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Intersections in the City: The Ermenek Coverings

Kentte Kesişmeler: Ermenek Örtmeleri

Nisa Yılmaz Erkovan[1]

Öz

Bir kentte komşuluk ilişkilerinin kurulduğu en küçük yapılanma olan mahalleler ve yapılar arasındaki bağlantıyı sağlayan sokaklar, Karaman ili Ermenek ilçesinde farklı bir karakter sergilemektedirler. Oldukça engebeli arazi üzerinde yerleşimin kurulduğu kentin sokakları topografyaya uyum sağlayacak şekilde kurgulanmıştır. Yapıların çoğu birbirine bitişik inşa edilmiş, sokak boşlukları dışında başka boşluk bulunmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla kentsel kurgu, evler ve sokakların organik bir bağ çerçevesinde bir araya getirilmesi ile ve altından sokağın devam etmesine izin veren halk arasında "örtme" adı verilen geçitlerle güçlendirilmiştir. Çalışma konusunu "örtmeler" üzerinden yapılacak mekânsal okumalarla örtmelerin geleneksel sokak dokusundaki kurgusu, kentle, bireyle, çevreyle olan ilişkilerinin tartışılması, tipolojik sınıflandırmasının yapılması oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın metodolojisi olarak ilk aşamada arazi çalışmaları yapılarak, yerinde gözlem, tespit ve belgeleme çalışmaları yapılmıştır. Sonrasında örtmelerin kentsel kurgu içerisindeki yeri literatür ve arazi çalışmaları üzerinden tartışılarak tipolojik bir sınıflandırma yapılmıştır. Yapılan çalışmalar sonucunda geleneksel sokak dokusu içerisinde önemli yere sahip örtmelerin kentsel, mekânsal ve fiziksel okumaları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışma ile kırsal mimari yapılanma içerisinde unutularak yok olmaya başlamış halkın yaşam kültürünü yansıtan bu türden yapıların mimarlık ve şehircilik tarihi içerisindeki önemi vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ermenek, Kırsal Mimari, Örtme, Geleneksel Yapı.

ABSTRACT

The streets, which provide the connection between the neighborhoods, and which are the smallest structures in a city where neighborhood relations are established, and the structures of this city, present a different character in the Ermenek District of Karaman Province. The streets of this city, which are located on very rough terrain, are designed to adapt to the topography. Most of the buildings were built adjacent to each other, there are no other spaces apart from the street spaces. Therefore, as a result of bringing together the urban configuration and streets within the framework of an organic union, these passages, which allow the street to continue, are strengthened with coverings, which are called "örtme" in Turkish. The topic of the study is conducted on the following four main themes: (1) the spatial readings to be made on coverings, (2) the construction of coverings in the traditional street texture, (3) the discussion of the relations of coverings with the individual, the city, and the environment, (4) the typological classification of coverings. In this context, as the methodology of the study, field studies, that is, on-site observation, detection and documentation studies, were carried out in the first stage. Afterwards, a typological classification was made by examining the place of coverings in urban fiction through literature and field studies. In conclusion, urban, spatial and physical readings of the coverings, which have an influential position in the traditional street texture, were carried out. With this study, the significance of such structures, which reflect the living culture of the people, which began to disappear by being forgotten in the rural architectural structuring, in the history of architecture and urbanism was emphasized.

Keywords: Ermenek, Rural Architecture, Covering, Traditional Building.

[1] **Corresponded Author:** Alanya Aladdin Keykubat University, Art Design and Architecture Faculty, Department of Architecture/Alanya
nisa.erkovan@alanya.edu.tr, ORCID 0000-0002-7473-7131

Introduction:

Ermenek, the district of Karaman province that has been inhabited for centuries, has an important position among the cities of Rough Cilicia (Fig 1). The city is located between the Konya Plain and the Mediterranean coast, at an altitude of approximately 1200-1350 meters above sea level and covers the high plateaus of the Central Toros Mountains. The abundance of deep valleys and steep slopes and a large number of thick limestone layers in the land have affected the settlement. The settlement is a passage connecting Central Anatolia to the Mediterranean.

Figure 1. Ermenek and its Surroundings (Source: Author)

The Ermenek district has both continental and Mediterranean climates, thus, from an altitude of 1500 m above sea level, a transitional climate called the Mediterranean mountain climate is observed (Doğanay, 2005, p.29). The airflow accessing the Mediterranean from the Toros Mountains, particularly in summer, creates a warm breeze and is felt in the coastal area. Therefore, the people in the coastal areas often migrate to the highlands in those periods (Doğanay, 2005, p.32). In addition, viticulture, which is common in the Toros Mountains, is observed in this region, and in the local context, it is reasonable to go to higher plateaus in summer, as well as to vineyard houses built as secondary residences in Ermenek. Geographical, climatic, and economic reasons form the settlement characteristics of Ermenek and reflect the three different settlements as a spatial mobility within the framework of environment-specific conditions. The first is the area where the houses are settled on the slope in winter, the second is the vineyard settlement for agricultural purposes in the valley, and the third is the high plateau settlement where animals can be grazed. This semi-nomadic way of life, which is also considered as a transhuman lifestyle, is a way of life in which the herds of the settled herd owners make seasonal oscillations in the winter quarters (kışlak)-stay for autumn (güzlek)-highland (yaylak) lines under the guidance of shepherds (Kavas 2016). Migration in this way of life depends on topography. In Turkey, horizontal migration is seen in Central Anatolia and vertical migration is seen in the Mediterranean Region. In Ermenek, both vertical migration movements to higher plateaus and horizontal migration movements, which are defined as going to vineyard settlements physically close to the winter settlements at the same altitude but suitable for agriculture, are realized (Fig 2). The presence of both migration factors provides the region unique point of view.

Figure 2. Ermenek Horizontal and Vertical Migration Routes (Photo:İlhami Etçi)

Considering all the above-mentioned reasons, the differentiating spatial structuring in the street texture emerged as a result of the difficult structure of Ermenek's topography will be discussed in this study. With spatial readings of the coverings, the structure of coverings in the traditional street texture, their relations with the individual, the city, and the environment will be presented. In conclusion, the typological classification of the coverings will be made in a systematic way. In this context, as the methodology of the study, field studies were carried out in the first stage, in which on-site observation, detection, and documentation studies were carried out. Afterward, a typological classification was made by discussing the place of coverings in urban fiction through literature and field studies. As a result of the studies, urban, spatial and physical readings of the coverings, which have a significant place in the traditional street texture, were carried out.

1. Current Street Texture Analysis in Ermenek

Ermenek is a mountain settlement located in the middle of the Toros Mountains. The use of flat areas as agricultural land has caused the winter settlement of the settlement to be built on a steep slope (Fig 3).

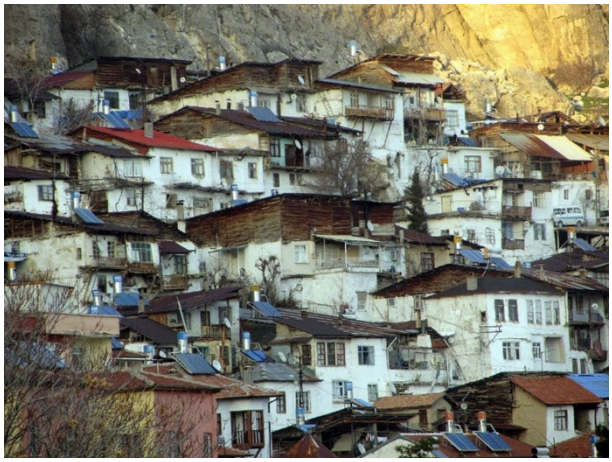

Figure 3. Ermenek Housing Settlement (Photo:İlhami Etçi)

This situation has influenced the architectural structure and the street texture. In the settlement built by terracing on the south-facing slope, each residence is positioned to benefit from the wind and sun equally. It is protected from strong winds in winter, so that more use is made of horizontal sun rays, and in summer, night breezes affect all residences on the sloping land.

Evliya Çelebi's The Book of Travels provides important information about the original rural architecture and street texture of Ermenek in the 17th century. Çelebi (Çelebi 1935) said regarding street texture that Ermenek is a very precarious place and that a stone rolled from above will destroy many people below. He mentioned high, falcon-nested steep rocks, thus giving information about the foundation of the settlement. He described the castle above the settlement, the gate in the east, and the wooden staircase with 140 steps with railing. He also mentioned that there were about 40-50 masonry structures in the castle and that they were directed towards the valley, some of them were covered with wood, and some of them were open. It has been stated that there are twelve neighborhoods a little further down outside the castle, that there are mosques in each neighborhood, and that there are about 800 stone houses in these neighborhoods. It is reported that the houses and mosques have earthen roofs, and the streets are narrow, made of cut stone and stairs. He also stated that there were 17 fountains and 50 shops in Ermenek.

Figure 4. Ermenek East-West Streets

As state by Celebi, the importance of climate and topography for a such a settlement and how they influence the spatial structure is well evident, an architectural and street texture suitable for the geography is observed on the rough terrain. Depending on this structure, the streets are oriented east-west or north-south. The streets are placed perpendicular and parallel to the slope, the streets perpendicular to the slope have stairs and are not convenient for wheeled vehicle traffic. East-west oriented streets are parallel to the slope, straight or inclined (Fig 4).

Due to the dense street structure, the residences are very close or even adjacent to each other. Alexander, states that for this adjacent housing structure, there should be neighbors and the residents who wander between these house clusters should not feel alien and he defines it as the House Cluster pattern. In Ermenek, the streets between the housing groups suitable for this pattern definition are quite narrow (Fig 5).

Figure 5. Ermenek North-South Streets (Photo: Author)

Therefore, in some residences, the building was built with sharp corner turns in order to widen the streets, if only a marginal amount. Although there are no gardens in the buildings due to the lack of space, semi-private areas were created for the buildings by arranging the dead-end streets and the entrances to form niches on the street from the inside (Fig. 6).

Figure 6. Street Niches (Photo:Author)

These spaces, which Alexander describes (Alexander 1977) as Positive Outdoor Spaces, are among the original structures of the street texture. In this way, semi-private areas were created within the street texture and common areas were created, which is associated with the concept of the front of the door with the garden or courtyard. Some structures were built on the natural rock because of the few and narrow areas suitable for settlement and steep topography (Fig. 7). This is an indication that all settlement areas were used by evaluating the topography, natural structure and climatic conditions in the settlement.

Figure 7. Ermenek Rock Houses (Photo:Author)

In the settlement where water resources are abundant, the fountains located between the neighborhoods are major parts of the street texture. Alexander's gathering-meeting areas, which he defines as Activity Nodes (Alexander 1977), are unique socializing spaces within the traditional street structure. The fountains, located in almost every street in the district, draw attention as the junction points that constitute the whole entire street texture (Fig 8).

Figure 8. Street Fountains (Photo:Author)

1.1. Street Coverings

Since the flatlands in Ermenek are utilized for agricultural purposes, the public settlement is built on sloping land on the mountain slope. Therefore, the land has been used at the maximum level in the areas that have been created suitable for settlement by terracing. Accordingly, the streets are narrow and streets are allowed to pass through the floors of the buildings as much as the property allows; thus ensuring spatial continuity (Fig. 9).

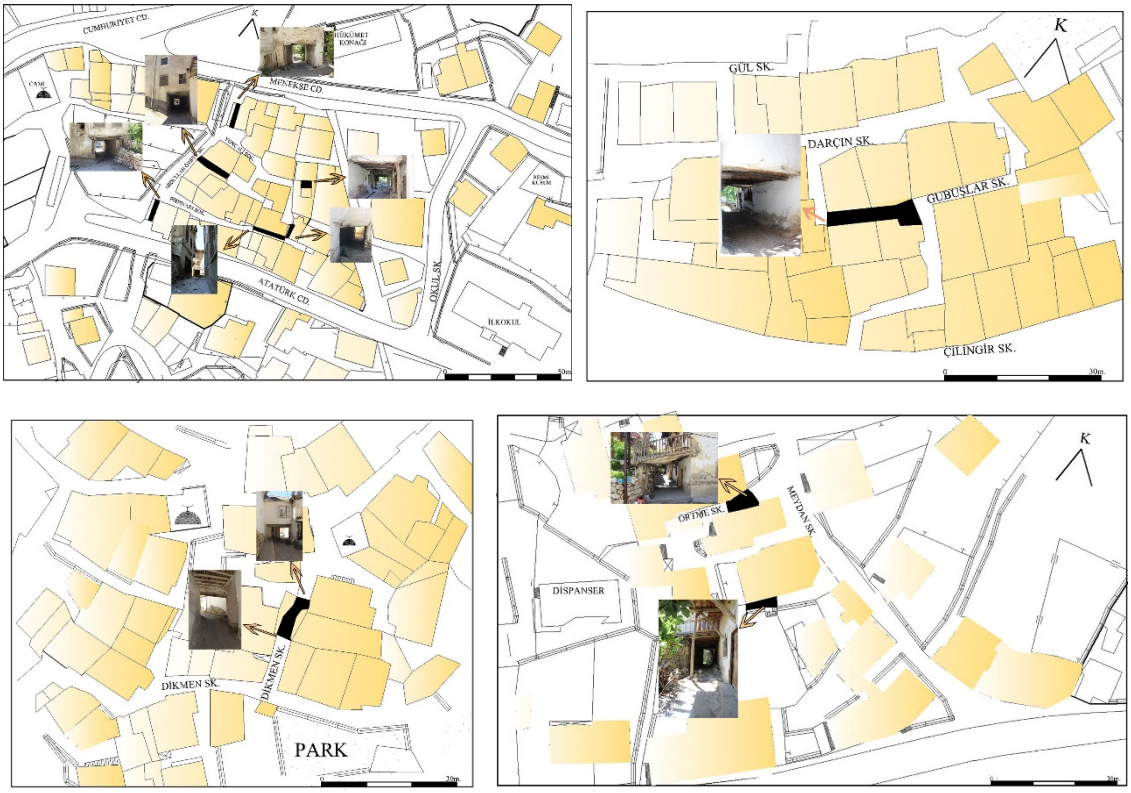

Figure 9. The Coverings in Ermenek

While the houses were integrated vertically, these voids created on the ground produced both public and semi-private spaces, providing uninterrupted circulation in the streets of Ermenek. These structures can be defined as the spatial spaces under the buildings or traditional houses, which allow the street to pass under them and which are called “covering” and maintain with different definitions according to the regions they are practiced in (Fig. 10) (For further information see, Erdal 2020, p.6. Also, these structures are called Tinao in Spain. See, https://rinconesdegranada.com/los-tinaos-bubion Access Date: 20.08.2021.)

Figure 10. The Coverings in Ermenek (Photo:Author)

It is essential for people to be able to move freely in the city to feel the order and relations of the universe and the earth (Erzen 2006). The "coverings" in Ermenek provide the individual with the opportunity to move comfortably and uninterruptedly in the dense street texture of the city. Erzen (2006) states that the natural relationships and mental awareness practiced while moving around this irregular street structure are an outstanding part of urban aesthetics. While moving in the street texture of Ermenek, the scale differentiation, the proximity of the traditional houses, the winding streets with sloping or stairs and the residences with streets passing under them, the building corners formed in order to the narrowness of the road, advance one street not similar to the other, thus leaving different spatial influences on the moving person. While coverings sometimes connect one street to another one, sometimes they end in a dead-end and are transformed into private spaces, increasing the emphasis of the distinction between public and private spaces. These spatial spaces, the spaces were the spaces where the private and public intersect in the city, from the street system with their uninterrupted connections. In order for us to discuss a street system, as Alexander (1968) states, when something is looked at, it must be able to reveal its character with its holistic features. Since no street in Ermenek is equivalent, it is only reasonable to apprehend its texture when we consider the street structure holistically. In common, coverings are significant parts of the texture in terms of providing uninterrupted transportation within this system. This system integrity can also be defined from a syntactic point of view through spatial syntax. In order to demonstrate the concept of spatial syntax through the street system, it is required to make a more singular reading in the underground and above-street space. In terms of a single covering to be formed, many concepts such as a residence, wall, avenue, street, ceiling, beam, door, window, material, construction technique must be perceived and meet in a certain sequence (Fig. 11). All these structural and systemic concepts meet within the Ermenek street texture and present a single unique structure.

Figure 11. Coverings Constructions (Photo:Author)

While a single covering can be evaluated as a whole in itself, managing it holistically within the street texture will transform this street texture into a street system. In other words, while each covering creates a whole in itself, it also becomes a part of the street system. When one of these coverings is removed from the system, the street is interrupted and its integral structure is disrupted. Each of the covering structures is a “generative system”. In other words, it is a complex that consists of parts and has its own rules for the formation of these parts. It is a “whole” formed as a result of the mutual interaction or convergency of productive systems. The coverings, which can be described as the productive system in a street system, have physical construction methods with certain rules (This generative system sequence can be explained by tectonic syntax. The creation of larger units from small building elements, the combination of different materials with a load-bearing system to sustain the building is completed, while the individual's perception of the building is completed with tectonic syntax. Frampton's [1995] concept of 'tectonic' is the study of an architectural form in both its physical and cultural dimensions, and it also encompasses tectonic climatic comfort, culture and physical environment. In order for the buildings to meet and form a spatial syntax, it is first required to study

the syntax within a single building scale. This arrangement in the coverings is structural as follows: the wall parts are masonry stone walls with wooden beams, the upper covering consists of unprocessed thick beam, which is the flooring material of the building, and the wooden beams are arranged at certain intervals, on top of this, a wooden covering board and the last part consist of wooden flooring. In some places, wooden beams are carried by struts from the wall, while in other places wooden beams are carried by wooden columns (Fig. 12).

Figure 12. Wooden Beams (Photo:Author)

The masonry stone walls with wooden beams were painted after plastering with plaster made by mixing hybrid mellez soil and straw (mellez in Turkish: A local soil type used especially for plastering. It is also called mellez mud. (Defined as a result of oral interviews)). On some walls of the residences, plaster made of mellez soil on wooden walls was applied (Fig. 13).

Figure 13. Wall Plasters (Photo:Author)

This physical description has revealed the structural characteristics, as well as the intersection of multiple functions such as a door/window, under the eaves, a woodshed/storage, a passing area of a street, a children's playground or a canopy resting place. It can be characterized as having spatial patterns such as being a point of interest. In these urban spaces, which are defined spatially within the holistic street system, individuals with all kinds of cultural, social, economic equal or differences occur and interact in these intersections. It forms the key parts of the street system with its L-shaped forms, sometimes with stairs or slopes, connecting streets or with dead ends (Fig. 14). While it takes on many functions and forms that can be defined within itself, its main task in the street system is to provide continuity.

By giving the names of the building owners or the street or region where they are located to the coverings, the coverings become stronger in the spatial context. By taking the form of the street, it also defines the urban space through changing according to the extent and narrowness of the street.

Figure 14. Coverings (Photo:Author)

2. Typological Definitions of The Coverings

The 11 coverings determined by the field studies were examined in two groups as coverings connecting two streets and covering a dead-end street and were further grouped under sub-headings according to whether they were a residence or a terrace (Table 1). Coverings with terraces are either an entrance canopy for the residence or provide a transition to other residences. The positioning of the covers in the street pattern can be perpendicular to the slope, parallel to the slope or L-shaped in both directions. There are spaces with many functions such as entrance doors to different residences, warehouses, barn entrances, which open to coverings.

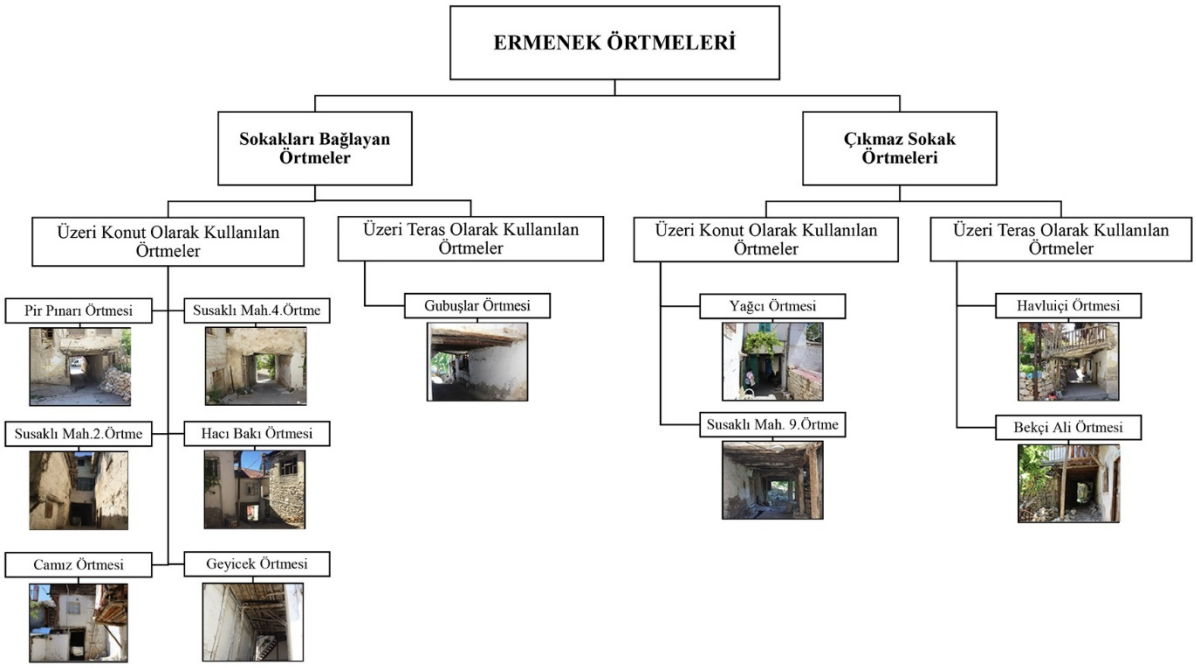

Table 1. Typological Classification

2.1.The Coverings that Join the Street

While this type of coverings connects two streets, they are covers that allow pedestrian passage, and some vehicles can pass if the height and width are suitable. It can be a residence or a residential terrace. It has been determined that these residences may belong to a single person or to two residences with different entrances. These are more encounter areas as they are coverings through which the entrance doors of one or more houses and barn doors are opened. Being a part of the uninterrupted street traffic in Ermenek, strengthens the definition of the spatial space with the residential community around and above it. These types of coverings, of which there are seven in Ermenek, can be grouped in two ways:

2.1.1. Coverings that Have House on it

In this type of coverings, street continuity is provided on the lower floor, while there are rooms belonging to one or more residences on the upper floor. Six such coverings were identified in Ermenek. These are as follows:

Susaklı Neighborhood Covering I (Pir Pınarı Covering): This covering is located at the intersection of Abdullah Özbey Street and Pirpınarı Street. It connects Abdullah Özbey Street and Atatürk Avenue (Fig. 15). There is a residence on the covering, named after the street, it is located on. In the covering, there is a wooden window space left in order to store the feed more easily in the barn: Its width is 2.43 m and height is 2.40 m. While the vehicles and pedestrians can use the covering, the structure on the covering is not used.

Figure 15. Pir Pınarı Covering (Photo:Author)

Susaklı Neighborhood Covering II: This covering is connected Pirpınarı Street to Yoncalı Street. While the first branch of this L-shaped covering, which is 2.57 m wide, is a dead-end street, it is connected to the other street with a continuation 1.54 m wide and 2.30 m high second covering (Fig. 16). Along the first branch of this covering, space was given for two barn doors and one for the entrance door of the other house. Only pedestrian traffic is provided under this covering.

Figure 16. Susaklı Neighborhood Covering II (Photo:Author)

Susaklı Neighborhood Covering III (Camız Covering): This covering is connected Yoncalı Street to Abdullah Özbey Street. The height of the covering space, which has five doors, the barn and the house door, varies according to the slope of the street in front, and there is a window belonging to the house (Fig. 17).

Figure 17. Camız Covering (Photo:Author)

Susaklı Neighborhood Covering IV: This covering is connected Yoncalı Street to Menekşe Avenue (Fig. 18). "It is 3.10 m wide and 5.40 m high" The covering on a sloping road belongs to a residence. There is a barn door inside the covering.

Figure 18. Susaklı Neighborhood Covering IV (Photo:Author)

Orta Neighborhood Covering V (Hacı Bakı Covering): This covering is extended along Dikmen Street (Fig. 19). The covering, which is located on a very inclined road, belongs to a residence. A residence, a barn door and two windows are opened through the covering. It was built in accordance with the shape of the street.

Figure 19. Hacı Bakı Covering (Photo:Author)

Orta Neighborhood Covering VI (Geyicek Covering): This covering is connected Hamam Street to Çobanlar Street (Fig. 20). A door opens through the covering that causes a very narrow street. The covering is used by two residences. After exiting the narrow street where the covering is located, the wide area reached is again connected to a narrow passage and then to other streets.

Figure 20. Geyicek Covering (Photo:Author)

2.1.2. Coverings that Have a Terrace on it

In this type of coverings, street continuity is provided on the lower floor, while there is a terrace on the upper floor. One such covering was found in Ermenek. This example is as follows:

Orta Neighborhood Covering VII (Gubuşlar Covering): This covering is connected Darçın Street to Gubuşlar Street. Half of the upper part of the covering is used as a terrace and half as a residence. Its width is 2.20 m and its height is 1.50 m on one side of the covering, while it reaches 2.00 m on the other side (Fig. 21).

Figure 21. Gubuşlar Covering (Photo:Author)

2.2. Dead End Coverings

These coverings are great examples of the transition from the public to the private area. These areas are both a courtyard and part of the residence. It is also the garden of a residential group and a socializing place. The patterns defined as Positive Outdoor Space and House Cluster in Alexander's patterns in dead-end street coverings are frequently observed. In Ermenek, instead of a random pass-through space, a semi-private space has been created in the public space for one or more buildings. It can be a residence or a residential terrace.

2.2.1 Coverings that Have House on it

In this type of coverings, street continuity is provided on the lower floor, while there are rooms belonging to one or more residences on the upper floor. Two such coverings were found in Ermenek. These are as follows:

Orta Neighborhood Covering VIII (Yağcı Covering): It is located below Hamam Street (Fig. 22). These coverings are examples of the transition from the public to the private area. It is both a courtyard for the residence and a part of it. There are two residences and four barn doors that are opened to covering. The barns are used for storage and woodsheds.

Figure 22. Yağcı Covering (Photo:Author)

Susaklı Neighborhood Covering IX: It is located on Yoncalı Street. A reinforced concrete addition was made in half. Half of the upper part is used as a residence and half as a terrace (Fig. 23). There are barn and house doors that open to covering. Its originality has been partially lost due to reinforced concrete additions.

Figure 23. Susaklı Neighborhood Covering IX (Photo:Author)

2.2.2. Coverings that Have a terrace on it

In this type of coverings, street continuity is provided on the lower floor, while there is a terrace on the upper floor. Two such coverings were found in Ermenek. These examples are as follows:

Meydan Neighborhood Covering X (Havluiçi Covering): It is located on Meydan Street (Fig. 24). It is popularly known as Havluiçi Street. The covering belongs to a residence. A door opens to the covering.

The covering, which is completely made of wood, also serves as an entrance canopy for the residence to which it belongs. It also provides a transition to other residences.

Figure 24. Havluiçi Covering (Photo:Author)

Meydan Neighborhood Covering XI (Bekçi Ali Covering): It is located on Meydan Street, and which is 1.77 m in width, 2.00 m in height. The upper part of the covering, which belongs to a residence, is completely made of wood. The covering is a passageway to the garden of the residence (Fig. 25).

Figure 25. Bekçi Ali Covering (Photo:Author)

CONCLUSION:

In Ermenek, there are many deep valleys and steep slopes that have caused the flat areas of the land to be allocated to agriculture for economic reasons. As a result, the settlement is seen in a sloping area on the mountain slope. Neighboring residences, narrow streets, fountain structures in every street due to the abundance of water are important elements that shape the street texture with the effect of environmental factors. It was built within the framework of an organic vineyard and no other gaps were left apart from the street spaces. The street texture of Ermenek has been shaped without any planning, considering the cultural structure, lifestyle, conditions and neighborhood relations of the people to the extent that environmental factors allow. In the period when certain sizes of blocks and parcels were not defined, as today, the permission given by the owner from the ground floor of some buildings to the extent allowed by the property created an uninterrupted street texture. The spatial spaces under the residences, which are known as “covering” among the people and which allow the street to pass under, are the richest elements of the street texture. While coverings sometimes

connect one street to another, they sometimes finish in a dead-end, increasing the emphasis on private space.

The coverings, which emerged as the original structuring of the winter settlement in the challenging topography between horizontal and vertical migration, are the intersection spaces of the private and the public. This weaving of private and public spaces is the nodal pointare the nodal points where topography and built environment are connected to each other in the continuity of the settlement. Although it was designed for the same purpose, each covering has gained different identities, beginning from the landlord or the street it receives its name from. Thus, these structures, which reinforce their belonging to the "place", are not just an emptiness that they come and go. These coverings provided the formation of an organic street texture by intertwining private life above, semi-private or semi-public spaces below with the public spaces. This street texture is a powerful indication of people's desire to read their environment accurately in line with climatic data in order to be protected from heat in summer and cold or rain in winter, in accordance with their requirements, and to build on steep slopes, considering the topography as much as the land allows. All this built environment, combined with the economic, cultural and social characteristics of the people in the society, forms the rural architecture and folk building culture of Ermenek.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare that for this article they have no actual, potential or perceived conflict of interests.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval is not required for this study. (If available, the file will be attached as pdf.)

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