

URBAN INFLUENCES IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF RURAL DWELLINGS IN SOUTHERN MUNTENIA AND OLTENIA IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

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Abstract: The article aims to capture a stage in the evolution of residential architecture in the lowland villages in the south of the country, identified during field research, which illustrates changes in the architecture of some dwellings and in the organization of rural households built in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. The changes are due to the influence of the urban architecture of provincial towns, the emergence of new buildings in rural settlements, owned by institutions (town halls, credit unions, headquarters of postal agencies), and the diversification of the activities carried out in homes and households in plain villages, especially due to the development of trade (shops, groceries), of crafting activities (furriers, tailors), and of services (notaries, barbers). The examples preserved *in situ* that were identified in the villages under research were synthesized into a series of building categories that illustrate this phenomenon. The article follows, in addition to the presentation of urban influences on the architecture of rural homes, the changes they brought to the traditional household in terms of location of facilities on the plot of land and the relation between the main building of the household (the house) and the public space.

Rezumat: Articolul își propune să surprindă o etapă în evoluția arhitecturii rezidențiale din satele de câmpie din sudul țării, identificată în cercetarea de teren, ce ilustrează schimbări în arhitectura unor locuințe și în organizarea unor gospodării rurale construite la sfârșitul sec. XIX și începutul sec. XX. Acestea sunt datorate influenței arhitecturii locuințelor urbane din târgurile de provincie, apariției unor construcții noi în așezările rurale, ce aparțin unor instituții (primării, bănci populare, sedii ale agențiilor poștale) și diversificării activităților desfășurate în spațiul locuinței și al gospodăriei din satele de câmpie, în special prin apariția comerțului (prăvălii, băcăni), a practicării unor meșteșuguri (cojocari, croitori) și a serviciilor (notari, frizeri). Exemplele păstrate *in situ* care au fost identificate în satele din Câmpia Română au fost sintetizate într-o serie de categorii de construcții ce ilustrează acest fenomen. Articolul urmărește, pe lângă prezentarea influențelor urbane asupra arhitecturii locuințelor rurale, modificările pe care acestea le-au adus în gospodăria tradițională în amplasarea construcțiilor pe lot și relația clădirii principale a ansamblului gospodăriei (locuința) cu spațiul public.

Rural architecture in the villages of the Romanian Plain (*Câmpia Română*) has been the subject of sporadic research. In the most important study dedicated to folk architecture in the lowland area of southern Muntenia,¹ developed in the mid-20th century, the co-authors, a team of architects and ethnologists noted: “Although the Bucharest region² is very frequented – which would imply a satisfactory level of knowledge about it – it seems, however, that it is very little appreciated and depicted in literary, folkloristic and ethnographic writings, and in artistic representations. Observed more closely, the Bucharest region has artistic values worthy of consideration.”³

Taking into account the whole of civil architecture, urban or rural, as well as the concern for the preservation of historical monuments or the adoption of some models to define a national architectural style, architect Constantin Joja and ethnologist Paul Petrescu noted that the situation can be explained by the existence of a prejudice that had persisted for several decades in the Romanian art historiography dedicated to the field of architecture, according to which Romanian civil architecture did not represent a study area worthy of consideration: “The almost total neglect of these vast fields of architecture has naturally led to the limitation of the concerns of art historiography to the investigation of monuments of religious art only, also by excluding some of the most interesting monuments of this kind, those built of wood.”⁴

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** The photographs whose author is not mentioned have been taken by the author of the article.

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¹ Stănculescu *et alii* 1958.

² The Bucharest region, according to the administrative division of 1952-1960, roughly included the territory of the current counties of Teleorman, Giurgiu, Ilfov, Ialomița, and Călărași.

³ Stănculescu *et alii* 1958, p. 6.

⁴ Joja, Petrescu 1968, p. 69.