

Historical monuments of folk architecture in the South Moravian region and the problems of their documentation

VĚRA KOVÁŘŮ

In 1969 and 1970 the workers of the Regional Trust of Historical Monuments and Nature Beauty Preservation, Brno, made a revision of the protected monuments of folk architecture registered in the South Moravian region. They examined all the 766 historical buildings which were a part of the National List of Protected Monuments. In the above number of buildings are represented the wealth and variety of architectural types, dwelling houses of people from various social ranks, further estate buildings (cowsheds, stables, barns, corn lofts, granaries, sheep-pens, cellars, wells, hay-barns, fruitkilns). Also working technical constructions serving folk production are enlisted such as water and wind mills, sawmills, limekilns, wine-cellars and pressing houses, smithies etc.). Also the religious buildings (village crosses, bellfries, chapels, etc.) were examined. The results of the official examination are not satisfactory. Several times statements were proclaimed on society's disregard for folk buildings. In contrast to historical architecture, folk buildings are not fully appreciated not only by the general public but they also lack sufficient understanding and everyday supervision by the public service who were entrusted with the care of the historical monuments as far as its executive part is concerned. Very often the original function of the building does not comply with the proprietor's wishes under the changed living conditions, the striving for modernization disregarding damage or full devastation of the historical value. The population seems to lack reverence for tradition tenaciously taught as we know from the Scandinavian countries, where affection for the culture of the past generations is instilled both at school and at home.

It is not without interest that the repairs of folk architecture are in most cases financially more exacting than the upkeep of a new house. The former requires traditional, hardly accessible materials such as quality timber, special straw etc. as well as knowledge of handicraft techniques exacting much skill and money. The decrease of protected building is logical, if we consider the unsatisfactory financial and moral

support accompanied by a complicated trial before the awarding of subsidies for current maintenance of the protected buildings.

To preserve the rarest values of the material culture, the Regional Trust Brno, worked out a survey of suggestions concerning the complex problems of folk houses protection. The farmsteads are taken care of first of all by a specialized Section of Folk Architecture, composed of an architect and ethnographer coordinating their work with other workers within and outside the Trust. Care of folk architecture is realized in two forms in fact, protection of the buildings in situ being the primary, of course. A part of this task is the protection of selected constructions valuable typologically, historically and artistically, from the viewpoint of disposition and ground plan. The aim of the Regional Trust workers is to maintain the buildings for their original purpose, or to propose a secondary function of the building, may be for cultural, recreational facilities, etc. in dwelling houses some repairs must be tolerated springing from the present requirements of living. Work must be focused on the preservation of the material architectonic of constructive elements. It is a pity the movement of salvage the so called "oldest house of the village" could not be set in motion, which can be successfully realized only with a maximum support of the local authorities and with the villager's consent.

An important component of care for monuments is their popularization. Here an idea arises to incorporate the protected houses into touristic routes and advertise them next to historical buildings and nature peculiarities.

The selected buildings are repaired by a special department of the Regional Trust, Brno, namely its preservation workshop, having at its disposal both skilled workers and materials necessary for the repair of traditional folk buildings.

Hand in hand with individual buildings' protection a movement arises to rescue whole urbanistic complexes representing certain architectural types and at the same time documenting the architectural structure of the traditional village. This form, exacting much work and skill, requires also the support of the public. But it springs quite naturally from the fact that a farmhouse is a logical part of the landscape, that the picturesque of our villages is formed by the urbanistic unity of both the whole and the details as well as inner dominants of the country milieu. As in the South Moravian region no untouched village exists older than from the 19th and 20th centuries, it is necessary to supplement those complexes which have been preserved with some transferred buildings to make the picture of a country house characteristic for a certain region or period of time as true as possible. The attractiveness of such a protected complex is without doubt. Apart from the original function, reservations can serve as recreational and cultural facilities.

Remarkable complexes of folk architecture monuments are preserved

in some villages of the Bohemia-Moravia Highlands. These are first of all villages with wooden architecture (Herále, Křižánky with spreading farmsteads, Kádov and Krátká). Next to agricultural production, also glass manufacturing, home trades, especially weaving, sieve-making, filemaking etc. flourished there. Krátká was chosen to be a reservation, a little village in which the state of the folk house from the two last centuries can be fixed. In cooperation with the Highland Museum (Horrácké museum Nové Město) and the District National Committee it will be possible to make use of the protected area and the rescued buildings transferred from the neighbouring villages for cultural and recreational purposes, as a part of the protected landscape of the Žďár Hills.

Some remnants of the wooden architecture from Central Moravia (Drahanská Highland) and a dated house with a built-in gallery form a part of the original village green till now nearly untouched by modernization.

The protected, recently restored complex of monuments in Rymice, Haná Region, represents a very important link in the line of development, namely the house with an elevated chamber which we meet in modified forms throughout the whole Pomoraví region.

Great progress is being made on the realization of a reservation design at Strážnice, connected with a regional open-air museum of folk architecture. The design, elaborated by the Institute for Folk Art, Strážnice, in cooperation with the National Trust, Brno, stresses the link between the relics of the traditional farm house with three rooms in the Old Town of Strážnice and the exhibition of the farm buildings from Eastern Moravia, arranged on the meadows outside the town. The link between the preserved complex and the exhibition of farm buildings and the Institute for Folk Art guarantees their full cultural use during the folklore festival and other festivities. A part of this complex are wine cellars in Petrov, characteristic for the South Moravian region. In Petrov's part called Plže the original state was fixed, and the front of the wine cellars bearing baroque and classical elements was restored.

The little town of Pavlov, located on the slope of the Pálava Hills, embodies the vinicultural tradition. Its foundations were laid by farmsteads of rich wine growers and by cellars with exterior and interior renaissance and baroque decoration. Misunderstanding of its monumental value caused considerable destruction of the oldest core, but some valuable farm houses and cellars have still been preserved.

Apart from the given complexes whose salvaging has begun recently a whole series of valuable urbanistic units still exist which should be protected against demolition as soon as possible. A Haná house with a huge monumental lug in front has been preserved in the Vyškov region, especially in Lysovice, then the wooden house of Carpathian type preserved in a greater number in Rusava, a group of farm buildings, especially individual lofts built separately from the house



1. Trhonice (Žďár n. S.). Richly decorated dwelling house, water-mill and oil-pressure workshop.



2. Zbilidy (Jihlava). Shingle workshop.



3. Horní Heřmanice (Žďár n. S.) Water mill before restoration



4. Doubravy (Gottwaldov). One of the oldest log lofts.



5. Herálec (Žďár n. S.). A dwelling house of log construction.

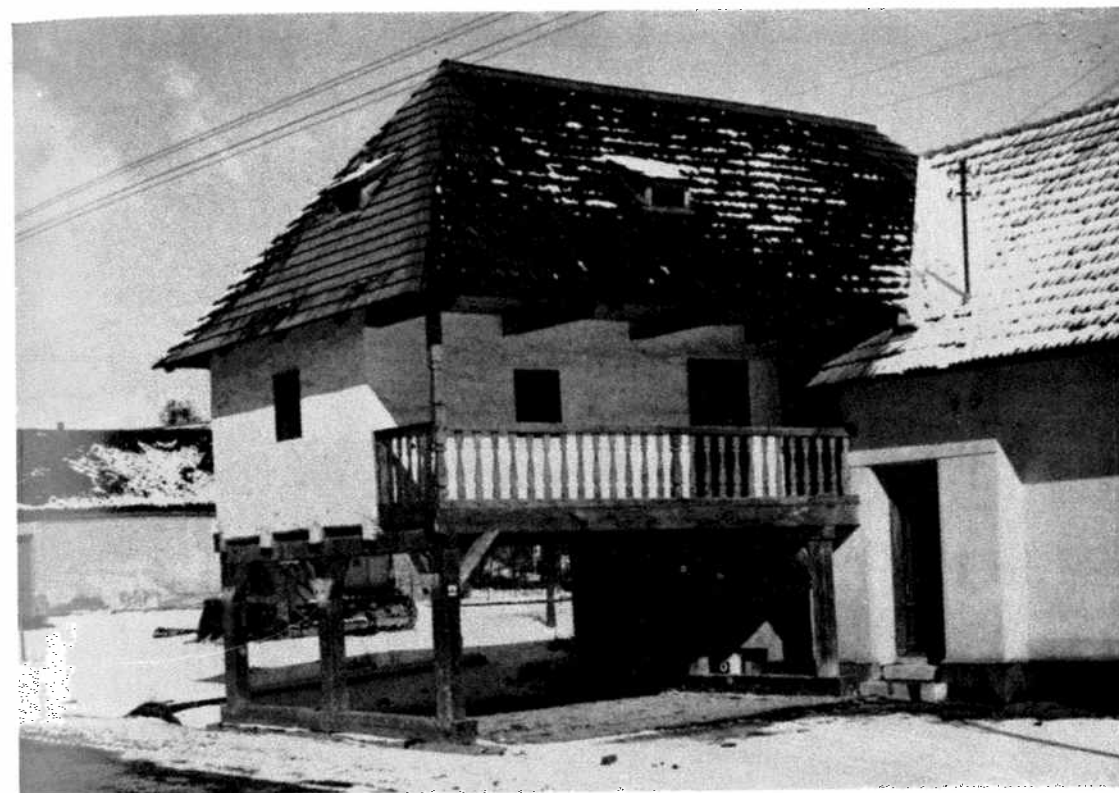
6. Kadov (Žďár n. S.). A log house, one of the oldest in the reservation.



7. Kaňovice (Gottwaldov). Reservation of rural architecture with typical free standing lofts.



8. Sv. Sidonie [Gottwaldov]. Dwelling houses of glass-workers with common bread-oven.



9. Sebranice (Blansko). A house with a loft and built-in gallery (žudr) repaired with the help of the National Trust, Brno.



10. Petrovice (Znojmo). Houses repaired with the help of the National Trust, Brno.
 11. Petrov (Hodonín). Plže, the reservation of richly decorated wine cellars.
 12. Šanov (Gottwaldov). Detail of a log-barn which has been chosen for the open-air museum.

as preserved in Kaňovice, a workers' colony in Svatá Sidonie documenting how the glass manufacturers lived at the turn of the century and other representative regional types.

Another hopeful way of salvaging folk houses and other documents of the traditional way of living is the museum in the open-air. The workers of the Regional Trust in Brno in cooperation with the Ethnographical Institute of the Moravian Museum and other scientific institutes deal with an idea to build an open-air museum "the museum of a Moravian village" near Brno at Veveří Castle. Such a museum can render complex views of the material aspect of folk culture, esp. agriculture, home trade, way of furnishing and living. At the same time it may be the only way how to preserve the buildings which would inevitably vanish under the changed living conditions. The open air museum project takes into consideration the technical preparations and questions of time and finance. The primary task for the specialists is the search for and selection of buildings within the given programme outline as the exhibition has not only a salvaging character.

(Taking into consideration the great number of papers presented on the topic of open air-museums, including "the Museum of a Moravian Village", I have presented only this short report.)

One of the basic tasks arising from all possible ways of protecting houses is to complete the documentation of the protected property. People working in the department of folk architecture are striving for more complete records about every building and a scientific evaluation of particularly valuable houses or collections of buildings. Reference cards, also used by other departments are the basis for orientation. These reference cards give information about the site, its value, age and state of the building, and, simultaneously, give a brief description of the preserved property. The reference card also includes a photograph size 6X6 and an index of additional material. A number of 318 selected buildings in the South Moravian Region is supplemented by measurements 1:200 which was done by SURPMO (National Trust for the Reconstruction of Historical Monuments). This survey and enclosed photodocumentation may bring only general information and it is necessary to put down the changes and enlarge the description. Particularly significant buildings where exceptional efforts of salvage have been concentrated because they have been designated for cultural use (reservations of folk architecture, open-air museums etc.), are compiled on cards, so called "passports". These cards give a general picture of the ethnographic and the architectural evaluations of the buildings in compliance with the fundamentals of the cartography of Czechoslovak folk architecture. This system is very important as the results could also serve for scientific purposes. The passports are filled out by the workers of the Regional Trust corresponding to a scheme of the Slovak National Museum in Martin, the section of folk architecture. The "passport" contains a statement

of the situation and character of the estate (type, development, description of the building, situation and ground plan), then follows the technique of building and investigation of material, (construction, method of work, means and transport of building materials), next comes the interior, its furnishings, or in some cases, its modernization. Then follows an artistic expression of the structure, exterior and interior, the organization of the farm life, a part about the characteristics of the farmsteads, inventory and use of the individual rooms, property rights, inheritance and neighbour relations, trees and plants (greenery) in the surroundings. Then comes the historical profile of the building including citations from archive documents and literature. The passport collection also has photographic documents and plans scaled 1:1000 (and even more detailed) which are selectively included. At the end are put down the instructions, how the protected building could be preserved and used.

An important contribution to complete documentation of selected buildings is the cooperation with the School of Architecture at the Technical University. In adding to the documentation material, there has been excellent cooperation with students who survey several selected structures every year, and include technical details (reports) of their work. This year The Regional Trust, Brno was loaned an extraordinarily rich fund of 560 buildings for re-photographing and filling in archives. Under the leadership of Prof. Ing. Arch. Ant. Kurial these buildings have been surveyed in various regions of Czechoslovakia over the past 25 years.

For the planned reservation of folk houses historical and architectural research has been done by a specialized group from the National Trust for the Reconstruction of Historical Monuments.

Systematic cooperation in the field of documentation is developing mainly with institutes which specialize in ethnography. Besides the Department of Ethnography at the University of Brno, contacts are strongest with the Department of Ethnography and Folklore at the Academy of Sciences. At these research departments the specialists of the Regional Trust, Brno, consult new forms and exchange of documentation as well as the principles of preserving buildings on sites, in reservations, even selecting buildings for the open air museum. They can also get copies of the documentation they need for the work with protected houses.

The most substantial help is the cooperation with the regional museum and the Institute for Folk Art in Strážnice. This cooperation brought its first fruits during the revision of protected folk buildings, additional outdoor research, and suggestions for reservations etc. This coordination of tasks has its parallel in other countries as well; for instance in Norway and Sweden.

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the cooperation of various scientific disciplines and institutes in completing

documentation material. Only in this way it is possible to perceive the problems of preserving valuable documents of folk architecture as one part of the national culture.