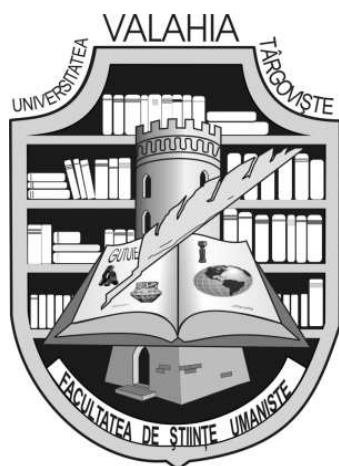


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Wooden Church from Târnăvița, Hunedoara County

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Abstract: *Wooden Church from Târnăvița, Hunedoara County.* The wooden church from Târnăvița village is one of the most beautiful and valorous from Mureș Meadow, in Hunedoara County. This church from seventh decade of 17th century preserve the archaic forms and dimensions, with a interior paint from two periods – from 17th and 18th centuries. Is a listed monument in A class, but its state of conservation is poor. This monument is representative for wooden churches from Mureș Valley in Hunedoara County and its integral saving must to be a priority for the specialized teams.

Key words: wooden church, 17th century, plan, elevation, interior paint, state of conservation, emergency intervention

Context

Târnăvița village unfolds along Târnăviței Valley, appearing as early as 1484 in old documents with different names in time (C. Suci, 1968). On a hill, in north-east of the village, are situated two churches (one from wood and another one from bricks) at approximate three meter distance between them. Nearby the forest is extended in north and north-west parts. The wooden church is listed on the monuments list, in A class (HD-II-m-A-0346) (http://www.cjhunedoara.ro/hunedoara/uploads/files/cultura/lista_monumentelor_istorice.pdf).

Belonging to the 17th century, the church has marked on the enter door frame, the year of the end of building – 166[?], with Slavic words. The inscription remembers the bishop from that time – Sava [Brancovici], the prince Mihai Apafi and the date of build (*Cu vrerea Tatălui și cu ajutorul Fiului și cu săvârșirea Sf[ântului] Duh se făcu această beserică în zilele craiului Apafi Mihai arhiepiscop fiind kir Sava [Brancovici] anul 166[?] în luna iunie. S-a [...] în luna iunie – translated in Romanian – F. Dobrei et. al, 2010). In august 1661 was given to the church a copy from Cazania of Varlaam, was bought with 40*

florinți, from Mihail (Alba County). Inside this was noted that it is bought by price Mihai Oprean in memory of his relations (cumpărat de Oprean Mihai la această sfântă biserică în Târnăvița ca să fie de pomană, să se pomenească Sanfira, Mihai, Cătă, Crăste, Ionaș, Ștefan, Parascheva, Anuța, Maria, Pătru). The church age is attested by the old pall witch remember the dedicate moment (s-au săvârșit și s-au sfințit cu mâinile sfințitului chiriach Teodosie și de Ch[risto]s iubitorul Domn Constantin Basarab, voevod la toată Tara Românească). This document is stored at Gai Monastery, Arad County (F. Dobrei, 2011).

The church appears also in registry books from 1733, 1750, 1761-1762, 1805 (F. Dobrei, 2011) and 1829-1831 (*Consignatio statistico topographica ...*) and on Josephine map from 1769-1773 (Josephine Map http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Josephinische_Landaufnahme_pg167.jpg).

Description

The archaic plan is rectangular, with west and east parts uncrossed, polygonal with three sides. Access door is situated on the south side of

narthex, and the altar has three entrances, but Ioana Cristache Panait submit the possibility of existence of two entrances. We consider that in the moment of the first paint site from 17th century was already three entrances (after analyzing the outline and decorative motives from these areas) (Fig.1 b).

The church basement was made from stone and fixed with plaster from concrete. Oak sills are changed after the consolidation of basement and were isolated with asphalt board. The walls

beams are horizontally placed, all in all, and dovetail jointed. Transversal walls are jointed with north and south walls with half joints. The massive frame of the door, jointed with bridle joints, maintain the old hols of wood latch. Bulging beams from the top of the walls are decorated with big carved retreated lobes. On this consoles rest the ground beam, at distance from walls, with special places for the spars. All sills and walls are consolidated with metallic nails and cramps (Fig. 1 a).



Fig. 1 – a. Dovetail joints and decoration of consoles; b. The door from north side of narthex.



Fig. 2 – Wooden church from Târnăvița village, north-east view

Wooden Church from Târnăvița, Hunedoara County

The roof, unique for all construction, copying the plan is covered with two layers of hand-made shingles. To protect the church with damaged roof, in august 2009 was covered with a temporary protected canvas. The robust bell tower has a rectangular plan, is posted upper narthex, and has a pavilion on sills and two windows on each side of the gallery. Bell tower roof has a double pitch and is covered with shingles (Fig. 2).

Inside the elevation is represented by the new fir boards ceiling upper narthex, sitting on

beams; the nave has a semicircular arch from oak planks, sitting on two tympanans and median massive arch, from oak, which is decorated with lobes. Altar has a semicircular arch with two pitches and a transversal arch on the north and south walls (similar with that one from nave). At altar arch was used the fir boards. Entire church has a fir board's floor.

Interior of the church is painted in tempera technique on a plastered walls and interstitial canvases. In narthex we can distinguish only few faces, ground and colours. In narthex loft, on the



Fig. 3 – a. Imperial doors; b. The ceremonial Flag from altar table



Fig. 4 – Interior paint from altar

tympan from nave arch are preserved partial the ground layers, being a proof in the evolution of this church, where the nave arch was continued upper narthex and the ceiling and bell tower was built after that.

Iconographic program from nave contain representations of Jesus Christ Pantocrator, sky with stars and angels on arch, God Father and saints on west tympan, Iacov Dream, Crucifixion

and apostles on the iconostasis. In nave, on the north and south walls are painted saints, but the paint is lost in major part. On the imperial doors are painted Petru and Pavel Apostles (Fig. 3 a). In altar are represented scenes, saints (hierarchs and archdeacons Aavram Sacrifice, God Father, Virgin Mary with Jesus in her arms, etc) (Dionisie din Furna, 2000) (Fig. 4).



Fig. 5 – a. Wooden pieces stored on the walls; b. Biological attack at the beams

The church was painted in different period. Ioana Cristache Panait consider that in the first phase, in 17th century, was paint the iconostasis and imperial icons, by a painter from Târgoviște

School. After, in 18th century was painted interior space and imperial doors, by Constantin zugravul (I. C. Panait, 2000). But we observe that the draws, faces expressions, colours used,



Fig. 6 – a. degradation of interstitial canvas; b. Degradation of beams – inside the church

iconographic representations are the same at the iconostasis, at the saints from north and south walls and west walls in nave, the figure from narthex and altar entire paint. The saints from walls of nave and altar are framed by the same columns and arcades. At second period of paint belongs only Jesus Christ Pantocrator and possible the sky with stars and imperial doors.

Inside are still preserved two icon supports, painted with vegetal and geometric motifs. The altar table, made from stone, is covered with an old ceremonial flag, which is painted on both sides with oil colours, representing Three-in-one in occidental style on first side, and Saint Parascheva with Mihail and Gavril Archangels on second side (from 19th century) (Fig. 3 b). On

this table is the monstrance in the form of mitre, from 19th century, crosses and candlesticks. A beautiful chandelier, from painted wood and metal, is left in a corner, on the floor, in a bad condition of conservation.

Material and methods

In our analysis of the church from Târnăvița village we start with historical sources from State Archive, Hunedoara County and Ardeal Romanian Orthodox Mitropoly Archive from Sibiu. For this theme we find valuable informations in the books of Ioana Cristache Panait (I. C. Panait, 2000), Florin Dobrei (F. Dobrei, 2011; F. Dobrei *et. al.*, 2011), the article of Eugenia Greceanu (E. Greceanu, 1969), informations preserved on the church and another published studies about the history, description of areal of Mureș Valley. The research in situ includes many views of monuments, of interior spaces, photographing and studding entire church and all components, objects and analysis of conservation state from 2009 to 2012. For the measurements of wood humidity we used a Basetech BT-300 humidometer.

Results and discussions

The church has the main disadvantage its position near trees, the new church and the hill slope is in north-south direction. The basement is consolidated with concrete, in not enough high and the sills reach at ground level. Between basement and sills is a isolation with asphalt board, which at on the north part is not efficient. We can observe the effect – biological attack is much more intense, on big areas at sills and walls. These degradations were accentuated because the high humidity was maintained by the pieces of wood stored during cold season, on the north, north-east and north-west walls of the church (Fig. 5 a, b).

Humidity average of the wood was registered from the sills and walls. The major values were at sills to the all sides (*aprox.* 16, 17%), at walls the averages to the all sides were from 14 to 16% in the median areas and in the upper part the average was 15-17%. From here we can observe that the high humidity favour biological attack of insects and fungi.

All sills were changed and consolidated with metallic cramps. Walls present distortions, minor deformations and looseness of joints at some beams. Is very interesting the aspect of little church with the walls and sills from with many

cramps and nails, like an iron decoration. In the upper part of walls we can observe moisture marks and stains. The shingles roof is much damaged, so, in this condition the church was on the list of DALA Foundation for saving many wooden churches from Romania (http://60-project.blogspot.com/2009_08_01_archive.html). In 2009 the church was covered with a temporary canvas, which remained the only protection for the church more than three years, because the project stops. The negative consequences were not slow to appear: during application of canvas the workers were produced damages to the roof and in present the biological attack is present at this canvas.

The boards from bell tower are dislocated, present cracks, losses of wood and hols from peckers. Entire structure of roof and bell tower is instable, is empirical consolidated with timber and metallic nails and cramps.

Inside all board's floor have biological attack, the narthex ceiling is new and in loft we find massive deposits of dirt, vegetal, animal and insects remains, and objects random stored. All arches present moisture marks and stains, biological attack, cracks and marginal losses.

Regarding interior paint we observe that in a major part the painting layers was washed by water from infiltrations (the most exposed areas are: in narthex, on the walls, in nave on the walls, median, north and inferior part of arch, in altar on the central and south part at the arch, north-east, south and upper part of walls), and interstitial canvases are fallen, decayed, lost and rotten. On all paint layers are moisture marks and stains (Fig. 6 a, b).

Degradations were made by people from negligence or intentional: carbonizations at walls, fixing of boards with iron nails, wax on icons and iconostasis, scratches on the paint especially with the ceremonial flags, wear at the walls, *etc.*

In the church doesn't electricity, because the monument is not used from 1927, when the new church was built. Fire protection, anti effraction and monitoring systems doesn't exist. This monument present a lot of degradations and damages, being one of the most badly damaged from Mureș Valley, despite the fact that is indexed in A class. The first step is the elaboration of the scientific projects for conservation, preservation and restoration of entire monument and for interior paint.

Among the emergency measures to be carried

out in the shortest time remember: prophylactic consolidation of interior paint, changing the old shingles with another one, handmade, moving pasted wall furniture, of ceremonial flags and icon from iconostasis that cover the original paint.

Other emergency measures are: rebuilding and exalting the basement, improving drains, treatments and consolidation of sills, walls and floor, obstructing the blanks with grates to prevent birds and animals to enter. Structures of roof and bell tower have to be consolidated. The monument has to be anti fire and anti effraction protected, using special alarms and fire extinguisher (with water mist for interior paint) manually and automatically. For permanent monitoring of interior microclimate (temperature and humidity) is recommended to install data loggere. Nearby trees is recommended to be felled, all vegetation and cleanness to be maintained. Is indicated the scientific restoration of interior paint in the shortest time.

Conclusion

This monument from 17th century is representative for this area and for Transylvania, because the archaic forms and dimensions are still preserved, interior paint is preserved in original form, unfortunately washed in a major part, the arch from nave is from oak – few churches here preserved the original arches, the transversal arch from nave and altar are massive and carved, in loft is still preserved the ground on the tympan.

Târnăvița church though it in on A class of historical monuments, is one the most damaged from Mureș Valley, needing urgently intervention, protection and care. It is very important to save our monuments and we hope that in this case the needed sums to be found.

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