



# CONTENT REPORT FOR DIGITAL OUTPUTS HAMMAM, DURRËS



ATELIER 4  
ARCHITECTURE • ENGINEERING • CONSULTING

**22644-001\_ALB\_EU4C\_RFP\_01 - "Provision of Consultancy for Design services for EU4CULTURE Project - Support for revitalization of cultural heritage sites and monuments affected by Earthquake in Albania."**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretation and presentation of the Hamam of Durrës intends to clearly identify the system of cultural, social, religious and historic values of the monument. Indeed based on these values it aims to offer a special experience for the visitor.

Through the visit in the Hamam is offered some crucial information regarding the city during the Ottoman period with aspects on the ways of life of the local population, and more general the role of the cultural and religious influences in the life of the Albanian cities over the centuries of the Ottoman period and so on. On the other hand, the visitor could be encouraged to reflect about the historic nature of the ways of life, the administration of the water sources in urban contexts, the role of the rituals in the social life and any other aspect related to the human presence that takes place in this historic dimension.

The aims of interpretations and presentation of the Hamam will be:

- a scientifically correct and attractive information;
- stimulated to reflect on various aspects of life in the past and nowadays;
- offering a unique experience with the application of the multi-media techniques and the virtual reality

## 2. HISTORIC BACKGROUND: DURRËS DURING THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

The Ottoman period has an important role in the urban life of Durrës. A city that was born as a Greek colony by the end of the 7th century BC and became the largest harbor in the region. However, during the Ottoman period Durrës only played a role as a boundary castle that defended the coastal shores with a small harbor under the control of Elbasan, which had been assigned as the center of Ottoman sandzak and within which Durrës was included. The city develops in a range of hills along the Adriatic coast. Until very late this range of hills was entirely separated from the seacoast by a wide streak of marshlands. Over times this environment did establish the power and weakness of the city of Durrës. For the naval powers Durrës comprised an easy defended base with a good natural harbor, but was not a healthy place to live. During the historic times Durrës served as the inception of the largest liaison with the inner areas of the Balkan peninsula, that of Via Egnatia.

The war of the Ottomans against the Venetians at the time of Bayasid the second, was under the command of sandzak bey of Elbasan, Evrenosoglu Mehmed Bey. They succeeded to subdue Durrës due an unexpected attack in the summer of 1501 after being able to cross the dry marshes. The Ottomans started immediately repairing the destroyed walls and reduced the city fortifications so that they only surrounded the inhabited areas. This mainly covered the area between the castles on the hill and that of the Anjou on the coast.

To summarize, it can be claimed that the existing fortification walls around Durrës, belong to two major periods; that of the byzantine emperor Anastasius, a native from Durrës and that of sultan Bayazid II (1501-1512). Any other remain between these two periods is hardly noticed due to the damages of the 1928 earthquake.

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Another important monument is the Venetian castle, perhaps the successor of the old town acropolis. The castle was ravaged even before the Ottoman attack. When the Ottomans occupied the city in 1501, they started a renovation project. The small tower of the south corner is probably the only feature that belongs to the Venetians, the remaining comprise renovated parts that stand on old Venetian foundations and are undoubtedly of an Ottoman intervention. During the first centuries of the Ottoman government Durrës again experienced decline being considered only as a boundary castle and small harbor for Elbasan. In 1610, there were accounted 300 houses and half a century later this number was reduced to only 150 shelters. These data come mentioned from the traveler and historian Evlija Çelebiu. The Bayazid II sultan converted into mosque the largest gothic church of the town. In the centuries that followed this building was replaced with an Ottoman structure smaller in size and different in shape. At the time of Evlija Çelebiu the structure of the old church no longer existed. According to him, the decline of Durrës is to be attributed to the Albanian rebellions which forced the majority of the city inhabitants to emigrate in other areas.

Ottoman officials of the Durrës kaza dwelt in the town of Kavaje, which comprised a much healthier environment, further from the coast and around 12 km inside the land and founded from the Ottomans during the XVI century. Only during the XVIII century Durrës managed to partly recover. It gained some importance as harbor for the export of the agricultural products that came from the large chifligs.

Various western countries opened consulates in Durrës; French in the beginning of XVIII century and Dutch by the middle of the same century. Somehow this indicates an increasing importance for the town during this time.

During the last decades of the Ottoman period, according to the salname of Shkodër vilayet, in 1892 the city counted: 550 houses, 9 inns, 1 hammam, 3 mosques, 1 medrese, 1 'rushdie' school, 2 Islamic elementary schools, 3 Christian schools and 4 churches. The population in total comprised 4.785 inhabitants from which 3.018 were Muslim, 1.520 orthodox and 199 catholic.

In terms of Ottoman administration the sandzak of Durrës was one of the two that constituted the vilayet of Shkodër. It was located south of the vilayet, bordering with Shkodër in north, the sandzak of Dibër in northeast (which belonged to the vilayet of Manastir) and in south and east with the sandzak of Elbasan, of course in west faced the Adriatic sea. Durrës was made of 4 kaza: Durrës, Shijak, Tiranë and Kavajë. The population was entirely Albanian. From the religious point of view, beside a small community of Christians in the center of the city, the rest was Muslim.

In the encyclopedic dictionary of the Ottoman empire, KAMUS AL-ALAM 1889-1898, that is compiled by Sami Frashëri, it is written: the land is mostly shaft with fields and only in the east of the Tirana and Kavaja kaza is encountered a mountainous terrain. In this side is the mountain of Krrabë with a semicircular form and where the flow two rivers Ishmi and Erzen source. Both rivers while passing through a beautiful field flow in the Adriatic sea. River Ishm collects the waters of rivers Zizi, Trakush and Rostoja while Erzen river collects that of Zaranika. In the kaza of Kavaje there are two small rivers named Darçi and Kavaja. The land is very fertile and produces large amounts of wheat, corn, barley, rice, and other cereals, as well as fruits and vegetables. From the harbor of Durrës are exported many food items to Trieste and Italy. There are many forests and

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since is adjacent to the sea these is of great benefits. There are many salt works. Even though there are various mines, according to the accounts they are not exploited.

### **3. WATER & HAMMAM AS A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON**

In general water has been an important part of the islam culture and even more to that of the Ottomans. The arabs that came to Europe by the IX-X centuries brought new knowledge for the usage of water. In contrast with the romans previously, the arabs would use the water more extensively. Water was used for irrigation, urban decorations and more specifically for personal hygiene, which was of particular importance. The difference with the Romans is that the Arabs did not limit the use of water only within the urban centers, they took it to the fields intending to develop a more extensive agriculture.

Based on some fondamental principles of the islam, the arabs at first and then the Ottomans would bring new practices with regard to personal hygiene of the people. The hammams are the main buildings that are associated not only with the cleaning of the body but also with other crucial social purposes.

From a religious point of view, the importance of hammam regards the very fact that someone prior to the prayers should be clean spiritually and physically.

The first hammams were built in Syria, during the Caliphate Umayyad (661-750). During this time the hammams mostly were built in castles or palaces in deserts. When the Ottomans later occupied Anatolia and then further made it to Europe, they spread quite extensively the culture of hammam. Considering their function as a social center they distributed in eastern and central Europe.

The hammam combines the structure and function of the early roman baths with the tradition of Islam such as the steam bath, the cleaning prior to the rituals and the respect for water. In contrast with the greco-roman tradition where the baths were public buildings, the islamic hammams were often built as extensions of mosques. Even the mosques would be part of larger complexes that simultaneously served as prayer sites and social centres.

The plan of the hammam projected a row of rooms next to each other. In these rooms the visitor entered while following an order. The first was the undressing room, then the cold room, warm room and the last was the hot room.

Rooms were covered with domed ceilings, a feature that gave to the visitors the image of the sky. In the warm rooms the ceiling was interrupted by small windows. They had two functions: provided light during the day and let the steam out. Usually the undressing room was the most decorated space of the hammam. Attached to this complex were the toilets. The majority of the historic hammams followed the roman system of hypocaust (heating), therefore the heat came underneath the floor. The ovens were behind the walls of the warm rooms. Also, the smoke and warm air from the ovens passed through the pipes below the floor before it made an exit through the walls of the chimney.

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While in the roman baths there would be pools, the hammams only used flowing water. According to the principles of islam, the standing water was considered not clean. This is why the hammams were not provided with pools.

The hammams were built for men and women. Some were built separately and others could be attended by both men and women, but in separate schedules. In some cases the hammams were transformed into entertainment venues, for wedding, birthdays ceremonies, to honor the start of the military service or for grooms.

In the islam the cleaning took place before the prayers. Two were the types of wash: *ghuls* which regarded the washing of the entire body and *wudu* that included only face, hands and feet. While the mosques had their own areas for partial wash, the hammams were built in their adjacent areas in order to offer the believers an entire wash of the body.

In the islam, the hammams had a variety of functions. Beyond the immediate space reserved for cleaning before the prayers, it served as a place of general hygiene, also as a venue of social events or as a meeting place. People could gather, meet and discuss among them, like in a cafeteria. In fact it has been said that the sultan had trusted people, some of whom were even paid, to go to various hammams, listen and collect information for different persons and learn the topics of their conversations.

The conservative countries did not permit for women to gather and socialise in public areas. Hammams contributed to the transformation of these realities. Women could gather among them, far from the eye of men and make friends and socialise. This is how the hammams played a crucial role in the life of muslim women, because it helped them gain a certain privacy and freedom.

Starting from the end of XIX and the beginning of XX century the hammams lost their prominence in the cities. A growing portion of the city population would build these washing facilities inside their houses. Indeed this process was indeed initiated from the higher ranks of the society.

#### **4. HAMMAM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

Hammams were part of the socio-civil architecture in the Ottoman Empire. In the cities of the empire, every neighborhood (*mëhallë*) had its own bath; the hammam for men and women serving simultaneously as meeting places, where people could talk for long hours. The Hammams were divided in Single-Hammam and Double-Hammam. The single-Hammam were built and used exclusively for men, women or both genders on different days or at different times (men in the morning and women in the afternoon). Usually on Thursdays the Tek-Hammam were reserved for women. To distinguish this, the *telak* (caretaker) would hang a coloured towel at the entrance door (1974, Shtylla.V, Monumetet 7-8, fq.119-137). Given their social role, often the hammams were very beautified and at cases even luxurious. Even famous architects, Mimar Sinan among them, had no embarrassment to engage in their projection and construction. As other hammams around the Islam world the architects that projected them were careful to preserve the tradition of the roman baths (roman terms) and projected mainly the spaces of the undressing hall (roman *apoditarium*), hot room (roman *caldarium*) and the cold room (roman *tepidarium*). They were dressed with

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marble slabs, covered with domes which at times had small windows that let the light through (2004, Mantrant.R). Another type would consist of three spaces: the room of cold water (soğugluk), room of warm water (ilikklik) and the room of hot water (sicaklik)

(2018, Inalcik.H, Renda.G).

## 5. THE HAMMAMS IN ALBANIA

In Albania the construction of baths started during the XVI century and continued until the XIX century (2016, A.Meksietj.). The first to mention them is Evlia Çelebiu (1672). The hammams (public baths), nowadays are preserved in Elbasan, Durrës, Shkodër, Gjirokastër, Delvinë, Krujë and elsewhere. They follow a similar functional scheme, undressing room, intermediary adaptation hall with heat and nearby are the sanitary and cleaning spaces as well as the washing room. The water depot was also part of the construction.

In total nowadays in Albania are preserved 10 hammams which are distributed as follows. The hammam of Shkodër;

The hammam of Lezhë; The hammam of Krujë; The hammam of Durrës; The hammam of Elbasan; The hammam of Skrapar (Stallinjë);  
The hammam of Gjirokastër; The hammam of Delvinë

From this list, only the Hammam of the castle of Elbasan is a double-hammam. Even with this case, however, initially it was projected as a tek-hammam but in a later phase was added a space reserved to women (1974, Shtylla.V, Monumentet 7-8, fq.119-137).

## 6. THE HAMMAM OF DURRËS

The building of the medieval hammam is a monument of first category, established with verdict nr. 1886 from the ministry of Education and Culture, date to 10.06.1973. The hammam is placed very close to the center of the city in the Archaeological Zone A, and as such is surrounded with several distinguished monuments including the museum house of Aleksandër Moisiu, the amphitheater, the Venetian tower, and the building of the market street (Figs. 1-5). It is dated in the XVIII century.

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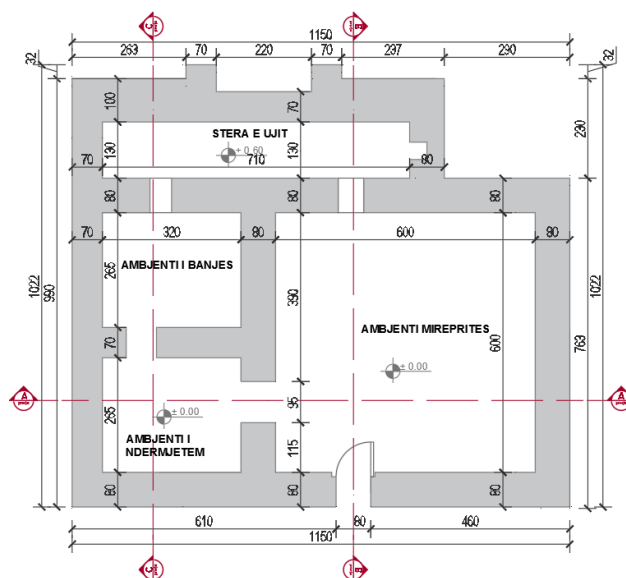


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## 7. ARCHITECTONIC DESCRIPION

The space within hammam is namely divided in 4 areas (Fig. 6).



Area 1 (Fig. 7) is the entrance, a quadratic room measuring 6.00x6.00 m. It served as the reception hall. The exchange of clothes and the equipment with the necessary accessories of the hammam like towels, clogs and so on took place here. In this area the clients would relax and have tea (1974, Shtylla.V, Monumetet 7-8, fq.119-137). It is covered with a massive dome and on its top is raised another smaller concentric dome. In the massive dome for lighting purposes are placed 12 holes in quadratic shape and one window, while in the smaller concentric dome are only 3 holes in circular shape.



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Area 2 (Fig 8) is the intermediary space and measures 3.20x2.65 m. This area serves as a corridor that connects with the hot and warm rooms and the hygiene-sanitary spots. The only function is that of intercommunication. In a little corner is an alcove with a stool where the Tellak (caretaker) would wash the clients who then rinsed in the warm room. It is covered with a hemispherical dome with three circular holes for aëring and lighting purposes and one window.



The Area 3 (Fig. 9) is the hot room and is directly connected with the room of the water deposit. The room was used for steam baths and massage. There are three decorated arches with small glass windows that give it a soft lightening. In the center is a big marble rock which warmed up when clients layed above it.

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Area 4 (Fig 10) is the water deposit. This is usually located at the bottom. The water of the deposit is heated from a fire that is started at a corner below the deposit (hearth), more precisely below the container that is located in the center of the deposit. This room has direct communication with the hotroom (Area 3) through a window that allows the passing of the hot **steam**.



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It must be stressed that by the beginning of XX century a two storey volume was added in front of the old bath. This served the administration and the undressing area (Fig. 12). It is recalled to have been highly damaged and fall apart in the 1970's (Fig. 13). During the 1990's the bath has been subject to restoration project and due to this attention it maintains the current integrity.

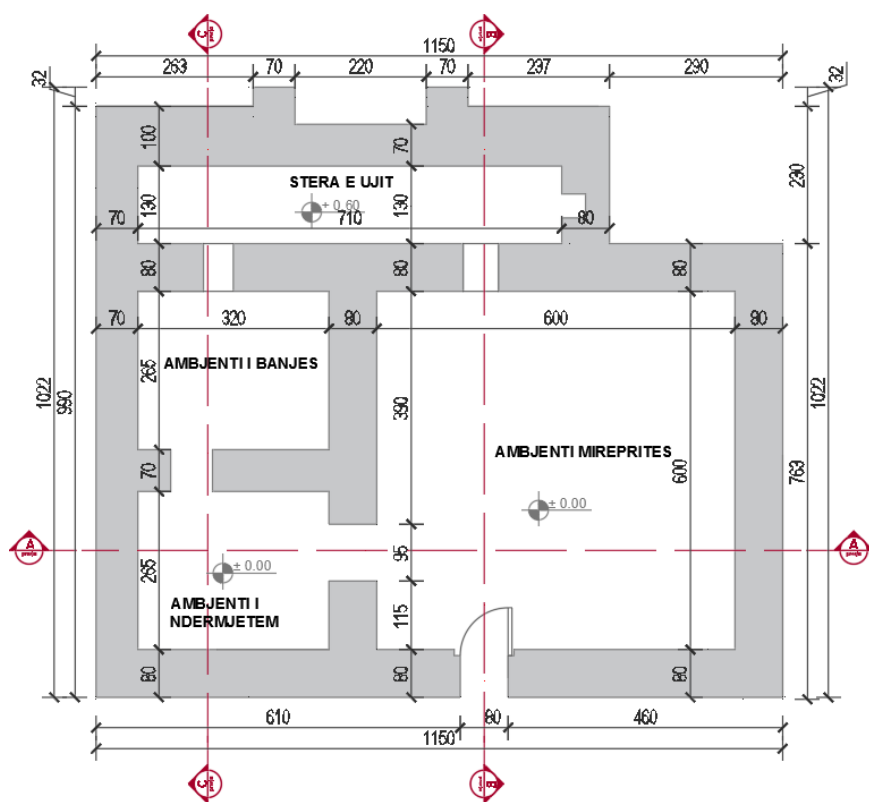


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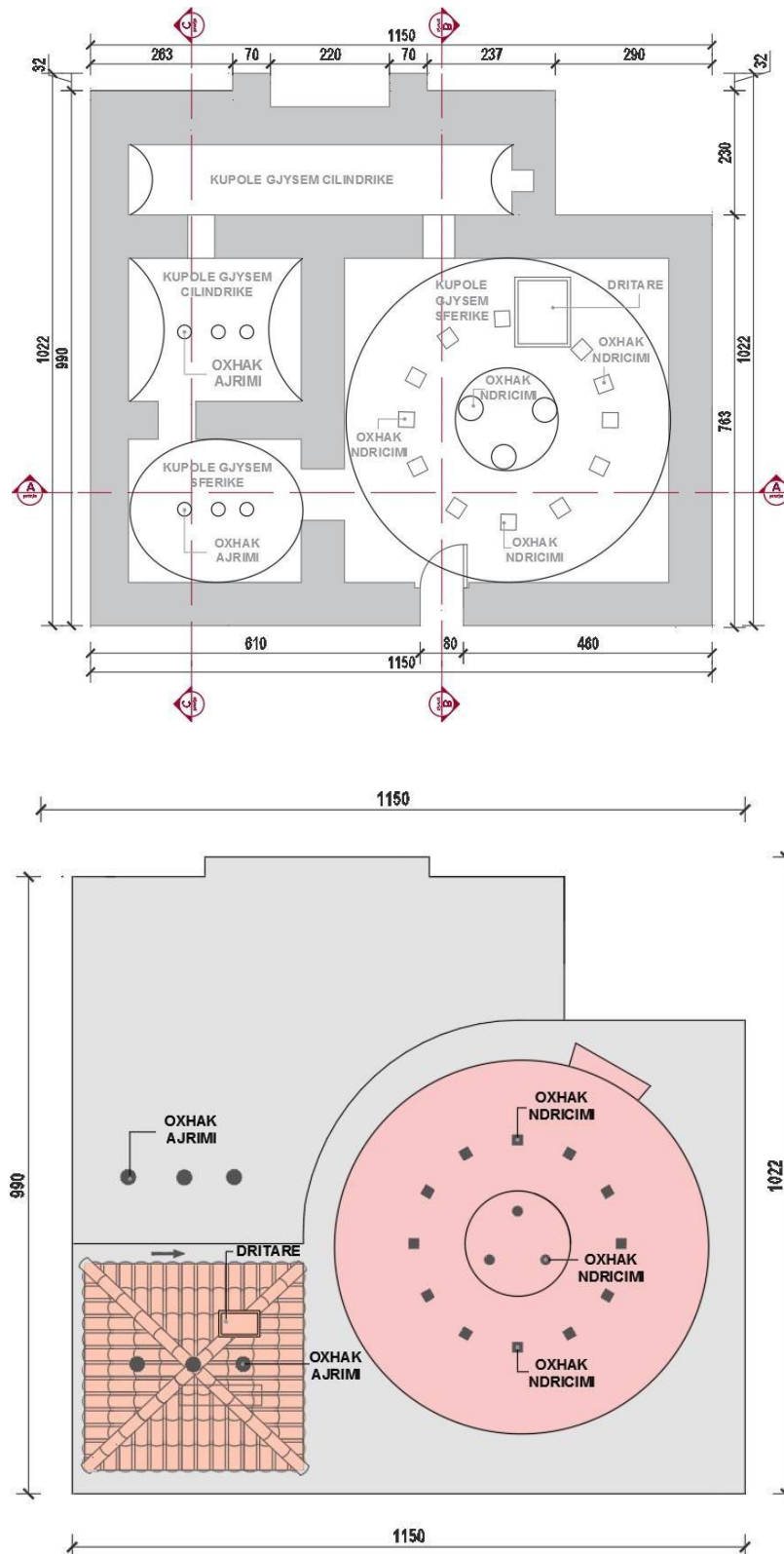
*Hammam: views, cuts, technical plans*





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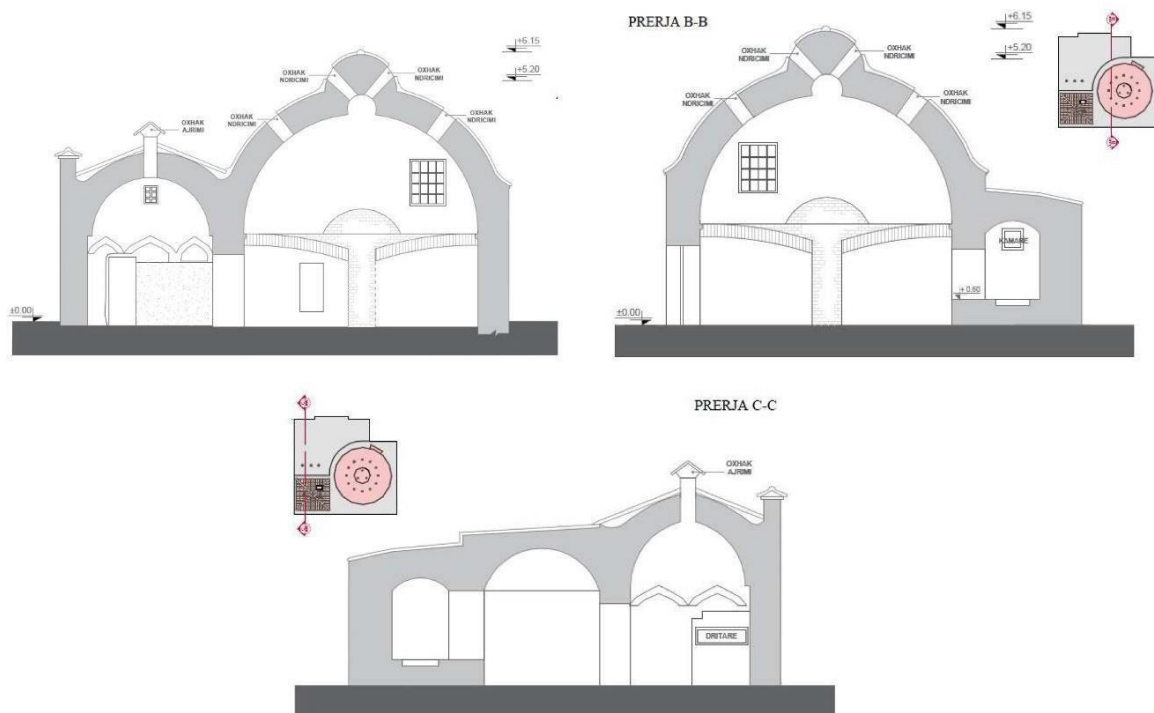


Fig. 17 Cuts

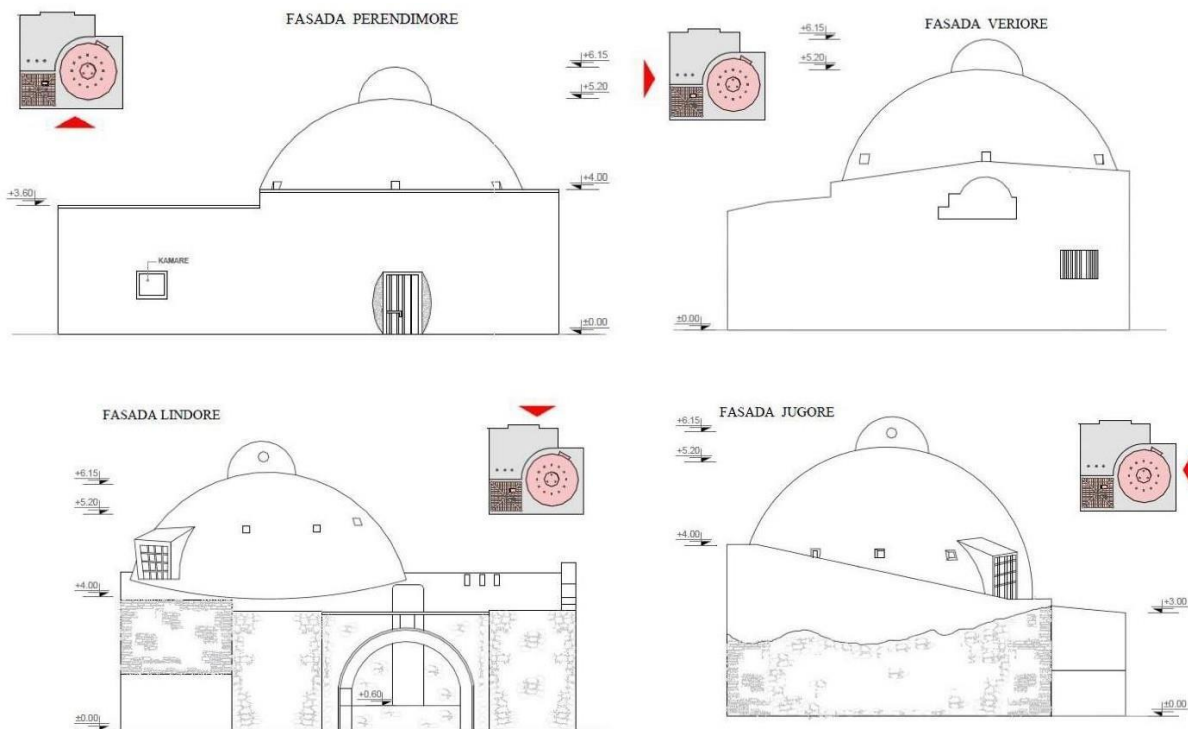


Fig. 18 Views

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