On the medieval architecture chronology of the Black sea Coastal area north in the North Caucasus and the Crimea

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Abstract. During the research we revealed three periods of architectural and building activity activation in the Black Sea coastal area north territory of the North Caucasus and the Crimea. All these periods were connected with the Christianization waves. The first period, the Christian expansion beginning (the VI-IX cc.) is characterized by the Christian objecting role conceptualization development the landscape territorial organization, the mono-apsidal churches and certain types of temples building, mainly within fortresses built according to the classical rules of Vitruvius. In the second period (X-XII cc.) when the existing denominational centers influence was at its peak, the main principle was to follow the temple architecture tendencies of the Byzantine Empire, Armenia, Georgia, for the North Caucasus – Abkhazia. In this period depending from the influence area the basilicas, cross-domed churches, hall churches with post-phoria and an inscribed apsis, mono-apsidal churches of different types were built. In fortification architecture, on the contrary, there was a tendency towards regionalization. The feature of the third period (XIII-XV cc.) is the regional development and the Christian architecture ethnic variants on the population world views religious blending, the fortified settlements creation basis.

Introduction
In VI-XVI cc. we can name three main stages and define their main tendencies in political and economic life of the region. In this period in the North Caucasus and the north of the Black Sea coastal area were taking place the land development processes; this land, being the border between the states of East and West, was of geopolitical interest. The struggle for the trade routes predetermined the constant territorial redistribution and the different national unions creation. Between the VI and the IX cc. the national unions in the basin of the Black Sea (Abkhazia, Zikia, Taurika) and in Ciscaucasia (the KhazarKhaganate) appeared. From the X to the XII cc. strong state and patronymic unions existed throughout the North Caucasus and the North Black Sea coastal area (Alania, Abkhazia, the union of Nakhche, Zikia, Tmutarakan, the city-states of Taurika, Serir and princedoms in Dagestan, the union of Kipchaks in Ciscaucasia). There was an intensive cultural interchange, which promoted the traditional cultures convergence between them. In the XIII - XIV cc. there comes a fragmentation period against the Golden Horde expansion background, which caused ethnogenesis intensive processes and the tendency formation to the individual ethnic groups self-isolation.

From the point of view of the Christianization processes and the Christian architecture formation, the North Black Sea coastal area and the Northern Caucasus have gone through fundamentally different ways of historical development. Moreover, we must admit that there was a period of a strong,
even determining influence of the Christian culture in the North Black Sea coastal area on the North Caucasus church architecture development.

The North Black Sea coastal area and the Northern Caucasus were subjected to the wave-like influence of Christianity spread here within the given period. In this process we can see peculiar activity peaks, most of which were faced by the North Black Sea coastal area population. The bursts of increased missionary activity in the Northern Black Sea area, respectively, belonged to the IV, VI, VIII, X, XI and XIII cc. In the North Caucasus - to the VI, X and XIII cc.

Materials and methods

In this territory Christianity was mainly spread on the Byzantine Empire purposeful state policy basis. In the North Black Sea coastal area, temple building was carried out by the forces and means of the Byzantine Empire itself, its permanent representation took place from the VI to the XII cc. The Byzantine settlements and fortresses construction, the Greek population residence in them, the Byzantine culture penetration, the huge number of monumental temples construction, in which the Greek priests constantly conducted canonical service [1, p. 275 - 276], - all this contributed to the continuous preservation of Christian doctrine here, in a constant form, unaffected by paganism, which we can deduce, first of all, by working with the church architecture monuments. This did not mean the widespread and deep Christianity penetration into the North Black Sea coastal area peoples worldview - the pagan beliefs preservation took place throughout the period under review, and this had an impact on the Greeks living in the North Black Sea coastal area, which is noted in a number of sources in the VII-X cc. However, due to the permanent Greek elite presence of the clergy, preaching canonical Christianity, the phenomenon of parallel coexistence of Christian and pagan cultures was formed here.

The most widespread in the early Christian period (VI - VIII c.) here were basilica temples, which were three-nave buildings, with semicircular or faceted apses, narthex, sometimes exonarthex in the form of an open portico or courtyard, mausoleum, baptismal. In the altar part of the temples there was a ciborium, a rendered pulpit, a synthonon, and a suppository for presbyters. In each city, several basilica temples were built - in the center and in the neighborhoods. They also expanded a few basilicas, built in V c. [2, p. 29]. The Crimea basilica temples researchers note that all these buildings were of the same type, and, in addition, they were decorated with standard marble details, which were brought from Proconnesus in finished form [2, p. 30; 89, pp. 108 - 206]. By the fair remark of A.L. Jacobson, monotony in the Crimean basilicas of the VI c. indicates a lack of local initiative in the temples’ construction [2, p. 30]. However, under the local initiative of A.L. Jacobson means the Chersonites, but there could be another local initiative. On the plans’ comparative analysis basis of the basilicas of Chersonesus, Ravenna, Asia Minor and Constantinople, Jacobson comes to the conclusion that variants of compositions of the Crimean basilicas had Asian Minor origin [2, p. 181 - 184]. However, the masonry feature noted by him - the stone rows alternation with brick layers - corresponds to the Constantinople, not the Asia Minor school, and is the entire North Black Sea coastal area characteristic of this period. In particular the basilica in the village Alahadza in Abkhazia was built using the same masonry. This leads to the conclusion that Constantinople provided the North Black Sea coastal area with funds and construction guilds that trained the local craftsmen (most likely from among the aboriginal population). Compositional ideas could belong to the Greek-Asian clerics who lived there and had close contacts with their homeland.

A different situation has been developed in Abkhazia - here the basilica compositions of temples are distinguished by a bright originality [3, p. 137-191]. Taking into account the fact that, in Constantinople itself, the basilica was not widely spread [766, p. 184], we can assume another reason for the Christian basilica popularity in the North Black Sea coastal area. It was a roomy, monumental and solemn temple meeting the basic requirements for the new faith temple being built in the province. However, all these characteristics could be achieved using simple and affordable means. All the Crimean basilicas lack arched coverings over the naves - it is made in the truss structure. Nuanced corrections of the samples traditional well-established architectural composition did not require a complex creative search by the master. The appearance solemnity was achieved by introducing a rich
The new period between the VI and the IX c. is characterized by the classic approach. Determined by Vitruvius they were built in intersection points of the Black Sea coastal area and trade routes (Chersonesus (V-VI cc.), Anacopia (VI c.), Tsebelda (VI c.), Humara (VII c.). The citadel presence, a line of towers performing the protective function, big open space inside the fortress, Byzantine building technique with the use of plinhti-form brick – are the features of these buildings.

With the connections weakening with the Byzantine Empire in the VIII – IX cc. the determining influence of Christianity, along with other religions, preserved in the North Black Sea coastal area, and contributed to the Christian architecture peculiar variants formation against the background of a decrease in the church construction volume. An important role in this process was played by the emigration waves of Byzantine monks who were exiled to the North Black Sea coastal area. Peculiar variants of cave rock temples appear on the territory of Crimea [4, p. 166 - 179]. In the North Black Sea coastal area mountainous part, in the Abkhazia territory, one-apsis churches began to be erected in the fortresses, the compositional variants of which were quite diverse, due to the creation of the additional premises.

The Christianity spreading methods in the North Caucasus differed from those used in the North Black Sea coastal area. Due the empire representatives’ constant presence impossibility, missionary activity in the North Caucasus was aimed at convincing and gradually adapting the new faith. The permanent presence of Byzantium, the construction of its fortresses and outposts here was impossible, mainly because of the natural landscape features and remoteness from the empire centre. The Greek clergy elite lived only in the centre of the Alan Metropolitanate, and for a very short time (the X- XII cc.) [5, p. 149-150]. From Constantinople they appointed only heads of dioceses and metropolitanates, and even they did not always reach their flock [6, pp.404 - 406]. Their duties included only ordination as a priest, which sometimes took place in Constantinople, Chersonesus, Mtskhet and other Christian centres [7, p. 93 - 106]. Basically, they practised ordination as a priest onsite, candidates were chosen from the indigenous population. These priests, in the absence of Greek mentors, distorted the Christian doctrine dogma [8]. Episodic Christianization contributed to the gradual contamination formation of the Christian and pagan worldview among the population. Each new missionary activity surge, it would seem, should have led to the Christian doctrine canonical foundations actualization, but it superimposed on the already established thinking tradition, which was a bizarre conglomerate of Christian faith and paganism. This was aggravated by the fact that missionary activity was conducted not only by the Byzantine Church representatives, but also by other Christian denominations.

Strong patronymic structures and the conservatism and traditionalism associated with them contributed to the long-term mythological thinking preservation, which in the North Caucasus did not replace paganism with the Christian faith, and not parallel coexistence, as in the North Black Sea.
coastal area, but to combine them and create them historical periods of various types of religious contamination of the worldview, which are reflected in the temple architecture.

The Zigii tribal confederation territory, which was located on the frontier, both in the North Black Sea coastal area and in the Northern Caucasus, was subjected to the Byzantium expansion to a lesser extent than the rest of the North Black Sea coastal area. The sources do not mention the constant presence of representatives of the Byzantine Empire here. The numerous fortresses preserved in the mountainous part of the Black Sea coast of Zigia were attributed by the researchers not to the Byzantine, but to the local fortification art [9, p. 84 - 90; 17]. Although the Zigii eparchy is continuously mentioned in the notifications of the VI-IX cc., the Byzantine church clerics who visited the North Black Sea coastal area tried not to visit Zigia, having a rather unflattering opinion about its inhabitants’ Christian faith strength [10, p. 269]. So the Black Sea territory of Zigia was attributed by us to the North Caucasus, which corresponds to the modern territorial division.

We know of only three monuments from the period of large scale church building under the rule of Justinian in the VI c. – the three basilica temples: in the village Novomikhaylosvkaia in “Kashtany” and “Yuzhnyekultury” of Sochi district [9, c. 90 - 91]. Their remains are Proconnesus marble details and smithereens which define the vast monuments area and the fact that they are the capital building technique examples, which let us consider them typical basilicas of the VI c. built by the empire in the North Black Sea Region. But it was impossible to determine the planning scheme. The one-apsis temples preserved in fortresses, also dated back to the VIII-IX cc. [11] have local identity.

Despite the significant efforts of Byzantium to spread Christianity in the North Caucasus in the VI c. transferring the branches of the Great Silk Way to the mountainous regions, the early Christian temples associated with the Byzantine culture are unknown. This is due to several reasons. The main architectural structures of this time were stone crosses and steles, which were placed in the pagan objects’ traditional location places: on high ground, along roads, on passes, in holy places. In the Caspian regions of Khazaria and in the mountainous regions of the North Caucasus, peculiar versions of churches were erected - open temples-courtyards. Their appearance is probably not connected with the Byzantine preachers’ activities, but due to the Armenian and Albanian churches missionaries’ influence, as in the Caspian regions of Khazaria. The construction of such unique temples is also observed in the Northern Black Sea coastal area territory - in the eastern regions of Abkhazia, not far from the Tsibil fortress.

According to many temples’ liturgical functions researchers [12], in the IX c. with the appearance of a small entrance in the liturgy, it becomes necessary to emphasize the dome space, and the cross-dome composition of the church starts to form in Byzantium. At the same time in the middle of the IX c. Byzantium regains again strong positions in the North Black Sea coastal area: the Chersonesetheme was created - a military administrative district that had a status similar to other Eastern empire themes [13, p. 171 - 173]. In the X c. the most intensive contacts of the North Black Sea coastal area and its main pro- Byzantium outpost, Chersonesus, are established with the states of Asia Minor, as evidenced by many sources, for example, C. Porphyrogenitus: “If there are no products from Amins, Paphlagonia, Vukelarias and from the outskirts of Armeniaki, the Chersonese people will not be able to exist” [13, p. 171]. In the X c. cross-domed compositions started dominating in the Byzantium temple construction and the Asia Minor states, therefore becoming widespread in the North Black Sea coastal area.

The political and economic connections strengthening of Alania and Byzantium in the X c. contributes to the Christianity spread intensification. By this period Alania occupies a huge territory in the uplands of the North Caucasus, inhabited by various Alan tribes. In this regard, in various regions of Alania, the Christianization process and the formation of church architecture had its own characteristics. In the centre of the Alan metropolitanate, located in the immediate vicinity of Abkhazia, thanks to the purposeful state policy of church building, cross-domed temples of the type “free” and “inscribed” crosses are spreading. In the remote mountainous areas, as well as in the western regions, a variety of one-apsis and non-apsis hall churches are formed. In the eastern regions,
located in the Georgian Church influence zone, other, more complex processes of regional variants
Christian architecture forming took place.

In the X c., presumably due to the trade and economic relations intensification with the states of
Asia Minor in the North Black Sea coastal area, the widespread construction of *basilica churches*
began. The basilica type temple is very common in Trebizond [12, p. 113 - 123]. This type first
appears in the North Caucasus - in the western regions of Alania (Illichivsk and Urupskoye
settlements), as well as in the east, in the Nakh tribes residence area. The basilicas emergence in the
eastern regions of the North Caucasus, according to historical and archaeological data, should be
associated with the activities of the Abkhazian, Georgian, and Armenian churches, and not with
Byzantium and the North Black Sea coastal area. Also the successes of the Georgian and Armenian
missionaries should be identified with the flourishing of Christianity and the intensive temple
construction on the Khunzakh plateau (Dagestan). In the XI c. Kartli begins active construction of
temples according to Georgian patterns in the eastern regions (Bedia, Mokvi).

Thus, it can be noted that in the X - XI c. similar processes took place in the North Black Sea
coastal area and the Northern Caucasus Christianization and temple construction. At the same time,
there is a temporal layouts coincidence of the temples common in this period: *cross-domed types of
“free” and “inscribed” crosses, a basilica, a one-apsis church with a prominent apsis, temples with
an inscribed apsis introduced from the territory of Transcaucasia (a church hall with and without
pasto-phoria)*. On this basis, in comparison with these sources, it is possible to assume the North
Black Sea coastal area temple construction determining impact on the Northern Caucasus Christian
architecture in this period. The general trend of X - XII cc. is an active implementation of local state
policy in the field of Christianization and temple construction, aimed at reproducing the patterns
introduced from confessional centres. The consequence of this was the formation, both in the North
Black Sea coastal area and in the North Caucasus, of temple construction features associated with
local development and the Christian culture basic ideas understanding. This was a fundamentally new
phenomenon for the North Black Sea coastal area, and especially for the North Caucasus. In the North
Black Sea coastal area, this tendency was not formed in the previous period due to the Byzantine
power and Byzantine culture strong pressure, and in the North Caucasus due to the Christianization
spontaneous process, the statehood lack and the tendency emergence towards the dual faith formation.

In the designated territory fortification architecture, on the contrary, there are trends towards
regionalization. The fortresses built during this period on the Abkhazian kingdom territory, the
Crimea, Alania are practically incomparable with each other, with the exception of a few basic signs -
the presence of a temple, a citadel, a residential part (Narchkhel, Abkhazia (X-IX c.;) Syunrenskaia
fortress, Crimea, (X c.); Alan fortresses Gilyach, Kyafar, (X-XI c).

In the XIII c. a number of political events — the Tatar-Mongol invasion, the rise of Genoa, the
strengthening of Trebizond and the intensification of its church activities in the North Black Sea
coastal area and the North Caucasus, as well as the mass migration of Armenians to the Crimea —
contribute to the temple architecture various patterns introduction in the region. In the XIII - XV cc. in
the North Black Sea coastal area, very few churches were built, mainly the temples of Armenian
immigrants, who formed in the Crimea a peculiar variant of Armenian church architecture based on
the mutual influence of introduced and existing patterns of temple architecture. During this period, in
connection with the Muslims expansion in the North Black Sea coastal area, unique variants of self-
isoilation by means of architecture were formed — the cave temples of the Byzantine church became
popular again: during the XIII-XIV c. in the Crimea, in the region of Mangup, there is the principality
of Theodoro [7, p. 93 - 106]. In the newly built Armenian churches in the territory of the Crimea, more
attention is paid to the internal architectural appearance of the churches with deliberately strict and
stingy external forms.

In the fortification architecture of this period, there is a tendency towards the fortified settlements
construction in the North Caucasus (Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan) and the
“modernization” of the existing fortification sites in the North Black Sea coastal area.
Summary
The analysis of the factors listed above in comparison with the preserved monuments made it possible to determine the historical periodization of the temple construction in the North Caucasus from the VI to the XIV cc., one of the features of which is the lack of direct continuity between the architectural compositions of different periods temples. The samples from confessional centers that had been actively introduced with one or another wave of Christianization represented a certain stage in the Eastern Christian architecture compositional schemes formation, but in the North Caucasus, due to the Christianization process discontinuity, the intermediate compositional schemes did not take place. The second feature is the certain compositional schemes “lagging” tendencies absence, which is usually characteristic of provincial architecture. However, in the North Caucasus, the beginning of a new wave of Christianization each time contributed to the emergence of new compositional schemes, sometimes in line with the capital’s tendencies, and sometimes emerging under the predominant influence of internal processes.

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