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Portico as Architectural Element to Churches with Inscribed Cross (Albania, Century XI – XIV)

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Abstract

Portico as elements of high value in the exterior of the building will be the subject of my study. Their treatment as architectural and decorative values will be realized as part of churches with inscribed cross. Churches with inscribed cross are used in the Byzantine empire with defined typologies and special features. The porch is a long and narrow exonarthex. Often it is closed with columns or arcades. Situated at the entrance to the church and traverses across its width. Exonarthex does not form an integral part of the main body of the church but is a single well known structure and placed against the church. Exonarthex is a recent borrowing into architectural nomenclature. The practices of the early church that required an exonarthex were abandoned early, but the architectural bits lived on. The porticoes we encounter in our churches are several types. Most important are those who participate in the function of the building.

1. Introduction

A profane has created the idea that the Byzantines built only churches. In reality, they also built other types of buildings, such as houses, palaces, spas, tankers, fortifications and bridges. A considerable number of these secular constructions still exist. It is difficult to establish a balance between profane and religious architecture, so I, like my predecessors chose to write to the churches. [12] Religious buildings are tangible and concrete evidence of past civilizations. They are "historical documents" not less than the written evidence. In some cases, their voice is clearer than his writings. This is true for every age, but especially for the Byzantine era. [12]

The classification of medieval churches is done on the basis of plan metric, volume and structural construction. So in our country we divide the church into three large groups:

- 1) Church with a single nave
- 2) Basilicas
- 3) Churches with central planimetry. [6]

Portico as elements of high value in the exterior of the building will be the subject of my study. Their treatment as architectural and decorative values will be realized as part of churches with inscribed cross. The first inquiries about the origin of churches with an inscribed cross indicate that these could originate from the Paleochristian churches or basilicas [13], or by cross-shaped churches of antiquity. [13]

Over time, the question of the origin of the intersecting cross became dim and attention focused on finding the first examples that fully enjoyed the development of this typology. This search corresponds to the church known as Fatih Camii in Trilye-Bitinia (IX century) and the so-called "Church H" in Side (around 800) [19]. Whoever the

reasons, the inscribed cross dominated the design of churches after the century. IX. [19]. In our country this architectural type is introduced late but through a unique and distinctive local path. [6]

Church was destined for the celebration of the liturgy. Changes in the liturgy bring the transformation of architectural environments. For example: a martirium was built differently from one parish or monastery was the residence of a dedicated group of priests not only to prayers but also to agriculture. [1] Indeed, the difference between these places of worship was the presence of auxiliary facilities. [12]

Both in the east and west have been observed that in the structure of the church there are similar symbols in some elements:

- 1) the presbyter's space represents the head of Christ
- 2) the transept represents the wings
- 3) the altar represents the heart
- 4) and the central nave, shows the body of Christ. [16]

Churches also have a range of auxiliary facilities such as diaconic, prothesis, catechumen, baptistery, etc. [17]. But to achieve aesthetic and architectural form, Byzantine churches also need other special, such as: Front one of cross wings, domes, drum, doors, windows, belfry, altar, narthex and porch. [6]

A portico is a porch leading to the entrance of a building, or extended as a colonnade, with a roof structure over a walkway, supported by columns or enclosed by walls. This idea was widely used in Ancient Greece and has influenced many cultures, including most Western cultures. The porch is a long and narrow exonarthex. Often it is closed with columns or arcades. Situated at the entrance to the church and traverses across its width. Exonarthex does not form an integral part of the main body of the church but is a single well known structure and placed against the church. [14] The porticoes we encounter in our churches are several types. Most important are those who participate in the function of the building. [6]

A pronaos is the inner area of the portico of a Greek or

Roman temple, situated between the portico's colonnade or walls and the entrance to the cella, or shrine. Roman temples commonly had an open pronaos, usually with only columns and no walls, and the pronaos could be as long as the cella. The word pronaos is Greek for "before a temple". In Latin, a pronaos is also referred to as an anticum or prodomus.

The porch even under different shapes, is an element used by the architecture of all time. In it, in their most definite aspects, the various formal solutions assumed originally both by the trilithic structure (in the oriental civilizations and in the Greek art), as well as by the arched structure (in Roman architecture), alternately re-designed or elaborated in periods later. The porch became a common element of monastic architecture (conventual cloisters), sacred (in front of churches or church facades, as quadriportal), civilian (courtyards of palaces and castles, facades of public buildings, loggia, markets). The porch constantly maintained its function of a passage and disengagement environment, of public or private use, resuming or elaborating classical orders, using or exasperating its forms in space and decorative function.

2. Examples of Porticos to Churches with Inscribed Cross

The case of St. Mary's Church in Peshkëpi të Sipërme (Figure 1) seems to be related to traditional architecture. [9] This church at a second time has been added a new environment on the south side. He is rectangular in plan and tall as the church. Addition should have played in the church as an open narthex and should be built when the church still preserved old forms because it was executed with regularity and respecting the older building. [6] The construction time of this addendum is c. XIII - XIV that is defined by the shape of the cloisonné and the ornaments on the eastern wall, such as diagonals and rosettes, which also come to the church of St. Theodore in Arta. [17]

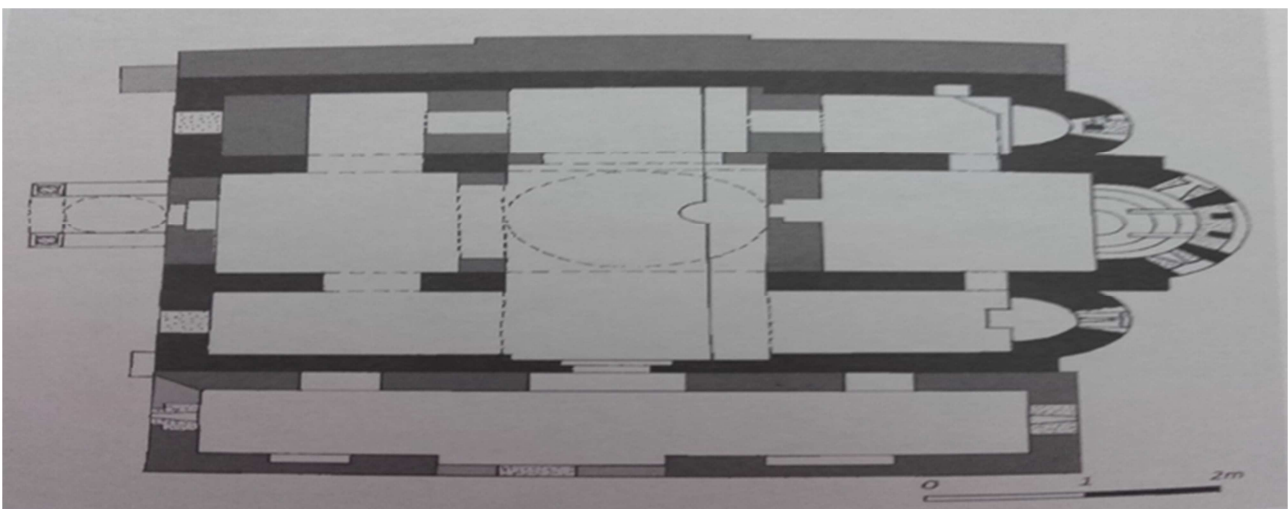


Figure 1. The plan of Saint Mary church in Peshkëpi të Sipërme [17].

The other monastery, the church of the monastery of Saint Mary in Zvërnec, is a free cross-shaped church with dome, narthex and exonarthex, and an open skirt on the north side. [8] Compared to the church of Marmiro [5], the church of Zvërnec (Figure 2) has the most cast, developed and presents not only a later construction but also masterfully crafted. [6]

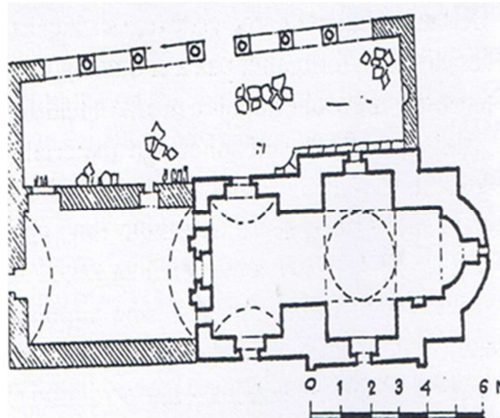


Figure 2. The plan [6] and photo of Saint Mary Monastery in Zvërnec.

The only example of the variant of the capital city of the inscribed church with dome, which has as distinctive characteristic the presence of a space between the bema and

the naos. It has the full eastern side of the cross, which comes immediately after the altar environment, is the church of the Monastery of Saint Mary in Apollonia, (Figure 3) Fier. [17]

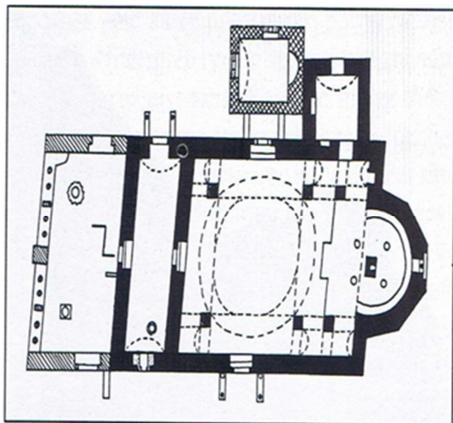


Figure 3. The plan [6] and photo of Saint Mary Monastery in Apolloni.

The church consists of the exonarthex, the narthex, the naos and the environment of the altar, through which it relates to an environment for the preservation of the dishes of worship (skevofilacion). The exonarthex later added to the western side (appearing at the joining joints of the two walls) is half open. On the west side, on a 80 cm wall above the ground, a colonnade is raised. Arcade columns are exchanged two-by-two with solid pilasters. The columns are octagonal and crowned with capitals, where are carved various animals and monsters, late Roman art, arrived here through Ragusa and Tivari. [4]

In the walls of exonarthex we also have two burial inscriptions. The first and the youngest, dating to 1350, is approximately at the level of the earth, in the southern wall of exonarthex. His existence in that place means that in that year the exonarthex was rebuilt. The second inscription is on

one of the columns of the western colonnade arcade, exactly in the north. It is a tombstone on december 6, 1381, set up and slightly engraved on the sides. His connection with the wall indicates that he is there from the beginning. So, the colonies of exonarthex was built after this year, without damaging in this case the old, northern and southern walls. From the remaining traces it is difficult to determine the old forms of exonarthex. [6]

Likewise, at St. Nicholas church in Kurjan, (Figure 4) Fier [10], there are four porches, as in the Pojan, on the north and south sides (only traces or parts of them). On a frame pillar system, on the exterior walls, in the upper part of the narthex, the arches of lombardy, which are likely to circulate the entire church once. These, as well as the sharp arches of the aisle gates, testify to the impacts of Western architecture as a direct line through Pojan and catholic settlements in northern

and coastal Albania. [17]

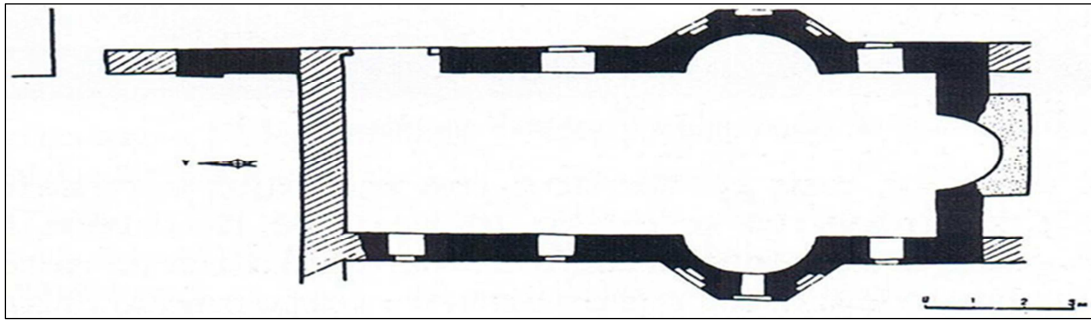


Figure 4. The plan of Saint Nicholas in Kurjan, Fier [17].

While the church of St. Mary in Labove of the Cross, (Figure 5) Gjirokastra, although it continues to preserve the old nucleus, it also consists of additions to the northern and southern sides. In addition to them, with the western addition, an arcade with an 8 arcade was formed. [9]

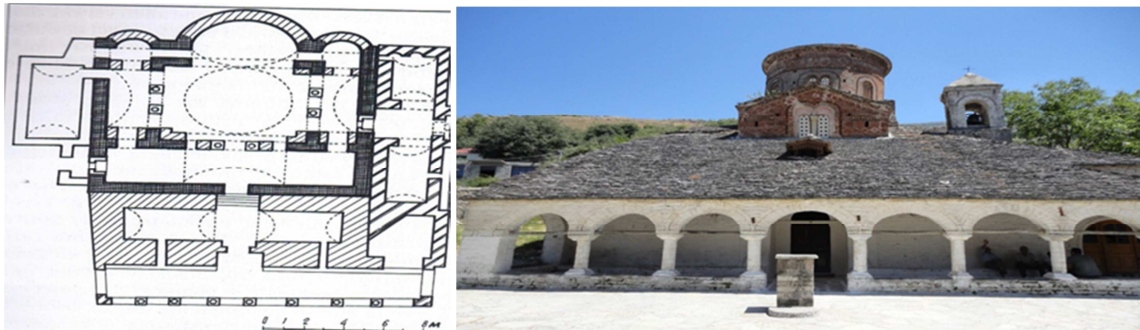


Figure 5. The plan and photo of Saint Mary church in Labovë e Kryqit [6].

If the above monuments can be included in traditional typological classifications, the church of Saint Nicholas Monastery in Sarandë, (Figure 6) Mesopotam is a unique occasion. The old building consisted of square nave plan with a pillar in the middle, covered with four domes on the drum,

narthex on the west side, covered with three spherical headgear and associated with nave with an arcade, altar environment with two bema and the open porch on all three sides (north, south, western), which today is plagued by being partially stored on the floor and the bottom of the pillars. [7]

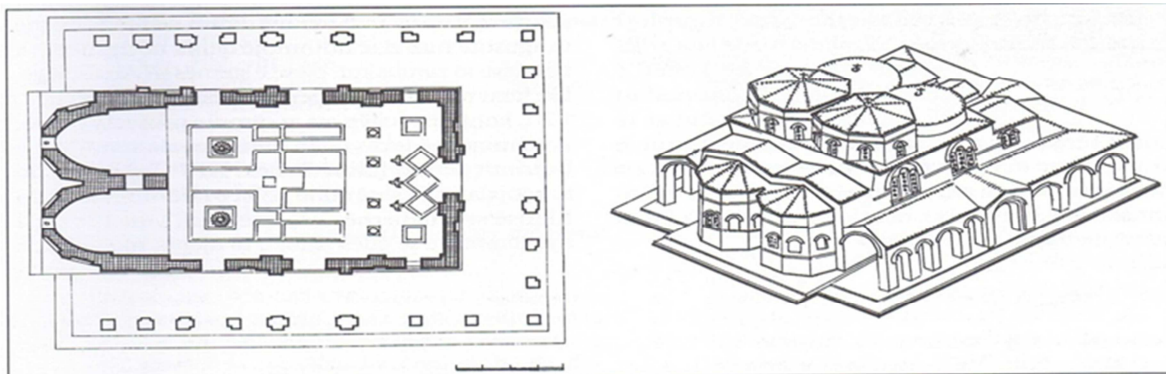


Figure 6. The plan of Saint Nicholas Monastery in Mesopotam [17].

3. Conclusions

It is thought that the portico is on the west side of the church opposite the apse on its eastern side. But the examples mentioned above show that the porch can extend to the south (Saint Mary – Peshkepi e Siperme) [9], or even surround the three sides of the church (Saint Nicholas-Mesopotam). [6] The porticoes are constructed with arches on columns,

creating a translucency of the side wall. [6] They were built later in time compared to the core church and did not always stick to byzantine concepts. While in Mesopotam we encounter ties with Constantinople, in other cases, such as Zvërnec, Kurjan, Apolloni, we see the influence of western ecclesiastical architecture. [2] These are the consequences of the links with the western Adriatic coast, as well as the Dalmatian coast, but also due to the placement during the

thirteenth century in our country of Catholic bishops and religious orders such as Benedictines, Franciscans and Dominicans. [3]

Columns of the Monastery of St. Mary in Apollonia (Figure 7) are the most significant example of Western influences. They are very similar to the capitals of the Monastery of San Benedetto da Norcia (Conversano). [20]

There are animals presented as real but also a litter of fantasy. According to Le Goff, the church was microcosm. It was based on nature as a great reservoir of symbols. The world of animals, according to him, was the universe of evil but also of dualism. Animals can be a symbol of strength and purity, but also a symbol of strength and hypocrisy. [18]



Figure 7. Capitals of the colonade of Monastery of St. Mary in Apollonia, Fier.

All the elements used in churches with a dome-encircled cross, such as their pyramidal construction, keramoplastic ornamentation, as well as verandas, are special components that have played a role in the picturesque exterior treatment of these churches. All of this brings to our architecture the category of great work. [6]

The restoration, conservation and promotion of the historical heritage is very important because it serves as a generator for social and economic capital, which brings tangible benefits to the local population by encouraging cultural tourism. We recall that the Archaeological Park of Apollonia has undergone a careful rehabilitation. According to the Ministry of Culture, the project is part of the list of combined projects that follow the Liubiana process, financing the rehabilitation of cultural heritage in South East Europe, a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. It is funded under the CARDS Regional Program. The works will be carried out in most of the Apollonia Park and especially in the Monastery of Saint Mary. Similarly, the restoration of the Church of Saint Mary in Labova e Kryqit is a promise held by the Ministry of Culture, not only to protect the cultural heritage but also to the development of tourism in this area. [21]

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