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**Archaeological Research on the Churches of Iași from the
Late 16th and 17th Centuries: Nicoriță, Golia, Socola, and
Stratenia**

ABSTRACT

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INTRODUCTION

The choice of the topic for our paper stemmed from a desire to bring together in a single study the results of archaeological research (largely unpublished) conducted at several churches belonging to monasteries or former monasteries (such as the church founded by Hetman Nicoară or Socola) located within the city of Iași, built during the 16th and 17th centuries. The results of our research introduce some new insights and, in part, correct previously held assumptions about these places of worship. However, given that the churches to which we dedicate a special study in this work are an integral part of Iași's urban fabric—some dating from the medieval period, others from a later date—we will also refer here to the history of the city of Iași, its economic development, and the spatial growth it has experienced. This entire process also involved the construction or reconstruction of countless churches. It is well known that many of these underwent significant restoration, either because the original structure had only a stone foundation and a wooden superstructure—with stone eventually becoming the preferred material—or as a result of fires, earthquakes, or even repeated attacks on the new capital of Moldavia by the Tatars and Cossacks.

Nevertheless, the structural elements have been preserved, defining an architectural style characteristic of the Moldavian style, onto which influences from Wallachian architecture were grafted in the 17th century.

Religion was an essential aspect of medieval and modern society, not only in our country. Places of worship represented (and still represent), alongside religious writings, religious objects, etc., the embodiment of this reality. Many movable religious monuments have been lost over time, whereas churches—solid monuments built mostly of stone—allow us to study the past from a religious, social, political, and artistic perspective, illuminating the mindset of the time.

The act of founding a church was the prerogative of both princes and prominent boyar families and, in a later period, with the economic development of the city, even of certain guilds of artisans and merchants, guilds that took upon themselves the financial support of the churches (many of which had been left without income due to the disappearance of the founding families from the early days or the loss, for various reasons, of the properties with which they had been endowed), thus assuming the role of founders. As a result of this situation, some places of worship even became known to society by a name derived from their new financiers: Curelari and Tălpalari in Iași. This phenomenon is also found in other cities, such as Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia. In the collective consciousness, the construction and funding of a church

conferred the privilege of a special relationship with the divine (a sign of piety) and, at the same time, symbolised the economic power of the respective founder.

During the medieval and pre-modern periods, the city of Iași transformed a simple market town and temporary royal residence into a provincial capital, becoming the seat of government for the Principality of Moldavia. The city's growing importance due to the presence of the royal court, which had abandoned the old custom of itinerancy, inevitably led Iași to become the residence of boyar families, whose members held offices within the administrative apparatus. This also resulted in the construction of a considerable number of buildings, serving both as residences and places of worship. Some of these monuments, built on the outskirts of the city, are veritable fortresses, equipped with enclosure walls and defensive towers—such as Golia, Socola, Cetățuia, and Galata—which also served as places of refuge for the city's population in times of distress. Gheorghe Curinschi noted that these fortress-churches constituted a true defensive system for the city of Iași. And this was no coincidence, given that the 17th century brought Moldova much political instability and military incursions (Mihai Viteazul's entry into Iași marked the very beginning of the century) that shook the stability of the state in every respect, with particularly negative effects on the economic and political spheres, but also with consequences for society as a whole.

The population and both urban and rural settlements were severely affected, as were places of worship. These places naturally attracted looters, not only because of the treasures they held but also because the population sought refuge within their walls, bringing with them, as is well known, at least a portion of their possessions. Other churches were built in the heart of the city, intended to provide religious services for the community that gravitated around them, with representatives of the ruling family serving as founders—as is the case with the churches of St. Nicholas, Stratenia, the Three Hierarchs, Barnovschi, and St. John Chrysostom—or with certain boyars, such as the churches of St. Vineri, Nicoriță, Tâlpalari, St. Dumitru-Balș, etc.

The 17th century is also notable for the fact that, despite devastating events, it was shaped by the personalities of great church leaders who played a significant role in the development of Romanian culture, such as Metropolitans Anastasie Crimca, Varlaam, and Dosoftei, as well as learned boyars like Luca Stroici, Grigore Ureche, and Miron Costin, as well as by princes who were defenders of the Orthodox faith, who supported the work of these scholars and were themselves founders of many churches, such as the Movilești family (which included Miron Barnovschi), Vasile Lupu, and Gheorghe Duca. Iași, as the country's new capital, had everything to gain from this cultural development. In fact, most of the churches in

Iași date from the 17th century. According to architectural historians, these places of worship are landmarks that exerted a significant influence on the development of ecclesiastical architectural style throughout the rest of Moldavia.

Another characteristic of the century in question was the development of ties between Moldavia and Wallachia, especially since princes such as Simion Movilă, Radu Mihnea, and Gheorghe Duca ruled in both Iași and Bucharest, thus allowing for the emergence of architectural influences from the south, such as the crenellated belt, made of bricks laid on edge, the twisted belt, and the open porch—elements found in several churches built in the 17th century in Iași (Socola, Barnovschi, Nicoriță). The symbiosis between these newly grafted influences and the classic Moldavian style defines the new style's characteristic traits of the century. We believe that the description of the churches included in our research plan should be based on this framework of phenomena and closely linked to it.

The Current State of Research in the Field

Archaeological research on a church is typically conducted only during a major restoration. In Iași, only a few religious buildings have undergone restoration work. Not all of these have been fully restored. Such was the case with the church of the Galata Monastery, researched by archaeologists Eugenia Neamțu (1962), Vlad Zira (1963–1964), and Gh. I. Cantacuzino (1964, 1965–1967), the church dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, within the monastic complex at Cetățuia, was investigated by archaeologist Gh. I. Cantacuzino, and the Church of Saint Sava at the monastery of the same name, where the site supervisors were Nicolae N. Pușcașu and Voica Maria Pușcașu, a site where I worked during several campaigns while I was a student at the Faculty of History at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University in Iași, coming into contact for the first time with medieval archaeology and, in particular, with monument archaeology. Another church that underwent archaeological research was the old cathedral of the Roman Catholic Diocese, a project coordinated by archaeologist Stela Cheptea.

The same archaeologist also conducted archaeological research at the Armenian Church dedicated to Saint Mary. In 2021, the Church of the Lord's Entry into the Church – Vovidenia was also archaeologically surveyed by a team led by Ludmila Pîrnău. Between 2023 and 2024, the church dedicated to Saints Theodore underwent restoration, during which we conducted archaeological research inside the church. Some of the churches in Iași have been restored or renovated at the initiative of the parish priests, without any archaeological research.

Some of the churches presented in this work have been the subject of historical analysis, with research on them resulting in studies and, in some cases, monographs. The parish priests

themselves wrote a few studies on certain places of worship; however, because they lacked specialised training, their articles emphasise the religious aspect rather than historical information, as they are primarily intended for a general audience. Archaeological information, however, has been used very little or not at all.

None of the churches discussed in this study had previously been restored, neither by the Commission for Historical Monuments during the interwar period nor by the Directorate of Historical Monuments, which operated until 1975. There were several proposals, as evidenced by the two studies conducted by N. Ghika-Budești and Sever Zotta, which focus on the Golia Monastery. Still, none of the proposed projects was ever implemented. Within the metropolitan complex, only a single monument was restored: the Old Metropolitan Church, dedicated to Saint George, on the initiative of Metropolitan Teoctist, a restoration continued by Metropolitan Daniel. More recently, after 1990, the church of the Golia Monastery and the Metropolitan Complex were restored using external funds. The other two churches, former monasteries, were restored using funds provided by the Ministry of Culture—Nicoiță—or through self-financing—Socola.

The relatively recent restoration of the monuments in question required prior archaeological research. Thus, we conducted excavations at the former Socola Monastery, the Church of St. John the New/Nicoiță, the Golia Monastery and within the grounds of the Metropolitan Complex. In the same context of restoration, we also conducted an excavation campaign at the Bârnova Monastery, specifically at the Abbot's House, which is why we do not discuss this monastic complex here. Archaeological research was conducted for the first time at all these sites, though in most cases it was incomplete, with areas still requiring such investigation. The insufficiency of archaeological research was due, in most cases, to projects carried out by architects, which included only certain areas slated for restoration, citing financial constraints as the reason.

As part of the research, which identified many unknowns regarding each monument, artifacts were also recovered: pottery, jewellery, coins, parts of water supply systems—clay pipes—which were handed over to the Museum of the History of Moldova within the Museum Complex in Iași, at the former museum of Golia Monastery, while some of the items discovered at the Metropolitan See are in the custody of archaeologist Vasile Cotiugă. In addition, some of these artefacts were restored at the Regional Laboratory, which operates under the “Moldova” National Museum Complex. The results of these restorations were the subject of an article written by those involved in the process.

In this work, in addition to the archaeological data—as is only natural—we present a series of historical details for each monument, including information on land ownership, property, and human habitation, as well as an overview of past and recent restoration and renovation efforts. In this way, we have aimed for each chapter of the work (except the introductory section) to serve as historical-archaeological profiles of these religious buildings—the church of the Socola Monastery, the Nicoriță Church, the church of the Golia Monastery, and the Stratenia Church within the Metropolitan Complex. Archaeological research, supported by documentary evidence, supplements the data regarding the monuments analysed in this work.

CHAPTER I: THE CITY OF IAȘI IN THE LATER HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY AND IN THE 17TH CENTURY

This chapter examines the development of Iași during the second half of the 16th century and throughout the 17th century, highlighting its transformation from a semi-urban settlement into an important capital of Moldavia.

Interest in studying the history of Romanian cities dates back to the 19th century, and Iași has been analysed from both documentary and archaeological perspectives. Modern research has enabled a deeper understanding of urban formation and development by comparing cities across Europe. In its early days, Iași developed due to favourable geographical and economic factors. Its location on an important trade route connecting Northern Europe (Poland) with the East (Constantinople/Istanbul) played a decisive role in the city's emergence and growth. This route became safer than the one along the Dniester, which was threatened by the Tatars, attracting merchants and fostering trade.

In addition to trade, development was also supported by natural conditions: the presence of water (the Bahlui River), favourable terrain, and the protection offered by certain local structures. Around these elements, an early settlement formed, which gradually evolved into an urban centre.

From a social perspective, in the first phase (the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century), the population consisted of artisans, merchants, and representatives of the royal authority. The town had a semi-urban character, as its inhabitants combined urban activities (trade, crafts) with rural ones (animal husbandry and farming). Over time, these rural activities began to disappear as the town developed and living space became limited.

Ethnic communities also played an important role in the development of Iași. The Armenians, for example, were wealthy merchants involved in the spice trade, and the Catholic

community, though less well-documented, contributed to the diversification of urban life. The presence of these groups influenced the organisation of the guilds and the city's economic structure.

A decisive moment in the city's evolution was the establishment of the princely residence. Initially temporary, it gradually became permanent, and Iași became a political and administrative centre. This process is linked to the reign of Alexandru Lăpușneanu, who helped consolidate the city's role, and to Petru Șchiopul, during whose reign Iași continued to develop economically and administratively.

Both internal and external factors, such as pressure from the Ottoman Empire and rivalry with Poland, drove the shift of the political centre from Suceava to Iași. Iași's geographical location made it easier for the Turks to control, which favoured its selection as the princely residence. With this status, the city underwent significant transformations: the number of royal officials increased, a new aristocracy emerged, and the population became more diverse. Additionally, the number of clergy and places of worship grew, with the Church playing an important role in social and cultural life.

The 17th century marked a period of rapid development. Iași became a true capital, with a more organised urban life. Crafts and trade flourished, guilds emerged, schools and printing presses were established, and culture began to thrive. The Romanian language became increasingly used in writing, gradually replacing Church Slavonic. The city also expanded: the number of residents, houses, and streets grew, and commercial activity became increasingly intense. Markets became permanent, and commercial and real estate transactions grew in number, a sign of a dynamic economy.

However, Iași's development was hampered by numerous difficulties: wars, invasions, epidemics (such as the plague), and periods of famine. Political instability and external pressures, particularly from the Ottoman Empire, negatively impacted the city's evolution.

An interesting aspect is the contrast between the city's economic wealth and its modest appearance. Most homes were built of wood or clay and had a simple exterior, but their interiors could be luxurious, containing valuable objects. This situation was explained by the constant threat of invasion, which necessitated structures that could be easily rebuilt.

Archaeological research confirms these findings, revealing modest dwellings, craft workshops, and numerous ceramic artefacts. Pottery—both everyday and luxury items—provides important insights into the standard of living and economic activities. Furthermore, the discovery of pottery workshops and water supply systems demonstrates a commitment to developing urban infrastructure.

CHAPTER II: THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE NEW OF THE FORMER NICORIȚĂ MONASTERY – HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY

The boyar founded the church of Nicoară Baltag, also known as Nicoriță, and his wife, Teodosia. Nicoară was an influential figure in the first half of the 17th century, serving under ten Moldavian princes. He had a complex political and military career, being involved in internal conflicts and diplomatic efforts, including the Moldavian-Polish Treaty of Braha. He and Teodosia accumulated numerous estates and made donations to their foundation. Teodosia was widowed after Nicoară's death and retained her influence by marrying a Polish nobleman, thereby preserving the family's properties.

The church, built between 1626 and 1627, is listed on the Register of Historical Monuments under the code IS-II-m-B-03956. It is located in the Tătărași neighbourhood of Iași, on the site of an earlier church. Documents from 1628–1635 attest to the church's founding and the properties associated with the monastery. Over time, the church was maintained and repaired, and after secularisation, it became a parish for the community near the area where it operated.

The archaeological research was conducted in two phases. Due to the structure's precarious condition, consolidation work was first carried out on the exterior, following the foundations' path. Archaeological observations revealed the existence of an older church whose foundation had been dismantled down to the height of a few courses. The church currently in use will be built on this site, but on a larger scale. Excavations were carried out along the entire length of the foundations, successively as the segments were reinforced.

Because the project also included interior renovations to the church, including a new floor, an archaeological survey was required. To this end, seven excavation squares were marked out, located in the altar, nave, narthex, and porch. Analysis of the excavation results revealed the existence of an older church, also identified externally, as well as several crypts: one intended for the founder, Nicoară Baltag; another where his wife, Lady Tudosca, was buried; and two additional crypts intended for the hierarchs who administered the monastery's activities until its secularisation.

Based on this discovery in the western part of the city, known as Tătărași, we conclude that the church existing beneath the present-day one is among the religious buildings constructed in Iași during the 15th century.

CHAPTER III: THE CHURCH OF THE GOLIA MONASTERY – HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Golia, whose history is divided into three construction phases, with three churches built one after another, by Dumitru/Maxim Burnar and his wife, Antimia; Ioan Golăi, son of Lazăr Golăi, Grand Logothete of Moldavia, and his wife, Anna, daughter of Maxim Burnar, Vasile Lupu and his son, Ștefăniță.

Archaeological research was conducted in several phases, particularly during the consolidation works of 1998–1999 and 2008–2009. The discoveries include fragments of a tombstone, possibly linked to the older church founded by Burnar, as well as layers attesting to the ancient structures of the walls, towers, and annex buildings.

Stratigraphic analyses and archaeological finds have contributed to our understanding of the evolution of the structures and subsequent modifications, including the addition of the enclosure wall, the bell tower, and alterations to the spires following the 1738 earthquake.

Golia Church is a complex example of boyar and princely patronage, with a rich historical and architectural evolution. Historical and archaeological research has highlighted the founders' contributions, the structural transformations, and the monastery's role in the religious and urban life of Iași. Modern restorations, supported by archaeological research, have preserved this monument for future generations.

The current church, founded by Vasile Lupu, represents the high point of Golia's history and serves as a symbol of Iași's religious and cultural significance. It continues to impress with its architecture, murals, and historical value, and modern restoration efforts have preserved this heritage for future generations.

CHAPTER IV: THE CHURCH DEDICATED TO THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE FORMER SOCOLA MONASTERY – HISTORICAL DATA, ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The archaeological investigation was prompted by unauthorised work carried out after 1990, when a monk began restoring the church without the necessary legal approvals, thereby damaging the monument's structure. As a result of this situation, the Ministry of Culture ordered a rescue archaeological investigation. The church is the only surviving element of the former Socola Monastery complex and is included on the List of Historic Monuments.

The first definitive document regarding Socola dates from 1583, during the reign of Petru Șchiopul, confirming the monastery's properties and effectively reinforcing the donations made by Alexandru Lăpușneanu. This supports the idea that the monastery was founded in the second half of the 16th century. The presence of the Grand Steward, Petru Albotă, who confirmed these properties and was a close associate of the former ruler, provides further evidence for the dating of the first church.

At the same time, the choice of the patronal feast of the “Transfiguration” and the similarities with other foundations established by Lăpușneanu (such as Slatina) reinforce the attribution of this foundation to him. The second church, still in use today, is attributed to Prince Petru Șchiopul. Over time, the monastery owned numerous properties (villages, vineyards, orchards, mills), confirmed by princely deeds ratified at various times. The administration of these assets frequently led to conflicts with other monasteries or local communities, requiring periodic renewal of property documents by Moldavia's various rulers.

At the beginning of the 19th century, by decision of Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi, the Theological Seminary was established in Socola. The curriculum included a variety of subjects, ranging from theology to the humanities, and the faculty consisted of prominent figures in cultural life—Augustin Scriban, Bishop Melchisedec Ștefănescu, Constantin Erbiceanu, and Mihai Costăchescu—while among the students, we must mention the great Ion Creangă.

Archaeological research has revealed the existence of two churches:

- B1 – we have named the first church, whose foundations were discovered beneath the current one, dating to the mid-16th century
- B2 – the current church, built later, approximately at the end of the 16th century.

Following archaeological research, we uncovered the foundations of an older church, which we believe was founded by Alexandru Lăpușneanu. This church was smaller, with its western boundary aligned with the original porch of the second church. We also identified the old floor, made of carefully crafted square brick slabs, a sectioned floor by the dividing wall between the nave and the narthex.

We also identified a conical structure made of brick, possibly intended for a special burial—a hypothesis we proposed because inside we found only a large amount of soil mixed with ceramic fragments dating to the 17th century. A key factor in identifying the archaeological context was the stratigraphy, which allowed us to distinguish the distinct construction phases of the two places of worship.

Gravestones from the 17th to 19th centuries have been identified in the churchyard, belonging to various individuals, including members of prominent families. A bell, dated 1816, is also mentioned.

Research confirms the existence of an older church, traditionally attributed to Alexandru Lăpușneanu. The current church dates from the late 16th century and was likely rebuilt or reinforced by Petru Șchiopul. The building has undergone numerous transformations caused by the interventions of the monastery's occupants—nuns or monks—by damage from earthquakes, and, toward the end, by the adaptation necessitated by the establishment of the Seminary, as well as by the recent restoration carried out by the current abbot. Today, the church is an important historical monument with a complex evolution, reflecting both the architectural influences of the era and the social and cultural changes in the Iași region.

CHAPTER V: THE METROPOLITAN COMPLEX. STRATENIA CHURCH – ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The Metropolitan Complex in Iași is one of the city's most important heritage sites. It includes: the Cathedral, St. George's Church, the Metropolitan Palace, the Chancellery, the "Gheorghe Stăniloae" Library, and the Epivata House. Although built in different periods and featuring distinct architectural styles, they form a cohesive ensemble.

Major restoration projects were launched in 1997 (National Restoration Program) and in 2011–2018 (Regional Operational Program), aimed at strengthening the foundations, restoring the monuments, and establishing the Metropolitan Museum. The results were published in the monograph "The History of the Cathedral and the Metropolitan Complex in Iași" (2021).

There are currently two churches within the complex: St. George's Church and the Cathedral, which is dedicated to three patron saints: the Entry of the Lord into the Church – Stratenia, St. George, and St. Paraskeva.

The existence of these three religious buildings within the current Metropolitan Complex's perimeter has raised numerous questions about their chronology and location within this space. The Church of St. John the Baptist is considered, based on documentary evidence, to be the oldest structure, which was, in turn, rebuilt "from the ground up" by Ana Racoviță. We have attempted, by correlating documentary, cartographic, and archaeological information, to determine the location of this place of worship, considering that its site may be situated in the southeastern part of the enclosure, but also in relation to the Old Metropolitan See.

The archaeological investigation within the metropolitan compound was conducted in two phases, necessitated by the implementation of the two restoration projects. Thus, the first phase took place between 1996 and 1997, and the second phase was carried out as part of a larger-scale project conducted between 2013 and 2016.

The focus of our research was the Cathedral building. We thus excavated two test pits, designated C1 and C2, located on the northwest and southeast sides, respectively. In C1, the foundations of a semicircular structure were identified, believed to be the southern apse of the Stratenia Church. The distance from these foundations to those of the current cathedral was 1 m.

The foundations of the current cathedral were built using large, dressed stone blocks, but in some places, large pieces of stone from the old church were also used; one indication of this was the thick layer of white lime coating them, evidence of their previous use. The semicircular foundation fragment, belonging to another structure and forming an apse on the southern side, led us to conclude that it was part of the Stratenia Church.

On the eastern side of the enclosure and, by extension, of the Cathedral, two semicircular trenches were dug, in which a row of concrete columns was to be installed to ensure the stability of the ground, as well as for a semi-underground structure extending from the cathedral.

Archaeological observations revealed the existence of water supply pipes consisting of several rows of ceramic pipes dating to the 18th and early 19th centuries, covered with stone or brick slabs and unconnected to one another, and subsequently destroyed. In addition to these, we also found two cast-iron pipes that originated from the construction of the fountain, designed by the Czech engineer Mihail de Hodocin in 1834.

Another site we investigated was the Chancellery building and, alongside it, the “Dumitru Staniloae” Library. These two buildings were constructed between 1958 and 1964 according to the plans of architect G. M. Cantacuzino. They were built on the site of the old administrative buildings that had served the Metropolis in previous centuries. A survey conducted on the west side, inside the building, near the street-facing wall—recently named after the architect—revealed the three construction phases, illustrated by different levels of masonry in the foundation, which existed on the site, as confirmed by three inscriptions dated 1809, 1817, and 1897. A section of these old walls was incorporated into the wall of the current building by G. M. Cantacuzino.

Toward the southwest corner of the metropolitan palace, another section was excavated, where we found a refuse pit containing primarily ceramic artefacts. This pottery dates to the first half of the 15th century. It belongs to a category classified by specialists as “luxury,” a

designation based on the high-quality clay, the fact that the vast majority of the vessels were glazed, and their rich decoration, all of which is evidence that Ciubotărească Street, later known as Ferdeilor Street, was inhabited by members of a wealthy social class, particularly the boyars.

A test trench was excavated along the axis of the altar of St. George's Church, where we discovered not only the presence of crypts built of brick or stone, but also that, in profile, only a single level of construction was visible, belonging to St. George's Church, and thus did not overlap the old church, dating from the early 16th century.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we present the results of archaeological research conducted at four religious buildings of significance to Iași's history. By supplementing our archaeological findings with documentary evidence, we sought to reconstruct part of the history of these monuments.

Although the archaeological investigations were limited in scope, we were able to identify the most important aspects of the structural composition, the necropolises and the chronological sequence of the churches studied. We also had the opportunity to examine the wall facades of some of them, such as the churches of the former Socola and Nicoriță monasteries, which enabled us to identify various alterations to the ornamental appearance of the facades. We are referring here to changes in the appearance of the windows and certain decorative elements, such as the twisted band, the serrated band, or even major alterations, exemplified by those made to the porch—which at Nicoriță and Socola were enclosed—or the removal of the wall between the nave and the narthex. These interventions altered the original appearance of the churches, a situation confirmed by archaeological excavations.

The novel aspect is the discovery, at all four sites, of the ruins of former churches that predate those known today. Some of them were known only through oral accounts, while for others we had information from historical documents, but lacked other identifying details, such as their exact locations. Thus, we identified the first church at Socola, to the east of the current one, and the Startenia Church of the Metropolis in the northwest of the current cathedral. This fact is also demonstrated by the necropolis associated with the Startenia building, discovered in the same area. The other two early churches, Nicoriță and the one at Golia, were completely covered by subsequent constructions. We can, however, state with certainty that their dimensions were much smaller than those of today, a finding confirmed by archaeological

research. Regarding the old foundation, representing the apse of an altar, discovered at Golia and attributed by us to the foundation of Maxim Burnar, the father-in-law of Ioan Golâi, due to the restrictions imposed by the restoration project, we were only able to place it on the plan, with a location on the west side, approximately five meters from the other two buildings that followed it, those of Logothete Golâi and Prince Vasile Lupu.

Archaeological research in the courtyard of the Metropolitan Cathedral has also revealed several aspects of urban life. These include the discovery of water supply networks. However, we were unable to determine their exact route—primarily due to later interventions that destroyed part of the pipes, whose clay sections were made of ceramic—they complement the documentary evidence. Moreover, the cast-iron pipes installed by Mihail de Hodocin, which supplied water to the fountain and were found in situ by us, were no longer in use, and the fountain itself had taken on an ornamental role.

Furthermore, as a result of the archaeological excavations, we discovered modest dwellings—both in construction and furnishings—remaining after they were burned down, located very close to Ulița Mare, just like the ruins of the former shops and vaults of the Metropolis. In the case of these dwellings, we were unable to confirm the phrase “house with a cellar” (in some cases, with the specification “stone cellar”) found in the documents; if such structures existed, they were destroyed along with the house, likely having a rudimentary structure.

Although we know from historical records that the Stratenia Church became the chapel of the Royal Academy, founded by Grigore Ghica, we have been unable to identify the exact location of this building. Although we found several sections of walls during the excavations, since they did not form a continuous line, we were unable to attribute them to a specific structure. This situation was also due to the numerous interventions in the soil, mentioned earlier, which were intended to equip the site with various utilities—heating, electrical, or sewer systems, which we have also noted in the text; the primary consequence of these was the disruption of the stratigraphy or even the removal of those walls that intersected with the paths of the subsequently dug trenches. However, we were able to determine the route of the first enclosure wall and the location of the entrance gate, situated on the west side of the current St. George Church/Old Metropolitan Cathedral, which also corresponds to the recently published Russian plans.

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