

«This house is mine and mine it isn't» Tariverde Germans and their heritage

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Tariverde and Cogealac, two rural settlements that are situated a few kilometers inward from lagoon area, both of them having an interesting history, marked by several dramatic shifts within their demographics, along with a post-1990 era which became synonymous with a general desire to mimic urban comfort, which heavily distorted the architectural heritage left behind by past generations. A highly particular note which marked the development of these two settlements was the presence of German settlers, and Kashubians –only in Tariverde, that settled here in the 19th century, leaving a still-visible contribution to the place's architectural landscape. Tariverde, named Dorotea in the past, has its most iconic building (Saint Peter and Paul Church) erected by the Lutheran Germans that settled about two centuries ago into the village. Nowadays, both Tariverde and Cogealac still preserved certain architectural relics, but the way in which they present themselves today is rather different than in the past. Due to the semi and quasi-urbanization that occurred in both places, by this we specifically point that the settlements started to use various amenities that were usually found in urban centers. Besides the amenities, the newly-constructed home were less caring of the way in which they were contrasting the already-existing structures, thus numerous oddities started to appear as a result of the uncontrolled manner in which the new was pushing for more territory in the detriment of the old. The current paper will analyze the manner in which the architectural landscape of both settlements had evolved over time, the novelties that become more present from the 1900s to the present, and the relics left behind by the German settlers.

Tariverde is situated in the north-eastern corner of Constanța County, in a region with moderate elevations that take the form of a mildly hilly terrain. The settlement is situated just east of Cogealac, was labeled as an “urban-type commune”, concept that was rather indigenous to the USSR, describing those large rural settlements that usually enjoyed some of the amenities that were usually found in urban areas. Besides this, such settlements also had a small niche of craftsman's shops and somewhat advanced agricultural constructions, such as mills, big brick-built warehouses, and silos. Due to its proximity to neighboring Cogealac, Tariverde shares a rather similar local history which becomes even more obvious when we take a look at some of the demographic records from the past,

or just by simply acknowledging the commonly shared architectural heritage. Besides this, we can talk in both cases about a demographic history that was deeply marked by a high fluctuation of numerous ethnic groups, settling and de-settling the two villages in only a time span of about one and a half century. Nowadays, Tariverde's landscape is dominated mainly by abode homes with a simplistic layout, made up mainly of a "main layout" which encompasses the three main living quarters, and a few add-ons - rooms that were not part of the original plan and were added on to the main building as time passed and the needs of the owners could no longer be satisfied by the basic layout. Abode-built homes are a trademark of both Romanian and Bulgarian households, as brick masonry has been, for most of the time beyond the reach of many peasants due to its high costs. This was mainly due to the fact that brick was produced in only a few places, besides its actual cost, there were other costs and logistics involved for its transportation to the construction site.

Unlike abode, brick was somewhat more pretentious when it came to its laying, bricklayers, along with other builders, being hired to do the job. As a result, brick homes were usually associated with higher socially ranked families. They also posed several advantages in comparison with the abode-built counterparts; they were more durable in time had a better change of outstanding natural calamities, especially floods, which were known to affect the area nearby Tariverde from time to time. Even though the home itself was most often built of abode, some of the other buildings present within the compounds of the household were built of flat stone blocks that were brought from the nearby quarries. Flattened pieces of stone were also used for building the fences that surrounded the property, interestingly enough, they are not too widely preferred when it came to the construction of the actual home, which will represent a hotspot for a rural family's life, especially during the long and cold winters during which numerous indoor activities, mainly carried out by women – such as knitting, sewing and crocheting, the end result consisted of various household goods, some of which were used in decorating the living quarters, others were used in a more practical manner.

The architectural styles vernacular to Tariverde, Cogealac, as well as the neighboring villages, can be described by using a multitude of criteria. Even so, it is important to acknowledge that some of the characteristics will be distributed in a patterned manner depending on the criteria that is being put in use. German vernacular homes will always have a linear layout, the main façade of the building will face the yard's interior, while the lateral façade will be the one that is facing the roadside. German

homes, especially those built latter on, heavily relied on brick as their main building material. Unlike the homes of the Bulgarians, Romanians, and later of Aromanians, the German ones tended to be more monumental, due to their height and the steep slopes of the gambrel roofs that constituted a highly-distinctive mark. This was in stark contrast with the low slopes of the majority of homes that predated the arrival of the Germans, their overall shape and destination were more adapted to the particularities of the climate and terrain of central Dobruja. A rectangular outline defines the layout of the old vernacular homes from the Tariverde area, the interior is divided among three rooms, two bedrooms and an intermediate room between them that takes the function of a hall. The main façade of the house is dominated by a wooden porch that rests on several wooden pillars that also sustain the roof, to a certain extent. The two lateral walls are usually extended to cover the width of the porch, thus sealing the two ends of the porch, and giving some extra support to the roof that hangs over. The house sits on a low pedestal that is only a few centimeters above ground level.

There are no wood balusters along the length of the porch, the wood pillars lay independently one from the other. Hip roofs are quite common, the gable roof is more noticeable among those vernacular homes that retained their original architecture, as were not subjected to interventions. Tariverde has an unusual layout, being made up of the “main village”, where most of the households are clustered, and a few other households that are situated almost midway on the road between the “main village” and Cogealac. Neighboring Cogealac has a highly homogenous layout, having a round outline layout that is usually found among market-towns in Dobruja. The story of the Tariverde Germans starts with 44 families that came and settled within the village, all of them came from southern Bessarabia, most of which traced their family roots back to Wurttemberg, Prussia, Bavaria and Poland. Almost all were of Swabian stock, with a few Kashubians among them. Kashubians are a Slavic group native to the region around the city of Gdańsk in Poland. As time went by, the Kashubians were slowly assimilated by the Germans. Both communities evolved in a fast pace, the German were particularly fond of the area due to its fertile soil and for the suitable climate which made the agriculture and raising cattle possible. If we take a look at several villages from Dobruja that were settled by Germans we will always come across a “stradă nemțească” (German Street), usually a wide street that crossed the village from north to south, or east to west, depending on each settlement’s layout.

Tariverde in particular had an almost perfect rectangular shape, having the narrow side situated on the east-west axis, while the wide side is situated on the north-south axis. From 1840 to 1940, the village was mainly divided in three rows of homes, each one stretching from north to south. Two main roads, one of which was the *strada nemțească*— the widest one which usually concentrates the buildings and institutions that are vital for the village, this includes the church, the townhall, along various shops and craftsman shops. Unlike the other streets, the households that were situated on the main street had a few meters of empty space from the exterior fence to the road, trees would be usually planted here in order to shelter the road and to give a decent amount of shade during the summertime. German houses were quite different from the vernacular houses of the region. They tended to be studier, have a more monumental appearance in general and have an average height that exceeded that of homes belonging to non-Germans. The narrow edge of the house would always face the roadside, the narrow wall facing the roadside would usually have two narrow windows side-by-side, and the upper side of the wall which the roof frame was sitting on would usually have one, or two, narrow windows which made ventilation more efficient. The exterior plastering would usually have a smooth texture, with a coat of white paint on top of it. The windows and the wall's outline would usually be highlighted with some ornamentation, that would emphasize the already existing geometry. Wood ornamentations could also be seen on the roadside-facing façade.

Even so, the charm of these buildings was usually given by their beautiful proportions and simplicity. As with many still traditionalism-oriented societies from the 19th century, the Tariverde Germans had a strong desire for having a place of worship that they can be proud of, the present church that is referred to by the villagers as the German Church (*biserica nemțească*) was not the first evangelical church of Tariverde (Stinghe 2007). The first German church can be better referred to as a prayer house. It had a rectangular layout, with a big bell tower through which you had the main entrance into the building. The architecture of the old church was not different from that of the residential buildings from the rest of the village. The new church was erected during the 1910s, the money was gathered from the crops that were raised on 32 hectares of land that the commune gave to those that wanted to work voluntarily in order to raise money for the new parish building (Stinghe 2007). The church became well known for having the biggest pipe organ from Dobruja, one of the few to be more exact. The evangelical church of Cogealac shared some similarities with the one from neighboring Tariverde, having a similar gothic-inspired architecture. As with the church from Tariverde, the bell tower dominated the main façade, through which you had the entrance into the

prayer chamber. The steep roof was a good indicator of the gothic style, the building was beautifully proportioned and it had an elegant simplicity as a dominant characteristic.

The church was surrounded by a garden which highlighted even more its geometry and white-painted walls. Unlike with most settlements from Dobruja, which had a very badly organized network of streets, Cogealac and Tariverde came off as exceptions, having beautifully designed layouts with a clearly defined village center where all the important institutions were clustered. In the between war period, Cogealac acted as an important transportation and commercial hub for central Dobruja, hosting even a courthouse that dealing with the legal issues of the citizens from the rural settlements nearby.

Historical references

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