

## ART, FORM AND LITURGY IN THE ROTUNDA AT KONJUH

Architectural setting as a resultant from public use and religious practice in Christian temples enabled the conduct of liturgical ceremony awarding it respective spatial accommodation. Centennial experience, produced from interaction between ideology and artistic interior decoration, developed iconographic systems inseparable from architectural design finely complementing each other and reflecting the message of a formally codified rite centered in the death of Christ and the martyrs, and re-enacted in church ceremonial. Born in the early centuries of the new era from the intellectual struggle between ancient tradition and new Christian ideology, church ceremonial passed along the line of development and transformation dominated by the variety of traditional forms and practices, ecclesiastical policies and habitual behaviour, yet determined to establish liturgical procession that would reflect the essence of religious thought and ritual, and reproduce it in the form of narrative in the artistic arrangement of interior decoration, engraving the message of faith deep into the memory of believers.

The study of artistic expression of religious themes and their presentation in church fresco, mosaic or icon painting, stone or wood carving, miniature illumination etc., as well as the whole sequence of appliances involved in ceremonial conduct, shows that a given subject and its location within precise spatial context are ruled by liturgical reasons. In the same sense illustrations distributed according to a precise liturgical code depict events commemorated by the liturgy itself.<sup>1</sup> The overlaying of past and present, or rather re-enactment of a biblical event through church ritual, is the basic method of liturgical language that converts terrestrial into heavenly reality. Thus the ceremonial rite conveyed inside an ecclesiastical unit through a line of linking subjects produces a reality that exists beyond the limits of time and space. Within the variety of material objects involved in church ceremonial, those of mere liturgical connotation or use are distinguished from others of liturgical language, whose appearance is the result of respective ceremonial experience.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Cutler, Liturgical strata in the Marginal Psalters, *DOP* 34-35(1980-1981), 17-30; and for the later period: T.F. Mathews, The Sequel to Nicaea II in Byzantine Church Decoration, *Perkins Journal of Theology* 41-3 (1988), 11-21.

<sup>2</sup> H. Belting, An Image and its Function in the Liturgy: The Man of Sorrows in Byzantium, *DOP* 34-35 (1980-1981), 1-16, 2. The discussion differentiates between liturgical

From the standpoint of intended determination of meaning and liturgical function of interior decoration, the example that is to be presented at this place is interesting for the successively combined illustrative potentials. The rotunda at Konjuh in the northern part of modern Republic of Macedonia, is rather well known due to the detailed study of its first explorer, S. Radojčić.<sup>3</sup> Located to the south and outside the walls of a well-defended fortification at the site Golemo Gradishte (Fig. 1), within the territory and near the border separating the early Byzantine province *Dardania* from *Dacia Mediterranea*, today it is found in a



Fig. 1. Panoramic view of Golemo Gradishte from the south with the rotunda in front of it  
Сл. 1. Панорамски поглед на Велико Градиште код с. Коњуха са југа, са ротондом у предњем плану

poor state of preservation.<sup>4</sup> Need for museum presentation of the finds coming from this site instigated new approach to the documentation and systematisation of its exquisite architectural decoration, almost a single kind of finds collected during the first visit of the site in 1938, after the uncontrolled excavation of the church by the local population in 1919. The project aimed at an at least partial reconstruction of a minor group of selected objects for interior decoration and its presentation within the permanent exhibition of the Museum of Macedonia at Skopje.<sup>5</sup> For that reason, during the academic 2005/2006, cooperation was

presentation of the Communion of the Apostles as a substitute for the scene of the Last Supper, and not an actual presentation of a moment in liturgy, as opposed to the scene of lamentation of the Virgin over the body of Christ, a biblical event expressed in liturgical language, an actual product of hymnographic and homiletic rhetoric. A third category of art works drew their content from liturgy, becoming the visual equivalent or even product of liturgical function-prayers or rite.

<sup>3</sup> С. Радојчић, *Црква у Коњуху*, ЗРВИ 1 (1952), 148-167.

<sup>4</sup> The site Golemo Gradishte was subject to several brief attempts for archaeological re-inspection in the last decades, reviewed in: C.S. Snively, *Archaeological Investigation at Konjuh, Republic of Macedonia*, in 2000, DOP 56 (2002), 297-306.

<sup>5</sup> The assembled fragments presented in: С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ 1* (1952), figs. 29-42, were deposited in 1938 at Kurshumli An, and inventoried as part of the collection of the

established with the Electro-Technical Faculty and the Faculty of Architecture at the University S.S. Cyril and Methodius at Skopje, under the guidance of Prof. D-r D. Davčev and Prof. D-r J. Hadžieva, respectively. For better visualisation of the monument, with the collaborators' permission, several 3D illustrations were presented at the conference, but omitted at this place due to their incompleteness as a result of project's status being under progress.

The church (Fig. 2) belongs to the central plan circular type of building incorporated within a trapesoidal structure. The central space is surrounded by a vaulted ambulatory terminated in eastern lateral compartments, separated from it on both sides by narrowed passages, which suggested their presbyterial character. From the narthex encompassed by lateral chambers, the church was entered via a tribelon entrance. There were two more entrances near the eastern ends of the north and south walls. An arcaded colonnade of interchanging pairs of mullions employed as columns and single piers separated the nave from the ambulatory, and once supported the presumably existent masonry dome elevated above the central space.<sup>6</sup> The *presbyterium* outstands with its developed form, extended westwards into the nave, enclosed between the apse and the first massive pair of piers. It is reminiscent of the kind of arrangement characteristic for the Middle Byzantine period, which regularly include a tripartite presbyterial arrangement, typical for the Early Byzantine churches in Syria already from the early sixth century. Closest parallels are found in the shrine of St. Michael at Fal'ul, and the presbytery of H. Tytos at Gortyna in Crete, while parallels for the narthex with annexes exist in several churches from the vicinity of Carichin Grad, a triconch cemetery chapel outside its walls, the churches at Kurshumlia and Klisura, as well as at Bregovina, all related to late Justinian's time.<sup>7</sup>

As a type the rotunda belongs to the central space buildings inaugurated in Christian ecclesiastical architecture already in Constantine the Great's time, equally in the East and the West. Dispatched as a part of the imperial religious policy aiming at the promotion of the mission of Christendom, it was primarily applied in the construction of burial chapels and chambers dedicated to the performance of the baptismal rite, the two profound acts that provide enactment of the essential Christian mystery of rebirth through faith.<sup>8</sup> With this

then Historical and Archaeological Museum at Skopje (no-s 2126-2179). Today they are in possession of the modern Museum of Macedonia.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed description of the building may be found in: С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 152-154. On the meaning of the ambulatory: E. Hadjityphonos, *Peristōon or Ambulatory in Byzantine Church Architecture, Concepts and Terms*, *Саопштења XXXIV* (2002), 131-143, particularly 135-136. On possible alternatives for a dome covering, see: W.E. Kleinbauer, *The Double-Shell Tetraconch Building at Perge in Pamphylia and the Origin of the Architectural Genus*, *DOP* 41 (1987), 278, 289.

<sup>7</sup> R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New York: Penguin 1979, 288, 268 fig. 214. С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), figs. 24A, 25, 26, derived a line of similarities with the churches in Kisamos, Mir'ayé and Fal'ul in Syria, etc. See also: J. Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie*, Paris 1947, 152-153, fig. 68; В. Кондић, В. Поповић, *Царичин Град, ујвврђени зрад у византијском Илирику*, Београд 1977, 135-136, 157-158, 154.

<sup>8</sup> W.E. Kleinbauer, *DOP* 41 (1987), 288-291 and fn. 58, brings up evidence of the existence of the double shell tetraconch concept as early as the reign of Constantine the Great until mid fourth century, p. 289. An interesting review on: "Christian Centralized and Domed

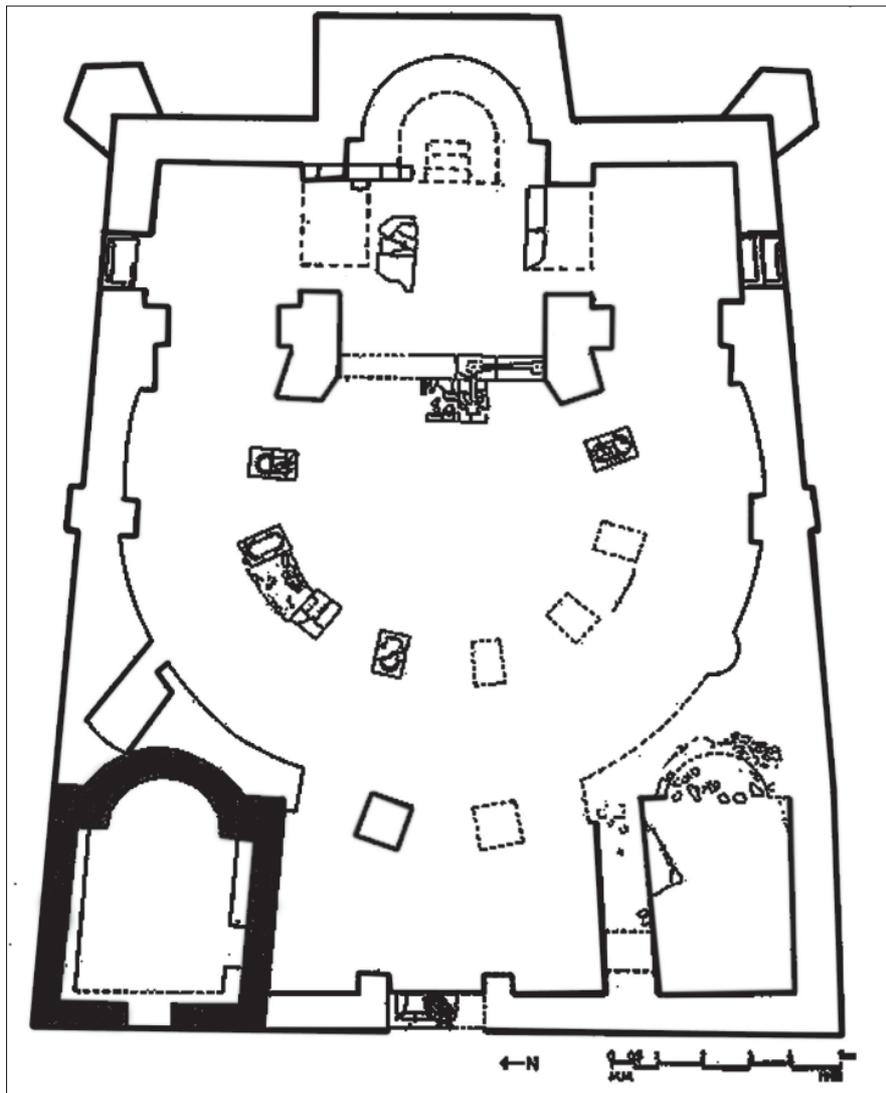


Fig. 2. Plan of the rotunda, according to: C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), fig. 10

Сл. 2. План ротонде, према: C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), fig. 10

background, as inheritance from pagan architectural tradition, the Hellenistic *heroon*, and founded on the study of A. Grabar, it was widely accepted that this type of building was particularly applied in the construction of *martyria* raised on sacred remains, the relics of a martyr saint, objects or places *-loca*

Architecture” can be found in: M. Gough, *The Early Christians*, London 1961, 145-155 ff. See also: S. Čurčić, From the Temple of the Sun to the Temple of the Lord: Monotheistic Contribution to Architectural Iconography in Late Antiquity, in: *Architectural Studies in Memory of Richard Krautheimer*, ed. C.L. Streiker, Mainz 1996, 55-59.

*sancta*- directly related to acts of martyrdom.<sup>9</sup> Promoted as an architectural type simultaneously with the acceptance and promotion of the veneration of martyrs as a state cult, this architectural plan was revived during fifth and sixth centuries simultaneously with the then popular translation of relics, and continued to be the norm for ecclesiastical architecture throughout Byzantium and its dependencies.<sup>10</sup> However, the analysis of a specific type of central plan building, the aisled tetraconch church, revised on examples from Syria and Northern Mesopotamia, all built within a seventyfive-year period from *c.* 460 to mid sixth century, located in cities of considerable importance, showed their functioning as cathedral churches.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, an alleged tradition of octagonal palatine churches is continuously subject to reconsideration.<sup>12</sup> Within the scope of early estimations, previous observations of the architectural structure of the rotunda at Konjuh defined it as a martyrium, and given its decorative ensemble, lead to the conclusion of its probable oriental, Syriac, origin.<sup>13</sup> Relatively outdated, and concerning liturgical problems, both conclusions show necessity for detailed revision.

One of the chief points in the discussion makes the former presumption of a tripartite organization of the presbytery.<sup>14</sup> The fact that the eastern lateral chambers were originally accessible from outside, prevents any possibility for their involvement in liturgical ceremony. Only with the closure of the entrance in the north wall, was enabled possible transformation of the space into a *prothesis*, stated also in the so called Museum Basilica at Philippi in the late sixth century, and earliest with the construction of Blessed David in Thessaloniki in the last third of fifth century.<sup>15</sup> The previous existence of entrances near the eastern

<sup>9</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium: recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, v. I, Paris 1946, 345-350.

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius VC 4.23. A revised observation on the notion of *martyrium* from the earlier view of A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, Paris 1946, is summarised by: G.T. Armstrong, *Martyrion*, in: E. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Garland Publishing, enc., 1998, 730-732, with a list of known *martyria*.

<sup>11</sup> W.E. Kleinbauer, The Origins and Functions of the Aisled Tetraconch Churches in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia, *DOP* 27 (1973), 89-114.

<sup>12</sup> A. Grabar, 1946, I, 214 ff; discussion was raised by: C. Mango, The Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the Alleged Tradition of Octagonal Palatine Churches, *JÖB* XXI (1972), 189-193; *ibid.*, The Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus once Again, *BZ* LXVIII (1975), 385-392, with further bibliography, both republished in: C. Mango, *Studies on Constantinople*, Variorum 1993, chapters XIII and XIV; J. Bardill, The Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople and the Monophysite Refugees, *DOP* 54 (2000), 1-11.

<sup>13</sup> С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 158-159, 164, stated its martyrial character 155, accepted also by: R. Krautheimer 1979, 288. C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), 305 expresses the insufficient evidence to state its function as a martyrium. Recently V. Aleksova in: Коњух-Големо Градиште, *Археолошка карта на Македонија*, вол. 2, Скопје 1996, 184-185; and: *Loca sanctorum Macedoniae, Култови на маријиритие во Македонија од IV до IX век*, Скопје 1997, 259-260, proclaimed its possible fourth century date, refuted by: C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), 304, fn. 38.

<sup>14</sup> С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 153, 159; В. Лилчиќ, *Македонскиот камен за божовитие, христијанитие и за животи и живојитои*, т II, Скопје 2002, 571, 577; C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), 303.

<sup>15</sup> С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 155 on the closure, 159 on Blessed David, dated to the last third of fifth century, R. Krautheimer 1979, 253, fig. 193; E. Kourkoutidou-

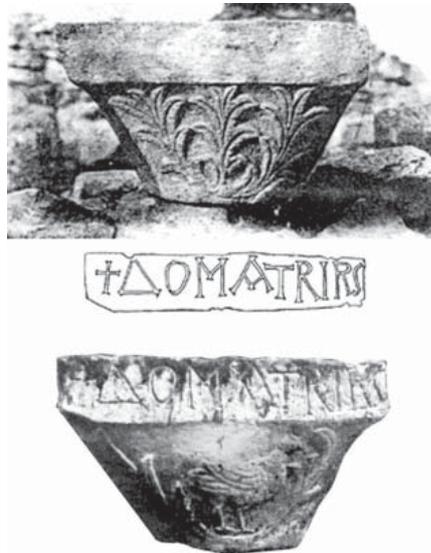


Fig. 3. The capital from the tribelon entrance leading into the rotunda

Сл. 3. Капител улазног трибелона који води из нартекса у унутрашњост ротонде

ends of the north and south walls argument against any suggestion of assumed Syriac origin of the original plan, and ascribe it rather to the Constantinopolitan group of churches accessible from the east.<sup>16</sup> In the same sense, due to limited excavations for now we are deprived of the knowledge for the existence of any western introductory segment of the church, an atrium or a forecourt, apart from the narthex accompanied on both sides by small chambers, both characteristic for the churches in Macedonia and Greece, occurred in demand for housing a practical purpose.<sup>17</sup> Greatest similarity of the rotunda with the martyrium of St. Karpos and Papylos in Constantinople, ascribed to c. 400 or earlier, is produced by the existence of an eastern prothesis and a southern entrance to the interior of the rotunda.<sup>18</sup>

The presumption of the martyrial character of the Konjuh rotunda is supported by an inscription engraved on a capital crowning one of the two columns of the tribelon entrance, defining it as a domatirrs, an abbreviation assumed to stand for domus martyris.

The title is further supported by the image of a hen executed in a low relief on the opposite side of the same capital, an illusion of Christ (Mathew 23:37) or its male match, the cock, a symbol of resurrection and vigilance.<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 3) However, An archaeological ditch that transected

Nikolaidou, E. Marki, Des innovations liturgiques et architecturales dans la basilique du Musée de Philippos, *Akten des XII Internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie*, Teil 2, *JÖB* 20-2 (1995), 950-957.

<sup>16</sup> Th.F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople, Architecture and Liturgy*, Pennsylvania and London, 1971, 105-106. This problem requests a much more detailed elaboration considering the entire territory. Several monuments as the Northern and the Episcopal basilica from Stobi may be attributed to the same group.

<sup>17</sup> While the first is characteristic for the Constantinopolitan plan, in which the lateral chapels are nonexistent. Th.F. Mathews 1971, 108; E. Hadjistryphonos, *Саопштијења XXXIV* (2002), 140-141.

<sup>18</sup> С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 156 fn. 21; W.E. Kleinbauer, *DOP* 41 (1987), 291; J.B. Ward-Perkins, Notes on the Structure and Building Methods of Early Byzantine Architecture, in: D.T. Rice, ed., *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors, Second Report*, Edinburgh 1958, 69-70.

<sup>19</sup> С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 154, 155-156, figs. 19, 20; on the symbolism of the hen. The cock since early antiquity symbolised vigilance, and is associated with Peter's denial of Christ (Luke 22: 61-62; John: 13: 38). As such it was presented in early Christian iconography, promoting it as symbol of repentant sinners. s.v. Cock, in: P. and L. Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, Oxford-New York, 1998, 114.



Fig. 4. A grove with a well near the rotunda

Сл. 4. Шумарак са бунаром лековите воде у непосредној близини ротонде

the church along its E-W axis, excavated in 1998, confirmed the inexistence of a crypt or martyr's grave beneath the altarpiece, leaving the apse *ambitus* as the single potential place intended for the deposition of relics, or possibly the northern narthex compartment today used as a chapel.<sup>20</sup> With this in mind, it may be understood that the upper title explains the church in general terms as *the house of the martyrs*, despite the uncertain place for deposition of the relics, which preservation in a church do not *ipso facto* identify it as a martyrion. The monument given the particular architectural form and the lower redefined interpretation of its decorative opus demonstrates the blurred distinction between *martyrion* and congregational basilica occurred by the sixth century as a result to the translation and strong profusion of saintly relics, their regular placement in or beneath altars, often followed by multiplication of auxiliary altarpieces around the church.<sup>21</sup> This trend propagated around the Christian world provided the multiplication of holly shrines within settlements, preserving differences maintained in accord with the saint's image, the status of the site, and their importance to the community to which they were dedicated. In this context, based on the size, the rotunda at Konjuh, located outside the walled city premises, was dedicated to an unknown Saint, devoted to a small community, and probably related to the hagiomatic cult centered in a near by grove. (Fig. 4) The pathway that

<sup>20</sup> The information is received in consultation from the director of excavations Prof. C. Snively, who allowed its publication, and to whom I express my gratitude. Excavations were conducted by K. Trajkovski. C. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 155, assumed possible location of the crypt in one of the minor compartments, unclear which, but supposed by C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), 304, to be one of those on the west side.

<sup>21</sup> S.v. Martyrion, G.T. Armstrong, in: E. Ferguson, ed., 1998, 730-731; C. Mango, Constantine's mausoleum and the translation of Relics, *BZ* 83-1 (1940), 51-61; W.E. Kleinbauer, *DOP* 27 (1973), 100, 1008-109. A small reliquary may have been deposited below the altar, where at the time of excavations the floor stone paving was found interrupted, C. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 155-156, figs. 11, 12, 14; C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), 303.



Fig. 5. Fragments ascribed to one decorative slab of curvilinear profile

Сл. 5. Фрагменти приписани једној декоративној плочи полукружног профила

of decorative relief revealed a much larger number of objects of different ornamentation engaged in various places around the building,<sup>23</sup> which directly initiated systematisation of the collection. Although fragmented, it initiated an attempt for a 3-D reconstruction of the separate objects, as well as that of the church, aimed at reconstructing their original location, and thus enabling the reconstruction of the formal appearance and liturgical setting of the church. Among them clearly distinct are the functional elements, as the capitals and columns of the *templon* and the two architraves.<sup>24</sup> A series of fragments composed from slabs ornamented with the symbol of cross placed upon one or both sides, from present standpoint may be attributed to the *templon*. A sub group of two is decorated on the reverse with schematic floral ornament encompassing the central cross, attributable to the *solea* fence. A major group is composed from slabs ornamented with a highly schematic bordure of geometrically symmetric acanthus palmettes concentrated around quadratic fields engaged with faunal or floral representations. The panels are further united into more complex arrangements combining several such fields encircled by an acanthus gourd found in a wide variety of stilisation and execution, a direct analogy to this makes an example from Lycia,<sup>25</sup> replaced in one example by an ivy. (Fig. 5) A part of these slabs with blank reverse is given horizontal curvilinear profile, while another is

connected it with the church was recently reconstructed.<sup>22</sup>

Lacking any other kind of interior ornamentation, a distinctive characteristic of the rotunda makes its architectural decoration. It was manufactured from a specific local volcanic rock, andesite, from which, cut in quadrangular blocks, the building itself was constructed. The careful inspection of the fragmented pieces

<sup>22</sup> Its heeling capacity is well known to the local population, С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 152; С.С. Snively, *DOP* 56 (2002), 305.

<sup>23</sup> К. Петров, Старуродекорација од Коњух, *Зборник на Археолошкиот музеј во Скопје* II (1958), 31-45

<sup>24</sup> East of the entrance in the ambulatory were preserved remains from fresco plaster painted in red and imitating marble incrustation. A large number of fragmented small capitals from the chancel were revealed. С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1 (1952), 154, 155, 160-164.

<sup>25</sup> H.-G. Severin, P. Grossmann, *Frühchristliche und byzantinische Bauten im südöstlichen Lykien, Istanbuler Forschungen* Band 46, Tübingen 2003, 84-85, Pl. 24

flat, either with a blank backside, or ornamented with large crosses or other motifs. So far the extent of progress of the ongoing project did not yet produce a dependable reconstruction of these slabs, which will limit the discussion on interpretation of presented iconography.

The retrospection re-evaluates the previously expressed conclusions of a mid sixth century, or slightly later date of the church.<sup>26</sup> It may be stated that two periods of execution of the interior decoration can be defined, within which the same decorative program was renewed, but differentiated by quality of execution pointing towards probable renovation within a short time span. Later pieces of the last group of curvilinear profile slabs were executed somewhat negligent, using a new decorative pattern, and executed over thinner slabs cut from more porous stone. The building itself also shows angular reinforcement by contrafors at the building's two eastern corners. There is a secondary closure of the intercolumniations with a low masonry wall topped by parapets, the one archaeologically confirmed being located on the north side. It may be supposed that interventions occurred as a result to an earth tremor characteristic for this seismically unstable region, but also possibly as a result to a thrusting movement exerted by the masonry dome. Partial closure of intercolumniations probably occurred due to need to stabilise the interior structural

elements supporting the dome, and only secondarily for disciplining the believers and their movement within the church interior, which is not a rare occurrence in the R. of Macedonia and the Balkans.<sup>27</sup> The inference that the building didn't survive the late sixth-early seventh century destruction archaeologically

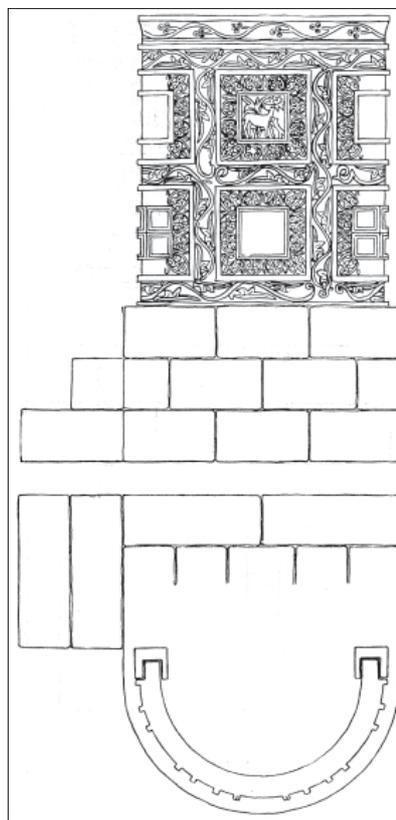


Fig. 6. Proposed reconstruction of the Konjuh pyrgos by K. Petrov, according to: *ГЗФФ* 22 (1970), figs. 8, 6, plan and profile

Сл. 6. Предложена реконструкција Коњушког амвона са стране К. Петрова, према: *ГЗФФ* 22 (1970), figs. 8, 6, план и профил

<sup>26</sup> С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1(1952), 155, stating that the entire building originated within a single period, accepted by C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56(2002), 304. И. Николајевић-Стојковић, *Рановизантијска архитектонска декоративна илустрација у Македонији, Србији и Црној Гори*, Београд 1957, 49-50, figs. 115, 116, 151.

<sup>27</sup> The inner organisation of churches and their liturgical projection call for a detailed discussion in the context of early Byzantine churches in Macedonia, including the rotunda

documented on the acropolis,<sup>28</sup> may rather be taken as a *terminus post quem* for the stated renovation of the church, rather than its destruction. The date of destruction due to lack of information remains an open question.

Main contradiction between observations presented at this place and previous study, later expanded by Prof. K. Petrov, is the reconstruction of the circularly profiled slabs as fence for an *ambonos*, presumed to have been located within the central space of the church.<sup>29</sup> Chief obstacle for accepting this presumption is the absolute lack of archaeological proofs to confirm its actual existence in the central domed part of the building, possibly due to the clearance of the floor surface at the time of excavation, as well as the inaccurately reconstructed appearance of *pyrgos* itself. (Fig. 6) The careful analysis of fragments employed in the proposed reconstruction shows that it united almost the entire second group of slabs from the collection, based singularly on similarity of ornamentation, ignoring their individual physical characteristics. Namely, certain slabs of horizontal circular profile were placed vertically, and even some flat slabs were engaged. (Fig. 7)

Basic argument against the proposed existence is found in the physical characteristics of the church. A narrow central space of 7.5 m in diameter fronted by a deep *presbyterium* containing two lateral *synthronoi* placed to block partly the passages to the lateral compartments, virtually vestibules for the lateral entrances, and a dominant *cathedra* placed on top of the *ambitus* inside the apse, as well as the fenced solea protruding into the nave, effectively do not necessitate the existence of a specific place for chanting the litanies. The nave function was highly segregated as a westward elongation of the sanctuary proper advanced by the solea and the pulpit, and transected by the processions of the Small and Great Entrances customized long before their ceremonial codification. They all formed the centripetal plan that focused clerical action of the liturgical drama in the nave, and as a consequence restricted presence of the congregation diverting it to the lateral spaces.<sup>30</sup> Thus the ritual purpose of the nave was to produce the *locus* for reading the Gospel book that the legitimate representative of Christ holds to read enlightening the souls of the believers, and where they receive his ultimate blessing, the sacrament that transforms them into Christ. During the ceremony the Gospel Book was carried from the altar to the *ambo*, which use was firmly established only in the sixth century, and offered to the public for kiss on the way back to the altar.<sup>31</sup> It is questionable whether the solea of this developed presbytery, fenced with slabs and at least encircled by architraves

at Konjuh and considering the liturgical function of nave, sketched by: Th.F. Mathews 1971, 117-134. The discussion surpasses the limits of this text. The closure of the door in the north wall doesn't necessary has to be related to this event

<sup>28</sup> C.S. Snively, *DOP* 56(2002), 302, 304fn.38; С.Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1(1952), 155, on walled intercolumniations.

<sup>29</sup> К. Петров, Реконструкција на амвонот од ротондата во Коњух, *ГЗФФ* 22 (1970), 271-304. The suggestion was also accepted by: И. Николајевић-Стојковић 1957, 47, 49.

<sup>30</sup> R. Krautheimer 1979, 107; T.F. Mathews 1971, 117-131.

<sup>31</sup> R. Krautheimer, 1979, 213-214; its use was announced in literary sources already in the fourth century, Th.F. Mathews 1971, 117-134; P.H.F. Jakobs, *Die frühchristlichen Ambone Griechenlands*, Habelts Dissertationsdrucke, Reihe klassische Archäologie, Bonn 1987, 153-162.

placed upon the high columns of the tem-  
 plon, if not also covered with a baldac-  
 chino, characteristic also for some types  
 of ambo, didn't take over already at that  
 time the role of an ambo. The implica-  
 tion is based in the simplified form of a  
 solea platform of the Middle Byzantine  
 churches slightly protruding into the nave  
 which took over the function and the  
 name itself. The existence of a canopy,  
 in the rotunda is not necessary since the  
 solea is located almost centrally under  
 the dome, which itself carries cosmo-  
 logical and sacred connotations essen-  
 tially indicating that the person beneath  
 is a representative of the sacred ruler, him-  
 self dominating from the top of the dome.<sup>32</sup>  
 In favour of this suggestion stands the conclusion of R.  
 Farioli Campanati derived on terminological comparison, stating that the term  
*pyrgos* used usually to determine an ambo is not synonymous. With the intent  
 of unobstructed conduct of the Great Entrance procession are interpreted the  
 group of compact one-access ambonoi placed slightly asside the main axis from  
 Thessaloniki but represents a figurative poetic term that may also be used for a  
 ciborium.<sup>33</sup>

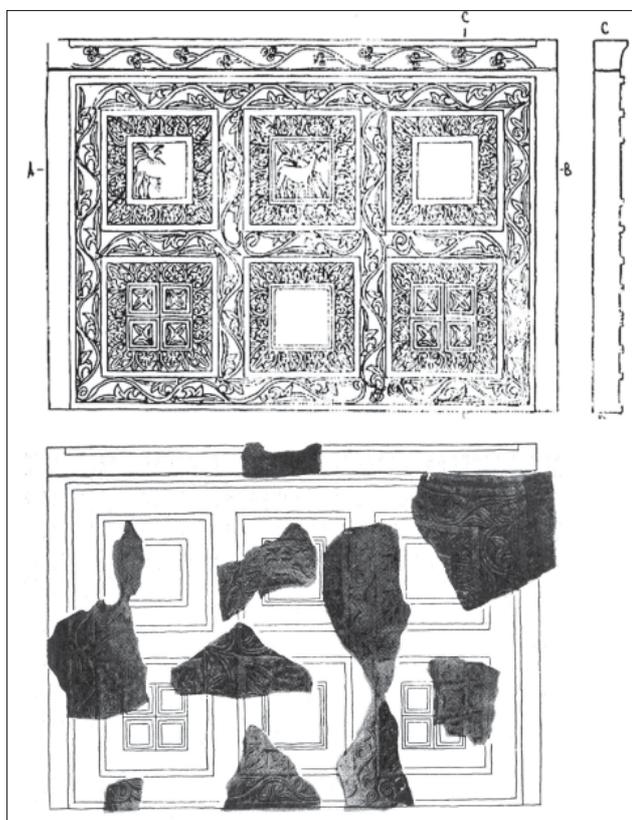


Fig. 7. Employed fragments with proposed reconstruction according to: К. Петров, ГЗФФ 22 (1970), figs. 2, 3

Сл. 7. Употребљени фрагменти са предложеном реконструкцијом плоче према: К. Петров, ГЗФФ 22 (1970), figs. 2, 3

<sup>32</sup> K.E. McVey, The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol, *DOP* 37 (1983), 105. The importance of the site is underlined by the nave iconographic program in Middle and later Byzantine churches presented in the image of Christ Pantokrator. T.F. Mathews, Religious Organization and Church Architecture, in: *The Glory of Byzantium, Art and Culture in the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843-1261*, H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom, eds., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1997, 31, 33;

<sup>33</sup> Concluded on the text of Paul Sylentiarius after 562, R. Farioli Campanati, Il pyrgus dell'Archivescovo Agnello e la sua datazione, *CCARB* XLI (1994), 211-216.

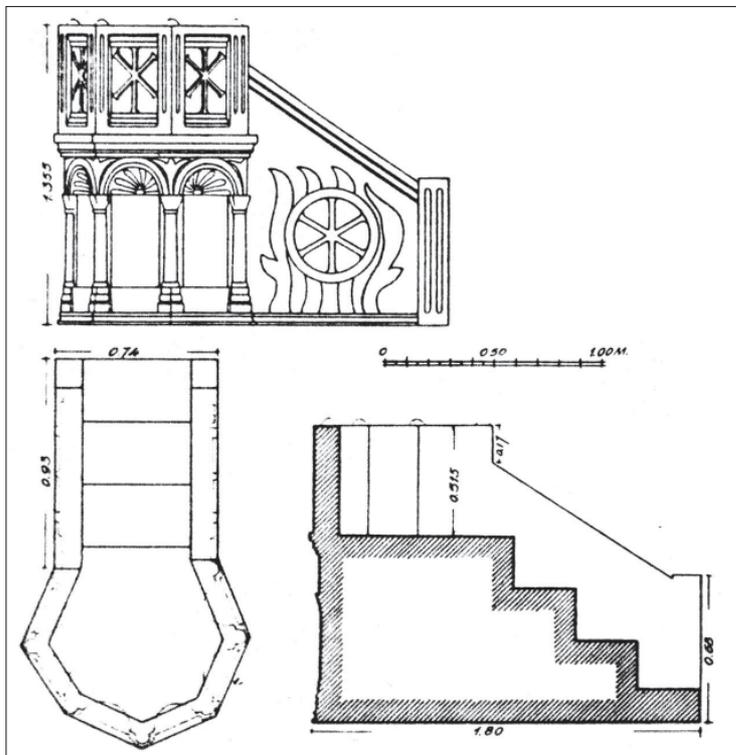


Fig. 8a. Two types of ambos: a. with a single stairway from the St. Menas church, according to: P.H.F. Jakobs 1987, Pl. 127

Сл. 8a. Два типа амвона: а. са једним прилазом, пример из цркве Св. Мине из Солуна, према: P.H.F. Jakobs 1987, Pl. 127

the group of compact one-access ambonoi from Thessaloniki, the monolithic from St. Demetrius at Thessaloniki, that in the Acheropiitos, St. Menas and St. Sofia church, all ascribed to Jakobs' type III, considered to illustrate the actual function of a modified form of the characteristic *kathedra*, i.e. the *thronos* of the Syriac type of bema.<sup>35</sup> (Fig. 8a) From their retrospection and contrary to the proposed reconstruction of the Konjuh ambo, it may be concluded that they do not show similarity, but rather complete difference on formal and decorative level. Contrary to the capital dimensions of these churches involved in the stationial

<sup>34</sup> P.H.F. Jakobs 1987, 60-63, 122-125, Taf. 27b-d, Pl. 83, 84 for the Octagon; Taf. 28d, Pl. 91-93 for Basilica.

<sup>35</sup> R.F. Taft, Some Notes on the Bema in the East and West Syrian Traditions, *Orientalia Cristiana Periodica* 34 (1968), 326-359; P.H.F. Jakobs, 1987, 60-63, and especially 61; W.E. Kleinbauer, *DOP* 27 (1973), 94-95; J. Lassus, G. Tchalenko, *Ambons Syriens, CA V* (1951), 75-122. The revision includes the reconstruction of the Bargala and Doljani ambos ascribed to the same type, С. Филипова, *Архитекционска декоративна скулптура во Македонија*, 5-6 и 11-12 век, Скопје 1997, 29, T VI-VII.

Two examples, both from Philippi, speak in favour of the adaptability of this part of the interior arrangement due to liturgical, but also probably to practical reasons. There the parallel existence of two *ambonoi* in even two churches was estimated, the first being placed in the nave, and the second enclosed within the church presbyteria, that of the Octagon, dated in the middle of the sixth century or somewhat later, and the Basilica E, the so called Museum Basilica, late sixth century.<sup>34</sup> Reasons for their existence are found in the Syrian influences, according to which the ambo and bema were synonymous, and the unobstructed conduct of the Great Entrance procession. With the same intent are interpreted

liturgy, the rather small interior dimensions of the rotunda at Konjuh, and the respectively small congregation that assembled within it, suggest that an *ambonos* could be omitted from the interior arrangement.

To return back to the complex decorative opus of the relief slabs. Dominant model represent the square panels centered on individual figures or figural scenes, surrounded by multiple border patterns that create the illusion of depth and throw the central scene into prominence. The use of this easily recognised pattern that may be composed into a variety of

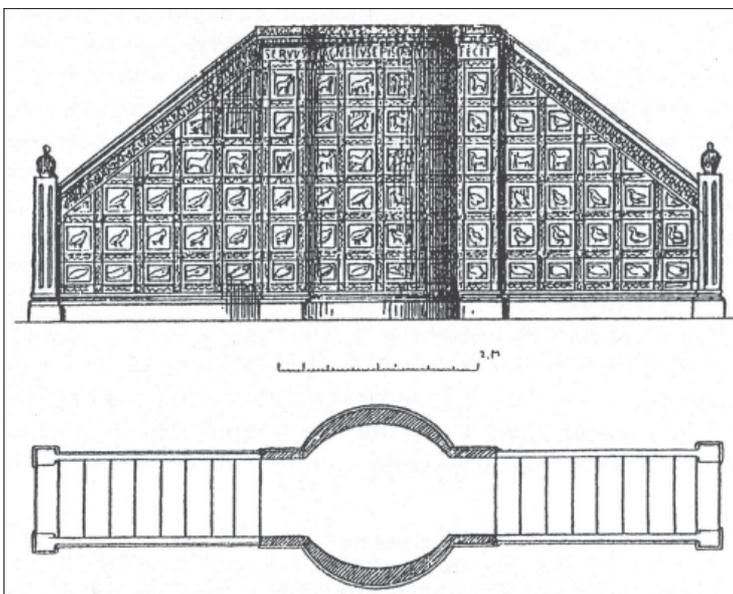


Fig. 8b. with double access from Basilica Ursiana attributed to Bishops Agnello, after 562, according to: R. Farioli Campanati, *CCSARB* XLI (1994), fig. 2

Сл. 8b. са двојним прилазом из Базилике Урсиане, приписаног Бискупу Ањелу после 562, према: R. Farioli Campanati, *CCSARB* XLI (1994), fig. 2

complex schemes, with a simplest variant in the grid pattern, is regarded as the basic principle of Roman and Byzantine composition particularly manifested in floor mosaics. It is considered it originated in the decoration of non-figural coffered ceilings, with the inclusion of the originally Hellenistic *emblema* tradition expressed in the central figural images in the mosaic decoration. A sequence of floor mosaics trace its development from the mosaic with foodstuffs of the Vatican Museum, the second or third century mosaic from Zliten, to the simple structuring with a single grid patterned border in the nave mosaic from Gasr el-Lebia in Lybia from 539-540. The advantage of this kind of presentation is found in the ability to display and coordinate large number of images neither physically, nor temporarily connected, as is the case with the Konjuh slabs, or a repeated floral ornament encircled by quadratic frame and a common grid border from Dibsi Faraj dated in 429.<sup>36</sup> A series of examples from the Balkan surrounding, characteristic for the interlacing bands determining squares, come from the Western Baths at Koss, the Basilica A at Amphipollis, as well as from the Dermech II basilica near Cartagina of the second half of fifth century, and

<sup>36</sup> J. Trilling, *The Soul of the Empire: Style and Meaning in the Mosaic Pavement of the Byzantine Imperial Palace in Constantinople*, *DOP* 43 (1989), 40-41, figs. 49, 50, 51; R. Ling, *Ancient Mosaics*, Princeton University Press, 1998, 49, 63; R.P. Harper, *Excavations at Dibsi Faraj in North Syria, 1972-1974*, *DOP* 29 (1975), 333-334, fig. E, 13 b.

the closer Dermech I of a multiple border coffer mosaic provisionally dated in the sixth century.<sup>37</sup> Much simpler variants makes the triple-border-paneled floor mosaic from the so-called *triclinium* of the Episcopal residence at Heraclea Lyncestis dated in the mid sixth century, or slightly before that.<sup>38</sup> It is characteristic that the panels are framed by a single grill of a guilloché border pattern, repeated also in the later floor mosaic of the south aisle in the Episcopal Basilica at Stobi dated in late fifth or early sixth century.<sup>39</sup> Close manner of framing the figural scenes to that at Konjuh shows the ivory diptych from the Duomo treasury at Milan, a Ravennate work from late fifth century, as well as the later Maximian's cathedra which has distinct decorative similarities with the other pieces from the architectural decoration from Konjuh.<sup>40</sup> On the whole it may be concluded that the manner of ornamental organization is traditional and equally established in mosaics, ivory or stone carving.

Close reminiscence to the Konjuh parapet slabs is found in the ornamentation of several monumental ambonoi accessible from two sides from the churches in Ravenna, among which two major examples come from Basilica Ursiana dated after 562 attributed to Bishops Agnello (557-570) (Fig. 8b) and Mariannino (596-597) executed for the cathedral; the church of S.S. Giovanni e Paolo 595-606, Sn Giovanni Evangelista dated by the Exarch Theodosius (678-687), S. Agnese, but also found in the eastern Adriatic coast.<sup>41</sup> They form a separate type of ambos different from that ascribed to the Constantinopolitan circle dated from the end of fifth and in the first half of sixth century, clearly distinguished by the ornamental design, which is closer to the slabs from Konjuh, but ascribed to a form of an earlier monolithic type generally dateable from mid sixth and into the first half of seventh century.<sup>42</sup> Cut from white marble, their figural representations separated by highly schematic borders are simplified and repeat in horizontal linear orders, acquiring the quality of purely decorative ornaments of symbolic connotation, unlike the Konjuh samples that rather acquire iconographic meaning. Their overall similarity instigates the possibility that the

<sup>37</sup> L.M. De Matteis, La produzione musiva coa in età tardoantica: indirizzi di ricerca, in: *Patrons and Pavements in Late Antiquity*, S. Isager, B. Poulsen, eds., Odense University Press 1997, 57, figs. 7, 8, 9, fns. 60-62; M.A. Alexander, A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader, G.P.R. Métraux, The Corpus of the Mosaics of Tunisia: Carthage Project 1992-1994, *DOP* 49-50 (1996), 365-367, figs. 14, 18, 20.

<sup>38</sup> Г. Цветковић-Томашевић, *Корпус рановизантијских подних мозаика, Рановизантијски подни мозаици у Епископском двору у Хераклеји Линкестис*, Београд 2002, 14-41, 74, with bibliography.

<sup>39</sup> R. Kolarik, M. Petrovski, Technical Observation on Mosaics at Stobi, *Studies in the Antiquities of Stobi*, vol. II, Belgrade 1975, 79-84, figs. 13, 14.

<sup>40</sup> Bishop Maximian (498-553). *Le sedi della cultura nell'Emilia Romagna, L'alto Medioevo*, Milano 1983, figs. 4-5, p. 34-35. The model was later followed in a series of ivory caskets of the Middle Byzantine period as a reduced continuation of the traditional concept, I. Kalavrezou, Luxury Objects, in: *The Glory of Byzantium*, H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom, eds., 1997, 219-236.

<sup>41</sup> *Le sedi...*, *L'alto Medioevo*, Milano 1983, 147, figs. 22-24; С. Радојчић, *ЗРВИ* 1(1952), 162-163; И. Николајевић-Стојковић 1957, 49; R. Farioli Campanati, *CCSARB* XLI (1994), 211.

<sup>42</sup> P.H.F. Jakobs 1987, 154-155, 157-158 to 162.



Fig. 9. Two fragments with figural images: a. with a camel, according to: К. Петров, *ГЗФФ* 22 (1970), fig. 13; b. with a combat scene

Сл. 9. Два фрагмента са фигуралним представама: а. са камилом, према: К. Петров, *ГЗФФ* 22 (1970), fig. 13; б. са сценом сукоба

entire theory of identification of the Konjuh slabs as fragments of an ambo was based on this resemblance. Yet, the entire set of information produces a controversy that is impossible to resolve on this level. In contrast to the previous group, our relief fragments preserved the freshness of a clearly cut ornament, which appearance evokes a precisely defined idea, composed after an unknown for now example. The proposed dating of the Konjuh group within the mid sixth century remains acceptable.

Not many of the central representations of the Konjuh assembly are being preserved. An exceptional example makes the double hatched camel image, a bread characteristic for North Africa, applied on a now lost fragment, rendered in a pictorial manner within realistic spatial setting with a palm tree behind it, which provided the specific scenic set up. (Fig. 9 a) The camel as a symbol of sobriety and attribute of modesty was presented as personification of Asia. It is the one that helps cross the desert, a reliable company on the way from an oasis to an oasis; the one that gets you to the hidden core of godly essence. As such it accompanied the three holly kings that visited newborn Jesus,<sup>43</sup> the priest that ascended one of the stairways of the ambo in the South Basilica at Aliko in Thasos, second half of the sixth century<sup>44</sup> or St. Menas on his trip to Maryût, his birthplace near Alexandria, and was promoted as his symbolic representation and an accompanying figure particularly on the Menas pilgrim flasks. A new

<sup>43</sup> S.v. Deva in: J. Chevalier, A. Gheerbrant, *Rječnik simbola*, Zagreb 1983, 117; К. Петров, *ГЗФФ* 22 (1970), 297-302, fig. 13, with a detailed analysis of its image .

<sup>44</sup> P.H. Jakobs 1987, 323-324 c, fig. 106

martyr church was erected in Justinianic time at the place of the old pilgrimage shrine housing the martyr's grave, now given the shape of a double shell tetraconch.<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to note that the St. Menas monastery grew into an important pilgrimage center in the fifth and sixth centuries, renown for the healing capacity of the springs in its vicinity. This reminds of the near by spring at Konjuh, a vague and poorly supported, yet not unimportant, binding element.

Second is a combat scene of a deer attacked by a dog, (Fig. 9 b) a motif regularly found around the early Byzantine world since pre-Christian times and more intensively during fifth and sixth centuries in wall painting, mosaic pavements, on textiles, or in a variety of architectural elements as door lintels, capitals, etc. The execution of the central motif is static, lacking liveliness and plasticity, but set to remind of the everlasting conflict, just as the floral ornament set in a similar field is reminiscent of the purity of eternal life. The visual vocabulary of ancient classical tradition included also a variety of animalistic figures placed in combat, a theme that created an active part in the early Byzantine decorative program in secular and religious art. Representing the violent chaos of nature, set in pairs according to the geographic region they are originally related to, African or Asiatic, domestic or wild beasts, reptiles, birds etc., places them apart from the innocent world they are called on symbolically to protect. Thus, according to classical interpretation, the belief that a deer hunts and kills snakes was allegorized either as Christ triumphing over Satan, or as the soul in its struggle with evil, similarly as the combat between an eagle and a snake was primarily understood as a symbol of the fight between Good and Evil.<sup>46</sup> The transmutation of pagan mythological themes into symbolic animal forms and images awarded a new meaning to Christian reinterpretation. The literary explanation is found in George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron*, or the creation of the world, where he equates destructive passions with animals, and the struggle against them, a cliché in Greco-Roman thought. Writing for Heraclius and his court, his poetry is considered to give secondary meaning to the imagery presented in the Imperial palace at Constantinople mosaic, assuming that an educated member of the court could not look at the mosaic without seeing in it a reflection of spiritual, but also of a physical, struggle.<sup>47</sup> As reflection of the constantly ongoing factionalism, institutional fragmentation, schisms, accusations of heresy

<sup>45</sup> P. Grossmann, The Pilgrimage center of Abû Mînâ, in: D. Frankfurter, ed., *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, 1998, 281-302, figs. 1, 4 and fns. 1-3 on his vita and the miracles; С. Петковић, Легенда о светом Мини у цркви села Штаве, *Сїаринар XX* (1970), 277-287.

<sup>46</sup> D.T. Rice, in: D.T. Rice, ed., *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors, Second Report*, Edinburgh 1958, 136-140ff, 145-147, with description; J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 59, with references to specific iconographic scenes in fns. 140, 141. A scene of griffin eating a lizard carries the implication of an association of the griffin with Apollo and the lizard with the serpent Python which Apollo killed, allegorically displaying the triumphant force of the solar deity over that of the darkness, a popular theme since fourth century B.C. op. cit., 59, fn. 142. See also: K. Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art*, Princeton 1951.

<sup>47</sup> Literal correspondence between some of the animals and those mentioned in his work, as well as with specific imagery, may be by far misleading. An antithesis of reason and passion was established in his other work, *Vanity*, when referring to the Minotaur and other mythical half-human creatures, J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 64-65, fns. 166, 167.

and disputes on the true faith, that marked early Byzantine history they are displayed as artistic expression of public politics with clear didactic function in the decoration of churches, palaces and other public buildings. In the atmosphere of traditional public debating the elucidation of biblical prophesies promoted every Christian into a potential exegete and theologian, to whom these illustrations weren't unknown. In this context one of the most distinctive examples of public artistry with a variety of scenes presented, makes the Imperial Palace at Constantinople. At first sight it suggests the interplay of idyllic scenery, violence and protection set as progressive optimistic resolution to everyday life incorporated in the architectural plan of the peristyle, within which the three elements of the program are considered to be held in endless tension on both symbolic and visual level without a final resolution. From there it is considered to be an artistic expression of political propaganda at the court of Heraclius.<sup>48</sup>

The virtual inseparability of violence and everyday life is the most widely practiced theme in early Byzantine church decoration. Byzantine mastery in narrative religious teaching was adapted in a wide variety of pictorial representations aiming at illustrative, didactic and devotional purposes. One of its most extinct examples from the Balkans is the monumental floor mosaic in the narthex of the Large Basilica at Heraclea Lyncestis from the turn of the VI century.<sup>49</sup> Among the several published mosaic pavements from Macedonia of similar but reduced content is the poorly preserved south aisle mosaic from the Episcopal Basilica at Stobi, with fragments of two scenes of combat of animals and sea-creatures, and a combat scene placed in a medallion into a segment of the narthex mosaic, both originated simultaneously as parts of the same renovation campaign and at the same time as the previous example.<sup>50</sup>

Combat is found in two two-zoned capitals from the Episcopal Residence from Heraclea Lyncestis, roughly dated to the sixth century, where a bird is presented standing over a snake, or an eagle in frontal position with laterally spread wings, possibly also standing over a snake.<sup>51</sup> The implied concept of hunting animals is displayed in the relief decoration of the capitals from the ground floor colonnade of the Episcopal Basilica at Stobi, dated from mid fifth century, the capital from the Holy Virgin's church from Drenovo (a lion hunting a boar, and a bull hunting a deer on the two opposite sides), and the reduced presentation from an impost capital from Slepče with a dog hunting a rabbit and a snake bellow them. In all three cases on the alternate sides eucharistic scenes

<sup>48</sup> J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 59-60 and further to 69.

<sup>49</sup> Г. Цветковиќ-Томашевиќ, *Мозаикои на постои во нартексои на золемајта базилика. Опис. Стил. Иконографија. Символизам. Техника. Мајеријали. Конзервација, Хераклеја III*, Битола 1967; E. Dimitrova, *In through the inner door* (the mosaic in the narthex of the Large Basilica in Heraclea Lyncestis, *Niš and Byzantium IV* (2006), 179-190, with the older bibliography.

<sup>50</sup> R. Kolarik, M. Petrovski, *Studies in the Antiquities of Stobi*, vol. II, Belgrade 1975, 80, fig. 13; *ibid.*, The Episcopal Basilica at Stobi, *Studies in the Antiquities of Stobi*, vol. III, Belgrade 1981, 69, fig. 9.

<sup>51</sup> С. Филипова, Рановизантијски капители креирани у престоници у Јустинијаново доба, Македонске и српске аналогije, *Niš and Byzantium IV* (2006) 197, figs. 22, 23, the second capital is broken off right bellow the eagle's claws, so it is not clear whether a snake really existed there.

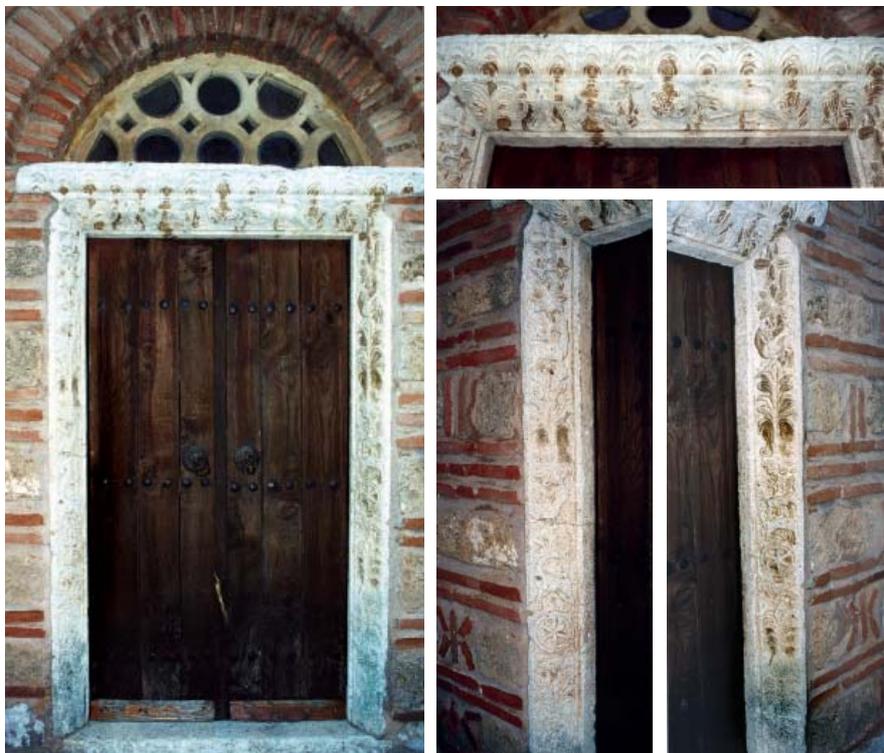


Fig. 10. A door lintel from St. Stephan's church at Kastoria, Greece

Сл. 10. Камени довратник из цркве Светог Стефана у Костуру, Грчка

were presented, a pair of peacocks drinking from a cantharos in the first, reduced to a single peacock in the second, or just a cantharos in the third example, explained as symbolic presentation of the soteriological concept of the eucharist.<sup>52</sup> As their parallel may be indicated the southern door lintel of the church St Stephen at Kastoria, so far unpublished, and dateable to the time of Justinian I. (Fig. 10) Among the animalistic images presented on the door lintel, most often dears and birds are found, a boar, and two hard to distinguish combat scenes presented on the right side. Observed in liturgical context, the door lintel and the narthex mosaics particularly the one from Heraclea may be considered to refer to purification and preparation of the believer for entrance into the House

<sup>52</sup> В. Лилчиќ, Траги на ранохристијански базилики во средното Повардарије, *Лихниг* 7 (1989), 76-7, 31a-v, 54; Е. Димитрова, Изведбата на евхаристичните сцени во ранохристијанската декоративна пластика, in: *Старохристијанската археологија во Македонија*, Скопје 2003, 146-148, fig. 22-25, 2. The Stobi collection is presented with three large order capitals with peacocks, Р. Егер, Градска црква у Стобима *ГСНД* 5 (1929), 18-19, figs. 11-13, the last one with numerous but broken off animal figures. A fourth capital presented a number of running animals under the abacus, and a badly fragmented Christ's monogram in a laurel wreath on the front, Ђ. Мано-Зиси, Ископавања у Стобима 1933 и 1934 г., *Старионар* III сер. 10-11 (1935-1936), 166-167, figs. 31-33.

of God, while the scenes from the capitals transposed the idea in a more definite eschatological form. Revealed through ornamentation, church doors and vestibules, particularly the central Royal Doors carry specific meaning in the liturgical ceremony, the symbolism of the Gates of Paradise that open to the believers to convey them to eternal life.<sup>53</sup> In practice, the patriarch of the Great Church in the preparatory part preceding the liturgy was seated in the narthex before the Royal Doors waiting for the psalmists' sign to come up to the Door and say the introit prayer. Only afterward the patriarch and his retinue, attired in rich vestments and bearing the Gospel and the Cross, the symbols of Christ, would enter the church.<sup>54</sup> This problem is archaeologically poorly researched, yet confirmed in a number of early Christian buildings from Dalmatia.<sup>55</sup> From there it may be suggested that the highly decorated with paneled motifs from one side parapet slabs, particularly those with an ornamented convex side, but also the flat ones, may have been used to face outside, perhaps to wall certain upper segments of the church, as the crown of the dome or spaces beneath the windows. However hypothetical, this allocation offers alternative use of the slabs, bringing the monument closer to the eastern trends of architectural and aesthetic arrangements.

From the viewpoint of Christian dogma the hypothesis is supported by the thematic contrast of presentation of the outer world of sin and the inner of faith and chastity honored by peace and tranquility. At this point raises the question whether a change in the iconographic ornamentation in early Byzantine churches resulted at a certain moment of development of the imperial religious politics. This alteration is expected to reflect the standpoint of sixth century Christians after the religious reforms of Justinian I, who after centuries of ideological conflict celebrated the religious victory over polytheism, locating their ultimate expectations in the second return of Christ.<sup>56</sup> Early Christian thought emphasised the transitory nature of life on earth, and its followers knew that the Second Coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment were at hand. The computation of the dates of the Judeo-Christian faith for political purposes were fitted into the records of the Old Testament culminating in the advent of Christ and terminating 500 years later fulfilling the actual Christian history until the year 6000 with the events described in the Book of Revelations, the *Parousia* and the

<sup>53</sup> On the liturgical importance of the Royal Doors, see: T.F. Mathews 1971, 162-173. The decorative program of Byzantine portals as predecessors to the collection of bronze doors from Italian donors dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as well as a number of Byzantine doors of Italian provenance, studied in the light of Byzantine liturgical sources reveal the basic ideas that promote them as surrogates for the gates to Paradise. M. English Frazer, Church Doors and the Gates of Paradise: Byzantine Bronze Doors in Italy, *DOP* 27(1973), 145-162.

<sup>54</sup> R. Taft, S.J., The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm, *DOP* 34-35 (1980-1981), 50-52; R. Taft 1975, 268-269.

<sup>55</sup> J. Jeličić, Narteks u ranokršćanskoj arhitekturi na području Istočnog Jadrana, *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 23 (1983), 5-37, particularly from 34.

<sup>56</sup> *Lim*, 199, 200 and fn.11; on the importance of his politics for the development of architecture, see: R. Krautheimer 1979, 211-213.



Fig. 11. Fragments with the figural images of a bull and a boar

Сл. 11. Фрагменти плоча са фигуралним представама бика и вепра

Apocalypse, leaving the seventh and final millennium to the Kingdom of Heaven. However, as the luminary date elapsed, the Christian expectations failed, and the world was forced to go on in anticipation of the prophecy.<sup>57</sup> The sixth century, co-terminating with the predicted end of Christian history after the year 500, witnessed revival of interest in the apocalyptic genre, now relinquished of the sense of impending doom, which in course of the seventh century in the works of Maximus Confessor and John of Damascus synthesised the traditional arguments for bodily resurrection, with an emphasis on the divinised human personage as the goal of God's eternal plan of creation. Thus early Christian hope for salvation reached its final form becoming the basis for classical Byzantine eschatology.<sup>58</sup> Eschatology provided the main images and conceptual structure for the hope of early Christian communities, viewing the eternal life and incorruptibility as present gifts in the community of faith. The death of a martyr became means of access to union with the risen lord. Entering the church meant entering a holy space protected by the omens of martyrdom and the martyr to whom believers addressed their prayers, and who provided their entry into the communion of saints. This made the scenes representing Paradise and the Garden of Eden the most favorable to decorate catacombs, martyria, or memorial churches. Within this interpretation it is tried to define the last group of the collection from Konjuh. Main observations are based on the

church as a focused ritual space defined with a contingent sense of movement, and illustrated by a unified composition of pictorial images, whether narrative or allegorical, founded on the celebration of the liturgy with gradual development of the processional entrances.

From the enumerated implements from Konjuh outstands the group of fragmented slabs carrying the images of a bull, a boar, perhaps a bear and an ass, as well as that of a deer, now lost, but known from the original published photo documentation. (Fig. 11) Although largely fragmented, their level of preserva-

<sup>57</sup> J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, London 1989, 3-6.

<sup>58</sup> S.v. Eschatology, by B.E. Daley, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, E. Ferguson ed., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Garland Publishing, New York-London, 1999, 383-387.

tion suggests a posture of tame animals presented in calm waiting. The more complete fragments show execution with relatively high plasticity, and to a dimension ranging in full size from approximately half a meter to at least double in the deer image. Their steadiness and calmness stand out from the standard model of bloodthirsty animals attacking one another, known from the scenes characteristic for the fifth and early sixth century church decoration. It is impossible to reconstruct exactly the original location of these slabs. Considering the fact that the first two slabs have unprocessed backside it may be assumed they were used as revetment and building material. The inclined border of the boar slab suggests it was used as support and lining of an elevated surface, perhaps the side of one of the *synthronoi*, which function may be assigned also to the slab with the bull presumed on the basis of similarity. The other fragments were also most probably employed for wall revetment. Outstanding with its size is that with a deer, which could be given a frontal position perhaps as a pier or pilaster revetment. By all means they may be related to the lower wall portions of the church creating the fundamental corpus of its interior design. The beasts belong to a standard selection presented in figural compositions, locally available, with slight differences in their symbolic background: the ferocious boar and bear, the deer as most frequent participant in eucharistic scenes, the bull traditionally employed in sacrificial rites, appearing as the domesticated ox at the Birth of Christ together with the ass. The ass bears a load of powerful symbolic associations, often found in Old Testament subjects presented since pre-Christian time, and one that accompanied Christ as a sarcastic allegory of his advent announced with the Entry into Jerusalem commemorated in the Palm Sunday celebrations, an announcement of his passions and a pendant to his resurrection, and an emblem of the epiphany of Christ eternal.<sup>59</sup> His presence as part of the decorative setting is found as a partaker in the event of the Entry, a prefiguration of the entry of the sacred elements during the Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist (Mt. 21:9) evoked in the Cherubic hymn that greets the entrance. Lacking direct parallels to this architectural ornamentation from other buildings, one is compelled to look for similar presentation of animalistic images in other artistic forms of close thematic more widely dispersed, as the mosaic pavements.

Apart from the symbolic and transformative power of Christ omnipotent, far from presumptions of cosmic configuration, wall decoration of sixth century Byzantine churches reflects the Christian worldview as vision of confluence of human kind, of animalistic and saintly figures converging toward an omega point sublimed in Christ. Growing proliferation of solemn processions in the art of fifth and sixth centuries coincided with the intensification of public participatory processions, all streaming towards a single goal. If c. 60% of all apsed compositions is based on the principle of centripetal processions, all mosaicked churches and baptisteries of Ravenna are organized on this principle. The specific development in the observation of space within which they were situated, whether it is the dome of S. Vitale with the four segments of terrestrial world meeting in the medallion with the Lamb of God (547), the proces-

<sup>59</sup> T.F. Mathews 2003, 24-and particularly from 39-53.

sion of the imperial suite in the same, and the imperial crowning presented in even five Ravennate churches, they literally illustrate that procession was basic to Christian liturgy. In this trend of spiritualisation the tone for the treatment of both landscape and space was set in the apse mosaics of SS. Cosma and Damian in Rome from 526-530, to become fully realized as the idealized setting for the mystical apparition of Christ in San Apollinare in Classe about 549. It is here that becomes clear to what extent the Justinianic art favors elaborate spatial setting, by no means a precise but rather an illusionistic landscape.<sup>60</sup>

A deep gorge separates the artistry of these grand churches with the coterminous rotunda at Konjuh. However, the intent to determine the contents of its fragmentary interior decoration starts with the fact that Christian iconography was permanently marked by the lack of Christ's authentic portrait tradition. God, regarded as invisible and unpredictable in the Old Testament, was identified only in the New Testament by the apostle Paul with Jesus Christ; becoming visible in Christ, as a consequence, the acts of the Genesis (1:26f.) became understood in terms of Christ.<sup>61</sup> God's images particularly in the first century of open public proclamation of Christianity were produced as his pure projections in the psychological sense corresponding to the popular expectations from him, but of undefined guise, and resulted in an unparalleled war of images of the old and new Gods. Thus Christians made use of the existent Greco-Roman image models and presented Christ as the Good Shepherd, as the most common representation in pre-Christian art; a Jewish version of the Roman design of *Orpheus and the Animals* in Gaza where the central image was titled David, while in Huarté in Syria he was labeled Adam.<sup>62</sup> Earliest image of Christ was produced in a fourth century legend that placed him in company with Orpheus and other cultic and religious images from a private cult shrine of Alexander Severus (222-235).<sup>63</sup> His lyre defined as *the harmonious*, which acquisition from secular shops was recommended by Clement of Alexandria c. 200, was produced as signet carried by early Christians signifying harmony of worship.<sup>64</sup> Orpheus' skill as a lyre-player enabled him to enter the underworld, and provided him the character of a type of Christ in the early times, the one that rescued souls from the Limbo.<sup>65</sup> His growing popularity gave rise to a mosaic Corinian Orpheus School, ancient Cirencester in Britain, in late third-early fourth century.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>60</sup> T.F. Mathews 2003, ch. 6 and particularly 142-147 referred to figs. 112, 113 and p. 150-157ff and 167-176, tracing the development since pre-Christian times; J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 47-48, figs. 64, 65, discussing the stylistic implications of the idea. S.v. Processions, by G. Sperry-White, in: E. Ferguson, ed., 1998, 950-951.

<sup>61</sup> For this reason the Old Testament scenes in early Christian art are likely to be given a double meaning, as they were in the commentaries. S.v. Images, by G.D. Dragas, in: E. Ferguson, ed., 1998, 562.

<sup>62</sup> S.v. Iconography, by J. Wilkinson, in: E. Ferguson, ed., 1998, 558

<sup>63</sup> Among the other images are: Apollonius, Alexander and Abraham. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Alex. Sever., 29, 2; T.F. Mathews 2003, 68-69.

<sup>64</sup> The lyre was related to the one used by Polycrates, *Paed.* 3.11.59.1; S.v. Iconography, by J. Wilkinson, in: E. Ferguson, ed., 1998, 557-558.

<sup>65</sup> s.v. Orpheus, in: P. and L. Murray, 1998, 358; D.I. Pallas, *CA* XXIV (1975), 17-19.

<sup>66</sup> R. Ling 1998, 68.

Episodic composition of animalistic scenes, representing hunting, combat or rural daily life, particularly favoured in North Africa were widely presented in mosaic floors of profane buildings, dispersed with the mediation of the capital along the crosscurrents around the Mediterranean. They induced themes such as animal catalogues, with one of the earliest examples from Carthage from the second half of the third century, easily conflated with scenes of Orpheus surrounded by beasts as in the Orpheus pavement from Blanzzy-lès Fismes in Gaul of the first half of fourth century related to the mosaic and palace architecture of the Piazza Armerina;<sup>67</sup> more popular forms come from the late third century Villa of the Laberii from Oudna, the Villa Trinquaille near Arles, fourth century, and Adana in Turkey c.300,<sup>68</sup> as well as the third century mosaic from Mytilene and the fourth century from Sparta.<sup>69</sup> His image is known from the cemeterial frescoes from SS. Pietro e Marcellino and Domitilla's catacombs, first half of fourth century, the relief decoration of early Christian sarcophagi from the second half of third century, and individual marble sculpture from the beginning of the fourth, as well as in minor arts as the pyxide from Bobbio from late fourth, and the dyptich from Bargello of the fifth century.<sup>70</sup> All the representations consistently show him singing his mystical message, charming the wild beasts into peace. Narrative images like the scene of Moses writing in Eden, a frontispiece to the Book of Genesis in the Bible of Leo Sakellarios c. 940, and David composing the Psalms from the Paris Psalter from the second half of the tenth century, where David was presented as a type of Christ, are considered to recall the grand manner of the fifth and sixth century painting announced with the above mentioned settings. The return to extended pictorial narration of long cycles of the Old and New Testament, one of the greatest achievements of the Middle Byzantine period, shows that the theme and its iconographic presentation remained popular throughout the early Byzantine period.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 42, fn. 57; I. Lavin, *DOP* 17 (1963), 262-264, fig. 132, and 244-245, fig. 107, and on animal catalogues 235-236, fig. 82.

<sup>68</sup> I. Lavin, *DOP* 17 (1963), 228-228, fig. 72; T.F. Mathews 2003, fig. 46; R. Ling 1998, fig. 41, respectively.

<sup>69</sup> M.T. et P. Canivet, La mosaïque d'Adam dans l'église syrienne de Hüarte (Ve s.), *CA XXIV* (1975), 52, according to: S. Charitonidis, L. Kahil, R. Ginouvès, *Les Mosaïques de la maison du Ménandre à Mytilène*, Berne 1979, 23-25, Pl. I 1, XI 3.

<sup>70</sup> D.I. Pallas, Investigations sur les monuments chrétiens de Grèce avant Constantin, *CA XXIV* (1975), 17, figs. 24-28; M.-T. et P. Canivet, *CA XXIV* (1975), 58 and fn. 36 for more bibliography. The subject was observed in more detail by: H. Stern, Orphée dans l'art paléochrétien, *CA XXIII* (1974), 1-16.

<sup>71</sup> J.C. Anderson, Manuscripts, in: H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom, eds., 1997, 86-87, cat. no. 42 fol. IIV, and cat. no. 163 fol. IV, as for example the sixth century Vienna Genesis. Secular art of the tenth century reviewed and intensified its contacts with the art of antiquity via that of the Justinianic time, which played decisive part in injecting Hellenistic elements into the religious art of the period, particularly in Old Testament imagery. E. Kitzinger, The Hellenistic Heritage in Byzantine Art Reconsidered, *JÖB* 31/2 (1981), 666-669; even three of the most precious tenth century illuminated Old Testament codices were found to be a part of a single set based on a Bible of early Justinianic date. H. Belting, G. Cavallo, *Die Bibel des Niketas*, Wiesbaden 1979.

The descriptions of Earthly Paradise in the Book of Genesis (Gen.2:8-14) popularised in the early Christian preaching awarded dominant place in contemporary iconography to Adam. The image of Adam is known from a series of presentations defining a scenic iconography that illustrates him naming the animals in Paradise (Gen. 2:20).<sup>72</sup> He was an object of literal and allegorical interpretation by the patristic writers since Origen's third century commentaries, transmitted to the west by Ambrose. He argued that God gave man through Adam dominion over the animals, the power to discriminate and form judgments about things. The Fall of Man and successive expulsion from Eden produced the turning point in the steady harmonious life after the Creation.<sup>73</sup> As he was cast out of Paradise for his disobedience, but retained the memory of it, by ascent of virtue he was given the possibility to regain it. Thus his dominion over animals in the Earthly Paradise describes him as a type of the just man who has ascended from his corporeal nature to a spiritual Paradise.<sup>74</sup> In the words of Theodoret of Cyrus, as God created beasts and reptiles for disciplining man, those that are educated in virtues do not fear their attacks, as the beasts stood beside Adam before he sinned and offered him their submission.<sup>75</sup> From there, the tame demeanor of the participants in the scenography generally agreed to recollect the setting of Earthly Paradise before the Fall, defined also the setting of Earthly Paradise before the Fall, defined the setting for the last group of the relief sculpture from Konjuh.

As a result of the taboo that debarred walking over sacred images in biblical scenes and other Christian subjects, and particularly the *sign of Christ* which was specifically banned by an imperial decree in 427, the world of birds, fish and animals, that is the world of nature created and presided by God, became a dominant iconographic subject in mosaic floors from fifth century onwards. In contrast to hunted or beasts in combat, pacified creatures as sheep, cattle, doves and peacocks, etc., were more often seen. Placed in separate context, enclosed in frames further organised into larger patterns, they represented Paradise that

<sup>72</sup> H. Maguire, *Adam and the Animals: Allegory and the Literal Sense in Early Christian Art*, *DOP* 41 (1987), 365-373, discusses the XIIIc. Genesis mosaic of S. Marco, Venice, made after the early Christian miniatures of the Cotton Genesis, dyptich of the Carrand Collection-Florence, and a church mosaic pavement from Huarte.

<sup>73</sup> s.v. Fall of Man, and Eden, in: P. and L. Murray 1998, 156, 298-299.

<sup>74</sup> H. Maguire, *DOP* 41 (1987), 363-364. The Pauline teaching on God's image revealed in Christ and restored to humanity is fundamental to the teaching of early church theologians, who define the two aspects of his nature, internal and external, so interconnected that each one explains the other. The dominion of humanity over the rest of creation refers to the human lordship, and is engaged in such a way that it participates in and cooperates with God. However, it is curtailed, obscured and even lost to humanity because of the fall into sin, but is restored in and through Christ, the image of God, who has become human without ceasing to be divine. Christ's identification with Adam carries in the background the meaning of his double nature, that of the heavenly man Lord Jesus Christ, as distinct from the first type of the earthly man, Adam. 1 Cor. 15:49; Col. 3:10; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; s.v. Images, by G.D. Dragas, in: E. Ferguson, ed., 1998, 562.

<sup>75</sup> The Antiochene theologian composed a series of answers to Questions on Genesis at the request of Hypatios after 453. In a similar manner when Noah entered the ark the most dangerous beasts and reptiles followed him like sheep, and the lions stood by Daniel in the den. H. Maguire, *DOP* 41 (1987), 364.

awaited the faithful in the afterlife.<sup>76</sup> Since late third century a more complex group of compositional mosaics largely based on animalistic scenes developed, with a shift from West towards their intensification in the East from the beginning of the fifth century. Among them can be distinguished the mosaic from the Hall of Philia at Antioch, of the late fourth century, with a predictable arrangement of symmetrically paired animals set to flank a tree, a series of hunting pavements of Antioch dated from the middle to late fifth century where the so-called Worcester or Megalopsychia Hunts are set peripherally in the quadratic fields, while the inner circle is occupied with running and rarely attacking animals.<sup>77</sup> The Orpheus pavements here are also existent, with a most distinctive example from Beirut from late fifth century. Related to the traditional iconography the identification of its central image draws toward the image of the Good Shepard. The recollection based in the loose, even abstract, compositional structure closely reminiscent of the earlier examples and the animal carpets, is found in a separate group of mosaics from the same time, a settlement complex Malatya in south-east Asia Minor; the mosaics from the Basilica A of Photios dated 483-485, and the Michaelion (Basilica B) of 487, both at Huarde in Syria; the close in date mosaic from a villa at Jenah in Lebanon, and the Martyrium of Seleucia at Antiochia.<sup>78</sup> It is significant to underline that in the late fifth and early sixth century, other kinds of narrative subjects such as mythology, tend to disappear almost entirely from the Antiochene repertory of so-called hunting mosaics.<sup>79</sup> The last composition of the ambulatory pavement from the tetraconchal building, exhibits a continuous procession predominantly of birds concentrated towards its center, surrounded by a major order of animals proceeding along the outer edge facing outward. The mosaic shows consistent unity despite its preservation in a minor segment, yet revealing an extremely intimate relationship with the architectural setting.<sup>80</sup> It is surprising that so far, apart from the stylistic definition, not far was reached in the definition of its theme. I. Lavin concludes that the chief significance of the whole group of hunting pavements from Antioch is the insight that they provide into the genesis of formal prin-

<sup>76</sup> Distinction was primarily accomplished between representation of figural images in secular buildings where mythological subjects remained in use, and sacral buildings where it was preferred to avoid placement of human figures on floors. During fifth and sixth centuries, if occurred, human images in sacral buildings were reduced to personifications, as the *Ktisis* or the four rivers of Paradise, generic figures as hunters or shepherds, or occasionally representations of donors. R. Ling, 1998, 98-99. J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 40-41.

<sup>77</sup> They are qualified with multiple viewpoints, excluded use of frames replaced with scattered landscape elements that do not depict a rational space, and inconsistent scale of the figures. J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 40-46; elaborately discussed by I. Lavin, *DOP* 17 (1963), 229-242.

<sup>78</sup> J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 44-45, fig. 61; I. Lavin, *DOP* 17 (1963), on Beirut 271-272, fig. 140; 273 fig. 141 on Malatya; D.T. Rice, in: D.T. Rice, ed., 1958, 143, on Beirut mosaic; M.-T. et P. Canivet, *CA* XXIV (1975), 49-52.

<sup>79</sup> I. Lavin, *DOP* 17 (1963), 189. The discussion results in a conclusion that this title incorporates wider variety of subjects than purely hunting themes.

<sup>80</sup> I. Lavin, *DOP* 17 (1963), 188, figs. 4-5, and fn. 20 where quotes Levi for dating the pavement just prior to the 526 earthquake contrary to his own opinion of attribution to the late fifth century; 216.

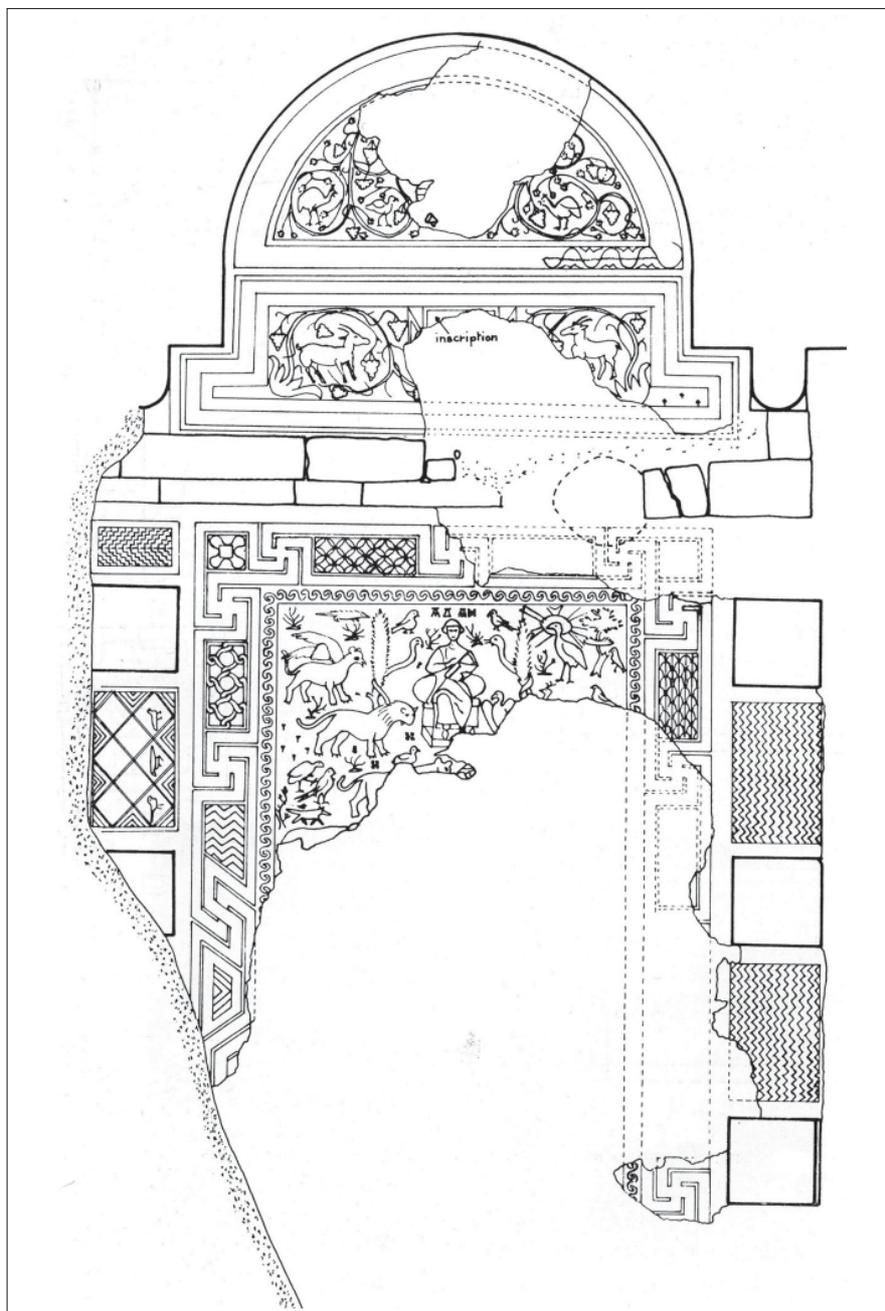


Fig. 12. The mosaic pavement from the nave of the church A at Hūrte, Syria, according to: M.-T. et P. Canivet, *CA XXIV* (1975), fig3

Сл. 12. Мозаички под наоса Цркве А из Хурте, Сирија, према: М.-Т. et P. Canivet, *CA XXIV* (1975), fig3

ciples that were fundamental in the subsequent development of mediaeval style, and particularly the Ravenna processional mosaics represented by the apse mosaic of S. Apollinare Nuovo viewed within its architectural framework. Crucial is the notice that the western catalogues of amphitheatre animals in the pavements at Ayaş in Cilicia and the Martyrium at Seleucia became an actual *animal paradise*, set in a pulsing ceremonious movement that can go on forever even though no organized symbolism or allegory is evident,<sup>81</sup> and though directed to an unknown point of convergence. The following group of mosaics should produce a possible answer.

The entire group of mosaics manifests the calm setting of the scenery as in one of the best known displays of the scene *Adam naming the Animals in Paradise* in the floor mosaic from the nave of the church at Hūarte in Syria. (Fig. 12) He was positioned among 23 animal and vegetative objects at the top of the composition right in front of the entrance into the presbytery carrying a name label. The form is interpreted as Adam in Majesty seated on cushions on a throne, perhaps a *sella curulis*, holding a book which defines him as a philosopher reminiscent of the iconographic type of Christ *didascalos*.<sup>82</sup> Its display bears one more important aspect, its placing in the nave as opposed to the scene of animals that pursue and attack each other in the south aisle.<sup>83</sup> Observing it from the point of view of functional spaces within the church where it was applied, that is the nave, an explanation may be found in its attribution to a liturgical space appropriate in eastern church ceremonial to the clerics, that is the righteous men, a space where the ceremony was administered. In contrast, the space awarded to the believers as the sinful in the lateral aisles was illustrated with scenes of conflict. This aspect retraced in the figural mosaic of the baptistery, a former diaconicon, of the Basilica of Moses in Mount Nebo, Jordan, dated by an inscription in 531. A rigidly structured assemblage released of any spatial, temporal or thematic unity, with an evolution towards a register composition. There, two registers of herding and held on a leash animals, are set bellow two upper registers of hunted and fought by man animals at the top, lightly divided in two separate zones.<sup>84</sup> Preceding the baptistery font, this mosaic conveys a clear message, describing the obedience of the faithful approaching to take the blessing of baptism, and the spiritual fight before its acceptance. The mosaics on Mount Nebo offer an extraordinary figurative repertoire of the period IV-V to the beginning of VII century, extended by recent excavations to the second half of VIII century, are chiefly unaffected by the iconoclastic crisis and available for iconographic interpretation. A common characteristic of the Madaba churches is the frontal panel preceding the presbytery ornamented with faunal and floral scenes that allude to the re-creative power of nature and the Eucharist.

<sup>81</sup> I. Lavin, *DOP* 17 (1963), 279 and fn. 441. The more recent discussions of the Great Palace mosaic exclude it from this observation. M. Gough, *A Temple and Church at Ayaş, Anatolian Studies* 4 (1954), 49 ff.

<sup>82</sup> M.-T. et P. Canivet, *CA* XXIV (1975), 53-70, particularly 61, figs. 3, 4. On the throne see: T.F. Mathews, 2003, 98-109.

<sup>83</sup> H. Maguire, *DOP* 41 (1987), 367-368, fn. 27 for a remark. J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 45 fn. 74 explained this contrast as product of thematic coherence.

<sup>84</sup> J. Trilling, *DOP* 43 (1989), 45, fig. 62; M. Piccirillo, E. Alliata, *Mount Nebo, New Archaeological Excavations 1967-1997*, Jerusalem 1998, 265-371.

In the Memorial of Moses the main mosaic fields of geometric composition in the basilica proper, second quarter of sixth century after 530, the previously described baptistery to the north of it, the new baptistery dated with inscription to 597, and the diaconicon or Theotokos Chapel of the early seventh century to the south, also contain framed compositions with floral and faunal figures spreading within the nave width.<sup>85</sup> The connotation that is provided is allusion to paradise that waits at the entrance in the presbytery or other sacral compounds, as the baptismal font. Thus the Temple of Jerusalem with a lit sacrificial altar placed centrally in the Theotokos Chapel surrounded by a bull on either side approaching it, each followed by a gazelle, stresses the soteriological aspect of sacrifice.<sup>86</sup> Only rare traces of combat occur in the central field, a residue of the traditional manner of decoration. In whole they are reminiscent of the arrangement in the narthex mosaic in the Large Basilica at Heraclea Lyncestis, where the theme of combat was more elaborately presented on the account of the functional space, as previously discussed. The decorative plan of the sixth century church of SS. Lot and Procopius from Madaba was also adapted to the functional division of the nave in two fields, the western presenting an allusion to ritual sacrifice as alluded in Psalm 51:21: "...and young bulls to be offered on your altar. Lord have mercy upon the poor Epiphania."<sup>87</sup> Allusion to the sacrifice of Christ was directly illustrated in the presbytery of deacon Thomas church from the first half of sixth century, in the figure of a ram set between four trees, once covered with an altar table, and preceded on the west by the figures of a bull and a lion.<sup>88</sup> Directly referring to the Christ's sacrifice and the Eucharist closest relationship with the known examples from the territory of the Republic Macedonia is found in the presbytery mosaic from Basilica D in Heraclea Lyncestis, dated in the first half of sixth century and the time of Justinian. (Fig.) An extremely rare example of tessellated figural mosaic, it is composed of even five scenes that surround the altar, mostly water birds and two deers in the apse drinking from a central vessel, all illustrating the psalm 41 and the Eucharist.<sup>89</sup>

The ultimate dissolution of the concept of presentation is found in the interlocking elongated hexagons within which only several individual animal figures are presented the mosaic pavement in the nave of the church at Horvat Berachot in Israel enclosed by a multiple border, dated in the fifth or first half of the sixth century.<sup>90</sup> On a comparative basis it may be observed as stilisation of the more naturalistic presentation of faunal, floral and human figures employed in daily functions incorporated within vegetal scrolls of major size from the Madaba churches, which inevitably remind of the same motif exploited in the fifth and sixth century wall mosaics from the grand churches of Rome and Ravenna. Within this observation the mosaic floor from Nicopolis in Greece dated between 525 and 550, where animals and birds were enclosed in squares,

<sup>85</sup> M. Piccirillo, E. Alliata, 1998, 265-304.

<sup>86</sup> M. Piccirillo, E. Alliata, 1998, 302-304.

<sup>87</sup> M. Piccirillo, E. Alliata, 1998, 344-350.

<sup>88</sup> M. Piccirillo, E. Alliata, 1998, 330-343.

<sup>89</sup> Е. Манева, Базиликата Де од Хераклеа Линкестис, *Лихниг* 7 (1989), 51-57.

<sup>90</sup> Y. Tzafrir, Y. Hirschfeld, The Church and Mosaics at Horvat Berachot, Israel, *DOP* 33 (1979), 305-309, 323, figs. B, D, F, 16-21, with a direct analogy in the Na'aran Synagogue mosaic pavement from the same time.

is a further step towards simplification of the mosaic composition.<sup>91</sup> A compilation of the two models is found in the mosaic pavement of the cross-shape church from Hersonesos dated to the mid sixth century, where a central panel with a eucharistic scene positioned right in front of the presbytery entrance is fully surrounded by interlocking circles containing faunal images, accompanied on the south by another eucharistic scene.<sup>92</sup> They are generally comparable to the roughly sixth century nave mosaic of the Basilica *Extra muros* from Stobi, where only eucharistic scenes and *baroque* floral motifs were presented in the square panels set in two parallel lines (except for a single scene of combatant sea creatures), a monument that awaits soon publication. This finds further support in several late tessellate mosaic pavements from Macedonia, appearing after a firmly established tradition of anionic mosaic pavements in geometric *opus sectile*. It is the pavement from the so-called North Triclinium, rather a chapel, in the Episcopal Residence at Heraclea Lyncestis,<sup>93</sup> where almost the entire scope of presented scenes, eight in total, is dominated by eucharistic scenes: two with running animals, presumably old image models now placed at random in several registers. Out of the two scenes with water life, only the one with the sea monsters presents them gulping each other, similarly as at Stobi. Comparable change in the thematic choice is presented in the other three rooms of the same building, where a complex Eucharistic scene is displayed in the Garden of Eden; individual animal figures are disposed in separate quadratic fields, and finally an association of Paradise where animals are set between trees, again at random and in various registers. The dating is also suggestive, the triclinium mosaic is ascribed to *c.* mid sixth century, that in the second room in course of the third-fourth decade, and the other two to the seventh-eighth decade of the same century.<sup>94</sup>

The world of Paradise, synthesised in the symbolic observation of the mid sixth century donor and manifested by the reduced and highly decorative segments of symbolic representation in the grand churches, was sublimed in the illusionistic illustrative concepts of the compositions focused in the domes and their apses as the chief converging points towards which the believers aspired. In this way they manifested the characteristic manner of manipulation of space typical for the Justinianic period. This concept at the rotunda at Konjuh, its architectural composition and animalistic figures from its interior decoration represent its fundamental though only preserved segment of ornamentation, presumably distributed close to the focal liturgical spaces of the church. Interpreted within the information displayed in the previous discussion, their convergence toward a definite omega point allocated in the apse may be suggested. In the words of the commentary of Patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople, died *c.*

<sup>91</sup> D.T. Rice in: D.T. Rice, ed., 1958, 144, related it also to the Paradise theme, refuted by E. Kitzinger explaining it as the Christianised depiction of the earth with everything that breathes and creeps.

<sup>92</sup> А.Л. Ротич, К изучению мозаичного пола крестообразного храма в Херсонесе, Византийский временник XXVII (1967), 328-333.

<sup>93</sup> Г. Цветковић-Томашевић, Корпус рановизантијских подних мозаика, Београд 2002.

<sup>94</sup> Г. Цветковић-Томашевић 2002, 74. The author has specific interpretation for the rooms, which according to my opinion requests revision. The dating of the second room may also be delayed at least in the mid century.

730, the antiphons preceding the Small Entrance are the prophecies that announced Christ's coming (23/32), while the bishop's ascent to and the session at the throne showed Christ's ascension and enthronement in majesty bearing on his shoulders and offering to the Father the whole race of Adam (27/38).<sup>95</sup> As a materialised vision of the mystery of faith sublimed in the compact organism of the rotunda, its form, art and function, represented a comprehensive statement of the mysteries of sacrifice and salvation experienced through the hosted liturgy, a religious metaphoric experience that answered the prayers and expectations of believers. As such, it produced a religious experience that not only offered patterns for understanding of the constructed reality of accepted belief, but also managed to divert people from actual perception of time and space toward patience and penitence while awaiting the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>96</sup> As such it may be understood in the words of Ephrem the Syrian who set forth in his sixth hymn the Church on earth as a type of Paradise, comparing the original creation of Paradise before the Fall with a house built by God,<sup>97</sup> fully realized in the rotunda at Konjuh.

Љубинка Џидрова

#### УМЕТНОСТ, ОБЛИК И ЛИТУРГИЈА У РОТОНДИ КОД КОЊУХА

Као последица покушаја за конзервацију и рестаурацију каменог мобилијара из ротонде код Коњуха, а с циљем за музејску презентацију једног његовог дела, наметнула се потреба за ревизију сазнања повезаних за ову грађевину. Специфичност њеног архитектонског облика пореклом из средине VI века, односно из времена касне владавине императора Јустинијана I, нашла је објашњење у њеном претпостављеном сиријском пореклу. Ревизијом се дошло до закључка да је претпостављена трочлана организација олтарског простора, оригинално поседовала једино развијен презвитеријални део, коме је кратко након завршетка градње придодат протезис на северној страни затварањем улаза на источном крају овог зида, док је онај на јужном зиду остао отворен што искључује овај простор из могућности за спровођење делатности повезаних за литургијски церемонијал.

Пажња је углавном усмерена на интерпретацију унутрашње декоративне пластике са освртом на једновремене представе овог типа, њиховог распореда и значења у компаративним видовима уметничког изражавања. Извршен је и критички осврт на могућност постојања амвона и раније урађену хипотетичку реконструкцију његовог изгледа. Главни акценат анализе се односи на ретку групу парапетних плоча са животињским представама (бик, вепар, мечка, магарац, срна) већих димензија, интерпретираних у смислу подређивања основног најнижег нивоа зидног украса сцени "Адам именује животиње у Рају" из Књиге постања (2:20) најчешће илустрованој у подним мозаицима, а са традицијом представљања од трећег века па на даље. Тиме унутрашњи простор ротонде, помогнут унутрашњом декорацијом и литургијским обредом који се ту изводио, добија алегорички значај Раја.

<sup>95</sup> R. Taft, S.J., *DOP* 34-35 (1980-1981), 52.

<sup>96</sup> An answer to the polemical question of H. Belting in: *DOP* 34-35 (1980-1981), 16.

<sup>97</sup> K.E. McVey, *DOP* 37 (1983), 112, Hymn 6:7-12; 13:2.