

lower levels of the social hierarchy, reaching first the urban and rural bourgeoisies and then the landed peasantry in the 18th and 19th centuries (as the *maison de maître*).

Externally, this house presents a facade with its openings symmetrically placed round a central entrance and its elevation rising two, sometimes three, storeys high under the eaves of an imposing roof pierced by dormer windows. Internally, a central cross-passage separates two rooms at ground-floor level, one used as kitchen, the other as dining-room. The corridor contains a staircase leading to the upper floor where two bedrooms are distributed on either side of an axial corridor.

The depthwise house with nave and aisles is a house extending in depth (i.e. perpendicularly to the axis of the roof-ridge), with a load-bearing structure consisting of pairs of wooden posts supporting trusses, thus forming a nave flanked by two aisles or, more rarely, a single aisle. This house includes both dwelling and farming functions under the same roof, sheltering humans, cattle, implements and crops at the same time. Such promiscuity evinces a concept entirely opposed to that of the farmstead with buildings arranged round a courtyard.

Houses with nave and aisles in fact were built to house agricultural tenants, first by aristocratic or ecclesiastical landlords, later by the legal or merchant middle classes. The earliest surviving specimens date back to the 17th, if not the 16th, century, the latest to the 19th. Some houses of this type were originally aisled barns belonging to large estates under the monarchy, in which a stone lodging was subsequently installed in the 19th century.

The type is encountered in relatively large numbers in the Landes, the Basque country, and in lesser numbers in the Agen region, Charente, lower Quercy and Lorraine. A few surviving examples are observable in Burgundy, Champagne, Berry and Périgord.

19th-century rebuilding

Up till the mid-19th century, the prevailing materials were half-timber, puddled clay, clay cob, stones cleared from the fields, earth and so on for wall building, and rye thatch, broom, reed, wood shingles, and the like for roof covering – except for the

houses of the wealthier classes. As a result, the architectural landscape was comparatively homogeneous across the entire countryside.

By the late-19th century, this relative homogeneity had given way to a wide diversity: by acquiring property or wealth, the agricultural proletariat and the small peasantry gained access to better materials like ashlar, fired clay bricks, quarried slates, fired clay tiles, and lime, until then reserved for the richer classes and from then on made available to a wider public by technological progress such as the opening of quarries, the setting up of brickworks and lime kilns, and the development of railway and waterway transport.

This construction or reconstruction movement, initiated at a more or less early date according to the region, was first described by de Foville and Flach in 1894 and 1899 who systematically contrasted ‘older types’ and ‘modern types’, namely 17th to 18th century houses and their 19th-century replacements.

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2.III.5.a Auvergne (France, cs)

Auvergne, which covers southern Allier, Puy-de-Dôme, Haute-Loire, Cantal, northern Aveyron and northern Lozère, consists of crystalline massifs in the eastern part between the Loire and the Allier, bordered on the south by volcanic uplands and on the west by volcanic peaks, and plateaux, with the plains of Limagnes and Briaude in the centre irrigated by the Allier. In the southwest the Maurs basin and Châtaigneraie have features in common with Aquitaine. The main occupation in the mountains is dairy farming, within differing patterns. In the plains, settlement is clustered; elsewhere there are villages but they are more scattered.

Buildings are in no fixed pattern; to the east they are enclosed, the dwelling barn and shed being joined at right angles. Elsewhere the unit is a linear one. Groups of contiguous dwellings (*barriades*), designed to combat the cold and save an end wall, are an indication of an old family or communal farming pattern.

In the plains, vine-growers’ houses had an upper floor as the work area was on the ground floor. To give each house access on to the road it had a narrow frontage and any enlargement was made by adding to the height or depth. The common living-room was upstairs and there might be a further floor

See also

- 2.III.1.b Franche Comté
- 2.III.6.a Alsatian
- 3.VI.2.j Maritimes (Canadian French)
- 3.VI.6.e Creole

References

- Demangeon, Albert, 1946
- Foville, Alfred de, and Flach, Jacques, 1894, 1899
- Gaillard-Bans, Patricia, 1979
- Lassure, Christian, 1984
- Meirion-Jones, Gwyn I., 1985

far right

Contiguous houses with haylofts ventilated by dormers, Auvergne.

House in the Champagne region with brick basement, timber framing for upper storeys; timber shingles on gable wall.

