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# ‘Saints and Soldiers’

## 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Russian Religious Art in Southern Bulgaria

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RÉSUMÉ : L'article clarifie l'histoire de plusieurs pièces du patrimoine mobile de deux institutions monastiques fondées par des citoyens russes en Bulgarie pour commémorer la bravoure et l'héroïsme des soldats et officiers russes tués pendant la guerre russo-turque de 1877-1878 : le Monastère de l'Ascension, avec son église 'Saint-Alexandre Nevsky', construite entre 1879-1882 sur ordre du célèbre 'général blanc' Mikhail Skobelev sur les collines de Bakadzhik, près de Yambol ; et le Monastère de la Nativité à Shipka, construit (et probablement consacré en 1902) à l'initiative de la mère du général, Olga Skobeleva, par un comité directeur dirigé par le diplomate et homme d'état russe Nikolai Ignatiev.

MOTS-CLÉS: icônes russes ; guerre russo-turque ; objets liturgiques ; art orthodoxe ; Bulgarie.

REZUMAT: Articolul prezintă câteva observații asupra a două instituții monahale rusești înființate pentru comemorarea vitejiei și eroismului soldaților și ofițerilor ruși morți în timpul războiului ruso-turc din 1877-1878: Mănăstirea Înălțării Domnului, cu biserica „Sf. Alexandru Nevski”, construite între 1879-1882 pe dealurile Bakadzhik de lângă Yambol, la ordinul celebrului „General Alb” Mihail Skobelev, și Mănăstirea Nașterii Domnului din orașul Shipka, construită (și probabil și sfințită în 1902) la inițiativa mamei generalului, Olga Skobeleva, de către un comitet director condus de diplomatul și omul de stat rus Nikolai Ignatiev.

CUVINTE CHEIE: icoane rusești; războaie ruso-turce; vase și ustensile liturgice; artă ortodoxă; Bulgaria.



Russian ecclesiastical art in Bulgaria has been poorly studied, although many icons, objects, book covers, and other metal works of Russian origin are scattered in museums, galleries, and churches throughout the country. During the first conference of the RICONTRANS project, Prof. Ivanka Gergova presented a panorama of the Russian Orthodox art in the Bulgarian lands between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, outlining the need for extensive and focused research. The set up of a database of Russian artworks in Bulgaria is a necessary prerequisite and an indispensable tool for comprehensive study and interpretation of this abundant and fragmentarily extant material.<sup>1</sup>

I should note that the RICONTRANS project provides very good opportunities for the collection and scientific processing of artworks, as hard work is ahead to build a database of Russian art in the Balkans as a whole, which will permit different comparisons and further discoveries. For example, the catalog of Christian art at the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia, published in 2012, features two Russian icons of unknown origin. Both icons have silver revetments with long and detailed inscriptions (Figs. 1-2).<sup>2</sup> The inscription on the icon of Christ reads as follows:

This revetment of the icon of Jesus Christ the Savior was arranged through devout solicitude and concern for the proper decor of the holy churches by Lieutenant

General and decoration holder Soimonov and the ardent donations by Gentlemen Field and Company officers of his unit seeking blessing from the Above for their weapons raised in defense of the Orthodox Church oppressed by the Turks as well as of for this very church of Saint-Nicholas the Wonderworker built from a Turkish mosque for the benefit of the blissful reign of our Lord the Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich by the Christ-loving victorious Russian troops, grateful to our Lord the Savior for the victories, granted by Him, over the Turks in 1828 and 1829, 1854, January 22.<sup>3</sup>

The inscription on the icon of the Mother of God has a similar content:

This revetment of the icon of the Mother of God was arranged through Christian concern for the beauty of the house of God by Lieutenant General and decoration holder Soimonov and the ardent donations by Gentlemen Field and Company officers of his unit, who place themselves entirely under the holy protection and intercession of the Queen of Heaven, expecting only from Her help for the weapons raised for the protection of the Eastern Church, suppressed by the Hagarenes, faithfully expecting the deliverance of the afflicted Christians from the persecutions perpetrated against them in the East by the Turks, 1854, January 22.<sup>4</sup>

Until now, the question of the origin of these two icons





▲ Fig. 1-2. 'The Virgin with Child' and 'Christ Pantocrator', 19<sup>th</sup> century (1854?), Russian icon from the church of Saint-Nicholas in Giurgiu.

Courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia.

▼ Fig. 3-4. The two inscriptions from the church of Saint-Nicholas in Giurgiu.

Credits: Ana Dumitran.



has remained unclear. Ivanka Gergova could not identify the church of Saint-Nicholas, mentioned in one of the inscriptions, and pointed out that during "the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29, a mosque in Varna was converted into a church, but it was named [the Church of] the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God. If there were other such occurrences, with the end of the war and the withdrawal of Russian troops the status quo was undoubtedly restored"<sup>5</sup>.

The critical analysis of the historical data has showed that originally these icons were related to a temple in the town of Giurgiu, in southern Wallachia, on the banks of the Danube River. The city officially passed to Wallachia under the Adrianople Peace Treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (September 2, 1829), and in 1830 a local mosque was transformed into a church dedicated to Saint Nicholas, the heavenly patron of the then Russian emperor. During the Russian occupation of Wallachia on the eve of the Crimean War, the church was presented with new icons (the same ones that are kept today in the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia) by the commander of the 10th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General Fedor Ivanovich Soimonov (1800-1854), whose troops were stationed in Giurgiu between the autumn of 1853 and June 26, 1854. The inscriptions on the silver fittings of the two icons offer the impression that they were donated on January 22, 1854, but this is not the case: in fact, this donation for the church of Saint-Nicholas commemorated the date on which several battalions of 39<sup>th</sup> Tomsk and 40<sup>th</sup> Kolyvan Infantry Regiments under General Soimonov's command successfully smashed an attack of the Turks against the town, which cost the lives of 40 Russian officers and soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

In 1877, the church was damaged by Turkish artillery, and in 1944 it was almost completely destroyed during the retreat of the German troops. Still, it retains two inscriptions in Russian concerning the conversion of the





▲ Fig. 5. General Adjutant Mikhail D. Skobelev (1843-1882).  
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

former mosque into a Christian place of worship.<sup>7</sup> One of them reads (Fig. 3):

This Church was built in 1830 from a Mohammedan mosque, conquered in 1829 during the glorious reign of the emperor and autocrat of all Russia, Nicholas I.<sup>8</sup>

The other one states (Fig. 4):

In memory of the brave deeds of the Russian armies of 1828-1829 and the restitution of Giurgiu to the Wallachian Principalities, this church was built under the administration of the Plenipotentiary President of the Wallachian and Moldavian Principalities, General Adjutant Kisselev, by the Giurgiu Construction Committee.<sup>9</sup>

Most likely General Soimonov and his officers supplied the Church of Saint-Nicholas in Giurgiu with other icons and liturgical objects, which was an established practice of the Russian field army in wartimes. We can assume this by analogy with the large donation to the church of Saint-Nicholas in Oltenița in memory of 236 Russian officers and soldiers of the 41<sup>st</sup> Selenga and 42<sup>nd</sup> Yakutsk Infantry, 43<sup>rd</sup> Okhotsk Jaeger, 7<sup>th</sup> Ol'viopol' Lancer and 34 Don Cossack Regiments who died bravely on October 23, 1853 in a battle near that town.<sup>10</sup>

On May 17, 1854, a monument to the victims was consecrated, and the local church, whose priests were to take care of the monument and perform an annual memorial service, received with special permission from Emperor Nicholas I a set of exquisite silver liturgical objects made to order by the renowned jewelry company of Ignatius P. Sazikov (the 'Court manufacturer of silverware'): an altar cross, a chalice with a discus, two plates, a zeon ladle, a spoon, a spear, and also a gospel in Slavonic and Wallachian with a crimson velvet binding and a silver cover embellished with enamel depictions of the Resurrection

of Christ together with the evangelists.<sup>11</sup>

The future governor of Sofia Petr V. Alabin (1824-1896), who was at the time an officer of the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment and took part in the battle of Oltenița, wrote a diary entry dated May 17, 1854:

We make such a valuable contribution in order to leave in a foreign land a worthy monument not only of Russian piety, which is already so well known to the world, but also a worthy monument of Russian art, which has recently been set to such a high degree of perfection, especially in the production of church items. The cross and this utensil, judging by the drawings sent to us by I. P. Sazonov, are really excellent; in their creation, one can see austere taste, the absence of unnecessary decorations, the utmost simplicity and high dignity of the minting. In a word, this elegant utensil is worthy of its famous master; the sketches of the utensils were drawn up in the ancient Byzantine style, so akin to the Russian, in part similar to the utensils being prepared for Saint-Isaac's Cathedral.<sup>12</sup>

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The examples considered here reveal one of the ways in which Russian church art was spread in the Balkans—through the wars of Russia with the Ottoman Empire. The itinerary and activities of the first expedition of the Sofia team of RICONTRANS (consisting of Ivanka Gergova, Georgi Mitov, and Angel Nikolov) were largely dictated by our desire to study and document two memorial monasteries in southern Bulgaria, built in honor of Russian soldiers and officers killed in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. The two sites are detailed below.

### The Monastery of the Ascension with the church of Saint-Alexander Nevsky on the Bakadzhik hills near Yambol

At the end of 1878, the Russian occupation administration of the Bulgarian lands, recently liberated from Turkish rule, stationed the units of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps in the town of Yambol. The commander of the Corps, the famous General Adjutant Mikhail D. Skobelev (1843-1882) (Fig. 5), together with the city's dignitaries, appealed to the local Bulgarian population and to donors in Russia to support the construction of a church in memory of the victims of the Russian army from the recent war.

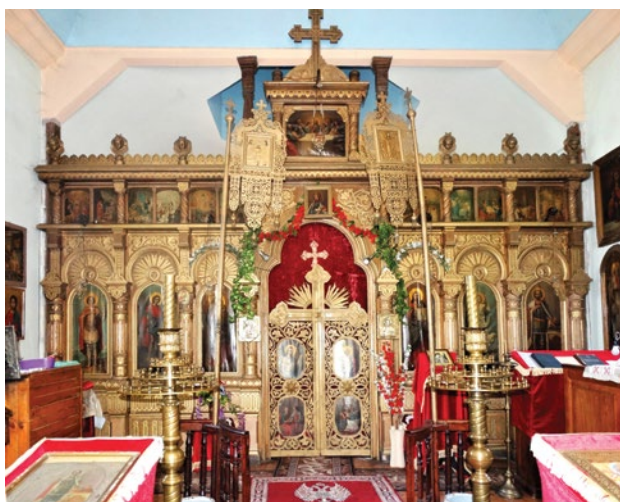
Meanwhile, immediately after the failed assassination attempt on Emperor Alexander II on April 2, 1879, General Skobelev and the local authorities decided to dedicate the memorial church to the revered Russian holy Prince Alexander Nevsky, considered the heavenly patron of the Russian monarch and the Russian army at the time.<sup>13</sup>

The construction of the church (around which a monastery was soon organized) was begun by soldiers of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division on May 12, 1879, on the northern slope of one of the Bakadzhik hills, 14 km south-east of Yambol. This was situated near the former Ascension Monastery, which was burned by the Turks during the suppression of the Bulgarian uprising in April 1876.

In September 2020, the Sofia team of the RICONTRANS Project was greeted kindly by the current abbot, Father Sophronius, who explained to us in detail the history of the monastery and generously showed us all its riches.

The modest monastic church, which has hitherto remained unknown to researchers, was furnished and decorated in accordance with the tastes and requirements characteristic of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia religious artistic production (Figs. 6-7). The iconostasis (Fig. 8) is said to







have been made by Russian monks and transferred in segments to the church before the consecration of the monastery in 1884; banners and icons were allegedly brought from the Kievan Cave Monastery (the Kiev-Pecherskaia Lavra).<sup>14</sup> However, there is no doubt that the iconostasis took its present shape on the eve of the jubilee celebrations in 1902, and it is quite revealing that the carved wooden busts of angels on its top are similar (but not identical) to the angels that decorate the iconostasis frame of the Shipka monastic church, consecrated the same year. It is not impossible that the royal icons of the Bakadzhik Monastery were created in the atelier of the Russian monastery of Saint-Panteleimon on Mount Athos, although their quality is much lower than that of the icons in the Shipka Monastery, produced in the same workshop.

One remarkable small icon of Saint Alexander Nevsky

- Fig. 6-7. *The church of Saint-Alexander Nevsky at the Monastery of Ascension on the Bakadzhik hills near Yambol, built in 1879-1882. Exterior and interior.*
- ◆ Fig. 8. *The iconostasis of the church of Saint-Alexander Nevsky at the Monastery of Ascension on the Bakadzhik hills near Yambol.*
- Fig. 9. 'Saint Alexander Nevsky', 19<sup>th</sup> century (before 1879), Russian icon from the same church.
- ◆ Fig. 10. 'Saint Alexander Nevsky', late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> c. (before 1902?), Russian icon from the same church.
- ▼ Fig. 11. *Front cover of a Russian gospel, donated on May 12, 1879 to the Monastery of Ascension on the Bakadzhik hills near Yambol.*
- ▲ Fig. 12. *Russian gospel, donated on May 12, 1879 to the Monastery of Ascension on the Bakadzhik hills near Yambol – a deed of gift and the names of the main donors and their families on the first blank sheet.*

Credits: Angel Nikolov.



placed above the royal doors deserves special attention here (Fig. 9). Glued to the back of the icon is a sheet of paper with a badly damaged inscription, which testifies that it was donated in the spring of 1879 to the church of Saint-Alexander Nevsky by the field church of the 118<sup>th</sup> Shuja Regiment of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, dedicated to the same saint.

Another large icon of Saint Alexander Nevsky is placed at the right end of the iconostasis (Fig. 10).

The founding of the monastic church on May 12, 1879 is evidenced by a record on the first white sheet of a gospel, printed in Moscow in 1875 (Figs. 11-12), which contains a deed of gift and the names of the main donors and their families:

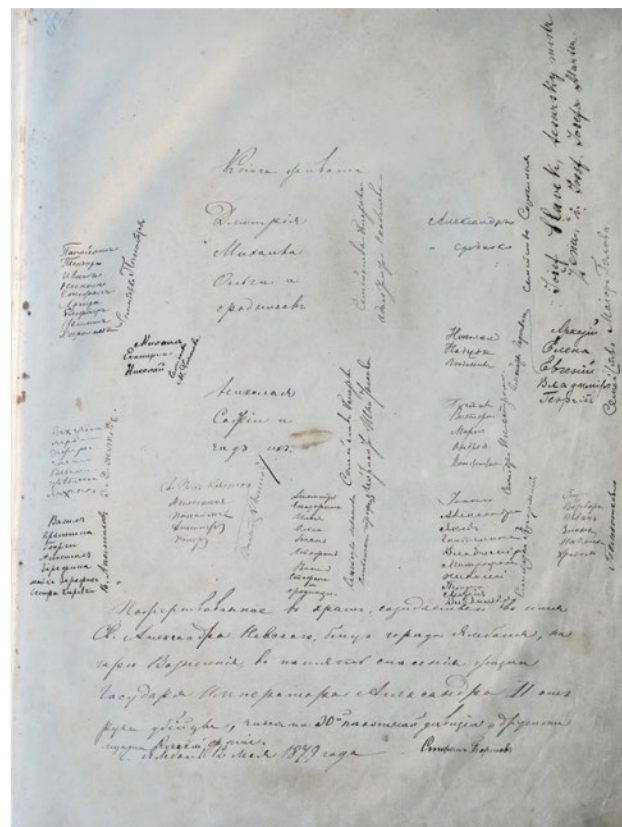
Donated to the temple, built in the name of Saint Alexander Nevsky, near the city of Yambol, on the Ascension Hill, in memory of saving the life of His Majesty Emperor Alexander II from the hands of an assassin, by the ranks of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and other staff of the Russian army.

Yambol, 12 May 1879

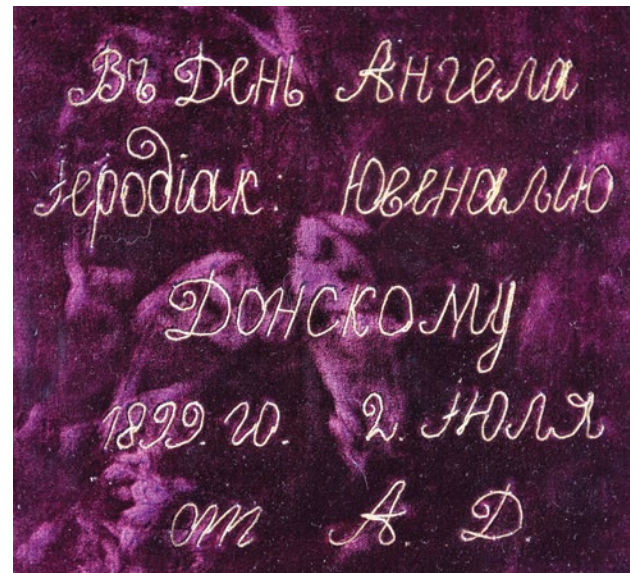
Stefan Georgiev<sup>15</sup>

Then the following names are listed: General Adjutant Mikhail D. Skobelev, General Major Nikolai F. Shnitnikov (1823-1881)—Commander of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division,<sup>16</sup> Major Arkadij Iv. Golov (1851-1914), Aleksandr G. Sorokin (1844-?)—Russian Consul in Tulcea,<sup>17</sup> Nikolai G. Gartvig (1857-1914)—Russian Vice-Consul in Burgas,<sup>18</sup> Mikhail M. Chichagov (1854-1902),<sup>19</sup> Zacharia D. Zhechkov (1834-1903)—a wealthy merchant and prominent citizen of Sliven, etc.

An integral part of this donation was a massive silver altar cross, kept to this day as a valuable relic in its original wooden box (Fig. 13). The hallmark reveals that the cross was produced in 1879 by the Saint Petersburg factory of Sergej F. Verkhovtsev (1843-1893), a hereditary silversmith and famous sculptor who graduated from the







- ▲ Fig. 13. Russian silver cross from the Monastery of Ascension on the Bakadzhik hills near Yambol produced in 1879 by the Saint Petersburg factory of Sergej F. Verkhovtsev (1843-1893) and donated (according to the legend) to the monastery by General Skobelev.
- ▲ Fig. 14. 'Saint Juvenal', late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1899?), Russian icon from the same church, front.
- ▲ Fig. 15. 'Saint Juvenal', late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1899?), Russian icon from the same church, back.
- ▲ Fig. 16. 'The Monastery of the Nativity of Christ in the town of Shipka, built in 1885-1902.
- ▲ Fig. 17. The central nave of the monastery church in Shipka.

Credits: Angel Nikolov.



Academy of Arts in the Russian imperial capital.<sup>20</sup>

The Church of Alexander Nevsky on Ascension Hill received other valuable gifts (now lost), among which we should note a golden chalice sent by the Russian Empress Maria Alexandrovna (1824-1880), and a printed gospel from 1751 with solid silver fittings.

These donations document the care of the Russian military authorities for the newly founded temple in the last weeks before their withdrawal from the autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia, which on September 6, 1885 was reunited with the Bulgarian Principality.

The construction of the church building was organized and carried out by the Russian hieromonk Parthenius<sup>21</sup> who served as a parish priest of the nearby villages Chargin, Tarnava, Mitiriz (present-day Kalchevo), and Mansarli (present-day Pobeda). The construction works were completed in 1882, and in 1884 the church was consecrated by Seraphim (1873-1896), the first Metropolitan of Sliven.

In 1886, Bulgaria and Russia severed diplomatic relations, and the Russian church on Mount Ascension found itself in a poor economic situation, forcing hieromonk Parthenius to retreat in 1891-1895 to the Trinity Monastery of Saint-Jonas in Kiev. Soon after he had returned to his church near Yambol, Bulgaria and Russia reconciled their relations. At the suggestion of the Russian Vice-Consul in Burgas, on December 19, 1898, an imperial decree was issued to grant annual subsistence to the clergy of the Alexander Nevsky church in Bulgaria, which was





handed over by the Most Holy Governing Synod of the Russian Church to hieromonk Barsanuphius of the Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Saint Petersburg.

Barsanuphius arrived in Yambol in May 1899, but eventually refused to accept his new appointment as Father Superior of the church on Mount Ascension and returned to Petersburg. Soon after that the church of Alexander Nevsky was assigned to the diocese of Kherson and Odessa. Its transformation into a true monastic institution started with the arrival in July 1900 of Abbot Hieromonk Juvenal (Julian Danilovich Zagorul'ko) who had spent several years on Mount Athos and in Jerusalem. Under his supervision, the monastery was renovated with funds from Russia and was consecrated on August 30, 1902 by the second Metropolitan of Sliven Gervasius (1896-1919). The construction works were planned and carried out with the assistance of architect Alexandr Nikolaevich Smirnov (1869-1928), who at that time supervised the construction of the Shipka Monastery (located about 130 km to the northwest).

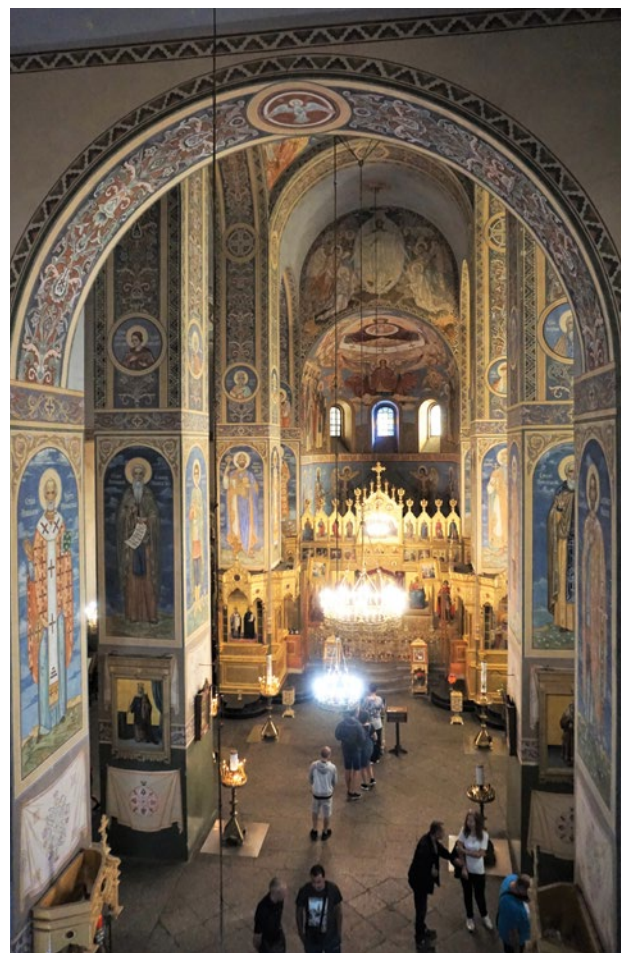
After Bulgaria entered the First World War in 1915 on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary, hierodeacon Juvenal, as a Russian citizen, was interned by the Bulgarian authorities in the town of Kotel where he died in 1916.<sup>22</sup> One of his personal belongings is still kept in the monastery—a small icon of his heavenly patron Saint Juvenal with a gift inscription from 1899 (Figs. 14-15).<sup>23</sup>

After the end of the war, Russian monks gathered again in the deserted monastery; in 1920-1921, the Metropolitan of Kherson and Odessa Platon (Rozhdestvensky) resided there. Between 1921 and 1934, when the monastery finally came under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, it was visited frequently by Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev), who ordained the last Russian abbot, hieromonk Kirill (Popov).<sup>24</sup>

### The Monastery of the Nativity of Christ in the town of Shipka

The second Russian monastery in southern Bulgaria was built in the town of Shipka, located at the southern foot of the strategic Shipka Pass in the central part of the Balkan Range, where Russian troops together with Bulgarian volunteers deterred the attacks of the main Turkish forces between July and December 1877 (Fig. 16).

The idea of building a church in memory of the Russian soldiers and officers killed in these battles emerged in



the same circles as the initiative to build the memorial church near Yambol: the main credit for the organization of this endeavour belonged to General Skobelev's mother, Olga N. Skobeleva (1823-1880), who in 1879 and 1880 was actively involved in charity in the capital of Southern Bulgaria Plovdiv.<sup>25</sup> At her suggestion, on April 25, 1880 Emperor Alexander II appointed a Committee for the construction of an Orthodox church at the foot of the Balkans, in southern Bulgaria, for the eternal remembrance of the soldiers who died in the war of 1877-1878. Honorary chairman of the Committee became the son-in-law of Olga Skobeleva, the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Leichtenberg Prince Eugen (Evgenij) Romanowsky, who was a grandson of Emperor Nicholas I of Russia and a great-grandson of Empress Josephine of France.

On July 6, 1880, Olga Skobeleva was brutally murdered near Plovdiv. The Committee she had set up, chaired by Count Nikolai P. Ignatiev (1832-1908), continued its activity, which ended with the consecration of the monastery on September 15, 1902.<sup>26</sup>

The church has three altars: the central one is dedicated to the Nativity of Christ, which is associated with the defeat of Veysel Hilmi Paşa near Shipka and Sheynovo on December 27-28, 1877 (Fig. 17, 18); the left altar is dedicated to Saint Nicholas (Fig. 19), and the right one—to Saint Alexander Nevsky (Fig. 20).

As for the icons, they were painted in 1901 in the art studio of the Russian monastery of Saint-Panteleimon on Mount Athos and were donated at no cost to the church in Shipka, for which Emperor Nicholas II expressed his special gratitude to the abbot and the monastic fraternity. There are 83 icons with rich gilding, made on cypress





- ▲ Fig. 18-20. The iconostases of the central altar, left altar, and right altar of the monastery church in Shipka, 1901-1902.
- ▼ Fig. 21. 'Saint Alexander Nevsky', 1901, Russian royal icon from the right altar of the monastery church in Shipka.
- ▶ Fig. 22. 'Saint Boris of Bulgaria', 1901-1902, Russian icon from the right altar of the monastery church in Shipka (over the royal doors).
- ▲ Fig. 23. 'Saint Kliment of Ohrid' and 'Saint Kliment of Belitsa', 1901-1902, Russian icon from the central altar of the monastery church in Shipka (over the royal doors).  
Credits: Angel Nikolov.



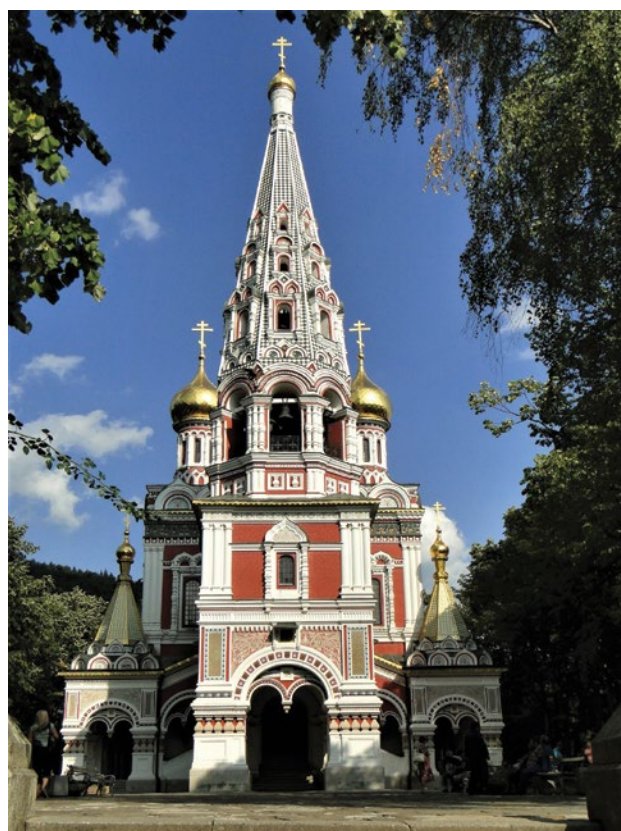




▲ Fig. 24. 'Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius as bishop of Moravia', 1901, Russian icon from the left frontal proskyneterion in the Shipka monastery church.

▼ Fig. 26. Russian silver gilded cover of a luxurious Gospel, printed by the Kievian Cave Monastery in April 1875, c.1900, from the treasury of the monastery church in Shipka.

Credits: Angel Nikolov.



▲ Fig. 25. The western façade and the main entrance of the Shipka monastery church, consecrated in 1902.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

boards, 16 of which depict saints, whose names the most prominent Russian generals bore (Fig. 21), 26 bear images of the most revered Bulgarian saints (Fig. 22), and at least two show popular Serbian saints.<sup>27</sup> The program of this iconostasis requires careful study, not least because I came across an incredible icon (Fig. 23), which betrays ignorance of the personality and the rank of Saint Kliment of Ohrid. The artist painted two saints together, the one on the left was named "Saint Kliment of Ohrid" (with a spelling mistake), and the one on the right was called "Saint Kliment of Belitsa". This is an absurd composition as it splits the same saint into two separate personalities, one of which bears the nickname that Clement got as he spent a lot of time in Ohrid and was buried there, and the other—his official title as a bishop of Dragvistas or Velitzas (ἐπίσκοπος Δραγβίστας ἢ τοι Βελίτζας).<sup>28</sup> On the large icon of the two Slavic apostles, we find also an inaccurate inscription in which Saint Cyril is referred to as the bishop of Moravia (Fig. 24).<sup>29</sup>

It can be argued that the visual messages and the aesthetics of these icons are in full harmony with the policy of "religious revival" pursued by Emperor Nicholas II at that time, whose objective was for imperial Russia "to appear in all its outward splendour of holiness and sacred marking".<sup>30</sup> The church in Shipka embodies in a somewhat paradoxical way the two leading aesthetic tendencies of the age: its external architectural appearance resembles Muscovite church architecture of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 25), which aligned with Nicholas II's desire to emulate his great predecessor Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich<sup>31</sup> in his care for the "church decoration" and thus to resurrect an ancient aesthetic that had been abandoned thanks to the reforms of Peter I and his successors; on the other





▲ Fig. 27. Russian silver gilded set of liturgical vessels and utensils commissioned by the peasants of Glebovskaia volost', Rybinskii uезд, in honour of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ascension of Emperor Alexander II (February 19, 1880) from the treasury of the monastery church in Shipka.

Credits: Angel Nikolov.

► Fig. 28. Russian enamelled silver cross, late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> century, from the treasury of the monastery church in Shipka.

Credits: Angel Nikolov.

hand, the icons donated to the temple by the monastery of Saint-Panteleimon reflect remarkably the aesthetics of academic religious painting of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which combined the principles of “Western iconography” and the “spirit” of Byzantine and medieval Russian icon art.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, I would like to thank the abbot of Shipka Monastery, Father Pancratius, who gave us the opportunity to work freely in the church and personally showed us its treasury, which houses precious liturgical vessels, gospels in luxurious bindings, crosses, etc. (Fig. 26-28). The study of these materials will continue in the context of the RICONTRANS Project.



## Notes:

1 Gergova 2018, p. 195-196.

2 Gergova *et al.* 2012, p. 87 (no. 291), 256 (photo). Russian text (revised version): РИЗА : СІЯ НА ИКОНУ ІІСУСА ХРИСТА : СПАСИТЕЛЯ УСТРОЕНА БЛАГОЧЕСТИВОЮ ЗАБОТЛИВОСТІЮ И ПОПЕЧЕНІЕМЪ О БЛАГОЛѢПІИ СВЯТЫХЪ ХРАМОВЪ ГЕНЕРАЛЪ ЛЕЙТЕНАНТА И КАВАЛЕРА СОЙМОНОВА И УСЕРДНЫМЪ ПОЖЕРТВОВАНІЕМЪ Г.: ШТАБЪ И ОБЕРЪ ОВІЩЕРОВЪ ЕГО ОТРЯДА ЧАЮЩАГО СВЫШЕ БЛАГОСЛОВЕНІЯ СВОЕМУ ОРУЖІЮ ПОДНЯТОМУ НА ЗАЩИТУ УГНЕТЕННОЙ ТУРКАМИ ВОСТОЧНОЙ ЦЕРКВИ ТАКЪ КАКЪ И САМЫЙ ХРАМЪ ВО ИМЯ СВЯТИТЕЛЯ И ЧУДОТВОРЦА НИКОЛАЯ СООРУЖЕНЪ ИЗЪ ТУРЕЦКОЙ МЕЧЕТИ ВЪ СЧАСТЛИВОЕ ЦАРСТВОВАНІЕ ГОСУДАРЯ ИМПЕРАТОРА НИКОЛАЯ ПАВЛОВИЧА ХРИСТОЛЮБИВЫМИ ПОБѢДОНОСНЫМИ РУССКИМИ ВОЙСКАМИ БЛАГОДАРНЫМИ БОГУ СПАСИТЕЛЮ ЗА ПОБѢДЫ ДАРОВАННЫЯ ИМЪ НАДЪ ТУРКАМИ ВЪ 1828 и 1829 годахъ 1854 года месяца ЯНВАРЯ 22 дня.

3 English translation: Gergova 2016, p. 153.

4 Gergova *et al.* 2012, p. 87 (no. 290), 255 (photo). Russian text (revised version): РИЗА СІЯ НА ИКОНУ БОЖІЕЙ МАТЕРИ УСТРОЕНА ХРИСТІАНСКИМЪ О КРАСОТѢ ЖИЛИЩА БОЖІЯ ПОПЕЧЕНІЕМЪ ГЕНЕРАЛЪ ЛЕЙТЕНАНТА КАВАЛЕРА СОЙМОНОВА И

УСЕРДНЫМЪ ПОЖЕРТВОВАНІЕМЪ Г. ШТАБЪ И ОБЕРЪ ОВІЩЕРОВЪ ЕГО ОТРЯДА, ВСЕЦѢЛО ПРЕДАЮЩИХЪ СЕБЯ ПОДЪ СВЯТЫЙ ПОКРОВЪ И ЗАСТУПЛЕНІЕ ЦАРИЦЫ НЕБЕСНОЙ ОТЪ НЕЯ ЕДИНЫИЯ ОЖИДАЮЩИХЪ ПОМОЩИ ОРУЖЕЮ ПОДНЯТОМУ ДЛЯ ЗАЩИТЫ ЦЕРКВИ ВОСТОЧНОЙ УГНЕТЕННОЙ АГАРЯНАМИ, СЪ ВЪРОЙ ЧАЮЩИХЪ СКОРАГО ИЗБАВЛЕНІЯ СТРАЖДУЩИХЪ ХРИСТІАНЪ ОТЪ ГОНЕНІЯ, ВОЗДВИГНУТАЮ ПРОТИВЪ НИХЪ НА ВОСТОКЪ ТУРКАМИ 1854 года месяца ЯНВАРЯ 22 дня.

5 Gergova 2016, p. 154.

6 Kovalevsky 1871, p. 101-102, 104, 145-149, 262-268; Dubrovin 1872, p. 165, Приложения, 2-4; Shil'der 1875, p. 727-728, 731; Bogdanovich 1876, p. 126, 129-130, 189-192, Приложения, 5; Bogdanovich 1877, p. 108-111. General Soimonov was fatally wounded and died nine months later, on 24 October 1854, during the battle of Inkerman near Sevastopol on the Crimean Peninsula: Seaton 1977, p. 164-165; Baumgart 2020, p. 143-145.

7 A brief history of the church of Saint-Nicholas in Giurgiu and photos are available at <https://episcopiagiurgiuului.ro/manastiri/schitul-sfantul-nicolae/> (accessed 24.02.2021).

8 Russian text: Храмъ сей сооруженъ въ 1830 год. изъ магометанской мечети, завоеванной въ 1829 году въ славное цар-



ствование ИМПЕРАТОРА и САМОДЕРЖЦА ВСЕРОССИЙСКАГО НИКОЛАЯ I.

9 Russian text: *Въ память подвиговъ Россійскихъ войскъ въ 1828 и 1829мъ годахъ и возвращенія города Журжи Княжеству Валахиі. Церковь сія воздвигнута въ [...] председателя дивановъ.*

10 Alabin 1861, p. 85-113; Bogdanovich 1876, p. 130-140; Badem 2010, p. 108-109; Baumgart 2020, p. 105.

11 Alabin 1861, p. 180-187, Примечания, p. 27-29.

12 Alabin 1861, Примечания, p. 29.

13 For the history of the monastery until 1902, the most reliable pieces of information are found in Brandt 1903. See also a more inaccurate, but valuable and panoramic essay on the history of the monastery to this day: Baev 2018.

14 Korenev 2009.

15 Russian text: *Пожертвованное в храм, создаваемый во имя Св. Александра Невского, близ города Ямболя, на горе Вознесения, в память спасения жизни Государя Императора Александра II от руки убийцы, чинами 30й пехотной дивизии и другими лицами русской армии.*

*Город Ямболь 12 мая 1879 года*

*Стефан Георгиев.*

16 Leer 1897, p. 374.

17 A. G. Sorokin served at the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1867. He held various diplomatic positions: Secretary of the Consulate in Dubrovnik (1869), from 1872 – Secretary General of the Consulate General in Constantinople (1872), Consul in Tulcea (1878-1883). During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, he was at the disposal of the Russian Imperial Commisaries in Bulgaria, Prince Vladimir Cherkasky and Prince Aleksandr M. Dondukov-Korsakov. In 1883 Sorokin was appointed Consul General in Eastern Rumelia. In this capacity, he attended the consecration of Bakadzhiq monastery (1884).

18 N. G. Gartvig was a prominent Russian diplomat, *Hofmeister* of the imperial court (since 1900), ambassador to Persia (1906-1908) and Serbia (1909-1914).

19 During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 M. M. Chichagov served as a lieutenant of the Lieutenant General J. V. Gurko's Advance Detachment. Later, as a lieutenant colonel in the General Staff, he was sent as a Russian military attaché to Eastern Rumelia (1885). He wrote detailed memoirs about the advance of General Gurko in the summer of 1877: Chichagov 1878. See also: Toshkin et al. 2003, p. 389; Frolova 2020.

20 Postnikova-Loseva et al. 1995, p. 185 (№ 1405); Ivanov 2002, p. 170-171 (arciformed hallmark with a double-headed imperial eagle over Cyrillic initials "С.В").

21 Parfenij Pavlovich Hetman (1824-1900).

22 Rosen 1982, p. 370.

23 Text of the inscription: *Въ день ангела іеродиак: Ювеналію Донскому 1899. го. 2. іюля от А. Д.* Translation: "On the Saint's day to hierodeacon Juvenalii Donskoi 1899, July 2, by A. D."

24 Shkarovskij 2008, p. 32-33, 35.

25 About O. Skobeleva and her last days in Bulgaria see: Shakhovskoj 1880, 167-175; Report 1883, p. 146-147; Jasharov 1904; Alekhin 2001.

26 About the monastery in general see: Bogdanovich 1902; Ignat'ev 1960; Tsanov 1969; Todorov 2002; Antonov, Kobiak 2005, 33-36; Shkarovskij 2017, 321-322.

27 For further details see: Dobrev 2002; Shkarovskij 2015, p. 702-704; Chesnokova 2016, p. 238-240; Pakhomov 2016, p. 606-617.

28 *Vita S. Clementis*, xx, 62 (ed. Iliev 1995, p. 100). See also: Stantchev, Popov 1988, p. 42; Božilov, Gjuzeev 1999, p. 218 Iliev 2010, p. 96; Uthemann 2017, p. 201.

29 On this icon, see also: Dobrev 2002, p. 85; Grigorova 2020, p. 35-36.

30 Tarasov 1995, p. 238.

31 Tarasov 1995, p. 244.

32 Tarasov 1995, p. 273.

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