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RESEARCHING AND PLANNING THE RURAL SPACE: THE WORK OF BRANISLAV KOJIĆ

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Abstract: An architect and ruralist, professor and academician, Branislav Kojić made a remarkable contribution to the study of village architecture and villages, their design and planning. His approach was thorough, systematic, comprehensive and interdisciplinary, and resulted in the establishment of a special trend in the study of the village in these regions — “ruralism”. His research had interregional aspect, encompassing space of all the six former republics of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, and with consideration of local and regional specificities. Creativity of Branislav Kojić united the elements of architecture, urbanism, ethnology, human geography, and allowed the filling of gaps in the former knowledge and approaches to rural issues. In order to present Branislav Kojić’s scientific opus and contribution, the paper presents the basic lines of his work, thinking and development of ideas, following the hierarchy of spatial units - from a rural house, a courtyard, through a village *atar*, a rural settlement, a system of settlements and a rural region, and finally to the villages in the regional spatial frames.

Key words: Kojić, village, village architecture, “ruralism”

Introduction

Branislav Kojić (1899–1987), an architect and ruralist², professor and academician, sees himself in an unpublished autobiography as unobtrusive person prone to scientific research, systematic, persistent, concise, tolerant, responsible and with a clear long-term vision (Kojić, 1975a). Reactualizing Kojić’s outstanding contribution to the study of village architecture and villages, their design and planning, the intention of the authors of this paper is to demonstrate how his professional and scientific work has largely been colored with his character traits.

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² Following term “ruralism”, which Kojić used and founded as a new discipline in 1958 in the title “Village Architecture and Ruralism”, and in accordance with the terminology used in contemporary science dealing with rural issues, we can define Branislav Kojić as a “ruralist”.

Kojić began work on the problem of village before the Second World War, but this topic became actual after the liberation. Socialist Yugoslavia inherited a rural, low-urbanized country in which the issues of the life of the village were of vital importance. This was reinforced by organized resettlement of the population from the passive parts of Herzegovina, Lika and Montenegro to Metohija and Vojvodina, where colonists needed to provide a new living space. In this social context, Kojić begins work on the matter of the village and its systematization, calling it “ruralism” (Kojić, 1958a). Kojić (1973a) sees the formation of the Seminar for Agricultural Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture in 1939, and then the scientific efforts after the Second World War as the ground-breaking moments for the wider scientific interest in the village and village architecture.

Kojić’s work on collecting and systematizing knowledge about the village reveals him as a persistent and thorough person; he was open and tolerant by joining different scientific disciplines with the village in the centre and encompassing all elements of the rural; he was responsible for the people and natural entities he visited and the tasks he approached in the research; he was practical, because he advocated the principles of functionality, and he was above all persistent and enthusiastic, as he found solutions to the challenges that the village faced, often at the rear of the socio-economic system.

The creativity of Branislav Kojić made it possible to fill gaps in the literature on rural settlements and architecture. In order to present the original way of living and settlements, in the territory of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, as well as Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, he relied on archaeological and historical studies in his previous works, as well as on anthropogeographic and ethnographic material on organization and development of housing and settlements (Vlahović, 1977). However, these were the most elemental knowledge, still incomplete, modest and unsystematic, which helped him to understand certain phenomena, the historical perception of the process, but also to be a basis for finding new approaches in solving problems related to village architecture and settlements.

In order to understand some of the phenomena and problems he dealt with, he used different written sources. He mostly relied on the interpretations of the ruling official documents, the charters, as well as the biographies of well-known Serbian politicians and historians: Djura Daničić, Ljubomir Stojanović, Konstantin Jiriček and especially Stojan Novaković. Novaković left significant observations on the organization of the old villages in Serbia, the architecture and the way of life in them, and his knowledge served Branislav Kojić as a

scientific basis for the substantiation of own conclusions (Novaković, 1891). Kojić gladly consulted the research and the descriptions presented in the travelogues and the works of earlier authors, in which the cities, towns and villages of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century were described (Stefanović Karadžić, 1969; Milićević, 1876; Karić, 1887; Vujić, 1901; Nušić, 1902; Djordjević, 1912; Djordjević, 1926).

The most important scientific basis in the works of Branislav Kojić was the results of research of Jovan Cvijić who expands scientific aspects of the era by his field observations, and complements the scientific knowledge of phenomena and processes in Serbia and in the Balkan Peninsula by anthropogeographic and ethnographic issues (Vlahović, 1991). At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Jovan Cvijić (1896; 1902; 1922) established scientific foundation for the study of the settlements and the population to which Kojić referred to in terms of terminological determinants, as well as in the typology of the settlements and houses, in searching for the primary causes for the creation of local and regional diversities and the like. Kojić critically approaches Cvijić's research, upgrading them and checking in the circumstances of that period.

When studying the settlements of certain geographic areas, Kojić (1949a) often consulted "old folk oral literature", such as epic poems, short stories and other folk proverbs. Although they were usually coloured with the aspirations and beliefs of the people who created them, such sources provided a striking notion of the appearance of the settlements and the village architecture that was not preserved. Also, they were helpful in interpreting different terminology (e.g. towers and enclosed porches).

Observing and understanding village in a wider context, Kojić also determined the direction of his further scientific training and profiling. Apart from the facts of village architecture, outstanding presentations and drawings, his earliest synthesised works already contain a certain discussion on the village itself: "The village was an inexhaustible source of strength that it gave to a mankind throughout history. It was always taken from it and returned a little. The village has never been the object of serious care and work. The main part of spiritual and material endeavours and activities was intended for cities. Science and art as the highest domains of man's creation did not give anything to the village" (Kojić, 1941, p. 3).

Branislav Kojić's evolution of scientific thought took place in several phases, for which one can clearly distinguish leading ideas and subject of research, the

dominant research problems, “trips” to other scientific disciplines through scientific cooperation and connection with various relevant institutions, as well as certain social circumstances which created policies and views on the development, survival and transformation of the village.

Branislav Kojić’s scientific and professional work has been marked by several different, chronologically connected periods. They can clearly follow the shift in the focus of research. The aim of the authors of this paper is to show the basic lines of Kojić’s work, thinking and development of ideas. In this respect, a hierarchy of spatial units has been created — from a rural house, a courtyard, through a village *atar*, a rural settlement, a system of settlements and a rural region, and finally to the villages in regional spatial frames — which is generally based on the hierarchy of social groups. This paper presents the chronology of Kojić’s scientific and professional activities, gives an overview of published scientific papers in the field of rural issues, in order to re-represent and emphasize his scientific opus and contribution. In addition, the paper will cover individual hierarchical spatial units for which the titles are taken from Kojić’s texts.

Rural house — “the essence of building skills”

Branislav Kojić has made an outstanding contribution in the field of advancement of village architecture in Serbia. Starting his professional career as an architect-designer, form of the building was of exceptional significance to him. He is one of the few architects whose interest has been awakened by village architecture. Other architects, however, as Kojić points out, before and during his time, focused on the city and sought only refreshment and decorative elements, and they saw village architecture as ungrateful, non-monumental and unrepresentative (Kojić, 1935; Kojić, 1941).

Kojić (1933) pointed out that it was not built with the intention of being enjoyable to a passer-by, but having a logical construction and being functional, and the harmonious rhythm of the holes, the steady eaves, the smooth flat surfaces of the walls and the absence of decoration follow as a consequence, while all these was arranged and balanced. This significant contribution served as a basis for further consideration, evaluation and etymological significance of the presented issues (Vlahović, 1977). In fact, by studying the old urban Balkan house, Kojić noted the importance of the elements of national construction, which were of great importance for the functioning of the whole building. By this he returns to the national roots, the undeniable need for a functional organization of space in the building. In creating modern village architecture,

Kojić thinks that “it is necessary to examine the state of the existing architecture, its spirit, conditions of work and development, the tendencies of construction, which can only be achieved through organized work and engagement of experts on the spot in the village and among the people” (Kojić, 1935, p. 108). In this way, he brought into the relationship the study of architecture in the village and in the city, and found motives for further research.

Kojić published the first synthesised review in this area in 1941 in the work *Architecture of the Serbian Village — Šumadija and Pomoravlje*. He chose this place as different from other geographical units, since it was first liberated from the Turkish authorities. Here, Kojić aimed to determine and demonstrate the basic principles of the development of village architecture, its characteristics in terms of spatial and constructive evolution and elements of devices and decoration.

Another synthesised work was published in 1949 — *The Old Urban and Village Architecture in Serbia*, in which Kojić sublimated the knowledge and results of the research in our area in terms of the way of building, the form and type of a rural house. This work has awakened the great attention of our professional and scientific public of that time. In his autobiography, Kojić puts forward positive reviews and overviews about this work given by Aleksandar Deroko, who emphasizes the importance of the work for “getting to know and informing about this type of our cultural material heritage”; Branko Maksimović, who sees the work as “a contribution to a poorly developed architecture”; and Dutch, English, Russian and French scientists point to its exceptional contribution to this field, in the form of a turning point in the Balkans (Kojić, 1975a).

His works on the village architecture were permeated with elements of architecture, urbanism, ethnology and anthropogeography, with a pronounced tendency of thematic and spatial systematization. The material about the village architecture Kojić “pedantically collected, arranged and made available to the scientific needs” (Vlahović, 1977, p. 167). As a form of creativity, Kojić sees village architecture as the work of a long and peaceful evolution, an experience passed on to the generations, the work of the collective of peasants and craftsmen.

He dealt with the form and function of the rural buildings first, and then he tried to make the typology of the rural style of construction and the rural house, to determine the stages of development, etc. His research is focused on the regional typology of rural houses and the establishment of legitimacy in their development and geographic distribution: Kosovo and Metohija (Kojić, 1936;

Kojić, 1949), Belgrade (Kojić, 1949), the Vrmac Peninsula (Kojić, 1953), Boka Kotorska (Kojić, 1953; Kojić, 1954; Kojić, 1956a), the Montenegrin Coast (Kojić, 1957), Slovenia and Croatia (Kojić, 1958a), Užice (Kojić, 1961a), Vojvodina (Kojić, 1961b; 1966), etc. He had a concrete approach and the clearly set principle according to which he studied the method of construction, the structure and organization of the rural houses from various regions of the former state.

Kojić thinks that the village architecture can be traced chronologically, because its development took place in a logical order in the phases that merged, changing various constructions and spatial dispositions (Kojić, 1941). Like his predecessors, he notices that the development of a rural house is influenced by a set of natural factors that have determined the constructive set of the building, as well as economic and political factors that have influenced more forcefully and have caused greater variability in the spatial dispositions of the building. He distinguishes four phases of the development of village architecture, which are a shortened version of the two-century review (Kojić, 1941; Kojić, 1949; Kojić, 1950; Kojić, 1958a; Kojić, 1973a; Kojić, 1977). The first two periods, which lasted until the middle of the nineteenth century, developed spontaneously, without the intervention of the state and profession, when the village architecture represented original, own expression of peasant-craftsman, with a gradual regional differentiation of types. As such, it represented a faithful picture of the general cultural and economic situation of our village (Kojić, 1935). Another two periods, from the late nineteenth century, were marked by the developed spatial and structural shape of the house, significantly improved financial capabilities and building culture, significant influence of urban architecture and reduction of regional disparities.

Kojić further expanded his views by exploring various elements of village architecture by working with several institutions, such as the Faculty of Agriculture in 1930–1931, the Ethnographic Institute since 1947 or the Institute of Hygiene in the period 1950–1957, encircling the achievements and knowledge in this field. At the same time, he singled out the most important aspects and the basic problems which burdened peasantry and village architecture, such as hygiene and health, where the house of a farmer does not provide the basic conditions for life and health, and social aspect, where the house should provide an opportunity of more comfortable life and more rational and more profitable work.

Kojić devoted a considerable part of his research to hygiene in a rural house and farmstead, that is, to the improvement of often poor hygienic conditions. As the

functional differentiation of the rural apartment was carried out with the development of outbuildings in the yard, these conditions were gradually changing (Kojić, 1960). He did not condemn village architecture, but he emphasized in his study that at that time it responded to the needs of rural household, it was autochthonous, and he found the most important reason for the messiness of our yards in the overburdened housewife who became the head of the household and farm (Kojić, 1960).

As the basic problems, Kojić outlined the construction method in the village, the redevelopment of existing buildings and the settling of empty areas. Visions to solve these problems were in fact the basis for establishing a new approach in the study of the village, which would characterize (Kojić, 1935):

- research work on a broad basis, with comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge, organized for many years of systematic and consequently carried out work, with consultation of various scientific disciplines,
- respecting the local circumstances that affect the development of village architecture and villages,
- respecting habits, construction and material conditions, types of settlements and buildings, organization of the yard, etc.

These were the bases for a new scientific and professional discipline — *ruralism*, which would comprehensively treat the problem of the village, rest on an interdisciplinary and systemic approach, with a clear vision of the development of the village and the preservation of village architecture.

Courtyard — “basic unit within the settlement”

Courtyard is a more complex element of the village structure. It is a place with buildings, yard and farmstead, where various functions of the rural population are organized: family housing and work (Kojić, 1958a). In view of this, Kojić sees the courtyard as a zone in which the influences of several disciplines intertwine: village architecture, which deals with housing buildings; agricultural architecture, which deals with economic buildings and problems of the working part of the village, and ruralism, as a discipline dealing with the spatial organization and planning of the courtyard.

After dealing with this fragment of the rural space, Kojić gradually made a step forward in the previous architectural practice. His starting point was the anthropogeographic research in Cvijić’s manner, particular in terms of determining the position and shape of the courtyard by recording the objects on it. According to the example of Cvijić (1922), he identified the basic factors that

determine the type, shape and organization of the courtyard: the configuration of the terrain (for example, the compact settlements of steep terrain have longitudinal form of courtyard, along the road, at isohypse), economic activity, that is, type of agriculture (e.g. cattle courtyards are the simplest, because grazing takes place outside the courtyard; mixed agricultural production requires the yard of a more complex structure), the size and structure of the household (construction of outbuildings, etc.), the economic condition of the village, that is, the degree of development, and the like (Kojić, 1973a) and the population size of the settlement (influencing the shape of the courtyard). However, Kojić finds that the type of settlement is an essential factor that influences the shape and size of the rural courtyards (Kojić, 1949a).

In this regard, he made a fundamental distinction between the types of courtyard in settlements of varying degree of compaction. In settlements of dispersed type, the courtyard are significantly larger and more diversified in several separate units (internal or home yard, economic or stable and the farmstead). However, he noticed that the settlements of the dispersed type still differ to a certain extent regarding the structure and organization of courtyards, their shape and position. In this regard, he relies the research of this element on differentiation according to regional specifics. Kojić devoted most of his research particularly to this segment, both independently and with his associates (Simonović, Ribar and others), making the typology of the courtyard, organization and arrangement of space that is directly used around the rural house.

Kojić also singles out agricultural facilities as an important segment of the organization of space in the courtyard. He noted that there is a difference in the number of these facilities in the courtyards of different types, but also that contemporary tendencies influence their reduction (size degradation and division of estates, economic determination, that is, engagement in other sectors of activity, facilities of polyfunctional character, etc.). This segment in his scientific and professional work deserves special attention. The results in this field can be partially seen through his engagement in teaching at the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry in Belgrade (1930/31), and then at the Faculty of Architecture in the teaching subject concerning economic buildings (1939). As a result, numerous works were published on the economic yard and the construction of a cooperative village (Kojić, 1941; Kojić, 1947a; Kojić, 1947b; Kojić, 1950), as well as a textbook on the construction of agricultural facilities on a farm estate (Kojić, 1948, Kojić, 1949b). He says about the significance of the architecture of agricultural facilities that it should be understood deeper and more extensively, with the formation of a unique body that would coordinate

activities in that area, with the involvement of peasants in the realization of concrete architectural solutions of the facilities on their farms (Kojić, 1935).

***Atar* — “the most evident feature of the individuality of the village”**

Branislav Kojić considered *atar* (village area) as a working part of the territory of the village, which most firmly determines the village as a community, because it represents a unique and unchangeable, clearly bound system (Kojić, 1958a). His interest in this part of the rural issue has evolved gradually, by examining villages and yards through the prism of environmental relations and the endogenous needs of settlements. Before Kojić, there was little discussion about *atar* as the village element. Among the people, this term is clearly and, usually, rigidly established, and as a term it is defined in the Serbian dictionary (Karadžić Stefanović, 1818). But this rural unit did not attract particular scientific and professional attention. Even Cvijić, according to Kojić (1982), also “ignored the need to study the *atars*” in some way, although this term was clear to him and he used it in his works, leaving this field of research to be one of the directions that his followers should make a contribution.

In the studies of different geographical units, Kojić noticed differences between the *atars* of settlements in terms of organization and position. He singled out a set of different criteria that determine the genesis and organization of *atars*: to a large extent, the configuration of the terrain, that is, geographical conditions (Kojić, 1949a; Kojić, 1958a; Kojić, 1956a); he notes the established legitimacy in the position of the *atars*, which arises from the established social relations and the division of the land, stimulated by purely economic reasons (Kojić, 1956a; Kojić, 1956b); he finds the reasons for the organization of *atars* in historical facts and events that determined the function and boundaries of the *atar* itself (Kojić, 1953); then the attitude towards the settlement (traffic of goods and people, the distance of the furthest points from the centre, the agrarian structure) (Kojić, 1949c), agrarian property, i.e. agri-economic policy, state interventions during the establishment or renewal of *atars* (Kojić, 1956b), socio-political relations (Kojić, 1949c; Kojić, 1961), and similar.

He particularly advocated the spatial arrangement of the *atar* as the unit in which the work and life of the settlement take place, adapted to the needs of the population. Studying the conditions for spatial arrangement of the village, Kojić and his associates made a significant contribution to this topic, determining the genesis, typology, position, size and content of the *atar*, as well as its relation to the settlement, with the quantification of idealized assumptions about the size, position and organization of the *atar*. He found that the shape and structure of

the *atar* are dependent on “the position of the main rural settlement, the arrangement of primary and secondary work centres, the basic traffic network as well as the relation to the neighbouring villages” (Kojić, 1956b, p. 101). Thus, he considered that in each reconstruction and reorganization of the villages, the study of *atars* must be a compulsory segment (Kojić, 1950; Kojić, 1956b).

Rural settlement — “the most important elements in the area of a certain territory”

Branislav Kojić views rural settlements as one of the elements of rural life and environment, as a changing time and space categories, on which the development and arrangement of entire territories are based. His interests in this rural segment are very diverse. They started in his early research period, when the physical and functional settlement structure was dominant research topic, through observation and measurement of various characteristics of the settlements, and then putting these issues into the wider scientific and practical problem, which involves a systematic approach, takes into account the spatial aspect and leans on precise differentiation of different rural categories.

He used a rich cognitive opus of geographic and anthropogeographic nature to create the scientific starting points of the rural settlements, supplementing them by historical data and representations, archives, travelogues and cartographic basis. Most of his works on rural settlements begin with a short chronological review of the genesis and historical development of a network of rural settlements, about two centuries long (Kojić & Simonović, 1975). He examined the genesis of rural settlements in Serbia and established the dominant factors of their evolution.

A special segment of the study of rural settlements was their more precise differentiation. The studies and measurements that he carried out were based on anthropogeographic scientific knowledge, in particular Cvijić’s morphological typology of the villages (Cvijić, 1922; Kojić, 1949a; Kojić, 1973a; Kojić & Simonović, 1975). He dealt with the basic characteristics of the types of settlements: genesis, position and shape, the determinants of certain types (morphology of terrain, historical circumstances, inherited system of social order, occupation of population, etc.), the contents of the settlement (courtyards, blocks, distance and frequency of settlements), the transport network, social and economic content, etc. (Kojić, 1958a; Kojić, 1969; Kojić, 1974; Kojić & Simonović, 1975). However, he considered that, although fundamental, anthropogeographic typology of rural settlements rests on descriptive criteria, rather than quantitative, measurable characteristics of the settlements, and in that

sense, it is not sufficient, complete and adequate for solving the problems of rural development. In this regard, he underlines that it is necessary to revise the typological classifications of rural settlements in Serbia by introducing numerical indicators that would enable more precise differentiation of types of villages, the establishment of transitional forms and the development of the phenomenon in the context of existing types of settlements, as well as the degree of representation of certain settlement characteristics (Kojić, 1969; Kojić & Simonović, 1975).

According to Kojić, an important segment of the problem of rural settlements is their differentiation. He critically expresses views on the official dichotomous division of the settlements, and sees this problem at higher instances, considering the relations in the social community. Although the differences between rural settlements are evident, there is no scientific or practical need to introduce new terms for different rural categories³. Kojić perceives that the basic lack of categorization of the settlements is its simplicity and mechanicality, mainly based on the population size of the settlement and, eventually, the occupation of the population. According to him, which is later acknowledged in geographical science, the functions of the settlement that it performs in relation to its environment are precisely the basic parameter in which differentiation should rest. In this regard, he established several rural categories: primary rural settlements, with a distinctly agricultural function; villages — seats of local offices, with established village centre; centres of the community of villages in the regions of dispersed settlements as their traffic and economic centre (Kojić, 1973a; Kojić, 1982; Kojić, 1965), and this is also added by suburban villages as a separate category, as a “road sign” for the transformation of villages of the lower categories (Kojić, 1975b). It was again a novelty in rural theory, which was not investigated in more detail in Serbia, and which he introduced into wider issues — the systematisation of settlements and the rural regions.

Systematization of the settlements is one of the topics that captured his research curiosity since the 1960s. His interest in spatial arrangement of the territory, regional organization and regional planning is also linked to the same period, as well as engagement in the Institute for Architecture and Urbanism, where he was the manager from 1955–1957. Branislav Kojić actually sees settlements as the main elements, and the systematization of settlements as the first task of spatial arrangement of the territory (Kojić, 1973b; Kojić, 1980). He attaches a remarkable significance to the system of settlements, observing it as a “skeleton

³ Under the “rural categories” Kojić meant on all varieties of rural settlements, that is, different types of villages.

on which all other spatial problems are being upgraded” (Kojić, 1973b, p. 15). When creating the global system of settlements in the territory of the narrower part of Serbia, he elaborated in detail the categories of rural settlements arranged in hierarchical relations, as well as the thesis on “bearing centres”. For this purpose, he used the following indicators as important ones: the total number of urban settlements (towns and small towns), the average size of the gravitational area of the urban settlement (the average number of rural population gravitating to the city), the distance of the settlement of the urban type (Kojić, 1965). In the basis of the system of settlements in Serbia there are hamlets, as the lowest category, then the primary village, the village — the centre of the local community, the country towns, which are connected with urban categories (small towns and towns). He determined the optimal distance between the settlements in the system by a graphical representation — a pyramid, taking into account the regional specifics reflected through the types of settlements and their hierarchical relationship.

“Rural region”

Kojić sees the root of the process of formation of rural regions in certain historical and social circumstances and the need for connecting villages in the so-called spatial region, due to the complexity of relations and the multiplication of connections between settlements of different categories. He points out that the regional transformation in the structure of the villages was mainly stimulated by administrative measures and the formation of rural municipalities in the late 19th century, reflecting the need for networking settlements and “gathering” villages around the village centre, in the same territorial frames, in order to better meet the needs of the rural population. Rural municipalities were “organically bound groups consisting of several smaller villages with a minimum total of 200 adult population” (Kojić, 1965, p. 9). Their purpose was to organize several village settlements into one system around a certain centre that was the bearer of public-administrative functions. He advocated the concept of reforming the network of settlements, through the formation of a community of settlements, as well as the spontaneous genesis of small country towns that had the role of mediators between the urban and the rural environment. This was prompted by the differentiation of rural categories and the tendency towards the formation of regional formulations, “a certain broader organism with common characteristics and which can be relatively precisely limited in space” (Kojić, 1973a, p. 218).

Branislav Kojić presented in his works certain terminological discussions, gave methodological bases and theoretical views on the regions, regional planning and arrangement of the territories, the regional plan itself, its content, the process

of making, etc. (Kojić, 1965; Kojić, 1966; Kojić, 1973a; Kojić, 1980; Kojić, 1958b). According to his understanding, adopted today, rural issues are one of the regional planning sectors. However, he points out that the role of rural settlements is relatively small in regional plans, and that the resolution of rural issues can be limited by the municipal area (Kojić, 1973a).

Although, dealing with rural issues, he was gradually introducing the systematic approach, where he viewed the settlement system as part of the spatial arrangement of the territories, he began to deal with regional issues early enough. His first public presentations on this subject date back to the 1950s. His preliminary ideas on the organization of rural area and settlements through regional planning were presented in the study Regional Plan for the Gruža District. This study points to the necessity of reorganizing settlements through differentiation in several rural categories, with the construction and strengthening of rural centres as supporting development points in space. His contribution to this field is very important and applicable, and the ideological concept is still current. The program of development of rural settlements established here was the basis for his further works dealing with the same issue.

Conclusion

Branislav Kojić started his professional and scientific work as an architect, designer. He expressed himself in this field with numerous built projects and awarded competition works, which were in touch with *modern* and personal interpretation of the Balkan vernacular architecture and made a very special stylistic expression in the mosaic of modern architecture in Yugoslavia between the two world wars. He continues his career as an architect-ruralist, extensively dealing with the space and architecture of the rural environment. The field material that he collected and left behind represents a rich legacy and scientific foundation for the development of village architecture and village science, which was continued by Dj. Simonović, V. Bjelikov, Z. Petrović, M. Ribar and his followers, primarily at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade.

With ideas and knowledge in this field, Kojić filled up gaps in architectural, ethnographic, and anthropogeographic literature and had a prominent role in “developing original scientific thought on objects belonging to both cultural and historical and social sciences” (Radovanović, 1991, p. 9). By spreading scientific views in this domain, he placed the village in broader temporal, spatial, and institutional frames. “From that time, reviews, overviews, expert and scientific works come one after the other, which, like concentric circles, from the centre towards the periphery, grow and expand the territory of the research” (Vlahović,

1977, p. 166). Based on contributions in this field, he was elected member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (as correspondent in 1955, and as a regular member in 1963).

The focus from village architecture, as a primary occupation in earlier research days, he gradually expanded, evolved, intertwined with other scientific disciplines, emphasized by geography and ethnography, introducing a systematic and multidisciplinary approach to perceiving the problems and perspectives in the development of the village. Certain elements of these approaches can be seen in his first synthesized works, in which he treats the architecture of the villages of different regions, subjecting them to the needs of the local population. This search for functionality in material rural forms led him to the expansion of interest and engagement in the fields outside the architectural profession.

The outstanding feature of systematicity in his works is also reflected in the influence of other disciplines relevant to the development and survival of villages, and expanding the circle of knowledge, he incorporates elements of anthropogeographic, ethnographic, security, hygiene and planning views, gradually placing the issue of the village in a broader regional context. In the later research period, his attention was drawn to the regional organization of settlements, regional planning, etc. As such, his work can be considered the forerunner of spatial planning profession, of both spatial arrangement of village *atars* and regional planning, but also pioneering accomplishment of integrated treatment of rural area. The research era of Kojić was marked by the sublimation of scientific results, their systematization and the realisation of rural themes at a higher instance. He dealt with issues of systematization and typology of settlements in Serbia, with a marked tendency to notice certain regularities in their spatial distribution and development. He has opened numerous, still current, scientific questions, such as: the question of small villages; dispersed settlements; village transformation; suburban settlements; arrangement of rural areas; systematization of settlements, protection of rural areas, etc., which require additional efforts and special attention to development guidelines. Synthesizing knowledge, linking ideas and scientific approaches, reviewing the various elements of villages and rural area, he is becoming the founder of *ruralism* as a synthesized discipline and science of arrangement and construction of villages, which today certainly deserves a special place in the system of social sciences.

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