

# A LESS KNOWN MONUMENT: THE CHURCH OF SAINTS ELIJAH, ENOCH, AND JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN OF THE DRAGOMIRNA MONASTERY (SUCEAVA COUNTY)

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**Abstract:** The Church of Saints Enoch, Elijah, and John the Theologian (1602) is part of the Dragomirna Monastery complex, being one of the most remarkable monuments built on the territory of medieval Moldavia. Much better known is the church of *The Descent of the Holy Spirit*, that stands out for its unique architecture, in which its height and stone lacing make it unique in the Moldavian architectural landscape. Located outside the fortified enclosure, the small church situated in the monastery cemetery has remained little known, although it is linked to the beginnings of the building of the monastic complex.

**Rezumat:** Biserica *Sfinții Enoh, Ilie și Ioan Teologul* (1602) face parte din ansamblul Mănăstirii Dragomirna, fiind una dintre cele mai remarcabile monumente ridicate pe teritoriul Moldovei medievale. Mult mai cunoscută este biserica *Pogorârea Sfântului Duh*, singulară printr-o arhitectură unică, în care înălțimea ei și dantelăria realizată în piatră o fac deosebită în peisajul arhitectural moldovenesc. Aflată în afara incintei fortificate, mica biserică din cimitirul mănăstirii a rămas puțin cunoscută, deși este legată de începuturile ridicării ansamblului monastic.

The Church of Saints Enoch, Elijah, and John the Theologian represents the early work of future Metropolitan Anastasie Crimca, whose remarkable activity is well known in Moldavia. He was the landowner of Dragomirești, where the monastery will be built, but the money for the construction came from Luca (Luca) Stroici ("*the great founder*").<sup>1</sup> The monumental ensemble of the Dragomirna Monastery is distinguished by its grandeur, but this small church is at the opposite pole: it is distinguished by its reduced proportions (10x5 m, 5 m high) and by its presumptive role as mortuary chapel for at least one founder (Luca Stroici). This possibility is suggested by the existence of a fragmentary tombstone, preserved today in the monastery's lapidary.<sup>2</sup> Professor Maria Magdalena Székely presumed that two of the founders (Luca Stroici and Anastasie Crimca) were buried here.<sup>3</sup>

One of the major observations that could be made regarding the great church is that the inscription (*pisania*) with the names of the founders and the year when the church was consecrated is missing. It was never put in its designated place. A land donation made by "great founder" Luca Stroici in 1605 to *the newly built The Descent of the Holy Spirit Church*, proved that the construction could have been finished or in its final stages around that year.<sup>4</sup> However, the church was built during the second reign of Ieremia Movilă (1600-1606).<sup>5</sup> In few years, the liturgical books were already finished and used in the church, based on the dedication on the *Four Gospels (Tetrevangelium)*, dated 7118 (1609), September, 6. The Holy Book was made by Anastasie Crimca, in his memory and in his parents' memory, Ioan and Cristina, and it was given to the "*newly built*" Dragomirna Monastery.<sup>6</sup> Some other manuscripts will soon be dedicated to the new church: an *Apostol* manuscript (in Vienna today) donated also to "*the holy monastery The Descent of the Holy Spirit which is newly built*".<sup>7</sup> A holy book dated in 1610 was stolen by the soldiers of Țimuş Hmielnickij in 1653 and would

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<sup>1</sup> Gorovei 2014a, p. 341, 346.

<sup>2</sup> Gorovei 2014b, p. 273, Gorovei 2016a, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Székely 2014, p. 447. The grave of Simion Stroici is at Probota Monastery (Suceava County), see Székely 1994, p. 252.

<sup>4</sup> Gorovei 2014a, p. 346.

<sup>5</sup> The Diptych (*Pomelnic*) of the monastery started with the name of Ieremia Movilă, Gorovei 2014c, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Cimpoșu 2014, p. 324.

<sup>7</sup> Bogdan, 1889, p. 22, Gorovei 2015, pp. 112-116.