



## **Traditional Architecture in Romanian Philately (IV): the Households from Ieud, Jurilovca, Mastacăn, Moșeni and Năruja**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author BVC designed the study, performed the literature searches and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author ALP managed the analyses of the study. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The cultural heritage is not only represented by the historical architectural monuments, but also by the architecture of wooden churches or traditional houses. It must be seen as a valuable heritage that, through proper management, can become a source of community well-being. It is important to preserve traditional architecture. To be able to build or restore adapted to modern needs, and respect the local architectural specifics. In this context, the study tries to emphasize once again the beauty of traditional Romanian architecture. This time in terms of philately. We want to expose the architectural specifics from five areas – Ieud (Maramureș county), Jurilovca (Tulcea), Mastacăn (Neamț), Moșeni (Satu Mare) and Năruja (Vrancea). Using illustrated postcards, and other philatelic effects, scenes from the outside and inside of the households in question are presented. The results of the research itself, not numerous, can be reorganized in the form of thematic exhibitions. Such events can contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the area among tourists.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, when the need for authenticity is so great, the word "traditional" seems worn out and abused. The term is used everywhere, in increasingly ads and on more and more labels. It is increasingly difficult to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic [1]. If for food there is a fairly clear definition of what is and what is not traditional or bio-, in the case of architecture, things are not as clear and regulated. The countryside is full of self-proclaimed traditional guesthouses, but which have nothing to do with the local architecture.

However, what does it mean traditionally in architecture? An architect will say that the traditional one belongs to the vernacular architecture - that is, proper to the place [2]. It has been developed and passed down from generation to generation, which does not mean that it has not evolved. On the contrary, the traditional architecture has developed and refined, adapting to the times and needs [3], but permanently reflecting the environmental, cultural, technological, economic, and historical conditions of the local context [4,5].

Although the phrases of popular architecture, vernacular architecture, and traditional architecture are considered synonymous, there are differences in nuance between them. While popular architecture is created without the input of construction professionals, vernacular architecture can call on craftsmen who specialize in the construction process, but not architects. It is based on local techniques and materials [3]. Traditional architecture denotes, first of all, the mode of transmission, from generation to generation orally, but this is a valid feature in the case of the first two forms.

The traditional house and the household always agree with the occupations and the way of life of the inhabitants, but also with their economic possibilities [2]. The economic motivations that influence the architecture refer to the basic occupations of the inhabitants and to how they determine the configuration of the household. In fact, this aspect will be observed from the study of the households from leud (Maramureș county), Jurilovca (Tulcea), Mastacăn (Neamț), Moșișeni (Satu Mare) and Năruja (Vrancea).

The disposition of the house, the barn, and the other "acareturi" around the yard seem to be the result of a compositional-plastic intention, but it is dictated by the functional needs of the household.

A way to promote these principles, as well as the immovable cultural heritage, respectively, the sustainable development of the community, can be made by thematic philately [6,7]. Having as a starting point a series of studies undertaken between 2018-2020 [8], we set out to review and analyze, in terms of philatelic material, the traditional architecture of the five areas mentioned above.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The zonal specificity from the philatelic perspective was presented using the philatelic catalogs. Also, following sites with philatelic content. These include the Colnect® platform, Delcampe®, eBay®, Ocazii®, PicClick®, and StampWorld®. In addition to this information, discussions with other collectors of philatelic materials were also of real use.

The documentation regarding the elements of traditional architecture was made through the prism of consulting some specialized sites. At the base of all was the specialized information provided by the platforms dedicated to the Village Museum. Equally, other sites were used that could provide information about the specifics of the household in leud (Maramureș), Jurilovca (Tulcea), Mastacăn (Neamț), Moșișeni (Satu Mare) and Năruja (Vrancea).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 The Household from leud (Maramureș)

The entrance to the household is made through a monumental oak gate, with a fir-tree roof. The gate has a double fire board door for cattle and carts, and a small gate for people [9]. The gate is richly ornamented with sculpture, with rope motif and geometric motifs. This type of gate is the distinctive sign of a social category: nemesis (free peasants). Next to the gate is a bench protected by a shingle roof, which served as a place of socialization.

In the yard of the household, next to the house, you can see a series of annexes. They illustrate the main occupation of the area - animal husbandry. Thus, there is a barn with two stables and a haystack, a hut with a barn (a haystack with a movable roof), and a barn with a pigsty. Also in the yard of the household, there is a fountain with scales and a sieve, with a guide made of fir beams. The house is built of fir beams with a low stone base. It has a porch on three sides, with a perforated railing and a pillar ornamented by chiseling and united by arches (see Fig. 1) [10]. The walls of the house are also made of fir beams, carved on four sides, and joined in the blockbau technique. The floor is made of earth mixed with manure and chaff, only, the large room being paved with planks [11]. The roof is four-pitched and has a double-timbered fir wood roof.

In plan, the house comprises a median porch, large room, small room and pantry. From the porch without ceiling and without windows you enter the large room, located in the northern part of the house, and the small room, located in the southern part. From the small room, which also serves as the kitchen, you enter the pantry. In the large room there is a large oven, raised on a wooden base. On the opposite side is the corner with the bed and the woolen fabrics. On the walls, above the angled shelves, are rows of glass, icons painted on glass and wiped.

### **3.2 The household from Jurilovca (Tulcea)**

The Lipovans, a population of Slavic origin, came to our country at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They settled on the shores of the Dobrogea lakes and in the ridges of the Danube Delta. The main occupations in the Lipovan villages are fishing and viticulture [12]. From a structural point of view, the Lipovan settlements are characterized by an orderly texture, with wide and straight streets. The architecture has as specific features the union under one roof of the house and the household annexes, and the use mainly of adobe as construction material.

Such a house with all the household annexes was also transferred to the Village Museum in Bucharest, in 1963 [12]. Its ten rooms, with differentiated functions, are arranged at right angles, the other two sides of the enclosure being closed by a stone-walled fence. In the interior space thus created is located the cooking oven during the summer and the birdhouse. The

part reserved for housing consists of five rooms: two rooms, two living rooms - one of which is reserved for guests - and a kitchen. They all communicate with each other. The smaller side brings together the stable, the fish smoker, and a multi-purpose room - storage space, but also work. The connecting corner consists of a partially enclosed shed and a fishing gear pantry. From the shed, you go behind the building to the steam bath. Next to it, is another shed, which houses the mobile press and agricultural tools.

The constructions have the roof covered with "combed" reed. The exterior aspect is completed by the low porch with carved pillars placed in front of the living rooms, with small porches. As well as by the polychromy of the frames. The doors are painted with the motif "tree of life" [12]. The interiors are characterized by the same polychromy, resulting from the presence of various textiles, wood painting, and glass. Through the constructive style, decorative elements, and the massive presence of fishing gear, the Jurilovca household is a valuable document of life and work of a population that has found its second homeland in Romania.

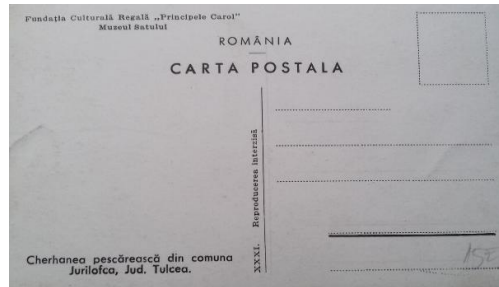
### **3.3 The Household from Mastacăn (Neamț)**

The Mastacăn household comes from a scattered village. It is located in a landscape of rare beauty, along the Bistrita Valley. It was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and transferred to the Village Museum in Bucharest in 1957 [13]. Includes, next to the house, a "lozniță" for drying and smoking fruit, a grinder for sharpening various tools, and a pigsty. The house, framed by a pillarless porch on three sides, has two rooms, respectively the porch and the living room. From a constructive point of view, the round fir beams which are closed at the ends, are glued on the inside and on the outside with clay. These make up the walls of the house, and the long drain, beaten twice on the frame in "four waters", forms its traditional roof.

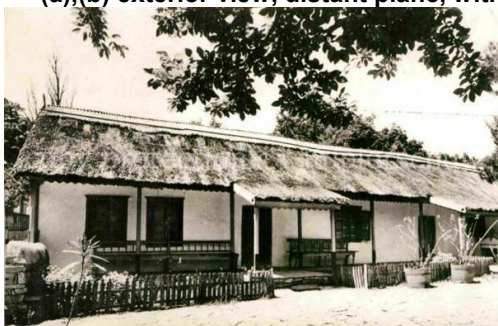
The polychromy of the interior results from the wide range of fabrics and garments that adorn the area above the bed [13]. They are harmoniously associated with the pieces of furniture, whose notches are of an unsurpassed refinement. Agriculture, sheep breeding and rafting are basic occupations of the inhabitants of Mastacăn village, reflected in the objects present in the museum household, but also in the tools used in these occupations.



Fig. 1. Illustrated postcard representing the exterior of the household from Ieud (Maramureș)



(a),(b) exterior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [14]



(c) exterior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [14]



(d) exterior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [15]



(e) exterior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [16]



(f) exterior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [17]

Fig. 2. Illustrated postcards representing the outside of the household from Jurilovca (Tulcea)



Fig. 3. Illustrated postcards representing the interior of the household from Mastacăn (Neamț)

### 3.4 The Household from Moșeni (Satu Mare)

The entrance to the household is made through a barn-type gate. This type of gate has three parts: the boom (a thick oak log fixed in the ground), the spring itself, and the pillar in which it is fixed [22]. In the yard of the household, next to the house, there are several annexes. These are mainly: a hound, a meadow (stable), a birdhouse, and in a corner, a tall prayer (guard cross) with embossed ornaments.

The house has a foundation of river bricks and brick. It has a traditional plan with three rooms: the room, the porch, and the pantry, and a partial porch on the façade. The walls of the house are made of oak wood, split and shaped with a bard, joined in the blockbau technique. The floor of the house is muddy. The roof is in "four waters", with very fast slopes. The cover is made of oak drainage, beaten in a row in a honeycomb system [22]. The roof has rounded corners, and on the ridge, there is a chimney to evacuate smoke from the attic. The chimney is protected by a round roof with a cross at the top.



(a) exterior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [23]



(b) interior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [28]



(c) interior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [25]

**Fig. 4. Illustrated postcards representing the household from Moişeni (Satu Mare)**

Of remarkable artistic value is carved and sculpted decoration, representing motifs such as the cross and the wolf's fangs. The decoration is found at the gate, as well as on the door and window frames. Furthermore the outbuildings. At the entrance to the house, there is a massive oak door. It is secured with a secret wooden lock. In the hall, there are various tools needed to process wool and hemp.

From the porch, you enter the pantry and the living room. Above the bed are arranged, in successive registers, three types of richly decorated fabrics. Carved wooden hangers, placed on the walls, support icons made of glass and ceramic plates.

The chamber is a single-celled construction, with a front porch, made by the blockbau technique. The floor of the building is made of beaten earth. The roof is in four waters, with oak roofing. This type of building was used as a storage space or as a summer kitchen. The stable is a single-

celled oak outbuilding with a stone slab foundation. The four-pitched roof has an oak shingle roof.

Decorative motifs are placed on the door pediment and side pillars. The birdhouse is a single-celled annex construction made of beech beams carved on four sides. They are combined in the blockbau technique, with a four-pitched roof and oak shingle roofing.

### 3.5 The Household from Năruja (Vrancea)

The village of Năruja belongs to the category of elongated settlements along the rivers. The main occupations of the inhabitants of the area are shepherding and working in the forest. The 19th-century house was brought to the Village Museum in 1957 [26]. It is made of round fir beams, glued with white humus, as presented in Fig. 5 [27].



(a),(b) exterior view, double-sided, without other applied philatelic elements [27]



(c) exterior view, distant plan, bearing the stamp with a face value of 5 lei from the philatelic issue "Traditional Architecture" and the stamp of the Philatelic Exhibition "Architecture and traditional costume" from 25.09.-05.10.1989 and the day stamp, 30.09.1989 of Postal Office no. 32 from Bucharest [28]



(d) exterior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [29]

Fig. 5. Illustrated postcards representing the household from Năruja (Vrancea)



(a) interior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [30]



(b) interior view, distant plane, without other applied philatelic elements [31]



(c) interior view, distant plane, bearing the stamp with a face value of 5 lei from the philatelic issue "Traditional Architecture" and the first-day of issue stamp [32]

Fig. 6. Illustrated postcards representing the interior of the household from Năruja (Vrancea)

The house built on the basement has an asymmetrical gazebo, where in summer there is a place to sleep. The four-pitched roof is made of shingles fixed in nails worked by blacksmiths. The construction plan consists of a narrow porch. It is used as a warehouse for tools and household materials. Besides, there is a single room with multiple functions.

The archaism of the construction resides in the way of reserving the awning in the living room space, as well as in the placement of the heating system [26]. The dishes and household utensils are grouped around the hearth to be at hand for the housewife. Along the walls, on three sides, are arranged the benches and the bed on which the dowry box is placed. A low round table and three-legged chairs complete the furniture.

The woolen materials in natural colors cover the bed and are placed in piles above the dowry box. On the shelves are spread materials with geometric decorative, and floral motifs, made in harmonious colors. The decorative ensemble is completed by the cotton fabrics placed "wheel along the walls". The inventory is completed with beautifully engraved wooden vessels. Alongside, the costume pieces illustrate, in addition to the main occupations of the inhabitants, the high mastery of work techniques.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The traditional Romanian architecture is not unitary but differs depending on the area. These are classified by specialists as distinct ethnographic areas. Among the most important ethnographic areas in our country, which have largely preserved their local specificity today, are Maramureș, Țara Moșilor, Bucovina, or the region of Saxon villages in southern Transylvania. In other areas, traditional architecture is found only in museum form. Even if these areas have a distinct character of their own, there are still some common features.

Along with specialized guides and philatelic materials, they can also be a starting point for continuous architectural education. They highlight models of good practice or, on the contrary, unfortunate interventions. Involving the community in the rehabilitation and training of people in traditional techniques is the best way to strengthen the sense of belonging to the place and to provide models of good practice.

Although few in number, the philatelic pieces identified and analyzed support the idea of good practice models. The aspects they illustrate, both from the outside and from inside the household, certify the zonal specificity and encourage the principles of preserving the memory of the place.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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