

**aORESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AS CULTURAL HERITAGE IN KOSOVA
DURING XIX AND XX CENTURIES**

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Abstract

Residential architecture has an important place in the cultural heritage of Kosova since it makes possible to understand the way of life of the people, historical and architectural value of the building and the tradition of our masters work. In the 19th and 20th century houses were build with chimney fire and had begun buildings of houses with porch or garett. These buildings were usually in the ground but there were times when the floor and half floor. Architectural heritage in the field of population along with the major values of its essential features is also well known for its connection of buildings with land. The distinguishing characteristics of housing in Kosova are closely linked with the fate of an occupied population, persecuted and killed for many centuries. The need to be protected from the enemies motivated the Kosova Albanians to build fortified dwellings. In Albanian rural and urban apartments draw attention the signs and symbols made with carving in wood and stone carvings on the door where it shows a fireside in the chimney. Hearth is associated with the cult of ancestors and with fire. Furthermore, these motifs are divided into two groups: with local roots and motives of foreign origin. We are grafting and motives of ancient local tradition but foreign influences. Researches show that we can distinguish some types of buildings housing facilities. This paper aims to provide some information about the type of housing facilities, the fortified house (kulla), rural housing and urban dwellings houses belonging to 19-20 century.

Keywords: *cultural of residence, cultural heritage, types of buildings housing.*

1. Rural dwellings in Kosovo

The architecture of rural dwellings, takes an important place in the cultural heritage of Kosovo. Through its study we can be informed for the way of people's life, historical and architectural values of the Popular architecture is born under certain conditions, which faithfully reflects the culture of residence. It was developed and built with circumstantial materials, in accordance with climatic and terrain conditions, and the tradition of our masters work.¹

In Albanian villages when they start the building of facilities, after the opening of foundations, have sacrificed a scapegoat. Its shortened head, and filled with cereals was put into the foundations.² This phenomenon was widespread in the whole Albanian territory, including Kosovo and beyond.

Our architectural heritage in the field of popular constructions in the countryside, and in the city, along with the major values with its essential features is also known for constructions.³ However, economic development as important human factor plays an important role in the protection of cultural heritage values, although social differentiation is present in the development of a society, too.⁴

In popular architecture in addition to socio-economic factors, an important role play her climatic conditions and materials construction.⁵ Rural architecture in some parts of Kosovo differs from ways in their accordance with environment. Rural flats in Kosovo according to its architectonic role is presented to us with elements of open type and closed type. Type of opened flat consists from a number of other supporting facilities that enrich the environment and were utilized rationally by adapting terrain. In Kosovo residential homes by the method of construction that is applied in the past, we can know that were applied two styles of construction: construction of wall with stones and wood battens (çatma). The architectural style with stones is more prevalent in the area of villages of Rrafshi i Dukagjinit, whereas with wood battens (çatma) are more prevalent in area of Fusha e Kosovës.⁶

The distinctive characteristics of rural apartment in Kosovo are closely linked with fate of its people, that was occupied, persecuted, and killed for centuries. By the need to protect themselves Kosovo Albanians built fortified dwellings. This type of house is present in almost all the geographical area of Kosovo and beyond, but in some areas with a significantly smaller number and smaller volume size. Open rural houses consist by a special group of objects with different functions in a courtyard surrounded by wall or Avli (wicker wood). This complex of

¹ Pirro Thomo, "Mjeshtrit dhe arkitektura popullore", Banesa shqiptare në Shqipërinë e veriut, Tiranë, 1976, pp. 143

² Ali Muka, "Vepra të mjeshtërive tanë", Mbi karakterin e banesës popullore në fshatin Romajë (Prizren), Tiranë, 1983, pp. 21

³ Emin Riza, "Vepra të mjeshtërive tanë", Lidhja e ndërtimeve popullore me truallin, Tiranë, 1983, pp. 3

⁴ Emin Riza, Ligjeratë e cituar.

⁵ Faruk Zarshati, "Vepra të mjeshtërive tanë", Tiranë 1983, pp. 98

⁶ Zoran Petroviq, "Shtëpia dhe vatrat nëpër fshatrat e Kosovës dhe metohisë", Glasnik Muzeja, Kosova i Metohija, Prishtinë, 1962, pp. 370-381

buildings is divided into residential apartments and other ancillary facilities. Residential homes of people consisted in these parts: the fire house, the house of friends- ODA (chamber), and bedrooms.



Yard fence in village Lladoc (Podujeva)



Yard fence in village Hertica (Podujeva)

In auxiliary facilities are these parts: granary, pantry (çarraniku), place where kept dairy products), stables, and hutch. By the method of production and materials were constructed mainly from materials, as: stone, wood and mud. Foundations were made by stone primarily associated with clay mortar, and wooden parts filled with clay mortar. Roofs were made by straw, fern, stone plates, and traditional tiles.



Granary in Grashtica village in XIX century (Prishtina)



Playpen in Hogosh in 1929 (Dardana)

Architectonic objects of rural apartments from earlier periods, respectively XV, XVI and XVII centuries, have not remained. However it should be noted that subsequent constructions, made by local masters have followed compositional schemes of previous constructions.⁷ In the XIX and XX centuries, houses were constructed with chimney fire, and had begun to spread construction style of rural houses with verandah (Çardak).

⁷ Fejz Drancolli, "Rrënimi i kullës shqiptare", Prishtinë, 2004, pp. 59



House in Keqekolla village in XIX century (Prishtina)



House in Krileva village in XIX century (Dardana)

Supposed that the chimney in the room, and in the house started to be used in these parts of Kosovo after arrivals of Albanian Muhaxhirs from Sandžak of Nish. Albanians from Sandžak of Nish have had chambers, as special rooms, where men slept and expected guests. Later the Chamber took place more and now consisted not only from a room. As innovation they brought painting of homes with lime.⁸ I think that chimney is used before the Muhaxhirs arrival, but probably in smaller scale, much more in villages than in cities of Kosovo.

Residential rooms have had composition and characteristic devices. In the corners of rooms for couples was hammam.⁹ In the fire room in front walls was chimney, nearby was the place for preparing bread (magjeja), sideways on the walls were cupboards for holding various dishes. In most cases in a corner of fire house, was the pits for storage of potatoes from low temperatures. Fire houses (living rooms) have had usually more space larger than other rooms. In the middle of the house was timber handler (made by oak wood) and in many cases decorated with various ornaments. These buildings were usually in ground floor, but there were occasions when the floor had another half additional floor. In the ground floor were kept cattle's, and over stable were bedrooms.

Coexistence of rural characteristics with urban features is actually known in all Albanian territories, when during the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, rural residence had affected urban residence.¹⁰ Relations between rural and urban flat, should be viewed primarily related to borrowings, with direction and density, that undoubtedly are like reflection of relations between the rural-urban society, from formations of society with layer that represents contradictions and differences of economic nature.¹¹ In rural architecture we can distinguish some types of buildings housing facilities:

- Residential building of timber type;
- Chamber of men;
- Residential building with garret;
- Residential building with portico (balcony);
- Towers as fortified residences.

These types of apartments belonging to the eighteenth, and mainly nineteenth century.¹² Rural dwelling with a scullery, used in various villages until today, has always represented the characteristic

⁸ Sabit Uka, "Jeta dhe veprimtaria e Sanxhakut të Nishit", Prishtinë, 2004, pp. 228-229.

⁹ Hammams - were bathrooms made mainly in the corner of bedrooms, which were used for doing shower.

¹⁰ Pirro Thomo, "Tradita e ndërtimeve në Shqipëri", Tiranë, 1981, pp. 17.

¹¹ Emin Riza, "Pasuri e trashëguar në shekuj", Banesa fshatare me një kthinë, Tiranë, 1984, pp. 55 – 89.

¹² Fejaz Drançolli, "Kulla Shqiptare", Prishtinë, 2001, pp. 26-27.

building of small family with a crown and a poor rural economy. These apartments have been built in the 1st floor or ground floor. In many areas this type of apartment called the fire house or home of bread.¹³ These flats have square and rectangular layout. In this type of house that used as fire house is always fire ignitions. In old apartment, between the facility is located a hearth. In these cases the fire hearth was without chimney, and smoke went out through wood horizontal wood connection (hatulla). Placing of hearth in the middle of the building shows a legacy of ancient tradition for construction. Floors of these houses were made in that way to share spaces between scullery, by dividing it in two parts. In this case the space was divided for staying and for sleeping. The front divided part, was covered with straw or dried fern, and over them tapestry¹⁴, jana,¹⁵ handmade wool carpets, mop leather from small animals. Usually floor was paved, and was on the wall opposite the entrance door. The rest was divided close to the door, and was paved with mud mortar. Ceilings usually were made with beams over them, floor was made by planks, and painted with mud mortar.

In many parts of the territory of Kosovo, object with a carrel was the chamber for men, which usually was built near the main door of the courtyard. Apartments built with circumstantial material in floor half or floor, were built in the second half of the 18th century to the 20th century.

Architectural treatment of sights and composition of elements buildings in apartments were well combined and used. On the first floor were located the cattle while in the second floor was chamber of the men, and place for cooking.¹⁶ In Albanian apartments are present the characteristic signs and symbolic motifs, made by engraving in stone, in door, or in chimney. Hearth is associated with the cult of ancestors, with fire. These motifs are usually displayed with a snake, one or two human hands, vessels for coffee, guns, human faces, different items of family life, plants, flowers, working tools, celestial bodies, animals, birds, and signs for cult symbols. These motifs are divided into two groups: with local origin, and foreign origin. We have motives that originate from ancient local traditions but with foreign influences.¹⁷



Cult symbols in Keqekolla village (Prishtina)



Cult symbols in Lladoc (Podujeva)

2. Urban houses (residential houses)

¹³ Koco Zheku, "Pasuria e trashëguar në shekuj", Banesa fshatare me një kthinë, Tiranë, 1984, pp.55

¹⁴ Tapestries and carpets were handmade by wool of sheep.

¹⁵ Jana or janat were as carpets, handmade by wool of sheep.

¹⁶ Leonard Suli, "Pasuria e trashëguar me shekuj", Banesa e vjetër fshatare e zonës së Vurgut, Tiranë 1984, pp. 128 - 129.

¹⁷ Mark Tirta, "Pasuri e trashëguar me shekuj", Mbi prejardhjen e disa motiveve në gurëgdhendje në shtëpitë fshatare shqiptare, Tiranë 1984, pp. 64-65.

The urban apartment in the territory of today's Kosovo, of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is the totality of all apartments built around the cities of Kosovo's territory in the mentioned period, regardless of the requesters, builders, types, and architectural and technical values.¹⁸ Studies of this type of dwelling in Kosovo were done mainly by Serbian researchers, who have created technical documentation, which has information about recognizing of volumetric composition, and fundamental component of the apartment.¹⁹ These documents completed during 1955-56 have the advantage, because in those years these apartments were preserved in good technical condition and do not have undergone profound changes.²⁰ It is understood that at this period was the demolition phase for complexes and old bazaars in all the cities of Kosovo, but a number of these houses survived and were taken to defend by law.

This type of apartment until recently has been preserved quite well in the town of Gjakova, less in Prishtina, Peja, Vushtria, Mitrovica, Gjilani, Janjeva etc. Holders (the owners) of these houses were mostly Albanians because Serbs have not lived in the cities during the XVIII – XIX centuries, this is confirmed by the Serbian academic researcher, Branislav Kojiq. Given that in Kosovo has not been placement of Turkish settlers, may affirm the permanent presence of the Kosovo Albanian towns.²¹

Branislav Kojiq in 1931 showed an interest for the study of urban dwellings in Kosovo, and this architectural heritage was named "Profane Architecture of Balkan." Emin Riza and Njazi Haliti believed and understood that Kojiq was forced to bypass Albanian heritage in this area. Author Kojiq also was not disconnected from traditional concepts of dwellings that, as part of folk architecture, should were necessarily linked to the sources of creatures. According to him, old civic architecture in Kosovo was the same with profane buildings in the Balkans and in the west of Asia Minor, which was embezzled and distributed by the Turks, being Greek-Byzantine creation. These hypotheses were laid in 1968, when there were still no systematic studies on these Balkan countries for these issues, with the exception of several treatises. Example of Kojiq unfortunately contains distorted attitudes, and was not the only that claimed that Serb population is indigenous from ancient times.²²



Urban home XIX century (Prishtina)



Urban home XIX century (Gjakova)

¹⁸ Emin Riza & Njazi Haliti, "Banesa qytetare e shek.XVIII – XIX, Prishtinë 2006, pp. 57.

¹⁹ Ibid. pp.58.

²⁰ Ibid. pp.59.

²¹ Emin Riza & Njazi Haliti, "Banesa qytetare kosovare e shek. XVIII – XIX, Prishtinë 2006, pp.61.

²² Ibid. pp.62-63.

Gjorgje Petroviq had treated opened environments of apartments, porch in the ground floor and the garret in the floors, arguing that this type of residence was known before the arrival of the Ottomans in the Balkans. This author claims that Albanians have arrived in Kosovo about three centuries before, and that supposedly have brought type of closed house with divanhane, claiming that in the cities of Kosovo lived mainly Turks, and allegedly that house with garret has oriental features, while houses with terrace were connected with the land of Serbia.²³

Nikolajeviq in his book "Severna stara Serbia" when did distinction between Serb and Albanian houses, writes that Albanian houses are not decorated, are built of stone and also covered with stone plates, while Serb houses were arranged and constructed by wood, bricks of immature (qerpiq) and covered with straw. Also has writing that rural homes in the area between the river Ibar and Lim are as in Bosnia and in generally constructed by wood.²⁴ From this conclusion we understand that the Albanians are carriers of the tradition of building with stone fortifications, which prove elements of autochthony in geographic areas of Balkans.

Slobodan Nenadoviq in an article he treated apartments in the town of Prizren, according to which values heritage in Kosovo apartment have fulfilled three main principles of architecture, function, construction and esthetics. Is of interest his claim that Albanians built in the same style with the Turkish apartments. Ranko Findik has written two articles for urban homes in cities of Vushtrria and Janjeva during 1955/56.²⁵

Albanian citizen homes, during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have maintained an extensive inventory of household items as: clothes, footwear, for sleeping, for kitchen, various ornaments, filigran items, weapons, embroidered fabrics etc.²⁶ With the First World War has been noticed that is done unbraiding, and complete destruction of the guilds.²⁷

In Turkey as researcher of dwellings in the Balkans is remarkable Selda Eldem with his work named "Plan of Turkish Houses". His assertion that the Turkish houses have replaced other types of existing homes in the Balkans since the century XV, XVI, expresses the idea of importing apartment style. Emin Riza and Halit Niyazi, point out that the author has expressed his idea without having knowledge about construction before the arrival of the Turks in the Balkans, knowing that in that time the Turks lived in tents.²⁸ From today's Turkish scholars is known Reha Günay, and according to him "Turkish Apartments can be defined as types of dwellings in which the Turks have lived throughout history." In his studies he mentions the men's chamber, where the origin of this type of houses has placed in Central Asia, seeking connection with Megaron apartment and even with Turkish tent.

Among the authors of Kosovo Albanian for major contribution to the study of apartment's types are distinguished: Mark Krasniqi, Fejaz Drançolli, Flamur Doli, Nijazi Haliti, etc. In Albania, contribution to the study of dwellings of Kosovo Albanians have given: Mark Krasniqi, Pirro Thomon, which supports the thesis that the tower is continuation of the apartment with verandah. This thesis was supported by Ali Muka too, who thinks that tower as stone flat was predecessor of the house with verandah. In traditional Albanian houses was tradition

²³ Ibid. pp.63.

²⁴ Mill. J. Nikolajeviq, "Severna Stara Serbija" Vojno geografska i istorija studija, Beograd, 1892, pp.102

²⁵ Ibid. pp.64.

²⁶ Mithat Dibra & Shaban Bilali, "Shoqata e artizanateve prodhues Shqiptarë", Tiranë 2001, pp.11

²⁷ Ibid. pp.11.

²⁸ Ibid. pp.65.

engraving of popular ornaments in stone and wood, protective popular ornaments of the house such as: motifs as sun cult, serpent cult, cult of women breasts, etc. who were transferred until nowadays, as pagan faith tradition, and are encountered in Vermica village.²⁹

3. Kullat

In architectural construction of towers as existential residential apartments of Albanians in ethnical territories and in Kosovo, during the eighteenth century until 1912 have affected many factors, which mainly depend on the circumstances of social, political and economic of different historical periods.³⁰

In construction of towers also has had an impact tradition of construction from dibran craftsmen, especially the locals, who had knowledge for heritage of system of fortifications, defensive towers and towers as apartments.³¹ Towers have quadrilateral planimetry with technical construction with turret protectingly, latch as security element, roof with four parts of water drainage etc. Craftsmen have used and the architectural elements of that time, and distinguished with an older version of the tower as dwelling, such as: towers with wooden of mattress, or gallery realized in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³² Tower as Albanian apartment appears as a particular type of material culture that was built by Albanians in the village or in the city.³³

The towers were built in two, three and rarely in four floors. On the ground floor was cot for animals, on the floor over cot was fire house and cellars that were used by family members, while the top floor was the chamber for men and guests. League of floors was made by large internal and external stairs. The men's chamber has played the role of popular institution with historical, political, social, economic, educational, cultural, legal importance etc.³⁴



Complex of towers in Dranoc village (Deçan)



Tower in Kqiq village (Mitrovica)

²⁹ Flamur Doli, "Mitologjia Shqiptare ne arkitekturen popullore", Gazeta "Lajmi", Prishtinë, 26 janar 2008

³⁰ Fejaz Drancolli, "Rrënimi i kulles shqiptare", Prishtine 2004, pp.66.

³¹ Ibid. pp.67.

³² Ibid. pp.68.

³³ Fejaz Drancolli, "Rrenimi i kulles shqiptare, Prishtine, 2004, pp.73.

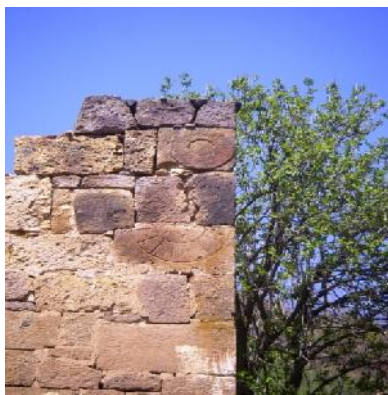
³⁴ Fejaz Drancolli, "Rrenimi i kulles shqiptare, Prishtine, 2004, pp.57.

Lighting for towers was made through the windows, where each room has a window. In the second floor the windows are slightly larger. The chamber for men illuminated by two or more windows.³⁵ In the main sights of the tower such as: entrance door, chimneys, windows, have different decorations in stone with various motifs of flora and fauna, cult symbols, and geometric ornaments. Decorations in wood were presented from chapitel of column in ground floor and up to men's chamber. Especially were decorated the ceilings with rosettes, doors, cupboards shelves etc.³⁶ The roof was covered with tiles or traditional tiles (qeremide). Each vertex except the chimney has baxhën from which light penetrates in ceiling, but also serves for replacing the tiles (qeremide).³⁷

For extension of towers in the territory of Kosovo and its study were received some Albanian scholars, and foreigner. More detailed studies has made Prof. Dr. Fejaz Drançolli, which with his works "The Albanian Tower" published in 2001 and "The Collapse of Albanian tower" published in 2004, concluded of lack in study of Albanian tower in Rrafshi i Dukagjinit. It should be noted that in Drenica had many towers, the tower of Isa Boletin in Boletin village. In Janjevo a tower still exists.

Author Tatomir Vukanoviq in his book "Drenica", mentioned Albanian towers in this region, which represents a transitional form between Albanian towers of Dukagjin and Kosovo. These transitional forms mainly are related to size, surface, beauty and values, and in in the foreground between the towers are mentioned towers in Dukagjin. In Drenica towers were built with baked brick or by stones. The most beautiful towers are in village Polluzhë, there exist towers with three floors. In Bajica village, in the region of Upper Drenica, exist a tower who has a clock with indicators.³⁸

In the area of Kosovo, towers are very rare now, but in the past have existed in a larger number.³⁹ In Shala Mountains are also recognized three towers in the villages: Karaqë, Breglum(Nadakoc), Kullë (Kollë) etc.⁴⁰ In village Gumnishta of Shala e Bajgores are some ruins of burned towers from serbs during the war of 1998-99, and where in walls there were also sundial. In Hertica village are known four towers.⁴¹



³⁵ Ibid. pp.79.

³⁶ Ibid. pp.79.

³⁷ Ibid. pp.80.

³⁸ Tatomir Vukanoviq, "Drenica", Prishtine, 1998, pg.158

³⁹ Mark Krasniqi, "Gjurme dhe Gjurmime", Prishtine 1979,p.333

⁴⁰ Abdullah Mulaku, "Disa te dhena lidhur me lashtesine e Vuahtrrise me rrethine", Mitrovice, 2004, pg.89

⁴¹ Zeqir S. Muqolli, "Hertica-Monografi", Prishtinë, 2000, pg.196

The presence of the towers until nowadays found in the mountains of Gallap, Karadak and other territories where Albanians lived for centuries although some Albanian lands were burned several times during the twentieth century by the Serbian military and police forces. By making a general overview in study of residential buildings can be stated that the masters for construction for technical construction from Dibra, and local Albanians, were carriers for construction of residential buildings in the geographical area of Kosovo today.

4. Conclusion

Architecture as a part of our popular creativity which is covering material, social, spiritual and artistic creativity was born and consolidated through the centuries. Urban apartments are popular work created by masters out among the people who knew better life demands of different social layers.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century built homes have significant traces of life, culture, lifestyle, building style and history of apartment buildings in Kosova. We should emphasize that in general when it comes to Albanian urban apartments built in the nineteenth and twentieth century in Kosova the ordering, investor and builder were Albanian.

Albanian urban apartments were built by local craftsman and situational construction material and were unique with exceptions where we noted ornaments from Eastern culture influences which had not a strong influence to alienated Albanian apartment.

Urban housing built in Kosovo reflect evidence of Albanian cultural heritage, vitality of the people and civil society features along with the level of Balkan societies at that time. We can conclude that the construction of Towers in Kosova in this period was the result of an ancient building tradition reaching a high stage that resulted in the creation of a building with specific features within Albanian popular architecture.

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