

EDITORIAL

With the intention to investigate, research, expand the study of vernacular architecture from regional perspectives at a world-wide scale, this issue of the ISVS e-journal focuses on the Ottoman Vernacular architecture. Needless to say, Ottoman architecture, whether existing or already lost, defined the lands of the once great Ottoman Empire. Its lands covered vast geographies and within them, under different influences, its architecture developed and grew. Whether the Turkish-Ottoman house existed as a distinct type before the seventeenth century and imposed itself on the non-Turkish Balkan communities when they began to prosper, or whether the Ottoman house was the syncretic product of a multiethnic society from the seventeenth century onwards with the imperial court acting as a powerful catalyst is an open question. (Cerasi, 1998)

This issue however tries to add a wider perspective to this question and in a way bring forward some new investigations in order to tighten the scope of this wide-open subject. The issue attempts to acknowledge the importance of the Ottoman vernacular and its principles within the global frame of the vernacular presented through several latest research articles that offer different study views, aspects and approaches.

Murat Şahin and Ayşe Özbil in their article dedicated to the village of Ormana in the Taurus within southern Anatolia present the seamless synergy of the design principles between the constructive materials (stone and timber) in its rural dwellings. Their article attempts to understand the Ottoman/Turkish house through its architectural, spatial and social relationships that exist in the houses in Ormana Village. In their work, they present the architectural composition of the houses (materiality), numbering diverse spatial configurations and their variation in functional space developments within the houses. Their work is not strictly focused on typological organization and structural specifics of the houses and their architectural/structural character. Nevertheless, they introduce a new way of reading this vernacular offering a possibility to rethink and learn from the rural architecture, peculiar to Anatolia through this case study.

While the first article of this issue deals with rich existing quantity of material data, the next article, by Luca Orlandi, envisions the lost heritage of the vernacular architecture in Galata district of Istanbul that once existed in the Ottoman capital. The article presents the rich vernacular architecture of the Galata district by identifying it in depicted materials such as gravures, sketches and images from the past as well as travelers' itineraries. From these materials, the author goes into an analysis of the dwelling's constructive, spatial and decorative features. This article restores the outlook of this architecture, its style and its stylistic expressions seen in the amalgamation of the local Ottoman traditions of buildings combined with the other (Arabic) architectural and decorative elements all as a result of the multi-ethnic face of the settlement in which this vernacular style existed and once in the past, blossomed. The article tries to redefine some aspects of awareness related to the Ottoman heritage and the almost forgotten vernacular architecture of the Galata district in Istanbul and its relevance today. Presenting this case study, the author gives the vernacular architecture of Galata its well-deserved place among the vernacular styles of the Ottoman Empire and the vernacular of its capital.

Eleni Kanetaki and Georgios Antoniou present an interesting case study from a different geographic region of the Ottoman Empire. Their article takes us to the island of Crete and the town of Heraklio. The article focuses on an exceptional Ottoman mansion building constructed in Heraklio, Crete-Greece; The Bey Sekeria mansion, one of the very few remaining *konaks*. The article highlights the need for its restoration being a building that was listed by the Greek Ministry of Culture as "worthy to be preserved". The analysis of the construction methods and techniques of the structure are in detail presented throughout the work of these two scholars. The examples of urban mansions of that era embody a remarkable mixture of architectural expressions; local-vernacular and foreign. This house, even though built following the typical Ottoman practices, at a same time presents neoclassical forms traced along the facade as well as historical Venetian "memories". The detailed work that resulted with interesting findings is presented throughout the pages of this article. The mansion of Bey Sekeria presents the vernacular architecture of the Island of Crete and its immaculate amalgamation of multi ethnic influences in its architectural features, perfectly combined into one structure. Probably the last remaining structure

in the islands and the territory of today's Greece, this *konak* (mansion) emphasizes the importance of prevention of such structures. It is from here that invaluable data for future research and analysis of the vernacular at the foot of the 20th century can be extracted. By comparing and contrasting architectural and aesthetic features of these structures, the authors hope to bring awareness of the importance of this building and that their efforts will lead to its future reuse and safeguard its preservation.

The article of Kokan Grchev and Olgica Grcheva takes us to the further north borders of the Ottoman Rumelia, to the lands of Macedonia. Their article presents the vernacular and style relations presented through the architectural development of the Macedonian cities at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th Century. Following the historical styles in the Western European countries, they try to establish an analogy with the processes carried out in the areas of the Balkans and Macedonia. They present the way to structure the relation to the notion of style in architecture in Macedonia. In development of the Macedonian architecture at the beginning of the 19th century, through the process of implanting elements from different cultural environments, they present the evolution and adaptation of the vernacular into the new neoclassical architecture. Having in mind similar patterns that appear in different environments and cultures in the same period, they also acquire the corresponding specifics of an autochthonous and separated value category. In the European frameworks, as they say the examination of the historical styles during the period of the 19th century resulted in an increasing awareness of new adjustments to the new materials and the industrial time, which imposed completely new architectural ideas. However, the vernacular developments shown strong ability to adapt and transform towards different parameters of architectural program and themes. What in the Historicism of the 19th century western world remine as defined style, in the Balkan countries including Macedonia is marked with the Oriental context that remains in the domain of the rich vernacular typology

The last article by Velika Ivkowska, brings together an understanding of common types of vernacular architecture in the geographic areas of today's Macedonia, Kosovo and Greece, by comparing the architectural design, built material, and forms in to the so-called vernacular "skyscrapers", a typology of houses that appear in the above mentioned geographic areas. The article identifies similarities in both urban and rural vernacular dwellings dated from the end of XVIII century onwards in the house's vertical distribution of the space. The study report covers the area that disperses over the furthest West of what was once the Ottoman Rumelia. The paper, after defining the skyscraper typology house concludes that there is a similarity in the aesthetic, constructive, spatial and typological forms of vernacular architecture, related generally to the geographical area, the topography, the local natural environment, ethnic characteristics and traditional understanding of construction. However, in the article, besides the presented similarities related to the abovementioned factors, there is a remarkable outsourced architectural expression combined with the artistic expressions of the master builders as well as the social, economic and religious backgrounds of its inhabitants. In the article, the examples show an unbreakable link in the vernacular heritage in the researched region influenced by the styles of the great Ottoman Empire modified and adjusted to the area they were built on, the social status of its owners but most importantly, they help in the attempt of defining an architectural vernacular style that can be referred to as vernacular neoclassicism and vernacular baroque.

The lands of the once great Ottoman Empire are an enduring source of astonishing models and varieties of vernacular traditions and cultures, both urban and rural. The articles presented in this issue, covering different geographic areas of the Empire, show that these products were not just mere attempts of building a shelter, but multi-cultural landmarks, marking not just the area they are built in, but the whole Empire and its defined social, cultural and economic status. The multi layered Ottoman society and the combined traditions are mirrored and legible in these vernacular examples, immaculate amalgamations of various, rich influences seen both in the style as well as the architectural building techniques, having their own individuality and still standing strong among the examples of the vernacular styles of the world.

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