

BYZANTINE ART IN EPIRUS

Few words about Byzantine art

Byzantine art is an artistic production and expression that developed during the period of Byzantine Empire between the 4th century and the Fall of Istanbul in 1453. Byzantine art is considered to be born initially in the capital of the Empire, Istanbul, but expanded in the largest part of the Mediterranean world and east to Armenian. There was a result of the interaction both of the ancient Greek tradition and the Eastern influence and religiousness. With the predominance of Christianity, the byzantine style is characterized by the elements of a religious art, whose purpose isn't the search of beauty and harmony, but the internality, the symbolism and the submission of religious excitement.

Byzantine art reached the highest level of creative power and it's originality bequeathed long-term valued works to humanity. Byzantine art came from the fertile conjunction of the Greek-Roman tradition and Eastern influences and the new religious reality, Christianity. However, it developed a unique and distinct personality. It presents a huge interest from historical aspect, as it reflects with clearness the composition of the byzantine civilization.

Byzantine art is divided in many categories:

- ~ Architecture
- ~ Sculpting
- ~ Painting
- ~ Miniatures (from ivory, gold and silver)
- ~ Music

In Epirus, byzantine art is depicted from:

A)CHURCHES

The Parigoritissa

It was constructed in 1285-89 from Nikiforos A' Komnenos Doukas and his wife. Only the the High Altar , the temple and 16 cells are saved in our times from the huge cruciferous monastery. The temple impresses with its external and internal architectural innovation. Moreover, the cannon is unique in the way the dome is supported.



St. Theodora

The temple of the patron saint of Arta and a pillar are the only preserved sections of the monastery founded in the 13th century by the queen of Despotatos Theodora in honor of St. George and functioned as a women's monastery. After the death of her husband, Theodora spent the rest of her life in the monastery, buried there and the temple was honored in her name.



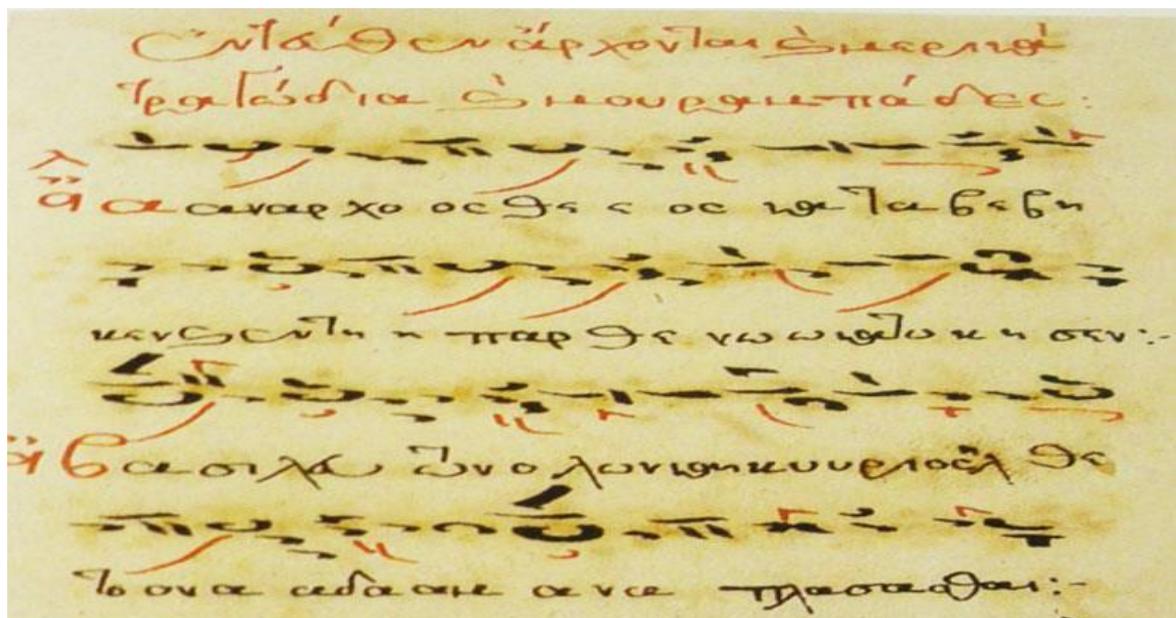
St. Mary of Vlacherna

It was founded at the end of the 11th century as a three-aisled vaulted basilica and was transformed into a dome in the middle of the 13th century by Michael II Doukas Komnenos. It was named after the Virgin of the Vlacherna in Istanbul.



B) BYZANTINE MUSIC

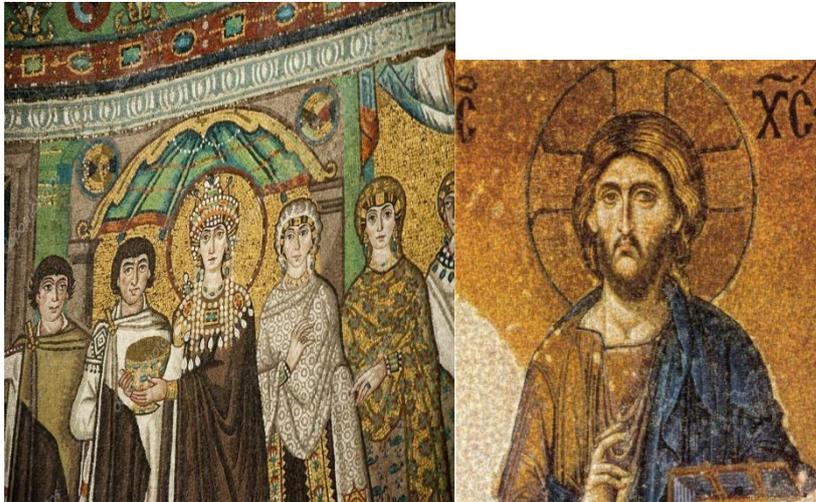
Byzantine music is an important branch of byzantine art. It resembles the European music as it has 7 notes (Νη, Πα, Βου, Γα, Δι, Κε, Ζω). Moreover it has 8 different scales (α', β', γ', δ', πλάγιος α', πλάγιος β', βαρύς, πλάγιος δ') in each of them some of the notes obtain different tonic value. In Epirus, byzantine music is notably developed. There are several significant hymn writers here and their work is recognized and appreciated not only from the Greek public but also from acknowledged spiritual men abroad.



C) BYZANTINE PAINTING

Byzantine painting is divided in the following categories:

Mosaics/ Marquetries , Wall Paintings , Pictures



Particularly in our village Thesprotiko, a sample of byzantine painting are the beautiful wall paintings of the village's central church St. Mary Labovitissa dedicated to the Birth of Virgin Maria. The church dates back to 1794, time that Ali Pashas of Ioannina reigned the region and is an element of cultural heritage both of the village and Epirus.



Here is a sample of byzantine paintings in our church. The following pictures are :

~ Part of the Second Advent



~ Metamorfosis



~ Jesus in the boat



~ The pray of Jesus in the Olive tree mountain



~ The Death of Virgin Mary



In conclusion, byzantine art in Epirus is developed in all of its sections and has affected varyingly the today everyday life of the people that live in it.