



RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE
CENTRE DE RECHERCHES SUR L'HISTOIRE, L'ART ET LA CULTURE ISLAMIQUES



TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF BOSNIA HERCEGOVINA AND SURROUNDING AREAS

JUDITH BING - J.BROOKE HARRINGTON

Since 1987, American architects Judith Bing and Brooke Harrington have been studying the traditional architecture of former Yugoslavia. They have created an extensive archive documenting vernacular wooden buildings - houses, farming structures, chapels, mosques and monastic buildings from rural and urban sites in all of the former Yugoslav republics and provinces. This exhibit comprises a selection of their photographs and drawings of buildings which are located in Bosnia & Hercegovina and surrounding republics.

This exhibit shows a diverse architectural culture of wood construction influenced by the combined ingredients of local tradition, rich geographic variation, and the overlaid cultures of the Slavic people and the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires which in past centuries controlled the Balkan Peninsula. When this research project was initiated, the ethnic conflicts of the past three years had not erupted.

Judith Bing is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at Drexel University. Brooke Harrington is an Associate Professor in the Architecture Program at Temple University and an Adjunct Professor in the Evening Architecture Program at Drexel. They practice together as Bing Harrington Architects in Philadelphia. This research project was initiated when Mr. Harrington received a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship to study wooden architecture in Yugoslavia. For a year in 1987-88, they combined archival study in Belgrade with field research throughout the Yugoslav republics. In the summer of 1991 they returned to visit areas still accessible to travelers, to meet with preservation architects and obtain drawings and data on significant sites. Ms. Bing and Mr. Harrington have lectured on their research locally, and at international architectural symposia in Canada and the United States.

Traditional Architecture of Bosnia & Hercegovina and surrounding areas

Photographs and Drawings by Judith Bing and J. Brooke Harrington

Introduction

Since 1987, American architects Judith Bing and Brooke Harrington have been studying the traditional architecture of former Yugoslavia. They have created an extensive archive documenting vernacular wooden buildings – houses, farming structures, chapels, mosques and monastic buildings – from rural and urban sites in all of the former Yugoslav republics and provinces. This exhibit comprises a selection of their photographs and drawings of buildings which are located in Bosnia & Hercegovina and surrounding republics.

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The intention of this research on traditional architecture has been to explore the techniques and types of wood construction which have evolved in a multi-cultural context, to reveal relationships between construction, cultural beliefs and mores, and design expression. Wood is a material easily adapted by local builders, either as a primary construction material (as with log-cabin structures), or in conjunction with other materials (as with frame-and-infill systems). Techniques vary with the landscape, according to availability of local materials, but the form and spatial organization of buildings combine with construction details to express social systems and cultural beliefs, as well as adaptation to local climate conditions. These compounding variables have generated an unusually rich architectural climate. Former Yugoslavia's complex ethnic mix and history of external cultural influences, combined with its diverse geography of wooded landscapes, offered an ideal setting for these studies.

The architectural heritage of former Yugoslavia is deeply influenced by this history of cultural diversity, and is further enriched by a mountainous geographic setting that encourages regional variation. Throughout the long history of the conflicts and migrations of people to the Balkan peninsula, the mountain forests have provided safe haven and shelter, while the Danube River basin and its tributary rivers and valleys have served as highways.

Exhibit Organization

The exhibit photographs and drawings are presented in broad categories which cross ethnic and political boundaries: urban buildings, rural buildings and religious buildings. As the majority are rural, this group has been divided geographically, grouping the buildings of plains and river valleys separately from those of mountain regions.

Notes about Exhibit Authors

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