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Lesya Chen^{1*}, Natalia Yavna²

¹Lviv Polytechnic National University

79000, 12 Stepan Bandera Str., Lviv, Ukraine

²Lviv Polytechnic National University

79005, 1-3 Knyaz Roman Str., Lviv, Ukraine

Architectural and Artistic Features of the Entrance Portal of the Church in Velykyi Khodachkiv of Ternopil Region

Abstract. The design of the main entrances in cathedrals and churches has always been one of the main tasks of artists. Realising the importance of the entrance to the Temple of God, the sculptors tried to design it in the form of a portal and give it prominence with an original sculptural design. This study covers the features of the architectural and artistic structure of the main portal of the Church of the Mother of God in Velykyi Khodachkiv, justifies its artistic value, examines the technical condition of the newly discovered monument, and identifies aspects of the restoration of the portal. Based on the general scientific and special restoration research methods used, the paper investigated the style characteristics of the portal, identified the main reasons for the degradation of the monument, and developed a set of restoration measures. In the study, based on literary sources and field surveys, an attempt to investigate the influence of one of the main architectural elements of the temple decoration – the portal, on the architectonics of the main facade of the shrine was made. Special attention was drawn to the unexplored Velykyi Khodachkiv Church in the Ternopil region, which is in a dilapidated state with an interesting architectural design of the main entrance. The architectural, artistic, and compositional design of the entrance portal of the Church of the Mother of God the Comforter and St. Joseph in Velykyi Khodachkiv was analysed in detail. Its stylistic and proportional solutions were examined. The portal is characterised by the expressiveness of architectural details, the integrity and aesthetics of this work of art were created according to the laws of beauty. Based on a thorough study of the features inherent in the portal, its architectural and artistic value was determined, and its technical condition was investigated. The Church of the Mother of God the Comforter in the former town of Velykyi Khodachkiv, Ternopil region, is not included in the Register of architectural monuments of Ukraine, so there is little information about the monument under study. Overlooked by researchers and art historians, the church has been in ruins for centuries and continues to collapse. The results of the study can be used in the system of historical and architectural education and practical restoration activities

Keywords: main entrance of the Church of the Mother of God, portal, stylistic solution, portal composition, portal proportions, artistic value, restoration measures

INTRODUCTION

Portals in all historical periods were valuable architectural elements for decorating the entrances of not only public and residential buildings but also sacred structures: cathedrals, temples, and chapels. Portals are diverse in shape and size,

construction material, composition, and structure [1]. The main function of the portal is to complement the main entrance to the shrine with architectural and artistic means [2]. Entrance portals often served as the primary accents of the

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*Corresponding author



main facades of buildings [3]. Depending on the task set for the architect, the entrance portal could be simple (Church of St. Anthony of Padua in Losyach, Borshchevskiy district, Ternopil region, Church of the Perpetual Help of the Mother of God in Trybukhivtsi, Buchanskyi district, Ternopil region) or solemnly and luxuriantly decorated (Church of the mother of God in Stryi, Lviv region, Church of St. Elizabeth in Lviv, Church of St. Anthony in the village Chernelytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk region).

A peculiar portal decorates the Church of the Mother of God the Comforter and St. Joseph in Velykyi Khodachkiv, Kozivskiy district, Ternopil region. It presents Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque elements, fascinating tourists and explorers. However, both the church and its portal were not investigated by anyone. The problem is that due to the closure of the church in 1944 and its conversion into a warehouse, the facility has suffered considerable damage due to oversight and fire. Now it is in a neglected state of disrepair and requires a comprehensive examination of the church and its main portal. Conservation and restoration measures should be proposed and included in the local Register of architectural and Art Monuments to preserve this architectural and artistic piece. Considering the need to preserve the newly discovered monument, it is necessary to discuss with the public and specialists the outlined monument protection measures with minimal interference with the material structure to ensure its preservation [4]. The law on the protection of monuments provides for the use of three types of work: restoration, conservation, and repair, which must be conducted with the knowledge and control of state bodies for the protection of monuments and with the approval of project documentation [5]. The investigation of portals as special architectural elements of collapsing temples is of interest to researchers and restorers. Information about the construction of a church in Velykyi Khodachkiv

is found only in the Polish edition "Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowińskich" (1880-1902), where it is stated that the first stone for the church in the town of Velykyi Khodachkiv was laid in honour of the 25th anniversary of the marriage of Emperor Franz Joseph and Elizabeth of Bavaria in 1879, the temple was built in a year and it was destroyed during the First World War, so in 1934 a new temple was built in the central part of the town and it is indicated that Thaddeus Schneider was the author of the project [2]. The study of portals in Ukrainian architecture of the 17th-18th centuries was conducted by D.N. Yablonskyi, who focused on the stylistic and compositional analysis of portals of monastic and temple structures of the Left-bank Ukraine and the Dnieper region [3]. However, in the Ukrainian architectural and art history source base, information about the structure under study in Velykyi Khodachkiv is missing.

Purpose of the study – to cover the features of the architectural and artistic structure of the main portal of the Church of the Mother of God in Velykyi Khodachkiv, justify its artistic value, investigate the technical condition of the newly discovered monument, and identify aspects of the restoration of the portal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the process of the research of the main portal of the Church of the Mother of God in Velykyi Khodachkiv, general scientific (empirical – observation, survey, description, theoretical – analysis, systematisation, comparison, generalisation) and special professional research methods (morphological (stylistic) analysis, conservation, restoration, field surveys, and photogrammetric fixation) were used [6]. Using these research techniques, the authors identified the causes of the object's soaking, which led to the destruction of portal fragments, peeling of plaster, loss of part of the cornice, and potholes in the brick (Fig. 1).

Drawing of the portal Scale 1:1

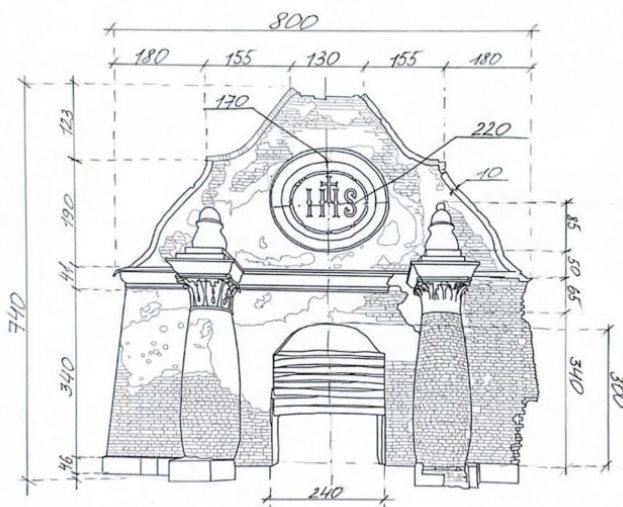


Figure 1. Dimensional drawing of the portal

Note: drawn by N. Yavna



The visual survey of the portal conducted at the first stage of the study enabled the determination of the range of relevant problems of step-by-step research. Analysis of literature sources allowed determining the level of knowledge about the object. The method of art history analysis presents the artistic features of the portal and its details. Based on the analysis of architectural and artistic detailing of parts of the portal, it can be argued that its architectonics tend to the traditional neo-Gothic and late Baroque styles with Romanesque elements (proportions of the columns). The compositional analysis allowed discovering the three-dimensional structure of the monument and identifying patterns of compositional design. The stylistic and compositional analysis allowed analysing of individual features, establishing the architectural and artistic value of it. Analysis of the perception of the silhouette of the portal from a long distance allowed stating its proportionality and perfection in relation to the main facade of the structure.

Through full-scale surveys, measurements, and photo recording, drawing of the object under study, the authors managed to examine the architectural and structural characteristics of the portal and establish its unique artistic value. When measuring the investigated portal of the church and its elements, their exact parameters were established.

At the diagnostic stage, the state of preservation of the structure was investigated, the main factors of its degradation were identified, and the restoration programme of the object under study was determined.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Portal – an architecturally designed entrance to a public or sacred structure, with decorative elements, often in combination with sculpture, modelling, etc. [1], which enhances the architectural and artistic impression of the structure in general. Portals are not only important elements in finishing

residential, public, and sacred structures, but also perform a symbolic role. In cathedrals, temples, and chapels, the main entrance, as a rule, was designed by sculptors in the form of a portal symbolising the Heavenly Gate of the Temple of the Lord. As a rule, the entrance portal was embellished with decorative elements: stucco, columns or pilasters, cornices, and sculptures carved from stone blocks or laid out of profile bricks [3].

Attention was drawn to the peculiar design of the main portal of the Church of the Mother of God the Comforter in the former town, and now Velykyi Khodachkiv, located 18 km east of Ternopil. The church was built in 1879-1880 by Thaddeus Schneider [2] in the neo-Gothic and late Baroque styles in the central picturesque part of the village on a plot of land donated in 1870 by the Sheliskiy family [2]. In terms of architectural and spatial structure, it is a basilica with side arcades, along the back of which baroque chapels are attached in the form of small round towers, with an elongated semicircular apse and a low square sacristy attached to it on the right behind the chapel (Fig. 2). The elongated building with massive walls, narrow paired windows of the side naves, semi-arches – central naves, round windows of the apse and small towers with oval windows resembles a fortress structure. The roof during the fire, according to local residents, was completely lost. The walls of the side facades are decorated with pilasters, between which there are paired narrow windows in rectangular niches. The main facade of the church is decorated with symmetrically placed four pilasters and a baroque deconstructive pediment with arranged oval and round niches. The facade was decorated in an oval niche with a relief sculpture of the Virgin Mary, destroyed during the Soviet era. The main facade of the church is complemented by a protruding portal, which in its overall composition repeats the outlines of the main facade of the church (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. General view of the church in Velykyi Khodachkiv, Ternopil region

Note: photo by N. Yavna



During the study, the authors discovered that the entrance portal, like the church, is built of red brick, locally produced. When measuring the brick from which the portal is built, its parameters of 29x14x6.5 cm were established by N. Yavna, and the width of the masonry of the pedestals under the columns is 93 cm, and the height of the Masonry is 46 cm. (Fig. 1). The originality of the portal is especially notable when considering its individual elements: the central entrance, vertical elements, and the end of the portal. The entrance opening has an arched brick lintel, which greatly simplifies the layout of such a lintel without the use of metal (Fig. 1). The authors measured the opening of the portal entrance, which has a width of 2.40 m and a height of 3.00 m. An important role in the composition of the portal is played by vertical architectural elements that compositionally emphasise the entrance axis, visually directing the visitor to the temple. The portal is decorated with symmetrically placed two three-quarter columns laid out of brick, covered with a thin layer of plaster, with stone capitals of the Corinthian order, on which decorative stone acroteria in the form of vases are placed (Fig. 3). The columns of the portal rest on very low square stone pedestals. Moving away from the canonical proportional interpretation of

the columns, the architect Thaddeus Schneider decided to borrow the columns in the portal from the temples of the Romanesque period – rough, squat, in contrast to the elegant columns of the Byzantines, which were already spread throughout Europe at that time. Despite the squat and plastic roughness of the columns in the portal, they are expressive and well perceived from a distance. The vertical elements of the columns at the top are combined by a profile brick cornice covered with a layer of plaster, above which there is a pediment of deconstructive (broken) smooth shape [3], which was typical for the late Baroque era. The compositional accent of the portal pediment is in a round decorative frame with a diameter of approximately 1.5 m, artfully arranged in an elegant relief symbol–the abbreviation– IHS, which means – Jesus Hominum Salvator (Jesus the Savior of Mankind) (Fig. 4). The remains of plaster on the facades of the church and the portal indicate that the entire portal, like the church, was plastered, which influenced the character and originality of the architectonics of the work of art. The plaster not only served as a protective and levelling layer but also softened the sharp and clear contours of the brickwork, visually enriching the plasticity of the portal.



Figure 3. The main portal of the church in Velykyi Khodachkiv

Note: photo by N. Yavna



Figure 4. Abbreviation on the gable of the portal

Note: photo by N. Yavna

The basis of proportional portal construction is a system of rational simple relations: the ratio of width to height of the portal is 1:1 (Figs. 1, 5), that is, its composition fits into a square, respectively, the basis for building the portal is based on the principle of the Golden Section [3] (Fig. 5). When designing the portal, not only the general proportions and ratios of their individual parts, mainly the load-bearing

and finishing parts, but also the ratio to the size of the church itself were particularly important [7]. When measuring the object under study, the authors discovered that the ratio of the height of the portal to the height of the church is 1:2, and its width to the width of the church is 1:1.5. The classical proportions of the Corinthian order Capitals to columns are 1:10 [8], and in this case, it is 1:6 (Fig. 1).

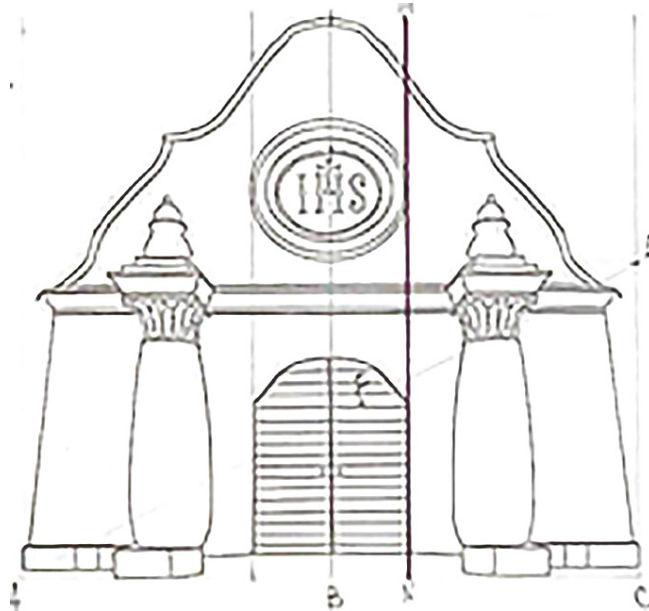


Figure 5. Portal proportions $BC=CD$; $CD=DF$; MN – golden section

The master (sculptor), striving to achieve artistic perfection and make an aesthetic impression, moved away from the canonical proportional ratios in creating three-quarter columns of the portal, thereby creating an individual composition of the portal. The portal itself is built according to the rules of ideal proportion, where all harmonised elements are combined due to balance, symmetry, and proportional relations, forming the integrity and unity of a work of art [3].

Since the analysis of the stylistic and compositional design of the portal identifies its architectural and artistic value, accordingly, it belongs to the cultural legacy of Ukraine. The preservation of the Velykyi Khodachkiv portal is important for the spiritual, cultural, and social development of not only the settlement of a certain region, but the people of the country in general, so it is proposed to include the monument in the State Register of immovable monuments of Ukraine of local importance. According to the Law of Ukraine “On the Protection of Cultural Legacy” [5], the protection of cultural legacy provides for the implementation of a set of measures to record, protect, preserve, and conduction of scientifically based measures that will protect the monument from further destruction and ensure

the preservation of its authenticity with minimal interference with its existing appearance (conservation of the object), to restore lost or damaged elements, that is, restoration, and museification of the object, that is, bringing it into a state suitable for excursion visits [9].

In the course of field surveys, the authors discovered that the portal has serious mechanical damage, namely: loss of plaster along the entire portal, weathering of stone on the reliefs of the capitals, lost parts (the upper decorative element on the vase-shaped part on the left side, the lower part of the right side of the portal, and the top of the portal) (Figs. 1, 6). The cornice on the right side has considerable damage and losses. The entire portal suffered partial losses of bricks, potholes, and damage to masonry joints. As a result of soaking, cornices of capitals and vase-like acroteria are covered with micro-sprouts of bioorganisms (lichens). The door to the main arched entrance is completely lost. The entrance to the church is laid in the upper part with several wooden planks. It should be emphasised that in the decoration of the portal, an equally important role was assigned to the decoration of doors, made of solid wood.



Figure 6. drawing of the portal in the Velykyi Khodachkiv village

Note: author – N. Yavna

Based on a long-term study (from March to May 2022) and full-scale surveys of the entrance portal of the church, a programme of restoration and protection of the object was proposed, namely, to examine it from the artistic and historical importance standpoint based on the analysis of archival and literary sources, determine the authenticity of the architectural work and appropriate security, restoration methods, and the factors of destruction, conduct a survey with the implementation of measurement drawings using various methods of fixating the technical condition, create a scientific report, and develop monument protection and restoration measures [10].

Restoration measures were developed and the following types of priority works were proposed to preserve the monument:

- conducting conservation and restoration of brickwork;
- cleaning of the outer surface from dirt, efflorescences, and destructive layers;
- filling hollow cracks in brickwork;
- structural strengthening of brick surfaces with special mortars, putty of chips and fixing minor losses, restoration of masonry joints;
- biocide treatment;
- tinting sections of inserted bricks;
- protective treatment of the monument surface, hydrophobisation of the portal.

In case of losses of brickwork for structural strength, it is allowed to supplement using bricks. The process of strengthening and complementing the material structure should be accompanied by the use of natural materials that are compatible with authentic ones. Injection of cracks should be conducted after the completion of work on replacing losses, putty, and fixing emergency areas. Restoration of masonry joints must be conducted with solutions as close

as possible to the original ones. Plastering requires a strong surface that has been cleared of destructive mortar. Plastering of chips is performed on the surface of the brick, which has a depth loss of less than 3 cm, with deeper losses, the brick must be completely or partially replaced. For this, a lime-sand mortar that is as close as possible to the brick surface in texture and colour must be selected [11]. Biocidal treatment of brick surfaces is conducted in the summer, eliminating all sources of moisture, in the absence of precipitation.

For the control of bio-destructors and long-term biosecurity of the stone brick surface, it is recommended to use biocidal compositions of a wide spectrum of action. The lost doors of the main portal, in the absence of iconographic materials, must be recreated based on analogues or other scientifically based materials. Despite the damage and losses, the portal under study has historical, architectural, and artistic value and requires priority urgent measures.

The uniqueness of the main portal of the church in Velykyi Khodachkiv indicates the acquaintance and high skill of the builders.

CONCLUSIONS

Upon investigating the portal of the Church of the Mother of God in Velykyi Khodachkiv of the Ternopil region, as one of the important architectural elements of the building decoration, it was identified that the work of art has a unique architectural and artistic design and an interesting individual composition. Based on general scientific and special methods, the architectural, artistic, and compositional features of the portal were identified. In its architectural features, elements of Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque styles have been preserved, compositionally and proportionally-harmoniously combined with each other, and interesting

from the restoration science standpoint. Despite the massiveness of the columns with a violation of their proportions, the smooth shape of the pediment and the calming decor of the portal give the impression of heaviness and simultaneous simplicity, expressiveness, and indissoluble integrity of the composition. Based on the study of the features inherent in portal, its architectural and artistic value was determined, and its technical condition was investigated. The sculptor created an interesting unique architectural and artistic work according to the rules of perfect proportion, which has a high architectural and artistic value and belongs to the cultural legacy of Ukraine.

During the study of the central portal of the church, full-scale surveys, measurements, and photo recordings

were involved, sketches were made, its style and composition were analysed, and a proportional solution was used to determine its value as a work of art and architecture in the state of degradation.

The newly discovered work of art is proposed to be included in the State Register of immovable monuments of Ukraine of local importance. The technical condition of the entrance portal of the church was analysed, and urgent restoration measures were developed to preserve it from further destruction: conservation, restoration, and museification of the object under study. Theoretical studies of the entrance portal of the church can be used in scientific and practical restoration activities. The theoretical part can serve as a basis for further restoration research and work.

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Леся Чень¹, Наталія Явна²

¹Національний університет Львівська політехніка,
79000, вул. Степана Бандери, 12, м. Львів, Україна

²Національний університет Львівська політехніка
79005, вул. Князя Романа 1-3, м. Львів, Україна

Архітектурно-мистецькі особливості вхідного portalу костелу у с. Великому Ходачкові Тернопільської області

Анотація. Оформлення головних входів у соборах та храмах в усі часи було одним з основних завдань митців. Усвідомлюючи значення входу у храм Бога, скульптори намагались оформити його у вигляді portalу і підкреслити оригінальним пластичним вирішенням. В дослідженні розкрито особливості архітектурно-мистецького вистрою головного portalу костелу Матері Божої в селі Великому Ходачкові, обґрунтовано його мистецьку цінність, досліджено технічний стан нововиявленої пам'ятки та розкрито аспекти реставрації portalу. На підставі використаних загальнонаукових та спеціальних реставраційних методів дослідження авторами вивчені стильові характеристики portalу, визначені основні причини руйнування мистецького твору та розроблений комплекс реставраційних заходів. У статті на основі літературних джерел та натурних обстежень здійснена спроба дослідити вплив одного з головних архітектурних елементів оздоблення храму – portalу, на архітектоніку головного фасаду святині. Особливу увагу привертає недосліджений Великоходачківський костел на Тернопільщині, що перебуває в напівзруйнованому стані з цікавим архітектурним вирішенням головного входу. Детально проаналізовано архітектурно-мистецьке і композиційне вирішення вхідного portalу костелу Матері Божої Утішительки і



св. Йосифа Улюбленця в селі Великому Ходачкові, Тернопільської області. Проаналізовано його стилістичне та пропорційне вирішення. Портал характеризується виразністю пластики архітектурних деталей, цілісністю і естетичністю архітектурної форми художнього твору, створеного за законами краси. На основі ґрунтовного вивчення особливостей порталу визначено його архітектурно-мистецьку цінність та досліджено технічний стан. Костел Матері Божої Утішительки у колишньому містечку Великому Ходачкові Тернопільської області не включений до реєстру пам'яток архітектури України, тому відомостей про досліджувану пам'ятку знаходимо дуже мало. Випущений з поля зору науковців і дослідників та мистецтвознавців костел протягом століть знаходиться в руїні і продовжує руйнуватися. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані в системі історико-архітектурної освіти та в практичній реставраційній діяльності

Ключові слова: головний вхід костелу Матері Божої, портал, стилістичне вирішення, композиція порталу, пропорції порталу, мистецька цінність, реставраційні заходи