

## EDITORIAL

ISVS e journal continues to expand the scope of investigations of vernacular. This issue looks at a multiple new aspects; from the emergence of vernacular to the historical construction of monuments, which in the strictest sense may not appear to be vernacular. Nevertheless, in the absence of architects and professionals, even the monuments of the past should and could come within the scope of vernacular, for they provide us with the wide range of situations in which people engaged themselves in building guided by traditions and conventions rather than professional involvement.

The first paper by Velika Ivkowska, on the development of a vernacular settlement in the Balkans is a very interesting one in this regard. Although we study various characteristics of vernacular settlements from buildings, structures and processes of traditions, it is only rarely that the emergence of a settlement itself is looked at. Velika examines the emergence and evolution of the Ottoman *Kavala* in the present day Greece, when it was under the Ottoman Empire from 1391-1912. She looks at the geography, topography and morphology, and traces how the town had evolved from the core. Ottoman houses have been studied in the context of urban developments there to map out the major changes they have undergone during this period. She concludes that they had originated in Istanbul and had spread thereafter across to the Ottoman Empire. However, they have acquired provincial characteristics making the *Kavala* unique and specific to the region.

Luca Orlandi looks at vernacular from an entirely different perspective; how the travelers had viewed and understood a vernacular settlement. His paper, the traveler's descriptions of vernacular architecture in Istanbul, Turkey from the 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Century, is unique in that his source of information is entirely based on travelers accounts. This paper analyzes, starting from the earliest representations of the city in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, like the Buondelmonti's cartography, and then the 16<sup>th</sup> Century's visual representations, like the Lorichs' panorama passing through the description of the many travelers in the Ottoman Empire until the notes and sketches left towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The visual and written traces left by all the visitors provide a caricature of the urban changes that occurred in the past of Istanbul. They show in some detail, the civic architecture, beside the imperial and monumental stone architecture.

Charu Monga and Amarendra Kumar Das present a comparative visual study of design elements of social cultural institutions; the '*Namghar*' with Monuments in South East Asia. This paper shows the similarities of socio-cultural institutes across South Asia and also points out that the difference in physical forms of exterior and interior elements are related to the external influence coming from religious practices such as Buddhism associated with those institutions.

Finally, Shayan Heidarian presents the spatial and structural features of domes in Iranian architecture while studying the *Soltanieh* Dome in Zanjan, Iran. Dome is one of the oldest forms in Iranian architecture and has been created before Islam. It has experienced multiple developments; dome was one of the main elements of the government palaces so it became a sign of the Sasanid imperial government. Since Iran converted to Islam, they refrained from using the dome in the constructions. However, after several centuries, the dome was no longer considered a sign of Sasanid government and returned to Iranian architecture.

Collectively, these papers show us the vernacular at a different scale than we are most often used to, and add to the understanding of the vernacular settlements of the world.

**Ranjith Dayaratne,**

Department of Architecture and Interior Design, University of Bahrain.