

M Á R T A N A G Y

THE ICONOSTASION OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH IN KARCAG

During the Turkish supremacy the greatest part of Jászkunság—a district of Central Hungary, which is also called Hármaskerület (Triple District) that is Jászszék (Jazygia), Nagykunság (Great Cumania), Kiskunság (Little Cumania)—was an integral part of the Turkish empire. It was at that time that the Greek merchants must have arrived here as Turkish subjects. Some of them even settled here, as the census of Jászkunság made by Pentz in 1699¹ let us think. The census contains family names, which were primarily used by Greeks: Marko, Pap, Nyrco, Szappanos, Illija etc.

In the “Jazygian and Cumanian countries” on 6th May 1732 Greek merchants made an application to the public of the district for a permission to reside². What made the application necessary were the royal ordinances on 11th and 22nd January 1732, which had prohibited any further trading by Turkish subjects in the country. In their application the Greek merchants put down that 1st, “their goods, without an exception are adapted to the conditions and necessities of the people”; 2nd “there are very few itinerant vendors who like them would peddle; 3rd, the commons for a certain period without any assessment of property (paving) and interest can get clothes and even money to pay their taxes and rates; 4th, “in the province of his royal highness we fulfil the hires; 5th, “we help the growth of the royal treasury and bearing the burden of the taxation”. Other documents from the district prove that the above description gives a true picture of the activity of Greeks in the Jászkunság.

There are three fields of their economic activity:

1. Selling in shops. The registrations of the shops in the district—in 1744³, 1753-54⁴ and 1773⁵—let us think that the shops were retail and grocers

1. Országos Levéltár. U. ETC. Fasc. 71. No. 4.

2. Szolnok Megyei Levéltár (hereinafter: SZML) Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Jegyzőkönyv 1732-1741, p. 16-18.

3. SZML Karcag város protokolluma 1736-1752, p. 178-180.

4. Országos Levéltár Helytartó Tanács Levéltára. Misc. Fasc. 2. No. 8.

5. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. D Capsa IX. Fasc. 2. No. 7.

shops with goods of both Turkish and Austrian origin. Their stocks were of a very low value.

2. They drew more profit from leasing taverns, meat houses, lodging houses. From 1773 there remained the leasing contracts of 15 taverns, 9 meat houses and 29 shops⁶.

3. The Greek merchants in the Jászkunság belonged to the company in Kecskemét⁷. Most of them practiced their profession as partners. While one of the merchants was travelling about with his goods the other was working in the shop, he was selling, making bargains, lending money⁸.

Three censuses were taken of the Greek merchants in Hungary in 1754, 1769 and 1779. Inspecting their dealing with the Jászkunság⁹ we can state that Greek merchants lived in 19 out of the 38 inhabited communities of the Hármas Kerület¹⁰. The guest merchants of the Jászkunság are of non unitus (ununitus) faith and all of them had come from Macedonia, mostly from Kozáni and Siátista. They crossed the border mostly at Zimony, as it is testified by their passports¹¹. The names in the censuses are approximately the same, but it means the identity more of the families than of the persons. The places of the merchants who went home after taking the loyalty oath in 1774, were taken by members of their wider family.

The members of Greeks in the Jászkunság is 75 in 1754, 62 in 1769 and 76 in 1780. Unlike in other parts, the immigration of Greeks was not over after taking the loyalty oath. Their number is approximately the same through the second half of the 18th century.

The census of 1784¹² registered 92028 inhabitants in the Jászkunság. Compared to this the number of Greeks is very small. Their trading activity, however, was essential for the people of the Jászkunság dealing primarily with agriculture and animal husbandry. They were welcome, we have no data about shutting up shops, and long disputes between the council and the Greeks

6. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. D Capsa IX. Fasc. 2. No. 28.

7. See Note 4.

8. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. D Capsa XIV. Fasc. 11. No. 1 (without year).

9. Census in 1754 —see Note 4.; Census in 1770: SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. D Capsa VI. Fasc. 4. No. 24. 1/2.; Census in 1780: SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. D Capsa XIV. Fasc. 7. No. 37.

10. Az első magyarországi népszámlálás 1784-1787, Budapest 1960, p. 64-65.

11. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. D Capsa XIX. Fasc. 11. No. 1.

12. See Note 11.

as we have in the case of the Greeks in Kecskemét and Debrecen. Though the 1767 protocol of Karcag inform us the banishment of Greek journey-men, Antal and Theodor, but it was their repeated wrangling and alcoholism that gave cause for it¹³.

In the hour of need the borough even defended its "own Greeks": in the 1753 protocol of Karcag there is a note on 24th April which prohibited merchants from other places from selling in the borough¹⁴.

The Greeks must have felt comfortable in the Jászkunság as they tried to get the *redemptus-right*, which gave the widest privileges attainable by local people¹⁵.

The Greek merchants of Hungary lived in a strange country. They tried to adapt themselves to the circumstances in their new homeland, on the other hand, they endeavoured to maintain their Greek nationality by fostering their mother tongue and ancient religion. Their adherence to the Greek language and culture manifested itself in editing and collecting Greek books, maintaining Greek schools. Even stronger than their cultivating the vernacular, observing the ancient customs of the Eastern Church embodied the feeling of belonging to one nation, of historical continuity and of spatial unity, the feeling of identity with the Hellenic nation living under Turkish subjection and dispersed all over the world. A congregation meant more for them than a religious community, it symbolized a foot native soil.

They could erect churches after the 1781 decree of Joseph II. proclaiming religious tolerance. The decree did not allow churches to be of an ornamented execution, and the front of the church-building could not be directly in the street. That is why orthodox churches in many towns hid in courtyards and did not determine the character of the settlements.

The Greek merchants of the Jászkunság built their church in Karcag. Already in the years after the "decree of tolerance" they raised 950 Ft for building the church by contribution and in 1791 they added another 3500 Ft¹⁶. It was on 10th August 1793 that they filed a petition with the public of Jászkun Kerület that they could build a church¹⁷. In their Latin petition they explained that they would build a nice church with a tower, because the inhabitants of Karcag and its surroundings had to go to church to the far away

13. SZML Karcag város protocolluma 1761-1772, p. 64.

14. SZML Karcag város protocolluma 1736-1752, p. 184.

15. SZML Karcag város napi Jegyzőkönyve a tanácsi végzésekről 1799, p. 384.

16. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. Fasc. 4. No. 335.

17. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. Fasc. 4. No. 23. 25. 1903.

Békés. They had the money needed for the building the church and the Bishop in Arad promised to provide a priest for the congregation being in formation.

On 11th September, 1793 the Deputáció of the district (a committee being charged with the matter of church building) reported¹⁸ that the expenses of the building were incurred by 12 families that is 72 persons in Karcag, Kisujszállás, Turkeve, Madaras, Kunhegyes. Trusting in a favourable verdict they bought a building ground for the would-be church in one of the borough's most beautiful places¹⁹. The borough of Karcag acknowledged the claim of the Greeks for building a church: "We do not oppose that the Greek merchants living here should build a church with tower, if they observe the laws of this country"²⁰. The claim of the Greeks for building a church was also supported by the Bishop in Buda, Dionysios Popovich (1790-1828), who was of Kozáni origin. On 14th February, 1794 the Greeks of Nagykunság declared that they had 9150 Ft collected for the building of the church²¹.

On the basis of all these a quick decision was made in the matter of the Greeks petition: in a document numbered 8887 the Helytartótanács (consilium regium locumtenetiale Hungaricum) informed the captaingeneral of the Jászkunság that His Highness, the King permitted the Greeks to erect a church in Karcag²².

The church was finished soon. One can read the date of 1798 in the epigraphic fresco decorating the proskomidion. The budget for the church was prepared on 28th January 1794 by József Jung, a master builder in Buda²³. In those days József Jung directed the building of the Greek church in Buda²⁴. This may have been the reason, or some kind of mutual agreement why it was not him but Károly Rábl, the master builder in Gyöngyös who constructed the church in Karcag²⁵.

Similarly to the other Greek churches in Hungary the one in Karcag was not built with the traditional Byzantine centralized plan, but it was axial. The design of the building, as well copied the local Baroque style. On the

18. ib.

19. ib.

20. ib.

21. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. Fasc. 4. No. 335.

22. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. Fasc. 4. No. 27.

23. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. Fasc. 4. No. 104/1794.

24. Füves Odön, "A pesti görög templom építéstörténete", In: *Építés-építészettudomány* 1975.; Geróné Krámer Márta, "Jung József pesti építómester", In: *Magyar Műemlékvédelem* 1967-68.

25. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. Fasc. 1. No. 2115.

other hand the ancient Byzantine traditions, which were determined by liturgical rules, were followed in forming the inner space.

The congregation must have been organized in 1793²⁶ and as it is testified by our documents it belonged to the jurisdiction of the ununited Bishop in Arad. The church was consecrated to St. George²⁷.

Among the works of arts preserved in their original state till our days, the iconostasion, the altar with a canopy and the pulpit have an outstanding significance and they give a unified church interior.

The height of the iconostasion is about 1000 cm and its breadth is 760 cm. Fifty four icons are placed on it, or if we regard the four little compositions in the ends of the crucifix in the work "Christ on the Crucifix" as separate productions we have fifty eight icons. In seven tiers there can be seen icons with scenes from the Old and New Testament. The compositions were painted on wood in egg-tempera (Photo 1).

Middle-axis: The upper pictures of the Holy Gates are The Mother of God north and The archangel Gabriel south. The lower pictures are Moses with the burning bush north and The dream of Jacob south. Above the Holy Gates is the Last Supper. The icon of the middle axis in the third tier is The Coronation of Mary; the icon of the middle axis in the fourth tier is The Saviour Enthroned. Above it is the composition The Eye of God, above it is Christ on the Crucifix; below the Crucifix are the Mother of God north and John, the Evangelist south.

The Diaconical Doors: north-wards there is Michael, the Archangel, above it is Abraham entertaining the three angels; south-ward there is Diacon St. Stephen, above it is The sacrifice of Isaac.

First tier: North there are 1) Jonah with the whale 2) St. George being broken on the wheel 3) The deliverance of the three innocent young men.

First tier: South there are 1) The temptation of Christ 2) The beheading of St. John, the Baptist 3) The confirmation of St. Basil.

Second tier: North there are 1) The Mother of God 2) St. George 3) St. Nicholas.

Second tier: South there are 1) Icon of the Saviour 2) St. John the Baptist 3) St. Basil the Great.

Third tier: North there are 1) Apostle St. Philip 2) Apostle St. Thomas

26. SZML Jászkun Kerület Közigazgatási Iratai. Fasc. 4. No. 2325.

27. About the history of the church and the Greeks in the Jászkunság see: Nagy Márta, *Görögök a Jászkunságban. Györffy István Nagykun Múzeum és a kecskeméti Szentháromság Magyar Orthodox Egyházközség kiadásában*, 1988 estztendőben, 41 p.

3) Apostle St. Matthias 4) Apostle St. Thaddeus.

Third tier: South there are 1) Apostle St. Bartholomew 2) Apostle St. Andrew 3) Apostle St. Barnaby 4) Apostle St. Jacob.

Fourth tier: North there are 1) Apostle St. Paul 2) St. Mark, the Evangelist 3) St. Lucas, the Evangelist 4) Apostle St. Jacob.

Fourth tier: South there are 1) Apostle St. Peter 2) St. John, the Evangelist 3) St. Matthew, the Evangelist 4) Apostle St. Simon.

In the fifth, sixth and seventh tier both north and south icons of King David and Moses are placed among those of lesser and greater prophets (Supplement 1). The Deisis and Church Feasts tiers are missing from the iconostasion. So it cannot wholly fulfil the religious functions laid down by the Church.

The Holy Gates: Its upper pictures, the icons of The Mother of God north-wards and The archangel Gabriel south wards represent the composition of The Annunciation (Photo 2, 11, 12).

The Mother of God. There is no inscription, its size is 45,5 × 35 cm. The master depicted The Blessed Virgin Mary with a halo, in a long white tunic and maphorion. In western art it became general to represent The Virgin reading a book. Eastern iconography depicts Mary with spindle in her hands when the Annunciation happens. The book of prophet Isaiah placed on a reading-desk refers primarily to Italian influence. The icon depicts the moment, when the angel let Mary know the news of her son being conceived. Mary presses her hands to her heart, her glance is directed towards the angel. Her gesture is filled with pathos, her expression is etherealized, her figure uncovers her deep feelings. The delineation is full of movement: the figure, the shaping of the ring of clouds surrounding the pigeon, the textile (even the reading-desk is given a veil of the same colour as Mary's garment to intensify the animation with its plant of restless curves), the pavement of a chess-board pattern drawn without perspective.

The composition is a carefully planned, Baroque work of art which follows the spirit of western iconography both as a whole and its details. In the upper right corner the master painted a circular window, which being left unaltered by the light penetrating it, symbolizes Mary's virginity, in western art.

The Last Supper (Photo 3). It is placed above The Holy Gates in the middle axis. There is no inscription, its size is 84 × 45,5 cm. In the middle of the composition there are the table and Christ with his disciples in a symmetrical arrangement. Among the disciples the master left a little empty space—enough for another chair—for the viewer. Christ wears a red tunic and a dark blue pallium (just as in the other icons of the middle axis), his head is

surrounded by a halo. He raises his hand blessing, his favourite disciple, John is bending towards him. The disciples also wear tunics and palliums. They are having an animated conversation, the first one on the left is flinging his arms about. It is only on the face of Peter that one can observe emotion. Judas, probably the first figure on the right, is grasping a money-bag hardly observably in his left hand. On the table there are a lamb on a plate symbolizing the supper and a wine flask. There are a drinking cup in front of Christ and knives, forks and little plates in front of the apostles. The pattern of the table cloth faced with gold is exactly the same as the one in the icon Abraham entertaining the three angels and reminds of the embroidery of upper clatses. One can see a vessel for washing one's hands on the floor.

The composition is a real Baroque scene. In the middle of the picture, which has a three part division, a twostranded, red drapery with golden stripes decorates the wall. On the left side there is a door, facing it, arranged symmetrically there opens a window through which, another characteristic of Baroque pictures, the viewer can glance at a landscape. The master, when painting the stone-blocks of a chess-board pattern, tried to follow the rules of scenography. The architectural elements of the interior are spatial, the figures are plastic.

When drawing the composition the painter took the possibilities given by the panel into consideration: the three upper arches of the frame became part of the composition with the help of dark columns.

The Last Supper in the New Testament is not only the memory of the supper eaten for the last time by Christ and his disciples but the symbol of founding the Holy Sacrament as well. In the later period it is very often painted above the Holy Gates.

Deacon St. Stephen (Photo 4). It is the panel of the southern diaconical gate leading to the diaconicon. There is no inscription, its size is 96,5×35,5 cm.

St. Stephen is painted with a halo, an incense-burner and his other attributes. He wears a sticharion, and a dalmatic, which is not white as it is usual in Orthodox iconography. His oration is of the same colour as the sticharion. He wears it across his left shoulder but unusually he keeps it not in his right but in his left hand. This way he signals the beginning of various acts in the divine service. St. Stephen does not look at the viewers. The shaping of the head resembles that of archangel Michael. For the sake of symmetry, to stress the middle axis they both turn towards the Holy Gates. The drapery in the background, which, not regarding its colour, resembles that in the icon of archangel Michael, reminds us of the ancient way of forming the iconosta-

sion, when instead of the two doors in the sides there hung drapery. In the foreground the stone-blocks of a chess-board pattern are not painted according to the rules of scenography. The master is almost self-consistent in using the stoneblocks in the various panels. He paints it in the two upper icons of The Holy Gates (The Annunciation), in The Last Supper above it, and in the icon Abraham entertaining the three angels above the northern diaconical door. Up to this point we can observe the painter's effort to establish symmetry in using the stone-blocks. He, however, could not use this motive in the icon Sacrificing Isaac above the southern diaconical door, which is the symmetrical counterpart of Abraham entertaining the three angels, he painted it instead on the southern diaconical door.

Above the icon of diacon St. Stephen the master placed the icon Sacrificing Isaac. This way Sacrificing Isaac became a kind of attribute of St. Stephen's martyrdom.

Sacrificing Isaac (Photo 10). The picture is placed above the southern diaconical door. There is no inscription, its size is $36,5 \times 36,5$ cm. In the middle of the composition on one knee Abraham is holding a sword in his right hand, raising his left hand high, from which his pallium is flowing in orderly plants. He is wearing a tunic. Isaac is kneeling in front of Abraham, folding his arms before his chest, bending his head concious towards his father. He is not tied up, all his figure shows that he is ready for the voluntary sacrifice. His tunic has slipped from his shoulder, he is almost half naked. Behind him there is a pile of wood, beside Abraham there are the sacrificial flames in a stone vessel. The master painted the angel on whirling clouds in the upper right hand part of the picture. In the coreground of the beautiful, balanced composition there are plants, in the background there become distinct the outlines of remote chains of mountains. The rock masses behind Isaac are similar to those in the icon of Jonah with the whale. The construction of the picture is layered similarly to all those panels of the iconostasion in which the figures and events are set in natural surroundings. It is basically characteristic of the pictures of the fundamental, first tier.

This little circular picture is nicely fit into the carvings. The frame is surrounded by ribbons at three points and above it is joined to the carvings by a huge acanthus leaf.

Isaac, voluntarily undertaking the sacrifice is considered as an Old Testament archetype of Christ. Similarly to the two lower icons of the Holy Gates (Moses with the burning bush and Jacob's dream) those above the two diaconical gates are the Old Testament prototypes of the Annunciation and the Incarnation.

Icon of the Saviour (Photo 5). Basic tier of picture. Inscription²⁸: Ἰ᾿ Ḳ᾿. Its size is 104,5×50,5 cm. The iconographical type of the Saviour usually depicts Christ sitting on his throne, raising his right hand blessing and holding the book of Gospels in his left. Here the master painted him standing probably because he wanted all the figures in the basic tier to stand. Christ is in a pink tunic and blue pallium. He is bare-footed, his feet and toes are robust unlike the graceful bearing of his head and fingers. He directs his warm, brown, gentle glance towards the viewer. His posture is a little strangely unnatural: he is raising his right hand and he presses the open book also against his right side. Thus all lines of force in his body are directed towards the Holy Gates—to stress the middle axis—like those of the body of his symmetrical counterpart, The Mother of God. The dynamic figure, the curved posture, and the costume of Christ are the product of West-European Baroque style. The figure is composed against a gilded background but he is placed in a natural surrounding. The halo, forming a ball is similar to that of Christ, the Child. The book of Gospels quotes the Gospel of Matthew 25.34:

Δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου,
κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν
βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

Jonah and the whale (Photo 6). It is the picture in the lowest tier of the iconostasion below the icon of The Mother of God. There is no inscription. Its size is 59,5×46 cm. The clothing of Jonah kneeling in the middle of the composition is a tunic and pallium. He is pressing his right hand against his breast, and is opening the other wide. The whale on the left is reaching far into the middle of the picture. It is spurting out water, its mouth is open, it has just put Jonah ashore. The counterbalance the huge, dark spot of the whale the master erected a pile of rocks on the right side, behind of which the silhouette of Ninive becomes distinct. The composition is very interesting: the dark spots of the whale and the cliffs narrow the space in the foreground and their diverging lines let it widen in the background. Jonah, the prophet preaching repentance is the archetype of the resurrected Christ.

The Mother of God with the Child (Photo 7). Basic row of pictures. Inscription: Ἰ᾿ Ḳ᾿. Its size is 104,5×50,5 cm. The Mother of God is standing holding the Child on her left arm embracing it with her right one. The Mother

28. We publish the inscriptions on the panels without any modification,

of God is rarely depicted with Child when standing. When she is holding a Child she usually sits on a throne. This icon being completed with the roll could be the Odigitria-type. The clothing of Mary is very nice, in spite of its Baroque character it seems to be very light and airy. The maphorion, framing the face and flowing around the shoulders is especially decorated. The face is icon-like, following the noblest Oriental traditions. She directs her large warm eyes towards the viewer, her whole being is very collected. Christ is raising his right hand blessing, his left hand is resting in his lap. His face does not fit his age as it is usual in the eastern iconography. The face is framed by curly hair. He does not look at the viewer. His striped tunic is unusual. His halo with an inscription disturbs not only the halo of Mary but the face of her as well. The master considered the halo not to be an organic part of his work, only a necessary attribute, that is why it does not fit in the whole composition, the master just painted it the picture. As in the case of the other icons of the basic tier, the master placed the figure in natural surroundings against a gilded background. The plants climb up the maphorion of the Mother of God like in the icon of St. Basil.

This icon differs from the ones described above. It must have been painted by another master, who was the creator of the icons St. George, St. Nicholas and St. Basil. This master was cleverer with his hands. He could build the Baroque elements into his composition in a way that they did not disturb the essence of the delineation. He held fast to the traditions of eastern iconography, trying to express the primariness of idea above the material world. His suggestive saints flushing with the plain of the picture are able to play the part of icons in the elevated moments of the divine service: they establish connection between the believer and the original personality of the saint evoked in the icon. The works of this master are of higher quality than those of the other.

The other master painted all the other panels of the iconostasion. His works are more statusque, he used not only the elements of Baroque. Looking at the composition, his way of creating space, the iconography, the delineation of the figures, we can see that his pictures are the slightly provincial products of West-European (Italian) Baroque style. These panels despite their places and iconography cannot be called icons in the traditional sense of the word. Still, because of the characteristics described above they can play the role of icons. The fresco on the ceiling is a work of this master's hand, too.

The two masters worked in a close cooperation or one of them continued the work after the death or departure of the other clinging closely to the

original plan. They must have been of Greek origin: their figures have Greek character. These works showing predominance of eastern iconography represent a noble composition of western and eastern iconography.

St. George with the dragon (Photo 8). Basic tier. Inscription: Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ. Its size is 104,5 × 50,5 cm. St. George is depicted standing in his armour and helmet. He is holding a lance in his right and a Latin cross in his left. The salamander-like dragon is in front of him. Its tail ends in an arrow winding upwards, pointing towards the soldier. George is fixing his eyes on the viewer. His slightly chubby face, his helmet, which disturbs the curve of his halo, his curly locks, his armour make him similar to the Greek war-god, Mars. His figure is strong and robust. The master placed him against a gilded background in natural surroundings, which is painted with respect for the rules of scenography. There is a lot of Baroque elements in the garments of St. George. On the other hand, the master did not picture the struggle, which is a favourite theme of Baroque art. The master's aim was not to tell an episode of St. George's life, he wanted to capture the St. George—phenomenon as a whole with the help of the attributes, he wanted to visualize the soldier and the martyr. The conceptual nature of the work links it with the traditions of the Eastern Church.

St. George the Martyr is the denominative saint of the church in Karcag, it was to his memory that the church was erected and dedicated. His struggle with the dragon makes him the earthy fellow fighter of the archangel Michael. For the Christians he is the symbol of the fight against the evil.

St. Nicholas (Photo 9). Basic tier of pictures. Inscription: Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ. Its size is 104,5 × 50,5 cm. The icon depicts St. Nicholas as a bishop. He raises his right hand blessing, in his left hand he has his crosier ending in two serpent-heads. It is rare in the Eastern Church that Nicholas is represented with a crosier, he is more often pictured with a book of Gospels. Here Nicholas can be seen in full canonicals: he wears sakkos on his white sticharion and an epigonation above his right knee. The three horizontal stripes on his omophorium refers to his being a bishop. His head is decorated with a mitre which is surrounded by a halo. He does not look at the viewer. His expression and posture is very disciplined giving evidence of force and the certainty of authority resulting from it. His clothes combine the attributes used in the Nicholas-pictures of the Eastern and Western Churches. Another example of blending the western and eastern elements: the gilded background recalls the Orthodox icons not representing space, the figure of Nicholas on the other hand, is placed in natural surrounding following Baroque models. The same duality is expressed by the fact that St. Nicholas, whose stature is not plastic one, casts a shadow.

The Iconostasion is a very harmonic work of art either in itself or regarding its relation to the church interior, it has a special place among Hungarian iconostasions. Where does this harmony come from? It is determined by the relationship between the individual pictures and the whole iconostasion between the architectural elements and the iconostasion, and between the trestle-work decorated with carvings and the painting. Let us have a look at all these components.

1. The iconostasion as a whole and its smaller units, the individual panels are based on the variations of one form. This basic form is the arch of the apse and the horizontal portion bordered by it (figure 1). This basic form is repeated in different dimensions by the panels of the lowest and 4th tiers: the panels of the lowest tier are squarer, the panels of the 4th tier are more stretched (figure 2). In the case of the panels of these two tiers the master altered only the upper arch while the portion below remained the same. In the case of the panels of the basic tier (2nd tier) and of the third tier the upper arch is altered again and the portion below becomes slightly incurved. These lower curves do not only give space for the carvings but create a smoothly rippling rhythm at the most expressed part of the iconostasion (figure 3). These two tiers are framed by the similarly formed panels of the first and fourth tiers, thus creating a separate unit within the iconostasion. The upper arches of the panels on the diaconical gates resemble the previous types, but the lower edges end in rounded arches, as if they formed pedestals (figure 4). This form is not repeated elsewhere, emphasizing that the two diaconical gates are separate units within the iconostasion. The middle axis. The two lower panels of the Holy Gates repeat the panels of the second and third tiers. The two upper panels, however, are another variation of the basic form (figure 5). A horizontally stretched variation of this panel is that of The Last Supper (figure 6). Above it the icons of the middle axis in the third and fourth tiers are similar to the panels of the basic tier, differing only in the fact that their vertical edges have a triangular fold in the middle (figure 7). The same type can be found in the case of the God's Eye composition. The forms of the panels in the middle axis—except for the panels of the two lower tiers on the Holy Gates—are not repeated elsewhere, nor in the case of the panels of the Calvary. This way the master wanted to emphasize the special importance of the middle axis.

The Holy Gates (figure 8.a) and the whole iconostasion (figure 8.b) are unique variants of the basic form as well.

The panels on the lower four tiers of the iconostasion are more or less the same. The monotony of them is dissolved by the icons of the upper third

composed on egg-shaped panels. Their "precursors" are the round panels above the diaconical doors. The egg-shaped panels of the upper third make it possible to multiply the carved work which make the whole iconostasion more facile.

The four little panels on the edges of the Crucifix are unique variants of the basic pattern. The two panels below the Crucifix with irregular arches remind us of the lower two third of the iconostasion and link the rectangles ruling in the lower part of the iconostasion and the oval forms characteristic of the upper third.

The conceptual climax of the iconostasion is the Calvary. The middle axis, which is to prepare the Calvary scene is emphasized by a pynel form not used elsewhere. The carved columns, which frame these panels are unique as well. The Calvary in the upper third of the iconostasion is emphasized also by widening the middle axis vertically leading to it.

So both the iconostasion as a whole and its smaler units can be deduced from one basic form. The master made use of all the possible variations of the form. All these make the iconostasion harmonic in itself. What is more, it is harmonically placed in the given space as the basic form chosen by the master is determined by the arch of the apse. The iconostasion fits exactly into arch of the apse, the crucifix crowing the iconostasion reaches the highest point of the arch. All these show that the iconostasion was composed into this interior. On the other hand the master tried to join the iconostasion to the wall flatly, not using salient columns at the edges of it.

The iconostasion must have been carved in the first decade of the 19th century. The motifs used most frequently are the favourite decorative elements of Baroque wood-carving: acanthus leaf, palmette, vine-tendrils with bunches of grapes, rose, stylized rosebuds, stringmouldinh, corinthian capitals. The carvings are enriched with cable patterns above the diaconical gates and around the frames of the panels. Though Baroque style would have allowed whimsical constructions they are always chosen in accordance with their place. In the case of this work of art the form does not only carry the spiritual content, it becomes an element of content in itself. The disciplined master subordinated his great skill to the emerging idea with the humility of a real artist. His masterpiece in Karcag by all means can be linked to the workshop of the sculptor Miklós Jankovics (ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΑΛΙΔΟΡΟΣ) in Eger. This seems to be proved by the initiels I. M. on the back of the second icon in the first tier of the upper third south-ward. These initials are of the same age as the inscription on the back above The God's Eye: ΠΑΡ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΥ. Archival documents let us know that between 1807-1813 it was Miklós Csiga-

rida who worked in Karcag as a priest²⁹.

2. The trestle-work and painting. According to the Greek inscription placed in a banderol below The God's Eye:

. 18 = ΕΖΩΓΡΑΦΗΣΟΝ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΚΑΙΡΩ ΤΗ[Σ] ΕΠΙ=

. ΤΡΟΠΙΕ ΤΟΥ ΕΓΓΕΝΕΣΤΑΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ Μ̃ΙΛΑ ΡΑΤΖ=11

the painting was finished during the curatorship of Mihály Rátz. The compositions of the panels were strictly planned in the form determined by the panels. And the individual panels were subordinated to the iconostasion as a whole. Every panel helps to emphasize the middle axis, the icons of which are strictly symmetrical works. The icon of Mary, one of the basic pictures is turned towards the Holy Gates. Christ, even if it makes him slightly twisted turns inside. To counterbalance it, lest the basic tier should tilt towards the Holy Gates, St. George and St. John, the Baptist are turned away from the middle axis. The basic tier is closed at the two sides by the figures of St. Nicholas and St. Basil as straight as a ramrod. The figures of the two diaconical doors are also turned towards the middle axis and the line of force of the compositions on the Holy Gates is directed towards the inside. The figures of the 3rd and 4th tiers separate the lines of force of the basic tier with little variations.

In the tiers of the prophets the master chose bolder solutions: in the bottom tier the first figures both north and south are turned away from the middle axis just to let the lines of force of the side figures stand out.

The iconostasion in Karcag, unlike other Baroque iconostasions of the age, does not disintegrate into separate works of art. Its masters composed it to be one piece of art. Both the trestle-work with its carvings and the paintings serve to express the idea formulated by the iconostasion: laying emphasis on Christ's prototypes in the Old Testament as well it depicts his presence on the earth and the celestial acknowledgement of the church founded on his doctrines. It has an outstanding place among Baroque iconostasions in Hungary.

Photo: TIBOR BELLON

Drawing: LÁSZLÓ VIGH

Translated by KLÁRA KOLTAY

29. SZML, Jászkun Kerület Közgylési Jegyzőkönyv 1813.

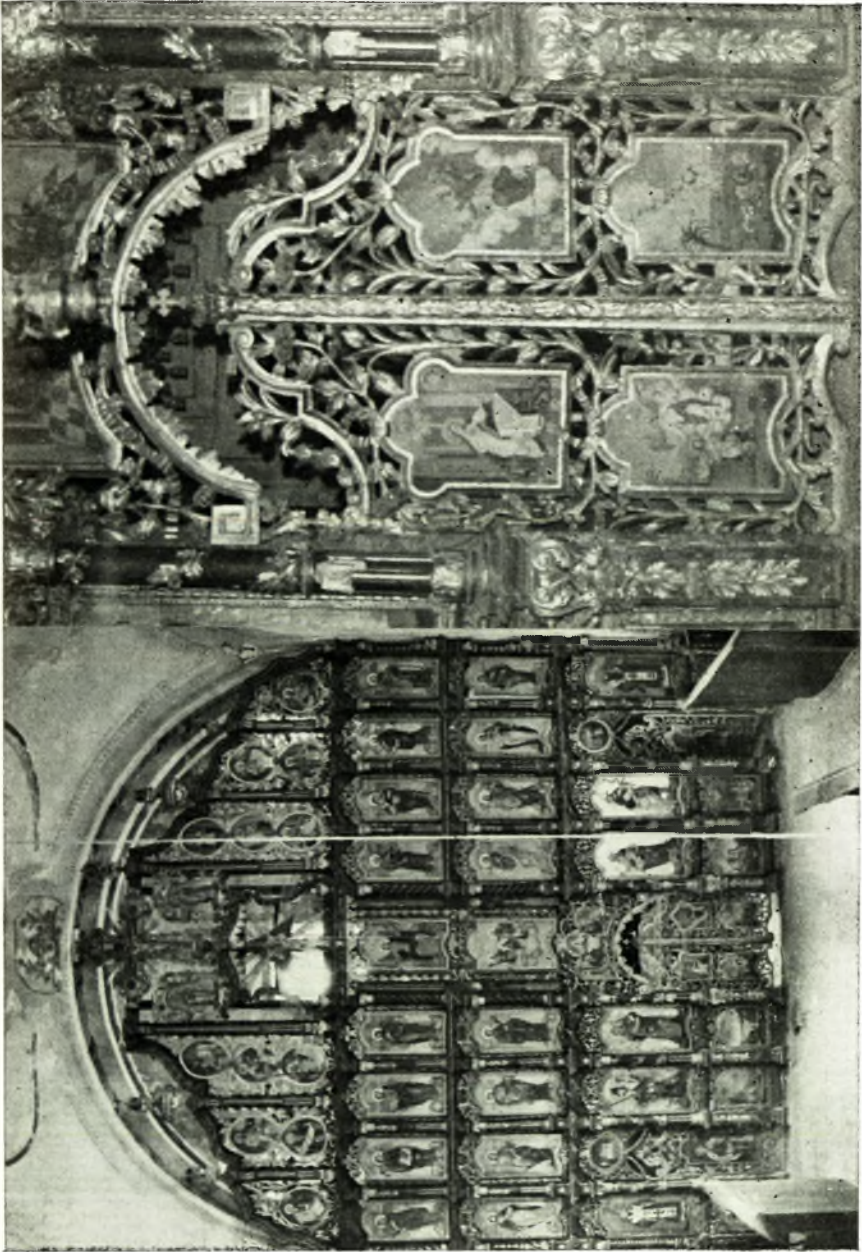


Photo 1.



Photo 2.

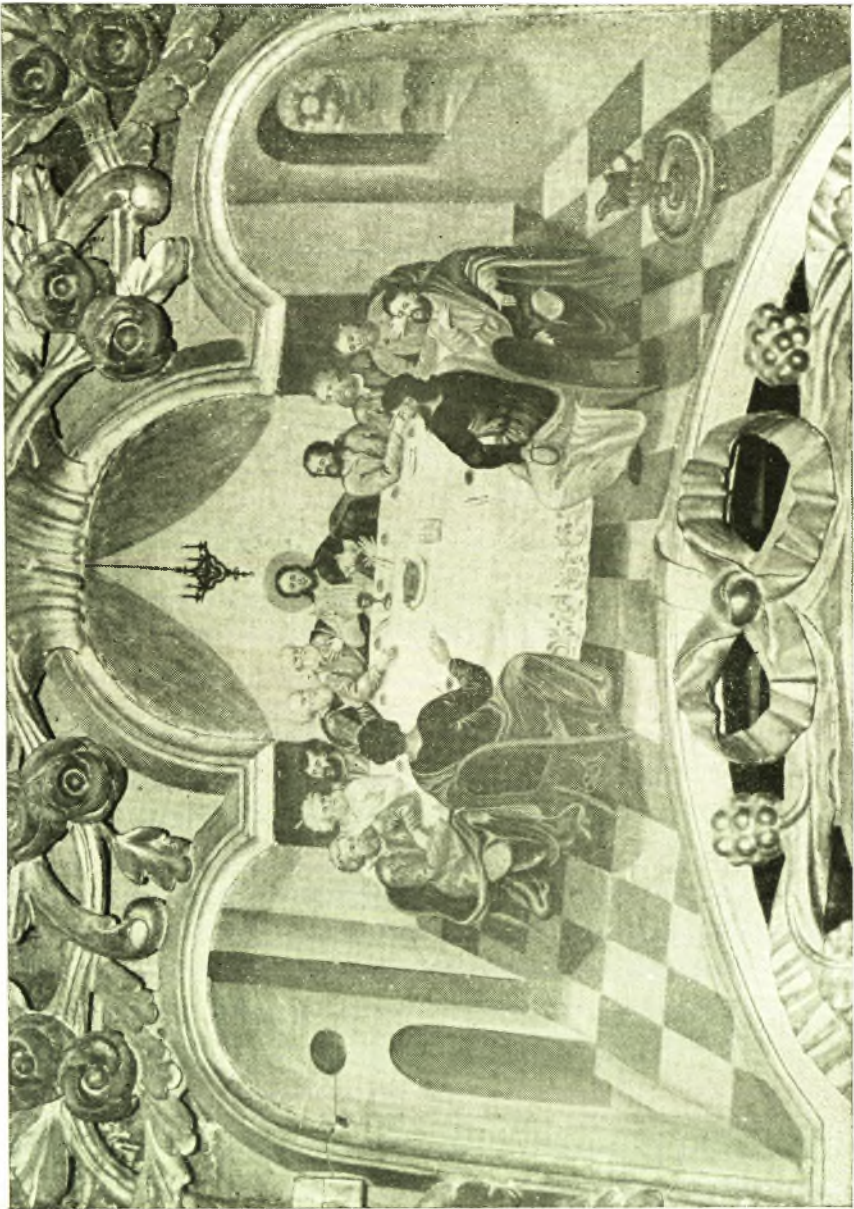


Photo 3.



Photo 5.

Photo 4.



Photo 6.

Photo 7.



Photo 9.

Photo 8.

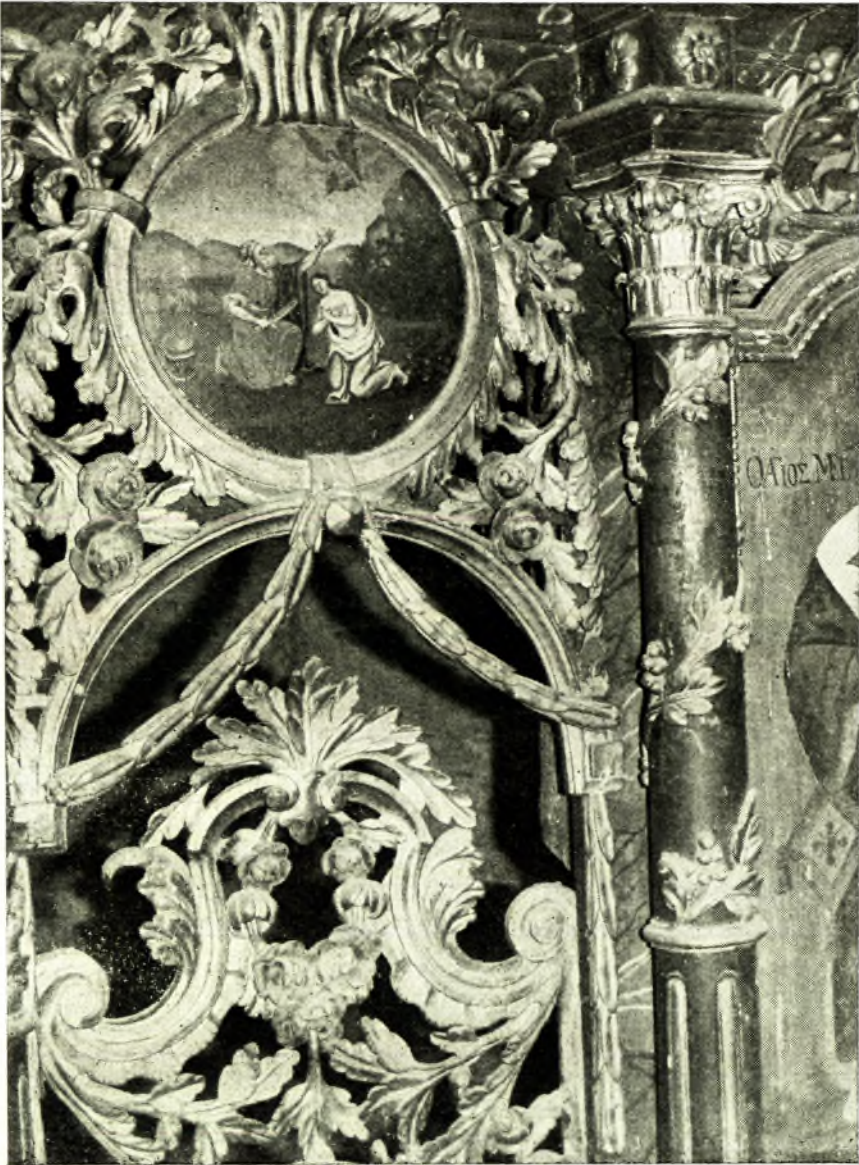
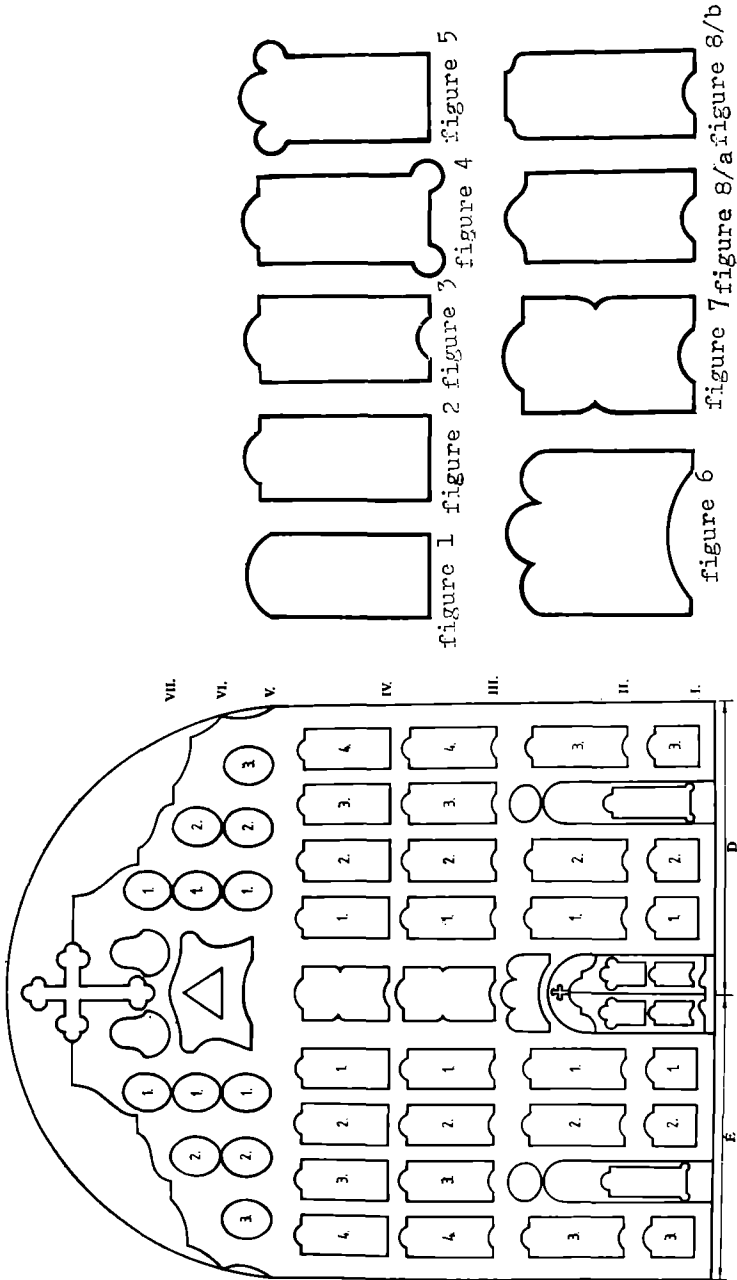


Photo 10.



Photo 12.

Photo 11.



Supplement I.