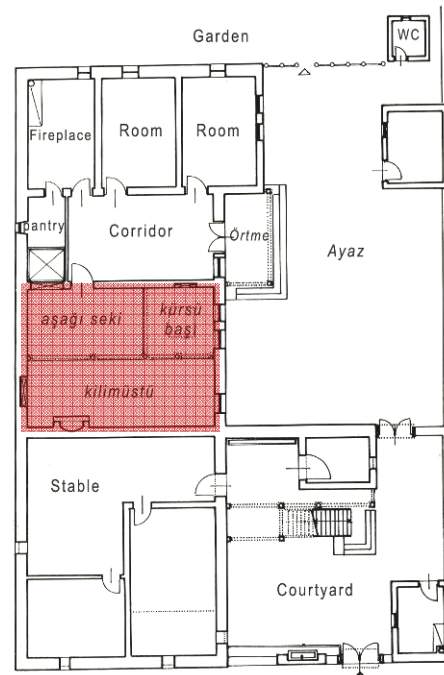
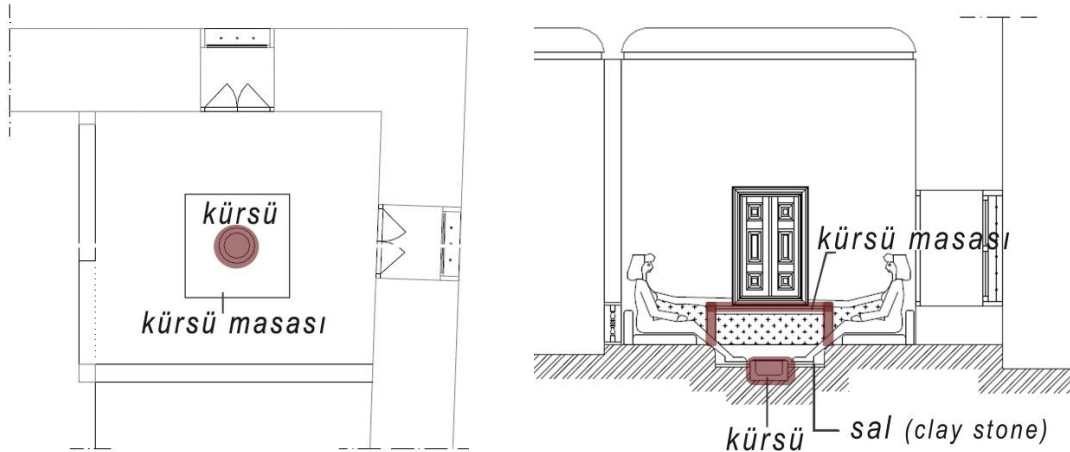


Fig 9. Hafislioğlu Ebubekir Efendi House-ground floor plan-*toyhane* is highlighted (Sakaoğlu, 1978)

Fig 10. *Toyhane* in Tevrüzlü House (Şenol, 2007)Fig 11. *Kürsü başı* in *Toyhane*-plan, section (Sefer, 2005)

Lower stone base (*aşağı seki*) is generally square-shaped in plan and located at the entrance. It is covered with *sal* (thin, smooth and shiny clay based stone). In this part, there is a low shelf (*suluk*) that keeps some belongings like water-pan, washbowl and soap.

Kilim üstü has a rectangular-shape in plan and located one-step above the lower stone base (*aşağı seki*). It attracts attention with its plain and functional wooden decoration of its closet and elegant balustrades (Şenol, 2007).

Kürsü başı, is square-shaped and seems to be the main lounge. It has this name because of the heating unit, *kürsü*, in the middle of the space. *Kürsü* was the place around which the family gathered for eating and chatting. At most 10 people can sit around the *kürsü* (Özen, 2000). *Kürsü başı* is furnished by carpets, pillows and mats in a way that is called as *yuvalama* (Fig 12). They are furnished in accordance with pleasures and possibilities of families. There are built-in closets in *kilimüstü* for putting the goods (Şenol, 2007).

At the center of the *kürsü başı* there is a stone firepan (*ateşlik*) buried in the ground for 25-35-cm. Fire brand is put on this firepan from hearthstone located in *kilimüstü*. There is a wooden table (*kürsü masası*) which is placed 60-70-cm above the firepan, is covered with two quilts (*kürsü yorganı*). In order to remove the gloomy atmosphere of the winters, vivid colors are mostly preferred (Şenol, 2007; Sakaoglu, 1978) (Fig. 12).

Kürsü had been used for heating until 1960s. There were limited number of stove-heated houses and heating stoves were used only in official buildings in 1940s (Özen, 2000).

Toyhane is lightened via two windows located at the wall of *kürsü başı*. In some *toyhanes*, there are also clerestories in the

other parts. The *kürsü* and the few openings on the walls points out that the design of *toyhane* has concerns for saving on the firewood and protecting from the cold (Özen, 2000).

4.2. TOYHANE IN DİVRİĞİ HOUSES

Toyhane forms the essential space of the house except for the houses having central halls. In order to focus on the spatial potentials of *Toyhane*, it is exemplified in some of Divriği houses.

***Toyhane* in Mühürdarzade House:**

Mühürdarzade House was constructed at middle of the 19th century. It was restored in line with the requirements but it could manage to reach today preserving its plan features and appearance (Ünlüdil, 2005). It has a *toyhane* situated in the ground floor. The *toyhane* occupies approximately 50-m² area (Fig. 13). It has five windows, one of them is in *kürsü başı* and the rest of them are on the walls of *kilimüstü*. There is also one clerestory on the wall of *kürsü başı*. Thus, this *toyhane* can be regarded as well-lit, relatively. On the south side of *toyhane*, built-in closets hide a large space behind. They are very well-designed as they include a bath and a large area for storing the goods. The closets, the doors, the balustrades, the posts, the ceiling are all wooden. It can be said that the whole wooden decoration is plain and in harmony (Fig. 14).



Fig 12. Kürsü başı in Hacı Nafisli House (Şenol, 2007)

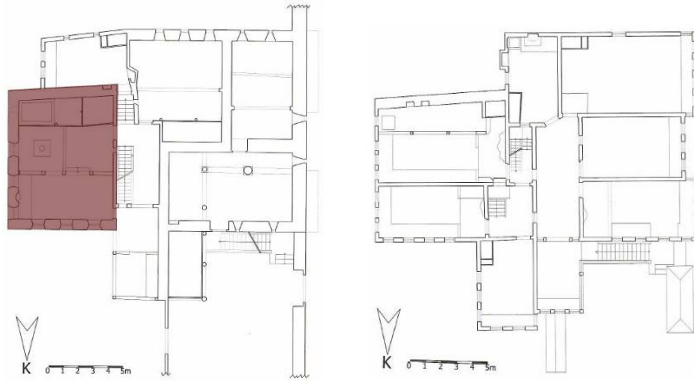


Fig 13. Mühürdarzade House-Ground and First Floor Plan-Toyhane is highlighted (Ünlüdil, 2005)



Fig 14. Toyhane in Mühürdarzade House (2011, Murat Dündar)



Fig 15. Aristakzade House-Ground and First Floor Plan-Toyhane are highlighted (Ünlüdil, 2005)



Fig 16. Toyhane in Aristakzade House (Ünlüdil, 2005)

Toyhane in Tevrüzlü House:

It was constructed at the beginning of the 20th century. *Toyhane* is in the *harem* section in the ground floor (Fig. 17). Its *toyhane* has special wooden ornamentation on the ceiling. *Kürsü başı* has the most adorned decoration among the others. There is a large closet stretching out along the north wall, also there is a niche on the east wall (Fig. 18). The ground of the *kilimüstü* and *kürsübaşı* which used to be *sal* (clay stone) covered, is then converted to concrete removing the *kürsü* (Ünlüdil, 2005).

Toyhane in Sancaktar House:

Sancaktar House was built at the beginning of the 20th century. In the house, the *toyhane* has relationships with both indoors and outdoors (Fig. 19). In this way, it acts as a service and a transition area. The door appearing as a closet (Fig. 19) connects *toyhane* to the inner sections of the house.

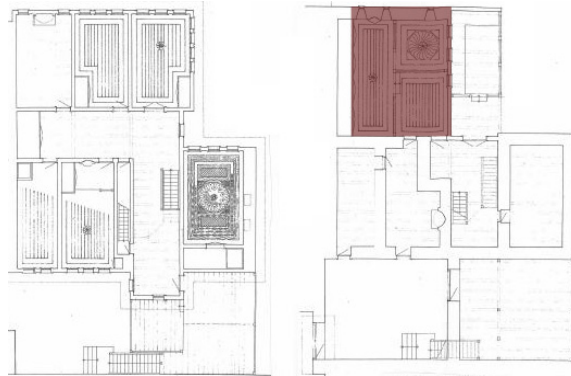


Fig 17. Tevrüzlü House-first and ground floor plan (Sefer, 2005)



Fig 18. Toyhane in Tevrüzlü House (Ünlüdil, 2005)



Fig 19. Toyhane in Sancaktar House (2011, Murat Dündar)

5. Conclusion

The increasing desire for comfort that accompanied the technological developments led to changes in the family structure and a trend towards the nuclear family. As a result, there appear comfortable flats reflecting financial competence and a modern life style. In short, the world has become uniform, the regional characteristics are disappearing (Günay, 2005).

With time, society has changed, the form has changed, and what has not already changed, is rapidly disappearing today (Küçükerman, 1973).

Confirming the statements of Günay and Küçükerman, after mid 1920s, it is seen that Divriği has moved away from its unique housing architecture and tried to keep up with the requirements of the times in respect of material, style and technique. In one of his studies, Özen (2000) underlines the housing in Divriği as; Divriği houses in his memory (1946) were adobe constructed, earth-roofed houses. In 1950s tile-covered houses increased in number and concrete masses started to take place of adobe structures.

Toyhane lost its initial shape and started to accommodate new functions in parallel with these developments. Being organized as the largest space in the house, toyhane was divided into rooms such as sitting room, bedroom, etc. in order to meet the modern demands. Large houses belonging to large families were divided into two or more for use of different nuclear families, so the relations of *toyhane* with the other sections of the house changed. It could not maintain its spatial characteristics since *kürsü* was not present in *toyhane*. Heating stoves and central heating started to be used in houses. Therefore, the upper part of *kürsü* was covered and ground of *kürsü başı* was leveled. Moreover, the decoration of *toyhane* lost its integrity. There became no need to have a closet for bathing because of the bathrooms.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the *toyhane* appears to be the most essential space in Divriği houses. If the cases are examined, it can be seen that the *toyhanes* located in various houses differ in spatial features. Size of space reserved for *toyhane*, economical status of family and aesthetic concerns are some of the factors effecting the formation of the *toyhane*. It is obvious that the *toyhane* had been the space important for the unity of the family and the conservation of the traditions in Divriği.

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Endnotes

1. Kibleh is the side to which Muslims should face while they are praying.

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