

The emergence of Mediterraneanism discourse in modern Turkish architecture and the special position of Cengiz Bektaş

Burcu KÜTÜKÇÜOĞLU¹

¹burcu.kutukcuoglu@bilgi.edu.tr • Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey

Received: September 2022 • Final Acceptance: February 2023

Abstract

This article focuses on the emergence of the discourse on Mediterraneanism in Turkish architecture of mid-20th century in relation to the precedent discussions and works by European and American architects from the earlier decades. The former attempts of the modernist architects from Mediterranean countries in associating Mediterranean vernacular cultures with modernism and their basic motives are briefly discussed in the first part of the article to be able to portray the difference of the Turkish case. The emergence of the discourse of Mediterraneanism in mid-century Turkish architectural milieu is then discussed through some articles in the prominent journals of the period, underlining its relationship with the development of mass-tourism. Cengiz Bektaş is presented as a distinct and significant figure within this context who made extensive studies on Mediterranean vernacular cultures of Anatolia and had an original approach to the issue. Following the legacy of the Blue Anatolianists, Bektaş sees the Anatolian geography as a holistic cultural landscape and its vernacular architectures as the main sources of inspiration for contemporary architects, rather than pragmatic tools to fuel tourism industry. The article displays how his truly regionalist and contextualist approach to the Mediterranean differs from earlier and contemporary discourses in Turkey and stays closer to early 20th century precedents in Europe, through a reading of his original publications from the 1970s and later decades.

Keywords

Cengiz Bektaş, Cultural landscapes, Mediterranean, Modernism, Vernacular architecture.

1. Introduction and methodology

Mediterranean cultural geography has been a fundamental source of inspiration for modern architecture since its early period. Unlike their predecessors, modern architects have found the main source of the inspiration they get from the Mediterranean in the landscapes created by the intermingling of the nature and local architecture of the region, rather than the classical canons of ancient civilizations. We can see the influence of the cultural landscapes and local building traditions specific to the Mediterranean on modern architecture, both within its own geographical space and on modern buildings built in other locations outside the region since the end of the 19th Century. In this period, the architectural works and theoretical discourses that exhibited original approaches to the relationship between modernism and locality from within the Mediterranean region reflected the characteristics and atmospheres of the sub-regions they belonged to, -in addition to having similar aspects. This article aims to discuss the development of the Mediterranean discourse, which started to be observed in architectural literature and practices in Turkey only in the middle of the Twentieth Century, and the approaches of the architects who pioneered this field through publications in the prominent architectural journals of the period. To ensure that the example of Turkey is contextualized correctly, the preliminary part of the article is reserved to the explanation of various discourses on the relationship between modern architecture and Mediterranean local cultures, which emerged in different parts of the region in the first half of the Twentieth Century.

The later part of the article, which focuses on the Turkish context and specifically on the discourse brought forward by Cengiz Bektaş has the original motive of discussing the issue of Mediterraneanism in Turkish modern architecture. This specific topic proves to be a gap in architectural literature on Turkey even though local influences on modern architecture have been dis-

cussed in various sources. Similarly the work of Cengiz Bektaş has also been the subject of many academic writings however his specific reference to the Mediterranean culture in his writings and architecture and his close links to the Blue Anatolia movement have not been comprehensively addressed. This article aims to underline the special accent on the Mediterranean cultural geography in his architectural thinking by way of a detailed and analytical reading of his writings in journals of 1970s and a few other later publications.

The general methodology of the article is based on the interpretation of the discourses of some important 20th century architects on the relationship between Mediterranean culture and modern architecture, through their own publications. Writings of those architects who made research and field-work on vernacular architecture of the Mediterranean are specially focused. This methodology based on the reading and analysis of first-hand sources is also applied when discussing the approach of Cengiz Bektaş to the cultural geography of the Mediterranean Anatolia, in the latter part of the article. Bektaş is an ideal figure to be investigated by this methodology as he has numerous publications in the form of journal articles and books based on his own research and travel documentations of the Aegean and Mediterranean regions of Turkey. From among his writings, the articles published in *Mimarlık* magazine between 1976 and 1981 are specifically focused due to their kinship to the European precedents mentioned in the second part of the article, both in terms of content and historical context. His later books and interviews are also briefly mentioned to display the changes and continuities in his discourse on the significance of Mediterranean vernacular and landscapes and their connection to the contemporary Turkish architecture and identity. In the final part of the article, the position of Bektaş is linked to the preceding discourses of Mediterraneanism in other parts of the region in order to show his special and original position.

2. Modern architecture and Mediterraneanism

In the architectural community, the interest in the Mediterranean local culture and the discourses on this subject can be clearly observed at the end of the Nineteenth Century; however, it became widespread in the period between the two world wars. The most comprehensive literature on this subject is included in the book titled *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities*, which was compiled by Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino and arrayed the examples and discourses from different locations within a wide historical range (Lejeune & Sabatino, 2010). The first chapter of the book, which was written by Benedetto Gravagnuolo, described the emergence of a Mediterranean “myth”, inspiring modern architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the journeys, documents, and discourses of some significant architects. (Gravagnuolo, 2020) Gravagnuolo drew attention to the interest shown in the Mediterranean cultural geography at the turn of the century with a series of examples ranging from the local building sketches produced by German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, -one of the masters of neo-classical style-, and the Viennese Joseph Hoffman, -an important representative of the Secession movement-, to the

journeys of Le Corbusier around the Mediterranean and his journals. Le Corbusier has a special place concerning the relationship between the Mediterranean and modernism, due to both his pioneering and singular position in the history of modern architecture and strong ties with the Mediterranean geography. The first real acquaintance of Le Corbusier with the Mediterranean was his journey to Italy in 1907; however, he made his famous Journey to the East in 1911, where he produced a large number of sketches, notes, and photographs, which had a definitive effect on his career. In the journey covering the Balkans, Anatolia, Greece, and Italy, the young architect candidate examined and documented the settlements and landscapes housing different examples of local architecture, as well as important historical monuments and cities (Figure 1). In later years, he said the following words about this journey:

“The site is the base of architectural composition. I learned this during the course of a long trip I made, in 1911, knapsack on my back from Prague as far as Greece and Asia Minor. I discovered the architecture related to its natural site.” (Le Corbusier, 1961)

Le Corbusier’s interest in Mediterranean architecture and his ideas about its possible associations with modernism were also supported by his interaction with Catalan architects at the end of the 1920s. A group of young architects led by Josep Lluís Sert tried to introduce and implement modern architecture in Spain and at the same time prove its natural relationship with the Mediterranean vernacular, within the group called GATCPAC, which they established in Barcelona in the early 1930s (Rovira & Pizza, 2006). The journal called *Actividad Contemporanea (AC)*, which was published by the group under the name of GATEPAC and included Spanish architects, served all these missions and some of its issues included examples of local architecture from the Catalan coasts and islands. Young Catalan architects have argued that buildings in Mediterranean villages naturally possessed the principles and aesthetics of modern architecture with their simple prismatic masses, asymmetric three-dimen-



Figure 1. Le Corbusier’s sketch of a historic street in Istanbul from the *Journey to the East*, 1911 (Fondation Le Corbusier).

sional compositions, and functional and economic characters. Therefore, according to them, modern architecture was Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean local building culture was modern¹. Fernando García Mercadal, an architect from Madrid, was another representative of this debate and the GATEPAC group. Mercadal, who made observations on local architectures and produced sketches and notes through his journeys to many different Mediterranean countries in the 1920s, turned them into various publications and used them as an inspiration for his works in the following years. His book titled *Sobre el Mediterráneo: Sus Litorales, Pueblos, Culturas* contains the sketches of Mercadal of the local works of architecture and the poetic descriptions of the Mediterranean geography and settlements, documented throughout his travels (Mercadal, 1996) (Figure 2).

It was not only the Spanish and Catalans, who established a connection between Mediterranean vernacular and modern architecture and put forward different syntheses of these cultures during the period between the two wars and afterwards. In countries such as Italy, Greece, and Algeria, architects conducted research on local building cultures and instrumentalized Mediterranean vernacular both for producing alternative interpretations of modern architecture and creating national architectural styles. These figures included Italian architects such as Luigi Figini and Gio Ponti (Sabatino, 2010), who adapted the indispensable space types of the Mediterranean climate such as courtyard, terrace, and porch, and Giuseppe Pegano, who compiled his local architectural research in the book titled *Architettura Rurale Italiana*, Greek architects such as Aris Konstantinidis and Dimitris Pikionis (Tzonis & Rodi, 2013), who interpreted the tectonic and plastic expressions of traditional settlements on their coasts and islands in innovative ways, and French architects such as Fernand Pouillon and Roland Simounet, who brought together modern architectural language in Algeria with archetypes and climate control tools unique to North Africa (Crane, 2010). In these early discourses

and studies on the relationship between the Mediterranean and modernism, it is seen that the architects mostly focused on their own geographies and presented the local architectures within their borders as unique and special, with nationalist approaches. The integrity of the larger Mediterranean and the common aspects of its local building cultures were not discussed in the works of these architects².

The uniform and abstract language of early modernism, based on machine aesthetics and the strict discourse of universalism, was criticized in the postwar architectural world, and the necessity of creating more humane alternatives to modern architecture through its association with local cultures and conditions was discussed. Research on local building cultures, whose examples had been seen since the beginning of the century, became widespread in parallel with these criticisms and ethnographic studies in different disciplines in the 1960s, and the number of publications in this field increased rapidly. In this context, one of the most prominent and memorable examples is the exhibition titled *Architecture Without Architects* held by Bernard Rudofsky in the New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the book with the same title. Rudofsky, a traveler and researcher of local ar-

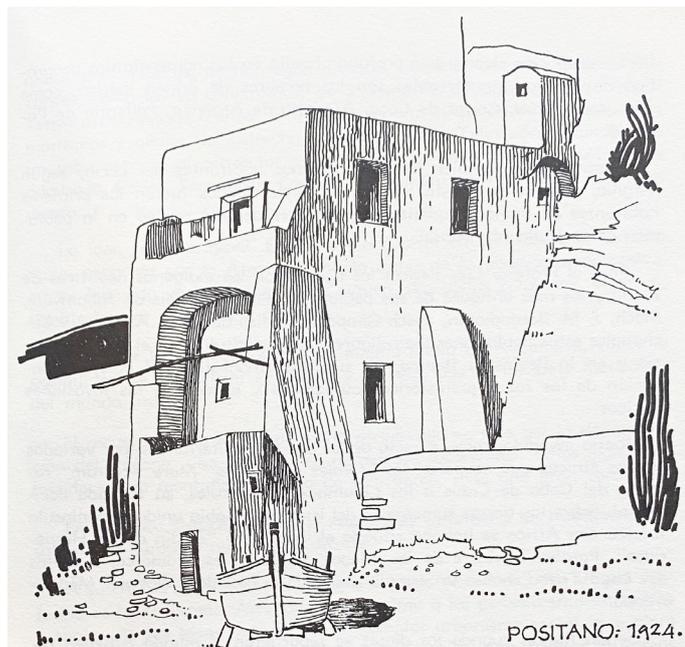


Figure 2. Mercadal's sketch of a local building from Positano, 1924 (Mercadal, 1996).

chitectures, used large black and white photographs to show the audience examples of vernacular building cultures from various locations around the world (Rudofsky, 1965). The presentation of these examples, which revealed the mottos of modern architecture such as simplicity and functionality in the most striking way without the need for a “heroic” architect, and which also contained a rich diversity, is recorded as a powerful critical argument in architectural history. Rudofsky’s work and similar others in the post-war era showed that research on Mediterranean building cultures ceased to be appropriated solely by the architects from the region but became a significant part of the larger field of vernacular architecture studies. Villages in the Sun, a book that was the outcome of the journeys and research of Myron Goldfinger in the wider Mediterranean region was a good example of this phenomenon (Figure 3). The book that was published in 1969 with a preface by Louis Kahn, described the villages offering the most picturesque examples of local architecture on the Mediterranean coast and islands with carefully framed black and white photographs, drawings, and short texts (Goldfinger, 1969). Goldfinger also wrote opinions on how these examples of local architecture might have influenced modern

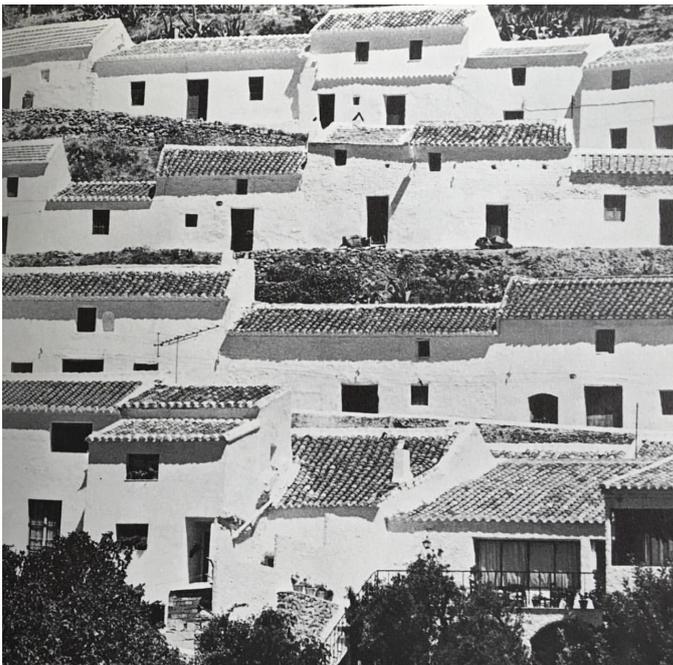


Figure 3. The view of a Spanish village from *Villages in the Sun* (Goldfinger, 1969).

architects in the introduction of the book and supported his arguments with comparative photographs of vernacular and modern buildings. Other important publications on Mediterranean vernacular architectures published in the 1960s include the *Folk Architecture of the Eastern Mediterranean*, where Daniel Paulk Branch compiled his observations during the journeys he made with a travel scholarship granted by Columbia University (Branch, 1966), and the *L'architecture de Lumiere*, where Jean Marie Besson brought together information about examples of local buildings from all over the region (Besson, 1976). These books contained local architectural cultures from diverse sub-regions of the Mediterranean, and both their differences and shared characteristics were portrayed with a more objective perspective, when compared to the prior research and publications by the Mediterranean architects.

3. Mediterraneanism discourse in mid-century Turkey and the special position of Cengiz Bektaş

Discourses on the relationship between modern architecture and the Mediterranean culture in Turkey, as well as the architectural works influenced by this relationship, evolved much later than other countries in the region, and with their own dynamics. With the proclamation of the Republic, it is known that European modernism was rapidly adopted in Turkey as of the mid-1920s, and action was taken to create a new face in architecture, as in many areas of social and cultural life. By the mid-1930s, Turkish architects also began to question early modernism, which claimed to have an abstract and universal language and was named as “cubist style” in Turkey, and ways of integrating this style with local characteristics started to be explored. However, unlike the Mediterranean countries mentioned previously, these efforts were nurtured by very different cultural and geographical sources in Turkey. In this period, the identification of the national identity by breaking the cultural ties of the young republic with the Ottoman Empire turned into a campaign carried

out by the state and focused on areas such as historiography and language research. The effect of this campaign on the fields of art and architecture was discussed in detail in the work of Sibel Bozdoğan (Bozdoğan, 2001) titled *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*. Bozdoğan explained that the “national essence”, which determined the new Turkish identity, was defined through its archaic roots extending to Central Asia and its relationship with the ancient civilizations of Anatolia; the Hittites and the Sumerians. In parallel with the nationalist movements in Europe, the effort to create a national architectural style in Turkey in the 1930s and 40s continued to be strengthened and architects headed for research on folk building arts in various regions of Anatolia. However, the studies in this period were carried out under the assumption of a homogeneous Anatolian culture in parallel with the understanding of the unitary state and were not carried out in a way that emphasized regional differences such as the special characteristics of Mediterranean local architecture. The most obvious example of this is the concept of “Turkish House”, which Sedat Hakkı Eldem, who carried out detailed studies and documentation on Anatolian folk culture and local architectures during this period, imagined and idealized as an “object-type” without context, as explained by Sibel Bozdoğan in “The Legacy of an Istanbul Architect: Type, Context and Urban Identity in the Work of Sedat Eldem” (Bozdoğan, 2010). Eldem, who got interested in local Mediterranean architecture and culture during his journeys to Mediterranean countries when he was young, produced sketches and unrealized projects containing modern interpretations of this culture and yet abandoned the “Mediterranean Dream” shortly and focused on the Turkish House project. Eldem argued that the Turkish House that shaped the urban fabric of the traditional settlements in the Balkans and various regions of Anatolia, was “modern” and had a transnational character, similar to what his Mediterranean

colleagues claimed about their own local architectures. However, unlike his colleagues, Eldem approached the Turkish House not as part of the cultural landscape of a certain region, but as an abstract phenomenon that could be analyzed and categorized through plan types with a rational approach. Therefore, according to Bozdoğan, Eldem cannot be described as either contextualist or regionalist.

Mediterranean culture began to be discussed for the first time in the 1950s as a holistic and singular phenomenon in the Republic of Turkey by a group of intellectuals and artists, who adopted humanist thought and presented it as the reference for an alternative definition of national identity. The group that included Azra Erhat, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, and Vedat Günyol and was referred to as the Blue Anatolianists, expanded the stiff and uniform Turkish nationalism discourse of the early Republican period to cover all civilizations that existed in Anatolia throughout history and defined modern Turkish identity as a synthesis and natural extension of these civilizations (Hacıbrahimoğlu, 2012). In his article titled “Our Anatolia: Organicism and the Making of Humanist Culture in Turkey”, Can Bilsel explains that, during the 1950s when the history and language theses of the early republican period were questioned, the Blue Anatolians portrayed the ancient civilizations of the Aegean and Mediterranean regions of Anatolia as not just the ancestors of the modern Turks but the whole Western civilization (Bilsel, 2007). The members of the group were inspired by Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı -aka the Fisherman of Halikarnas- who was exiled to Bodrum in the 1920s and established a deep connection with this geography, and made many land and sea journeys in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions of Anatolia from the 1950s to the 70s. They examined and documented local landscapes, architecture and crafts in addition to the ancient settlements that were of special interest to them, during these journeys. Among these documents, the paintings of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu are of significant value, in which he visualized the Mediterranean cultural landscapes with all their vital-

ity and intertwined elements, during the legendary boat trips known as the Blue Voyage (Eyüboğlu, 2009) (Figure 4). Similarly, Azra Erhat described in her writings the picturesque image of the landscapes formed by the interaction of nature, antiquity, and folk culture in these regions and pointed out the need to support this atmosphere with modern infrastructures and to encourage tourism without deteriorating its character (Erhat, 1960; Erhat, 1962). The most important common feature in the intellectual approaches and works of the figures such as the “Fisherman”, Erhat and Eyüboğlu was that they saw the Mediterranean geography as a holistic cultural landscape and drew attention to the sensitive relations of the natural and man-made elements that made up this whole. Although there were no architects among the Blue Anatolianists at this preliminary stage and it mostly consisted of writers, journalists, and artists, a strong spatial vision of the Mediterranean landscapes can be observed in their textual and visual productions. And thus, as will be explained later in the article, it is possible to speculate on their influence on the Turkish architectural milieu, albeit indirectly.

The interest in the Mediterranean culture in Turkish architectural milieus emerged around the end of the 1950s when mass tourism started to expand drastically and soon acquired an unprecedented scale. The Mediterranean has been the most important tourist destination in the world since the 18th Century when the practice of The

Grand Tour became popular; however, a tourism activity that would transform the economic, demographic and physical structure of the region dates back to mid-20th Century. As Manera, Segreto and Pohl explained with numbers in their article titled “The Mediterranean as a Tourist Destination: Past, Present, and Future of the First Mass Tourism Resort Area”, the tourism phenomenon reached a massive scale after the Second World War with the diversification of travel vehicles and the widespread implementation of paid holidays. (Manera et al., 2009) In addition to its natural and cultural values, the Mediterranean Region and primarily the northwest coasts and the islands were the first places to receive a share of these developments, since they were within easy reach of the European tourists with access to the above-mentioned opportunities. American aids and policies initiated right after the Second World War also had a big impact on the Mediterranean and especially on the coasts of Turkey, in becoming tourist destinations. As Begüm Adalet explained in detail in her book titled *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey*, Turkey entered into rapid processes concerning the development of highway networks and tourism facilities and the mechanization of agriculture, in line with the ideological and pragmatic goals of the Marshall aid package it started to benefit from in 1948 (Adalet, 2018). One of the primary objectives of the package was to turn the countries that received Marshall aids into holiday destinations for American tourists; and within this context, authorities rapidly started to produce tourism policies in Turkey at the end of the 1940s, initiated active propaganda in the press and institutions such as the Tourism Advisory Board (1949), the General Directorate of Press and Tourism (1949), and the Turkish Travel Foundation (1951) were established. The effects of these intensive activities and propaganda that aimed at developing tourism through the modernization of existing facilities and the construction of new ones on the Mediterranean coasts also became visible in Turkish architectural mi-



Figure 4. *Painting of Bodrum by Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, 1950s (Eyüboğlu 2009).*

lieus, towards the end of the 1950s. In this period, the interest in Mediterranean culture, which started to emerge among Turkish architects, was formed by the realization of the potential of development based on the tourism industry, rather than the ideals of creating an alternative architectural identity with national and local qualities. Discourses about the urgent need for the development of tourism in Turkey and the making of related policies and plans started to appear in the architectural media and the writers drew attention to the inadequacy of the country in this field, despite the fact that it was located in a sub-region of the Mediterranean with significant natural and historical assets.

The first issue of *Arkitekt* magazine in 1960 began with the article by Zeki Sayar titled "Towards Genuine Tourism". Sayar stated in his paper, in a harsh and critical tone directed at state institutions and the Tourism Bank, that Turkey had a large tourism potential on the Aegean and Mediterranean shores, but that it had never been used. (Sayar, 1960) The countries that he had taken as reference and made comparisons were naturally Mediterranean countries. Tourists were tired of the French and Italian Rivas, which were the pioneers of Mediterranean tourism, he added, and they could easily be directed to the Turkish coasts, as nations like Yugoslavia and Greece had already recognized this potential and taken action on. He emphasized that as rapidly as possible, comfortable tourist facilities that do not go into luxury should be erected on Turkey's beaches to accommodate European middle-class tourists. Almost all of Sayar's subsequent articles, which appeared in various issues of the journal throughout the years, were about the Mediterranean's potential tourism economy and did not contain a significant argument about the region's cultural geography or its link with modern architecture. Despite this, from the 1960s until the beginning of the 1980s, when the journal's publishing life ended, projects on the archaeology, folk crafts and local architecture of the Mediterranean and projects for touristic facilities and settlements in coastal regions increasingly appeared

in its issues. These included texts by practicing architects such as Turgut Cansever, Şevki Vanlı, Ercan Evren and Cengiz Bektaş addressing various topics and historic periods associated with the Mediterranean culture and architecture. Within this context, architect Cengiz Bektaş, who had carried out the most comprehensive studies on Mediterranean vernacular cultures since the 1970s and approached the subject from a different perspective and had a special and pioneering position. Bektaş, who had a close friendship with the Blue Anatolianists, especially Azra Erhat, made many journeys to Western and Southern Anatolia, some of which were Blue Voyages with this group (Figure 5). Bektaş mentioned that he learned to look at Anatolia holistically as a "cultural geography" and the importance of Western Anatolia within the context of all world civilizations from the Blue Anatolianists. He actively documented his experiences during his journeys and published his research on local architecture, ancient settlements and cultural landscapes in different architectural magazines and books since the 1970s³ (Figure 6) (Table 1). Before mentioning these publications, it would be useful to quote the words of Bektaş from a 9-episode series article he published in *Evrensel Journal* for the 100th anniversary of the birth of Azra Erhat, to express his view of the Blue Anatolianists:

"Dear Azra!

You presented us with an idea... An idea of Anatolianism... To me, it is the truth itself...

I've just returned from Ephesus, Aphrodisias, Magnesia...

You Anatolianists presented us not only our geography but also a cultural homeland." (Bektaş, 2015: 5,6).

In his series of articles titled "Halkın Elinden Dilinden" (Works and Words of People) published in *Mimarlık Journal* between 1976-81, Cengiz Bektaş depicted the landscapes in the regions he visited in Anatolia –especially on the West and South coasts– in a poetic language and presented the detailed drawings and sketches he produced about historical monuments and vernacular architecture to the reader. Bektaş, who explained the examples of "folk building arts" by associating

them with the surrounding natural elements and settlement fabric, took every opportunity in these writings to emphasize that they should be interpreted within their context and not as isolated objects (Figure 7). He mentioned that the definition of a house in Anatolia, not as part of a street, neighbourhood or cultural environment, but as an object determined by walls, floor, and ceiling, led to great failures, and he started talking about Antalya houses, in the first issue of the journal in 1978, by explaining the geographic characteristics of the region. (Bektaş, 1978a) Bektaş had a phenomenological approach as much as his regionalist

approach: He described a neighborhood square with the dark shadow of the plane tree in the middle, the sound of the flowing fountain, the laughter of children, and the stone entrance of a house with the coolness and privacy offered by the walls surrounding it. He drew attention to the spatial and experiential relationships of the square, street and courtyard and the sequence they formed, which lies at the base of many Mediterranean settlements. (Bektaş, 1978b) (Figures 8, 9) As a result of this experiential approach, Bektaş also included information about the processes such as construction stories and rituals learned from local masters in the series titled “Halkın Elinden Dilinden”. In an article published in the first issue of *Mimarlık* in 1976, he described the rituals of the old masters of Antalya, which heralded the end of a roof construction as follows:

“When the roofing was completed, the craftsmen used to rattle the incisor on a wooden board and announced to the neighbours that their work was over. Some masters were so talented that they almost made the incisor sing. Neighbour and friends who heard the rattling that turned into a music of some sort brought gifts to the masters. Gifts such as towels, shirts, handkerchiefs etc. were hung on a rope next to a flag on the roof...” (Bektaş, 1976: 9)

Bektaş added that he learned from Prof. İlhan Başgöz that this tradition went back to the Mesopotamian civilizations and once again drew attention to the continuities in time and space, within this cultural geography. According to Bektaş, who constantly emphasized historical and geographical relationships and the fact that cultures evolved by shaping each other, distinctions such as Turkish House and Greek House were also superficial. He said that the buildings in the Mediterranean Region bore the traces of the cultures and “thousands of years old” traditions that existed in that region.

“When I encountered the paving of the entrance of a one hundred and fifty-year-old Antalya House made of small pebbles, in a settlement from thousands of years ago, I sensed the touch of a hand and a culture continuing for thousands of years. I was a little surprised and looked with a little suspicion at those who attempted to define



Figure 5. Photograph of Cengiz Bektaş and Azra Erhat with some friends from a *Blue Voyage*, 1981 (SALT Research, Cengiz Bektaş Archive).

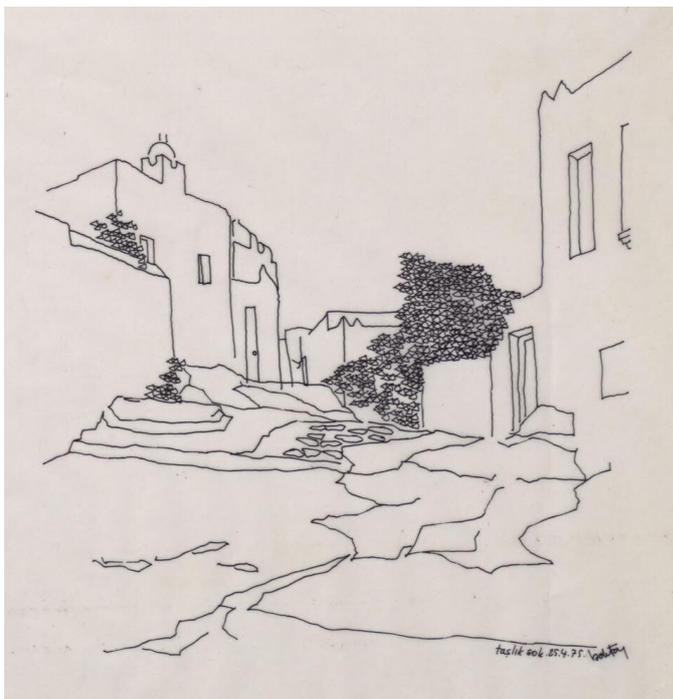


Figure 6. Sketch of a street in Bodrum by Cengiz Bektaş, 1975 (Bektaş 1975).

Table 1. Journal articles of Cengiz Bektaş on the vernacular architecture of Anatolia (especially the Aegean and Mediterranean regions) from 1970s and 1980s

Journal	Year	Issue	Title	Topics/Regions Discussed
Mimarlık	1976	146	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Ortahisar (Nevşehir)
		147	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Marmaris, Datça, Bodrum, Gökova Bay
		148	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Bulak
		149	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Denizli
	1977	150	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Marmaris, Fethiye
		151	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Tersane Island (Muğla)
		152	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Fethiye, Kalkan, Kekova
	1978	153	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Şirince (İzmir)
		154	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Priştine, Antalya
		155	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Antalya - I
		156	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Antalya - II
	1979	157	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Antalya - III
		158	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Antalya
		159	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Kayaköy-Fethiye
		160	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Kuşadası - I
	1980	161	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Kuşadası - II
		162	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Kuşadası
	1981	163	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Kuşadası
		164	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Babadağ (Denizli) - I
		165	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Babadağ (Denizli) - II
		166	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Babadağ (Denizli) - III
		167	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Babadağ (Denizli) - IV
		168	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Babadağ (Denizli) - V
		169	Halkın Elinden Dilinden	Babadağ (Denizli) - VI
	1982	176	Şirinköy: Ya da Köyde Apartman I	Şirinköy
		177	Şirinköy: Ya da Köyde Apartman II	Şirinköy
		178	Şirinköy: Ya da Köyde Apartman III	Şirinköy
		179	Şirinköy: Ya da Köyde Apartman IV	Şirinköy
		181	Şirinköy: Ya da Köyde Apartman V	Şirinköy
182		Şirinköy: Ya da Köyde Apartman VI	Şirinköy	
184		Şirinköy: Ya da Köyde Apartman VII	Şirinköy	
1983	189	Tirilye I	Tirilye	
	190	Tirilye II	Tirilye	
	191	Tirilye III	Tirilye	
Arkitekt	1975	360	Halk Yapı Sanatından Bir Örnek: Bodrum'da Sivil Yapılar	Bodrum



Figure 7. Photograph of Antalya's historic district Kaleiçi by Cengiz Bektaş, late 1970s or early 1980s (SALT Research, Cengiz Bektaş Archive).

this culture as national this or that and attempted to divide it with walls claiming this is Greek, that is Roman, etc.” (Bektaş, 1978a: 6)

In this sense, it can be argued that Bektaş examined the local building cultures with a contextualist, phenomenological and holistic perspective and not with an analytical, typological or categorical one that Sedat Hakkı Eldem had. Nevertheless, despite this contrast, Bektaş conveyed the classification of Turkish House made by Eldem in detail in the 4th issue of the magazine in 1978 with examples from Antalya houses and by calling it “Turkey Evi” (Houses of Turkey). With this revision, it can be thought that Bektaş aimed to change the emphasis of nationalism with a regionalist approach that embraced different cultures. The book by Cengiz Bektaş titled “Türk Evi” (Turkish House), published in 1996, maintains the emphasis on cultural geography despite its name. (Bektaş, 1996) In the first chapters of the book, Bektaş describes the elements that showed continuity in the building cultures and life of Anatolia, starting from the ancient civilizations of Southeast and Central Anatolia dating back to 10,000 years yet puts a special emphasis on the Mediterranean civilizations of Western and Southern Anatolia such as Ionia, Lydia, Caria, and Lycia. According to Bektaş, these civilizations contributed to the “definition of the culture of living in Mediterranean terms”. Later, he explains the contribution of Hellenistic, Persian and Ottoman cultures to the continuities in the Anatolian geography and brings the subject back to the Turkish House, underlying that this building type is actually the multicultural Ottoman House. Before going into the detailed description of this multicultural dwelling type, he feels the need to clarify why and in what context he uses this term:

“Human beings grow with the influence of the past and contemporary artefacts of the land they live on. In short, it is the people who live on a land that is the natural heir to all the cultures that existed there. Therefore, of course, the Ottoman house in Macedonia will be called the Macedonian House by the Macedonians of today, the Ottoman house in Plovdiv will be called the Bul-

garian House by the Bulgarians of today, and the Ottoman house in Greece will be called the Greek House by the Greeks of today. In reality, these are exactly the houses of the land on which they were created... When I say House of Turkey today, or if I say Turkish House since the citizens of Turkey are called Turkish, I am saying something right. But I am saying this knowing that the Ottoman way of life and culture created the term Turkish House through the common life that existed on these lands, and by considering all the regional colours as richnesses to be added to the whole.” (Bektaş, 1996: 22)

As it can be understood from the quotation above, the relationship of Bektaş with the terminology of the Turkish House was not non-problematic. Both this explanation and the content of the book emphasizing the multiculturalism and historical continuity of the lifestyles in Anatolia revealed his efforts to prevent this house type from being associated with a unique national identity. In the book, Bektaş mentioned Sedat Hakkı Eldem only in the last chapter where he explained the Turkish House plan types, and although he used his categories and naming, he could not help stating that he found the classifications of the “former generations” constraining. (Bektaş, 1996: 117) The geographical and historical accounts emphasizing the Aegean and Mediterranean regions in the first parts of the book, regional archetypes such as the megaron-type houses and the atrium, and explanations about the square-street-courtyard-hall (sofa) sequence of traditional settlements largely shaped by open and semi-open spaces revealed a discourse that contextualized the type called Turkish House within the Mediterranean culture. Despite the emphasis of Bektaş on cultural geography in his articles and books and his effort to avoid nationalist discourses, his research and studies were highly focused on his own geography, similar to the approach of Catalan, Italian, and Greek architects mentioned in the first part of the article. It was not common that he discussed Anatolia as a part of the greater Mediterranean or extended the continuities he discussed about the building cultures and lifestyles to wid-

er geographical and historical contexts. Accordingly, the approach of Bektaş was similar to that of the Blue Anatolianists. Even concerning the context of Anatolian geography, his special interest in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, similar to Blue Anatolianists, was often noticed in his publications in which he discussed these regions under the general title of Anatolia. Both the articles he wrote in the journals during the 1970s⁴ and the books he published about the local building cultures of Denizli, Güre, Antalya, and Aegean islands in the following years were proof of his special interest in the Mediterranean. In conclusion, if we speculate on the effect of the Blue Anatolia movement and thus the Mediterranean culture on modern and contemporary architecture in Turkey, it can be argued that Cengiz Bektaş was a key figure in building this bridge. Furthermore, his research motivated by a sincere interest in learning the building cultures of the geography he lived in and a search for a genuine architectural identity, rather than pragmatic motives that would serve the developing mass tourism industry, are other aspects that place Bektaş in a special position and akin to his Spanish, Catalan, and Italian colleagues mentioned in the first part of the article.

4. Conclusion

The interest of the modernist architects in the Mediterranean cultural geography and local architectural cultures since the beginning of the Twentieth Century -and especially during the period between the wars in Europe emerged in Turkey only by mid-century and with the sole motive of serving mass tourism industry. Unlike the efforts of Spanish, Italian, French and Greek architects to create original architectures by synthesizing modernism with local building cultures since the 1930s, the Mediterranean culture in Turkey was considered a pragmatic tool to be utilized for the spread of tourism supported by the state policies and Marshall Plan that appeared in the 1950s. During this period, the discourses in architectural publications, in parallel with the general state propaganda,

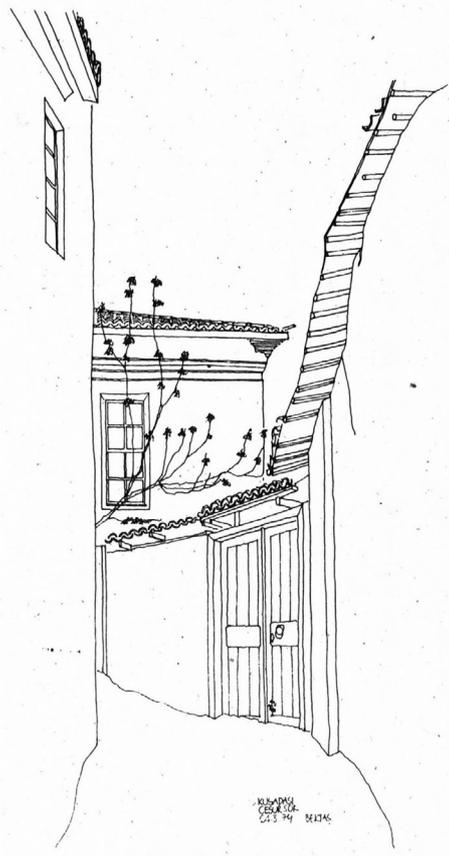


Figure 8. Sketch of a street in Kuşadası by Cengiz Bektaş, 1974 (Bektaş 1979).



Figure 9. Photograph of a street in Antalya Kaleiçi by Cengiz Bektaş, late 1970s or early 1980s (SALT Research, Cengiz Bektaş Archive).

presented the Mediterranean and tourism as two concepts that were completely paired. The group, which brought an alternative perspective to this understanding, were the Blue Anatolianists, which had been active since the mid-1950s and perceived the Mediterranean as a multi-layered cultural construct that could shape modern Turkish identity. Although there were no architects among the members of this group, their journeys on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts of Anatolia, research and documentation of the cultural landscapes of these regions could be considered the first and most creative representations of the Mediterranean space in modern Turkey. Cengiz Bektaş, who had a close friendship with the Blue Anatolianists and especially Azra Erhat, adopted their culture of travel and documentation and, most importantly, their understanding of cultural geography, also had a special place within this context. In the 1970s, Bektaş published his research on the “folk building arts” of the coastal regions of Anatolia in his column titled “Halkın Elinden Dilinden” in *Mimarlık Journal* and revealed his holistic perspective on this cultural geography and his sincere interest shaped by the search for an original architectural identity. This research, which had a major impact on his architectural practice as well, positioned Cengiz Bektaş close to his colleagues who developed similar approaches in other corners of the Mediterranean at the beginning of the twentieth century, in addition to his special place in the history of Turkish architecture. Since the 1970s, many studies have been conducted on the local building cultures of the Mediterranean Region by academicians and architects in Turkey. A detailed classification and historiography of these studies would undoubtedly exceed the scope of this article on the emergence of the Mediterranean discourse in the Turkish architectural milieu. Nevertheless, it would not be wrong to make the following conclusive remarks. Regardless of their initial motives, the architects who are interested in Mediterranean local cultures in Turkey and aim to

synthesize them with contemporary architectural practices -including Cengiz Bektaş- have mostly had the chance to implement and test their ideas on tourism facilities and summer residences and settlements until recently, for the reasons mentioned above. Although it seems difficult for the discourse of Mediterraneanism to be disconnected from the tourism industry in Turkey, which has radically transformed the coastal landscapes of Anatolia since the 1950s, it may be said that research on the vernacular cultures of this geography has been increasing and diversifying in the recent years, informing design ideas for projects with much more diverse architectural programs and critical stances, and providing inspiration for those seeking contemporary ways of inhabiting these lands.

Endnotes

¹ *Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*, known by its acronym AC, was published between 1931-37. In addition to current modern projects from Spain and the world, texts and visuals about field studies on Mediterranean vernacular were included in its various issues. Detailed information on the content and history of the journal can be found in an article by Antonio Pizza, titled *Contemporary Activity: The GATEPAC Magazine 1931-1937* (Pizza, 2012).

² One of the most significant examples of this was the discourses of Aris Konstantinidis in *Landscapes and Houses of Modern Greece: God-Built* (Konstantinidis, 1994) and *Elements of Self-Knowledge: Towards A True Architecture* (Konstantinidis, 1975). In these publications, Konstantinidis presented the local architectures and landscapes of Greece with texts that emphasized the concept of Greekness rather than Mediterranean culture and identity, including photographs and a strong emphasis on nationalism. In fact, the word, Mediterranean was almost never encountered within the texts in these books. The architectural and natural elements that could be found in many different parts of the Mediterranean region were described as phenomena specific to the Greek ge-

ography.

³ Cengiz Bektaş recently made an interview and published a series of articles that clarified his relationship with the Blue Anatolianists, the way he looked at them and how he was influenced by them. The first of these was the interview of Burak Baş with Bektaş and published on the website Arkeofili (Baş, 2017), and the second was the nine-episode series of articles published by Bektaş on the website of Evrensel Journal due to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Azra Erhat (Bektaş, 2015).

⁴ Cengiz Bektaş mostly included settlements from the Aegean and Mediterranean regions of Anatolia in the series of articles titled "Halkın Elinden Dilinden" (Works and Words of People) published in Mimarlık Journal between 1976 and 1981. The discoveries he made by going ashore with his friends and colleagues during boat trips in Gökova and Hisarönü bays and around Fethiye, the local architecture of Denizli, Şirince and Kuşadası and the detailed description of Antalya Kaleiçi spread over a few issues were the main topics that made up this series. He continued publishing articles on the landscapes and vernacular architecture of the Aegean and Mediterranean regions of Anatolia under different titles in various issues of Mimarlık in the 1980s and onwards. Moreover, Bektaş published a detailed article in the 4th issue of Arkitekt magazine in 1975, describing different house types and settlement textures in the local architecture of Bodrum. (Bektaş, 1975).

References

Adalet, B. (2018). *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Baş, B. (2017). Yüksek Mimar Cengiz Bektaş ile Mavi Anadoluculuk Röportajı, July 1. Retrieved from <https://arkeofili.com/yuksek-mimar-cengiz-bektas-ile-mavi-anadoluculuk-roportaji>

Bektaş, C. (1975-1981). Halkın Elinden Dilinden. *Mimarlık*.

Bektaş, C. (1975). Halk Yapı Sanatından Bir Örnek: Bodrum'da Sivil Yapılar. *Arkitekt*, 360: 167-171.

Bektaş, C. (1976). Halkın Elinden Dilinden. *Mimarlık*, 146: 8-9.

Bektaş, C. (1978a). Halkın Elinden Dilinden. *Mimarlık*, 154: 4-6.

Bektaş, C. (1978b). Halkın Elinden Dilinden. *Mimarlık*, 156: 3-6.

Bektaş, C. (1979). Halkın Elinden Dilinden: Kuşadası Evleri 2. *Mimarlık*, 161: 4-6.

Bektaş, C. (1996). *Türk Evi*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Press.

Bektaş, C. (2015). Azra Erhat-5, 30 November 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.evrensel.net/yazi/75407/azra-erhat-5>

Bektaş, C. (2015). Azra Erhat-6, 7 December 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.evrensel.net/yazi/75463/azra-erhat-6>

Bilsel, C. (2007). "Our Anatolia": Organicism and the Making of Humanist Culture in Turkey. *Muqarnas*, 24: 223-241.

Bozdoğan, S. (2001). *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*. Washington: University of Washington Press.

Bozdoğan, S. (2010). The Legacy of an Istanbul Architect: Type, Context and Urban Identity in the Work of Sedat Eldem. In J.F.Lejeune and M.Sabatino (eds.) *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities* (pp. 131-145). New York: Routledge.

Branch, D.P. (1966). *Folk Architecture of the Eastern Mediterranean*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bresson, J.M. (1976). *L'architecture de Lumiere*. Ivry: Serg.

Crane, S. (2010). Mediterranean Dialogues: Le Corbusier, Fernand Pouillon, and Roland Simounet. In J.F.Lejeune and M.Sabatino (eds.) *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities* (pp. 95-109). New York: Routledge.

Erhat, A. (1960). *Mavi Anadolu*. İstanbul: İstanbul Matbaası.

Erhat, A. (1962). *Mavi Yolculuk*. İstanbul: Çan Yayınları.

Eyüboğlu, B.R. (2009). *Mavi Yolculuk Defterleri*. İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

Goldfinger, M. (1969). *Villages in the Sun: Mediterranean Community Archi-*

- ecture. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Gravagnuolo, B. (2010). From Schinkel to Le Corbusier: The Myth of the Mediterranean in Modern Architecture. In J.F Lejeune and M.Sabatino (eds.) *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities* (pp. 15-39). New York: Routledge.
- Hacıbrahimoğlu, I.Ç. (2012). *Cumhuriyet ve Hümanizma Algısı*. İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Konstantinidis, A. (1975). *Elements for Self-Knowledge: Towards a True Architecture*. Athens: Karydakis Brothers Ltd.
- Konstantinidis, A. (1994). *God-Built: Landscapes and Houses of Modern Greece*. Crete: Crete University Press.
- Le Corbusier (1961). *Le Corbusier Talks with Students*. New York: Orion Press.
- Lejeune, J.F., Sabatino, M., (eds.) (2010). *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities*. New York: Routledge.
- Manera, C., Segreto and L., Pohl, M. (2009). The Mediterranean as a Tourist Destination: Past, Present, and Future of the First Mass Tourism Resort Area. In L. Segreto, C. Manera, M. Pohl (Eds.) *Europe at the Seaside: The Economic History of Mass Tourism in the Mediterranean* (pp. 1-11). Oxford: Bergahn.
- Mercadal, F.G. (1996). *Sobre el Mediterráneo: Sus Litorales, Pueblos, Culturas (Imágenes y Recuerdos)*. Zaragoza : Institución Fernando el Católico.
- Pizza, A. (2012). Contemporary Activity: The GATEPAC Magazine 1931-1937. *Docomomo Journal*, 47: 56-61.
- Rovira, J.M. and Pizza, A. (2006). *G.A.T.C.P.A.C., 1928-1939: A New Architecture for a New City*. Barcelona: Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat de Barcelona.
- Rudofsky, B. (1965). *Architecture without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.
- Sabatino, M. (2010). The Politics of Mediterraneanità in Italian Modernist Architecture. In J.F Lejeune and M.Sabatino, (eds.) *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities* (pp. 41-63). New York: Routledge.
- Sayar, Z. (1960). Hakiki Turizme Doğru. *Arkitekt*, 291: 3,28.
- Tzonis, A. and Rodi, A.P. (2013). *Greece: Modern Architectures in History*. London: Reaktion.