

Public Building and Urban Identity in Durres (I-IV Century A.C.)

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Abstract

The main purpose of this presentation is to review the lost of identity of Dyrrah habitants after roman conquer in century I B.C., reflected in public buildings. In the public building of Durres are made some excavations from albanian archeologist, that have explore the public buildings in Durres how amphitheatre, public Thermea, aqueduct and the lighthouse.

The new excavations have permits a new interpretation for the impact of these monuments in Durres with arrivals of the roman colonists. With installments of the colonists in Dyrrah start to penetrate the roman culture. After founding the colony the mean of organization of monumental space change. Now, the city starts to adapt requests and gusto of the colonists.

The colonists that established in Dyrrah have roman culture, traditions, morals, government system, mode of life, religion and form of city organization. When come in Dyrrah they brings all these and start to practices in the new Colony. This paper intended to study the space where these monuments are placed and the impacts to native habitants with hellene culture.

KEYWORDS: amphitheatre, public therme, aqueduct, lantern, lost identity.

Public buildings and Local identity

The public buildings are the magnificent structures that were constructs in the city for looked from visitors, citizens, traders etc. Therefore, the public buildings were considered important: they created an identity for the locals. In spite of, the public buildings manifests the respect of the habitants for the Gods. Some public structures were associated with religious aspect such the temples, theatre, amphitheatre, basilica and macellum (the market). After all, these structures haven their laic aspect. These structure are construct from the local govern of the city or by a single person that have a position and a prestige to the society, where his name settle in upper part of the build. The public buildings give the habitants of Dyrrah an image of his status in rapport with other persons, the state and the Gods. For example, on occasion of a religion ceremony the person with diverse status haven different posts for sits. So, these builds have a role for indicated the power, the traditions, the ideology and the identity of the society that has constructs. In Dyrrah, the public buildings are e expression of the identity and the ideology of the habitants during the Roman Period.

Dyrrah is made a roman colony in the end of I century B.C., in period when Octavian Augustus was the Princeps of Rome. The name of Dyrrah colony is knowledge by inscriptions finds to the tube that distributes the drinking water in the city. Dyrrah is named: *Coloniae Juliae Augustae Dyrrachinis*¹. Establishment of roman veterans in the city cause a conflict with the native habitants and produce

¹Lida Miraj. 1991, p. 250-251.

changes in the city. The first age of colony, the monumental space of Dyrrah don't change according to requests of new community. The public buildings that are found in Dyrrah, all are dated in II century A.C., that indicate that the process of Romanization wasn't rashly and immediate, at least so indicate us the public buildings because they are constructed two centuries before Roman conquer the city. Perhaps the inhabitants of Dyrrah, with a developed culture, have resisted the Romanization for two centuries. One of Roman family colonies that established in Dyrrah is the family Aemilius, this is testified from the inscriptions that are found in the graves discovered in Roman cemetery of Dyrrah².

With establishment of Roman colonists in Dyrrah start to penetrate the Roman culture. After founded the Roman colony the organization of the monumental space start to change. Now the city to adapt colonists requests. This must not be expected good from the existing inhabitants and caused certain conflicts. The nature of the conflicts was in controversy form because in Dyrrah in all Roman period don't happen revolt or rebellion. So, Dyrrah inhabitants accept the new situation that was created. Under Roman domination, Dyrrah take a political organization similar with Rome model that was in Republic Period. Dyrrah now is governed by *Duumviri* that elected in every five years³. For the existence of the *Duumviri* we are informed also by Cyriaco d'Ancona, who in 1436 year visited Durres and copy a *Sulpicius* inscription to west gate of the city, where is written that he was Pontiff, Prefect, *Duumviri Quiquenal* and Tribune of the city of Dyrrah⁴. So, were two persons that govern the city, where one was elected by the colonists and the other was elected by the native inhabitants of Dyrrah. In these political organization the existing inhabitants expelled from the government and the vote. Regardless of, this form of political organization conduce in conflict the existing inhabitants and the colonists because now in government of the city take parts also the new arrivals. In the past the persons who govern Dyrrah were only the native inhabitants and the division of the power with the colonists must not like the existing inhabitants. This form of political organization of Colony don't was a characteristic only for Dyrrah but she was a politic that Rome use in some Roman Colony that he created⁵.

Dyrrah inhabitants haven't a developed culture in Hellenistic period and perhaps this has controlled the explosive diffusion of Roman culture in the I-II century A.C. In any case the inhabitants of Dyrrah can't resist of the innovations and the new modes that come from Apennine Peninsula, especially from Rome. With pass the time and the generations, the inhabitants of Dyrrah with Hellenistic culture initiates to Romanization. This phenomenon is reflected also to the public buildings in Dyrrah. The Romanization cause the losing and changing of Hellenistic cultural traditions that they were inherited by their predecessors. Bit by bit the existing inhabitants of Dyrrah with Hellenistic culture losing their identity and begins to identified how Roman. This is a phenomenon that has happened in mostly of territory that Rome dominates⁶. This phenomenon is clearly distinguished to the public buildings that are found hitherto in Dyrrah. Now we begins to mention the Roman public buildings that are found and how influences in the lost of urban identity of Hellenistic inhabitants of Dyrrah.

²Fabian Miraj. 1991, p. 269-270.

³Lida Miraj. 1991, p. 253-255. Guntram Koch. 1988, p. 48.

⁴Cyriaco d'Ancona. "Inscriptiones...", Rome. Hasan Ulqini. 1980, p. 5.

⁵Karl Grimberg. 2003, p. 187.

⁶Louise Revell. 2009.

We will begin from amphitheatre, the structure more excavated and studied in Durres⁷. Amphitheatre is the place where the gladiator fights. Today exists two ideas when is constructed this build. The first think date the amphitheatre in years 98-117 A.C. while the second date the structure in years 117-138 A.C. under Roman Emperor Hadrian⁸. For watched the gladiator fights in amphitheatre comes the habitants of Dyrrah and the peoples that life in periphery. This influence in growth of contacts between communities, in consolidations of connections, in create of unite culture and developments of consensus. During the periods of game match problems between the communities the conflicts and the disagreements are temporarily forgets, but not resolved.

We will speak only for the position where the amphitheatre is build and the changes that he causes in city life. How in almost more roman city, amphitheatre is construct in an extremity of the city⁹. These builds are constructs in an extremity of the city because the games were much rowdy and influence in the tranquility of the city zone where the amphitheatre is build. The ancient constructors must know the problem, wherefore they constructs the amphitheatre in an extremity of the city. This phenomenon is remark in Durres amphitheatre. He is erected in the southwest extremity of the city, near the sea. This nearness with the sea don't is an accident. The nearness with the sea influence in ado descends that comes from the amphitheatre because a part of echo of spectators voices diffuses in the sea consequently reduces the ado. In these area of the city, where amphitheatre is build, is a hill. Why this is important? In hillside of the hill is construct a part of amphitheatre stair, we will suppose that this has influence in decline of the cost and the time of construct. In it area where is build the amphitheatre must pass a principal street, most frequented by the habitants of the city, that enables the people for goings in the amphitheatre and in these area of Dyrrah. Also, nearness with the port enabling the tourists, the visitors or the traders that comes in Dyrrah to see the amphitheatre. This increases the prestige of the city. Before the games starts, the peoples one can waits in a place in front of the amphitheatre where they can drinks, buy or pauses. The researchers suppose that the place is in the east part of the amphitheatre¹⁰.

So we have speaks before that in the amphitheatre games the spectators were also from Dyrrah periphery. They constantly have arrives in the amphitheatre games and bit by bit they begins to integrates in Dyrrah culture and mode of life. Perhaps, the culture and mode of life they have diffuses in their countries and houses. So, the amphitheatre has influence in culture unity between colons, existing inhabitants of Dyrrah and the people that life in Dyrrah periphery. Why we suppose those? The Dyrrah amphitheatre has a capacity for 15.000 spectators and Dyrrah is a city with about 80.000-100.000 habitants in I-IV century A.C. ¹¹. Not all the habitants are interesed to watchs the game with the gladiators because they don't like the blood, have works, bisneses, family problem or don't have money to pay the ticket. This is why we supposes that in amphitheatre comes people from the periphery to see the gladiators fights.

⁷ Koço Miho. 1984. Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1986, 2. Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1988, 2. Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1990. Vangjel Toçi. Monumnetet. 1971, 2.

⁸ Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1986, 2, p. 166.

⁹ Aldo Neppi Modona. 1961.

¹⁰ Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1986, 2, p. 166. Koço Miho. 1984, p. 97-99.

¹¹ Koço Miho. 1984, p.110.

In roman amphitheatre the seats are definite specific persons or for specific social strata. The persons that are parts of high social strata have different seats from the other strata of the city¹². The seats of the important persons or of high strata are positioned in first line of *Cave*, for watch better the spectacle. This tradition is borrowed from the Greek theatre and now the first line in Dyrrah amphitheatre is reserved for the roman colonist, naturally together with a part of Dyrrah high aristocracy. Thus, the amphitheatre can indicate the posts and the positions that everyone has in society, also evidence who are the persons that have privilege and govern the city. This can tell us that roman colonist and the existing aristocracy in Dyrrah governments together the city and have privilege.

The game with gladiators are organized by the Roman state and the govern institutions of the city for diverts the peoples, for pass the time and for devious the peoples attentions from diversity Roman State problems in diverse moments. Unfortunately we don't have much information about the games in Dyrrah amphitheatre, and the archeological finds don't tells us much why, when and occasions when are organized.

Only information that we have today about the amphitheatre games is an inscription where be said that in occasion Dyrrah library erect is organized a fight with twelve gladiators couple. From this we can understands that the gladiator games are organized also in inaugural occasions to other public buildings. We can supposes that the gladiator games are organized also for religious ceremonies, in honor of noted person, for the emperor and his family, for remember a specific occasion or a battle triumph. These games were organized by the Roman State, the Dyrrah city, from some persons or by an only person.

Everything that happens in amphitheatre is organized according to roman traditions, because the Colons that establish in Dyrrah are from Rome and the amphitheatre is a roman build. This influence in diffuses of roman culture in Dyrrah habitants and in his periphery. So, this public building has his role in converts in roman culture but for the level it is difficult to understand. For example, in some religion processions are organized games with gladiators in Gods honor, before these don't are made. The amphitheatre has influenced in other celebrations because are organized game with gladiators or with the beast, that before these don't happens. The Durres amphitheatre is erected in II century A.C. and it is abandon in V century A.C. with Christianity triumph¹³ that close these public build. From this moment the amphitheatre of Dyrrah is converted in a Christian chapel till Late Medieval Period. The amphitheatre is still visibly in XV century when the Albanian Historian Marin Barleti has mention in his book "The History of Skanderbeg, Prince of Epirus" the rests of the building. We can understand that the rests of amphitheatre are still visible in XV century but from this period the building is bedimmed with soils and is forgetful by the Durres habitants till XX century when he is discovered from the Albanians archeologists.

Another public building that is erect in roman period in Dyrrah is the Aqueduct. In an inscription found in Durres it is said that the aqueduct is constructed by Hadrian Emperor (age 117-138 A.C.)¹⁴. This build furnished with clean water the

¹²Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1986, 2, p. 152.

¹³Ibidem, p. 167.

¹⁴Lida Miraj. 1991, p. 250-251.

public fountains of the city, the Therme and some house of reach persons. The Dyrrah aqueduct take the drinking water from the *Ululeus* river (today Erzen river). The aqueduct accumulate the water with a canal that is construct with bricks and mortars that bring the water from Erzen river to today Rrashbull hill where with a subterranean tunel, from bricks and mortars, transport the water in Dyrrah. From Rrashbull hill into the city the aqueduct is construct with brick archs on columns, today from this part of the structure finded only the foundations¹⁵. It is supposed that the aqueduct enter into the city from the north side, today is called Spitalla. Here it is discovered a structure that the archeologists supposes is the *Castellum*, the water cistern, from this the water is diffused in the city by plumbum tubing¹⁶.

One from the important elements for the life and a civilization is the water. In roman period not all the people have a canalization system for furnished with water his house. The aqueduct has cause an important change in Dyrrah life. The new system of water furnishing has substituted the ancient methodology that the habitants have uses in Hellenistic period. Before roman invasion, Dyrrah is furnished with water from the mountain source of Dyrrah (*Boraes Dyrrachi*)¹⁷. It is not escluded that soma habitants of Dyrrah can uses the wells for furnishes with water. We will speaks some from principal change that must have caused the aqueduct erect in the daily life of Dyrrah habitants.

In the first century of roman invasion is the period of economic progress of the city. In the century I-III A.C. is the period when the number of habitants in Dyrrah is increase. This bring the problem of drinking water furnishing. This must are a serios problem after obligate the Eperor Hadrian to order the erect of an aqueduct in Dyrrah, at the some time signify also the importance that this city has for the romans because otherwise don't will spends money for erect the aqueduct. In these period the Dyrrah habitants takes the drinking water from the public fountains. The aqueduct is erect for finished the city with drinking water than for funishes the public bath or the house. The Dyrrah aqueduct furnish with water the public fountains, the Therme and some house. The requests for drinking, cleanly and fresh water will was elevated by Dyrrah habitants as much money for erect an aqueduct. This displace the ancient system of water furnishes from the mountain source of Dyrrah and the wells.

The water is diffuse by a *castellum* situated in a elevated position of the city because this facilitate water leaks from the gravity force. The *castellum* is divided in three parts in three ducts that diffuses the clean water. The central duct, who is more great than the others two, furnish the public fountains with water, the other ducts furnish the public baths of the city and some private house, naturally with a payment. Must be said that the persons who have water in their houses, they can uses, drinking and furnish from the public fountains water¹⁸.

Unfortunately, today doesn't is discovered any public fountains of roman period that diffuses the water in Dyrrah. This don't tell us that in Dyrrah haven't public fountains. In much Roman Colony where is erect an aqueduct, the habitants of the city are furnished with drinking and cleanly water with public fountains. Similar

¹⁵ Fabian Miraj-Halil Myrto. Iliria, 1982, 1, p. 131-156. Apollon Baçe-Aleksandër Meksi- Emin Riza-Gjerak Karaiskaj- Pirro Thomo. 1980, p. 189.

¹⁶Hava Hidri. Iliria, 1990, 2, p. 260.

¹⁷ Vibi Sequestris, 1967. Fabian Miraj. Monumentet, 1991, 1-2, p. 77-83.

¹⁸Charles Victor Daremberg -Edmond Saglio. 1937, s.v. aquaeductas.

aqueducts are discovered in Pompeii¹⁹, Carthage (erected by Emperor Hadrian), Miracles and Segovia in Spain and the aqueduct of Pont du Gard in France²⁰. These aqueducts are erected in roman period in diverse parts of their state with an intention: to bring the drinking water in the city. In any event, the aqueducts distribute a part of drinking water to the habitants of the city with public fountains and with other part of water furnish the public baths and some house in the city. Wherefore, we suppose that the aqueduct of Dyrrah has similar function.

This public building invented by Romans has brings an important change in the life of Dyrrah habitants in roman period. She has improved the hygienic conditions of the habitants and the city in compare with Hellenistic period.

The Thermae is another public building discovered during construction of culture palace Aleksandër Moisiu in Durrës. The public bath is a structure that is erect after roman invasion. She is dated in II century A.F. and has a surface about 700 m²²¹. It is partially discovered. The Albanian searchers have discovered the *Apodyterum*, *Frigidarium*, *Caldarium*, *Tepidarium*, *Sudatorium*, *Latrina* and sewerage²² but today it isn't found the entry. The functions of Thermae parts are similar with all other public baths. This building is an urban excavations and it is difficult to effectuate more excavations for finds the other parts because the streets of actual city of Durres interferes. It is found in a round colon of *Hipocaust* in *Caldarium* an inscription: *Luk Tutil Veneri Rufus*, the name of architect that has erect the building²³. Here, we will talks for the some impacts that this building causes in the life of Dyrrah habitants.

It is hypothesized than during roman domination in Dyrrah, also before roman invasion, the areas from actual municipality till today port of Durres, also Stan hill, were the zones more inhabited in ancient period in Dyrrah. The position where is erect the public bath is in middle of these two areas. This isn't a case but it is thoughtful by the constructors. We think that this position between the two areas more inhabited in Dyrrah and near a road, perhaps has influenced in prestige increase and it is more frequented by visitors, reach persons and the elite of the city. The nearness with the two more inhabited areas also with the other parts of the city must have influenced in a more frequent.

Exceptionally, the public bath is associated with aqueduct construction because this building has need a continuous and uniform furnishing with clear and fresh water. Something can't be realized with system of water furnishing in Hellenistic period because the wells or the mountain source of Dyrrah can't realizes the continuous request for clear and fresh water that needs for waterlogged the swimming-pools. Contrariwise, the aqueduct is a structure that has the capacity for a continuous and enough furnishing with water.

This building has some influence in culture life of the Dyrrah habitants. Firstly, she influence in the hygiene of the habitants. I can't say than in the past periods is scarce or wasn't in high level for the time. The erection of the Thermae during the

¹⁹Ray Laurence. 2006, p. 40-43. Roger Ling - Paul Arthur. 1999, p. 35.

²⁰Charles Victor Daremberg -Edmond Saglio. 1937, s.v. aquaeductas.

²¹Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1994, 1-2, p. 223-224.

²²Apollon Baçe. Monumentet, 1980, 19, p. 73-76. Irma Kabashi. Iliria, 1989, 2, p. 286. Lida Miraj.

Iliria, 1990, 2, p. 259. Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1994, 1-2, p. 212-222

²³Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1991, 1-2, p. 256-257.

roman period in Dyrrah influence ulterior increase in hygiene of the habitants. During the day the habitants can makes bath to the Thermae, normally against a payment. It is difficult to understand how and when the persons makes bath in Thermae during the day, week or month because we don't have data for these. The surface of Dyrrah public bath was on 700 m² and this tell us that she must be regularly frequented by much persons otherwise she don't had such size. The dimensions of Frigidarium (6.45 x 4.60 x 0.60 m) and the size of Caldarium (12.80 x 7.45 m) that tell us than some persons can makes bath at the same time. Normally, the Thermae was more frequented by the Elite and the reach persons of the city, the existing aristocracy of Dyrrah and the Roman Colonists, because the payment that fall due must balks the majority poor habitants of the city. The Elite and the reach persons in ancient periods don't adores to stay in posts that are frequents by the normally persons because their must defends a reputation. To stay away from the posts that are frequents by the normally persons influence, in ancient periods, in a high reputation.

The public bath, directly or indirectly, influence in hygiene of the habitants of Dyrrah. How she influence? We spoken that this public building was situated between the two areas more frequented in Dyrrah and near her was an important street or a place much frequented by the persons, she was continuous view by the habitants. This indirectly and unwilled manner one can influence in the persons minds because the Thermae was a sanitary building and a symbol of hygiene. When the person that constantly sees the public bath in their minds was impresses the conception of cleanness, not only of their body but also of their clothes and the area when they life.

In a great city how Dyrrah it is difficult to believes in existence only to a public bath for the city but must are erect more Thermae. Unfortunately, except the public bath discovered under the culture palace Aleksander Moisiu isn't discovered other sanitary building. The excavations in diverse areas of the city have discovered some data that indicates for existence of public baths but these data don't are enough for the explorers to take a conclusions if the structures are public bath or private bath of any house²⁴. The future excavations will indicate if in Dyrrah had or not other public bath.

The ending excavations in Dyrrah, 150 m in the east of today municipality, in the place that is called "Troplini" it is discovered a circular structure build with stone, brick and mortar. This structure has 8 m diameter and it is discovered only foundation. It is supposed that this is a lighthouse for indicated the ships navigations. It is difficult to determine the height of the building because today it is remained only the foundation. This lighthouse is erected in roman period. If this suppose it is truth, because has still debate for these structure is or not a lighthouse, it is normal for Dyrrah with an important port to have a lighthouse in roman period. Under roman domination and with placements of Roman Colonists this city in I-IV century A.C. begin to use how an important port of east Adriatic sea. This was favored also from the construction of Via Egnatia in 140-120 age B.C. by the roman. Dyrrah has also a short distance from Italy that favor in diminution of the time and the distance. The armies and the wares, in I-IV century A.C., are constantly transported from the ships from Italy to Balkan Peninsula. The port of Dyrrah was an important node in these communications in Roman Imperial Period. Not all the sailors know the dangerous sea roads near Dyrrah, that avoids notably nightly, the ships needed for orientation. These

²⁴Lida Miraj. Iliria, 1994, 1-2, p. 208. Hava Hidri-Fatos Tartari. Iliria, 1989, 2 p. 280.

demands always in increase resolved from a lighthouse construction near the Dyrrah port. Thereby, the night navigation with the lighthouse erect was more easily. Now not only the ships with sailors from Dyrrah that know the sea roads but also other ships can know the dangerous sea roads near Dyrrah and they can deviate. The lighthouse has survived till V century A.C. when the Roman Empire decline.

Dyrrah don't had such public buildings, but he can had more buildings. They still are in Dyrrah underground. Some inscriptions that are finds in excavations in Dyrrah and the some ancient authors have indicated for other public buildings. These sources have indicates for existence of three temples in Dyrrah: Minerva, Diana and Venus²⁵, still not finds today.

The ancient author Appian has writing for existence of Diana temple in Dyrrah before roman invasion. He speak for a meeting between G. J. Caesar and a delegation of Dyrrah Elite for devolved the city in Roman Civil War between Pompey and G. J. Caesar. In according Apian this meet is made in Diana temple out of Dyrrah²⁶. We know from an altar inscription for existence of Minerva temple, where the land of construction it is donated by the Roman Republic²⁷. Another ancient author that has mentioned for the temple of Venus in Dyrrah it is Gaius Valerius Catullus but he don't tell us nothing more. We have only some indications for existence of some temple outside or inside Dyrrah defenses wall but we know that they have existed. Today these temples don't are finds.

Conclusion

The Hellenistic identity of the city was modified from all these new buildings that are erected in roman style and the celebrations of festivals or religious ritual was made by roman traditions. Also, the visitors, the traders and all the strangers when will moves inside of the city they will dazzle from these buildings than the Hellenistic architecture but they continuous to exist. This has created a mix between olden Hellenistic culture and new culture that has comes from the roman colonists in Dyrrah that produce a mixing of identity to olden and new habitants of Dyrrah. Certainly, this identity mix isn't created within a generation. This is reflected in the public buildings in Dyrrah because all these are erected in II century A.C., so have passed some generation in Dyrrah that they will Romanize. We can say that was the Elite of the Dyrrah that has changed the image of the city.

The seismic that knock Dyrrah 345 A.C. cause a great harm to the public buildings. One of these building was the aqueduct who was hard damaged and fall out of use forever²⁸. Moreover, this seism has damaged also the Dyrrah Amphitheatre²⁹ and the Public Bath. The excavations haven't evidenced reconstruction in these buildings. Perhaps the problem of the roman state in these moments have influenced in non-reconstruction of the buildings that was damaged from the seismic. The city don't was in the high-level that had before the seismic till Emperor Anastasius I come in Byzantine throne, who order new constructions in Dyrrah. In I century A.C. don't are erected public buildings, perhaps on account of high culture of Dyrrah habitants that

²⁵Lida Miraj. 1991, 1-2, p. 255-256.

²⁶Apiani. *Bella Civilia*, lib. II, 2002, p. 60.

²⁷Lida Miraj, *Iliria*, 1991, 1-2, p. 255.

²⁸Fabian Miraj-Halil Myrto. *Iliria*, 1982, 1, p. 150.

²⁹Lida Miraj. *Iliria*, 1986, 2, p. 167.

influence non immediate Romanization. This phenomenon happen when have passed the generations in Dyrrah and in II century A.C. the major habitants of the city it was Romanized. These can tells the public buildings in Dyrrah, perhaps this is one argument that why they are erected in II century A.C. and not earlier. The Urban Identity of Dyrrah from I century B.C. till IV century A.C. was varied and the habitants that have lived in end of West Roman Empire in the city have a different culture by the persons that have lived in the end of Hellenistic period.

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