

THE JOINT FAMILY AND ITS DWELLING IN WESTERN BULGARIA
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The joint family (or family commune) as a socio-historical form is characteristic of the past of a great number of peoples and has been studied from various points of view (Kosven 1948:3-4).

One of the problems which arise in studying the joint family is the problem of the joint-family dwelling. Common life in one house by all members of the joint family together with joint property, the collective form of production, collective consumption, etc., were some of the typical characteristics of the joint family.

The south Slavic joint family, known in the literature under the term zadruga, attracted the attention of Slavic and non-Slavic scholars as early as the last decade of the last century.² Some of their works contain valuable information on the joint-family dwelling as well. However, no one has yet made a special study of this problem.

Bulgaria remains one of the territories where it is possible to this day to find information on joint families and their dwellings by field study. As late as the beginning of the last century the institution of the joint family was retained in this country universally. The process of the disappearance of the joint family in Bulgaria proceeded from East to West. (Bobchev 1906-1907:43; 1896:27-29, 31-32, 47; Zanetov 1905:395; Bakalov 1934:31; Vakarelski 1936:54; Primovski 1958:133-134; Markova 1960:66-67, etc.) In the second half of the last century and at the beginning of this one, the joint family was retained chiefly in the western districts and in Rhodope Territory.

The first information on the joint family in Bulgaria was given at the beginning of the eighteenth century by the Austrian, G. Z. Drijäsch (?), in a description of his journey (Miletich 1891:123; Shishmanov 1891:403). G. S. Rakovski (1859:29) mentioned in 1859 that the joint family in Bulgaria lived in common under one roof. However, the fullest and most important data for our purposes on joint families are contained in descriptions of journeys by F. Kanitz (1882:205-206; n.d. I:121, 206-207; II:279).

V. Bogišić, systematically describes the Bulgarian joint family in connection with the south-Slavic zadruga. Of especial interest to us is his assertion that each married member of the joint family in western Bulgaria has for himself, his wife and his children, either a large room in the main house, or a separate building (the latter was the rule among the largest and wealthiest joint families). Bachelors were either accommodated in small rooms of their own or all slept in a common room (Bogišić 1867:35).

I. E. Geshov (1886:43-45, 421-449, 434-435) gives a more detailed description of individual joint families. Despite the fact that he does not deal especially with the dwelling of the joint family, we can pick out data on our subject from his description. Geshov tells us that at the end of the

nineteenth century in the village of Dragalevtsy of Sofia District there were two flourishing zadrugas--the Alulovs (36 persons) and the Danevs (34 persons); and 15 smaller families along with them. In the settlement of Gorna Bania near Sofia lived the joint family of the Bozhovs, numbering 35 members. At the end of the nineteenth century there were 20 other joint families in the same village. Geshov notes that the zadruga at that time was more frequently encountered on the left bank of the Iskyr River than on the right bank. Irechek also mentions the zadruga in western Bulgaria. He writes that survivals of large kin units are limited to the region of Tsaribrod, Tryn, and Brezник, the mountainous part of Radomir Okrug and the districts of the plain of Liula and Vitoshi around Sofia and Pernik and also Kratov and Shtip in Macedonia (Irechek 1899:86).

D. Marinov devoted great attention to the joint family in western Bulgaria at the end of the nineteenth century. According to his data, the joint family lived in a single dwelling complex, but each married couple had its own house or at least a room which served for sleeping, but only in the winter. In the summer everyone slept on the threshing floor or in the granaries where each family had one bed. Marinov also indicates that in the joint family dwelling, food was cooked for everyone in one vessel over one fire and eaten at one table (Marinov 1892-1894:II 195; IV 84). Marinov also mentions the dwelling of the joint family in another of his works. In the summer, according to his information, all the workers of one zadruga are accommodated on the threshing floor or in the granaries; in the winter all sleep in the house--either in the basement (bachelors) or in the storerooms (younger members of the family). (Marinov 1901:20-21.)

S. S. Bobchev, in his generalizing work on the Bulgarian joint family, deals with its dwelling only in passing. According to his data, the members of the joint family live in one house--not however under one roof, but in several separate buildings, annexes, or rooms. They might also live at a considerable distance from one another--some in the old house in the village, while others went out in search of work. Prosperous joint families placed in one courtyard a house for each of the individual families; the single men were accommodated in the house of the senior members. In smaller and less prosperous joint families the individual families have at best only a bedroom (chiefly in the summer) (Bobchev 1906-1907:1, 56, 76-78; 1938:4).

The following data on the joint family in western Bulgaria are cited by H. Wilhelmy. As late as the 1930's he found an existing joint family in the village of German, near Sofia. In the villages of German, Dol'na Malina and Dragalevtsy of Sofia district, individual joint families lived in their own quarters (makhali), which were called by the names of their founders (Wilhelmy 1935:99, 101).

The authors listed above touched on joint-family dwellings only in part; much of their information is incomplete and does not tie this subject-matter to the complex of questions without which one cannot understand the peculiarities of the joint-family dwelling. The absence in their works of concrete descriptions of joint families and their dwellings, data on the character of their farming operations, and a number of other types of information, is especially noticeable.

In recent years the joint family and its survival have been studied by the ethnographer R. Pesheva, who worked in northwestern Bulgaria in the regions of Tryn, Breznik and Kiustendil (Pesheva 1958; 1961). Her materials contain very important data on the dwelling of the joint family in the period of its decay.

Of the scholars who have studied Bulgarian folk architecture, it is chiefly T. Zlatev who has directed attention to the dwelling of the joint family. He indicated some peculiarities of the planning of the house, and distinguished, without citing concrete examples, two main types of joint-family dwellings: (1) a house with a large central room and hearth from which one might enter the individual rooms where the members of the zadruga lived; (2) several free-standing buildings in a common courtyard (Zlatev 1948:89-90; 1955a:21; 1955b:10).

One of the chapters in the present author's dissertation for the degree of kandidat is devoted to the joint-family dwelling of Sofia district (Frolec ms. 1963).

The aim of the present article is to shed light on certain aspects of the daily life of the joint family, particularly in connection with the peculiarities of its dwelling. Both literary sources (only works dealing immediately with the joint-family dwelling are cited), and the author's own field material, obtained by him during an expedition to Bulgaria in 1961-1962, are used here...

In studying the joint-family dwelling, several problems arise which could also illuminate certain features of the daily life of the joint family: (1) the numerical strength of the joint family and the influence of this upon its dwelling; (2) the collective character of the joint-family dwelling; (3) the reflection of the internal organization of the joint family in the dwelling; (4) the influence of the joint family on the development of house and village planning. These questions must be studied in their historical aspect in the two main periods of the development of the joint family; namely, the period of its flourishing, and that of its decline.

On the numerical strength of the joint family in western Bulgaria we have data from as early as the first half of the nineteenth century, the period of the greatest flourishing of this form of family. D. Marinov, in his 1892 work, wrote that fifty to sixty years before that time there had been families of 50, 100, 150 and 250 persons living together. These included 30, 50, or 80 working joint-family members (Marinov 1892-1894:II 182; Bobchev 1906-1907:189). It is clear that such a multitude of people could not live in one house. Marinov speaks of this, indicating that in the courtyards of large zadrugas there were several and even "dozens of houses" (Marinov 1894-1896:II 182), but in only one of them was there a hearth for cooking food. The dimensions and character of the operation of the joint family required a considerable number of outbuildings which, besides this, were certainly used for sleeping.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the dimensions of the joint family in western Bulgaria decreased considerably; the number of members at that time did not exceed 60 persons.³ At the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of joint-family members did not exceed 20 to 30 and in

some cases 50 (Bobchev 1938:4; 1906-1907:51; Zakhariev 1918:265; Pesheva 1961: 513, etc.).

In order to understand the daily life of the joint family and the entire character of the joint-family dwelling, one must study all these questions from concrete examples of joint families, taking into account both their numerical strength and the size of their operations. For this reason we cite some of our own data on individual joint families, obtained during field work.

In the village of Zheleznitsa in Sofia district, there existed up to 1929 the joint family of the Vukadinovs numbering 38 persons. The family was administered by Mladen Vukadinov. In the common courtyard, besides him and his wife, there lived seven of his married sons with their wives and children: Diuro (4 children), Dimitr (6 children), Malin (5 children), Jordan (4 children), Spas (2 children), Georgi (1 child), and Iovan (childless). The family's farming operation was based on agriculture and sheep raising. The family had 400 dekars of land,⁴ 300 sheep, 200 goats and 30 cows.

All members of the joint family took part in farming: one was an agriculturalist, a second looked after the sheep, a third cared for the cows, etc. The courtyard of the joint family consisted of a dwelling house, several sheds, granaries and other farm buildings. The family also owned a cabin in the mountains. In the summer some family members slept in the farm buildings and the courtyard and in the sheds in the mountains. In the winter, they all slept in the house which consisted of a room with a hearth called kyshta (measuring 4.5 by 6 meters), a large parlor (odaia, 6 by 6 meters), and two bedrooms, one of which was called nevestarnik [bride's room] (Figure 1). The room with hearth was situated in the middle of the house; food was cooked for all in this fireplace. The entrance from the courtyard led through a shed, chardak, into the hearth-room whence doors led into the other rooms. The wattled walls of the house were smeared on two sides with clay; only the rear wall and the one which separated the odaia from the hearth-room were built of stone. The peaked roof, covered with tiles from the beginning of the century (earlier with straw), was of half-hipped construction. The odaia was lit by four small windows (55 by 100 cm.); the kyshta was lit by the light of the fire and the light coming through the door of the neighboring room; one of the bedrooms was lit by two small windows (30 by 40 cm.) and the second was dark. The entire joint family slept in the odaia where each married couple had its own bed. Clay benches along two sides of the room were also used for sleeping. The unmarried people slept in the nevestarnik. The house had been built during the period of Turkish rule, but the exact date of the building is unknown.⁵ Compared with other houses in the village, the Vukadinov joint dwelling is distinguished primarily by its large size. In its planning it is constructed on the same principles as other houses of Sofia district (Figure 2).

The joint family was retained for a very long time in the region of Tryn. During field work we were able to obtain information on several of them: in the village of Lialintsy there lived at the beginning of the twentieth century the joint family of the Klinzurovs. The senior member of this family was Todor Klinzurov; seven married sons and several daughters who left home upon marrying (their exact number could not be established) carried on the farming operation with the old man Todor. Todor's son Mladen had five children; Stoyan, three; Georgi, three; Blagoi was childless. The number of children of

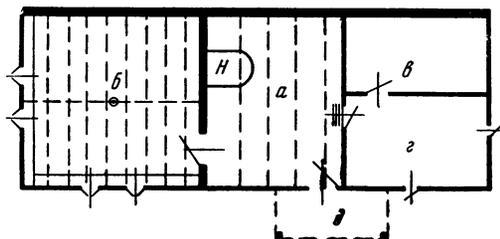


Figure 1: House of the Vukadinov joint family, village of Zheleznitsa, Sofia raion: a--kyshta; b--odaia; c--d--odaiche; e--chardak; n--hearth. Measured by V. Frolec.

Velichko, Stoilo and Ivan could not be determined. The joint family numbered more than 30 persons. Its members carried on agriculture and animal husbandry (the family owned 100 dekar of land, 80 sheep, 20 goats, 20 oxen and horses), and some of the members were masons and went each year to find work in Rumania. The family had one house where in the summer there lived only the senior member with his wife, some other members and the children. The others were occupied in herding the livestock on the mountain pastures. The entire family gathered together twice a year; at Christmas and on the Festival of St. George, its former patron. On these days there was a big party at which all of the members of the family sat at one table. All the earnings of the family were in the hands of the senior member. The joint family split up after the death of old Todor Klinzurov in 1924.

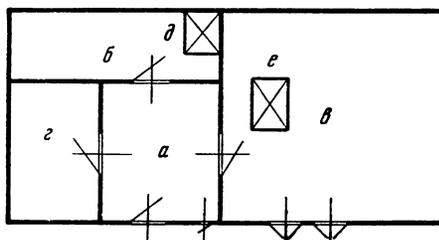


Figure 2: One-story joint-family house inhabited until 1924 by 19 persons, village of Dragovishtitsa, Sofia raion: a, b--kyshta; c--golema odaia; d--odaiche; e--ognishte; f--kamna. Measured by V. Frolec 1961.

The village of Busintsy, in Tryn district, is interesting. It was famous for pottery; there was no house here where a potter did not work (on this point see Stankov 1961). Until World War I the joint family of the Stoikovs, consisting of 50 persons, lived in Busintsy. The men of this family were potters, herdsman, or farmers (the family had 200 dekar of land). The senior member of the joint family was Diuro Stoikov. He decided who was to be a potter, who a herdsman, who would work the land, and who would go to work as a potter in Rumania, Serbia, or elsewhere. . . . After the splitting up of the joint family, the family of the youngest son remained living in the father's house. . . .

In Lomnitsa [Tryn district near the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border] there lived the joint family of the Marikovs. The senior member was Stoyan Iliev

Marikov (in 1940 he was about 80 years old). The families of his sons farmed with him: Gigo, with three children; Khristo with eight; Diuro with three; Stoyan's daughters (Seta, Tonia, Marika, Tsveta) moved into their husbands' homes. The family numbered about twenty-eight persons in all. They all lived in one house of tri-partite plan. They all ate in common and cooked their food on one hearth. The operation was purely a pastoral one (in the summer some members of the family always lived in sheds on the mountain pastures)....

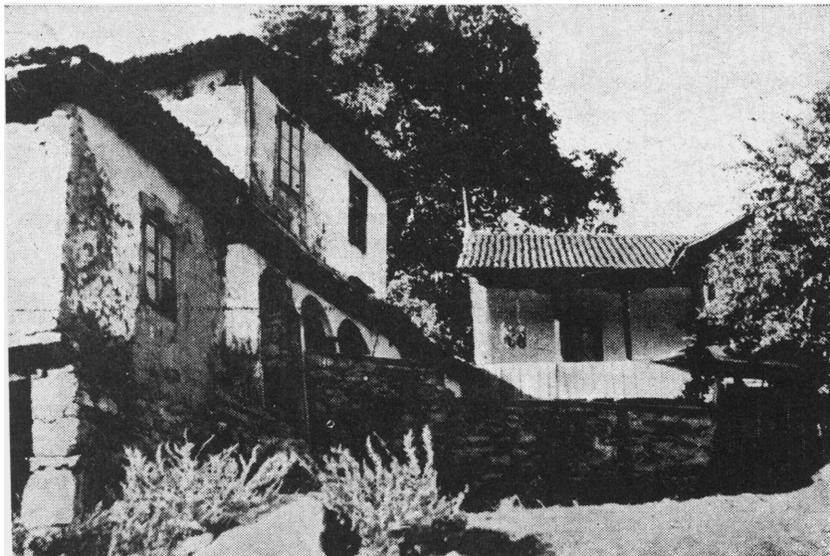
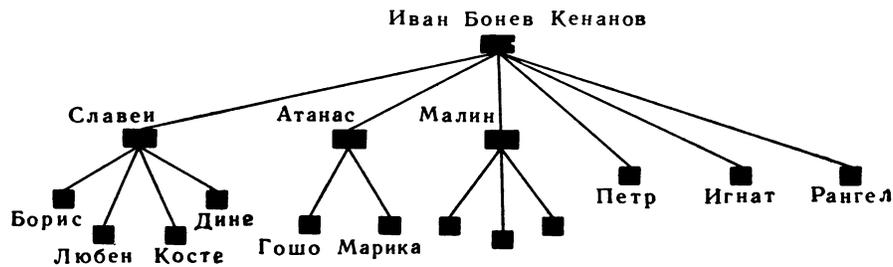


Figure 3: Dwelling of the Vukadinov joint family, village of Lomnitsa, district of Tryn. Photograph by V. Frolec 1963; two of the four houses belonging to this family are visible. [The description of this family resembles the others given, and is omitted. Tr.]

Joint families at the end of the last century and the beginning of this one were retained also in another part of western Bulgaria, in the region of Samokov. In the small foothill village of Belchin I obtained information about several joint families. I became most familiar with three of them--the Bonevs, Vukovs, and Penevs.

The senior member of the Bonev joint family was Bonia Kenanov. With him were three of his brothers with their families. Bonia Kenanov had three married sons, Kolia, Pavel and Ivan. The joint family lived in one house, with a larger number of rooms than in houses where small families live. The joint family split up in 1910 and individual component families built their own houses.

Ivan Bonev Kenanov put up a three-part house (odaia + kyshta + kiler) with a very large odaia (5.5 x 5.5 meters) (Figure 6). This was a structure of the usual western Bulgarian type: wattled walls, half-hipped roof covered with tiles, clay floor; the ceiling was on rafters, closed. The hearth was located in the extreme left corner of the room, called "u kyshty." The odaia was not heated. Ivan's family, which moved into this house, gradually grew into a joint family:



Ivan Bonev Kenanov also had three daughters who left home after marriage. The economy was run under the leadership of the old man, Ivan Bonev. Food was prepared on one hearth and all ate together. The cooking was done in turn by all women of the family. The order of turns was determined by the senior member's wife. The operation was a combined agricultural and herding one. The family had 200 dekaras of land, 30 head of cattle, 60 sheep and 50 horses. The money was managed by the senior member who also distributed the work among the men (who would look after the sheep, who would care for the cows, who would plow, etc.). In the summer the old people and the children slept in the house (in the odaia); the others usually spent the night outside the house (in the sheds, granaries, etc.). In the winter the entire family was gathered under one roof; people slept on rugs laid directly on the floor. The joint family split up after the death of the senior member in 1946. . . .

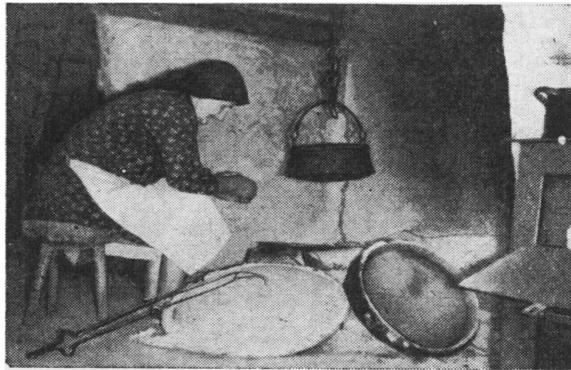


Figure 4: Oven (ognishte) in one of the houses of the Vukadinov family.

The data on the joint families in western Bulgaria clearly indicate two main types of joint-family dwelling: (1) several houses located in one courtyard, only one of them the paternal house, having a common hearth for all the families; (2) one house for all members of the joint family.

The first type of joint-family dwelling was characteristic especially of large and wealthy joint families. This type was widespread up to the middle of the nineteenth century when the joint family in western Bulgaria attained its greatest development. Several houses in one courtyard were also found during the later period and among joint families with fewer numbers. This is indicated by the data of Kanitz and later field investigators.



Figure 5: House of the Koshulanov joint family. Village of Vukan, district of Tryn. Photo by V. Frolec 1963.

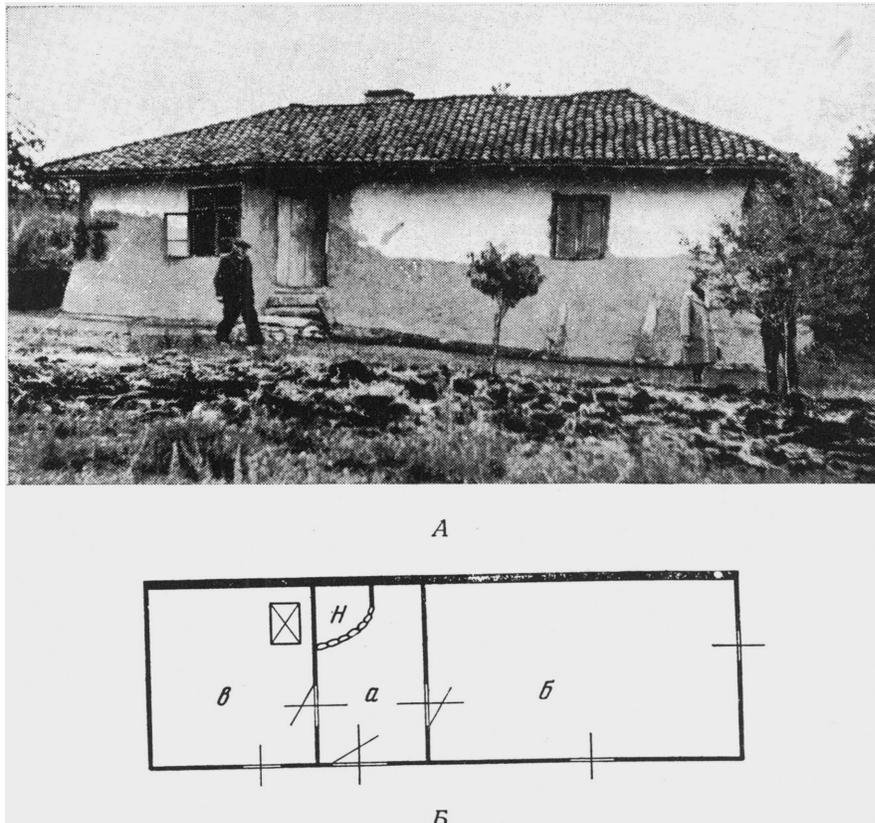


Figure 6: Great house of the Bonev family, village of Belchin, district of Samokov. (A) General view (photo by V. Frolec 1963); (B) Plan of the house: (a) kyshta, (b) odaia, (c) kiler.

With the decrease in the number of members in the joint family in the second half of the nineteenth century, and in the beginning of the twentieth, the number of buildings in the courtyard where individual married couples lived also decreased. How did a joint-family dwelling of this type look? Our data on this, from western Bulgaria, are very incomplete. However, even on the basis of them, and by analogy with Yugoslavian territory (Kanitz 1868:80-81, 234-235; Cvijić 1922:361-363; Nikolić 1903:125; Balzer 1899:232; Kojić 1949:122, 143; Schultze 1927:pl. XI, etc.), we can reconstruct a rather exact picture. The center of the joint-family courtyard was the paternal house with the hearth. Around it were arranged a number of smaller buildings (their number depending on the number of married couples in the joint family), in which the hearth was usually lacking. These were, as a rule, one-room buildings with wattled walls, half-hipped straw roofs, and no windows. Their internal furnishings were also very simple: a bed, a shelf, etc. The family was here only during the evening and to sleep. In western Bulgaria we were not able to find a special designation for such structures.⁶ It is possible that no special term for them existed. Precisely because these buildings had several designations, they were called by appropriate names in each concrete case. Analogous buildings existed in the past, not only among the southern Slavs, but also in the territory of other Slavic peoples. L. Niederle mentions these buildings in connection with the old Slavic klet [cell] (Niederle 1913:750-758).

Along with these structures, there were also in the joint-family courtyard other buildings (wattle containers for grain, barns, various sheds, byres for the livestock, etc.), which served the needs of the entire operation.

The type of joint-family courtyard which we have described is undoubtedly among the most ancient form of the Slavic joint-family dwelling. This conclusion is confirmed by the comparison of ethnographic materials with the data of archeology, which are so far known only on the eastern Slavic territory (Pitterová 1958).⁸

Less numerous joint families in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries usually lived in a large house.

Field materials and other data indicate that within this type of joint-family dwelling there were two types distinguished by the character of their daily use. In the first case the entire joint family slept together in one room (only the young married couples sleeping in a separate bedroom, called in some regions the *nevestarnik*). The senior member and his wife always had a bed of their own; the other members of the household slept on rugs on the floor, or in separate cots for each family. In the other case, each of the married couples had a separate room in the house where the bed and all necessary furniture was placed. These rooms never had hearths and were used exclusively for sleeping.

At the present stage in the study of the problem it is impossible to say which of the two types of joint-family dwelling is the more ancient. However, in all probability, the joint family originally lived in one common room. This is indicated both by the materials assembled through concrete study of joint families in western Bulgaria, and by the development of planning of the house on this territory (on the development of house planning in western

Bulgaria see Kozhukharov 1958, 1961; Frolec 1964a, 1964b). Studies have shown that the fundamental types of planning of the houses in the second half of the nineteenth century were the two-part layout (Figure 7) and the three-part plan. Together with them the one-room house was also retained. This plan of dwelling was produced by the necessity of accommodating several families for the night in one room. It may be assumed that before the first half of the nineteenth century some small joint families also lived in one-room houses with hearths (*kyshta*, *izha*) which, in the process of further development, became the nucleus of the western Bulgarian dwelling (as of the south Slavic dwelling in general).

It is understandable that it was precisely the existence of the joint family which facilitated the rapid segmentation of the western Bulgarian dwelling and the formation of a number of peculiarities of its planning, which were not present in the nineteenth century in the dwelling of the western Slavs. Among these peculiarities is, in the first instance, the existence in one house of a number of unheated rooms adjoining the room which contains the hearth (Figure 8). This shows that in the last century (as is confirmed by the data of several authors), both types of planning of the joint-family dwelling under one roof were already disseminated. In this connection, one must bear in mind that the joint family occupied the house usually in the winter. In the summer some of the members of the family spent the night in sheds in the mountains where they were pasturing the livestock, and also in farm buildings (granaries, sheds, byres, threshing floor).¹⁰ This tradition developed because of the special character of the economy of the joint family, which combined agriculture with stock-breeding.

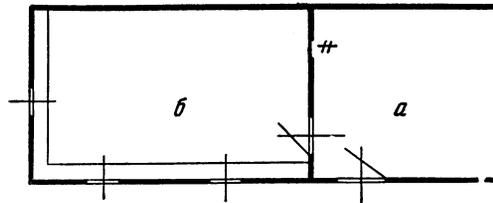


Figure 7: Two-part house of Slava Georgiev Pena, village of Krainitsy, district of Stanka Dimitrov. The house was occupied at the beginning of the century by 20 persons: a--*u kyshty*; b--*odaia*. (Measured by V. Frolec 1963.)

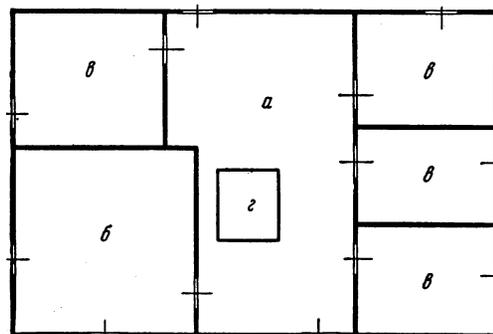


Figure 8: Joint-family house, village of Zabel, district of Tryn: a--*izba*; b--*odaia*; c--*kiler*; d--*ognishche* (after T. Zlatev).

The setting apart of separate rooms in the house for conjugal families¹¹ was characteristic in general of the period of the decay of the joint family. This is also indicated by certain field materials.

In 1963, while gathering material on folk architecture in the village of Belchin, district of Samokov, I visited a house occupied by Stoyan Stimenov Chukachov with his wife and sons. The older sons, Mitko and Angel, are married and have children; Doncho is unmarried. Their house consists of four living rooms, a kitchen, and a small corridor (Figure 9). Each family occupies

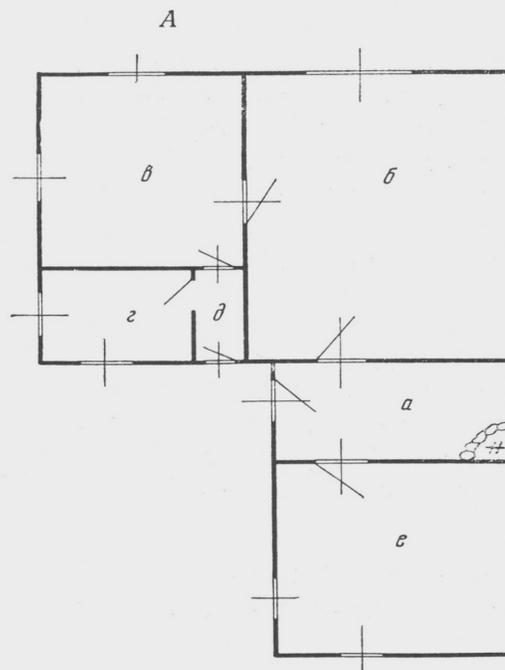


Figure 9: House of the joint family of the Chukachovs, village of Belchin, district of Samokov. A--Overall view (photographed by V. Frolec 1963); B--Plan of the house: a--kitchen; b--Stoyan's room; c--Mitko's room; d--Doncho's room; e--corridor; f--Angel's room. (Measured by V. Frolec 1963.)

one room (the father, Stoyan, and his wife live in the largest one), and the kitchen is used by all together. All the rooms adjoin each other. The house and the entire farm is the property of Stoyan Chukachov. In familiarizing myself more closely with this family, I understood that this joint family was gradually dividing up: despite the fact that the entire property is held by the senior member, each family possesses a definite sum of money of its own. Survivals of the joint family are retained in joint work on the farm and in a common table, which, it is true, is not always observed (when there are quarrels between the individual families, each of them cooks separately). The house has only one hearth.

An analogous case is described by R. Pesheva in the village of Dolno Kobile, near Kiustendil. Here, until 1960, the seven Stankov brothers lived in one house. Originally this had been the family of Krysto Stankov and those of his three sons--Iovo, Dino and Mano. After Krysto's death (about 1875), the three brothers continued to operate the farm together (about 100 dekaras of plowland and meadows, 100 dekaras of woodland, about 150 head of cattle). The joint family consisted, in the beginning, of 12 persons (Iovo's family, 3 persons; Dino's, 4 persons; Mano's, 5 persons). After their sons married, the number of members of the joint family increased to 30. Before the division, the joint family consisted of six individual families: (1) the family of Grigor (the son of Iovo); (2) the family of Mitso (the son of Dino) including two unmarried sons and the families of two married ones; (3) the family of Mano, including three bachelor sons and the family of one married son. Grigor's family lived in one room; the families of Dino and Mano and of their sons occupied two rooms each. The families of Grigor, Mitso and Mano had their own hearths and their own bedrooms, and ate separately (Pesheva 1961: 519-520).

The examples cited indicate clearly the decay of joint families and the increasing autonomy of individual families. The division of the farm is accompanied by financial autonomy of each small family, separate consumption of food, etc. In the dwelling, the appearance of several hearths in one house is a manifestation of the decay of the joint family. The house itself remains in common ownership until such time as the individual families build their own houses. This is the transitional stage between the joint family and the individual family.

In the initial period of decay of the joint family, certain heads of families begin to make an effort to divide the room containing the hearth from the other rooms in the house. As a result, houses have appeared in which the entrance into the dwelling rooms is directly from the chardak and not through the kyshta (as had been usual earlier). (This was noted by T. Zlatev 1955:89-90; 1948:6.)

In studying the joint-family dwelling, it is necessary to direct attention to a number of questions connected with the internal daily life of the family.

The house and the outbuildings were in general the property of the joint family. Landholdings, livestock, etc., were also collectively owned. The personal property was limited to clothing and objects of personal use

(Bogišić 1867:22-24; Bobchev 1906-1907:92; Marinov 1892-1894:II, 184; Markova 1960:75; Nahodil 1958:74).

The common dwelling was one of the major indices of the joint family. The expressions "ot s"shtata k"shta" ("from the same house"), "ot edna k"shta" ("from one house"), denoted specific kin relationships.¹² Only persons related by kinship traceable from a common ancestor could be members of a joint family: a father with his sons and their sons, uncles with their nephews and children, brothers with their children. In the joint family there could also be other close relatives, or even members taken in later, for instance runaways, sons-in-law, etc. (Bobchev 1906-1907:58).¹³ At the head of the joint family stood the master (Marinov 1892-1894:II, 186; Bobchev 1906-1907:64) who, in the district of Tryn, was called stareishina, starets; in the region of Sofia and Samokov most often stariot, domakin, dedo; in some places--for example the village of Bogdanov bol--naprednik; and in the village of Khaskovo s"dnik. (Bobchev 1906-1907:57; Irechek 1899:87; author's field notes 1963; see also Kosven 1948:8-9.)

This was, as a rule, the senior member of the joint family, most often its founder. He supervised the entire life of the family and represented it in all respects.¹⁴ . . . The wife of the head of the family was called gospozha, stara, Stara baba, domakinia. All the women in the joint family were subordinate to her. The head and his wife always lived in the main house with the hearth which was the center of the joint-family courtyard (Kosven 1948:9, 19-20; Murko 1906:95). In the entire courtyard of the joint family there was only one hearth which united all the members of the family into one whole. Around the hearth there took place the assembly of all the men of the zadruga, food was prepared, and all sat down to one table. The founding of a new hearth signified the division of the joint family.¹⁵ For this reason the paternal hearth (bashtino ognishte) was worshipped by all members of the joint family.

Even in the period when the joint family was flourishing in western Bulgaria, there were cases in which it broke up into several smaller families, numbering about 20-25 persons.¹⁶ The main cause of such segmentation was the excessive number of members of the family, which made it difficult to assemble in one courtyard all the property and to accommodate all the members. In the second half of the nineteenth century, because of the disintegration of the subsistence economy and the penetration of capitalist relationships, the process of gradual decay of the joint family in western Bulgaria was accelerated. This process reached its peak at the beginning of this century, when the joint family in western Bulgaria, to all intents and purposes, disappeared. Moderately large joint families were the dominant form of family in the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism. The difference between the joint family in the period of its flourishing (up to the middle of the nineteenth century in western Bulgaria) and joint families with fewer members (which were characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth) consisted primarily in the different form of ownership of the means of production. While the joint family in the period of its flourishing was typically marked by collective ownership of the means of production, in the joint family of the following period the stareishina was the undisputed owner of all the property (for detail on this, see Kosven 1948:11, 28; Islami 1950:121-126; Pesheva 1961:514-523; 1958:21; Markova 1960:68).

The process of decay did not take place in the same way everywhere. In certain cases, after the death of the stareishina, his sons divided, while in others (chiefly among the wealthiest) they remained together. The supervision of the economy passed to the eldest or the most experienced of the brothers.

The stareishina prepared the joint family for division in advance. If he decided that the zadruga would divide, he determined the places where the new houses would be built. The area was enclosed by a fence, and byres, granaries, and other farm buildings were set up here (Marinov 1892-1894:II, 205). Houses gradually began to be built for all members of the family, and during the division the elder brother, uncle, nephew, etc., moved into them. The building of a house for each member of the family was the responsibility of the joint family as a whole (Bobchev 1938:6; Dinev 1943:61-62; Dronchilov 1923:100). If the stareishina was the father, he himself separated first in the joint family, and after him his eldest son and the others. The youngest remained in the old house.¹⁷ If, on the other hand, the head of the zadruga was an uncle, the first to separate were the children (nephews) of his eldest brother, then the children of his second brother, and finally the children of the stareishina's youngest brother. The uncle, with his children, remained in the old house. If the joint family was headed by an older brother (lalo), the one following him in seniority was the first to separate, then the third brother, and finally the youngest. The oldest of the brothers remained in the house. In the event that the mother was still alive, she remained with the oldest brother. If the youngest brother was still too young, he remained at home with the mother, and the oldest brother left with his family, like the others. This gradual division continued for about three years. During this period the land was worked jointly. The property underwent final division after the houses for each member had been built. Money to build the houses was taken out of the common treasury of the joint family. In the event that the head was the father, houses were built for each of the sons. If the head was an uncle, houses were not put up for all the nephews separately, but only as many as the stareishina had brothers. If, on the other hand, the head was an elder brother, houses were built for each of his brothers (cf., Marinov 1892-1894:IV, 94-95). The household utensils were only partially divided: one person received a tub, another a barrel, etc. Small items--sieves, pots, etc., remained in the old house and were divided only in the event that there were several of each type of vessel. Bags and covers were left, and everyone took his own bedspread (Bobchev 1906-1907:116).¹⁸ Moving of the separate families into new houses was accompanied by many ceremonies.¹⁹

Farm buildings, byres, granaries, root-cellars, grist mills, sawmills, washboards and the like were, in the majority of cases, not divided after the break-up of the joint family. They were given as property to the one who remained in the paternal house. Only in cases where many farm buildings stood in the courtyard were they sometimes divided, but for technical reasons (the unprofitability of transporting such buildings), this happened rarely. The buildings were appraised and the new owner paid the other members a set sum of money. All members of the family had the right to use mills and ovens even after their separation. A large threshing floor was divided into sections, according to the number of newly established houses (Marinov 1892-1894:II, 208; IV, 93; Bobchev 1906-1907:120; Markova 1960:75; author's field notes 1961-1963).

Dwellings for the individual members of the former joint family were usually built close to each other. The growth and division of the family led to the building of more and more houses which formed entire quarters of villages (*makhaly*), called by the name of the joint family which had existed earlier.²⁰ And despite the fact that each of these houses was entirely autonomous, the relations between families living in one *makhala* preserved definite connections which indicate their close kinship (on this question, see Kosven 1950:71-72; Ikhilov 1950:130-131, etc.). The patronymy^(a) also played a large role in the formation of clustered settlements, which constitute the most widespread settlement-type in western Bulgaria (Frolec 1963b:126).

When joint families divided, the families of two brothers often remained living in one house. They lived either in the old, paternal house or in a newly constructed dwelling. Sometimes they began by farming jointly and prepared the food on one hearth. In the course of time, however, each of the families always began to conduct operations separately. We encounter such a transitional form between the joint family and the individual family²¹ in western Bulgaria to this day.²² The problem of the origin of double houses, which were widespread in all of western Bulgaria, is closely connected with the questions of the joint residence of the families of two brothers under one roof. But this problem goes beyond the bounds of the present article. . . .

ENDNOTES

¹The importance of the study of the joint-family dwelling has already been emphasized by M. O. Kosven (1948:17). See also Nahodil 1951:80; Takoeva 1952:187.

²The extensive literature on this problem is cited by Bobchev 1906-1907.

³Data on joint families with 60 members are cited for the last half of the nineteenth century by Marinov 1892-1894:II, 182; Kanitz 1882:I, 205-206; II, 4, 137-138, etc.; Irechek 1899:Pt. I, 87-88; see also Wilhelmy 1935:I, 99; Dronchilov 1923:150.

⁴Ten dekaras equal one hectare.

⁵The house was measured by me in 1961; in 1963 the structure collapsed.

⁶In Yugoslavia these are called vajat.

⁷Similar planning of the joint-family courtyard is also known among non-Slavic peoples. See for example Ikhilov 1950:189; see also Kosven 1948:16-17; Kharadze 1954:135.

⁸This work cites the relevant archeological literature.

⁹This type of joint-family dwelling was also usual in certain east Slavic regions. See for example Gantskaia, Lebedeva, and Chizhikova 1960:27-29; Nahodil 1958a:311, 313-314, 320.

¹⁰Analogous data are available from certain parts of Yugoslavia (cf. Nikolić 1903:125; Cvijić 1922:357; Kanitz 1868:80-81) and among the east Slovakian [Trans-Carpathian] Ukrainians (cf. Nahodil 1958:307-308).

¹¹The same conclusion was reached on the basis of the study of the Albanian joint family by Isljami (1950:180); see also Studenetskaia 1948:108-109; Takoeva 1952:187; Blomkvist 1956:171-172; Kharuzin 1902:353-354; Pražak 1941, etc.

¹²The most widespread terms for the joint family in western Bulgaria were the following: kupchina, u kup, obshcho (zaedno-bratski) zhiveiat, etc. For the members of the zadruga the term druzhina was used (u k"shchi sme mnogo druzhina), and also the term drugari and others. Cf. Bobchev 1938:4; 1896:28; Pesheva 1961:513; Kosven 1948:7.

¹³During the period when the joint family was flourishing, all of its members were sure that they could live happily only together.

¹⁴The stareishina enjoyed great respect in the family. This was manifested particularly in the fact that he sat at the head of the table, and no one dared to sit down before he did, etc.

¹⁵"Teshko na taia k"shcha, u koiato goriat dva og"nia"; "Deka se klad"t dva og"nia, tamo bereket niama." Cf. Marinov 1892-1894:II, 195; Bobchev 1906-1907:78.

¹⁶Pesheva (1960:523) calls the small joint families "family-zadruga households" (semeino-zadrushno domakinstvo).

¹⁷This was also the rule in the territory of other peoples. Cf. for example Demelich 1876:24; Isljami 1950:124; Studenetskaia 1950:184; Gantskaia, Lebedeva and Chizhikova 1960:185.

¹⁸There was something like this on other ethnic territories as well (see for example Isljami 1950:124).

¹⁹Bobchev (1906-1907:117) writes: "Separation from the former house is usually accompanied by particular rituals which speak of the distant past when divisions of families were a great rarity. These rituals recall the transfer of domestic idols into another house."

²⁰For example, in the village of Zheleznitsa near Sofia there was formed a makhala "Golemi Vukadinovy" consisting of ten houses occupied by former members of the Vukadinov joint family. The Marikov joint family gave its name to a makhala in the village of Lomnitsa near Tryn, etc.

²¹Nahodil (1958) studied these questions among the Ukrainians of eastern Slovakia.

²²For example, the brothers Panaiatov with their families, lived together in the village of Lialintsy near Tryn, and the brothers Diuro Momchilov Stoikov and Sytir Momchilov Stoikov lived in this way in the village of Busintsy near Tryn.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

(a) The standard Soviet term for a corporate patrilineage, introduced by M. O. Kosven.

(b) The following abbreviations are used: SE=Sovetskaia etnografiia; TIE=Trudy Instituta etnografii.

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