

Fig. 5. The presence of Graphic boards emphasize on horizontally oriented churches. Ananuri Church. Georgia. Photo: Zohreh Shirazi, Archive of NAZAR research center, 2013.

Endnote

1. <http://www.iranpress.ir/farhang/template1/News.aspx?NID=32> access date 1/7/1392 (2013).
2. Rhizome is the secondary roots of plant which grows in the middle distances of it. A Rhizome is the secondary root of plant that grows in the middle distances of the main road. A plant with rhizome grows horizontally and the stem lies underground. Gilles Deleuze, the French philosopher in his book, "A Thousand Plateau" (A Thousand Smooth Surface), published it along with his friend Felix Guattari, has repeatedly referred to the metaphor of the rhizome. He said: there are two kinds of thinking, rhizomatic thinking and arbolic thinking. He said the arbolic thinking represents the philosophy of existence (and stagnation), while the rhizomatic thinking is dynamic and plural, and there is no boundaries of line thinking in it. The rhizome thinking is against common focusing and discipline. Indeed, it values the multiplicity and by connecting many various cultures together makes a new connection.

Reference list

- Ahmadi, B. (2005). *Modernity and Critical Thought*, Fifth Edition. Tehran: Nashr-e Markaz Publishing Co.
- Demi, R. & Street, S. K. (2003). Din, sisatmadaran va dolat [Religion, Politicians and Government]. Translated by S. Naderi Farsani. *The journal of Farhang-e Omumi*, (34): 49-56.
- Ershad, M. (2001). *Andishe-ha-ye falsafi dar payan-e hezare-ye do: goft-e goo ba Dr. Mohammad Zeimaran* [Philosophical at the end of the second millennium: Talk to Dr. Mohamed Zeimaran], Tehran: Hermes Publications.
- Ghezelsoufa, M. T. (2003). Art and Politics. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (9 & 10): 234- 213.
- Ghobadian, V. (2007). *Mabani va mafahim dar meamari-ye moaser-e gharb* [Principles and Concepts in Contemporary Architecture in West], Tehran: Publications Office of Cultural Studies.
- Jamadi, S. (2009). Sanat-e farhang va resaneha-ye tekniki [Culture Industry and Technical Media], *the Journal of Ettela'at Hekmat va Ma'refat*, (4 row 40): 9-14.
- Nazari, M. (2003). Payamad-ha-ye control-e rasmi-ye din va farhang [The control Implications of Religion and Culture], *the journal of Baztab-e Andishe*, (43).
- Powell, J. (2000). *Postmodernism for beginners*. Translated and edited by H. A. Nozari, Tehran: The Cultural research institute of Nazar printing and publishing.
- Shariati, A. (1998). *Mazhab aleih-e mazhab* [Religion against Religion], Tehran: The Publication of Chap-Paksh.
- Steakhouse, M. (1995). *Religion and Politics, Proceedings of Culture and Religion: Selected Papers from the Encyclopedia of Religion*, Translated by M. Asaadi, Tehran: Tarh-e no.

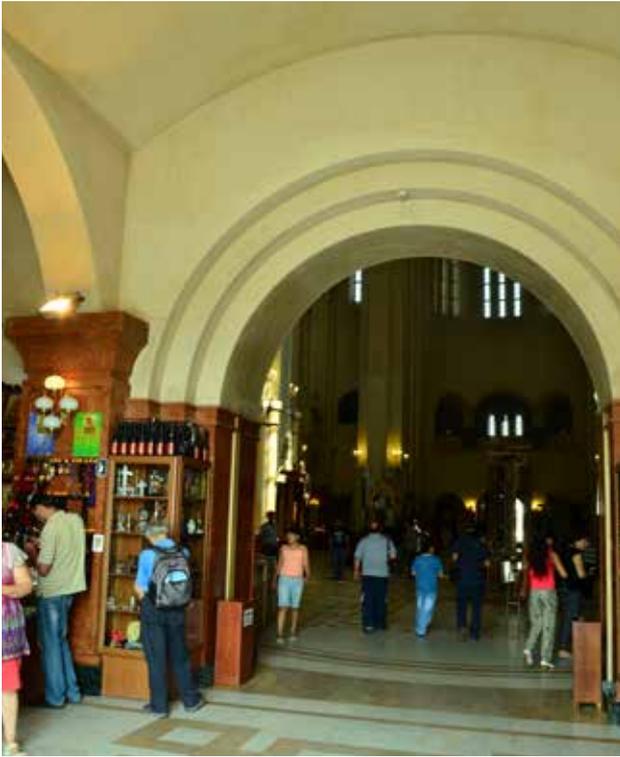


Fig. 3. The presence of cultural products shops induces a museum and exhibition space in churches. Holy Trinity Cathedral of Tbilisi, Georgia.

Photo: Zohreh Shirazi, Archive of NAZAR research center, 2013.

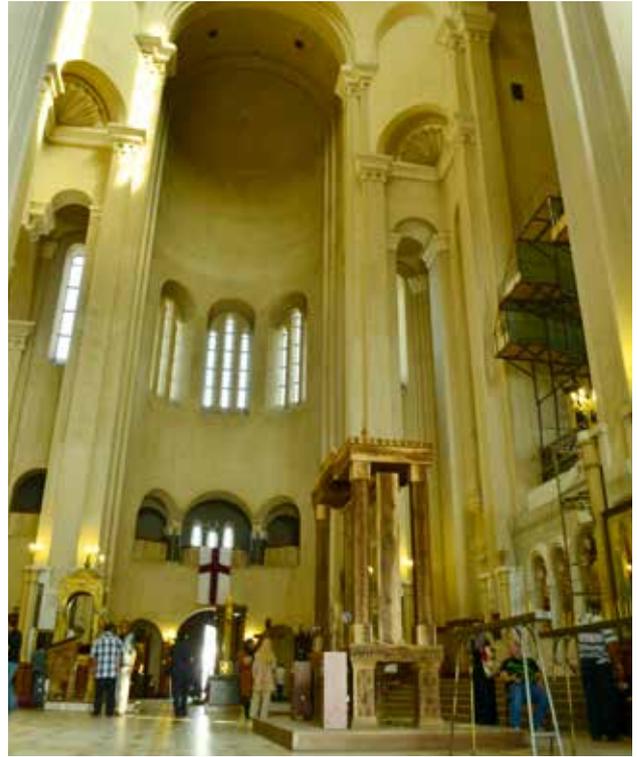


Fig. 4. A Contemporary approach of horizontalism against verticalism in Gothic churches in Georgia. Holy Trinity Cathedral of Tbilisi, Georgia

Photo: Zohreh Shirazi, Archive of NAZAR research center, 2013.

while tree, as a symbol of vertical orientation is seeking the consolidation and existence of itself, the rhizome², the symbol of horizontal orientation, is continuously searching for re-shaping itself. According to the rhizome model, being purposeless and accidental, cause everything be similar and values the same. What can be surely deduced from this transformation is the verification of the aesthetics order of vertical decoration in the historic Georgian Church that has been replaced by

a new style. The transformation carries special meaning covering the aim of the article, the confirming of transformation in decorating of churches in Georgia.

The ordering of painting frames and graphic boards, the separator of Altar, are the characteristic of Georgian Orthodox Church, represent the horizontal space that can be partially justified by the idea of underground rhizomes focusing on the human, earthly thoughts (Fig. 5).

Conclusion

The Georgian government with the help of religion and the support of church tries to control culture into industry. The church in this process is a media which is trying to attract the tourists and pilgrims for entertaining. It seems that the Georgian government policy aims to promote tourism in the economy and is effective in the creation of this role. The decoration of churches, particularly legendary examples which are managed by the government, as a promo and demo

product, resemble this policy by carrying the frame-based, temporary characteristics and being at the sight of observers and the mentioned horizontally oriented.

Converting the church into a neutral medium emphasizing on customs and related rituals, with the purpose of improving tourism and economic benefit, in addition to making it far from its origin, has turned it into an object resourceful toward destroying the traditional religion.



Fig. 2. Visit the church Instead of pilgrims. Bagraty Church. Georgia.
Photo: Zohreh Shirazi, Archive of NAZAR research center, 2013.

of space or place for the pilgrims privacy and having to watch the wall frames, the church spirituality been replaced by the sense of the museum; the frames with object and commodity function, create a religious culture industry for people. Here, the concept of the mass can be borrowed from one of the theorists of the Frankfurt School.

According to “Adorno”, mass is not that kind of freedom arising from the liberal democracy, the creator of the varied and spontaneous ideas, but it is a deceived, commoditized uniform agglomeration, working as a tool for culture industry ideology (Jamadi , 2009: 11). The culture in terms of the mass culture industry is defined as a mass culture that is produced and reproduced by the technical media (here: the church) alongside the Integralism. The culture industry from the perspective of Adorno is not a prominent per se, but against, it is a distractor of philosophy, art, and everything that is principled and great. Adorno considers this cultural decadence as a form of fascism (Ibid: 12). In general, the framed painting of Georgian churches that form the main decoration of them are sort of cultural goods with exhibitiv features but not narrative one given them the characteristic of being temporary and reproducible.

The Icons of saints that onetime were the human interface with God, in the process of commodification been captured by object individuation (Fig.1). More-

over, the church has turned into a place of entertainment because of these frames, hereupon the people go to the churches to visit theme instead of doing meditation or religious ceremony (Fig.2). Furthermore, the shops with cultural products at churches in Georgia have intensified the exhibition sense of atmosphere and the media sense of them (Fig. 3).

Horizontally Oriented Decorations in Church

There is no vertical orientation of the Gothic, as a symbol of the universe hierarchy, at the churches of Georgia, but we are witnessing the horizontally oriented [decorations] which are emphasized by the rows of painting frames (See Fig. 4). Some features of horizontally oriented [designs] can be seen in the contemporary theories of philosophers such as “Deleuze” as well. These philosophers reject the vertical, tree-like and western rationality based center hierarchy. According to them, there is no priority in this world. Everything is lied alongside with other things, no ideology is preferred over another, no interpretation is above and beyond the other, everything is horizontal (Ghobadian, 2007: 152). Deleuze believes that art and literature seek no aim but understanding and drawing the life considering them as a tool of tracking and receiving the veins of life (Ershad, 2001: 188). Powell (2000: 117) says that

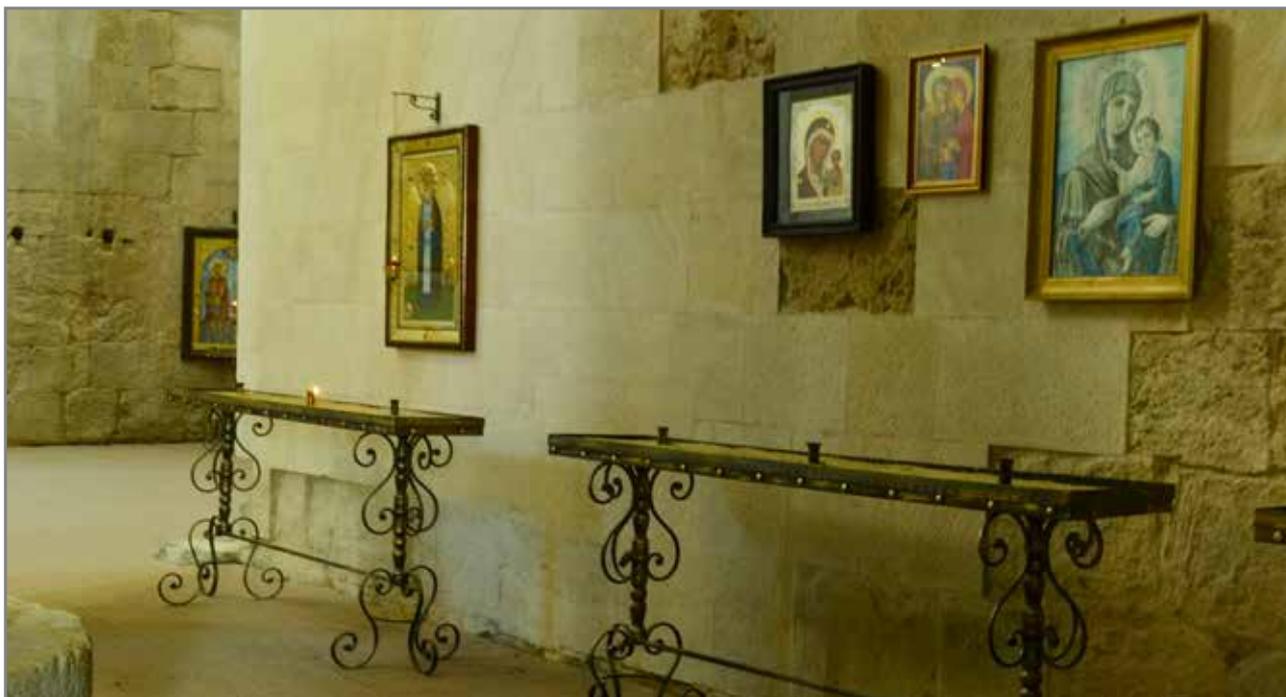


Fig. 1. The picture frames painted in the church as a cultural commodity. Bagraty Church, Georgia.
Photo: Zohreh Shirazi, Archive of NAZAR research center, 2013.

nor headed to respect for cultural norms but in contrast they led to the weakening of them. It seems that the government intervention in cultural issues such as religion and art has caused harm to the community in this country: The footprints of Georgian identity with the well-known historical background are fading. The lever of power in Georgia by generating concepts and norms has made a political culture through its constituent elements including art and religion. In this situation, the religion has been turned into a contrivance for gaining more power and wealth and has given authenticity to the religious shapes that finally led to drawing it into the sideline.

Church as a Media, a Means of Mass Culture

The seemingly enlightened wisdom action of the governments could be resulted in recent crises that the outbreak of practical and instrumental aspects could be the consequences of this kind of view. The instrumental rationality is following the domination of nature... and the qualitative distinctions of its elements are considered worthless. Since the science is incapable of understanding the distinction, inevitably associate itself with technological needs (in order to make a tool) and follow it.... And the culture has diminished to culture industry (Ahmadi, 2005: 133). The main product of this industry is the creation of mass culture. Today,

the state of Georgia with the aim of building a modern, western culture is going to create a new identity for Georgia. Although the religion could make a culture, but in the modern state of Georgia, the religion is not protected; it has distanced from its originality and the “religious culture” has turned into the “religious culture industry”. One of the tools of the culture industry is media and we are witnessing that in Georgia, the church has become a media and entertainment for the modern culture. In other words, the modern religious culture as an industry is generated in Georgia by means of the church as a media with the aim of influencing the masses.

Commodification of the Church and its Decorations

When the Church is a medium, the religious beliefs are reduced into rituals and repeated behaviors, which are remarkably old and ancient tradition and has become a cultural commodity by taking the place of the cultural heritages. The commodification is a consequence of the dominance of the capitalist system of exchange. The masses in this game are so mesmerized that it seems they themselves like to be deceived. In the Georgian churches, in particular the historical Churches, it is difficult to distinguish tourist from pilgrims. At these kind of churches because of the lack

Introduction

Politics is defined as monopolizing, organizing and exploiting the power in a region, country or community (Steakhouse, 1995). With respect to this definition, of course, the state governments are the main link between politics and society in the modern world. Today the Republic of Georgia by joining the Europe Union and taking the policy of moving toward westernization has prompted the government to take decisions which are visible among the religious and artistic institutions and communities across the country. In the meantime the nature of the Church as the bedrock of religious art and rituals that convey the implications are in trouble with the current policy. "Ghezelsofla" in "Art and Politics" states that in the modern era, apart from the history link of art and religion appearing in the form of church and government politics, the mentioned inter-

action and reciprocity has found an obvious interaction (Ghezelsofla, 2003). Politics in the form of government and government institutions uses the arts and religion media to convey the special meanings and concepts to the society, as we are witnessing that this imposed politicization could lead to distortions of art and reducing its aesthetic dimension. Art at this position play a practical and purposeful role for government, government agencies and other social classes in a civil society. Since art and religion are influencing factors, politics use them for its durability therefore they are in the service of politics and almost find credential role. Reading out the contemporary politics of the Georgian churches as a symbol of a religious- art body in general concept to identify the dominant approach in the decoration of the church is the main objective of this paper.

Hypothesis: The policy of decoration in today's management of Georgian church follows a commodity and manifestation approach.

Religion as a Tool

"Demi Ross" of his studies on how politics behaves in different countries, believes that all of them follow a common theme and content: relations between religion and politician from one side and religion and the governments from the other side. He believes the politician to legitimate their activities and also appeal the poll and attract the voters on one side take advantage of the religious theme in their political advertising and campaigns but on the other side by coming to the power, the same religious issues would be considered a hindrance to the management activities of the government by the authorities and will attempt to eliminate it.

Although some countries have the separation law of religion and politics (as in Georgia), but this type of separation is considered as a conventional issue and ordinary concern as well.

Religious states are not explicitly considered at this point, but instead the state religions are most addressed here, in which the government sought to control religion which leading to the form of coup against it and cause the government to promote it and to neutralize it as an independent power base, hereupon, the religious foundation could be attached to the government automatically as well as other governmental bodies and will lose its independent power base¹. The religious show-off and the selective misuse of it have historically

been and are going on. A commercial use of religion as a tool has occurred and the governance has returned to popular believes in order to gain and maintain the power, expand autocracy and to create a political repression. This is the same religion that doctor "Ali Shariati" refers to it in his book named, "Religion against Religion" as the "Religion of Atheism". He believes that this kind of religion has always been there since the beginning of human social history and its trustees have constantly been trying to exploit the people by keeping them in material and spiritual poverty (Shariati, 1998).

According to this view and based on the field evidences it seems the religion in Georgia has found an instrumental role that has been spread out to art areas as well. Since this article focuses most on church decoration, therefore the church is considered as the intersection of art and religion.

Churches, a Political Tool to Control the Culture

Having the experience of being in Georgian society this feeling could be perceived that this country is facing with the consequences of controlling the culture and religion. According to the field evidences, the church in Georgia as the representative of the religion and art has distanced from its basic content model. On the surface, it may be regarded as the legitimate government, but in practice it has become a tool of controlling the culture. The governmental control in underdeveloped countries such as Georgia neither led to reinforcement of the principles of religious behavior

The Contemporary Approach to Decorating of Churches in Georgia

Padideh Advand

Ph.D candidate in Art Research, University of Al-Zahra,
Faculty member at NAZAR research center,
padideh_advand@yahoo.com

Abstract

Decoration, arisen from the designer thinking is a context that enables achieving the semantic foundations dominating the creation and organization of them through reading it. The types and styles of church decoration are capable of exhibiting the philosophy, ideology and approach which govern it.

The decoration of churches in Georgia bearing different approaches; with an obvious alteration in patterns comparing to the those of ancient time, these decoration in Georgia today are faced with a commodity and showing approach displaying the icons of saints which can be found in the form of additional frames.

The decorations represent several features: 1) no communication is appeared with the former patterns neither are complementary to them but combined horizontally with an independent identity; 2) Considering that the additional frame is capable of accepting the low and high amount without any need to define the predetermined level, has found a temporary

way; 3) The frames are displayed as individual museum objects unrelated to the context; 4) Are not celestial and bring no aspect of greatness.

In addition to this politic, the way of managing the church adds a demonstrating aspect to it. The existence of book stores and cultural products and the lack of a dedicated space for worship increase the exhibition mode of the church. The local people are confined to perform the rituals such as the consecration of the frames, lighting the candles and doing baptism as there is no space in the church for their privacy. The demonstrating and commodity approach governing the churches today declares the content of government policy in relation to religion and its role in society today. In other words, in Georgian politics, the church management with media functions and something objective to attract the audience has converted the spiritual atmosphere of the church into an exhibition mode.

Keywords

Georgia, Decorating, Church, Demonstrating approach, Museum approach.