

Residences: Odas and Hanes

Although the Ottoman Empire was an agrarian empire, village societies have rarely been the subjects, as opposed to the objects, of historical investigation. An analysis of housing in Hebron's villages is therefore valuable for what it reveals about rural social structures and about economic stratification within and between rural settlements in a single district.

There were 3,687 residential structures recorded in the Hebron-district villages in 1876. These were categorized as either *odas* (اوطه, Tr., lit., room) or *hanes* (خانه, Tr., house, household, building). Also recorded in most villages was the number of *musaqqafāt* (مسقفات, Tr., lit., buildings, house-property).¹⁸⁴ The Turkish term *musaqqafāt* comes from the Arabic root, *s-q-f*. A *saqf* (pl., *suqūf*) in Arabic is a “ceiling” or a “roof”. This category likely indicated the number of rooms in a single residence, at least those rooms used for living/sleeping. Most residences had between one and three *musaqqafāt*. There were also residences in the Hebron district with four, five, and even seven *musaqqafāt*.

There is considerable overlap in recorded value and size between the categories of *oda* and *hane*. In fact, the extent of this overlap is so great that the distinguishing characteristics of an *oda* as opposed to a *hane* cannot be determined with any certainty. These two Ottoman-Turkish words did not figure among the Turkish lexicon that was absorbed into the local vocabulary. We never find *oda* and *hane* used in Hebron's sharia

¹⁸⁴ Şemseddin Sami, 420 and Redhouse, 828.