

Vernacular architecture in the villages of the 19th century contains certain building values, traditional construction, spatial shaping of the village houses, house models, interior decoration, expressed through the application of a specific local builder's style. Particularly important is the form of traditional buildings that are part of the Balkan and Mediterranean tradition of building. The cultural and anthropological treatment of the space was clearly expressed through all of the life processes, the birth, the family celebrations, the weddings, the every day life, the religious holidays and death. Preserving certain rite actions connected with all the elements in the space, the man expressed his respect to the dwelling, the space and the construction.

Village house

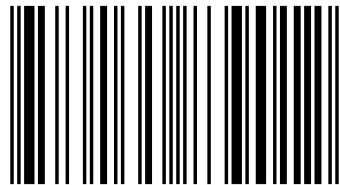


Petar Namicev

# Vernacular architecture in Macedonia- village house

Traditional architecture

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Vernacular architecture in Macedonia- village house  
from 19<sup>th</sup> century

2018

## **Introduction**

The cultural and anthropological treatment of the space was clearly expressed through all of the life processes, the birth, the family celebrations, the weddings, the every day life, the religious holidays and death. Preserving certain rite actions connected with all the elements in the space, the man expressed his respect to the dwelling, the space and the construction. The aim of this work is to show the evolutional development of the dwellings in certain historic, cultural, economic and social conditions and processes, to determine the typology of the mostly built houses, but also to take into consideration the cultural and anthropological aspect of the living space which was formed due to the customs and the believes connected to the house. In that sense for the basis for defining of the dwelling and its space we used the rite actions which were being done during the construction process of the dwelling, the work of the construction guilds, the used materials and the construction technology which determine the man's life space in certain boundaries. These elements are seen and presented in a context of the used methods for determination of the typology and the cultural and anthropological treatment of the dwelling space.

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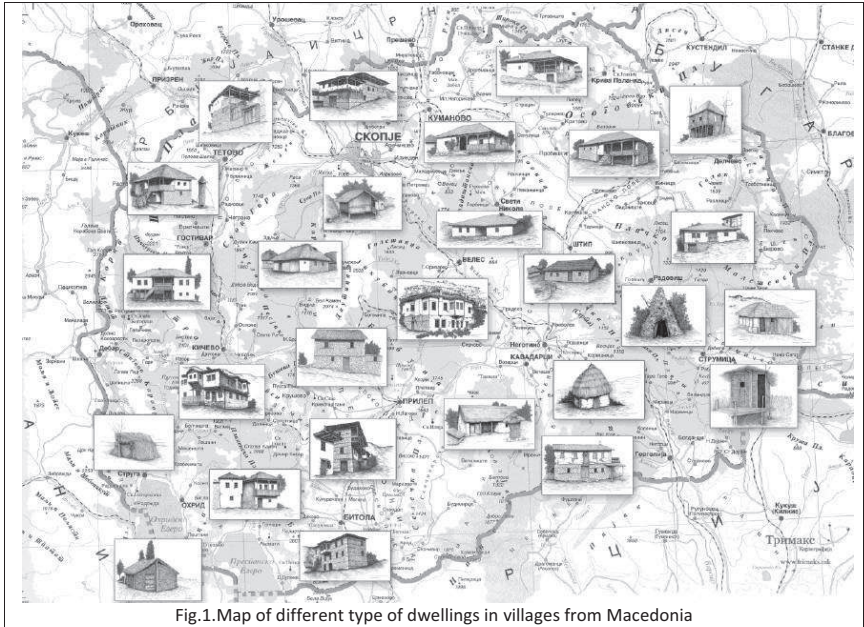


Fig.1. Map of different type of dwellings in villages from Macedonia

## Introduction

**T**raditional architecture composes important part of the Macedonian cultural heritage, particularly the one from the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the position in the central part of the Balkans Macedonia was subject to various cultural influences, which brought about emergence of great number of diverse typological solutions of houses. In that sense, dwellings can be considered a special field of Macedonian ethnology, as regards their function, structure and meaning in the material, social and spiritual culture. Researches have followed the development of Macedonian vernacular houses from the earliest dwellings, their transformation regarding both the structural aspect, and their cultural-anthropological treatment. Several conclusions can be drawn concerning the genesis, typology, ethnology and terminology.

The evolution of dwellings can be traced on the grounds of architecture discovered in archaeological excavations, as well as through buildings from the Byzantine and medieval period. Data have also been preserved in the writings of travel-writers, but they refer to the time from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, whereas hardly any material evidence has come down to us. There is scanty evidence on the earliest habitations of Slavs in these areas, which were built by themselves on the grounds of their own construction experience and the accomplishments from the culture of living of the Old Balkan population. Very few structures have been preserved from the Byzantine dwelling architecture. Slavs adopted the existing houses as achievements of the already formed construction culture of houses mostly built of wood, similar to the present day wooden structures. The first houses within South Slavs represented a place for keeping the fire as a symbol of life and a sacred place, as well as a space for stockbreeding.

Thatched houses were built of rods and sticks, coated with clay. In discussing the genesis of vernacular house a point should be made to the evolution of two parallel cultural and historic forms of dwellings, starting with their basic form to developed architectural structure. This phenomenon has been observed even in the recent field researches. In exploring the reasons for existence of two parallel cultural manifestations in this domain, it could be inferred that they are due to the very slow, even imperceptible changes in every sphere of life of Macedonian people during the Turkish rule throughout a very long period of over five centuries.

During the Turkish rule the influence of the Islamic culture was more apparent in towns, whereas in villages the traditional life style and the native construction culture were preserved, due to the slow economic development. The highly conservative Turkish establishment was one of the reasons for preservation of traditional features of the Macedonian village community. This observation shows that the status of Macedonian peasants did not change significantly. The extremely long continuation of these circumstances in the community has consequently been reflected in the appearance of the vernacular house and subsidiary structures to such an extent that they have become living archaeology of the genesis of the vernacular architecture.

Nevertheless, it should not be expected that any community could have endured without any change for a period of over five centuries. Analyzing attentively a great number of architectural structures, we could infer that changes did occur, despite the very slow progress of processes.

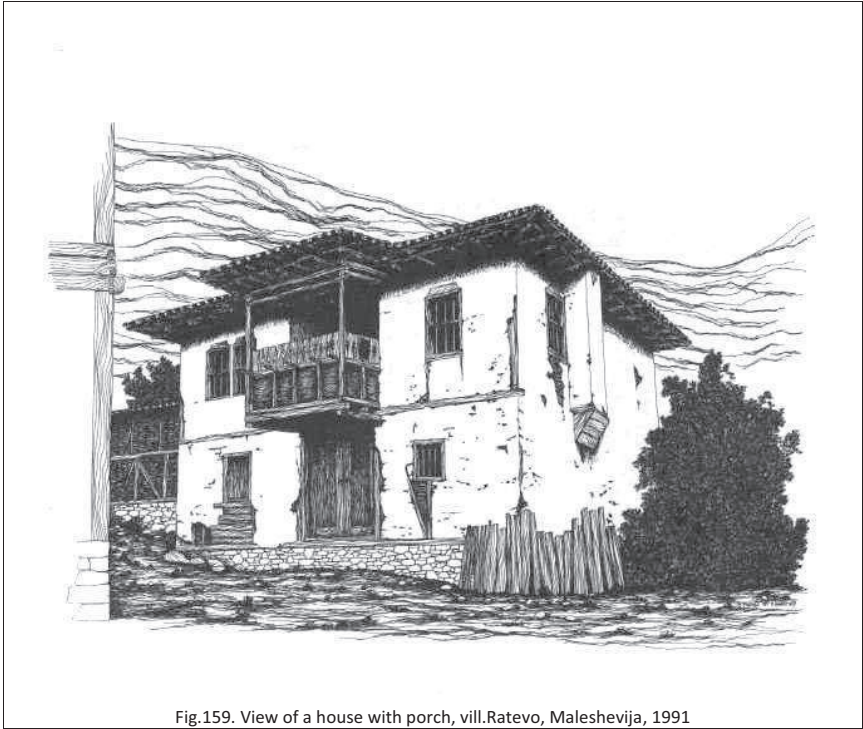


Fig.159. View of a house with porch, vill.Ratevo, Malesheviya, 1991

Vernacular architecture as form of folklore arising from the needs of man and having been constructed to satisfy those needs has endured for a long period of time up to the beginning of the 20th century, when the influence of town house forms became more intense. In the development of vernacular house its form and household utilities were being transferred from generation to generation through the experience, which resulted in creation of original, though simple form with highly expressed function. Sudden changes of form would bring about objects comprising new elements of not so pure design, function and structure. This was the reason why most of the traditional heritage was actually collective popular creation, in which, beside the artisans who had significant share in it, there were peasants who had the talent to modify certain objects and adjust them to their needs and concepts. This was the way of designating the folklore forms and features distinctive of a specific ethnic region as a variety in the common traditional creation.

Dwelling was a designed and fenced space where all daily activities and rituals were performed, where all objects embodied certain characteristics of traditional life in the domains of material and spiritual culture.

In the traditional construction native architects used to build houses without a designed plan or project, relying merely on their own experience of construction masters and craftsmen, yet, paying respect to the needs of a family and the local tradition in this sphere. Additional

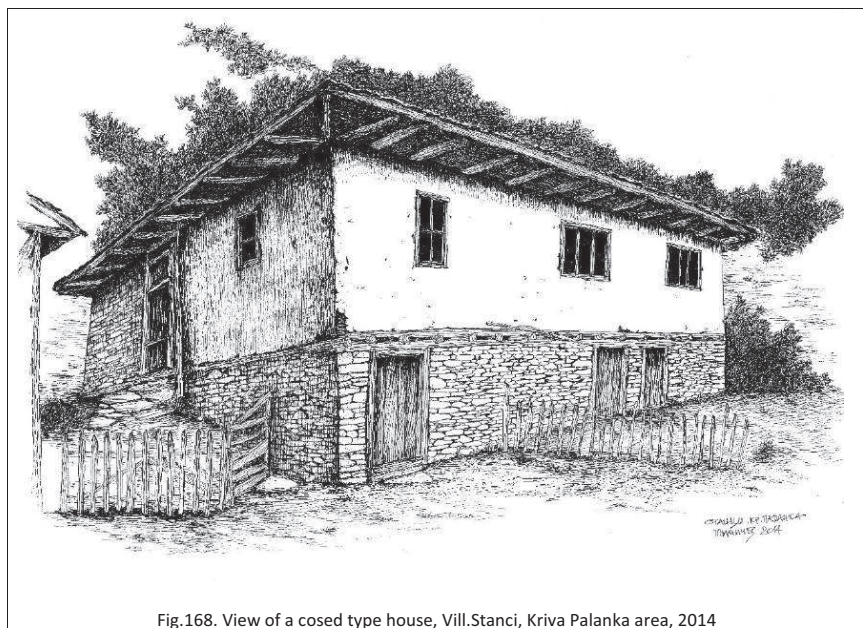


Fig.168. View of a cosed type house, Vill.Stanci, Kriva Palanka area, 2014

Besides the constituted characteristic types of houses among which the dominated ones are the ground floor houses, houses with floor, brotherly houses and tower houses, which developed in the framework of certain social and economic conditions and in certain ethnocultural context, a special place is given to the work of the local constructors and their memories for the architecture and the construction. We should also take into consideration the cultural and anthropological aspect of the living space which was created according to the customs and the believes, the respect and the meaning of the life space.

The Macedonian village house could be defined as an authentic value in the Macedonian popular work in specific cultural and historic conditions and social structure of the Macedonian village in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. At same time the Macedonian village house followed through the all phases of its technical, social and spiritual development is a perception of the space, the craftsman's skills, the human ambience of the interior and the exterior, the ecological and ergo logical values.