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Featuring artist:

Kolë Idromeno



DIOGEN pro culture
magazine ... a month
for DIOGEN artist
...and you ...

Kujtim nga Shqypënia - Shkodra.





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Kolë Idromeno
(1860–1939)
Albania

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Research paper

Biblical-philosophical Scenery of Kole Idromeni in “Two Paths of Life”			Cultural Studies Keywords: Analysis, iconographic reading, aesthetics, philosophical message, comparison.
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Abstract			
Kole Idromeno (1860-1939) Was a high-spirited and many-sided artist. Idromeno was born in the cradle of cultural-spiritual and Albanian contemporary civilization, in Shkodra. He had his first steps as an artist in the studio of the famous Italian photographer, Pietro Marubi, in Shkodra. After finishing the university in the Academy of the Fine Arts in Venecia, it's the point when he succeeded as an artist. When he came back in his country, he didn't find it easy because he was interned by the Turkish Authorities for a year (1897-1898). Idromeno was conspicuous as an architect, painter, musician and photographer. In 1912 for the first time in Albania he brought a camera to shoot cinematographic films. Useful values: The artist from Shkodra was the first walker of a new age in painting all over Albania. He achieved a lot of paintings with a new style and subject borrowed from Albanian life and tradition such as: “The garden of a house in Shkodra”, “Our sister”, “Cliff of Ulqin”, “Wedding in Shkodra”, “Father Shtjefen Gjecovi”, and wrote his name in aeternum in golden letters as the father of Albanian Renaissance painting. The purpose of research: In my esthetic- philosophical focus of a many-sided analysis, there's the most impressive tableau of the painting “Two paths of life”, which belongs to the Renaissance period. It was the first announcer in that dark horizon due to the black shadow of 500-hundred Turkish invasion. It also contained critical elements and spirit and pointed out extraordinary historic-political, cultural-ethnographic and esthetic- psychological values at the end of XIX century in Albania. The picture that Kole Idromeno created through this fabulous work of art as a Iudicium, involves the Albanian people over years, where the crossroads between goodness and wickedness, existing and non-existing makes the message of victory of a native background be on the top of obelisk, deriving from the history of Pellazg, Illir and Albanian people nowadays. The method of research: Another description of the events, which belonged to the period that this masterpiece was created, is also the book “Souvenirs della haute Albanie”, published in 1901 in Paris by the French Consul Auguste Degrand, who paraphrases in the chapter dedicated to religion: The famous painting of Kole Idromeno “Two paths of life” has been helpful to the priests to do their job during the religious ceremony among peasants, who used to live in very difficult conditions: in poverty, in age-long isolation, their orient customs and difficulties that Franciscan priests faced, in order to make them follow the right path of Christian moral values ²⁹ .			

Introduction

"Two paths of life" or Heaven and Hell is a masterpiece of the most various personality of Albanian obelisk Kole Idromeno. This topic touches the life of Albanian people during the Turkish invasion for 500 years. If you take this masterpiece, which belongs to the period of Albanian Renaissance, creates an emotional state inside you and impales deep in your heart. Idromeno uses a dual language which is psycho-philosophical and an anthropologic-cultural pictorial art. Through the painting, the author describes his feelings which are really meaningful to the historical events in Albania at that time, when he had a strong dissatisfaction towards social-political degradation. Catholic church had the same feelings and was completely against the phenomenon of social immorality which was widely spread in Albania.

Kole Idromeno, through this painting, expressed his desire for a healthy civilization and getting away from the Turkish habits or better say getting rid of the laziness and ignorance which had seized the Albanian culture at the end of XIX century. Thus, this masterpiece becomes critical toward the reality mentioned above, involving the whole country. An essential part is also the outstanding costumes worn by men, women and children with a wide range of colors, naturally shown in the dual view of "Two paths of life".

²⁹ Auguste Degrand, "Souvenirs de la haute Albanie", Valter Edit., Paris, 1901, f. 276.



Kolë Idromeno, *Two Paths of Life*, oil colors on canvas, 1893, The Historical Museum of Shkodra

The most distinguishable ones are those which belong to the North like: Zadrima, Dikagjin, Kelmedi and Shkodra without leaving apart the costumes of Middle and South Albania. By mixing up the muslim and catholic clothes, it gave a magical message showing the two religions³⁰ living perfectly together.

Kole Idromeno was an architect, painter, photographer, musician, composer, screenwriter and the only example that could produce such a wonderful work of art. He has cultivated all his skills in this painting like: the study of the anatomy of human body, the various Albanian portrait and ethnography, calm natures and landscapes. Due to this fact he was designated as Albanian Leonardo Da Vinci. Idromeno achieved successfully his works of art such as: "The garden of a house in Shkodra", "Our sister", "Cliff of Ulqin", "Wedding in Shkodra", "Father Shtjefen Gjecovi"³¹ which contain ethnographic, anthropologic, religious, psychological and panoramic values which point out a dark past of Albanian society at the end of XIX century.

³⁰ Besi Bektashi, "Dy Rrugët" e Kol Idromenos, pse kryevepra u la në harresë", Rivista Ëndrrat Shqiptare, Tiranë, 2004.

³¹ Ermir Hoxha, "Kolë Idromeno", Rivista Muza, Durrës, 2011, f. 7 - 8.

“Two paths of life” is a work of genius, where the author describes his spiritual state which is in a terrible mood for the destiny of his country, a message that has been conveyed with a lot of difficulties throughout the time.

This masterpiece also used a new and unknown language in Albanian art up to that time, an art which belonged to the ordinary and byzantine style. Idromeno was the first to build a new art with wide vision. This painting resembles the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, where Hell and Heaven melt in the symbiosis of life significance or the painting “The big tower of Babel” by Pieter Bruegel that involves you to be part of psychological-fiction universe, where the concept Humanitas is really meaningful.

The syntax of the language used in “Two paths of life” is perfect. In order to understand the psycho-philosophical Idromeno’s ideas, one has to observe the in hominis poenam and on a surface of 200 per 175cm to achieve the best virtues of Albanian people like two different religions living together. This is evidenced by mixing up naturally the national different costumes. Those of muslim religion that cover the whole body and catholic ones that let some parts of the human body uncovered. According to the paintings point of view, idem omnium mandatum is figured out in a direct way, where the poetic soul of Pashko Vasa in “Albanian religion is Albania itself” tries to find peace in the nest between two worlds, Heaven and Hell.

An important feature in this masterpiece is the spectacular scenery shaped vertically and makes it meaningful for the picture of Albanian Renaissance³². To create this great art, Idromeno was inspired by his home town Shkodra, including the hill of Rozafa castle, where Heaven and Hell are decomposed throughout the art and recreated into a sole image as a spes renascitur in “Two paths of life”³³. The landscape also appears like a Zigurat spiral straight to the sky, where the path beyond two worlds is created by using a real language and unreal one at the same time. The painting provides strong communicative elements such as: one of the most burning pictorial colors of Hell at the bottom part of the scenery and unexpectedly they rise up gently, cold and sparkling towards the upper part straight to Heaven, the Kingdom of God, where peace dominates all around Jesus Christ tracks. Related to iconography, Idromeno sets up a wide nuntius, a vivant tableau of Albania at the end of XIX century. View framework is various where the calm nature, busy with trees animals, joins the bare nature, empty, cold, light everywhere and large cliffs that disappear gently in the mystic horizon.

The artist has created an encyclopedia of real images, spiritual states and original scenes taken from the reality, where any character doesn’t match for each other. Among this variety of characters, there are two scenes: “musicians | bacchanalians” worn in typical catholic costumes, that shows clearly they are from Shkodra, and “two devils” one is writing about what is happening, whereas the other is surprised due to the indifference of people about what is happening around them. One of the devils is standing still in the middle of two “bacchanalians” leaning against him, in this way showing the strong and unbeatable soul of Albanians, who are more evil than “the Devil” himself. Someone is taking raki, some are singing, another one is summoning those who are coming from Hell to join their group of sinners.

Idromeno conveys a critical message for the society, where “bacchanalians” crystallize a careless society, but only knows how to entertain and avoid the responsibilities and not getting out from the cliché of their lives. The description of “bacchanalians” consists of a tributum for Shkodra music. Soon after this musical scene, comes a well detailed scene, where villagers or peasants share gossips or fight each other. Through these actions is discovered another face of northern Albania culture, violent and aggressive people,

³² Ferid Hudhri, “Albania through Art”, Donika Bardha Albanian Arts Foundation, Tiranë, 2007, f. 38, 39, 214 – 219.

³³ Ferid Hudhri, “Shqipëria nëpërmjet artistëve”, Shtëpia Botuese Onufri, Tiranë, 2003, f. 126 – 133.

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Research paper

whose lives consist of knives, rifles and “their bravery” to kill others. “God the first, Canon above all” is the slogan that would guide their spirit for a lifetime.

This scene is put purposely below that of “bacchanalians”, because the triangular language created among the spectator, scenes and bacchanalians or violent people, makes you live through goodness and wickedness, beauty and ugliness, civilization and ignorance, life and death, when the earth starts to collapse and hides in the midst of heavy mist of illusion. The scene of murder involves nine characters, eight peasants and one Devil. Fear inside him is betrayed by his terrified face and at the same time becomes enthusiastic due to the slaughter between ordinary people....!! There is one murdered and the others are fighting strongly against each other. All are killing all. This is the high point message conveyed by Idromeno. At the end of XIX century, society in Albania had degraded and decayed thoroughly. Altruism and goodness were vanishing at that time where criminals and bandits of rural zones in Shkodra show the inherited virtues of Turkish backward culture of cruelty and murder. The costumes and armory of these characters are evidences of how peasants of Northern Albania³⁴ used to live. “Two paths of life” consist of six large scenes and twenty small scenes. The relation between the characters and scenery boosts a *vivum theatrum*, where the war between doubt and illusion disorients human sensibility and the right way to Heaven becomes meaningless. The way that leads to the large burning gate of Hell, is drawn like a wonderful and attractive and for this reason people go toward it. They avoid to go to the purgatory gate, which is smaller than the gigantic gate of Hell that is typical of Turkish architecture. Thus, the work of art “Two paths of life” has pictorial and esthetic values that convey a regenerative and free spirit of the invaded people by Turkish Empire. This feeling is exactly realized at the large gate of Hell and the figure of Albanian people freedom to return in their origin, is described by sending it straight to the paradise of Catholic world through the purgatory gate³⁵. So we can say that “Two paths of life” is an indisputable *et memoria* of sacrifice, culture, traditions and darkness of Albanian society during the Turkish invasion³⁶. This spectacular masterpiece codified the best values and the forbidden freedom of Albanian people through art and philosophic-fiction spirit of Kole Idromeno.³⁷



³⁴ Ferid Hudhri, “Arti i Rilindjes shqiptare”, Shtëpia Botuese Onufri, Tiranë, 2000, f. 64 -72.

³⁵ A. Sadikaj, (Restaurimi i “Dy rrugët e jetës”), e piktorit Kolë Idromeno, Revista Monumentet, Tiranë, 1976, f. 42.

³⁶ Album “Rilindja Kombëtare Shqiptare”, Tiranë, 1962.

³⁷ H. Nallbani, (Tabloja “Dy rrugët e jetës” dhe restaurimi i saj), Gazeta Drita, Tiranë, 1980, f. 11.

Conclusions

All I have described and achieved in my esthetic-philosophical analysis of the masterpiece of Albanian Renaissance “Two paths of life” of Kole Idromeno, is modest compared with the great message conveyed to the spectators. By using a historic-cultural and psycho-anthropological judgment, I have tried to reveal some of the most important elements such as: Religious subject that fits perfectly to the Albanian costumes, folklore and scenery, the universal values and message of the Albanian religions living together, that makes it even more special. At that time, this painting served as a strong light of hope up to the end of a dark tunnel of 500-Turkish invasion over Albanian people that saw another face and its European gene.

“Two paths of life” was a spiritual-psychological self-portrait of the artist from Shkodra, that gave life to the ideas, feelings and patriotic soul of Kole Idromeno. He also brought a humanism taste through visual poetry and magical pictorial art that bring all the characters to life in the Albanian drama theatre, where Idromeno gave the greatest importance to human being, virtues, and Albanian people sufferings. I compared and named this work of art as a self-portrait of Kole Idromeno because we cannot find himself pictured at any of his works. Idromeno was fond of this painting, since he paints himself with self-conscience among the group of bacchanalians, an ambiguous element, on one side as a part of cultural-folklore of Shkodra. On the other side self-painting within his paintings, which is a typical elements of artists and Italian Renaissance art, a period of time when Kole Idromeno was really keen on. Thus, in the long run of this analytic-iconographic path, the masterpiece “Two paths of life” describes the hill of Rozafa Castle as a simple and picturesque one in the Holy mountain, where Albanian people head towards the Heaven and prosperous path of God, where Albanian country would find peace and happiness.

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The latest book of Deputy editor in chief

Ancient Monuments and Treasures of Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan



PETER M. TASE

"The Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan is an autonomous region within the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan; this is established under the Azerbaijani constitution that was approved by a national referendum in 1995.

In this volume the author provides a glimpse of archeological wealth that visitors can find throughout Nakhchivan. Peter Tase wants to bring Nakhchivan at the center of the world's attention while promoting the history of Azerbaijan's cradle of ancient history and archeology, including the decade long administration of Mahammad Jahan Pahlavan, the leader of Azerbaijan (1175-1186), during this period, Nakhchivan was a principle economic, political and cultural center of Azerbaijan, it garnered an international reputation under the period of Atabaylar-Eldanizlar rule.

The Encyclopedia of Nakhchivan Monuments, published under the leadership of Mr. Vasif Yusif oglu Talibov, President of Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan, has served as the main source of reference, research and information for the publication of all articles that are assembled in this volume."

Ancient Monuments and Treasures of Nakhchivan

PETER M. TASE



The latest book of Deputy editor in chief

"This book is a result of a passionate work that Peter Tase, as the author, has undertaken for over a year, with his research and publications that have appeared in the Foreign Policy News and Eurasia Review Journals. This is the first book volume about Nakhchivan that is published by my colleague in the United States, and I am confident that Peter Tase will continue to bring on the light of publication many other volumes that will further promote the tremendous wealth of history and culture that Nakhchivan embodies within the context of national history of Azerbaijan as well as its special characteristics that are a precious asset to the world's history

.According to the Encyclopedia of Nakhchivan Monuments, there are approximately 1143 cultural and archeological monuments that were certified by the competent authorities. The area of Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan is 5.5 square kilometers that constitutes 6.4 percent of the territory of Azerbaijan."

- Sabahudin Hadžialić



"Heydar Aliyev established a framework to strengthen the key principles of human rights, democratic values and liberty in Azerbaijan; he had a pragmatic vision to preserve the national cultural heritage and bolster Azerbaijan's presence in the world."

- Peter M. Tase

"...Nakhchivan is one of the smallest regions in the nation of Heydar Aliyev, its founding leader, however it is almost impossible to find a similar place in the world with almost the same territorial size that would contribute as much to human history as this region of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has been a very strong country in almost every period of its history, particularly in the XII century. The name 'Nakhchivan' derives from Noah-Jahan. It is believed that the name of the city of Nakhchivan is related to Prophet Noah. According to archaeological sources, this area has the traces of the big floods in antiquity that were described in the Koran and the Bible.

More than half of the territory of Azerbaijan is mountainous, to the north is the Greater Caucasus with the highest peak: Bazardyuzy, 4,466 meters (its south-eastern part reaches Azerbaijan), to the southwest is the massive Trans-Caucasian upland extending to Armenia and Georgia, bordered by the Lower Caucasus, and to the south there are the Talysh Mountains. These highly striking territorial surfaces, along with geographical particularities, profoundly determine the diversity and abundances of its unique nature, encompassing the features of the Caucasus and Middle Asia region..."

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Kolë Idromeno (1860–1939) was an Albanian painter, sculptor, photographer, architect and engineer. He was born in Shkodër, where he learned the first elements of photography from Pietro Marubi. He was of Cham origin. In 1876 he stayed for some months at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia, the academy of fine arts of Venice, and then worked in the studio of an Italian painter. When back in Albania (1878), he engaged himself in a number of different activities, working as an architect, sculptor, photographer, scene-painter, engineer and painter. He was the initiator of the first art exhibition in Shkodër (1923) and was represented in the first national art exhibition in Tirana (1931).

He established a very active photographic studio. Idromeno was the first painter to show motion pictures in Albania in 1912. He had kept up a correspondence with the Lumière brothers in Paris. His most well known work is Motra Tone. He was the first landscape painter in the modern Albanian painting school (Courtyard of a House in Shkodra) and pioneered realistic secular painting. His works were represented in international exhibitions, for example, in Budapest, Austria–Hungary (1900) and New York, United States (1939). One of his best work, not very popular is the portrait Gjergj Kastriot Skenderbeu. It was painted in 1889. Its owner it is not known, and the painting has never been in public.

His works are held in the Mezuraj Museum, Tirana. As an architect, Idromeno has carved his name into many well-known objects in Shkodra. The list includes "The Big Coffee Shop" (Albanian: Kaffja e Madhe), the Grand Catholic Cathedral, church of Shirokë, first electrical station of the town, Radovan Building, the Prefecture Building, mosque of Parrucë, and most of the residences of villas along the main boulevard in the northern historical district of Shkodra. He is referred as Michelangelo of Albania.





SOUTH EAST EUROPE AT THE EDGE OF CIVILIZATION



Sabahudin Hadžialić

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Complete societies within South-East Europe, regardless if in power are from the "left" and/or "right" and/or "center" or of any kind have been established in a way to protect the ones who are in power, instead of protecting the people.

"...The youth of South-East Europe have lost their virginity. How has that happened? Before we try to answer that question, let us develop a proper story as the background and the confirmation of the above mentioned announcement.

Namely, during last decade, almost 300,000 thousand young people from the area of South-East Europe fled towards a "better place for work and life" heading towards the West (Europe) – young people from Croatia (approximately 100,000), Serbia (approximately 100,000) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (approximately 100,000). It increases especially within last couple a years and instead to decreasing, it rapidly goes up and up. Why?

The answer is very simple. It is within the Head office of each political party (left or right, depending on the election year) within those three mentioned countries (There is no difference in Montenegro and/or Macedonia and especially Kosovo, which increases above mentioned number almost up to 500.000). Again, why is that answer is within the above mentioned parties, regardless if they are "national" and/or "international"?..."

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**“GRAND CAFE” IN SHKODRA:
THE HISTORICAL - ARCHITECTURAL STUDY OF THE
MONUMENT AND THE DRAFT IDEA OF ITS RESTORATION**

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Abstract

The masterpiece of architect Kolë Idromeno, the "Grand Café" building was declared in 1960 under the state protection as Cultural Monuments. The monument represents a construction of the beginning of the 20th century with the proper social - cultural functions as café/restaurant and hotel. The monument is known for the exterior decorations and a clear functional scheme, being rated as one of the most representative prototypes of this period. Today, the building has lost its usability as a consequence of deep depreciation and lack of systematic maintenance. It needs a fast intervention to be preserved and revitalized. Hypotheses and facts presented in this article about the history and the construction phases of the "Grand Café" derive from the results of the research of historical documentation, architectural survey of geometric proportions, and detailed morphology of the spatial structures, construction and details. The study begins with the comprehension of the history of the monument breakdown and its designer. The work of Kolë Idromeno has given the meaning of the urban development of the Inner City of Shkodra, through his architectural and creative urban design works. The architect of the "Grand Café" also played a significant role in the artistic and cultural life of the city. The combination of these dimensions and their influence on his work is presented in this first part of the study. It continues with careful investigation into the object to determine the architectural values, construction phases, diagnosis of the pathology that has obsolete it and restorative interventions in order to maintain the historical presence, its morphological and typological characteristics. The restoration project idea of the building aims the improvement of the use of space and mainly the sanitary conditions of the hotel, based on the fact that the intervention needs to improve and not change the original structure of the monument. The study concludes that the "Grand Café" building has lost its traditional use because of deep depreciation, lack of systematic maintenance, substantial damage to the exterior, interior and somewhat on the constructive structure and has an immediate need for restoration and re-evaluation. It is proved that Idromeno has re-used an earlier structure built with stones that had the same use. In stylistic terms too, the building represents only outstanding values of the main facade decorated with care, which is not evident in other facades.

Keywords: *Grand Café, Kolë Idromeno, monument, pathology, restoration*

Introduction

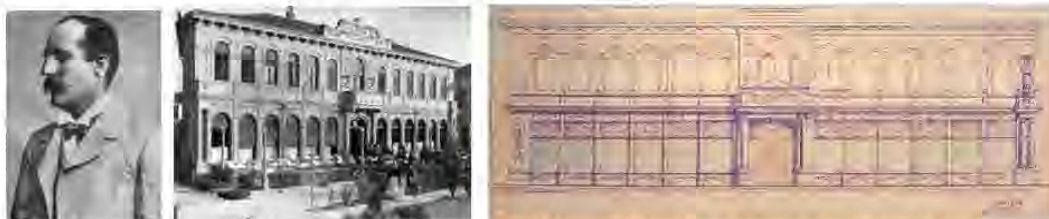


Figure 1. Portrait of Kolë Idromeno; **Figure 2.** Photo of "Great Café" in 1940 (Source: Postcard time); **Figure 3.** Drawing in the rapid technique with watercolors consisted in two different morphological-aesthetic development options of the facade of "Grand Café" by Kolë Idromeno (Source: Central State Archive)

"Grand Café," one of the most famous works of Kolë Idromeno in the center of Shkodra, was part of the three "major" monumental constructions for which the city was proud of: the Grand Church, Grand Nuts Tree and Grand Café.¹ Although in its genesis it was named "Adriatic Café," during its usage "Hotel ParkCafé" and in the '40s the "Grand Hotel Savoia,"² it was recognized as the "Grand Café" in Shkodra because it was one of the most famous cafés in our country at that time, even until the 90's. The autodidact architect, Kolë Idromeno, designed every detail of "Pjaca,"³ all the buildings, from the City Hall to "Dugajët e Reja", turning it into a perfect architectural symphony.⁴ "Grand Café" was a significant part of this monumental ensemble representative of the new spirit. Legends and a careful survey show that the building had the attributes of a café in the Ottoman period, which was turned into a noble edifice by the architect, images of which can only be experienced through the photographs of the time (Fig. 2). The project found today in the Central State Archive (Fig. 3), conducted by Idromeno in the rapid technique with watercolors, and consisted in two morphological-aesthetic development options of the facade of "Grand Café." The implemented option was the one with more conspicuous ornaments. The neoclassical building realized by the architect Idromeno was a result of the investments of Ashiku Family. Ndoc Luka bought it in 1920, when he was tasked as the Italian consul in Albania. One of his girls was married to a descendant of Muzali family. As a result the ownership remained to the members of this family until 1945, when it was frequented by the nobles and prominent persons of the city.⁵ After that year, it passed into the ownership of the state and continued offering the same services. The ground floor of the building, covered by a roof, operated as a bar and restaurant, with a capacity of 200 persons whose interior was dominated by mirrors and their reflective strength. The bathroom's block and kitchen with their facilities were added later. The billiard table was positioned at one of the edges, which looked into a series of heavy furniture's of the café. The square before the building was filled with tables that served in the warm period of the year. The first floor performed the function of a hotel, which did not only accommodate visitors to the area, but also persons from other regions of the country and tourists. The stairs, climbing to the first floor, were located in the hind of the building. At the end of the central corridor, which made the delivery in nine bedrooms, were located the bathrooms. Only two rooms were equipped with luxurious bathrooms for the time. Meanwhile, there was also a wooden staircase which led into a usable space under the roof. The most luxurious café, which provided architectural space and comfort, gathered the

¹ <http://www.shkodradaily.com/2013/04/kafja-e-madhe.html> - Ben Andoni

² It changed its name to "Grand Hotel Savoia" in the years of the fascist occupation, while during the dictatorship it was officially renamed "café Park", while the upper floor was called the "Hotel Park".

³ "Shëitorja Popullore"

⁴ <http://besibekteshi-info.blogspot.com/2013/07/idromeno-urbanisti-dhe-arkitekti.html>

⁵ <http://www.shkodradaily.com/2013/04/kafja-e-madhe.html> - Ben Andoni

elite (clerks, teachers, merchants, officers and intellectuals), the middle and higher class, thus found the opportunity to get closer to the citizens of Shkodra more and more every day. The students who came from abroad made it very famous by turning it into a landmark for meetings and love-affairs. Bit by bit, the café, slipped into the nest of culture, art and politics. It turned into a symbol of improved offered services and an emblem of conduction of the European contemporary elements. Luxury was expressed in the fact that people went in the organized evenings there, dressed in tailcoats. There was played "live" music and poker.⁶ In 1960, the building of "Grand Café" was classified as a cultural monument; giving it the right place in the architectural heritage fund, but it never exceeded the glasses of the old "Grand Café." It continued being very famous in the 70's – 80's while its musicians were in emulation with those of the "Old Tourism."⁷ The first intervention was conducted by the Restoration Institute of Culture Monuments,⁸ in 1986, in the context of conservation and preservation of cultural heritage in the historic area of Shkodra city. The project⁹ aimed the restoration of the main facade, the structure of the floor of the first level, which alongside amortization, manifested static problems, as a result, of the overweight partitions, wooden ceiling of the ground floor's hall and roof restoration. In this period were realized the outer layer of floral decorations in granulated stone (cast in site).¹⁰ In the 90's, after regaining the property of the right owners, who attempted to return its identity, the economic difficulties of the process turned the café into a wish and hope of Mozali family. In the last decade, "Great Café" remained closed due to financial criteria, set by the owners against the tenants who attempted to return the building to life. It survived a fire in this same period. The fire managed to burn the coffee bar and was thought to have been the depreciation of the electrical grid.¹¹ The building was proclaimed Monument of the first category, in 2007, by the Institute of Monuments of Culture. As a result of the business community interest, and in cooperation with the Municipality of Shkodra, the restoration project¹² was conducted in 2012, in order to revitalize the monument. The project is not implemented yet due to financial reasons.

Aim of study/research

The study assures that the "Grand Café" building has lost its traditional use because of deep depreciation, lack of systematic maintenance, substantial damage to the exterior, interior and somewhat on the constructive structure and has an immediate need for restoration and re-evaluation. Another intention of the study is the determination of the pathology of the building in order to intervent for its future. So, the restoration project idea of the building aims the improvement of the use of space and mainly the sanitary conditions of the hotel, based on the fact that the intervention needs to improve and not change the original structure of the monument.

Research topics

The topics of research are mainly focused on: restoration, architectural re-evaluation, preservation methods, historical memory, urban articulation's importance.

⁶ <http://www.shkodradaily.com/2013/04/kafja-e-madhe.html> - Ben Andoni

⁷ <http://www.revistajava.al/reportazh/2012118/shkodrapas-idromenos> - Ben Andoni

⁸ Regional Directorate of Cultural Monuments of Shkodra

⁹ Planner: Ark. Zef Çuni

¹⁰ Executive: Franc Nika

¹¹ <http://www.shkodradaily.com/2013/04/kafja-e-madhe.html> - Ben Andoni

¹² Designer: Dr. Ark. Florian Nepravishta and Ark. Arben Biçoku

Research questions

Did Idromeno re-use an earlier structure built with stones that had the same use? In stylistic terms too, the building represents only outstanding values of the main facade decorated with care, which is not evident in other facades. Why was this certain attitude chosen by the architect? How can the monument be brought to life without changing the identity, preserving the building and its historical memory? Is it possible to make a good integration of the concept of the revitalization and the further utilization of the object?

Scientific methods

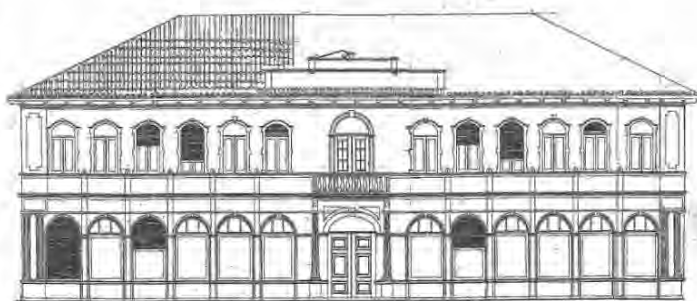


Figure 4. Master plan - Survey of 196; **Figure 5.** "Grand Café" façade (Source: Institute of Cultural Monuments)

The documentary records that enable the clarification of the morphological-constructive characteristics of the "Grand Café," the category of the monument and the interventions implemented in this object were taken in the Regional Directorate of Cultural Monuments of Shkodra (Fig.4, 5). For the accuracy and specification of these data, a full survey of the object is attained, and trips in site are made possible. All this information is analyzed statistically and graphically, according to the design office requirements for the logistics of the object operation, regarding the external communication, as well as the internal functional organization. Its leads to precursory conclusions on the possibilities of intervention, spaces and elements of the building to be restored, the quality of construction in accordance with the standards of restoration, the budget and the schedule. These are accompanied with ongoing discussions held with the client and specialists of Shkodra Municipality, as a necessary integral part of the reflective process on the concept of revitalization and further utilization of the object. In the phase of research, the implementation of the project idea, the following investigations were fulfilled: The urban situation was analysis, Geometric survey, Architectural and typological analysis of the building, Inquiry of the security conditions - Building Pathology, Inquiry of the welfare conditions and construction equipments (systems). In this phase it is compiled: The digitized information on the existing situation of the object, with all the physical data; The statistical and visual digitized information on the building pathologies.; The statistical and visual digitized information on the standards and needs for functional environments.; The written and visual information on the qualitative and technological requirements of the building.

Data analysis

The urban situation. The "Grand Café" (Fig. 6) was one of the successful urban challenges of Idromeno, which became the expression of a new urban model proposed by the architect.¹³ It is the moment of escaping Turkish influence on architecture and urban planning, and directing toward the "Venetian" model, as they call it in Shkodra. The beginning of change was the location of the buildings with decorated facades and customized ornaments (with different figures not used until then) in line, on both sides of the road, situating shops on the ground floors. The "Grand Café" stands as an elegant lady in front of what was once called "Popular Park" and expects glances coming from those who pass in the museum street of "Pjaca." This city looks like it cannot avoid the affliction and depreciation of time, the essence of which is felt through traditional paths, old houses, locked gates, abandoned monuments... Although nowadays there are no more Idromeno that would invest every millimeter of their soul, to make this city the first, the citizens and professionals do not want to lose its identity.



Figure 6. Location of the "Grand Café" in the protected area of the city of Shkodra (Source: Municipality of Shkodra); **Figure 7.** Site Plan of "Grand Café" (Source: Author)

Geometric survey. Although it was managed to possess the original documentation of the building and cadastral data from the earlier surveys,¹⁴ it was necessary to organize site vizits. During this trips topographical, external and internal surveying of the building; photographic material (Fig. 7); as well as inventories in the current state of the object, its environment and architectural details (finishes, doors and windows); is done in order to enable the clarification of the morphological-constructive characteristics of it and to ensure the accuracy of the subsequent interventions. The survey of the monument is made possible by combining instrumental and traditional techniques. Topographic survey has served to determine the relative quotas of characteristic points inside and outside the building, and a reference plan for the internal measurements. Architectural survey is accomplished with traditional tools such as laser meter, water level, plumb, etc. There are made sequential measurements associated with general ones, to make the necessary control and to correct any possible errors or inaccuracies. The external measurements are made taking into consideration the quotes of the topographic spots. This way, the connection of the object with the surrounding terrain, and the internal measurements with the external ones became possible. It is also done the survey of the building damages. The survey data processing is done with the AutoCAD program.

¹³Based in the European cities models, he created the first facades in row along the promenade, by setting in line the "Dugajët".

¹⁴ Source: Regional Directorate of Cultural Monuments of Shkodra.

Architectural and typological analysis of the building. “Grand Café” is located in the “13 Dhjetori” street (Fig. 8). The object consists of two-stories of the old “Grand Café” and the additional one-story construction of the building (Fig. 9).



Figure 8. Site plan of the building; **Figure 9.** Resettlement plan, with the additional construction in the back of the old building (Source: Author)

The object is distinguished by a clear functional scheme, pure design, careful decoration of the exterior and interior, in a neoclassical style. The building is developed on two floors, with a total area of 778 m² (Fig. 10). The ground floor and the first floor have an area of 389 m² respectively. The ground floor plan is developed in a parallelepiped form and is visually divided into two different spaces by an ongoing arcade. The bigger space serves to increase the “drama” of the interior. The main entrance is located at the center of the main facade, which responds to one of the longest ribs of the parallelepiped. The freedom of the composition, influenced by the existing plan of the building, is replaced by the rational use of space on the first floor. The side walls of the ground floor are made of stone and lime mortar (thickness: 60 cm) and belongs to an earlier period of construction. It confirms the fact that the Idromeno project was constructed using part of the walls of an existing structure.¹⁵

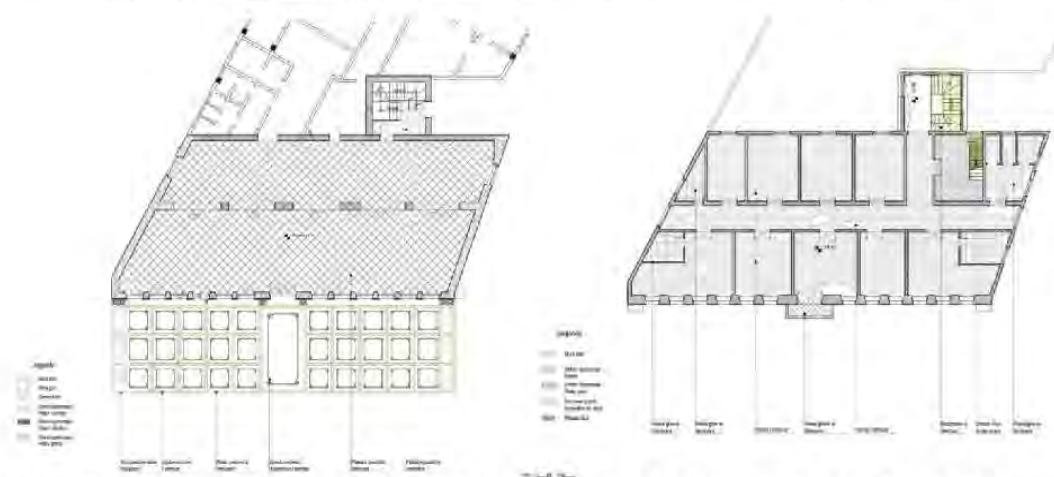


Figure 10. The ground floor (on the left) and the first floor (on the right) of “Grand Café” after the survey (Source: Author)

¹⁵ This is evident from the existing semi-circular openings in the two lateral facades, closed later to the quote of 1m, to create windows with two lids and “fanlights”. The dimensions of these windows are different from those proposed by Idromeno for the main facade of the “Grand Café” ground floor.

The decorated front wall and the posterior wall were built with concrete, bearing the load of the first floor and the roof. In the corners of the building, a stone wall is interlocked with the concrete one. The original and subsequent use of the building as a café, restaurant and hotel, has made possible that the changes of the object plans, due to usability, would be minor. On the ground floor, an addition built in concrete structure and brick walls supplies the spaces with bathrooms, kitchen space and facilities. Ascension to the first floor, which was used as a hotel, was realized by stairs covered in granulated prefabricated stone, which were located in the rear of the building. The reception was located in one of the rooms to the left of the corridor that appeared after the entry gate on the first floor. Right there, also existed a wooden staircase leading into the usable space under the roof. The hotel lacked a convenient vestibule. On the first floor of the building built with brick in the country (width: 25 cm), is located the hotel. The rooms are located on both sides of the corridor (width: 180 cm). Five rooms are located on the front facade, two of which, the "VIP" ones, have bathrooms. On the back, there are placed four rooms, a small spa in a rectangular shape at the end of the corridor. In the southeastern side of the building, it is adapted a space for shared toilets for the other hotel rooms. The Coverage of the facility has been attained with wood for slopes roof and tiling of the country (Fig. 11, 12). The space under the roof as partially used. The bearing structure of the roof demonstrated static problems even though it was reconstructed in 1986. The coverage of the stairs was partially covered with corrugated asbestos tiles. As mentioned above, the new urban model that was proposed by Idromeno gave much attention to the main road frontage. The buildings were in synchronicity with each other and the landscape. They tried to escape from the pavement line, to increase the space in front of them, which made them very suitable for commercial activity. The other sides of the building were neglected in architectural and formal terms because of the importance that was given to the main front facades, which came one consecutively after the other. So, we can consider these objects as "buildings with one facade." Perhaps, it is the trend of the "mask maker"¹⁶ architect to deal with the appearance, the details of the facade decoration in this urban scenery. The main facade of "Grand Café" (Fig. 13) faces the "December 13" street on the northwestern side of the building, while in the northeast and southwest it is bordered by alleys and in the southeast by a one storey object, a later additional space which has the functions of a kitchen, bathrooms, etc.

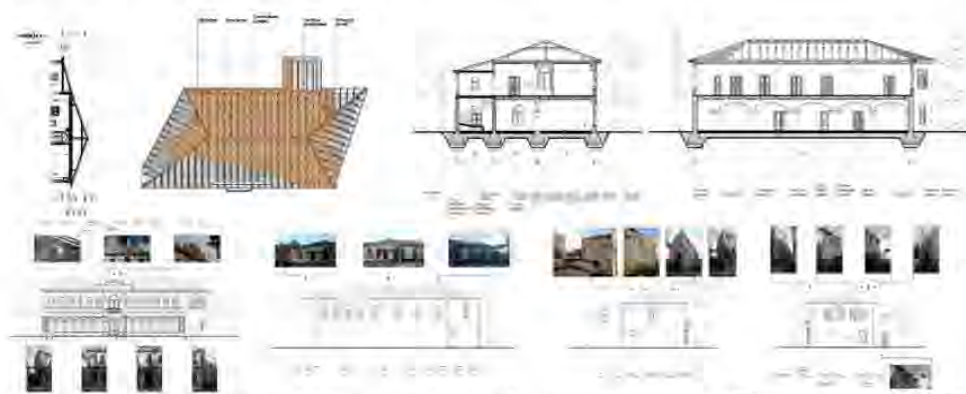


Figure 11. The roof plan and the sections after the survey; **Figure 12.** The sections of the object after the survey; **Figure 13.14.15.** The facades after the survey. Photographic identification and description of materials. (Source: Author)

¹⁶ Idromeno was a polyvalent artist. Despite being an architect, he also was a successful stage designer and mask creator, dimensions that are thought to have strongly influenced his architectural reality.

The main facade aesthetically beautiful, monumental, not too distant, comes so acceptable to our senses because of the human proportions that it owns, the perfect fusion of all the decorative and three dimensional elements (whether finishes, the pace of windows, columns, etc..) that cover the facade, creating a homogeneous and symmetrical bas-relief. The continuous perception of this masterpiece is translated, why not, into feeling... in the fear of losing these proportions (completely interdependent on one base unit). Analyzing this facade (Fig. 14), we note the presence of a strong symmetry axis that coincides with the entry of the building, whose emphasis is made using an element such as the first floor balcony. Each proportion is a multiple or submultiples of a module, which coincides with the light space of the ground floor window (also equal to the ratio of the window as a volume, in the exterior of the first floor). All the components of the facade have their own axes of symmetry too. Pairs of columns¹⁷ stand at the extremes of the facade and the arcades that bring light into the interior (if the blinds are open), lay between them in a regular pace. Idromeno has made an interlacing of the tradition of Shkodra buildings with neoclassical elements, such as decorations, frames, borders, etc.. The frameworks extend and embrace all the body of the building. Meanwhile, its monumentality is obfuscated by posters on the walls, moss and a galvanic padlock on the front door of the entrance. In the interior prevailed mess, but not noise, darkness, but not "intimacy." Unlike the tastefully decorated main facade, the other three sides of the building are treated quite poorly, with rectangular windows on the back facade, and rectangular and arched ones on the side facades. The stylistic positioning of the architect seems to lose its importance in the three other sides of the building (Fig. 15, 16). In a metaphorical perspective, the building is merely sufficed with the face that it shows in the street, so to "the world", and does not worry about the rest of its body, left in the aesthetic hibernation.

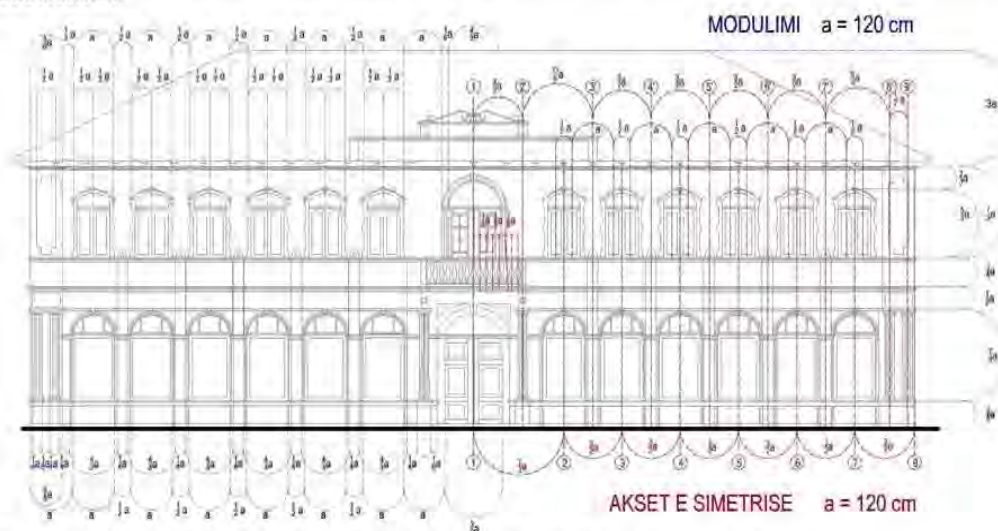


Figure 14. Geometric modulation of the main facade of the building (Source: Author)

Architectural details of "Grand Café," executed perfectly, are the only ones that have resisted the degrading action of time, arriving until nowadays as separate pieces of the past (Fig. 17). We can mention "Dionysus," engraved on the main facade, below the balcony, above the entrance of "Grand Café" (Fig. 18), which represents "on the outside" of the facade: a smiling face, while its symmetrical part "on the inside" of the building: "cries internally." Everything

¹⁷ In the first sketches of Idromeno, it was supposed to pull off statues over the columns, but it was not executed during the implementation.

is detailed, but never excessive. Each refinement comes naturally, in a charming way that it cannot be thought otherwise. The composition of the square ahead of the facility, conducted in 1986, was handled with floral motifs, coated with granulated stone, separated by narrow marble slabs. A restricted number of flower bowls restrained the decorated outside space of the "Great Café," being associated with vertical electric lights. (Fig. 19)

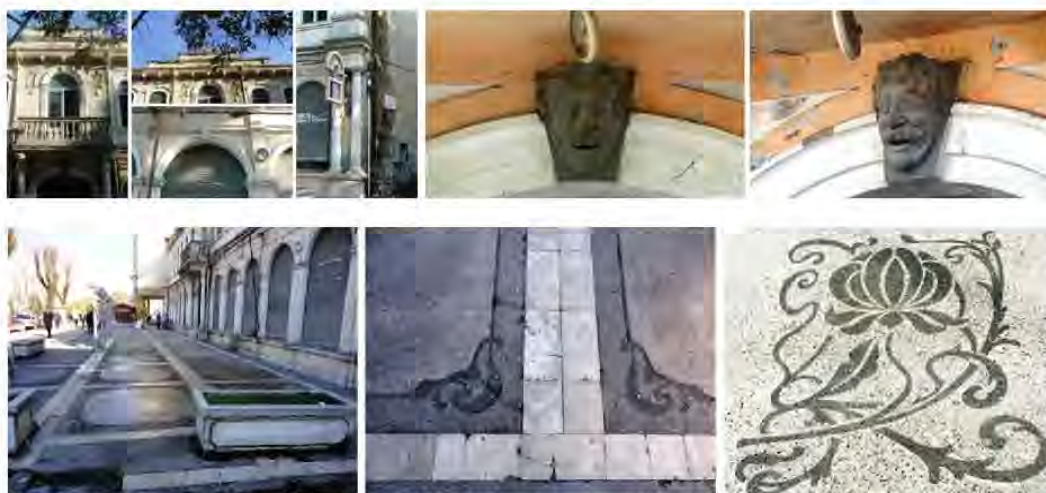


Figure 15. The facade's details; **Figure 16.** "Dionysus", engraved above the main entrance; **Figure 17.** Floral motifs of the square in the front of the "Grand Café". (Source: Author)

Inquiry of the security conditions - Building Pathology. The monument's situation, today, appears amortized and associated with serious injuries in certain parts of it, as follows: ***Retaining structures.*** The building with retaining walls, covered by a roof, is statically stable. The foundations do not exhibit problems of immersion or visible damage. The walls on the ground floor are partially built with stone (width 60 cm) and concrete (width 40 cm), while on the first floor with bricks of the country (width 25 cm), and are statically stable. The concrete columns and arches in the center of the building do not display static problems, but the roof and the floor of the first level, which are amortized, do. The roof, constructed with "roof of the country," is overused. It is covered with "tiles of the country" and partly with corrugated asbestos tile. The floor of the first level is built with wood construction based on metal rails, in the first space (axis 1-2) of the front with dimensions 6.50 m x 26.64 m, and in the second space (axis 2-3) with dimensions: 4.92 m x 25.85 m (Fig. 20). This floor was renovated (in 1986) by reinforcing with metal joist, the part of the floor under the dividing walls of the rooms. A new parquet layer is laid over the existing cover, which is in a bad condition (Fig. 21).



Figure 18. Structural plane of the first floor; **Figure 19.** The pathology of the first floor level. (Source: Author)

Finishes. Finishes, realized with traditional materials, are already amortized and damaged by the time; thus a thorough replacement of them is needed. The exterior plaster is amortized at the rate of 40-60% during the internal plaster, at the rate of 60%. As it can be noticed from the picture that shows the actual state of "Grand Café," a good portion of the wall plaster is fallen, giving an ugly image to the object (Fig. 22, 23, 24). While in the other parts, it has undergone clefts and cracks, making the object appear older and degraded. The decorative elements, such as friezes and frames, are depreciated.



Figure 20. The pathology of the main façade; **Figure 21, 24.** The pathology of the side and back facade (Source: Author)

It is evident the presence of moisture and mold in various parts of the facade. Its would lead to further degradation of it; therefore, the intervention should be immediate. In the side facades, the situation is that bad, that the greatest part of them, after removing the material of the "outfit," is covered with moss (the green color is more than visible). The same degrading factors are found in the other facades of the "Grand Café" too. (Fig. 24). The architectural elements which give monumental character to the "Grand Café," are also damaged by atmospheric agents by losing their white color and turning to gray (Fig. 25). The concern is not only the loss of color, but the loss of identity by formal damage instead. Later it is made possible a special surveying of special elements (architectural survey with the method of successive measurements, and the moisture degradation survey), to see in a more concrete way the construction of architectural elements and their depreciation problems.

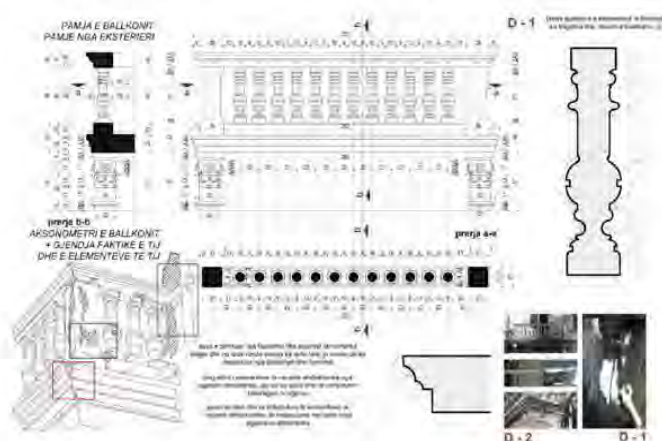


Figure 22. The conditions of the balcony of the main facade and the architectural elements that compose it (Source: Author)

Some of the factors and consequences of facades degradation are shown in Fig. 26. The interior situation, the same as that of the exterior has missed attention, care and consideration for such a long time so numerous gingivitis is noticed. The walls, in most of the cases, are under the effect of moisture. Consequently, the plaster often appears damaged or dropped. It is also noticed the damage of the first floor parquet (the floor, which functioned as a hotel).

The granulated stone tablets on the ground level floor and the wall coverings of the baths with majolica tiles were below the action of moisture and damaged by physical blows. The wooden ceiling of the ground floor, renovated in 1986, is a design with inconsiderable aesthetic value and is already fully depreciated. The granulated stone stairs and the banisters of them are damaged and amortized (Fig. 27). The problem of waste disposal in domestic premises remains a concern. Finally, as the main causes of degradation of the natural object, we can mention¹⁸: - *Physical factors*, such as the creation of ice, changing temperatures, crystallization of salts. - *Chemical factors* such as the presence of water in masonry, acid rains, condensation. - *Biological factors*, such as algae and cyan bacteria, bacteria and fungi, lichens, bird's actions, etc.



Figure 23. Identification of facades degradations; **Figure 24.** Identification interior degradations (Source: Author)

Doors and Windows. The doors, windows and louvers with all their devices, are fully amortized and should be replaced. There are noticed physical,¹⁹ chemical²⁰ and biological²¹ deteriorations, by the geometric survey and the study of the state of degradation of the windows of the hotel (Fig. 28, 29).

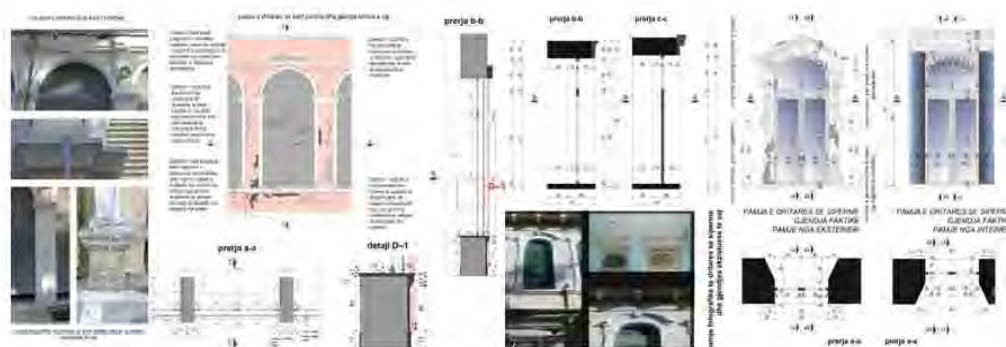


Figure 25. The conditions of the ground floor windows; **Figure 26.** The conditions of the windows of the first floor (Source: Author)

Inquiry of the welfare conditions and construction equipments (systems). As a result of the overall depreciation of the building, the conditions are completely off welfare standards. The thermal insulation is absent, and the doors and windows lack glass, the roof covering and

¹⁸ Marino, L. *Il progetto di restauro. Protocolli operativi*, Alinea 2003.

¹⁹ Cracking, partial fractures of the frameworks.

²⁰ Presence of water in masonry, acid rains, condensation.

²¹ Presence of algae and cyanobacter, bacteria and fungi, lichens, birds actions in the facade.

floors are fully amortized. The electrical system, water supply system and sewerage, heating and ventilation system are completely out of function and should be replaced. The fire protection system does not exist and must be implemented. While the thermal, acoustic insulation and lighting requires significant improvement.

Findings

In the most important phase of the project, in that of the project idea, it should be made a reconciliation of the data collected and analyzed during historical analysis and survey of the facility, with the requirements for the monument preservation and restoration, being translated into architectural drawings. The proposed project idea should be based on the fact that the facility is a First Class Monument, as well as in the data, design task requirements and observations made in the site, by the designer instead. In cooperation and discussion with the client and the Municipality of Shkodra, as an integral part of the process, it is necessary to reflect on the concept of revitalization and further usage of the building. The proposal should solve in principle, the functional organization and the problems of restoration of this building with architectural and historical value. In this aspect, special attention should be paid to the architectural restoration of an existing facility. It has to deal: *Firstly deals* with the restoration and re-evaluation of the surfaces of the existing facility. The architectural project should focus on the functional rehabilitation of the facility, organization of internal spaces and necessary interventions in the existing building in accordance with European standards both in terms of surface quality, as well as comfort and energy conservation. *Secondly*, the restoration project for the entire object presents the construction techniques and forms of intervention in this structure. The intervention program for maintaining the facility ends up with a graphical diagnostic synthesis that should ensure the homogeneous reading of the project. The objective is continuously to read the geometric landscape, the material one, the structure, the type, the level of degradation and technical interventions that will be adopted. Taking into consideration different natures of the problems to be solved, there is a need of differentiation of graphic work organization: on one side: the project of preserving surfaces and materials, and on the other hand: the project of consolidation and technological adaptation. Referring to the historical use as a restaurant and café, and to the design task, the project must maintain the same functional scheme of the existing building, making the necessary changes to improve the safety and comfort, as well as the hygiene. Meanwhile, there should not be made morphological changes, just as it should not be modified the typology or the usage of the facility. *Thirdly*, during the process of intervention, we should keep in mind that a good structural restoration of the "Grand Café" means its return into the identical origin. The study of the static behavior should not be considered different and separated from the architectural restoration, but must be a historical-critical research that has produced the building structure.²² Every aspect, metric or structural serves as evidence to build a historical presence, where the intervention should help and not change the original structural data. The most important thing to do is to act against the pathologies of which the monument "suffers." The appearance of the building should be returned to the previous one, by the necessary interventions. By restoring the existing facades of the building, the friezes and frames, preserving and restoring the main facade and renovating the other ones, with the aim of respecting the elements that constitute architectural and aesthetic value, as well as preserving the integrity of the building. A view of the restored facades and typology of interventions that could be implemented are shown graphically below (Fig. 30, 31, 32, 33).

²² Marino, L. *"Il progetto di restauro. Protocolli operativi"*, Alinea 2003.



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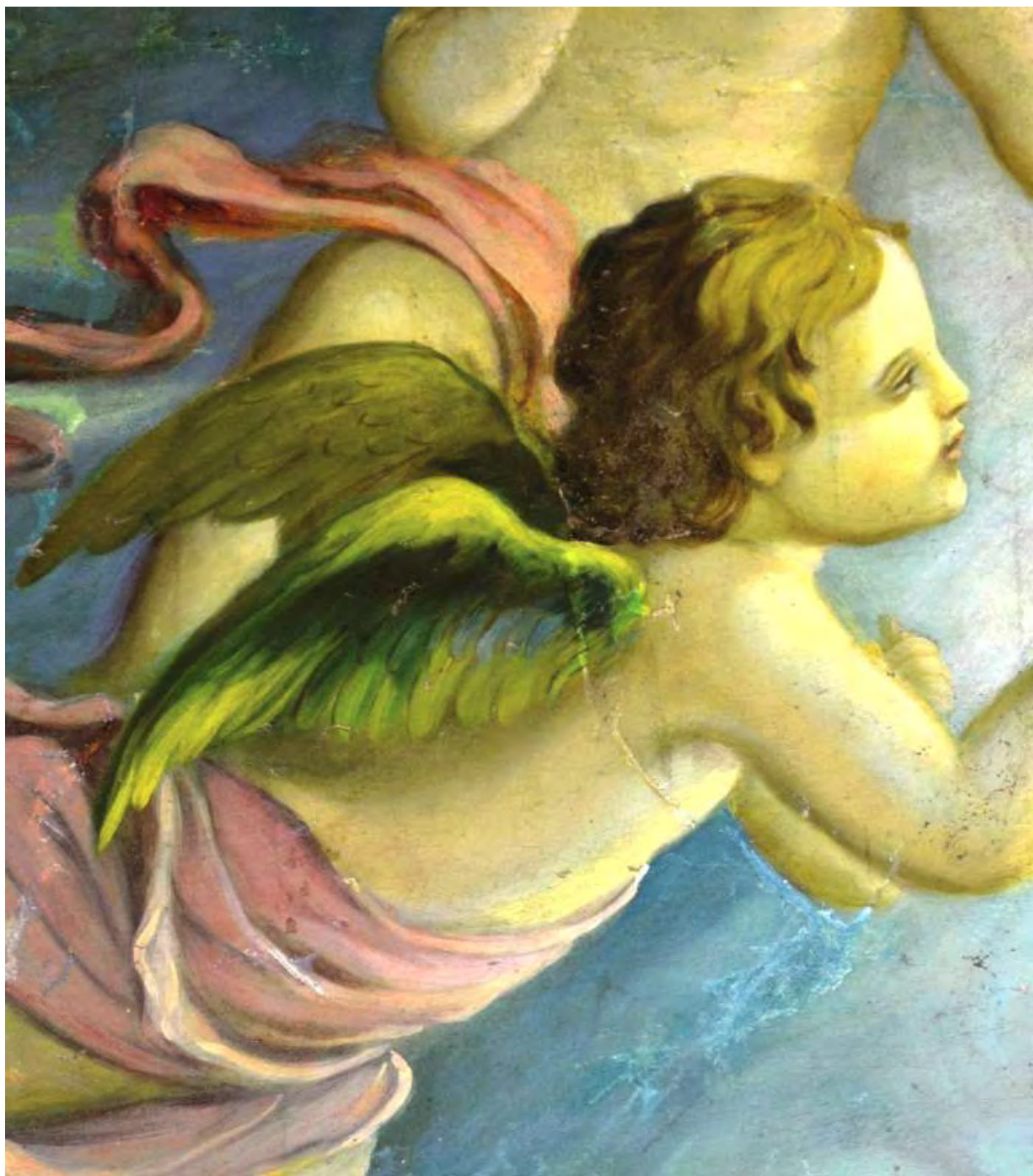














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Godišnjak/Annual 21.3.2015



Multi-identitet kao nadgradnja mono-identiteta

Obzirom da se u demokratskim društvima vlast može definisati kao „vladavina slobodno izabranih predstavnika naroda“, u tom slučaju građani, kao osnovni dio pretpostavki kreacije naroda države sekularnih težnji i uobličavanja jesu i moraju biti činilac integracije unutar interaktivnog oblika mogućih alternativa svijesti. Angažirani umjetnik-građanin u sebi sadrži multi-identitet kao nadgradnju mono-identiteta koji dobija pripadnošću ovoj ili onoj naciji, vjeri, rasi, genderu. To je za angažiranog umjetnika jedini i nadasve inspirativni cilj-pomoći građaninu, kako bi, unutar totalne kreacije sopstvenog bića, stvorio društvo dobrih namjera.

Multi-identity as an upgrade of the mono-identity

Given that in democratic societies, power can be defined as a "rule of freely elected representatives of the people", in this case, the citizens, as a basic part of the assumptions of creations of nations of the state with secular aspirations and shaping up are and should be a factor in the integration of interactive forms of possible alternative to the consciousness. Engaged artist-citizen incorporates multi-identity as upgrade of mono-identity which gets through belonging to this or that nation, religion, race, and gender. It is for engaged artist only and the very inspirational goal-to help citizen in order, within the total creation of its own being, to create the society of good intentions.

Sabahudin Hadžialić

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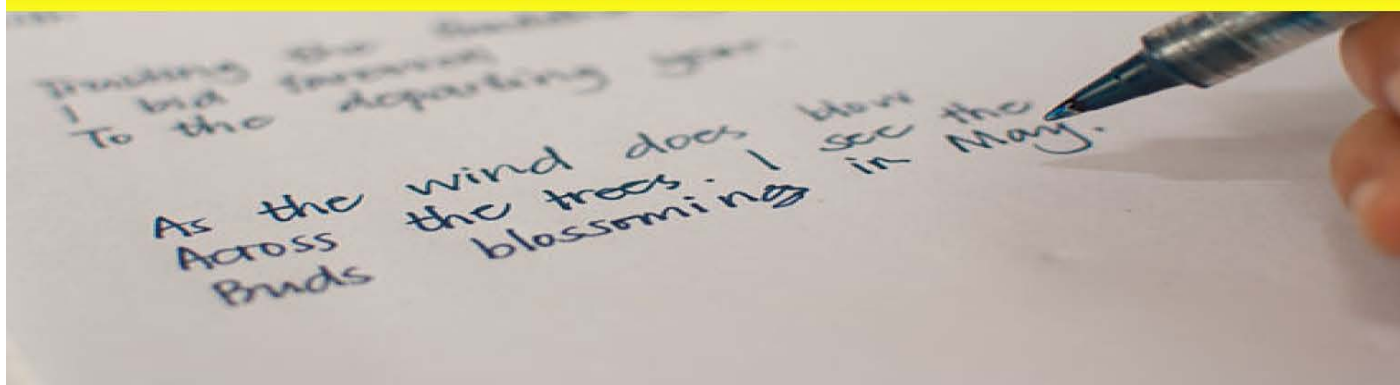
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Iraq



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Kolë Idromeno

