

THE MONOGRAPHY “ALBANIAN CORNERED HOUSES” BY EMIN RIZA AN EVIDENCE OF ALBANIAN ARCHITECTURE DEVELOPMENT

Prof. Dr. Emin Riza is one of most prominent figures of Albanian restoration and expert of cultural heritage in Albania. He has a long work experience at Institute of History and Linguistics as well as Institute of Cultural Heritage, specialized on restauration. This has helped him on writing sixteen books, mainly monographies. He also worked for years as chief editor of magazines “Studia albanica” and “Monumentet” enabling him to publish a handful articles on both magazines.

Prof. Dr Emin Riza is well known as the initiator and member of the committee implementing the draft- resolution of “Cultural Heritage”, leader of task force supervising the dossier of UNESCO membership for towns Berat and Gjirokastra. His contributions have been acknowledged making him “Honorary Citizen” of Berat and Gjirokastra. The monography of “Albanian cornered houses” published by Albanian Academy of Science on 2018, is a study which fulfills all the necessary requirements of a special treatment of those kinds of houses, in order to elaborate values of its composition architectural elements, structure techniques, and building materials. Evolution of Albanian houses is explained on five chapters, including the new type, that of cornered house.

The author himself highlights on the book that, the earliest date up today of a cornered house build in Albania is that of the house of friends of Toptani family in 1764, inside the walls of Kruja Castle. Later on, this building style was widely spread not only in Albania but, in Kosovo too. Nevertheless, time pressures, natural catastrophes, like earth quicks or fires, caused a devastating even destructive impact on those buildings. This led to partially buildings, improvised annexes and very rarely building them entirely. In our case, most of those buildings were modified, closing down the corner in order to fulfill ever increasing family needs and life requirements.

This is why nowadays it is rather difficult to distinguish typically monumental existing Albanian houses. Prof. Dr. Emin Riza remains very active even now, with his great contribution on the mission of preserving our cultural monuments and other old buildings as part of our heritage. He expresses those concerns even on this book by saying: “Cult buildings or fortresses in general are preserved on the current of time because of the functions that once they had. Popular buildings, in spite of their importance are always prey of natural life developments and changes. Therefore, protecting and preserving them is of a special importance.