

# The Monastery of St. John Rilski of Chiprovtsi (Ciproviți)

## Descriere

Ciproviți Monastery is one of the oldest monasteries in Bulgaria, according to historical sources, being called Jeleznič Monastery, due to its proximity to the locality of the same name, on the Ogosta river valley. It was founded in the tenth century and played an important role in the revolutionary movements for the liberation of Bulgaria. Throughout the centuries, generations of priests have been formed here, manuscripts and religious books have been written and copied. The monastery is linked to the first battles against the oppressing Turks, being a place of refuge for all the tzars of the Second Bulgarian Empire from the fourteenth century. Here were deposited the relics of St. John of Rila, when they were brought from Hungary. The existence of the monastery is closely linked to the older history of the region, reminiscent of the Thracian, Roman and medieval times. In the 16th-17th centuries, the local population of Orthodox and Catholics, grouped around the Ciprovti Monastery, participated in the battles against the Turks. The monastery witnessed six uprisings against the Turks, serving as a refuge for the outlaws. For this reason it was burned six times, but it was redone every time, remaining one of the most solid landmarks of the Orthodox faith in the past centuries. The monastery has a very rich library with Slavonic books and manuscripts, being sought by specialists in the field. Located at the foot of the Balkans, the monastery complex was last reconstructed in 1876, having a rectangular shape. The last rehabilitation of the church was made in 1829, of stone, in the shape of a nave with an apse, a style borrowed from Gothic architecture. Beside the central gate of the complex are located two apartment buildings with two floors, the space of the egumen, a tower with ossuary and chapel and the bell tower, where the remains of some freedom fighters in northwestern Bulgaria are buried. Above is the sanctuary of St. John of Rila. In the past, in the complex there were stables and warehouses. The exterior facade of the church is covered with pictures and inscriptions carved in stone. The iconostasis is splendid, made by an unknown craftsman, and the icons are painted by Hristo Enceev from Koprivštita. In the western wing of the monastery is the chapel of St. Anastasius the Great, made in 1880, with murals representing local saints. Every year, during the feast of the patron saint (October 19), a great agape is celebrated in the honor of St. John of Rila. The entire monastery is restored, with central heating and sanitary spaces. It is a cultural monument of national

importance, inscribed on the list of 100 monuments.

## Galerie







## Harta

