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### **Artistic Moulding of Bessarabia in XIX Century (Typology Church Inventory, Architectural and Sculptural Details)**

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# Artistic Moulding of Bessarabia in XIX Century (Typology Church Inventory, Architectural and Sculptural Details)

Liliana CONDRATICOVA<sup>1</sup>

*Artistic moulding is real art,  
where the master uses the metal instead of a brush and tints*

## Abstract:

*In spite of the artistic processing of precious metal and metallic alloy materials has studied thoroughly in the works of some scientists from adjacent territories, in the national historiography this topic was elaborated only indirectly. In the framework of presented research it is impossible to trace the development all technology and technics connected with the artistic metal processing. In the present case author accent the attention on historical development of technological methods relating to metal melting and moulding. The formation of technical and technological ways is given in chronological order, as for example there are some models of decorations and utensils executed in moulding discovered at the territory of the Interfluve of Prut and Dniester.*

## Keywords:

*artistic processing, moulding, melting, form, mould, inventory, soldering, labeling, technology, icons, architectural detail, tombstone*

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**The history of this problem.** Preceding researches refer to the origin and evolution of jewellery art in Moldova has considerably expanded the area of our investigation opening new possibilities for its examination.. In this case, our goal is to show the place and role of artistic methods of metal processing in Bessarabia for XIX century, characteristic and definition of types of these objects manufactured with help of these technics and giving some examples by visual demonstrating the methods of artistic metal moulding.

As a priority we review church inventory particularly, metal funeral sculptures and architectural details made in the tecnics of art moulding for XIX century and its implementation into scientific circulation. It's necessary to say that the discovering of physical and chemical properties of a metal that have been developed for all centuries it being known that some of them were became to use rarely and they were changed by complicated high profrrssional technologies. Among the most claimed and respectively estimated methods of metal processing one can name such technics as moulding, engraving, filigree, forging, artistic enameling and at al.

**The main raw material.** Preserving singularity and originality, artistic moulding (an iron, tin, gold, silver, brass) opens considerable capabilities for further development especially for the modernization of processes. Among used raw material in the jewellery one can enumerate wood, glass, natural and artoficial stones, synthetical materials besides black and colour metals though in this case the metal remains on the first place.

**Classification.** The first of all it is necessary to mark that some objects made in the technic of artistic moulding can be classified in correspondence with separate priority-driven circumstances. In our opinion one of the first classification is connected with the devision of some objects on 1) high-society adornment (private ornamentation , statuettes, decorative items, furniture, architectural motives and et al; And 2) religious objects (ecclesiastical inventory, an icon setting and sacred books, crucifix worn on one's neck, funeral monuments, temple's and monasteries decorations and etc.).

The next classification is connected with a raw using in this context where we speak about 1) precious metal (gold, silver, platinum) and 2) cheap metal alloy (brass, bronze, copper and etc.).

The third classification can be compared to functional assignment of these objects made in the technic of artistic moulding. Thus, conditionally these objects can be divided on the next types which in every case have more vast that we have reviewed subspecies. We will give a detailed account for them.

**Personal high-society adorning** (medallions, pendants, rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, beads, cuffs, grivnas, complete sets);

- **liturgical inventory and religious adornment** (gold and silver icon setting and sacred books, baptismal crosses, chalices, tabernacles, procession crosses, mitres, crowns);
- **architectural decorative items** (decorative fences, enclosures, stairways, spiral staircases, gates and gateways, arrays and barriers and etc.);
- **sculpture** (sculpture of small forms, funeral crosses and plates, decorative statuettes);
- **silver plate**, tableware from precious metal (spoons, tea spoons, fruit knives, forks, sets for spices, tea, coffee and wine, sugar tongs, plates, glasses, cups, goblets);
- **Costume adornment** (tie holders, brooches, pins, small bags, boxes for jewellery, bottles for a perfumes, manicure sets, powder-cases);
- **objects of decorative furniture and design of an interior** (metall castings decorated by engraving or filigree, decorative boxes, panels adorned by colour stones, encrusted furniture, knives for paper and etc.);
- **timepieces** (bracelets for watch, wristwatches, chains);
- souvenirs;
- memorable medals, badges, orders, heraldic emblems and symbols);
- **tobacco accessories** (snuffboxes, pipes, ashtrays, lighters, tobacco sets, mouthpieces).

Thus, we will try to do the most complete description of architectural details and ecclesiastical inventory executed in the technic of artistic moulding.

**Ecclesiastical jewellery affair of Bessarabia.** One of the main categories among reviewed objects refers to ecclesiastical inventory and personal adornment. These items were arranged by us as the next

categories: crosses, icons, panagias, tabernacles, roods, chalices, chalice for baptism, chandeliers, candlesticks, icons setting and sacred books consisting of the set from 1-5 decorative pieces, reliquaries, decorative bronze statues and etc.). It is necessary to mark that just ecclesiastical inventory has been unquestionable indicator of jewellery development in XIX century. Multiple objects of ecclesiastical inventory or patronal decoration were made just in the technic of artistic moulding.

An activity of the first workshops on manufacturing valuable religious objects from precious metal were legalized in Kishinev at the beginning of XIX century. There were different things of art by local masters and invited ones from abroad, using precious metals and colours stones (Condraticova, 2010:114-125). The catalogue of museum collection of Bessarabian church and archaeological society (Opisul, 1923) supposes its analysis that were characterised depending on its possible using as next categories: priestly vestments, gold and silver icon setting and sacred books encrusted by colour stones or strasses; cult tableware (chalices, candlesticks) and private adornment as crucifix worn on one's neck.

Thee category of cult objects (Opisul, 1923) dated by the first half of XIX century can be added by silver carved crucifixion (1780), lead chalice (1819), the candlestick (1840), the bowl with engraved note (1814) and also great number of metallic crosses and tin, silver, copper ones; copper, silver or tin patens; candlesticks, chandeliers and silver candelabrams; silver stars of handicraft that were told in previous publications. The detailed analysis of cult objects gives an evidence concerning relative wealth of bessarabian churches and temples that archival sources indicative of it. For example, according to the function of some monasteries and churches archival documents besides a description of economic activity and architectural details of some edifices and also the strength of monks and biographies of some priors have often presented rather limited facts that a church or monastery had „sufficient utensils” (NARM, fund 205, inv. 1, file 1186). In some cases there was the information of availability of ecclesiastical inventory in a church and altar; some icons, sacerdotal robes. For example, there is the folder of Hyrjeuca monastery or Bocanča skit for 1872 (NARM, fund 1232, inv. 1, file 125). In general outline one can conclude with confidence that for XIX century some churches and monasteries were

provided with cult objects made from precious metals and stones, and also cheap metallic alloy materials in spite of archival sources haven't indicated full enumeration of those objects and short description yet.

We can't with any confidence affirm that these cult objects are exclusive ones, but proceeding from hand technic of making adornment and cult tableware of XIX century one can assert that these objects haven't made serially as the most up-to-date for today. As a rule, some chalices, tabernacles or icon settings besides key identical idea for all objects were owned by typical peculiarities of some design and fabrication. In this context it should be noted that some chalices with the image of Saints executed in the mixed, candelabrum with different decorative elements, icon settings which undoubtedly distinguish one from other especially its decoration. Small details and separate decorative elements add to cult objects as peculiar features, it allows to suppose the presence quite original cult objects in jewellery of examined region. At the same time in monasteries some masters of gold and silver affairs that made and repaired ecclesiastical inventory and some crucifix worn on one's neck really were done in a great quantity proceeding from popular growing demand.

Special place in local jewellery art there were some icon settings and sacred books moulded in precious metals with chased pieces and vegetable ornament, polychromatic enamel or filigree details. Undoubtedly such objects have various ornament and decor that were decorated by biblical stages, some images of saints and angels whose traditions were incarnated and revived by modern jewellers. Settings of some books present mainly the Mother of God with a babe in her arms, different decorative motives adorned by colour stones or strasses or delicate inserts. Besides some icon settings and sacred books the crosses faced by precious metal and colour stones and also the beads from pearls or wood used for divine service were found out among modern museum collections.

In our view, manufacturing of cult objects as for personal using (crucifix worn on one's neck), so for all ecclesiastical inventory suppose a presence of perfect knowleges in the field of artistic metal processing and etc., some moments regulated by institutions accrediting with these rights. It were those institutions that had duty to check and estimate the test with labelling of used metal, compliance metal test or alloy materials,

classification of some objects, distribution and provision with appropriate to cult inventory of Bessarabian churches and monasteries. We could find very important document in the National Archive of Moldova (NARM) referring to (NARM, fund 205, inv. 1, file 5524) the regulation of a procedure of manufacturing of cult objects. Monopoly on making of religious objects was regulated in Bessarabia by the Saint Synod whose all decrees prohibited custom and manufacturing of cult objects by those persons that haven't had any rights and were alien ones.

We will try to present some extracts from the document under number № 1729 from July, 12, 1827 year about manufacturing of cult adornment. Thus, according to the decree of His Majesty the Emperor, Holy Governmental Synod there was the offer of synodal attorney-general and cavalier prince Peter Meschersky about the prohibition of manufacturing of religious jewellery by alien persons. Thus, "According to the decree addressed to the Right Reverend Archbishop Demetrius from Kishinev and Khotin and also due to the addition The Department of finances for the 17 th March of 1758, secret melting of precious metal beside testing tents was strictly prohibited. According to next decrees of the 1<sup>st</sup> October of 1801, the 5<sup>th</sup> of November of 1779 and the 10<sup>th</sup> of August of 1810 the masters weren't allowed to make the silver lower than the trial number 84 under the apprehension of severe penalty. Thus, due to the Council decision for 1827 in Russian Empire was strict prohibition on manufacturing of jewellery by alien persons as well with the trial lower then established number 84, without enough reasons for it. In consideration of official imperial documents in that year the Department of economic government of Kishinev hierarchal house issued ИЗДАЛ the order of the 7 th September of 1827, signed by Father Superior Onisif: "According to the decree of the 3d September of 1827 Kishinev the Consistory Court was prohibited to manufacture metal alloy materials by alien persons used for religious adornment with the trials lower than indicated ones without special permission for it». This decree was spread on all territory of Bessarabia including such regions as Ismail, Akkerman, Bolgrad, that confirmed the receipt of that document and its putting into operation.

Thus, for Bessarabia due to the collection of Kishinev Religious Museum the main types of ecclesiastical adornment executed in the technic of artistic moulding were established there. The abundance of

bronze and copper crosses moulded sometimes enough primitive without precious inserts or colour glass give evidence concerning local character of manufacturing. Seven crosses of such type were presented to the Museum by the archpriest K. Erhan from Tighina and two iron moulded crosses were handed by the priest N. Shtefyrtsa (Opisul, 1923). Thus it's necessary to mark that jewellery art mainly of artistic moulding for previous centuries was based in Moldova of XIX century on the creativity of some masters and workshops on manufacturing of cult adornment though jewellery affair supported and protected by all authorities, priests and grand people that registered as church wardens.

The next part refers to architectural motives and sculpture executed in the technic of artistic moulding. This is one of the most beautiful partitioning of artistic moulding at the territory of the Interfluve of Prut and Dniester, specially as because high-society adornment as well as cult objects are bright example of development of this field. Metallic decorations became quite popular ones for not only exterior décor of many buildings (for example, some enclosures, balcony grid and etc.), but for adorning of interior of some edifices creating thus architectural-decorative ensemble of full value. In this context there are winding stairs or stairways of very different form and configuration, balusters, some objects of furniture and other decorative items. These objects are original ones and especially essential for right aesthetic education, but at the same time such items are estimated high by some lovers of the antique, the more so because they often have good quality of distinctive decorations. In our case we give a few examples to demonstrate visually using of some objects made in the technic of artistic moulding for adorning local churches and temples. We offer the next classification of some objects made in considered method: 1) balusters; 2) stairways; 3) winding staircases (used mainly in the belfry and bell tower equally with wooden staircases); 4) the gate and wicket with a lot of geometrical or vegetable motives; 5) window grating of very various forms and sizes, mainly in a combination of vegetable ornament; 6) an enclosure for the assignment of funeral complexes. For example, for the family of Burlacu from village of Ofatints of Rybnitsa district; metallic street enclosure for the assignment of church yard or cemetery; 7) metallic decorative abat-jour used for screens of entrance doors or windows; 8) roof-shaped cover crosses of funeral monuments, crosses located at

church housetops; 9) decorative motives of crucifixion, metallic decor of fountains and wells; 10) memorial plates including the notes of funeral monuments; 11) pedestals or metallic mourning gravestones including made „as wood” that basically have met at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries; roofing columns, lances, attachments of metallic enclosures of very different forms made according to artistic style and financial possibilities of church wardens; 12) metallic objects of furniture, door handles, metallic pieces for decoration of furniture, chairs, lectern; 13) church chandelier consisting of 7-12 lamps and church chandelier with 12 lamps that were situated under the very cupola of church, candlesticks, wall brackets, candelabums. All these objects established in the church have to revive ecclesiastical interior allowing to take pleasure people came down to earth with a God-given talent.

Also church bells of small and big forms deserve special attention depending on thickness of walls and diameters post-synching to different musical notes. The bells call to Morning Prayer and all for popular assembly convene or even for the revolt being one of the ancient the mass media. It is necessary to mark that during many years the technology of artistic moulding of some bells practically was not changing. Different notes as an year of bell moulding, city or factory producer, time of creation, the name of church warden or bell grantor has special meaning in our case. To X century some methods of bell moulding were elaborated by the efforts of monks that not only prayed but occupied with useful arts. Actually, it was bronze as 80 % of copper and 20 % of tin. This proportion could change, but a little: increase of tin did alloy materials as fragile ones, but decrease notably impaired acoustic bell qualities. Afterwards in the capacity of material for bell moulding cast iron was used in individual cases, but silver was utilized for manufacturing of not great handbells. The art of bell moulding is quite labour-intensive and compound in relationship to technical skills of architect. No less than difficult there was putting of bells founded at the belfry of Kishinev the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Cathedral. A lot of archival sources are testifying of it today (Ceastina, 2009:158-167). To our great regret we have to mark that a lot of bells founded in XIX century were destroyed cruelly for the period of establishment of atheistic ideology. And only starting for nineties the art of bells founding has revived and many of them were moulded according to old models.

The next category of some objects is connecting with artistic moulding and undoubtedly the part of ecclesiastical art as now so-called the details of landscape design and landscape architecture.

In IX century some monks and parishioners of an abode were occupied with arrangement of church or cloister.

In our case searching certain artistic material one can conditionally to divide these objects on the next categories: 1) bowers, towers, terraces, verandahs with decorative various motives or metallic carcasses; 2) benches and metallic tables; 3) various lanterns used for lighting of church yard and also interior premiseses; 4) fountains of different forms and sizes that became very popular ones in cloistral yards last time, for example at monastery of Bocanचा of the Republic of Moldova.

Thus, all items made in the technic of artistic moulding and outlined in this article present mainly flying fantasy of authors-creators and eternal beauty of surrounding world. They show us the real cultural values and go out of the frames of ordinary handicraft. These manufactured articles attract by its originality created forever and ever, indeed with the lapse of time historical and cultural value become still more.

It would be true that just these items are the base of treasure house of every Christian country. As for our opinion the adornment and objects executed in the technic of artistic moulding undoubtedly are more durable and long-lived than chased ones, because the moulding open good prospects for further art development and all the more modern masters often transform old lost motives into metal. Especially earlier artistic moulding has been developed for many centuries and further it is going on well in the field of creating of cult adornment, metallic enclosures, funeral gravestones and etc. In this case we mark not only the practicalness and multifunctionality of these items, but its high quality, master's professionalism and also particular ornament, geometrical and vegetable that we meet on manufactured articles of this type.

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