

The church of the Holy Emperors Constantin and Elena

Country or territory:

ROMANIA

Name of organisation

compiling the information:

National Institute for Historical Monuments
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Name and address of building(s) or site:

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY EMPERORS
CONSTANTIN AND ELENA
TÂRGOVIȘTE Municipality, Dâmbovița
county, 7A Constantin Brâncoveanu St.

Inventory reference number(s):

Position 16B 062 of Historical Monuments
List / 1992

Building type(s):

Sacral building, Church

Main date(s):

1650

Current use(s):

Orthodox church

Significance:

The church was built at the order of Matei Basarab, prince of Wallachia, in 1650, probably on the location of an older church, near to Princely Court, in the north-west side of Târgoviște, ancient capital of the state.

From the structural point of view, the church belongs to the single nave type, without lateral apses. With a rectangular layout, elongated, of approx. 22 x 8,5 m in size, the ecclesiastic edifice has a square narthex covered by a calotte supported by pendants, a similar square nave and a polygonal chancel, polygonal at the exterior and semi-circular at the interior, covered by a semi-calotte which is now collapsed. A bell-tower above the narthex dominated initially the monument on its western side. On the northern side we can find a small tower added to the circular staircase which offered access to the bell-room. As we can also notice from the votive painting, during the mid 18th century, initial volumetry of the monument was modified by adding a small porch to the western façade - no longer existing today.

The church witnessed great disasters : fires, earthquakes, occupation by Ottoman troupes. In 1875, the ruined church was closed and abandoned. In 1999, after 178 years, the church was returned to its religious function; there is a reversible emergency intervention meant to ensure stability of the edifice.

The church is important due to its architectural and historic value, being one of the most remarkable princely monuments found next to the Princely Court of Târgoviște, representing a

landmark of the architectural style of Matei Basarab's age. Also it is part of a structural group of monuments with common planimetric-volumetric characteristics.

The architectural value of the church is enhanced by the artistic component of the paintings made in 1753, as well as the decoration carved in stone, representing an eloquent example of artistic skills and refinement of the stone craftsmen of the time.

Categories of significance:

Of special national interest

Categories of ownership or interest:

Documentation and bibliographic references:

- The preliminary Studies and Researches, the Technical Expertise and the Feasability Study, all of these being elaborated by a private firm – FIDIAS PROIECT;
- Drăghiceanu, V., The Guide of historical monuments from Dâmbovița county, Târgoviște, 1907;
- Drăghiceanu, V., The ruin of The Holy Emperors from Târgoviște - Historical Notes, B.C.M.I., III-rd year, 1910, page 125-126;
- Ghika-Budești, N., The ruin of The Holy Emperors from Târgoviște - Architectural Notes, B.C.M.I., III-rd year, 1910, page 127-135;
- Ghika-Budești, N., The evolution of architecture from Muntenia and Oltenia, in XVII-th century, B.C.M.I., XXV year, 1932;
- Ionescu, G., The history of architecture in Romania, București, 1982;
- Moiescu, C., Târgoviște – Historical and Art monuments, București, 1979;
- Nicolae, V., The founder Matei Basarab, București 1982;
- Stoicescu, N., The Bibliography of localities and feudal monuments from Romania, I, Wallachia, II-nd vol., Craiova, 1970;
- Stoicescu, N. and Moiescu, C., Târgoviște and its monuments, București, 1976;
- Voinescu, T., Painters from XVIII-th century to the Church of The Holy Emperors from Târgoviște, S.C.I.A., 1961, no. 2, page 473-474;
- The Archives of The Historical Monuments Office, The Fund of the Commission from Historical Monuments, București, Files no. 3387, 9199,1999,3887 – concerning to The Church of The Holy Emperors from Târgoviște
- Plans of the city from 1886, 1896,1910,1929 years

Condition:

Very bad condition because of:

- structural failure and instability
- major internal deterioration
- major fire and earthquakes

Risk:

Risk is related to the above mentioned factors.

Condition:

Nowadays, the building is in an advanced state of decay and almost improper for use. The church suffered great loss: the bell-tower collapsed above the nave and the iconostasis, the disappearance of the wooden stairs leading to the bell-tower disappeared, as well as of the porch – out of which only faint traces of the columns are now left.

The church is in a general state of decay, typical for consequences of seismic activity associated to a longitudinal fracture developed on a transversal direction.

Technical assessment and costing:

From the point of view of the structural configuration, the main intervention is targeted at the elimination of the sources of decay and remedy of the degradations by a set of restoration and consolidation actions which aim to restore the original appearance and silhouette of the edifice, according to preliminary research.

Reversible restoration of the iconostasis and the disappeared tower is thus proposed. The interior painting shall be consolidated and restored. In terms of protection the painting, a small construction shall be placed in the church's courtyard to shelter the necessary chandeliers desk.

The estimate cost according to the Feasibility Study it's about 480,000 EUR.

Occupation:

The church was closed and abandoned for 178 years.

Condition risk :

Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; solution agreed but not implemented.

Ownership :

The church is the property of the Romanian Orthodox Church / the Orthodox Parish of Târgoviște

Occupation:

Fully occupied in regular use.

Management:

The Parish of Târgoviște is responsible for the management of the building. The National Office for Historical Monuments is responsible for administering the funds and supervising works.

Summary:

The church is important due to its architectural and historic value, being one of the most remarkable princely monuments found next to the Princely Court of Târgoviște, representing a landmark of the architectural style of Matei Basarab's age. Also it is part of a structural group of monuments with common planimetric-volumetric characteristics.

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The potential priority level for intervention is *high*.

Sign and date:

Ph.D.Arch. Sorin Minghiat

08.03.2004