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THE ORNAMENTAL SYMBOLISM OF THE WOODEN CHURCHES FROM BANAT

SIMBOLISTICA ORNAMENTALĂ A BISERICILOR DE LEMN DIN BANAT

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***Abstract**: These wooden churches are situated on today Timis and Caras-Severin counties. Now in Banat have been kept only 28 wooden churches-concentrated in the north-east of Banat around Faget and Lugoj. One of the representative wooden churches is "Cuvioasa Paraschiva" from the village Batesti, situated on the road E70 Timisoara-Lugoj, Lugoj DN68 Faget, Faget Batesti Dc113.*

***Key words:** symbolism, ornamental, church, Banat, Băteşti*

INTRODUCTION

The wooden churches from the south-west of Romania are representative monuments of the cultural patrimony of Banat County. These wooden churches are situated on today Timis and Caras-Severin counties. Now in Banat have been kept only 28 wooden churches-concentrated in the north-east of Banat around Faget and Lugoj. (1)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Cultural tourism has been practiced since always, but today it is becoming an industry, alongside mountain, spa and institutional, literary, religious tourism. There are so many forms of tourism as many fields there are, out of which religious tourism is being in the subject of discussion, a form of tourism debated in this paper to fulfil a dream-making acquaintance with religious art of XV century.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. DISTRIBUTION AREA AND HISTORICAL DATING

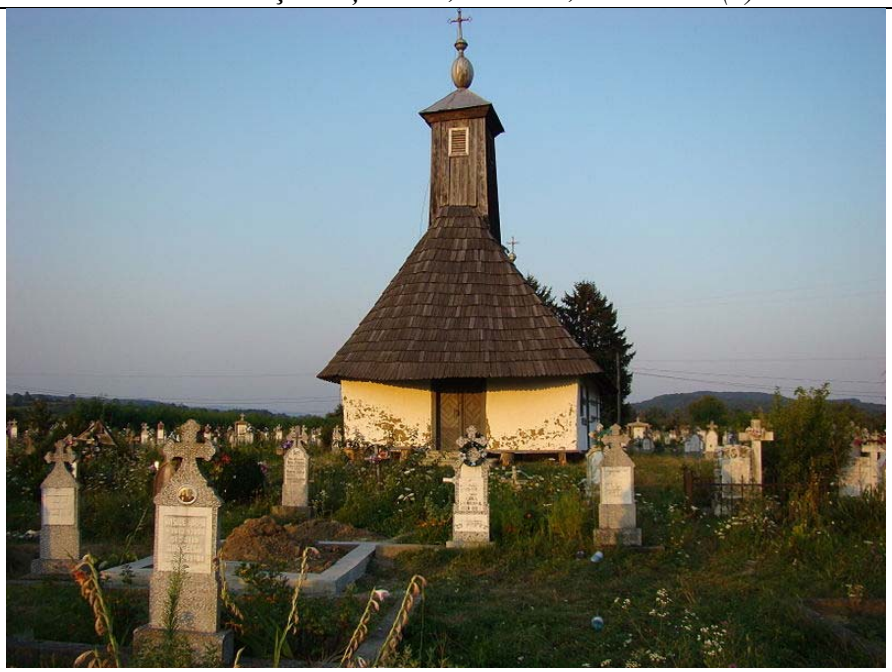
These wooden churches are situated on today Timis and Caras-Severin counties. Now in Banat have been kept only 28 wooden churches-concentrated in the north-east of Banat around Faget and Lugoj. The rest of the territory contains some isolated wooden churches; there are two of the churches in Calina and Iersig (Caras –Severin County) and some scattered churches in the fields of Banat at Cebza, Hezeris si Căpăt (Timis County).

The geographic and economic specificity of the region, and memory or privileged past may explain the maintenance of the tradition in terms of the wooden churches building. With few exceptions, the religious buildings studied were built in 18th century. (1)

2. MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

The wooden churches' material from Banat was identical to those used to build houses clothing in the area. The main building materials used were: earth, wood and stone. Earth set up an insulating layer under; his role was to protect space inside the monuments against weather, especially in cold season. Some churches built in barn after massive oak system "blockbau" have been plastered on the subsequently level of earth from outside (Crivobara, Margina (fig.1), Povergina). Beaten earth was the original floor of the wooden churches from Banat. (1)

During the renovations and repairs of these two buildings Cosevita and Jupanesti, the floor of the beaten earth was replaced in most cases by the floor of boards. Places of worship which are the subject of our study are constructed entirely of wood. Construction material was provided by the vast forest in hilly and mountainous eastern half of the Banat. The river stone carving constitutes the foundation of wooden churches in the Banat Mountains. The corners are fixed on larger boulders, and stone underfoot squabbled with clay mixed with chopped straw. The rock was collected from rivers. (3)



Wooden Church Margina (fig.1)

3. THE ARCHITECTURAL AND PLASTIC SCENE

Painting kept in wooden churches from Banat Mountain proves to be attached to the tradition of Byzantine art. Pictorial ensembles of wooden churches keep traditional art forms related to Byzantine painting. With the establishment of Habsburg rule in Banat (1718), painting wooden churches Banat iconographic types and gradually assimilated the stylistic language specific to the Baroque and Neoclassicism Western art. In most cases, Banat mountain village communities have supported, from the point of view, works of painting. (3)

Through its reports to the Byzantine tradition, but also advances the time, painting wooden churches in the Banat mountain lies on the border between the Orthodox tradition of moralizing and didactic Enlightenment thinking

"It betrays a slow but irreversible integration of rural communities in the atmosphere of Greater Europe Banat, under the influence of Reason and Enlightenment ideology."(1)

4. WOODEN CHURCH "CUVIOASA PARASCHIVA" FROM THE VILLAGE BĂTEŞTI (fig.2)

On Vădana river valley, two kilometres east of town Faget lays the village Batesti**,** attested since 1554. The wooden church of the village (town has a new brick church), dedicated to"Cuvioasa Paraschiva", was moved here from a settlement now extinct, Veța next Faget. It happens around the middle of the eighteenth century. (Dating the place of worship is between the XV-XVIII centuries). (2)

The edifice is built of massive oak beams, carved and joined dovetail, no trace of metal nails. There are artistry joints on the western portal, decorated with carvings and solar motifs, wolf's tooth, and a low door, carved from one piece of oak wood width of 0.90 m. South portal access door has a high, decorated with inlaid panels and forged metal targets. Old windows are small openings just 0.35 / 0.25 m. The windows are newer and slightly larger size due to the extension of the church made another 3 m in 1858. Porch is supported by four carved pillars. The narthex is the ceiling board and the nave, all from the boards, is vaulted "a boutte". The coverage of the altar brings a brick church architecture. On the east and south walls are hung small votive crosses. (2)

The iconography is generally known and used in the wooden churches from Banat. Old painting is kept only at the altar and the nave vault. As shown by an inscription in Cyrillic in the nave, it belongs to the famous painter from Banat-Gheorghe Diaconovici. (1)

The floors of the place of worship are pine plank fixed to the beams. The roof is shingled, restored from 1979 to 1980. Steeple above the narthex has two windows on each side and is adorned with a baroque-inspired bulbous finished with a metal cross. (2)

The church was once endowed with icons, old books of worship and liturgical instruments. This heritage has been transferred to the inventory of the local church, the Metropolitan of Banat and collections of the Romanian Academy. (2)



Wooden Church Batesti (fig.2)

Visiting the lens is on request. Please contact the local parish priest.

Accessibility: E70 Timişoara Lugoj Lugoj DN68 Făget, Făget Bătești Dc113. (2)

CONCLUSIONS

Preserved wooden churches in Banat are based on an ancient construction technique, sent over dozens of generations. (1)

Banat wooden churches have a structure consisting of rock and sometimes even a little deep foundation of the same material. The rocks that make up the foundation sat in the corners. The foundation stone of the churches is observed in Batesti, Cosevita, Crivina de Sus, Curtea, Dubesti, Jupânesti, Margina, Poieni, Povergina, Românesti si Topla.(1)

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