



The Ethnography Museum “Traditional peasant house” from village Butuceni, Orheiul Vechi

Anna was a young woman filled with excitement and anticipation. She had just received important news that she was eager to share with her beloved. News that led her on a journey of discovery about the rich cultural heritage of Moldovan traditional fine crafts and priceless artifacts.

Eternity was born in a village

*“Little girl, put your hands on my knees.
Eternity, I believe, was born in a village.
Here, every thought is slower,
and your heart throbs at a quieter pace,
as if beating not in your breast
but deep in the earth somewhere.”
(fragment of “Soul of the village” by Lucian Blaga, romanian writer)*

Anna struggled to hold onto the memories of her grandparents' traditional home. She longed to feel the warmth and comfort of their simple but cozy abode, filled with the fragrance of freshly whitewashed walls and burning wood.

However, as modernization took hold, more and more traditional homes were being replaced by modern family establishments, and Anna feared she would eventually lose her connection to the national identity of her ancestors. But she found solace in a special place - a small museum, where she would go to be surrounded by the hand-woven carpets on the walls, reminiscent of the ones that adorned her grandparents' home. Here, she felt protected, as if she

Common borders. Common solutions.



were in the safe embrace of a walnut shell, and the memories of her childhood came flooding back.

In this place Anna steps back in time and immerses herself in the traditional Moldovan way of life at the Peasant House of the Ethnographic Museum in the village of Butuceni. This historic household offers a unique glimpse into the rural life of Moldovans from the 19th to 20th centuries. It is a testament to the unique architectural and cultural heritage of the region.

In front of the house, Anna sat down on the porch to admire the area surrounded by the limestone cliffs. Nestled within the Cultural-Natural Reserve Orheiul Vechi, this place showcases the harmonious relationship between traditional rural life and nature. The limestone cliffs were formed in the Miocene within the Sarmatian Sea (13.0-8.0 million years) and still are present in the life of the local community.

Towards the 19th century, a style of peasant stone architecture crystallized here, very expressive in relation to the traditional wooden architecture of the other ethnographic areas. It appears as a stone replica of the wooden architectural forms. Here too, it was possible to create an architectural order that has all the components of the classical orders. It is the only case in Europe, when this performance was achieved within a small peasant community, in the middle of the Middle Ages.

The crystallization of specific style of architecture had historical premises: the presence of several craftsmen brought by the Golden Horde in the 14th century, crystallization towards the 15th century of the so-called Moldavian style and its amplification thanks to the existence in the Pruto-Nistean area of other important medieval centers of extraction and artistic processing of limestone.

The defining element of the traditional peasant household in the Orheiul Vechi area is the stone wall surrounding the courtyards, present along the streets and alleys of these villages. The variety of the way the fences were built, combined with the variety of the architectural decoration of the stone pillars of the

Common borders. Common solutions.

gates, recalls the cave-like character of the landscape in the area, giving it expressiveness and impressive dimensions.

The household wall symbolically delimits the "peasant's universe" from the rest of the world.

A decisive role in the formation of vernacular architecture was played by the village of Butuceni, which represented an epicenter of irradiation of the popular craft of artistic stone processing. In this village until the 60s-70s of the 20th century, renowned craftsmen worked, they exported the pieces of architecture to localities more than 80-90 km away.

Anna admired the Peasant House as being a model of vernacular architecture of the area. The household as a whole and each individual component represents the result of people's concern to provide shelter for the family, animals and tools, organized space for the production, storage and preservation of products and food, their consumption and, at the same time, living space.

Anna paid attention to the household walls of the dwelling house, as it serves as a symbolic boundary between the world of the peasant and the wider community, with the gate serving as a threshold between these two realms.

As soon as she entered the yard, she stopped in front of the house that was painted in white. Anna found out from the local museographer that the **walls of the house are built of broken stone and plaster with clay, then painted with lime to give them a clean and bright look.**



The peasant house detailed elements ***The interior of the peasant house***

The interior of the traditional home was conceived as a true sacred perimeter, where family members were born, raised and learned from their ancestors to work the fields, breed the animals, cultivate vines and fruits. Also at home, under the guidance of their mothers and grannies, the girls learned the secrets

Common borders. Common solutions.



of processing textile fibers, sewing and weaving, etc. In the house, the peasants celebrated Easter and Christmas, received carolers and guests, married their children and raised their grandchildren.

The household specific to this area consists of a dwelling house, composed of two or three rooms and a porch; stable for animals; annexes for storing various products; yard and garden.

Entering into the house Anna saw only two rooms. The first room, located on the left wing of the house, served as the primary living and work area. It features a massive brick oven, a weaving loom, and a small, collapsible table that typified the region's traditional furnishings. The second room, known as "Casa Mare," was the most spacious and elaborately decorated space, used for important family events, rituals, and entertaining guests.

The mistress and the artist of the house

In the decoration of the room Anna observed the great effort made by the mistress to make sure her home was not only comfortable, but also aesthetically pleasing. Each home was unique, much like no two pieces of clothing were identical within the community. Interior textiles played a crucial role in the domestic economy and were a solution to many problems faced by the family. The textiles were used to create a warm and cozy atmosphere, dampening noise and providing thermal insulation. You'll see various types of woven rugs covering the walls, each with its own unique function and technique - from the "scoarță" (wall-carpet) to the "lădar" (carpet lying on chest-of-drawers). Each textile serves a purpose, adding to the comfort and beauty of the home.

Handmade carpets, main elements of interior design

In the bygone days, when large families lived in cramped quarters during the harsh winter months, it was crucial to have interior textiles that would provide both warmth and comfort to the mind and soul. The living room, the heart of the home, was the main focus of the design effort. To create an illusion of space and width, horizontal wool carpets, known as "scoarță", were hung along

Common borders. Common solutions.



the entire length of the walls, adding depth to the interior and making it appear larger. Additionally, to elevate the ceiling and give a sense of height, textiles with vertical designs, such as woven wall hangings, were incorporated into the decor.

This traditional use of wool carpets, known as "scoatță", was widely practiced in the countryside, providing both function and beauty to the humble abodes. The artful use of interior textiles was a testament to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the locals.

Anna was amazed to discover the rich cultural heritage of Moldova at the Peasant House, where history comes to life, and she could experience the traditional way of life in a unique setting.

Common borders. Common solutions.