

Determination and analysis of site selection factors for kulliyes of architect Sinan with respect to the locations in the Ottoman city of Istanbul

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Abstract

Besides serving with their public and religious functions to the city, Ottoman kulliyes were the focal points which develop the urban pattern of their surroundings and the city. Sinan's kulliyes were established as important centers both serving the society and expressing the imperial power during the busiest years of the empire in terms of construction and building activities. Their location in the city was chosen particularly and many parameters were taken into account and evaluated while deciding upon the site selection. On the other hand, the fact that each kulliye might have its own specific conditions makes it difficult to determine the parameters in question. Generalizing to some extent, this study aims to determine the site selection factors and puts the effects of these factors forward in both site selection and space arrangements of the kulliyes all of which stand on different points of the city. Within the framework of the aim of the study, the analysis and its findings provide not only to determine how the kulliyes were located in the city but also indicate the importance of site selection and its effects on the built environment in architecture by means of Sinan's kulliyes. Identification of these effects would also demonstrate whether there is an interaction between site selection and formation of the kulliyes. The presence of the interaction in other words formation of the complex with respect to its location would be an indicator of the relationship of buildings with its surroundings and even with the city.

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1. Introduction

Architect Sinan, who served as the master architect of Ottoman Empire for fifty years in the 16th century, was responsible for all constructional and planning works and performed most of his works in Istanbul. Although he is generally renowned with his buildings examined and evaluated in single building scale in the studies carried out about him up to date, it is also known that his buildings are the components of a building complex which is called “kulliye” and they are significant in this scale. He designed his kulliyes using the spatial relations between the

buildings and topography such efficiently that his kulliyes are so distinguished and important. The kulliyes of Sinan, who was aware of the site topography and aimed to construct buildings that comply with urban pattern, were the cores of the city as a whole and the important centers of cultural, religious, commercial and educational activities. Today, even most of the buildings of those times were barred by the time; the centers that introduce the actual identity of Istanbul city are these complexes.

Therefore, it is very important to determine on what the values of such complexes with historical importance in today's cities depend. The idea of “The primary factor, which ensures that the complexes are attributed to the history, is the site selection and the complexes are shaped based on their locations” is the starting point of this study. Moving from this point, it was studied where and how the

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kulliyes of Sinan in the 16th century were located in the city. As a result of the very first observations and examinations, it was determined that there is some variety in locations of them and that such variety was caused by some factors that are considered by Sinan. Since most of the kulliyes of Sinan are constructed in Istanbul and the city provides many opportunities in regard of the variety, the study restricted with this city demonstrated that Sinan took many factors into consideration when locating his kulliyes.

2. Determination of locations for kulliyes of Sinan

An Ottoman city consists of areas with different important characteristics. There were incidental, crowded and introverted dwelling areas on one side of the Ottoman city and capital Istanbul, while there were kulliyes that form the order of social life on the other side. The kulliyes are located at the important points of the city as the structures emphasizing the religious center [1].

The decision made for locating a kulliyeh in the geographical and topographical structure of the city is very important. Sinan did not select the sites for his kulliyes randomly. Their locations in the urban space were selected intentionally. The factors considered by Sinan take an important role in making decision for locations.

In general, Sinan preferred hills and sloped lands, coasts, regions with intensive urban fabric and the peripheries of the city for his kulliyes. He considered the following factors in selection of sites for positioning and maintaining their position in the city:

2.1. The needs of the regions in the city and the reasons related to functions

The idea that there should be a religious building and also public buildings in each quarter has always been effective in selecting the locations of the kulliyes (before and after Sinan). However, if a kulliyeh can provide the educational and social services needed by a definite region of the city, then there is no need for any other one in this region. In regions with small kulliyes, since the number of their functions is not enough, forming a group can be under consideration in order that a group of small kulliyes acts as a large kulliyeh as a whole.

When the entire city is considered, it can be seen that such kulliyes do not become intensive in a definite region of the city as fulfilling the needs of especially the residential zones, but are located from end to end equally. The employers of the kulliyes paid attention to locate them with some distance from each other, so they did not provide more services to a definite region and compete with each other, while neglecting other regions. The kulliyes were located as providing the services to all regions of the city equally [2].

The Ottoman architect directed to new locations for his complexes when all the lands in the city center were full and

no such buildings were required anymore. Especially the kulliyes during the late period were built in newly developed regions in the city because the lands in the city center became full and the city grew towards the periphery.

The needs of the region are related to the services provided by the kulliyeh. Therefore the quality of the services is another issue, which will be considered when siting the buildings of the complex. Since the site selection interacts with some issues such as the arrangement and organization of spaces, the decisions related to the functions of the buildings should be evaluated by considering the characteristics of the site.

Since the religious function—mosque—is the first of the absolute functions of the complex; it has the priority in many issues in design. The kulliyeh should be located in such an area that while the mosque is away from the daily life, it is visible by everyone [2].

The decisions related to the other functions are also effective in site selection. Süleymaniye kulliyeh, for example, is a complex, which stood out with the educational services in addition to the religious services and had the quality of a university campus, cultural and scientific center for the city and its residents at those times. Therefore, it can be thought that constructing the kulliyeh in city center but as visible from outside the city center may be a good choice in order to ensure that it undertakes such mission.

Since a kulliyeh is a building complex that provides social services to the region it is located, it has also an important role in this regard. The kulliyes located in residential zones had a role of core that united the vicinity and the residents living around them in addition to serving them with its functional buildings. The kulliyes located in commercial zones undertook important roles for these regions, even if their number was very limited. The objective of such kulliyes is to provide services to marine traffic and the caravans on the highway of commerce. Therefore, the functional regions of the city as well as the functions of the kulliyes influenced the site selection.

2.2. Geographical and topographical structure of the city

Although the topography and water were used differently in each Ottoman capital, they had important role in city landscape and arrangement of the kulliyes. In Istanbul, sea and topography are very important factors for location of the kulliyes, since the city was established near the sea and on hills and the inclined lands.

Since the topography of the city consists of inclined lands, it provided some opportunities to the Ottoman architect. The architect forms a platform on the altitude of the slope and obtains chance to use space under this platform. Therefore, this space could be used for some services of the complex. Sinan, for example, used the space constructed under platform for the shops in Süleymaniye kulliyeh [2].

On the other hand, if there is no elevation in the lands, the Ottoman architect prefers the seaside for location of his

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