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GREEN DEAL INITIATIVES, SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, MARKET DEMANDS, AND NEW PRODUCTION PERSPECTIVES IN THE FORESTRY-BASED SECTOR

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Title of the paper: *Fostering Sustainable Development:
An In-depth Examination of Policies and Strategies for Preserving Nessebar's Cultural
Heritage, Emphasizing Traditional Crafts and Wooden Houses*

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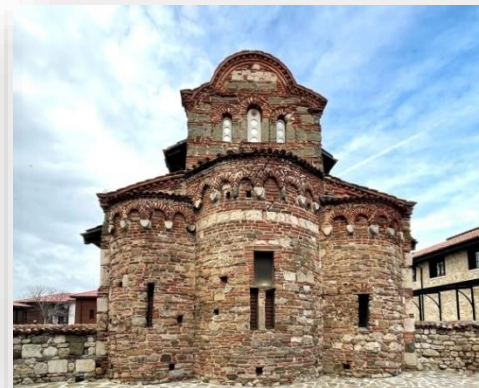
MAIN TOPICS

- This research explores **the challenges and opportunities** for preserving the unique cultural heritage of Nessebar, Bulgaria, a city inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (1983).
- We focus on the **importance of traditional wooden houses** and **the skilled crafts** associated with their construction.
- Finally, we discuss **measures for fostering sustainable development** that would balance the heritage preservation with the needs of the local community.



THE ANCIENT CITY OF NESSEBAR

- The Ancient City of Nessebar is a **historic city**, situated on the Black sea peninsula in the southeastern Bulgaria.
- **It is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List** in 1983 under the criterion III and IV and is known for its remarkable medieval churches, archaeology, and Renaissance wooden houses.
- These houses are a vital part of Nessebar's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).



WOOD

THE "WOODEN HOUSE" CONCEPT

- Mavrodinov (1947) was the first to describe the shift from stone houses towards combination of stone with wood structure.
- Stamov (2007) clarifies the "wooden house" concept, specifying that only the upper living floors are built entirely of wood.
- Wood offeres advantages in construction speed, ease of processing, and thermal insulation.
- Additionally, timber's seismic resistance and ability to create decorative elements with various colors and textures contributed to its popularity.



THE NESSEBAR'S WOODEN HOUSES

- Zlatev (1955), Vakarelski (1974), Angelova (1975) consider that the Black Sea house fully meets the understanding of a wooden house as it is stone/mud-built house with wooden cladding.
- Ivanchev (1957) characterizes these structures as "wooden houses with stone ground floor", echoing the architectural style of the earliest buildings from the era of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. He points that they are distinctive example within the broader category of the Black Sea Houses.



THE WOOD IN THE NESSEBAR HOUSE fulfils different functions.

- (1) **The structural function** is expressed in form of a timber skeleton and wooden beams, the timber floor and roof constructions as well as the timber façade cladding;
- (2) **Utilitarian functions** are associated with doors (exterior and interior), windows, built-ins and fireplaces as well as the interior furniture such as: minders, chairs and tables;
- (3) **Decorative functions** are in terms of artistic elements in the exterior (facade) and in the interior (mainly ornamented ceilings).



CONSTRUCTION PERIODS

Their emergence is associated with the **18th century economic revival of Nessebar** and 3 construction periods can be designated:

- 1st period - until the 18th century at the latest
- 2nd period - the 19th century houses – to which most of the samples belong
- 3rd period - the houses from the beginning of the 20th century.



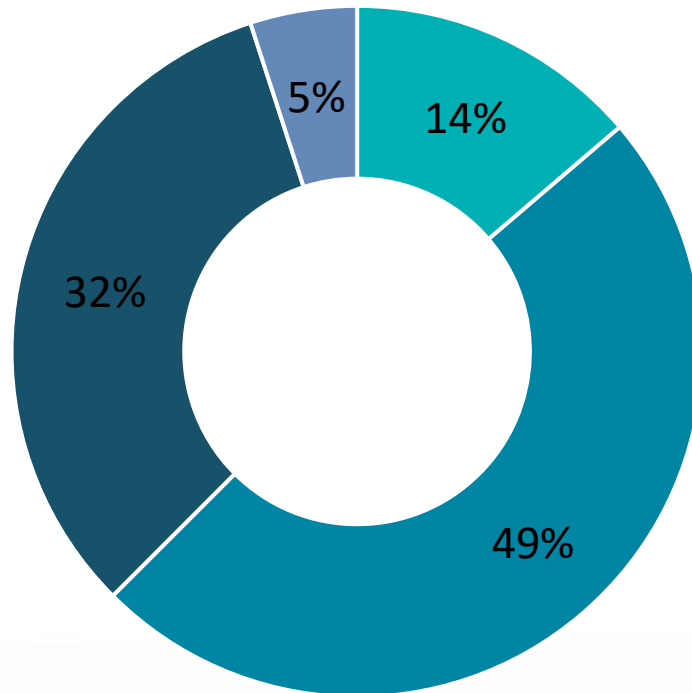
CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICS

Most distinctive element used during the first two construction periods is **the facade wall cladding**.

- (1) 18th century facade cladding - thin oak planks (6-8 cm in height) are used. They are placed in horizontal direction partially overlapping at the top each other;
- (2) The 19th century façade cladding introduces new material – cham and the planks are 12-24 cm in height. This material is more resistant to weather changes (drought and moisture) and cheaper.



ASSESSMENT OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NESSEBAR'S WOODEN HOUSES (2018)



Currently their degree of authenticity is not high

- A0 – preserved volume, architectural and artistic elements, details and materials, without additions and upgrades
- A1 – preserved volume, partial loss of details, without or with minor and removable additions
- A2 – The architectural volume is attached and/or elevated; missing or compromised architectural decoration and details
- A3 – new, unrecognizable with respect to the authentic volume

Figure 4. Assessment of the authenticity of the Nessebar's wooden houses on the territory of the WH "Ancient City of Nessebar" (2018) (Centre for Cultural Heritage and Architecture, 2023)

CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO WOODEN HOUSES

- The primary concern lies in the erosion of intangible cultural heritage and traditional construction practices due to migration process, change of cultural context and modernization of local community's life.
- Currently the authenticity of the wooden houses is threatened by factors such as:
 - ✓ Deviation from traditional facade cladding;
 - ✓ Replacement of wooden windows and doors with PVC;
 - ✓ Lack of skilled craftspeople for restoration.
- Due to these and other factors, the Ancient city was suggested by ICOMOS and WHC for possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.



POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR PRESEVING THE NESSEBAR'S HERITAGE AND WOODEN HOUSES

- Efforts to preserve Nessebar's heritage include:
 - ✓ During the 1960s to the 1980s concerted efforts were undertaken to preserve the Nessebar's houses by state.
 - ✓ Designation as an architectural reserve in 1956
 - ✓ UNESCO World Heritage List inscription in 1983
- Legal frameworks, conservation policies at national and local level are created including the Cultural Heritage Strategy (2023-2032), the Protection and Management plan (2011) and municipal programs for sustainable tourism
- But the owner`s obligations and needs are not met and create tension.
- There is need for financial and technical resources for restoration and owner incentives.

TRADITIONAL WOODWORKING CRAFTS

- Despite of the presence of the 2001 Skilled Crafts Act (SCA) the loss of crafts continues.
- From the comprehensive list of 129 trades included in SCA, 72 have been removed in 2011. Regarding traditional crafts associated with woodworking, only woodcarving and crafting wooden utensils (whittling) are recognized as distinct crafts.
- In the education field – there are only 2 specialized secondary schools educating students in the profession of "artist - applied arts", with speciality "Decorative Woodcarving"
 - ✓ the National High School of Applied Arts “Trevnenska school”
 - ✓ the National School for Applied Arts “St. Luke” in Sofia".
- There is a low number of graduates in traditional woodworking crafts at the national level (yearly between 12-19 in total).



FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development requires a multifaceted approach including community based approach. The key steps include:

- Conservation of existing wooden structures is essential.
- Support for the bearers of the traditional knowledge and skills is needed.
- Rejuvenation of traditional crafts, techniques, and materials is crucial.
- Inclusion of the local community in the preservation efforts.

The Nessebar's Cultural Heritage Strategy foresees financial support for both restoration of the tangible and intangible heritage (bearers of traditional knowledge and skills). The Strategy suggests education measures and raising the awareness, especially amongst the younger community members, cultivating a deeper understanding and respect for the heritage.



CONCLUSION

- Wooden houses are a cornerstone of Nessebar's historic landscape, significantly contributing to its OUV as recognized by UNESCO.
- There is on going trend in loosing the authenticity of the wooden houses and the historic city is suggested for the inscription on List of WH in danger.
- To ensure the sustainability of Nessebar's cultural heritage integrated measures has to be implemented combining:
 - ✓ balance between heritage and the living city is needed
 - ✓ revival of traditional skills,
 - ✓ Local community engagement,
 - ✓ financial support, etc.





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THANK YOU!

***FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF POLICIES
AND STRATEGIES FOR PRESERVING NESSEBAR'S CULTURAL HERITAGE,
EMPHASIZING TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND WOODEN HOUSES***

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