

The Church “St. John of Suceava – Nicoriță” (Iași, Romania) history and iconography

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Abstract:

Among the historical-monument churches of the city of Iași, the Nicorita church occupies the fourth oldest place in terms of building period (1626-1629) and is the oldest church with an open porch and bell-tower above it. Formerly a monastery in the old forest on the outskirts of the city, the current secular church in the Tătărași neighborhood, the church still preserves objects and inscriptions from the end of the 18th century, objects that come from both Moldavia and Transylvania. An important number of inscriptions and manuscripts are preserved on the iconostasis. The latter, together with the icons in the church's collection, reflect aspects of Moldavian iconography from different historical styles and periods: post-Byzantine at the end of the 18th century, the period of transition to realism from the beginning of the 19th century.

Keywords: *church, historical monument, iconography, iconostasis, Iasi*

1. Historical data about Nicoriță church

The Church of St. John of Suceava – “Nicoriță” is located in the city of Iași, on the street with the same name, being built between 1626 - 1629. In the 2015 List of Historical Monuments, it is tiered at no. 1141, with the code number IS-II-m-B-03956. Among the 36 churches of the city of Iași, the Nicorita church is the fourth oldest in terms of building period, being raised after the church “Transfiguration of Jesus” Socola (1555), the church of the Galata monastery (1582-1583) and the church “St. Sava” (1625). It was built, approximately, in the same period as the church Barnovschi (1627-1633).

The church was built by the hetman and head of Suceava county, Nicoara – also called Nicorita – and by his wife, Theodosia, the sister of the ruler Miron Barnovschi (Jumară 1996-1997: 118). It was raised on the

site of another wooden church, dedicated to St. John of Suceava, in honor of the passing of the saints' relics through Iasi, in 1402, on their way from the Cetatea Albă Fortress to Suceava (Erhan 2003: 131).

Initially it was a monastery, with church services in the Greek-language, dedicated to the Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. After the secularization of the monastery assets (1864) it became a parish church, as it is today. According to N. A. Bogdan, at one time it was the church of the leather craftsmen's guild and the carpenters' guild (Bogdan 1997: 219).

In describing the journey of the Patriarch Macarie of Antioch through Moldova in 1653, Paul of Aleppo mentions his participation in the Holy Liturgy, on All Saints' Sunday, in the Monastery St. John of Suceava "invited by the father superior:

After that I went into the living room. This place is truly delightful. Outside there are balconies, from where you can see the whole city, the place being high" (Bogdan 1997: 219). The visit of the patriarch shows the importance of the monastery in that period, its wealth being supported by the estates he owned: "the surroundings of the Monastery (in Iasi), Covurlui, Radacinesti, part of Vicoleni, (Tecuci), part of Munteni (Roman), part of Vetejesti (Tutova) etc. (Bogdan 1997: 219).

In 1858, under the guidance of Athanasius, the Archimandrite Exarch, the abbacy was rebuilt, a kindergarten currently operating inside it (Leonte & Ungureanu-Racoviță 2008: 15). In 2007, during the renovation of the building, an inscribed stone was discovered referring to the repairs done in 1858, confirming the data recorded by historians.

Around the church there was also a cemetery, demolished after 1876 (Erhan 2003: 132). This statement is confirmed by archaeological excavations that have led to the discovery of tomb stones (with unreadable signs) and an inscribed funerary tomb (Leonte & Ungureanu-Racoviță 2008: 15).

The repairs of the church were made after the 1838, 1863 and 1940 earthquakes. In 1814, according to the inscription at the entrance, extensive repair works were done to the church, under the guidance of Nicodim, the Archimandrite. The most important intervention was the closing of the porch (fig. 1). The current iconostasis of the church dates from this stage.

In 1945 and 1950 the walls affected by the 1940 earthquake were reanchored, and in August-September 1968 a consolidation of the building was carried out (Jumară 1996-1997: 122), and the last remaining traces of painting from 1950 were removed.

After 1989, the church was included in the National Restoration Program, some funds being wired, starting with 1996 when consolidation and restoration work started, motivated by the very advanced stage of the monument's degradation, both in terms of the structure of resistance, as well as the decorative part. In 2019, the consolidation of the monument was completed. During the restoration work carried out, the original architecture of the church with an open porch was restored; thus, the walls of the porch done in 1814 were removed and the original columns and pillars were preserved.

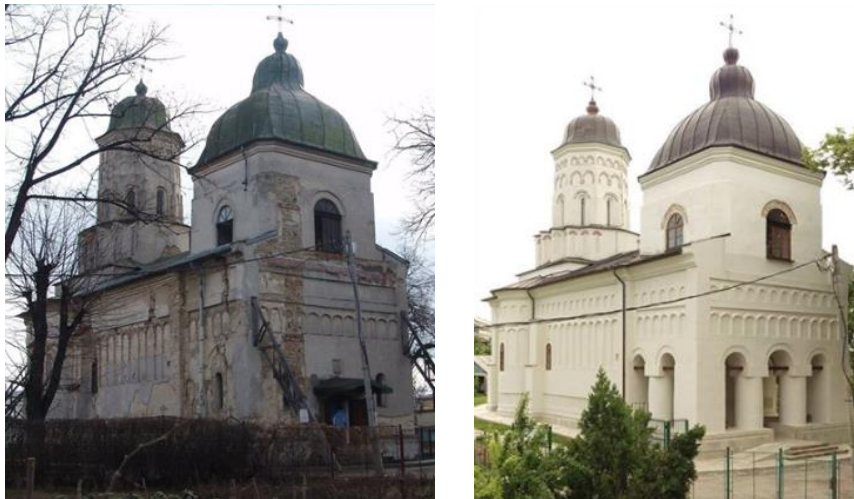


Fig. 1. Nicorița Church: before and after the restoration (2019)

<https://www.facebook.com/Monument1627/photos/rpp.198246226946731/1972651486172854/?type=3&theater>

2. The Collection of heritage assets

The Nicorița monastery was endowed with precious church objects that were lost in time. It is mentioned the sale of a *Tetraevangelion* – a manuscript in Slavonic - to the church of St. John Zlataust in Iași, in 1742 (Leonte & Ungureanu-Racovița 2008: 33). Nicolae Iorga mentions, in

1908, the existence of a *Holy Bible* (dated 1794, as a donation in 1806, from Stephen, the ‘servant of God’), a *Kiriadromion* (dated 1801, from Bucharest, given by the clucer – the responsible for the household - Constantin Duca), a *Book of Psalms* from Neamt (dated 1807), an *Euchologion* (dated 1811, Brasov), a *Holy Bible* from Buda (dated 1812), a *Kecragarion* (dated 1814, from Neamt Monastery, with a note about the earthquake in January 11, 1838, made by the donor – postelnic captain Ioanu Scorpanu) and a *Triodion* (1816) (Iorga 1908: 33).

V. Erhan (2003) also mentions, in part, the existence of old books such as: *The Bible of Iasi* (1794), *The Bible of Buda*, with a silver-covered cover, *The Bible of Neamt* (1858), covered in velvet and silver (Erhan 2003: 132) (fig. 2a). From the collection of prints made at the Neamt Monastery in the 19th century, they still keep: the *Octoechos*, *Menaion for April*, the *Book of Psalms*. Also, dating from the 19th century, there is a *Bible* printed at Pesta, a *Book of Psalms* (1835) from the Typography of Metropolitan Church, a *Horologion* (1835), a *Bible*, the *Octoechos*, the *Pentecostarion* (dedicated to the bishop Veniamin Costachi), the *Apostle*, the *Book of Psalms* (1843), etc. The Bibles of Neamt and Buda are still present among the church's assets, along with 90 other books from the 19th century.

The church keeps a collection of icons of saints, royal icons with silver riza set in worship iconostases, an epitaph (oil painting on canvas), Liturgical vessels of silver or gold-coated silver, from the 19th century (fig. 2b). Currently some pieces are preserved in the archive of the Archdiocese of Iasi (clothes, icons, books). In the nave a silver chandelier is preserved (fig. 2c).



Fig. 2. The Bible of Neamt (a), a silver chalice dating 1857 (b), the silver chandelier from the nave of the church (c) and the votive inscription (d)

3. The architecture of the church

The church was built of materials such as stone and brick, with about 1.5 m thick walls. The plan of the church is of a trefoiled type, divided into the altar, nave, narthex and porch, above which the bell-tower was erected. The construction is oriented from east to west.

Exterior architecture. The altar is in the shape of a semicircle, with a median window facing east. The semicircular apses of the nave are detached from the plane of the side walls and are flanked by the buttress corresponding to the arches inside. In the apses, two windows are placed, one to the north and another to the south. The buttress are small, with two levels of discharge; they are protected with corrugated ceramic tile.

Above the nave an octagonal tower was built, supported on two high bases, one square and one partially starred: on the north and south sides it has 12 corners, while on the west and east sides, the surfaces are simple. On each side of the tower there is a window (at the bottom) and two rows of niches (at the top). The Holy Cross is mounted on the tower.

The simple rectangular narthex has two windows on the south side. The access door from the porch is located on the western side. The bell tower is located on the porch, being accessed through an interior staircase made in the thickness of the north wall of the narthex. The tower has a tetragonal shape, with blunt edges. It houses six bells, the largest being cast in 1790, in Brasov (Erahan 2003: 132).

The basis of the church is one meter high. Above it, on the north, east and south, the facades are decorated with a row of bricks, placed on the edges, similar to those of the Aroneanu church (1594).

The north, east and south facades are decorated with blind, tall, rectangular niches, finished in a semicircular arch. Five windows are interspersed in the row of niches: one on each apsis, one on the north side of the narthex and two on its south wall. Above the niches, a simple relief is outlined.

Some architectural elements resemble those of the church "St. George" in Suceava city: the two windows arranged near the western extremities of the buttress; to the lateral apses the same niches appear, less pronounced in Nicorita compared to the church "St. George" (*Monumente Istorice bisericești din Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 1974: 284).

The walls are supported by five buttress: one on the center line of the altar and two on the south and north facades, near the lateral apses of the nave, corresponding to the interior arches separating the altar from the nave and the nave from the narthex.

Interior architecture. The entrance to the church is through the western side, through an open porch. In the porch the votive inscription is preserved, with stone incisions, in Greek letters, mentioning the carrying out of extensive repairs in 1814 (fig. 2d). The spacious narthex has windows only to the south. In the middle of the northern wall there is a door that leads up to the bell tower above the porch. The passage to the nave is made under a transverse arch supported by pillars.

The nave has semicircular lateral apses, illuminated by a high window. The tall tower is supported by pendants and arches; it is illuminated by eight windows. In front of the altar there is the 0.5 m narrow soleas, on which the iconostasis was placed.

The altar houses the (to the north) and the diaconicon (to the south). It is illuminated by a window facing east, on the center axis of the church.

The church was painted indoors in 1926, but at the 1950 and 1968 repairs, the painting was removed.

4. Iconostasis – historical data

The iconostasis of the Nicorita church is a typical piece for the Moldavian iconostasis, being made up of the tiers of the royal icons - with the low icons, the royal doors and the diaconate ones, the tiers of the feast icons, the apostles, the prophets and the perch with the crucifixion.

The oldest pieces of iconostasis are the royal icons, from 1794 (fig. 3). The year 1794 is mentioned on the royal icon of “St. Nicholas”, along with donors (fig. 4). The dating is also valid for the other three royal icons, with the same founders mentioned as in the icon of Saint Nicholas. The royal icons differ from the rest of the iconostasis, both stylistically and in terms of the technique used.



Fig. 3. The royal icons from 1794: "Mother of God" (a), "Jesus Christ" (b), "St. Nicholas" (c), dedication icon "Sf. John of Suceava" (d)

The royal icons present Romanian inscriptions in Cyrillic script. The founders' names were inscribed in white, symmetrically placed to the left and right of the central character in the lower part of the icons, on the background:

The inscription on the royal icon “St. Nicholas” are: “*Founder. Nikita. Savva. Ana. Anita*” (bottom, on the left) and “*Ioana. and Tasia: 1794. May. 30.*” (bottom, on the right) (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Inscriptions on the royal icon “St. Nicholas”: left (a), right (b)

The inscription on the royal icon “Mother of God” are partially illegible: “*Nikita S [...]*” (bottom, on the left) and “[...] *Tasia*” (bottom, on the right) (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Inscriptions on the royal icon “Mother of God”: left (a), right (b)

On the royal icon “Jesus Christ” the founders are mentioned (in partially erased writing), but also an undeciphered inscription: “*Founders. Niki [...] itza*”. (bottom, on the left) and “*Sava. Ana. Ioana. Tasia* [...]” (bottom, on the right) (fig. 6).

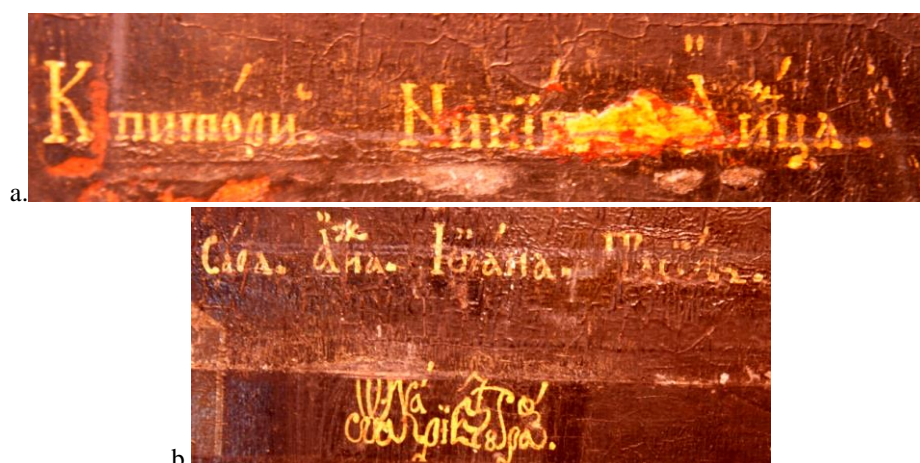


Fig. 6. Inscriptions on the royal icon “Jesus Christ”: left (a), right (b)

The inscription on the dedication icon “Sf. John of Suceava”: “*Founders.*” (bottom, on the left) and “*Ioan. Vasâlca.*” (bottom, on the right) (fig. 7).

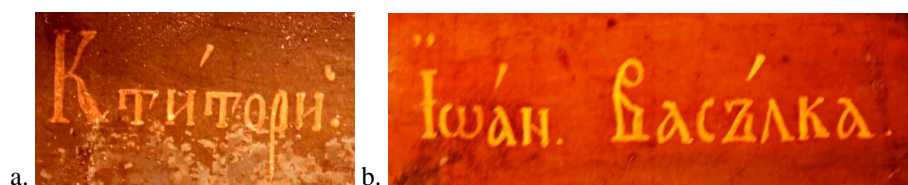


Fig. 7. Inscriptions on the icon of the St. John of Suceava: left (a), right (b)

One can notice that the icons of St. Nicholas, the Mother of God and Jesus share the names of the founders Nichita and Tasia. The names Sava, Ana, Anita, Ioana can be found on the icons of “St. Nicholas” and “Jesus”.

In the years 1848-1849 the royal icons were adorned with silver riza (revetment), gold-coated silver (haloes, crowns, medallions) and precious stones (fig. 8).



Fig. 8. The icons with the rizas: “Mother of God” (a), “Jesus Christ” (b), “St. Nicholas” (c), dedication icon “Sf. John of Suceava” (d)

The revetment of the icon “Sf. Nicholas” was donated in 1847 by Dimitrie Suceveanu, the well-known psalm singer of the Metropolitan Church of Moldova. Three risas were made by means of the parishioners’

money: in 1848 - the riza of the icon of the “St. John”, and in 1849 the rizas of the icons “Mother of God” and “Jesus Christ”. The last three rizas have the signature of the master Chir Georgiu (fig. 9).

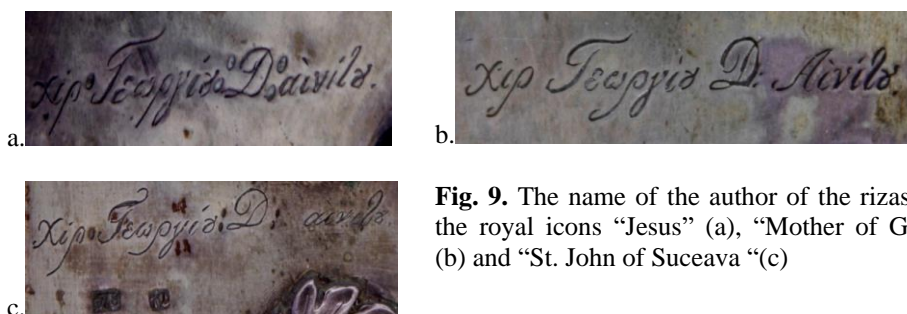


Fig. 9. The name of the author of the rizas on the royal icons “Jesus” (a), “Mother of God” (b) and “St. John of Suceava” (c)

The inscriptions on the rizas of the royal icons. The inscriptions on the riza of St. Nicholas’ s icon are: “*This Holy Icon. was dressed in silver. At the expense of God’s servant. Dimitrie Sucevanu Protopsalm singer of the St*” (bottom, on the left) and, on the left, “*The Metropolitan, and His Wife Ecaterina, Towards Their and their kind’s Eternal Remembrance. 1847. 24 December*” (fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Inscriptions on the riza of St Nicholas’ s icon: left (a), right (b)

Dimitrie Suceveanu (1813-1898) was the protopsalt singer of the Metropolitan Church of Moldova from 1844 to 1890, with a brief interruption between the years 1860-1864 (Barnea 2009: 44). He made an

important contribution to the development of church music by making a synthesis of the Romanian Orthodox Church songs in our country, by adapting Greek songs to the Romanian language and by publishing original works of musical composition. Dimitrie Suceveanu lived in the first part of his life in the Nicorita neighborhood of Iasi, which probably caused him to donate the silver riza from the “St. Nicholas”, in 1847. It is also known that he donated in 1884, together with his wife, Ecaterina, a *Triodion* to the Văratec Monastery (Neamţ), and in the will he drafted in 1894, he donated much of his wealth to the hospital “St. Spiridon” from Iasi and for the maintenance of some churches, having no heirs (Barnea 2009: 44).

The inscriptions on the riza of St John of Suceava icon “Sf. John of Suceava” are:

This Holy Icon with the dedication of the Great Saint Martyr Ioan Nove at ‘Necoriță’ Monastery” (bottom, on the left) and “Covered with Silver ‘Clothes’ by the people for the Holy Place, with the power of the Merciful God. and His Mother: 1848 November 10 (bottom, on the right) (fig. 11).

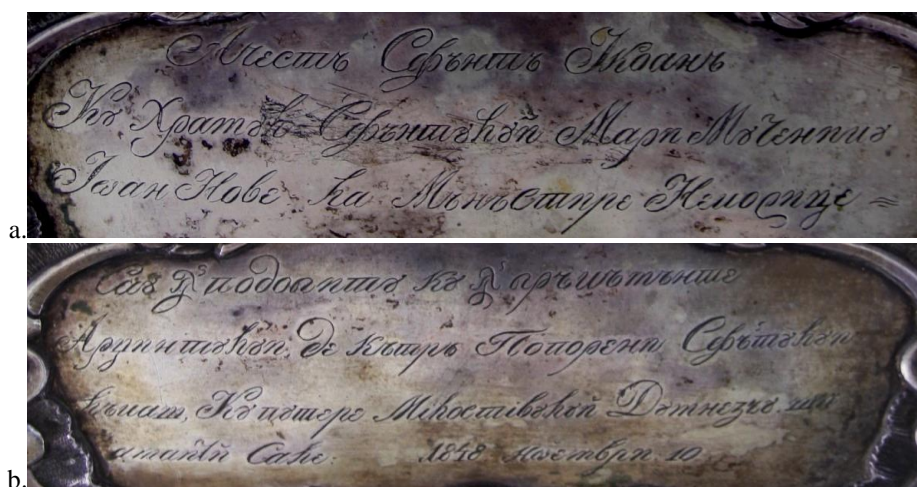


Fig. 11. Inscriptions on the riza of St John of Suceava icon: left (a), right (b)

The inscription on the riza of "Mother of God" icon is:

This Holy Icon the Face of the Mother of G(od) that is in the Holy Monastery Necoriți, dedicated to Saint Martyr Ioan Nove, was adorned with garments of Silver D: by the people of the Holy Place: with the power of the Merciful God and of the Holy Mother 1849: M. (fig. 12).



Fig. 12. The inscription on the riza of "Mother of God" icon (bottom, center)

The inscription on the riza of the icon "Jesus Christ":

This Holy Icon the image of the Saviour which is in the Nicorite Monastery with the dedication of Saint Martyr, John of Suceava, it was adorned with silver 'clothing': by the people. To the holy place with power of the Merciful God and of the Holy Mother 1849: Mart: 24. (fig. 13).



Fig. 13. The inscription on the riza of the icon "Jesus Christ" (bottom, center)

The royal icons were set in an iconostasis dated in 1814. This iconostasis was made in the context of extensive repairs and alterations carried out at the monastery church, as shown by the votive inscription mounted above the entrance door.

The date of iconostasis was recorded at the base of the Holy Cross in the perch. The inscription is in Greek (fig. 14).

The transcript of the inscription: “Μνήσθητι Κύριε ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ Σου, τὸν δοῦλον σου Εὐστάθιον γοναίων καὶ ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ. 30 Σεπτεμβρίου 1814”. Translation from Greek: “*Remember the Lord in your kingdom, your servant Evstathion, his parents and his brothers. 1814 September 30*” (Transcription and translation made by rev. Gregorios-Telemachos Stamkopoulos, Dr. Theology, associate professor at the University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki).



Fig. 14. Inscription from the basis of Holy Cross, dated 1814

5. The compositional structure of the iconostasis

The iconostasis is organized on five tiers, according to the tradition of Moldova and Țara Românească: the royal tier (which includes both the royal icons and the low icons), the tiers of the feast icons, the icons of St. Apostles, the icons of St. Prophets and, in the upper part, the crown. In total, the iconostasis has of 51 icons. These tiers alternate with polychrome carved wood friezes.

The tier of the royal icons is formed, from north to south, by the icons of “Sf. Nicholas”, “Mother of God Hodighitria”, “Jesus Christ Emperor”, “St. John of Suceava” (icon of dedication). Each icon is flanked by two fusiform columns, perforated, polished, the decoration being made up of vines (grapes, leaves) and flowers.

The icons of “Jesus Christ” and “Mother of God” are made in the same way: on the green background there is a golden throne, very rich in

plant ornaments, on which Jesus is standing, and respectively the Mother of God with the Child. Jesus is represented in the triple posture of the Bishop (who blesses, wears the vestments of the bishops), the Teacher (with the open Bible) and the Emperor (who sits on the throne).

In the icons of "St. Nicholas" and "Sf. John of Suceava" the saints are represented standing, the silhouettes being placed on gold backgrounds (at the top) and landscapes with architectural structures (at the bottom). St. Nicholas is dressed as a bishop, with the Bible in his left hand, and blessing with his right hand. St. John is dressed in a blue shirt and a red cloak, and in his hand he is holding a large cross and green leafs, signs of martyrdom (fig. 3 c, d). The low icons of the iconostasis are painted in correspondence with the royal icons. From north to south there are scenes such as: "*Sf. Nicholas when they had mercy on the virgins*", "*The Mother of our Lord when they entered the house of Zacharias*", "*Christ when they prayed in the garden*", "*The New St. John: when they beat him [...]*". The icons are framed in carved, perforated (à jour), polished wood, with geometric and vegetable motifs.

The icons in the royal tier alternate with the royal doors and the diaconate doors. The royal doors are carved, perforated, polished, with four medallions in which the four Holy Evangelists are represented: John (above) and Luke (down) on the left door, Matei (above) and Mark (down) on the right door. The diaconate doors depict St. Archangel Michael (on the left) and St. Archangel Gabriel (on the right), standing, wearing specific symbols: St. Michael is holding the sword of fire in his right hand and the balance of judgment in his left hand, and St. Gabriel is represented with the lily in its hand, a specific element of the Annunciation scene.

The tier of the feast icons includes the representations of the 12 royal feasts, to which is added the icon of "*The Last Supper*", located on the central axis of the iconostasis. The order of the icons is chaotic, neither the criterion of the chronology of the historical events, nor the order established by the hermitage being respected. This aspect confirms the subsequent interventions on iconostasis. From north to south there are the icons of: "*The Birth of our Holy Mother*", "*The Birth of Christ*", "*The Resurrection*", "*The Palm Sunday*", "*The Resurrection of Lazarus*", "*Stratenie*" – the presentation of Jesus at the temple, "*The Last Supper*",

“*The Baptism of Christ*”, “*The Ascension of Christ*”, “*The Annunciation*”, “*The Descent of the Holy Spirit*”, “*The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*”, “Preobrajenie” or *The transfiguration of Jesus* (fig. 17).

The feast icons are closed compositions, with the characters placed in the foreground, the landscapes and architectural structures showing trends of linear perspective. The painter sought a realistic realization of the skin, the clothes or the vegetation elements, specific to the period of the beginning of the 19th century. The color in the oil is modeled with both thick touches and transparency. At times we can see naivety regarding the proportions of the characters, the lines of the drawing, the way of underlining the surfaces. The clothes have the lights made with golden pigment. The names of the feasts are written in Romanian, with Cyrillic characters, in white.

The tier of the icons of the Holy Apostles shows the 12 Apostles of Jesus, clothed in robes, dressed in sandals and holding scrolls of prayer in their hands. They are represented in semi-profile, oriented to Deisis (located on the central axis of iconostasis). Each icon has the initial of the name, which help to identify the apostles. Among the apostles we can see the figure of St. John, positioned - atypically - with his back to the viewer. From the north to the south there are the icons of: Ap. Thomas, Ap. Jacob, Ap. Andrew, Ev. Mark, Ev. John, Ap. Peter, Deisis, Ap. Philip, Ap. Simon, Ev. Luke, Ap. Bartholomew, Ev. Matthew, Ap. Paul (fig. 16).

The tier of the icons of the Holy Prophets consists of six medallions, each having painted two prophets (fig. 18). They were represented in semi-profile, up to the middle, oriented towards the icon of Mother of God Oranta (Panagia), located median, on the central axis of the iconostasis. The icons do not have inscriptions. According to the specific symbols, the following prophets can be identified: Jacob (with the ladder), Gideon (with the fleece full of dew), Isaiah (with a charcoal burner), Zechariah (dressed in priestly clothes, with the menorah in his hand), David (old, with crown, with the ark in his hands), Aaron (holding the budded rod), Solomon (young, bearded, with a crown, with the Temple in his hand), Ezekiel (old man, holding in his left hand two closed doors), Daniel (as a young man).

The perch is made up of the Holy Cross flanked by the two icons of the Virgin Mary and St. Ev. John (fig. 14).

6. The style of the iconostasis painting and polychromy

The royal icons were painted in the manner of the post-Byzantine tradition painting on which were engraved some elements of baroque and realism. The painting is smooth, made in tempera on the priming. The Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ are represented sitting on golden thrones, with plant motifs, thrones that stand out clearly from the dark malachite green background. They have their heads covered with royal crowns, surrounded by haloes. The garments are rich, ornamented with floral motifs. The portraits were made in the manner of Eastern tradition, but no longer remember the hieratism specific to the Orthodox icon, but the tendency towards realism. The interiority of the saints in the icons, here is replaced by sobriety (fig. 3a, b).

In contrast to the royal icons, the painting of Holy Cross, of the icons of St. Prophets, St. Apostles, of the feast icons, of the royal and diaconal doors, as well as of the low icons, was executed in a realist style. The painting is smooth, in a thin layer, in transparency, but sometimes there are pasty, vigorous touches. The color is warm, dominating the ocher, brown, green. The chromatic accents are set either with complementary (red next to green, in the Apostles tier) or with cold tones (malachite green). The feast icons, the icons of the prophets, the medallions of the royal doors are made in predominantly in dark colors, largely due to the dark color or the brown background. At St. Cross, the white-yellowish silhouette of Jesus is clearly distinguished from the brown shades of the wood of the cross and the background. The St. Apostles tier creates diversity by representing high silhouettes in red and ocher garments on green shades. Only in the low icons the color is brighter and the colors are more pasty.

The brightness of the ensemble is given first of all by the polychrome gold and silver, enriched by the light passing through the perforated doors and friezes, through the sculpture of the icons of the prophets. The pillars, the royal doors, the columns, the decorative friezes are richly carved, with plant and geometric motifs. The decorative elements of each tier differ in shape, weight, size, dimensions. The massive pillars at the lower part of the iconostasis support the slender columns of the royal tier. Above the royal icons there is a rich frieze, made of perforated wood, with baroque-inspired decorative motifs such as

flower beds, vines, cartouches. Between the festal icons the light enters through the perforated rods, consisting of a four leaf alignment, having a chrysanthemum in the middle. Above the festal icons a much narrower and simple frieze was placed as compared to the lower frieze. The icons of the apostles are flanked by small columns with floral motifs, and at the top they are delimited by arches made of profiled rods.

The launch of the assembly vertically is due to the oversized icons “Deisis” and “Mother of God Oranta” from the central axis, to which is added the arrangement of the icons of the prophets on two ascending lines that converge to the Crucifix.

Polychromy. For decorating the iconostasis, the plant and geometric motifs were used. The plant elements - inherited from the Moldavian Baroque style - are vines, acanthus leaves, iris flowers, tulips, chrysanthemums and roses. They are framed by profiled rods, sticks with denticles. Flowers and gilded ribbons are entwined. The spaces between the plant elements are adorned with accolades and palmettes. A rarer element in the decoration of the iconostasis is the five-cornered crown, placed four times in the frieze above the royal icons. In the same frieze there is the traditional vineyard, symbol of the wine that is sanctified during the Holy Liturgy.

The columns that limit the royal icons have the cylindrical spindle, on which spirals, flowers and ribbons are wrapped in a spiral. At the top, the columns are dominated by composite capitals (rolls and plant elements). In the tiers of the feasts and the apostles the ordinary columns were replaced with flattened carved decorative elements (with plant motifs: leaves and flowers) (fig. 15, 16, 17). The “Deisis” icon, from the St. Apostles tier, is flanked by two large, parallelepiped columns, with grooves in the lower third and vegetal elements at the top (fig. 15).

Within the iconostasis, the symmetries of the decorations, the unity of the tiers and the alternation of the vertical decorations are respected.



Fig. 15. The central part of the iconostasis (feast and Apostles icons)



Fig. 16. The left part of the Apostles tier



Fig. 17. The right part of the feast icons tier



Fig. 18. The right part of the Prophets tier

Conclusions

The Church “St. John of Suceava” Nicoriță, former monastery, stands out among the churches-historical monument of the city of Iași because of its antiquity and its architecture. At present, little historical information is preserved from the first part of its existence, the oldest inscriptions preserved being from 1790 (on a bell) and 1794 (on the iconostasis and on a Bible). The iconostasis and liturgical objects of the church's heritage, in addition to the historical data they provide, also reflect aspects regarding the achievements of Moldavian and

Transylvanian artists and craftsmen from the end of the 17th century – to the beginning of the 19th century.

Thanks

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