

Following Saint Apostle Andrews' Way

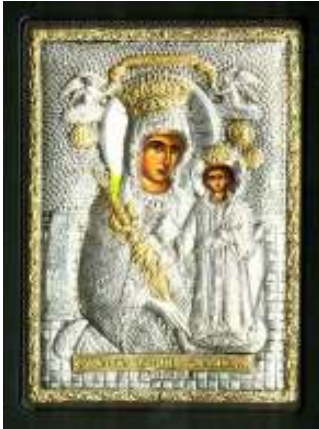


Following Saint Apostle Andrews' Way

Church – Role and Importance in Romanians' life

All the important moments in the Romanians' life are tightly related to the church: the birth, for the sacred mystery of the baptize, the wedding, the death and the most important holidays of the year, such as Easter and Christmas. Especially in the villages, the church and also the cemetery are places where one can witness picturesque proceedings, which usually take place when feasting or blessing the food and the drinks for holidays. There are also some proceeding to invoke rain, fertility or to drive away malefic spirits. All these rituals are based on the belief in God, Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary.

CHURCH IN MUNTENIA



Old Romanian churches are divine shelters skillfully built by Romanian craftsmen according to the pattern of the village houses. Most of them are built from wood, using the technique of horizontal beam coronets and their sizes are close to those of the houses, having the walls adorned with icons and sewn and woven towels.

Churches in Muntenia are somehow similar to the Byzantine style from the last period of its existence. They look like the churches from Mount Athos, from Salonic or Serbia. In a church from Muntenia we distinguish four parts: *altar*, *naos* (the part where people stay), the *narthex* and the *porch*.

Our church painting comes entirely from Bizant. Most painters of our churches come from East. The pupils they had in our country followed the same style. This lasted till the XIX century, and we can say that it even lasts today through tradition.



Many churches from villages in Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldavia don't have any towers while the churches from Transilvania, Maramures and Muntii Apuseni usually have a high or even a very high tower reaching approximately 6 m.

Romanian churches are unique through their elegance and

their balanced sizes, their rich and beautiful decorations carved in wood on the outside walls, through the warmth of the inner paintings.

The decorations of the external churches walls are very close to the peasants' houses. Mythical motifs like the solar wheel, bird, snake, dragon can be found on the external walls of the churches which sometimes are divided in two registers by a carved wooden girdle which looks like a thick wound rope, a spiral that surrounds the church at its middle



Made by students: *Veronica Vasile, Maria Saulea and Alexandra Lazar*

THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



The Romanian Orthodox Church is autocephalous (**since 1885**) and organised as a Patriarchate (**since 1925**) with the name of the Romanian Patriarchate.

The highest authority of the Romanian Orthodox Church for all dogmatic and canonical issues, as well as for the religious ones – of any kind – is the **Holy Synod**, made up of the hierarchs in function (metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, assistant bishops).

The **Standing Synod** functions between the sessions of the Holy Synod; it is made up of the Patriarch, the Metropolitans in function and the Secretary of the Holy Synod.

Made by students: *George Stamu & Gabriel Dumitrescu*

History of Romanian Church

The Romanian Orthodox Church is unique among the Orthodox churches because it alone exists within a Latin culture. Romanian is a romance tongue, directly descended from the language of the Roman soldiers and settlers who occupied Dacia and intermarried with its inhabitants following its conquest by Emperor Trajan in 106 AD.

Our Church was founded at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit - as fire flames - came down over the Holy Apostles in Jerusalem. About three thousand souls were christened at the time, establishing the first community or group of faithful. The new teaching was preached in Jerusalem, then in other towns of the Holy Land, first among the Jews.

Beginning with the fifth decade of the first century, the Holy Apostles started their missionary work in the "pagan world, too, according to the commandment that the Saviour Himself had given them before His ascension to heaven, that is to teach and christen "all nations".

As Romanians, we are interested in Saint Andrews's activity, who preached in the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, later on called Dobrudgea, known from the antique sources as "Scythia". A few "indirect proofs" can be mentioned to back up the idea of the evangelization of this territory by Saint Andrew.

The dominant religion is Romanian Orthodox, shared by 86.80/0 of the population.

Other 14 religious denominations are officially recognized: Roman-Catholic, Greek -Catholic, Armenian-Orthodox, Reformed, Old-Rite Christian, Evangelical of the Augsburg Confession, Synod-Presbyterian, Unitarian, Christian Baptist, Christian according to the Gospel, Pentecostal, Christian Adventist, Mosaic and Muslim

For example, there are a few carols and folk poems in Dobrugea and on the left bank of the Prut River that remind us about the passage of the apostle in this territory.

But we have also a direct proof Saint Andrew's cave, the place where Saint Andrew lived two thousand years ago.

A strong proof of the old age of the Romanian Christianity is made by many words with religious meaning in the main lexical background of the Romanian language, that have been used since the 3rd-4th centuries until today. Some of these words have been taken over from the ordinary Latin spoken by our "christened" Dacian-Roman forerunners, while some others were created on the spot by the new confessors of the Christian faith. We mention the words:

- **church** (rom. **biserică** coming from lat. *basilica*);
- **faith** (rom. **credință** coming from lat. *credere*);
- **law** (rom. **lege** coming from lat. *lex-legem*);
- **angel** (rom. **înger** coming from lat. *angellus*);
- **altar** (rom. **altar** coming from lat. *altare -altarem*);
- **cross** (rom. **cruce** coming from lat. *crux – crucem*);
- **father** (rom. **părinte** coming from lat. *parens - parentem*);
- **prayer** (rom. **rugăciune** coming from lat. *rogatio - rogationem*);
- **temple** (rom. **tămplă** coming from lat. *templum*);
- **sin** (rom. **păcat** coming from lat. *peccatum*);
- **pagan** (rom. **păgân** coming from lat. *paganus*);
- **Christian** (rom. **creștin** coming from lat. *christianus*);
- **to give Eucharist** (rom. **a cumineca** coming from lat. *communicare*);
- **to christen** (rom. **a boteza** coming from lat. *baptistore*);
- **Sunday** (rom. **duminică** coming from lat. *dominica*);
- **God** (rom. **Dumnezeu** coming from lat. *dominus - deus*);
- **Christmas** (rom. **Crăciun** coming from lat. *calatione*);



Made by students: **Evelina Arabagiu, Simona cristescu, Aura Gande, Ana Maria Ifrim and Oana Tanase**

The Cave of St. Apostle Andrew Monastery

In Dobrogea, in the middle of a deep forest, issued like a miracle in a dry aria, we find the monastery and the cave where Saint Apostle Andrei preached Christianity for the first time on Romanian land. These lands are the birth place of remarkable people of the Christian world, such as St. Ioan Casian and Dyonisius Exiguus.



Address: Comuna Ion Corvin, Jud. Constanta, Romania

Divine Liturgy Service: Romanian

Established: 1990

Celebration/Hram: "St. Andrew" (November 30)

Other: Monks Skete

Andrew was the first Christian who was turned into a saint. He had lived there in a cave in the hillside. There are small holes in the cave walls, where the Christian



pilgrims leave pieces of paper, where they write prayers and wishes. The cave is believed to be healing and to fulfill people wishes.

Made by:

Andrei Mitea & Alexandru Mitulescu

"The Cave and Saint Apostle Andrew's Monastery should be visited by any real Romanian Christian. Why? Because here it is the Romanian Bethlehem. Here Romanian Christianity was born."

Prof. Nechita Runcan, Theological, Faculty from Ovidius University

Saint Apostle Andrew's cave is situated at about 4 kilometers South East of Constantza – Ostrov road. Even today you can see the stone that once served as an altar. The stone slab has the Holy Cross sculptured on all its sides. This sanctuary was used by Saint Andrew and his disciples.

At about 50 meters from the cave there are the nine springs which offer the best water all over Dobrogea. Saint Apostle Andrew preached for the first time in this area the religion of peace, harmony and love healed the sick and comforted those in suffer and baptized in the name of Christ.

All over those 45 years of communist period the Cave became nothing else but a simple grotto, without any treasured religious objects. The skete was reopened in 1990. The work of rearranging the Cave began in 1993. Today the skete became a monastery according to the decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church from 14th of July 1994. Many are the miracles worked by Saint Apostle Andrew at his Cave from Dobrogea and at the 9 springs where he used to baptise.



Made by: **Catalina Ghicu & Mihaela Tintea**



Romanian tradition on the celebration of St. Andrew

We will tell you about a very important saint of Romanians, Saint Andrew. It is said that he was the first to be called by Jesus to become his apostle and help christen the world. After Jesus's death, when all the apostles went to a different part of the world to christen all the peoples, he was chosen to come to our region, so he is the first one who introduced the religion to our land. Let's talk about what he did for our country and why he is so important to us. The main reason is that he introduced Christianity and there is a great story about this. The story of his arrival is pretty interesting:

He first met our ancestors, the people of Scythia, in a little village near Tomis, known today as Constanza. When he first talked to them he asked where their priest was. 'Take me to your leader', he said. They told him to go to a nearby cave, with a legend of its own, because people believed that their god Zalmoxis, the Sun God, lived there. However, when St Andrew arrived there, the cave was empty and on his way back he said to the people 'Nema est', which means 'There is no-one there'. That's how the village got its name 'Nameiesti'. After this little adventure St Andrew remained in Scythia for two or three years performing miracles and baptizing people, especially children. St Andrew's Day is celebrated in 30 November, when ghosts and spirits are thought to come into our world to torment the living. A very nice tradition is putting some wheat seeds to grow and they grow very fast. It is said that the higher the new plant is, the better your year will be. This custom is associated with St Andrew because he represents the beginning as wheat represents new life.

There is also the pilgrimage to St Andrew's Cave, where miracles still happen today. Of course this doesn't work for everyone, but everyone is welcome to try his faith.

Then there is the custom to put garlic at the doors and windows, because people believe that on this night evil spirits come into our world and St Andrew fights them and the garlic protects us from them.

Made by students: **Cristina Gheorghe, Diana Iancu and Raluca Anghel**

DERVENT MONASTERY

A gate for Christianity in Romania

On the land where more than 2000 years ago 4 from Saint Apostle Andrew's disciples were martyred, where the Saint preached the Christianity, in the South of Dobrogea appeared 4 stone crosses.

The current Dervent Monastery was established on the place where during the IX-XI centuries used to be an old monastic area.

The Dervent Monastery - situated in Dobrogea on top of the Dervent Hill, is an important archeological site dating back to the Neolithic age.

There is also a stone cross which is said to work

wonders. Any tired traveler is welcome and sheltered here for one or several days.



Divine Liturgy Service: Romanian

Established: 1929-1936

Celebration/Hram: "Pious Paraschieva" (October 14), "St. George" (April 23) and "Life-giving fount of the Mother of God" (first Friday after Pascha)

The monastery has a Holy Icon of the Mother of Good with the Holy Infant, which works wonders and a Holy spring with good water to drink and to bath your body, whose apparition is due to Saint Andrew. The monastery is visited by sick people for healing especially on the Holy Cross Day (14th of September.)

Made by students: **Catalin Sarbu & Augustin Ganea**

Healing Cross

Healing Cross is placed in the farmer area of Stoenesti village ant dates from 1620. It is said that through this village Saint Apostle Andrew would pass on his way to Christianize the native people from Baragan fields. The legend says that when the cross was carried from Calarasi to Fetesti in an oxen cart, and they reached to Stoenesti village, the cart broke and the cross fell down. The people who carried the cross went to fix the cart but when they returned to take the cross and go on their way they couldn't move it.

Soon after that, the villagers from Stoenesti got sick and started to die of plague. The cross is considered to have healing powers and people who can't cure themselves going to doctors, come here, at the healing cross to find their health and salvation through prayers.

Every Friday midnight it is held a special divine service which is also held on every holiday. It was also noticed that the Holy Cross became higher and higher as the years past and many times after strong, true and pure prayers it is full of unction.

Saint Nicolas Cathedral

The oldest church in Calarasi is Saint Nicolas Cathedral, certified since 1773. In that time the town was called Lichiresti as the name of Saint Nicolas' archbishop – Myra Likia. Practically the town Likiresti (now Calarasi) was built around this church and its older name proved that.

The church is made by bricks and is shaped like a ship. It has two spires, one opened and other one closed (this is used as steeple).

The church has a possession some invaluable objects, donated by the prince Al. Ghica, in 1835.

In 1908, the church was repainted by the Italian painter Orest Cantini, and the wall that separates the altar from the rest of the church was sculptured in oak wood, by M. Babic, a Romanian sculptor.

CERNICA MONASTERY



Cernica Monastery, ancient center of prayer and culture, built in 1608, nestled on a small island in the middle of Cernica Lake 14 km east of Bucharest. It is one of Romania's most idyllic monasteries that rises in the middle of a lake, surrounded by secular forests with an interesting fauna (wild boars, pheasants, oaks, pellets) attracting those who love nature as well as the worshippers.

Divine Liturgy Service: Romanian

Established: 1608

Celebration/Hram: "Saint George" (April 23) for monastery's church and "Saint Nicholas" (December 6) for the church from the island (Ostrov)



Two imposing churches, some chapels dedicated to the most famous saints, and a book and religious art museum.

The cell complex that houses the 84 monks living in the monastery, is practically just a great fortress built in the architectural style that is typical of the plains.

From the bell tower, tireless watcher of times, the sound of bells calls once more to prayer: not only have those who desire to shared the gospel, but also the mere tourist.

Between 1818 and 1850, Saint Calinic from Cernica the most representative figure of the religious world of the time, was nominated Father Superior.



Founder of monasteries, churches, hospitals and orphanages, he was also responsible for the construction of the most important building of the Cernica Monastery. He had, with relentless zeal, the fortress and St. Gheorghe church built. The Abbey opened a religious painting school.



He was declared saint in 1955, one the worse years for Christian faith in Romania, because of persecution by communists. Lover of culture, he set the foundations for a rich library, and opened a religious painting school.

The relics of a 19th-century saint, who helped restore the monastery after it been abandoned due to plagues, attracts many pilgrims. He is celebrated on 11th April.

A very important institution has been the Seminary, as it formed many remarkable representatives of the Church. Among them is Father Teoctist, Patriarch of Romania, who studied for eight years in this school. At the time of the 2nd World War, the Seminary and monastery typography were shut down.

Now, with the blessing of the Holy Father and no danger of persecutions by atheist regimens, the monastery will become a place where young people, who want to follow the way of Christ, can find nurturing for their souls and become, according to their individual inclination, typographers, professors or craftsmen, while living a life of prayer. Since 1995, the Theological Seminar has been reopened.

The graves of Romanian painter Ion Tuculescu, and writer Gala Galaction, are in the cemetery, in front of St. Gheorghe's Church.

The religious art museum has a rich collection of icons, mediaeval silver bindings, embroideries, textiles, cult objects. The library has over 14,000 volumes.



BIRD MONASTERY



Bird Monastery, placed at 29 km away from Bucharest beyond the Pustnicu Forest, was

founded in 1813 by the same archimandrite Calinic, is home to 180 nuns.

The nuns, real artists in religious adornments and enameled jewels, gladly host guests.

Divine Liturgy Service: Romanian

Established: 1813

Celebration/Hram: "Holy Trinity" (the following day after Pentecost) at the main church and "Dormition of the Mother of

God" (August 15) for cemetery.



the church from the

The first attestation at this monarchical establishment dated from the year 1813, when the Abbot Timotei from the "CERNICA MONASTERY" has built one church from wood, which was demolished at the earthquake from 1838.

The big church was built by the "SAINT CALINIC" in time when he was Abbot at "CERNICA MONASTERY" in the year 1846, the church from the churchyard it was constructed in 1834.



The whole complex of buildings it was building from the nuns which were living here, each having the own house, and some houses they were made from the churchgoers, like gift for the monastery.

The name of the church: The "SAINT TRINITY" at the big church and the "DORMITATION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD" at



church from the churchyard.



The legend of Bird Monastery

There are two legends about the name of “Bird” monastery. One of them says that the abbot from Cernica Monastery left one day with two sister nuns to find a place to build another monastery closer to Cernica. They took a bird with them and the abbot released the bird saying that he would build the monastery right on the place where the bird would stop and that the monastery will be named “Bird”.

Another legend says that when the abbot read from the Gospel during one of the divine services held on the purpose to start building a new monastery, a bird came and sat on the Gospel and she didn't leave until the priest finished reading. They brought a wooden church and placed it in front of the big church, and those who wanted to devote their life to church came here and built their houses according to their taste and their financial possibilities.



Made by student: *Evelina Arabagiu*



The Museum

The monastery has a rich collection from the old church art: icons, ceramics, borderlines, also some moldings in gypsum to belong of the sculptor GHEORGHE D. ANGHEL, which was living here the last years of his life and he is burring in the churchyard of the monastery.



The nuns are at number 180, it is monastery with “SELF LIFE” and they are working in sections of tailoring, priestly vestments, little crosses.

The monastery it was restoring
between of the years 1950 – 1960,
through the care of the JUSTINIAN
PATRIARCH.



Cathedral “Ascension of Good” from Slobozia

The day of March 25th 2004 meant a great joy for the bishopric of Slobozia and Calarasi and also for the Romania Orthodox Church. On this very day a bishop Cathedral was hallowed. This is a historical event for the community as never had been raised a Cathedral in Baragan fields before.

The Cathedral has “Ascension of Good” as its celebration and in its basements there is a chapel with the celebration “Holy Roman Alexander” on 6th of December.

The sizes are monumental:

- height: 37 metres
- length: 45 metres
- breadth: 24 metres
- surfaces: 850 square metres

It is the most significant church building from this area in our country which has been raised during the last centuries and the moment of its sanctification was long waited by the faithful people from this diocese.

Until the moment this Cathedral was built the church “Holy Rulers” from Slobozia, established by Matei Basarab, was used instead.



“Holy Rulers” Monastery from Slobozia

It was founded by Matei Basarab (XIII century) and by Ianache Caragea. It was dedicated to the Holy Mount Athos until the second half of XIX century.

The present church dates from 1848 being built on the old structure of the old church founded by Matei Basarab. This new church was built by superior Gavriil from Izmir (Turkey). The inner wall dates from XVII century with some changes made in XIX century. After the secularisation of monastery estates, during Alexander Ioan Cuza ruler, the monastery became unction church.

Between years 1994 and 1997 the church walls were consolidated and the painting was restored. Between years 1996 and 1998 the cell complex inside the church was rebuilt and from the autumn of 1998 the monastery was reopened having in present eleven nuns, Mother Florentia Mocanu being the abbes.

Inside the monastery there is a museum with valorous exhibits gathered along the history of this holy place. In the new cells ensemble was opened a knitting workshop and an icon painting workshop.

Liturgical vestments



Various patterns, colours



Publication edited by students from 7th grade

Assisted by teachers:

Cornelia Ioniță, Blebea Petronela, Carmen Costea Stela, Aurelia Popescu

and

Marinela Dincă, *COMENIUS Co-ordinator Project*

Published by Barbu Știrbei College, Călărași - Romania

November, 2004