

Jasmina S. ĆIRIĆ\*

*Institute for Art History Faculty of Philosophy*

*University of Belgrade*

## WEST FACADE OF HOLY ARCHANGELS CHURCH IN ŠTIP: ECONOMY OF THE WALL

**Key Words:** Holy Archangels church in Štip, Late Byzantine architecture, west facade, facade articulation, economy, ornament, Tree of Life, transversal Z meander, fleur-de-lys, brickwork.



Fig. 1. West facade of Holy Archangels church in Štip, photo: J. S. Ćirić

**Abstract:** This work retraces observations concerning articulation of west facade of Holy Archangels Church in Štip. The use of insufficiently recognised and various modifications of brickwork ornaments are characteristic elements for representing the Economy of Salvation of the wall.

*“What a man sees depends both upon **what** he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has **taught** him to see.”<sup>1</sup>*

In historiography of Byzantine architecture, architectural ‘ideas’ at the late 13th and 14th century often were marked with qualities whom «quite possibly because of the visual habits thus engendered, we now underrate».<sup>2</sup> Late Byzantine architecture most of all

expressed its artistic possibilities on the surfaces of *the walls*. Vojislav Korać considering the peculiar treatment of the facades in Late Byzantine architecture recapitulated the views on the subject and concluded that “the ornamentation of the façade is characterized by using bricks, stacking bricks with which the entire surface of the façade turns into a kind of tapestry”.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, despite the recognition of several symbolic ornaments on Late Byzantine facades it is also has been noted that “the patterns that appear on its surface are not organized in any particular direction and do not contribute to its articulation, but only to its decoration”.<sup>4</sup> The analysis of facade articulation brickwork ornaments that appear near the church door have an active and mutually dependent, iconic function. Although it was noticed in historiography that “Their arrangement has little to do with the articulation of the façade and more with connecting one space to another at specified points”<sup>5</sup> at the same time appears the attitude to be mutually exclusive with the above: “in many cases doors as the foci of the façade significantly contribute to their appearance”.<sup>6</sup> Taking into consideration the example of articulation of west façade of Holy Archangels Church in Štip founda-

its significance, all citations and parts in sentences in this article are given in italics.

<sup>3</sup> V. Korać, *Monumentalna arhitektura u Vizantiji i Srbiji u poslednjem veku Vizantije. Osobena obrada fasadnih površina*, Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta 43 (2006), 209.

<sup>4</sup> J. Trkulja, *The Façade Decoration of Byzantine Churches: Symbolic, Spatial and Performative Aspects*, Spatial Icons, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moscow 2009, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Eadem, *Aesthetics and Symbolism of Late Byzantine Church Facades 1204-1453*, Princeton University, PhD Thesis, 2004, 245.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

\*[jciric@f.bg.ac.rs](mailto:jciric@f.bg.ac.rs); Jasmina S. Ćirić is a research assistant at the Institute for Art History Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade, Serbia. This article is part of a projects: “Christian culture on the Balkans in Middle Ages: Byzantium, Serbs and Bulgars from 9th to 15th century” (177015) and “Medieval Art in Serbia and its European context” (177036) financed by Ministry of Science and Education of Republic of Serbia.

<sup>1</sup> T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970, 112.

<sup>2</sup> R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Harmondsworth 1965<sup>1</sup>, 1975<sup>2</sup>, 440. For reasons of

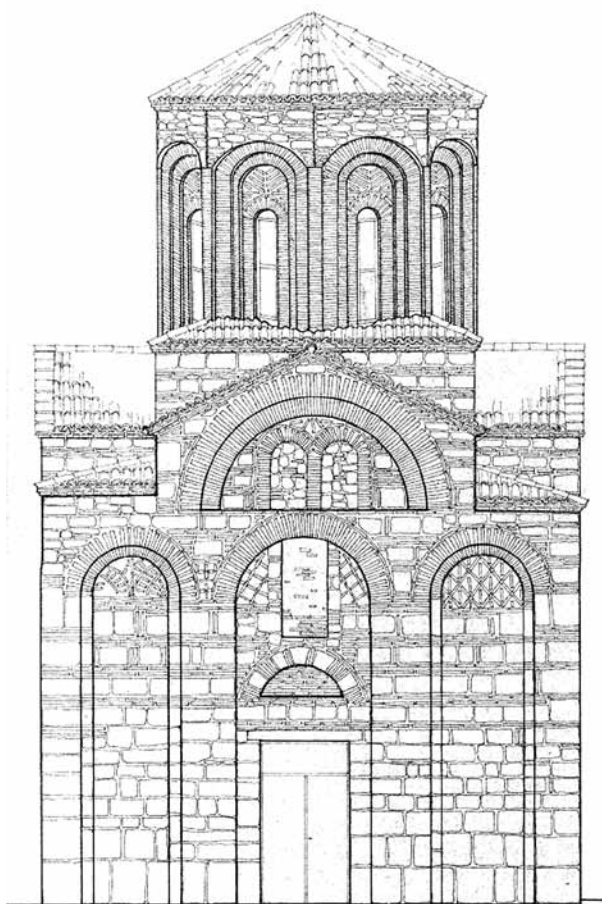


Fig. 2. West facade of Holy Archangels in Štip, drawing: Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Ohrid, Macedonia

tion of protosebastos Hrelja (figs. 1, 2),<sup>7</sup> and bearing in mind the question of *what* is seen and *what the observer is taught to see* as in Kuhn's methodological miniature at the beginning of the text, it is possible to understand the «messages» represented with brickwork geometric ornaments, in critical terms of art history insufficiently identified as «aniconic decoration».<sup>8</sup> These questions, *what is seen* and *what observer is taught to see*, are highly significant for this work and at the same time are complementary with Krautheimer's conclusion concerning our visual

<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to colleagues from the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Ohrid - Macedonia, for providing me west facade drawing of the church of the Holy Archangels in Štip.

<sup>8</sup> J. Trkulja, *The Façade Decoration of Byzantine Churches: Symbolic, Spatial and Performative Aspects*, Spatial Icons, A. Lidov ed., Moscow 2009, 20, 75. However, a distinction should be made between the terms aniconism, antiiconism and deiconism. About aniconism cf. J. S. Ćirić, *The Art of Exterior Wall Decoration in Late Byzantine Architecture*, Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art. Vol. 1. Collection of articles. Materials of the Conference of Young Specialists. St. Petersburg State University, December 1–5, 2010/ eds. S. Maltseva, E. Stanyukovich-Denisova, 2011, 69 - [76].



Fig. 3. Middle niche, west facade of Holy Archangels church in Štip, photo: J. S. Ćirić

habits.<sup>9</sup> Understanding the ornamental unit which is not only “abstract mathematical construction” because taxonomy demands precision in description “in understanding the shape one sees (...) and requires other competences than those of articulating visual observation”.<sup>10</sup> In his detailed architecture analysis of church in Štip, Vojislav Korać emphasized that “Surface that surrounds the middle arch of the lower zone is decorated with a rhythmic motif set in a diamond shape, made of brick. Surface framed in the southern part of the façade is covered by a similar motif, only increased, but in its inner surface was filed with the cross motif. In the northern niche is a motif of geometrically stylized flower, also made of brick, dipped in plaster. In the middle is placed a vertical line, a left and right are arranged parallel to and slightly bent to the side.”<sup>11</sup> On the western facade of the temple of

<sup>9</sup> On understanding of visual habits and its perceptions in historiography of Late Byzantine architecture: J. S. Ćirić, *Optic Desires: Toward better understanding of wall arrangement at the late 13<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine Architecture*, Before and After the Fall of Constantinople. The Center and Peripheries of Byzantine World in the Turbulent Times Before and After the Conquests of Constantinople in 1204 and 1453, ed. V. Stanković, Belgrade 2013 [forthcoming].

<sup>10</sup> O. Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, Princeton University Press, Washington D. C., 1992, 121. Although in one passage she quoted Grabar's methodological principles, ten years later Leslie Brubaker attributed this type of ornamentation as ‘voiceless’. It is concluded that aniconic decoration was used in organizational and structural purposes. Cf. L. Brubaker, *Aniconic decoration in the Christian World (6th – 11th c.)*, Settimane di studio dlila Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo, Fondazione Centro di Studi Sull' Alto Medioevo Band, Spoleto 2004, 573 – 590.

<sup>11</sup> V. Korać, *Spomenici monumentalne srpske arhitekture*



Fig. 4. Niche, west facade of St. Sophia church in Ohrid, photo: J. S. Ćirić



Fig. 5. Niche, north facade of Holy Virgin Yahumska church (Zaum) in Ohrid, photo: J. S. Ćirić

the Holy Archangels in Štip, probably erected around 1334<sup>th</sup>,<sup>12</sup> so called triumphal arch is dominant motif. Slobodan Ćurčić contributed to the topic discussed by a statement “The ‘triumphal arch’ system of

<sup>12</sup> XIV veka u Povardarju, Beograd 2003, 85.

<sup>13</sup> Founder of the church protosebastos Hrelja donated Holy Archangels Church in Štip to Hilandar Monastery, mentioned also in chapter of Hrelja's the most supreme lord Emperor Stefan Dušan. Cf. M. Dinić, *Relja Ohmućević – Istorija i predanje*, Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta 9 (1966), 95—118 [with bibliography]; S. Ćirković, *Hreljin poklon Hilandar*, Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta 21 (1982), 103—117.



Fig. 6. North register of west facade, church in Matejče, photo: J. S. Ćirić



Fig. 7. South niche, west facade of Holy Archangels church in Štip, photo: J. S. Ćirić

façade articulation is most closely related to the Middle Byzantine tradition. It consists fundamentally of three arches visible in each elevation, reflecting the internal disposition of the cross-in-square unit. Accordingly, the central arch is broader and taller than the lateral two. Of all systems of facade articulation witnessed in Palaeologan architecture, the ‘triumphal arch’ maintains the highest degree of structural integrity, and in that sense represents an archaizing trend. The Church of St. Nikita at Čučer, built before 1307 is a case in point”.<sup>13</sup> Although church of Holy Archangels in Štip was excluded from this study, its west façade displays a more ‘elaborate’ version of the triumphal arch. The central arch is wider and taller than the side arches on the facade. Arch of middle niche is filled with geometric ornament formed with diagonally crossed bricks (fig. 3). The opinion that

<sup>13</sup> S. Ćurčić, *Articulation of Church facades during the first half of the fourteenth century: A study in the relationship of Byzantine and Serbian Architecture*, L’art byzantin au debut du XIV siècle, Symposium de Gračanica, Beograd 1978, 21.



Fig. 8. North facade, detail, church of St. Theodora in Arta, (published in: V. N. Papadopoulou, *Byzantine Arta and Its Monuments*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens 2007, 45 – 55

“by analyzing features and characteristics of the architecture of the Štip church it could be concluded that the whole is built on the roads of local building traditions with continuous contacts with the neighboring Byzantine building ateliers”<sup>14</sup> can be accepted when it comes to the use of ornament, especially in the Byzantine artistic centers. An adequate parallel is the central apse of Holy Apostles church in Thessaloniki, the central west facade of the church of St. Sophia in Ohrid, where in every other niche is placed identical ornament (Fig. 3). The same ornament is placed on the central register of the west facade of the church of Holy Virgin Zahumska in Ohrid (Fig. 5), northern register of Matejče church west facade (Fig. 6), southeastern side of the apse and south facade of church of Ljuboten.<sup>15</sup> With the correction of term “brick placed slightly to the side” that should

<sup>14</sup> V. Korać, *Spomenici*, 95.

<sup>15</sup> That ornament is located right next to Tree of Life at the apse of Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki. Cf. M. L. Rautman, *The Church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki: A Study in Early Palaeologan Architecture*, Ph.D., Indiana University 1984, UMI Microform, Ann Arbor MI, OL17260050M, 194; V. Korać, *Sveta Sofija u Ohridu. Prostor, struktura, oblici – izvori*, Zograf 32 (2008), 29 – 35 (with bibliography); Idem, *Spomenici*, 247, 255 fig.10.



Fig. 9. Niche of the central apse, south church of the monastery Constantine Lips in Constantinople, photo: J. S. Ćirić

be replaced with artistic more allusive term *transversal Z meander*,<sup>16</sup> it should be stressed that brickwork building technique is *eo ipso* of master builders who expertly and precisely took care of the fine interweaving geometric ornaments which in the process of visual perception contains complicated forms.<sup>17</sup> Consequently to be interpreted with the same precision the motif in the southern niche (Fig. 7) is described as a rhombus whose interior is a cross should be “read” precisely in order to be interpreted with the same precision.<sup>18</sup> This motif is executed with synthesized tetrahedron and octahedron, which together make three-

For Matejče: Ibid, 219, 239 fig. 18. For Ljuboten: Ibid, 114, 116, 125 fig.17, 127 fig. 21.

The photograph of Matejče west façade (Fig. 6) published in this article was taken in November 2011<sup>th</sup> with the invaluable help of Dr Sašo Cvetkovski, director of the National Museum of Natural Science “Dr Nikola Nezlobinski” in Struga who provided me permission slip for photographing given by the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>16</sup> For term “Z” meander cf. M. L. Rautman, *The Church*, 194.

<sup>17</sup> This is the type of meander with the same meaning as at Lesnovo church apse. Cf. J. S. Ćirić, *Les emblèmes sur l'abside de l'église de Lesnovo*, Zograf 35 (2012), 189 - 197.

<sup>18</sup> Problems of precise description, perhaps most vividly confirms the awkward position of an interpreter in relation to the picture because the act of writing is “the vertigo of an infinite correction”. R. Barthes, ‘Flaubert and the Sentence’, in *New Critical Essays*, ed. Richard Howard, New York, 1980, 69. In Ljuboten e.g. while the transverse Z meander was recognized as “an ornament, in the form of chessboard (...) with that difference that the brick was set diagonally “ the same ornament in Zaum was recognized as “open meander motif.”. V. Korać, *Spomenici*, 114, 246.



Fig. 10. Register of the west façade of St. Catherine church in Thessaloniki, photo: J. S. Ćirić

dimensional pattern of the Tree of Life like at west façade of St. Theodora in Arta (Fig. 8) or central apse of southern church of monastery Constantine Lips in Constantinople (Fig. 9). One ornamental unit looks like schematized mirror reflected fleur-de-lys. Symbolic communication between two mutually dependent ornaments can be related with the interpretation of the apostolic idea that “now we see as in the mirror” (1.Cor, 13, 12). That is the case with a fleur-de-lys which via “mirror symmetry” becomes Christ’s monogram as at St. Catherine’s church in Thessaloniki (Fig. 10). Multiplication of such ornamental unit results with so-called diagonally and vertically divided grid. Those multiplied octahedrons are difficult to be visually observed because of *two-dimensional expressive possibilities of brick* as a material for the façade ‘vocabulary’.

It is necessary to accurately describe the motif previously described as a stylized flower placed in the northern niche of the west façade of Holy Archangels in Štip (Fig. 11). A vertical line divides the niche in the half. Four semi-circular lines are proceeding on the south side where above the first line are two bricks in a square, while over the last five semi-circular lines are rectangular shaped bricks. That is the same motif which Marcus Rautman described on the apse of Holy Apostles church in Thessaloniki (Fig. 12) and observed that “the superlative treatment of the east façade suggests the high conspicuousness of



Fig. 11. South niche, Holy Archangels church in Štip, photo: J. S. Ćirić

this aspect of building.”<sup>19</sup> Rautman concluded that this motif is “best described as a wheat stalk (...) device presenting 12 symmetrical pairs of branches”.<sup>20</sup> Similarly designed ornaments - two motives/modifications of Tree of Life - are executed at several examples of Late Byzantine architecture: at west façade of St. Theodora in Arta – northern register under the west portal, on the southern church central apse of Constantine Lips in Constantinople and west façade of archbishop Gregory’s narthex of St. Sophia church in Ohrid (Fig. 13).<sup>21</sup> This particular motif, described as ‘decorative’ unit placed on the sides of the apse, represents powerful transmitter of complex exegetic messages expressed with rectangular cut bricks. Tree of Life is universal archetype because “On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers” (1 Kings 6:29). Visually equivalent motives of Tree of Life are painted in the lower registers of

<sup>19</sup> M. Rautman, *The Church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki: A Study in Early Palaeologan Architecture*, Ph.D., Indiana University 1984, UMI Microform, Ann Arbor MI, OL17260050M, 182.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 195.

<sup>21</sup> V. N. Papadopoulou, *Byzantine Arta and Its Monuments*, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens 2007, 45 – 55; about Constantine Lips Monastery architecture: V. Marinis, *The Monastery Tou Libos: Architecture, Sculpture and Liturgical Planning in Middle and Late Byzantine Constantinople*, PhD Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, 2004; especially about description of the ornamental units used for façade articulation cf. J. S. Ćirić, *Artikulacija istočne fasade katolikona manastira Konstantina Lipsa u Carigradu*, Niš i Vizantija V (2007), [315] – 329; eadem, *Optic desires*, [forthcoming]. Article concerning southern church of monastery Constantine Lips and its façade transfiguration by optical illusion is in preparation. About St. Sophia in Ohrid cf.. V. Korać, *Sveta Sofija u Ohridu*, 29 – 35.



Fig. 12. Central apse of the Holy Apostels church in Thessaloniki, photo: J. S. Ćirić

the west wall of naos in St. Sophia church in Ohrid below depictions of Holy Archangels as gatekeepers of the west portal and Tree of Life (Fig. 14).<sup>22</sup> Colored with blue or red, Tree of Life motives depicted right next to the west portal could be anticipation of an idea that the act of passing through the doors – as a result of mystery within the church – is mediator for restoration of Paradise lost since “This is the gate of the Lord, Through which the righteous shall enter.” (Psalm 117: 19 -20).<sup>23</sup>

In finding new directions of investigation and making more readable brick architectural text it is necessary to point several recent conclusions, concerning executed motives on the façade, like that “most of the brick patterns become confined to discrete spaces framed by niches, blind arches (...) always restricted by architectural features (niches, lunettes)”<sup>24</sup> or that

<sup>22</sup> Cf. M. Tatić-Djurić, *Archanges gardiens de porte a Dečani*, ur. V. Đurić, Dečani i vizantijska umetnost sredinom XIV veka. Međunarodni naučni skup povodom 650 godina manastira Dečana (septembar 1985), Beograd 1989, 361–362; G. Gerov, *Angelite – paziteli na vhoda*, Zbornik radovi Vizantološkog instituta 46 (2009), 435 – 442 (with bibliography).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Fig. 1.

<sup>24</sup> J. Trkulja, *Aesthetics*, 20.182.



Fig. 13. Niche, west façade of St. Sophia church in Ohrid, photo: J. S. Ćirić

“architectural elements were used playfully and in exaggerated quantities”.<sup>25</sup> If the brickwork opus placed directly above or below the niche, it is undeniable that *meticulously executed details such as Tree of Life or transversal Z meander*<sup>26</sup> are participating in *synchronous optical and highly symbolic conception of the façade*. That implies the same determined methodological instruments in interpreting in its entirety. The analyzed examples clearly show the necessary and

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 183. For opposite opinion cf. V. Korać – M. Šuput, *Arhitektura*, 286-290, figs. 393, 395, 396, 397.

<sup>26</sup> R. Bauerreiss, *Arbor Vitae: Der ‘Lebensbaum’ und seine Verwendung in Liturgie, Kunst und Brauchtum des Abendlandes*, Munich 1938. Compare *Arbor Vitae* in byzantine manuscripts: on the walls of Zion (Athos, Vatopedi. Cod.107, Fol. 47v), Nyssa (Athos, Vatopedi. Cod.107, Fol. 203v), Cesarea (Athos, Vatopedi. Cod.107, Fol. 136r), Nazareth (Athos, Vatopedi. Cod.107, Fol. 82r), Alexandria (Athos, Vatopedi. Cod.107, Fol. 227r). B. G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, Princeton-New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1969, pl. LXI-LXIV. Cf. linear schemata of composition Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles with schemata of *Arbor Vitae*. Ibid., Athos, Dionysiou. Cod.61, Fol. 21v: Pentecost, pl.LXIX. More about Tree of Life motif in the Late Byzantine architecture: Eadem, *Décryptage du mur : l’Arbre de Vie dans l’architecture byzantine tardive*, Collection of Works “Spaces of Memory: Art, Architecture and Heritage”, eds. A. Kadijević, D. Bulatović, M. Popadić, Belgrade [forthcoming, 2012].



Fig. 14. Tree of Life motif, south register of the west wall, St. Sophia church in Ohrid, photo: J. S. Ćirić

inherent connection between the portal and designing a wall, and the necessity of interpreting *the portal as an integral part of the wall*. Since that Tree of Life and transversal Z meander are placed laterally from the portal, the image of the facade is not only the wall but directly and *mutually interconnected and dependent on the portal*. West portal represents “space” of the wall surface that is - if judging by the few sources – the pleasure to see and to be seen because it is “the Wisdom of our time”<sup>27</sup> – the Economy of Salvation. The example can be observed in the *Enkomion to the great city of Nicaea* by Theodore II Doukas Laskaris (1254-1258) written before 1254<sup>28</sup> where words were transposed into a means of architectural visual discourse. The *Enkomion of the great city of Nicaea* by Theodore Doukas Laskaris focuses on the walls and material objects become alive. In cap. 2 the walls and their towers presented as alive are set next to the abundance of knowledge of the citizens: “and bearing its towers, as if they were living and the walls as if they had life (ὡςπερ ἔμψυχα φέρουσα τὰ πυρνώματα καὶ ἐν ζωῇ τὰ περιτεκίσματα).”<sup>29</sup> Another aspect of

the walls and its sublime thought appears in Theodore Metochites description of buildings *Nikaeus*. After the praise of the history and of the location of the city, the walls are praised first of all the structures of the city. First level is chorographic,<sup>30</sup> second is shaped with shape for its regular form with philosophical connotations of wall arrangement. At this point Metochites develops the *ekphraseis* of the walls: “it is succeeded by the brilliancy of variegated stones, closely rivaling the beauty above by the multiplicity of color; skill

cooperates with this, making use of the regularity of arrangement “ / τῆς χροῆς ἐτερότητι συνεργούσης τῆς τέχνης καὶ σοφισμένης τῆς ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἁρμονίας.”<sup>31</sup> At the deepest level of visual exegesis these rhetoric examples proved to be par excellence arguments for ‘restoration’ of blurred meanings of the economy of the wall (οἰκονομία - lat. dispensatio). The wall with the portal as receptive focus is constructed of materials that have specific, powerful characteristics. Brick as product of dry exaltation of earth in Platon’s *Timaeus* was recognized as the element with energy of Creation. The *Timaeus* makes conjectures on the composition of the four elements. The element of earth would be a cube, and of fire a tetrahedron a polyhedron composed of four triangular faces, three of which meet at each vertex<sup>32</sup> the

*tine Capital and Its Praises With the Speeches of Theodore Laskaris*, 136.

<sup>30</sup> “And their friendliness to one another and unwillingness to stand far apart might look to you like some surrounding circle of dancers orderly and very pleasing for the city to enjoy from within, yet armed, if an enemy approach them from outside, and unsociable for him to meet with”, Transl. C. Foss – J. Tulchin, *Nicaea*, 175. Cf. cf. N. Isar, *Χορός: The Dance of Adam. The Making of Byzantine Chorography*, Alexandros Press 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 179 – 181. I want to express my sincere gratitude to Oliver Dimitrov, M.A. in Theology Sofia University (Bulgaria) for the exact translation of Metochite’s *Nikaeus* oration and interest in discussing the subject matter of this paper on several occasions.

<sup>32</sup> “Of each of these kinds which I must endeavor to explain to you in an exposition of an unusual type; yet, inasmuch as you have some acquaintance with the technical method which I must necessarily employ in my exposition, you will follow me. In the first place, then, it is plain I presume to everyone that fire and earth and water and air are solid bodies; and the form of a body, in every case, possesses depth also. Further, it is absolutely necessary that depth

<sup>27</sup> A. Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris*, op. cit., c. 2.61-62 (p. 70). Transl. C. Foss – J. Tulchin, *Nicaea Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises With the Speeches of Theodore Laskaris*, in: Praise of the Great City of Nicaea and Theodore Metochites Nicene Oration, Brookline – Massachusetts 1996, 136.

<sup>28</sup> L. Bachmann, *Theodori Ducae Lascaris imperatoris in laudem Nicaeae urbis oratio*, Rostock 1847; E. Merendino, *Per la riedizione dell’δεξιόμνην εκτ φηι μεγέληρπλιν ΗΥκδύβη di Teodoro Lascaris*, Diptycha 4 (1986-1987) 379-383; S. Georgiopolou, *Theodore II Laskaris 1222-1258 as an Author and an Intellectual of the XIIIth Century*, Cambridge, Mass. 1990 (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University); A. Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris. Opuscula Rhetorica*, Leipzig 2000, 67-84.

<sup>29</sup> A. Tartaglia, *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris*, c. 2.61-62 (p. 70). Transl. C. Foss – J. Tulchin, *Nicaea Nicaea: A Byzantine*

same as depicted at west façade south niche in Štip. Theories of vision like those formulated by *Timaeus*, refer that brick is the product of fire. In the same time brickwork exists as “fire” of the eye, that is meets the shining of the fire coming from the object seen, which results in a visual stream. It must be stressed that such a kind of vision blurs the distinction between subject and object; it unifies seen and seer.<sup>33</sup> Fire is immanence; it is why the heavenly beings are described as fiery: “For our God is a consuming fire” (Hebr. 12: 29).<sup>34</sup> Earth seems to pervade brick and animates it; brick seems to be traversed (outspread) by an invisible stream which *transfigures* and ensouls the epidermis of wall. Fire is a mode of being uplifted to God because “the power of fire causes a lifting up to the godlike”.<sup>35</sup>

In closing, and in the context of interpretation of the west façade of the Holy Archangels church in Štip and the visual exegesis of this complex image, topos of the west portal is the element of the wall with high connectivity characteristics in the entire space of the church as the embodiment of the Logos.<sup>36</sup> The portal within the wall is limen, a ‘threshold’. Doors are performatives, gaze directing devices. Passage as liminality occurs physically when we enter a sanctified space – the church. Passage through the portal of medieval church is visual passage also: observer had to experience the visuality of the portal and niches and other ornamental units of the wall. It was through all this visuality that one entered the womb, the church as Incarnation of materializing of the Word – Logos and its spreading through the teachings of the Church.<sup>37</sup> Concept of physical liminality transposed at the wall aesthetics described in ekphraseis implies that “*seems to be in ecstasy and the church itself seems to whirl around; for the viewer, with his*

*twistings and turnings in every direction and his constant movements that the variety of the spectacle imposes on him, imagines that his personal experience is transferred to the church.*”<sup>38</sup>

The wall as truly immense skin of the church provides a continuous vision for the eyes of believers or “those who could see”.<sup>39</sup> The portal as an *organic part* of the entity of the organism of the west facade, played the crucial role creating, ultimately, an incomparable visual effect of the facades foremostly oriented towards accentuating *movement*, a dynamic interplay realized by tridimensional modelling, directions of distribution of geometric or geometricized motifs, polichromatic masonry in various *opus* and materials, optical illusion.<sup>40</sup> St. John Chrysostom also noted that by Christ’s sufferings “the *whole world* has become a Temple, and every place a place of prayer”.<sup>41</sup> That is why the liturgical mystery that takes place in the Church allows existence of the walls as the container of the economy of Salvation. Nevertheless, liturgical mystery continues to exist outside of the church space since *the wall of separating as a liminal space* was destroyed uniting all in Christ.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, the entire brickwork repertoire of the economy of the wall form sublime thought and perpetual «whirling»

<sup>38</sup> Photios, Homiliai 10.5.

<sup>39</sup> Maxim the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, in PG 91, 669C-D.

<sup>40</sup> V. B. Bičkov, *Estetika otaca crkve, apologete, blaženi Avgustin*, Beograd 2010, 611. About reception of optical phenomena of images, especially that “to see the walls that seem to descend on us and to close in on us, is to feel a sense of movement within ourselves, when we look at them from the outside, or from above, or to be drawn ineluctably in, as we find ourselves forced to move along with and within them”. D. Freedberg, *Movement, Embodiment, Emotion*, *Cannibalismes disciplinaires*, *Quand l’histoire de l’art et l’anthropologie se rencontrent: Actes du colloque Histoire de l’art et anthropologie organisé par l’INHA et le musée du quai Branly* (21 et 23 juin 2007), Paris 2010, 38.

<sup>41</sup> J. Chrysostomos, *Homilia II Oratio in crucem et in confessionem latronis, recitata in Sancta et Magna Parasceve, et quod oporteat pro inimicis*, PG XLIX, 408 – 409.

<sup>42</sup> If the death of the Lord is the ransom for all men and if by His death is being destroyed, the partition wall that means the invocation of all people to the Lord Who had to suffer, to spread his arms to draw with one hand an ancient people, and other Gentiles, so that both united in Him. “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” (John 12: 31 – 32). Cf. J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Liturgy: Report on the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium of 1979*, DOP 34 (1981), 272; N. Isar, *Chorography (Chôra, Chôros, Chorós) – A performative paradigm of creation of sacred space in Byzantium*, *Hierotopy: Studies in the Making of Sacred Space*, Moscow 2009, 59 – 90.

should be bounded by a plane surface; and the rectilinear plane is composed of triangles.” *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9 transl. by W.R.M. Lamb. London 1925, *Timaeus*, 53c.

<sup>33</sup> C. Mango – J. Parker, *A Twelfth-century Description of St. Sophia*, DOP 14 (1960), 237.

<sup>34</sup> *The Celestial Hierarchy* 15.2, 329C; 15.7, 336C.

<sup>35</sup> *The Celestial Hierarchy* 13.4, 305A.

<sup>36</sup> B. Pentcheva, *Visual Textuality: The “Logos” as Pregnant Body and Building*, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 45 (2004), 225 – 238 (with bibliography).

<sup>37</sup> A. Van Gennep, *Les rites de passage*, Paris 1909. On liminality in medieval churches: cf. G. Gero, *The iconography of the liminality: the symbolical vertical in the sacred space of the church entrance*, *Ierotopija: issledovanie sakral’nykh prostranstv. Materialy meždunarodnogo simpoziuma*, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moskva 2004, 110-111; Idem, *The Narthex as Desert: The Symbolism of the Entrance Space in Orthodox Church Buildings*, *Ritual and Art: Byzantine essays for Christopher Walter*, ed. P. Armstrong, London 2006, 144 – 159.

of various contents and depth of meaning signified in the Tree of Life: the fundamental idea of the Logos

incarnated in the temple (Eph: 1 -10) a mediator between Creator and created.<sup>43</sup>

Јасмина С. ЂИРИЋ

## ЗАПАДНА ФАСАДА ЦРКВЕ СВЕТИХ АРХАНЂЕЛА У ШТИПУ: ИКОНОМИЈА ЗИДА

### Резиме

На примеру обликовања западне фасаде цркве Светих Арханђела у Штипу задужбине протосе-васта Хреље, а имајући у виду питање *шта* се посматра и *шта* је посматрач *научен* да види како је наведено у Куновој методолошкој минијатури цитираној на почетку текста, могуће је разумети «поруке» опеком остварених геометријских представа у литератури препознатих као «аниконична декорација». Фасадним платном прочеља односно „спољашњом“ сликом западне фасаде храма Светих Арханђела у Штипу, подигнутог вероватно око 1334, доминира мотив тзв. тријумфалног лука. У раду се скреће пажња на терминологију коришћену у историографији, јер је неретко био случај да се исти орнамент на различитим градитељским остварењима, у епохи о којој је реч, називају различитим терминима. У централној ниши прочеља штипског храма препознат је мотив трансверзалног Z меандра – налик на лесновски, за који се проналазе паралеле и у другим градитељским центрима. У јужној ниши је препознат мотив тзв. мреже односно синтетисаног октаедра и тетраедра који заједно творе мотив Дрвета Живота. На северној страни прочеља, нишу испуњава мотив Дрвета Живота као универзалног архетипа јер „све зидове у дому унаоколо искити резаним херувимима и палмама и развијеним цветовима изнутра и споља“ (1 Цар. 6:29). Посебно акцензован портал на прочељу посматра се као органски односно интегрални део фасаде. Будући да су поменути орнаменти: два варијетета Дрвета Живота и трансферзални Z меандар постављени бочно од портала и да чине јединствену слику, слика фасаде није само зид већ је директно зависна од врата. На примеру штипског храма показано је да врата представљају „простор“ зидне површине коју је ако је судећи по малобројним изворима задовољство гледати јер је носилац „мудрости наших времена“ - икономије. По изворима зидови као и врата имају посебно место у концепцији храма. У Метохитовом Никеју (Nikaeus) на месту где се описују зидови, употребљени су сви елементи екфрасиса: “τῆς χροῶς ἐτερότητι συνεργούσης τῆς τέχνης καὶ σοφισμένης τῆς ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἁρμονίας” што доводи до закључка да се може

говорити о *икономији зида*. Уз приказано могуће значење орнамената на западној фасади штипског храма, неколико наведених реторичких примера у вези са зидом показују се као прворазредни аргументи за „враћање“ замагљених значења икономије зида (οἰκονομία - lat. dispensatio, домострој). Будући да је опека као материјал продукт ватре она поседује елементе стварања које је невидљиво. Такви садржаји епидерма цркве реферирају и на топос врата који не представља ништа друго већ спајајућу компоненту простора. Врата на западној страни представљају *limen*. Пролазак кроз врата средњовековне цркве је визуелан: верник усмерава поглед преко ниша пласираних у зидну површину. Другим речима, верник прелази у лиминално стање у складу са визуелним опажањем које се активира и приказаним орнаментима. Када се врати у стваран свет преко пролаза и изађе из цркве стање верника је промењено. Концепт лиминалности у односу на портал поменут је и у Фотијевим Хомилијама (10.5). По писању Св. Јована Хризостома, Христовим страдањем „цела Земља постала је света“ и „цео свет постао је Храм и свако место, место молитве“. Зато литургијска тајна која се догађа у Цркви омогућава постојање физичких зидова као носиоца божанских икономија, но ипак наставља да постоји и ван јер зид раздвајања као лиминални простор је срушен уједињујући све у Христу посреднику између Бога и људи.

<sup>43</sup> “It seems that everything is in ecstatic motion and the church itself is circling round. For the spectator, through his whirling above in all directions and being constantly astir, which he is forced to experience by the variegated spectacle on all sides, imagines his personal condition is transferred to the object”. *Homiliae Photii Patriarchae In dedication novae basilicae*, PG 102, 569.

For performative aspects cf. N. Isar, *Chorography (Chōra, Chorós)-a Performative Paradigm of Creation of Sacred Space in Byzantium*, in: *Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* (ed. A. Lidov), Moscow 2006, 59-82; eadem, *Chōra: Tracing the Presence*, *Review of European Studies* 1-1 (2009), 39-55; eadem, *Chorography-A Space for Choreographic Inscription*, *Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Braşov* 2-51 (2009), 263-268.

## ЗАПАДНАТА ФАСАДА НА ЦРКВАТА НА СВЕТИТЕ АРХАНГЕЛИ ВО ШТИП: ИКОНОМИЈАТА НА СИДОТ

### Резиме

На примерот на обликувањето на западната фасада на црквата на Светите Архангели во Штип, задужбина на протосевастиот Хрел, а имајќи го предвид прашањето *што* се набљудува и што *е научен* да види набљудувачот, како што е наведено во Куновата методолошка минијатура цитирана на почетокот од текстот, можно е да се разберат „пораките“ од геометриските претстави остварени со тулите, во литературата препознатливи како „аниконишна декорација“. На фасадното платно на предницата, односно со „надворешната“ слика на западната фасада на храмот на Светите Архангели во Штип, подигнато веројатно околу 1334 година, доминира мотивот на таканаречениот триумфален лак. Во работата се обрнува внимание на терминологијата што е користена во историографијата, зашто не ретко имаше случаи ист орнамент на различни градителски остварувања, во епохата за која станува збор, да се нарекува со различни термини. Во централната ниша на предницата на штипскиот храм е препознаен мотивот на трансверзален Z меандер – слично на лесновскиот, за кој се наоѓаат паралели и во други градителски центри. Во јужната ниша е препознаен мотив на таканаречената мрежа, односно на синтетизирани октаедар и тетраедар, кои заедно го создаваат мотивот на Дрвото на Животот. На северната страна на предницата нишата ја исполнува мотивот на Дрвото на Животот како универзален архетип, зашто „сите сидови во домот наоколу ги накити со режани херувими и палми и со развиени цветови однатре и однадвор“ (1 Цар. 6:29). Посебно акцентираниот портал на предницата се набљудува како органски, односно како интегрален дел од фасадата. Бидејќи споменати орнаменти, два варијетета на Дрвото на Животот и трансверзалниот Z меандер, се поставени странично од порталот и прават единствена слика, сликата на фасадата не е само сид, туку е директно зависна од вратата. На примерот на штипскиот храм е покажано дека вратата претставува „простор“ од сидната површина која, судејќи според малубројните извори, е задоволство да се

гледа зашто е носител на „мудроста на нашите времиња“ – икономијата. Според изворите, сидовите, како и вратата, имаат посебно место во концепцијата на храмот. Во Метохитовиот Никеј (Nikaeus) на местото каде што се опишуваат сидовите се употребени сите елементи на екфрасисот: „τῆς χρόας ἑτερότητι συνεργούσης τῆς τέχνης καὶ σοφισμένης τῆς ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἁρμονίας“ што води до заклучокот дека може да се зборува за *икономија на сид*. Покрај прикажаното можно значење на орнаментите на западната фасада на штипскиот храм, неколкуте наведени реторички примери во врска со сидот се покажуваат како првокласни аргументи за „враќање“ на замаглените значења на икономијата на сидот (οἰκονομία - lat. dispensatio, домострој). Бидејќи тулата како материјал е продукт на огнот, таа поседува елементи на создавање што е невидливо. Таквите содржини на епидермот на црквата реферираат и на топосот на вратата, што не претставува ништо друго освен поврзувачка компонента на просторот. Вратата на западната страна претставува *limen*. Минувањето низ вратата на средновековната црква е визуелно: верникот го насочува погледот преку нишите пласирани во сидната површина. Со други зборови, верникот поминува во лиминална состојба во сообразност со визуелното забележување што се активира и со прикажаните орнаменти. Кога низ преминот ќе се врати во реалниот свет и ќе излезе од црквата, состојбата на верникот е променета. Концептот на лиминалност во однос на порталот е спомнат и во Фотиевите Хомилии (10.5). Според пишувањето на Св. Јован Хризостом, со Христовото страдање „целата земја стана света“ и „целиот свет стана Храм, и секое место, место за молитви“. Затоа литургиската тајна што се случува во Црквата го овозможува постоењето на физички сидови како носители на божествените икономии, но сепак продолжува да постои и надвор, зашто сидот на разделувањето како лиминален простор е урнат, обединувајќи ги сите во Христос, посредникот меѓу Бога и луѓето.