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Department of Medieval Studies

MEDIEVAL WALL PAINTINGS IN TRANSYLVANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND  
THEIR DONORS

PhD Dissertation

by

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## Introduction

Among the multitude of painted churches that have been preserved in the territory of medieval Hungary -- most of them concentrated in the northern and eastern parts of the kingdom, in modern Slovakia and Romania -- the churches that belonged to the Orthodox Romanians occupy a special place. Their decoration surprises the viewer with the use of both Byzantine and Western styles, and with a number of iconographic peculiarities. The paintings reflect interactions between the Romanian knezes and the Hungarian authority, the Orthodox and the Catholics, as well as the Byzantine and Western painting traditions. Deciphering their message may contribute to a clearer portrait of their donors, local Romanian leaders about whom historical sources are scarce.

The majority of medieval churches founded by Romanian knezes have been preserved in the Hațeg Land, although other churches also exist or have been documented in the rest of the Transylvanian voivodate and its neighboring counties. The churches were built in the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries and are of a small size. Frequently they consist of a rectangular or polygonal sanctuary, a rectangular nave and a western tower. As a rule, they were knezial foundations. It has also been argued that in particular cases the knezes took over churches that had belonged to Catholic owners; thereafter they remodeled them and/or added to their decoration.<sup>1</sup>

To date, the number of medieval Orthodox churches that preserve medieval wall paintings reaches sixteen.<sup>2</sup> The paintings date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and are fragmentarily preserved. Many are still in a poor state of conservation or incompletely uncovered. They contain Old Church Slavonic inscriptions, which may be considered an argument for the Orthodox rite of their donors,<sup>3</sup> but their style varies greatly: from late Gothic

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii din vremea sa* [John Hunyadi and the Romanians of his times] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Presa Universitară, 1999), 268-270.

<sup>2</sup> The churches that preserve fragments of paintings still visible today are: Strei, Streisângeorgiu, Peșteana, Ostrov, Densuș, Colți, Sântămărie Orlea, Sânpetru, Leșnic, Chimindia, Ribița, Crișcior, Hălmagiu, Remetea, Râmeți and Zlatna. Fragments of fresco were also discovered during archaeological excavations at the ruined church of Răchitova.

<sup>3</sup> When I call these churches "Orthodox" I imply that at some point in time, at least when the paintings were created, they served the Orthodox rite. This assumption is based on the use of Old Church Slavonic inscriptions, sometimes the iconography of the sanctuary, and the fact that the Romanians usually appear in late medieval Hungarian sources

(Strei, Chimindia, the sanctuary of Hălmagiu) to late Palaeologan (Densuș, Colți), through a local school, based on the Byzantine tradition but with some Western influences, particularly as concerns the iconography (Ribița, Leșnic, Crișcior, and partially also Densuș).

The medieval paintings of Transylvanian Orthodox churches have a rich historiography, consisting of both general studies and articles dedicated to individual churches. The works of Ion D. Ștefănescu, Virgil Vătășianu, Vasile Drăguț and Marius Porumb belong to the first category. Many of the medieval Transylvanian Orthodox churches were included in I.D. Ștefănescu's book dedicated to the religious painting in Wallachia and Transylvania.<sup>4</sup> The author took a broad and systematic approach, analyzing the architecture, painting technique, style and iconography of the paintings. However, the fact that many of the paintings were yet to be uncovered or cleaned had an impact on his observations and conclusions. Some of the churches were also included in Dénes Radocsay's catalogue of murals in medieval Hungary.<sup>5</sup> In his history of medieval art in Romania, Virgil Vătășianu made new observations regarding the style and refined the dating for some of the Transylvanian paintings.<sup>6</sup> The book of Vasile Drăguț, *Pictura murală din Transilvania*,<sup>7</sup> is entirely dedicated to medieval wall paintings in Transylvanian Orthodox churches. Besides the stylistic and iconographic analysis of each church, the author groups the paintings by period, based mainly on stylistic grounds, but also correlated with the general historical situation. Both Vătășianu and Drăguț also approached the paintings of the Orthodox churches in later general works.<sup>8</sup> Marius Porumb has provided an overview of the paintings in the Transylvanian Orthodox milieu, from the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries,

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as "schismatics" (of Greek rite) -- although occasionally some are mentioned as Catholic, converted to Catholicism or in a process of conversion to Catholicism. However, as the few sources reveal, the nature of the relationships between the Orthodox and the official, Latin Church varied greatly in time and space, from conflict to union. Therefore, as regards jurisdiction and Latin influences on the religious life of the "Orthodox" one should be cautious and stay open, unless the sources provide explicit and specific information.

<sup>4</sup> I.D. Ștefănescu, *La peinture religieuse en Valachie et en Transylvanie depuis les origines jusqu'au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1930-1932).

<sup>5</sup> Dénes Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarországnak falképei* [Wall paintings in medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1954).

<sup>6</sup> Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria artei feudale în țările române* [The History of Feudal Art in Romanian Countries] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1959).

<sup>7</sup> Vasile Drăguț, *Pictura murală din Transilvania* [The mural painting in Transylvania] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> Virgil Vătășianu, "Arta în Transilvania în secolele XI-XIII" [The art in Transylvania in 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries], and "Arta în Transilvania din secolul al XIV-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea" [The art in Transylvania from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century], in *Istoria artelor plastice în România* [The history of fine arts in Romania], vol. 1, ed. George Oprescu (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1968), 115-136, 199-222; Vasile Drăguț, *Arta gotică în România* [Gothic Art in Romania] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1979); Vasile Drăguț, *Arta românească*; Vasile Drăguț, *Pictura românească*.

paying special attention to the historical data of the artistic works.<sup>9</sup> The same author has published a dictionary dedicated to the Romanian painting in Transylvania.<sup>10</sup> Each entry provides detailed information about the painting and the relevant bibliography up to 1998.<sup>11</sup> Many articles have been dedicated individually to Transylvanian churches, with the most prolific authors being Vasile Drăguț and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei. Vasile Drăguț was also the initiator of a corpus of medieval wall paintings in Romania, but only the first volume was published in 1985.<sup>12</sup> The volume contains studies by various authors dedicated to the wall paintings in most of the Transylvanian Orthodox churches and to the church of Sântămărie Orlea. Each study contains historiographic data, stylistic and iconographic analyses of the paintings, and iconographic schemes with a detailed description of each subject. The volume, which also comprises a valuable epigraphic study and a technical analysis of the murals, has remained an important instrument of work for any student in the field. More recently, other significant studies were dedicated to the churches of Densuș following the restoration of its paintings,<sup>13</sup> the church of Chimindia after previously unknown paintings came to light, and Sântămărie Orlea.<sup>14</sup> Besides the stylistic and iconographic analysis that situates the paintings

<sup>9</sup> Marius Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania* [Romanian painting in Transylvania] (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1981). The book also contains a German version of the text.

<sup>10</sup> Marius Porumb, *Dicționar de pictură veche românească din Transilvania, secolele XIII-XVIII* [Dictionary of old Romanian painting in Transylvania, 13<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> More recently, Sorin Ullea has published a book entitled *Arhanghelul de la Ribîța* [The Archangel of Ribîța] (Bucharest: Editura Cerna, 2001), written in a polemical key. In addition to some observations he makes on the iconography of particular paintings, the main new idea proposed by the author is that some of the paintings of Ribîța, Crișcior, Leșnic and Strei display Comnene features. In Ullea's opinion this would imply that in the twelfth century, in the Transylvanian Romanian milieu, there was a strong school of painting, in his opinion of high quality and therefore of Constantinopolitan origin. However, taking into account what is known today about the history of the Romanians at that time, this latter hypothesis is difficult to support. Adrian Andrei Rusu has expressed several critical remarks with regard to the book in "Geografia si evoluția picturii medievale românești din județul Hunedoara. Câteva răspunsuri domnului Sorin Ullea" [The geography and evolution of the Romanian medieval painting in Hunedoara County. Several answers to Mr. Sorin Ullea], *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Historia* 48/49 (2003/04), 109-116.

<sup>12</sup> Vasile Drăguț, ed., *Pagini de veche artă românească* [Pages of old Romanian art], vol. 5, no.1, *Repertoriul picturilor murale medievale din România (sec. XIV-1450)* [Catalogue of medieval wall paintings in Romania, 14<sup>th</sup> century -1450] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, "Din nou despre pictura bisericii Sf. Nicolae din Densuș" [Again about the painting of the church of St Nicholas in Densuș], *Ars Transilvaniae* 19 (2009), 89-98.

<sup>14</sup> Tekla Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi falfestmények feltárása és korabeli másolataik" [The uncovering and contemporary copies of the murals of Sântămărie Orlea], *Műemlékvédelmi Szemle* 14 (2004), 39-68; Tekla Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi református templom freskói" [The frescoes of the Reformed church of Sântămărie Orlea] (PhD diss., Doctoral School of Art and Cultural History, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2007)). In her dissertation, Szabó presents the history of the church and its paintings and carries out a stylistic and iconographic analysis of the paintings, putting to use drawings and watercolors made on the basis of the frescos in 1873 and 1905-1907 respectively.

within particular artistic trends and helps in dating the works, there has been also another type of approach, most frequently followed by Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, which interprets the paintings in their liturgical and historical contexts. A similar approach will be applied in the present study as well.

In this dissertation I interpret several of the subjects represented in the paintings. These subjects reflect the special social, political, and religious situation of the donors as knezes and Orthodox in the Hungarian kingdom. The investigated topics have been selected from the paintings of nine churches, which were situated in two neighboring medieval counties -- Hunyad, in the Transylvanian voivodate, and Zaránd -- and date from the early fourteenth to the second half of the fifteenth century: the churches of Strei, Streisângeorgiu, Sântămărie Orlea, Densuș, Leșnic, Chimindia, Ribița, Crișcior and Hălmagiu. The research has been restricted to Hunyad and Zaránd Counties, where the bulk of medieval wall paintings in Orthodox churches has been preserved. In addition, the historical background of the donors is similar in both regions. The selection of subjects followed several criteria: the paintings should be in an acceptable state of preservation, they should be suitable for interpretation based on preserved historical data and they should reflect specific aspects of the social, religious and political life of the donors.<sup>15</sup> The analysis of the donor portraits, military saints, Holy Kings of Hungary and the Exaltation of the Cross focuses on their relevance for the social and political life of the knezes. The study of the iconographic program of the sanctuary and of the image of St Bartholomew mainly brings to light aspects of their religious life.

The message of the images is analyzed taking into account their use and meaning in Byzantine and Western, particularly Hungarian painting, and the available information regarding their social, political and ecclesiastical context. While indeed, the painted message may be understood only through its historical background, the paintings themselves may also suggest directions for research or favor a particular interpretation based on other types of sources.

The majority of the researched subjects have been approached to a certain extent by previous scholars (the military saints, the votive paintings, the Holy Kings of Hungary, the iconography of the sanctuary), and the present research nuances or broadens their interpretation. Other topics have not yet been investigated (St Bartholomew), or have received only cursory treatment in the literature (the Exaltation of the Cross). The present study uses a variety of sources and

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<sup>15</sup> The present study embodies a limited number of such themes although further research might expand their range.

incorporates more recent studies regarding the Romanian elite, the history of the Church in Transylvania, and particular iconographic topics in Hungary and elsewhere. However, research into medieval Orthodox paintings in the Hungarian kingdom has always faced two major problems: the paucity of sources regarding the donors and, in general, the Romanians' life, as well as the scarcity of appropriate comparative material from the same period in Moldavia and Wallachia.<sup>16</sup> In order to bridge these gaps, I have resorted to multiple types of sources and to the use of artistic comparisons from more distant regions. As much as possible, I have tried to be cautious in making generalizations. If in some cases the final answer remains open to question, the present research has still tried to put together a mosaic of information that may provide the basis for further interpretations, especially if new data are introduced into the equation.

The dissertation is structured into eight chapters. The first two chapters set the historical background to help in the interpretation of the paintings. Chapters three through six deal with iconographic topics that are closely related to the social and political situation of the donors. The last two chapters approach themes that are relevant to their religious life and to local practice in the decoration of the sanctuary. The Catalogue presents basic information on the nine churches from which the paintings have been selected.

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<sup>16</sup> Only a few churches in Wallachia have preserved paintings from the fourteenth century: the cave church of Corbii de Piatră, the church of St Nicholas in Curtea de Argeș, and the church of the Holy Trinity in Cozia. No wall paintings have survived from fifteenth-century Wallachia, while the earliest preserved paintings in Moldavia date to the last decades of the same century. Also, few icons have been preserved in the territory of Romania from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the majority of them date to the sixteenth century and later.

# 1. The Social, Political and Religious Life of the Romanians in Late Medieval Hungary

## 1.1. The Romanian Elite in Fourteenth-Fifteenth-Century Hungary: A Social and Political History

Late medieval Hungary was inhabited by people of different religions or confessions. In eastern Hungary, the major ethnic groups besides Hungarians were the Romanians (Vlachs),<sup>17</sup> Saxons, South Slavs, and Ruthenians. In the late Middle Ages, Romanian settlements were spread throughout eastern Hungary: in the Transylvanian voivodat, in the neighboring western and northern counties and in the Banat. In addition to Hungarians and Romanians, Saxons and Szeklers also lived in Transylvania. The Saxons arrived in many waves, mainly from Germany, but also from Flanders and northeastern France, from the middle of the twelfth century to the fourteenth century.<sup>18</sup> They were called *hospites* (guests) and mainly colonized in southern and eastern Transylvania. The purpose of their colonization was the military defense of the southern border and the increase in revenues from taxable population, as well as the development of mining, crafts and trade. The Szeklers, people of uncertain origin but Hungarianized by the eleventh century, played the role of border guards and in the thirteenth century they finally settled in southeast Transylvania.<sup>19</sup> Both the Saxons and the Szeklers were privileged groups, each with their own administrative organization and a large degree of autonomy.

The majority of the Romanians lived in villages and their leaders appear in the sources as *kenezii* and *voivodes*. As landowners and community leaders, the knezes and voivodes are mentioned in all areas inhabited by Romanians, including the territories of the future principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. However, because the two institutions mostly appear in the sources from the thirteenth century on, in the period of their decline, historians have had difficulties in

<sup>17</sup> Romanians appear in sources as Vlachs (*blachi*, *valachi*, *wolachi*, *olachi*, etc.). On the origins of the term Vlach and its use to designate the Romanic population living south and north of the Danube see Șerban Papacostea, "The Shaping of an Ethnical Identity: The Romanians in the Middle Ages," *RRH* 32 (1993), 3-13; Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor. Istoria unei idei* [The Romanity of the Romanians. The history of an idea] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993).

<sup>18</sup> For Saxon settlement see Pop and Năgler, eds., *Istoria Transilvaniei*, 219-225; Makkai and Mócsy, eds., *History of Transylvania*, 420-428.

<sup>19</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 115-117; Makkai and Mócsy, eds., *History of Transylvania*, 414-420; Pop and Năgler, eds., *Istoria Transilvaniei*, 213.



defining them accurately. Broadly, both the knezes and the voivodes were landowners and leaders of communities of various sizes and possessors of administrative, juridical and military prerogatives. The voivode's authority, however, extended over more knezates. He was in charge with the military command and had also political attributions.<sup>20</sup> When assimilated into the judicial and administrative system of the Hungarian kingdom, the knezes and the voivodes became intermediaries between the Romanian peasants and the lord of the land they lived on. They kept their leading positions in the Romanian communities and, in part, their prerogatives.<sup>21</sup> The knezes and voivodes in eastern Hungary were under different types of jurisdiction depending on the type of land they lived on: royal land, the land of a noble or the land of the Catholic Church. Information can be gleaned from royal diplomas issued for the knezes on royal land concerning their land ownership. Royal diplomas granting lands or confirming the possession of lands already held by the knezes have been preserved from the fourteenth century

<sup>20</sup> On the institutions of knez and voivode see *Instituții feudale din Țările Române. Dicționar* [Feudal institutions in the Romanian countries. Dictionary], ed. Ovid Sachelarie and Nicolae Stoicescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1988), 108-110, 508-510.

<sup>21</sup> Historians' interest in the Romanian elite in medieval Hungary has increased in the last fifteen years. A very useful historiographic overview of the topic has been published by Ioan Drăgan, "Studiu introductiv: Nobilimea românească din Transilvania – o problemă controversată în istoriografia română" [Introductory study: the Romanian nobility in Transylvania – a disputed issue in Romanian historiography], in *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania/ Az erdélyi román nemesség* [The Romanian nobility in Transylvania], ed. Marius Diaconescu (Satu Mare, 1997), 5-35. In 2000, the same author published his PhD dissertation dedicated to the study of the Romanian nobility: *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania, 1440-1514* [The Romanian nobility in Transylvania, 1440-1514] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000) -- on the assimilation and evolution of Romanian knezes in the Hungarian kingdom see especially pages 219-226 and 266-270. Other studies of the evolution of knezes and voivodes that also touch earlier periods are: Ioan Aurel Pop, "Elita românească din Transilvania în secolele XII-XIV (origine, statut, evoluție)" [The Romanian elite in Transylvania in the twelfth-fourteenth centuries (origins, statute, evolution)], in *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania/ Az erdélyi román nemesség* [The Romanian nobility in Transylvania], ed. Marius Diaconescu (Satu Mare, 1997), 36-63; Maria Holban, "Variații istorice în problema cnezilor din Transilvania" [Historical variations with regard to the knezes in Transylvania], in *Din cronica*, 213-231; Maria Holban, "Deposdări și judecăți în Banat" [Dispossessions and law suits in the Banat], 61-66, 127; Radu Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, 136-243, 190-195; Radu Popa, *La începuturile evului mediu românesc. Țara Hațegului* [At the beginning of the Romanian Middle Ages: Hațeg Land] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988), 156-165, 188-198; Ligia Boldea, "Situația social-economică și juridică a nobilimii române din Banat (sec. XIV-XVI)" [The social-economic and juridical situation of the Romanian nobility in the Banat], *Banatica* 12/II (1993), 13-24; Viorel Achim, "Mutații în statutul unor sate cneziale din Banat în epoca angevină. Cazul de la Biniș" [Changes in the status of some knezial villages in the Banat in the Anjou period. The case of Biniș], *Banatica*, 12/II (1993), 47-63; Viorel Achim, "Voievozii în districtele românești din Banat" [The voivodes in the Romanian districts of Banat], *SMIM* 12 (1994), 95-119, with previous bibliography on voivodes in other regions of eastern Hungary; Adrian Andrei Rusu's chapter "Turnura conceptelor sociale: aspirații noi în lumea românească" [The turn of the social concepts: new aspirations in the Romanian milieu], in Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii din vremea sa (John Hunyadi and the Romanians of his times)* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară, 1999), 159-196; Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu, "From *kenezii* to *nobiles Valachii*: The Evolution of the Romanian Elite from the Banat (fourteenth-fifteenth century)," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 6 (1999-2000), ed. Katalin Szende and Marcell Sebök, 109-128; Ioan Drăgan, "Dispariția cnezului proprietar la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea" [The disappearance of the landed knez in the middle of the fifteenth century] *Mediaevalia Transilvanica* 7-8 (2003-2004), 107-116.

on when the number of written sources become abundant in the Hungarian kingdom.<sup>22</sup> These charters show that the knezes used to possess land, with or without a written confirmation, under certain conditions. In the sources these are referred to as *iure keneziatus*, *more keneziatus*, *sub servitute keneziatus*, *modo Olachorum* etc.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the knezes<sup>24</sup> had certain obligations with regard to their possession, but these are not clearly defined in the sources and were not uniform in all territories inhabited by Romanians. The main obligations the knezes living on royal land had towards the state appear to have been the *census*, the *quingagesima ovium* (the sheep fiftieth) and services. The *census* was a money tax for their knezat.<sup>25</sup> The *quingagesima ovium* was a sheep tax, typical for Romanians in medieval Hungary.<sup>26</sup> The services that the knezes had to perform were primarily military: participation in the army in defense of the country, guardianship of castles and roads, participation in the enforcement of official authority, etc.<sup>27</sup> The knezes also had limited juridical authority on their lands. The royal charters confirmed or granted them lands by knezial law (*iure keneziatus*) or by noble right (*more nobilium*). In the first case, the knez was a landowner with limited privileges compared to a 'real' noble (*verus nobilis*), who owned lands by noble right. Sometimes, the knezes and voivodes on noble or Church estates also received private grants of land from their lords, their privileges being limited and valid only on the estate to which they belonged.

In the long run, the knezes and voivodes either assimilated into the nobility of the kingdom or went on to decline and became peasant tenants (*iobagiones*). In the second half of the fifteenth century, the majority of the knezes were actually simple village reeves (*villici*).<sup>28</sup> However, the aspirations of the Romanian leaders lay in the direction of their official recognition as privileged landowners, and, if possible with full noble rights. In late medieval Hungary, nobility was equated with the ownership of a free hold estate.<sup>29</sup> Also, from the time of the Anjou kings, the principle that any possession of land originated in a royal grant was firmly established, and, as

<sup>22</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 122-123.

<sup>23</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 117-119, 127. Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 125-132, contains a detailed analysis of the possession *iure keneziatus* starting from a document dated to 1453.

<sup>24</sup> The *kenezatus* had a double nature: that of land ownership (*dominium*) and office (*honor*). Because they owned land by knezial right, the voivodes were also knezes, but the voivodat was a higher and more prestigious position (Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 119-121).

<sup>25</sup> About the census see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 198 and Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 155-156.

<sup>26</sup> About *quingagesima* see Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 154-155 with previous bibliography. *Quingagesima* was sometimes replaced by other dues in kind or money (Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 196-198).

<sup>27</sup> See Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 198 and Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 152-153, 156.

<sup>28</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 225.

<sup>29</sup> Fügedi, *The Elephanty*, 43; Engel, *The Realm*, 175, 338.

the royal bureaucracy made important progress, documents proving possession became necessary for any landowner. Not having any document of property made the knezes vulnerable to the abuses of the king or to the claims to their lands of various nobles or knezes.<sup>30</sup> Still, a charter of knezial law placed them on an inferior level compared to the “real” nobles (*veri nobiles*) of the kingdom. Not only because of the specific obligations associated with knezial ownership, but also because, as frequently occurred, the king could grant such lands to other knezes or nobles.<sup>31</sup> In order to have a firm hold of their possessions and to remain part of the elite, the knezes aimed for, and some of them received, royal charters of confirmation by noble right. Hence they could join the “real” nobles of the country, who, by Louis I’s decree issued in 1351, were all guaranteed one and the same freedom (*una et eadem libertate gratulentur*).<sup>32</sup> The majority of the knezes who received royal charters, *iure keneziatus* or *more nobilium*, came from royal castle estates.<sup>33</sup> The charters were issued as a reward for faithful services (*fidelia servicia*) on the part of the beneficiary, usually military services against the internal or external enemies of royal authority.<sup>34</sup> A great number of royal charters issued for Romanian knezes and voivodes date from a period between the end of the fourteenth century and the second half of the fifteenth century, when the Romanians played a significant role in the battles against the Ottomans. After the defeat of the Serbians and their allies in the battle of Kosovopolje (1389), the Hungarian Kingdom came under direct threat from the Ottoman Empire. From King Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437) to King Louis II (1516-1526), Hungarian rulers undertook constant efforts to halt Ottoman expansion. From the end of the fourteenth century, the Ottomans also frequently led raids in the south and southeastern parts of Hungary. Romanians played a significant role both in the defense of the southern borders and in campaigns outside Hungary. Eventually, in 1526, the Ottoman army won the decisive battle of Mohács. In 1541, the Hungarian kingdom was split into three parts: the principality of Transylvania, which

<sup>30</sup> On this issue see the two articles of Maria Holban: “Deposedări și judecăți în Hațeg pe vremea angevinilor,” in Holban, *Din cronica*, 232-244 and “Deposedări și judecăți în Banat,” *SMIM* 5 (1962), 57-132. The difference between a knez without charter and one with charter of knezial right was that between a non-noble (*ignobilis*) and a noble (see Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 219-222)

<sup>31</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 198; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 221.

<sup>32</sup> *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 2, ed. János M. Bak et al., 11.

<sup>33</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 120, 220. A special case is represented by the ennoblement of the knezes and voivodes on the estates of John Hunyadi – see further down.

<sup>34</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 342-343, 364-365.

became a vassal state of the Ottomans, the pachalik of Buda, and western Hungary, which fell to Ferdinand of Austria, the future Roman Emperor (1558-1564).

The social advance of the Romanian knezes at the time of King Sigismund was prompted by two factors: the king's policy of supporting the lesser nobility, as part of his effort to reinforce central power, and the need for military power, primarily against the Ottoman threat.<sup>35</sup> Romanian knezes made use of this military opportunity to improve their social standing and many of them, in particular those living close to the southern border, in the Banat and Hunyad County, received royal charters confirming their possessions. The ascent of the Romanian elite was even more spectacular at the time of John Hunyadi (1407-1456), who was the leading figure in the Hungarian fight against the Ottomans. He lived in a period of internal instability and held the offices of ban of Severin, voivode of Transylvania (1441-1446), governor of Hungary (1446-1453),<sup>36</sup> and captain general of the kingdom (from 1453 until his death in 1456).<sup>37</sup> His father, Voicu (*Wayk*), was a Romanian knez who served as a knight in the royal household. Thanks to his military achievements within the framework of the Late Crusades, John Hunyadi acquired a special reputation both in Hungary and in the rest of Christian Europe. He also acquired a huge fortune, which supported his social and political position.<sup>38</sup> John Hunyadi had among his *familiares*<sup>39</sup> many Romanian knezes and voivodes, and he was also related to several Romanian knezial families.<sup>40</sup> He must have represented a model of military and political career for the Romanian leaders.<sup>41</sup> With his support they were granted offices and lands by knezial or noble right as a reward for their military services. Given their contribution to the anti-Ottoman wars

<sup>35</sup> Ștefan Pascu, "Rolul cnezilor din Transilvania în lupta antiotomană a lui Iancu de Hunedoara" [The role of the knezes from Transylvania in the anti-Ottoman fight of John Hunyadi], *Studii și cercetări de istorie* VIII (1957), 33-41; Konrad G. Gündisch, "Cnezii români din Transilvania și politica de centralizare a regelui Sigismund de Luxemburg" [The Romanian knezes in Transylvania and the centralization policy of King Sigismund of Luxemburg], in *Ștefan Mateș la 85 de ani* (Cluj-Napoca, 1977), 235-237.

<sup>36</sup> In 1446, John Hunyadi was elected regent, with the title of governor, for the period of King Ladislas V's minority. He was given a limited form of royal authority and exercised royal power along with the regency council (Engel, *The Realm*, 288-289).

<sup>37</sup> On John Hunyadi and his age see Engel, *The Realm*, 278-297; Camil Mureșan, *John Hunyadi: Defender of Christendom* (Iași: The Center for Romanian Studies, 2001); Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*; Ana Dumitran, Loránd Mádly and Alexandru Simon, eds., *Extincta est lucerna orbis: John Hunyadi and his Time*, (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Academy, Center for Transylvanian Studies, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 43-44.

<sup>39</sup> *Familiaritas* was a particular form of vassalage, specific to Hungary. See Engel, *The Realm*, 126-128 and Makkai and Mócsy, ed., *History of Transylvania*, 467-468.

<sup>40</sup> About the Romanian *familiares* and relatives of John Hunyadi see Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 245-246, and respectively Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 30-36.

<sup>41</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 143.

and the favorable context of the Church Union, the Romanian elite, especially in the Banat and the Hunyad County, thrived around the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>42</sup> However, from the second half of King Matthias's reign (1458-1490), the number of grants for the knezes decreased as their military importance also diminished.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of the Romanian nobles belonged to the category of lesser nobility, holding part of a village or even only one holding (*nobiles unius sessionis*).<sup>44</sup> There was however a small number of Romanian nobles who, mostly in the second half of the fifteenth century, came to possess a large estate and to hold important offices, thus ranking among the middle or high nobility.<sup>45</sup> The ascent to the middle or high nobility meant in the short or long run the Hungarization of the new-comers.<sup>46</sup> The majority of the noble class was Hungarian and the model of the "real" noble was Hungarian par excellence.<sup>47</sup> Use of Hungarian was necessary for anyone holding an office or having frequent contacts with official institutions. Also, the only official Church in the Hungarian Kingdom was the Roman Church. As they appear in late medieval Hungarian sources, the majority of the Romanians were Orthodox. Depending upon local historical developments, much of the the upper strata of the Romanian elite converted to Catholicism in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, and to Protestantism (Calvinism) in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

## 1.2. Church History

### 1.2.1. The Latin Church and the Romanians

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<sup>42</sup> In detail concerning the evolution of the knezes and voivodes in this period see Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, especially the chapters "Aspirații noi în lumea românească" [New aspirations in the Romanian milieu] and "Slujbași români la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea" [Romanian royal servants at the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century].

<sup>43</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 270.

<sup>44</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 142, 273-275; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 193.

<sup>45</sup> About the material and social positions of these Romanian nobles see Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 142-150, 275-312, and Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 197-232.

<sup>46</sup> Adrian Rusu stresses that the Romanians wished to be considered nobles without any exceptions or limitations. In order to achieve this goal they displayed political, social and religious opportunism (Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici din Țara Hațegului până la 1700* [Founders and Churches in the Hațeg Land until 1700] (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 1997), 27).

<sup>47</sup> Barta et al., *Histoire de la Transylvanie* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992), 218.

In late medieval Hungary the Orthodox population consisted of Romanians, South Slavs and Ruthenians. They were considered ‘schismatics’ by the Roman Church who made efforts to convert them. Royal power intermittently supported Church proselytism.

The kings of the Anjou dynasty, particularly Louis I (1342-1382), were zealous supporters of the Latin Church.<sup>48</sup> In addition to his campaigns to maintain or extend his authority in Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Wallachia and Moldavia,<sup>49</sup> Louis also aimed at converting the Serbians, Romanians and Bulgarians in his kingdom to Catholicism.<sup>50</sup> The Franciscans in the Bosnia province played an important role in the mission of conversion.<sup>51</sup> Already in 1345, in a letter addressed to Louis I, Pope Clement VI expressed his satisfaction with regard to the success of Catholicism among Romanians in the Hungarian kingdom.<sup>52</sup>

The activity of conversion intensified in the second half of the fourteenth century after Louis conquered the tzarat of Vidin (1365). Louis’s expansion in the Balkans combined with the Latin Church’s revived hopes for union, still seen as unconditional assimilation of the Orthodox.<sup>53</sup> In his writings, Bartholomew of Alverna, vicar of the province of Bosnia (1367-1407), criticized the dogmatic and liturgical ‘errors’ of the Serbian, Bulgarian and Vlach schismatics and heretics in the Hungarian kingdom, and vehemently exhorted to their conversion even if that had to be carried out by force.<sup>54</sup> The vicar called attention to the importance of the king’s support in the success of the converting mission.<sup>55</sup> He also pointed out that the king and the lords would also

<sup>48</sup> See a short overview on religious policy during Louis I’s rule in Engel, *The Realm*, 170-173.

<sup>49</sup> See Engel, *The Realm*, 163-169.

<sup>50</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 172.

<sup>51</sup> The Franciscan Province of Bosnia was founded in 1339 and initially covered the territory of Bosnia, where the friars were particularly engaged in fighting the dualist heresy. The territory of the province soon expanded into the Hungarian Kingdom and to the east, reaching the Black Sea coast. One of the main missions of the friars was the conversion of heretics and schismatics. From the first half of the fifteenth century, they also engaged in preaching the Crusade. In 1448, the Hungarian Province was born, which represented a part of the old Province of Bosnia, covering the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom north of the Sava River. On the history of the Bosnia Province see Cevins, *Les franciscains observants*, 32-43. For a survey of the Franciscan mission on the actual territory of Romania in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, see Viorel Achim, “Ordinul franciscan în țările române în secolele XIV-XV. Aspectele teritoriale” [The Franciscan Order in Romanian countries, fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. Territorial aspects], *Revista Istorică* 7, no. 5-6 (1996), 391-410.

<sup>52</sup> *DRH*, D/I, no. 32, 60-6.

<sup>53</sup> Papacostea, “Întemeierea,” in *Geneza statului*, 96, and Papacostea, “Bizanțul și Cruciata,” in *Evul mediu românesc*, 47-48, 61-62.

<sup>54</sup> See Dionysius Lasić, O.F.M., “Fr. Bartholomaei de Alverna, Vicarii Bosnae, 1367-1407, quaedam scripta hucusque inedita,” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 55 (1962), no. 1-2 (ianuarius-iunius): 59-81. Șerban Papacostea was the first to call attention to their relevance to the history of the Romanians in medieval Hungary (Șerban Papacostea, “Întemeierea,” and *idem*, “Întregiri”).

<sup>55</sup> Lasić, “Fr. Bartholomaei,” 79; Papacostea, “Întemeierea,” 98.

benefit from the schismatics' turning to Catholicism, because, by becoming faithful to the true God, they would also become truly faithful to their king and lords.<sup>56</sup>

A charter issued by King Sigismund on December 5, 1428 confirming the privileges of the Franciscan friaries of Cheri, Sebeș, Hațeg and Orșova, also refers to an order by King Louis I that could date to 1366.<sup>57</sup> The fifteenth-century document reiterates and partially extends to the districts of Mehadia and Hațeg a decree that Louis I would have issued for the Sebeș district, in the Banat.<sup>58</sup> According to the 1428 charter, renewed by King Mathias in 1478,<sup>59</sup> Louis's decree stipulated, among other restrictions regarding the Orthodox, that in the Sebeș district only Catholics could hold estates by noble or knezial law. However, the decree attributed to Louis has not been preserved and therefore some historians raised doubts about whether it actually ever existed.<sup>60</sup> Also, no sources have been preserved referring directly to the enactment of the presumed 1366 royal decision against the Orthodox elite in the Banat, although conversions are attested in that period.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, some later evidence regarding the conditioning of noble status through adherence to Catholicism in the Banat has been noted. For instance, two documents from 1500 mention the noblemen Myhaylo and Nicholas of *Porecha* from the Mehadia district, whose lands were confiscated because they left Catholicism and adopted Orthodoxy.<sup>62</sup> According to these documents, the measure was taken on the basis of the law and

<sup>56</sup> Lasić, "Fr. Bartholomaei," 72; Papacostea, "Întemeierea," 100-101.

<sup>57</sup> Ștefan Lupșa, *Catolicismul și românii din Ardeal și Ungaria până la anul 1556* (Cernăuți, 1929), 93-97; Ioan D. Suciș and Radu Constantinescu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Mitropoliei Banatului*, vol. 1 (Timișoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, 1980), 85-91.

<sup>58</sup> In the fifteenth century, the district of Sebeș united with the district of Caran, taking the name of Caransebeș. Caran and Sebeș were two of the eight districts of the Banat that had great administrative and juridical autonomy and were inhabited mostly by Romanians (Dumitru Țicu, *Banatul montan în evul mediu* (Timișoara: Banatica, 1998), 440-444).

<sup>59</sup> Lupșa, *Catolicismul*, 97-99.

<sup>60</sup> Lupșa, *Catolicismul*, 67, 76; Ioan D. Suciș, *Monografia Mitropoliei Banatului* (Timișoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului 1977), 55-56.

<sup>61</sup> Achim, "Catolicismul," in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 149-150. Achim also notes that the documents preserved from the first half of the fifteenth century do not suggest any measure of punitive dispossession and therefore concludes that there was no resistance to conversion on the part of the knezes or voivodes in the Banat (Achim, "Catolicismul," in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 152, and idem, "La féodalité roumaine du royaume de Hongrie entre orthodoxie et catholicisme. Le cas de Banat," *Colloquia. Journal of Central European History*, 1, no. 2 (July-December, 1994), 25).

<sup>62</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, II/2, 448-449 (no. CCCLXXVI) and 451-453 (no. CCCLXXVIII). On the same documents see also Suciș, *Monografia*, 62-63; Achim, "Catolicismul," in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 150, and idem, "La féodalité roumaine du royaume de Hongrie entre orthodoxie et catholicisme. Le cas de Banat," *Colloquia. Journal of Central European History*, 1, no. 2 (July-December, 1994), 23-24.

the custom of the kingdom.<sup>63</sup> It has been suggested that the religious policy of Louis towards the Orthodox reflected the Latin concept introduced in the thirteenth century by Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) according to which non-Catholics were not entitled to land ownership.<sup>64</sup> However, the preserved evidence shows that even if the lay authority issued orders in this spirit, political expediency dictated that the law was not consistently implemented in the territory.<sup>65</sup>

In the fifteenth century, the Observant Franciscans intensified their activity in Hungary.<sup>66</sup> Besides their mission to convert heretics and schismatics, they also played an important role in preaching the Crusade. John Hunyadi and King Matthias were supporters of the Observant Franciscans.<sup>67</sup> In 1455-1456, the Franciscan inquisitor John of Capistrano preached the Crusade in Transylvania and the Banat. Through his sermons, he supported John Hunyadi in his recruitment and encouragement of the crusading army for the battle of Belgrade (1456).<sup>68</sup> In the beginning, Capistrano's attitude towards non-Catholics was very harsh.<sup>69</sup> Apparently as a consequence of his getting to know the local situation, he became more tolerant.<sup>70</sup> Right before the battle of Belgrade (1456), he reportedly addressed the army saying "whoever wants to stand by us against the Turks are our friends, Serbians, schismatics, Vlachs, Jews, heretics and any infidels who want to be with us in this misfortune let us embrace them with friendship."<sup>71</sup>

<sup>63</sup> "Que ex eo quod iidem Myhaylo et Nicolaus contempta religione fidei christiane, dampnabili secte scismatice Wolachorum sive Rascianorum adhesisse dicuntur, ad nos consequenterque collacionem nostram regiam, juxta antiquam et approbatam eiusdem regni nostri Hungarie legem et consuetudinem rite et legitime devolute esse prohibentur..." (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, II/2, 448).

<sup>64</sup> Ligia Boldea, "Înnobilare si confesiune în lumea feudală românească din Banat (sec. XIV-XVI)" [Ennoblement and confession in the Romanian feudal world of the Banat], *Banatica* 13/II (1995), 34.

<sup>65</sup> Boldea, "Înnobilare," 36; Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Națiunea română medievală* [The Romanian medieval nation] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), 93-95.

<sup>66</sup> On the mission of the Observants in Hungary see Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, *Les franciscains observants hongrois de l'expansion à la débâcle: vers 1450-vers 1540* (Rome: Istituto storico dei Cappuccini, 2008). For a short overview on the Franciscan presence in medieval Hungary see Hervay, "Franziskaner," in *Franz von Assisi* (1982), 312-317.

<sup>67</sup> See Cevins, *Les franciscains observants*, 133-134.

<sup>68</sup> On John of Capistrano's and other Observants' support for the Crusade in Hungary see Cevins, *Les franciscains observants*, 125-132.

<sup>69</sup> John of Capistrano exhorted people to set fire to Orthodox churches and to chase Orthodox priests who refused conversion (Marius Diaconescu, "Les implications confessionnelles du Concile de Florence en Hongrie," *Mediaevalia Transilvanica* 1, no.1-2 (1997), 43; Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. 1, 294-295). See a short overview of the anti-schismatic actions of the Franciscan friars in Hungary, including John of Capistrano, in Cevins, *Les franciscains observants*, 122-126.

<sup>70</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 108.

<sup>71</sup> "...Quicumque nobiscum etiam contra Turcos assistere volunt, amici nostri sunt, Rassiani, Schismatici, Valachi, Judaei, Haeretici et quicumque infideles nobiscum in hoc tempestate esse volunt, eos amicitia complectamur." (L. Waddingus, *Annales minorum*, ed. III, tomus XII, 407 and 766, as quoted in Diaconescu, "Les implications," 46).



The preparation for the Late Crusades paralleled negotiations for Church Union, which finally materialized in the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439). Even if the Catholic Church continued to proselitize in eastern Hungary, the lay power no longer supported extremist attitudes towards the Orthodox. The Serbians and the Romanians played an important role in the defense of the southern Hungarian border and the need for a united effort against the ‘infidels’ came first. The attitude of King Sigismund towards the Orthodox was dictated by his political aims and, except for the order of 1428, he appears to have been tolerant towards the Orthodox in Hungary.<sup>72</sup> It has been also argued that Sigismund was a supporter of Church Union.<sup>73</sup>

Recent studies have shown that the directives of the Church Union concluded in 1439 in Florence were partially implemented in the Hungarian kingdom.<sup>74</sup> Wladyslas I, king of Poland (1434-1444) and Hungary (1440-1444), supported the Union and in 1443 issued a charter that recognized equal rights for the Orthodox clergy (*ritus Graeci et Ruthenorum*) in Poland and Hungary with the Latin clergy.<sup>75</sup> It has been shown that John Hunyadi, voivode of Transylvania (1441-1446) and governor of Hungary (1446-1453), himself a Catholic, found support in the Union for his anti-Ottoman efforts and implicitly for his policy towards the Romanian elites.<sup>76</sup> From 1458 until 1469, the sources reveal the existence of a Uniate bishop, Makarios, who had jurisdiction over the Transylvanian Orthodox united with Rome.<sup>77</sup> The monastery of Peri (Maramureş County), a fourteenth-century Romanian foundation and *stauropegion* from 1391,<sup>78</sup> also adopted the Union as demonstrated in a document from 1442.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Regarding the tolerant attitude of King Sigismund towards the Orthodox see Papacostea, “Bizanțul și Cruciata la Dunărea de Jos,” in Papacostea, *Evul mediu românesc*, 47-70, and Daniel Barbu, “Pèlerinage à Rome et Croisade in Daniel Barbu, *Byzance, Rome et les Roumains. Essais sur la production politique de la foi au Moyen Âge* (Bucharest: Éditions Babel, 1998), 173-177. Barbu partly agrees with Papacostea’s argumentation. Nevertheless, he characterizes the policy of Sigismund towards the Orthodox as *Realpolitik* and argues that towards the end of his reign, Sigismund’s attitude towards the Orthodox in Hungary became more intransigent. The Hussite problem was a warning that a religious difference could transform into a political threat.

<sup>73</sup> Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 180, 433; Malyusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 153-154; Virgil Ciocîltan, “Înțelesul politic al ‘minunii’ sfântului Nicodim de la Tismana” (The political meaning of the ‘miracle’ of St Nicodim of Tismana), *SMIM* 22 (2004), 158.

<sup>74</sup> Diaconescu, “Les implications,” Rusu, “Sinodul de la Florența,” in Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 77-127. Damian, “Unire.”

<sup>75</sup> Damian, “Unire,” 54-55; Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 37; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 102-103; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 89.

<sup>76</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 109-110; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 103.

<sup>77</sup> See Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 46-51 and Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 98-106. Rusu places the actual see of the Uniate bishopric at Feleacu.

<sup>78</sup> A stauropegial monastery was under direct jurisdiction of the Constantinopolitan patriarch. On the history of the monastery of Peri see Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, 205-206, 234-236. On the historical context of the monastery obtaining the stauropegial status see also Șerban Papacostea, “Întemeierea Mitropoliei Moldovei: implicații central

Nevertheless, the sources are insufficient to assess in detail the effects of the Union, which appears to have been limited.<sup>80</sup> The Union was successful where it matched the social and political aspirations of the Romanian elites.<sup>81</sup> Eliminating the status of tolerated and at times persecuted “schismatics” represented a further step towards their full integration into the nobility of the kingdom. Most probably some of the Romanians remained in the Catholic Church after the Union proved a failure in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>82</sup> In fact, one part of the Romanian knezes and voivodes had embraced Catholicism before the Union.<sup>83</sup> The conversion process however was not uniform throughout eastern Hungary because of specific local conditions and the political and military importance of different regions. In the Banat, a region of strategic importance and subject to an intense proselytising activity from the second half of the fourteenth century, the majority of the Romanian elite had converted to Catholicism by the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>84</sup> In the Hațeg district, a region that until the fifteenth century maintained a strong autonomy and whose military importance increased at the end of the fourteenth century, few of the knezes had converted by the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>85</sup> In other regions with massive Romanian populations, such as Maramureș County and Făgăraș, the number of converted Romanians was even smaller, in contrast with regions dominated by Hungarians, where Romanian elites were absorbed much faster into the Hungarian nobility through adoption of Catholicism and the Hungarian language.<sup>86</sup>

Many historians agree that the reasons why one part of the Romanian knezes converted to Catholicism were the social and political benefits associated with noble status.<sup>87</sup> Being Catholic certainly brought them closer to entry into the noble class, which was Hungarian and Catholic.

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si est-europene,” in Șerban Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, 278-295, and, more recently, a new interpretation in Daniel Barbu, “Juridiction ecclésiastique et communauté politique. Le Maramureș en 1391,” *Historia manet. Volum Omagial Demény Lajos* (Bucharest-Cluj-Napoca: Kriterion, 2001), 57-65.

<sup>79</sup> Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 34-37.

<sup>80</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 127; Diaconescu, “Les implications.”

<sup>81</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 117, 127; Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 57-61.

<sup>82</sup> Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 61. Boldea, “Înnobilare,” 34.

<sup>83</sup> There were also common Romanians or whole villages that embraced Catholicism, but the phenomenon is little documented and was supposedly limited in extent. See Achim, “Catholicismul,” in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 148; Makkai and Mócsy, ed., *History of Transylvania*, 584; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 119.

<sup>84</sup> Achim, “Catholicismul,” in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 151-152, 153.

<sup>85</sup> According to the preserved sources, by the end of the fifteenth century in Hațeg, circa fifteen families of knezes had members converted to Catholicism (Rusu, “Nobilimea și biserica,” in *Nobilimea românească*, 141).

<sup>86</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 180-181. For an overview of the Romanians’ conversion in different regions of eastern Hungary see also Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 57-61.

<sup>87</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 191-192 and Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 27; Achim, “Catholicismul,” in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 153; Boldea, “Înnobilare,” 41.

Marriage, frequently an instrument of social ascent, was formally allowed by the Latin Church only between Catholics.<sup>88</sup> The fact that the Orthodox confession was only tolerated and Orthodox people were exposed to the proselytism by the Latin Church, supported by the “secular arm” when that served political aims, was certainly a burden that some wanted to be liberated from.<sup>89</sup> It has also been argued that the Romanians who held important public office must have been, at least formally, Catholic.<sup>90</sup> Some historians do not exclude either the existence of a Catholicism of Greek rite before 1439 or of a Catholicism only formally accepted by the Romanian knezes.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, even if the wall paintings of a church, especially because of the Slavonic inscriptions and sometimes also the program, suggest that the worshipers followed the Greek rite, one should be reserved with regard to the donors’ actual relationship with the Latin Church if the written sources are not explicit enough.

Naturally, there was also a resistance to conversion and even to the Union, about which the missionaries complain. However, the reasons for this resistance only sporadically appear in the sources. The Orthodox priests, or at least part of them, were a significant obstacle to Catholic proselytism. The missionaries would have liked them to be either converted to Catholicism or chased away by secular authorities.<sup>92</sup> Another issue was the tithe, an additional burden that the Romanians were unwilling to pay and that made Catholicism unattractive.<sup>93</sup> Also, some sources

<sup>88</sup> See Joseph Gill, S.J., *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198-1400* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 241. In the document issued in 1428 by Sigismund at the request of the Franciscans of the Bosnia Province, marriage between a Catholic and an Orthodox follower is forbidden unless the latter converts to Catholicism by baptism (Ioan D. Suci and Radu Constantinescu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Mitropoliei Banatului*, vol. 1 (Timișoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, 1980), 86-87).

<sup>89</sup> See also Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 129.

<sup>90</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 279, 342; Achim, “Catholicismul,” in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 152.

<sup>91</sup> Achim, “Catholicismul,” in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 154; Rusu, *Cititori și biserici*, 42. As regards conversion, Bartholomew of Alverna himself considered that the first generation of converts might not all be true believers, but at least their children and grandchildren were expected to be “good Christians.” (Lasić, “Fr. Bartholomaei,” 70; Papacostea, “Întemeierea,” in *Geneza statului*, 99).

<sup>92</sup> For Bartholomew of Alverna’s position with regard to Orthodox priests see Lasić, “Fr. Bartholomaei,” 71, 74-75 and Papacostea, “Întemeierea,” in *Geneza statului*, 99-100. See also the attitude of Mihály Székely (Michael the Szekler), a fellow of John of Capistrano, on the same issue, as expressed in a letter dated February 10, 1456 (Béla Pettkó, “Kapisztrán János levelezése a magyarokkal,” *Történelmi tár*, 1901, 194-195; Ioan D. Suci and Radu Constantinescu, *Documente privitoare la istoria Mitropoliei Banatului*, vol. 1 (Timișoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, 1980), 96).

<sup>93</sup> Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 44-45; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 97; Păcurariu, *Istoria*, vol. 1, 294. Normally, Orthodox Romanians were not expected to pay the tithe. However, there were exceptions – see Viorel Achim, “Românii din regatul medieval ungar și decimele bisericești. Pe marginea unui document din ‘Acta Romanorum Pontificum’” [The Romanians in the medieval Hungarian Kingdom and the Church tithe. On a document from ‘Acta Romanorum Pontificum’], in *Banatul în evul mediu*, 135-141 and Achim, “Disputa pentru decimele din *terrae christianorum* din cuprinsul episcopiei de Cenad (1468-1469)” [The dispute regarding the tithe in *terrae christianorum*, in the bishopric of Cenad (1468-1469)], *Revista istorică*, 16, no. 1-2 (2005), 169-184.

show that ignorance of the Romanian language by the Catholic priests who happened to be assigned to the Romanians led to the failure of their mission.<sup>94</sup> Finally, there were also nobles who did not want to share the exploitation of their Romanian peasants with the Latin Church and therefore did not support their conversion.<sup>95</sup>

### 1.2.2. The Orthodox Church and the Romanians

When discussing resistance to Catholic proselytism, one naturally thinks of the institutional organization of the Orthodox Church. However, information in this regard is scarce, even for the Late Middle Ages. An Orthodox bishopric began to operate at Feleacu in the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>96</sup> The area of its jurisdiction probably extended over the whole of Transylvania.<sup>97</sup> Before that, for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, only two names of bishops have been preserved in the sources, although their canonical subordination and area of jurisdiction remain unclear. The votive inscription in the church of Râmeț (Alba County), dating from 1377, mentions the archbishop Gelasie, but no further information has been preserved about him.<sup>98</sup> Another bishop, called John of Caffa, was active in Hunedoara, in 1455-1456. The Franciscan inquisitor John of Capistrano accused him of being a false bishop and of following neither the Roman nor the Greek rite.<sup>99</sup> After he was arrested by John Hunyadi, John of Caffa

<sup>94</sup> Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Ethnie et confession. Genèse médiévale de la nation roumaine moderne," in *Ethnie et confession en Transylvanie (du XIII<sup>e</sup> au XX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, ed. Nicolae Bocșan, Ioan Lumperdean and Ioan-Aurel Pop (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundația Culturală Română, 1996), 30.

<sup>95</sup> See the letter of the Franciscan friar Mihály Székely, dated February 6, 1456, in which he asks for the intervention of John Capistrano in order to convince the barons and nobles of the country to accept a new tax for their Romanian servants who are ready to convert (Pettkó, "Kapisztrán János levelezése," 191); Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 124-125.

<sup>96</sup> On the history of the archbishopric of Feleacu see Păcurariu, *Istoria*, vol. 1, 296-299; Diaconescu, "Les implications," 53-54. Unlike previous authors, Adrian A. Rusu argues that the bishopric of Feleacu would initially have been an Orthodox bishopric united with Rome (Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 102-106).

<sup>97</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 100-101, 105-106.

<sup>98</sup> Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 49-50. Daniel Barbu has developed the following hypothesis: the archbishop Gelasie would have been consecrated archbishop by a certain Paul Tagaris, who made several un-canonical consecrations, pretending that he was the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem. The hypothesis is based on the presence of Paul Tagaris in 1376-77 in Hungary, where he un-canonically consecrated the hieromonk Symeon as vicar of Galicia. See Daniel Barbu, "Jurisdiction ecclésiastique et communauté politique. Le Maramureș en 1391," in *Historia manet. Volum Omagial Demény Lajos* (Bucharest-Cluj-Napoca: Kriterion, 2001), 62-63.

<sup>99</sup> In a letter addressed in April 1456 to Pope Calixt III, John of Capistrano wrote of John of Caffa: "...qui se pro episcopo, heresiarcha et magistro omnium schismaticum et haeresum gerebat. His enim cum multitudine sequacium

publicly retracted, in Buda, all the “errors” of which he was accused. John Capistrano then recommended him to the pope for the “restoration of his dignity” and a later source mentions him as Uniate archbishop of Gothia (*Archiepiscopus Gothensis*), in the Crimea.<sup>100</sup>

Priests and archdeacons of Greek rite are occasionally mentioned in the sources, but these sources barely provide any details about the internal organization of the Church.<sup>101</sup> It can be safely assumed that the Romanian Orthodox in Hungary had close contacts with the Church in Wallachia and Moldavia, especially after the foundation of the Metropolitan Sees in the two Wallachian countries, in the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>102</sup> In 1401, the Patriarch of Constantinople called the metropolitan of Wallachia the “metropolitan of Ungrovlachia and exarch of the whole Hungary and of the borderlands.”<sup>103</sup> Ungrovlachia referred to the Principality of Wallachia, while the title of “exarch of the whole Hungary and the borderlands” has been interpreted as his being a representative or commissioner of the Patriarch of Constantinople over the Orthodox in Hungary, a Catholic state where the metropolitan could not exercise his jurisdiction.<sup>104</sup>

Another Transylvanian bishopric, aside from Feleac, was the bishopric of Vad. It was founded around 1500 with Moldavian support, on the estates of the Ciceu castle, which King Matthias had granted as a fief to Stephen the Great, prince of Moldavia (1457-1504).<sup>105</sup> The bishopric of Vad lay under the authority of the Moldavian metropolitan and apparently also took over the role of the bishopric of Feleac, which ceased to function towards the middle of the sixteenth

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et complicum suorum, neque Romanum, neque Graecum ritum tenebat.”(Suciu and Constantinescu, *Documente*, vol. 1, 97)

<sup>100</sup> On John of Caffa see especially Diaconescu, “Les implications,” and Iulian Mihai Damian, “Iancu de Hunedoara, Ioan de Capestrano și Biserica transilvană de rit răsăritean: noi mărturii despre mitropolitul Ioan ‘de Caffa’” [John Hunyadi, John Capestrano and the Transylvanian Church of Greek rite: new evidence about the archbishop John ‘of Caffa’], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “A. D. Xenopol”* 43-44 (2006-2007), 1-14. Mircea Diaconescu argues that John of Caffa was an Orthodox bishop, a protégé of despot George Branković, who acted against the principles of the Florentine Union and therefore was opposed by John of Capistrano (Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 40-44). Damian follows the bishop’s fate after he acknowledged his mistakes with regard to the Latin Church and became a Uniate bishop.

<sup>101</sup> On the archdeacons in Hațeg see Rusu, *Cititori și biserici*, 68-72.

<sup>102</sup> The first metropolitan see in Wallachia was founded in 1359 and was canonically subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Metropoly of Moldavia, already in existence in 1386, was initially in conflict with the Greek Patriarchate because it tried to maintain a certain independence. The conflict came to an end in 1402, when the Moldavian metropolitan received confirmation from the patriarch. About the foundation of the Wallachian and Moldavian Churches see Păcurariu, *Istoria*, vol. 1, 253-272, 273-285.

<sup>103</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XIV/1, 30-31 (no. 66).

<sup>104</sup> Alexandru Elian, “Legăturile Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei cu Patriarhia de Constantinopol și cu celelalte Biserici Ortodoxe,” *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 77 (1959), 908; Papacostea, “Bizanțul și Cruciata,” 67.

<sup>105</sup> Păcurariu, *Istoria*, vol. 1, 509-510.

century.<sup>106</sup> The Orthodox in Máramaros County were subordinated to the bishopric and then metropolitan see of Halich.<sup>107</sup> The monastery of Peri, also situated in Máramaros County, received the rank of *stauropegion* (monastery under direct jurisdiction of the Constantinopolitan patriarch) in 1391 at the request of its lay patrons.<sup>108</sup>

Fourteenth-fifteenth-century Orthodox monasteries are poorly documented. They were private foundations, generally modest in scale, although some of them must have also been centers of religious spirituality and learning.<sup>109</sup> It is worth mentioning the presence of Nicodim, the abbot of the Wallachian monastery of Tismana in Transylvania, at the beginning of the fifteenth century (1398/99-1404/5).<sup>110</sup> Nicodim († 1406), who was probably half Greek - half Serbian, came as a monk to Wallachia. There he founded two monasteries, Vodița and Tismana, in the eighth decade of the fourteenth century. The Vodița monastery represented a center of Orthodoxy in a border region of Wallachia disputed with King Louis I and subject to intense Catholic proselytism. The two monasteries received the material support of the Wallachian princes, but also of the Serbian knezes Lazar and Stefan Lazarević. It appears that Nicodim, who had the reputation of being a wise and learned man, had been a monk on Mount Athos and in Serbia before arriving in Wallachia. In 1375, he was the member of a small delegation of Athonite monks sent by knez Lazar to Constantinople in order to mediate a reconciliation between the Serbian Church and the Ecumenical Patriarch.<sup>111</sup> He was also in correspondence with Patriarch Euthimius of Trnovo, from whom he asked advice on dogmatic and moral matters. King Sigismund of Luxemburg and John Hunyadi took under their protection the monks of Vodița and Tismana and granted them the right of free movement in Hungary and exemption from taxes and customs, because they had served them “righteously and faithfully.”<sup>112</sup> It has

<sup>106</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 103. Rusu suggests that the bishopric of Vad was founded as a competitor against the Uniate bishopric of Feleacu. Once the Union failed, the bishopric of Vad subordinated the bishopric of Feleacu, which soon ceased to function.

<sup>107</sup> Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, 204.

<sup>108</sup> See above footnote 79.

<sup>109</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 240-244; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 94-96; Popa, *Tara Maramureșului*, 205-206.

<sup>110</sup> About St. Nicodim and his activity see Emil Lăzărescu, “Nicodim de la Tismana și rolul său în cultura veche românească, I (până în 1385)” [Nicodim of Tismana and his role in the old Romanian culture, I (until 1385)], *Romanoslavica* 11 (1965): 237-285; Păcurariu, *Istoria*, vol. 1, 302-313; Ciocîltan, “Înțelesul.”

<sup>111</sup> In 1346, the Serbian Church had proclaimed itself autocephal patriarchate and as a consequence the patriarch of Constantinople cast the anathema on it.

<sup>112</sup> The privileges are repeatedly confirmed – see *DRH*, D, vol. 1, no. 125; *DRH*, D, vol. 1, no. 129; *DRH*, D, vol. 1, no. 169; *DRH*, D, vol. I, no. 276. See also Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 115, 243; Ciocîltan, “Înțelesul,” 158.

been argued that Nicodim was a supporter of Orthodoxy against the aggressive Catholicization promoted by King Louis I (1342-1382).<sup>113</sup> After Sigismund of Luxemburg became head of the Hungarian state, the abbot would have been a supporter of the king's pro-Union policy, which lay at the basis of the anti-Ottoman fight.<sup>114</sup> The tradition attributes the foundation of the monastery of Prislop, in Hațeg, to Nicodim.<sup>115</sup>

The sources suggest that the Orthodox priests frequently belonged to the knezial -- from the second half of the fifteenth century, some of them even to the noble -- class.<sup>116</sup> Especially in Romanian districts, the priests were frequently members of local leading families. It has been suggested that the priests who were members of the privileged class were more prone to religious concessions to protect their privileged status.<sup>117</sup> Most probably such priests were also involved in founding churches.<sup>118</sup>

The majority of the Orthodox churches, and especially the village churches of the *iobagiones* must have been modest buildings made of wood.<sup>119</sup> Wealthy knezial families could afford churches constructed in brick and stone. These churches were usually associated with the residence of the founders but it is possible that they were also open to common parishioners. Some of them probably functioned as monastic churches as suggested by votive inscriptions or other historical and archaeological data. The church was the patrimonial asset of the founder and his descendants. They were responsible for securing resources for the functioning of the church.<sup>120</sup> Most probably the appointment of a priest also needed the confirmation of the

<sup>113</sup> Lăzărescu, "Nicodim."

<sup>114</sup> Ciocîltan, "Înțelesul."

<sup>115</sup> About the monastery of Prislop see Rusu, *Ctitori si biserici*, 122-134; Rusu, *Dicționar*, 246-247; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 244-246; Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Mănăstirii Prislop* (Arad: Editura Episcopiei, 1986).

<sup>116</sup> About the Orthodox priests in Transylvania see Adrian Andrei Rusu, "Preoți români ortodocși din districtul Hațegului în secolul al XV-lea" [Romanian Orthodox priests in Hațeg district in the 15<sup>th</sup> century] *Mitropolia Banatului* 32 (1982), no. 10-12, 644-653; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 63-68; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 163-165; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 163, 247; Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, 204-205; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 181-182; Makkai, ed., *History of Transylvania*, vol. 1, 569-570.

<sup>117</sup> Rusu, *Ctitori si biserici*, 65.

<sup>118</sup> Rusu, *Ctitori si biserici*, 68.

<sup>119</sup> On the issue of the Orthodox medieval wooden churches in Transylvania, Banat and Maramureș see Virgil Vătășianu, "Arta în Transilvania în secolele XI-XIII" [The art in Transylvania in the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries], in *Istoria artelor plastice în România* [The history of fine arts in Romania], vol. 1, ed. George Oprescu (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1968), 126; Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, 210-211; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 270-276; Makkai and Mócsy, eds., *History of Transylvania*, 573-575.

<sup>120</sup> On the founding and patronage of the Orthodox churches see Rusu, *Ctitori si biserici*, 54-62; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 235-239; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 185-187; Makkai, ed., *History of Transylvania*, vol. 1, 575.

patrons.<sup>121</sup> There is also evidence that Catholic nobles protected or even built churches for their Romanian *iobagiones* in order to stabilize their positions on their estates.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Rusu, *Cititori si biserici*, 60.

<sup>122</sup> Barta et al., *Histoire de la Transylvanie* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado 1992), 214; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 236-238. Also, sources dating to the middle of the fifteenth century show that the nobles were the patrons of all churches, whether Catholic or Orthodox, located on their estates (Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 237-239; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 186).



## 2. Historical Data on the Researched Churches and Their Donors

The present research deals with several subjects represented in the paintings of nine churches: Streisângeorgiu, Strei, Densuș, Sântămărie Orlea, Leșnic, Chimindia, Crișcior, Ribița, and Hălmașiu.<sup>123</sup> The churches were situated in two neighboring medieval counties, Hunyad and Zaránd, in regions populated mostly by Romanians. They were built in the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. The paintings themselves date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In most cases, the main donors of the paintings were local knezes. Most of them or their direct descendants experienced a social ascent around 1400 or in the fifteenth century, especially as a result of their military services.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, most of the donors had their knezial properties on royal lands and served a royal castle. Even if in the fifteenth century these castles were donated by the king to his loyal nobles, the sources show that the already ascending course of some of the knezes was not interrupted.

The villages of Streisângeorgiu, Strei, Densuș, Leșnic and Chimindia, and the market-town of Sântămărie Orlea were situated in Hunyad County. Fourteenth and fifteenth-century sources show a significant number of Romanian inhabitants in Hunyad County and the survival of their particular forms of administrative and juridical organization. The Hațeg district is the best documented and therefore also best studied administrative unit of Hunyad County. It is also known in historiography as the Hațeg Land, the name under which the region first appears in the sources.<sup>125</sup> In its wider understanding, the medieval Hațeg Land, centered on the Hațeg Depression, also included a great deal of the Strei Valley.<sup>126</sup> In this case, the Land includes not only Densuș and Sântămărie Orlea, but also Strei and Streisângeorgiu. The Hațeg Land,

<sup>123</sup> For detailed historical information about each church and its founders see the Catalogue at the end of this work.

<sup>124</sup> The least is known about the donors of the paintings of Chimindia and Strei (see the Catalogue). However, the sponsoring of the representation of the Holy Kings of Hungary in the church of Chimindia by an Orthodox or Uniate family seems evident. At Strei, the involvement of a local knezial family is also possible.

<sup>125</sup> The region appears for the first time in the sources as “*terra Harszoc cum pertinentibus suis*” (1247), probably part of the Voivodate of Litovoi, which had its center south of the Carpathians in Oltenia. It became a Hungarian county around 1275-1276 and in ca. 1320 was included as a district within Hunyad County. On the territorial and administrative history of Hațeg Land see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 249-264.

<sup>126</sup> On the extension of medieval Hațeg Land see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 6-12; *ITH*, 5-6. In his book, Radu Popa proposes a broad approach to the notion of medieval Hațeg Land. To the north, he even extends the limits of the land close to the Mureș Valley, therefore he also includes the Leșnic Valley in his research.

inhabited by a majority of Romanians<sup>127</sup> preserved certain autonomy and particular Romanian institutions until the fifteenth century.<sup>128</sup> Due to its location in the southwest corner of the Transylvanian voivodate, Hunyad County played an important role in the defense of the southern border. The royal castle of Hațeg, whose earliest structures date from the end of the thirteenth century,<sup>129</sup> guarded two important route-ways towards the center of Transylvania, which were also used by the Ottomans in their attacks: one way came from Wallachia through the Vâlcan Pass while the other came from the Banat through the Poarta de Fier Pass.<sup>130</sup> Hațeg castle was served by the inhabitants of the Hațeg district.<sup>131</sup> In 1420, the castle and the royal court nearby were severely damaged by the Ottomans. The castle was temporarily abandoned and never returned to its previous state and importance.<sup>132</sup> Instead, the military importance of Deva and Hunedoara castles, also situated in Hunyad County, grew. In sources dating from the middle of the fifteenth century and the second half of the fifteenth century, almost all the villages that once served Hațeg castle belong to the estates of the Deva or Hunedoara castles. Deva castle, probably built in the middle of the thirteenth century,<sup>133</sup> watched and defended the Mureș Valley, a major access route into Transylvania from the West. Deva was also the seat of the political and military authority of Hunyad County, and at times of the Transylvanian voivode himself.<sup>134</sup> The stone fortress of Hunedoara was built in the second half of the thirteenth century, not far from the earthen fortification that preceded it.<sup>135</sup> In the time of King Matthias it became the most important castle in the Hunyad County.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>127</sup> On other ethnic groups in Hațeg Land see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 53-54, 60-61, 136-137.

<sup>128</sup> The assizes of the knezes, which had juridical prerogatives and were chaired by a royal representative, usually the castellan of Hațeg, functioned until the second half of the fifteenth century ( See Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Instituții medievale românești: Adunările cneziale și nobiliare (boierești) în secolele XIV-XVI* [Romanian medieval institutions: The knezial and nobiliary assemblies in the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries] (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1991), 59-67, 85-101; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 259-264). Once the Romanian knezes became nobles, the knezial assizes gradually disappeared and their function was taken over by the nobiliary court of Hunyad County. Also, *ius valachicum*, the Romanian customary law, was gradually replaced by *ius regni*, the law of the kingdom.

<sup>129</sup> Adrian A. Rusu, "Cetatea Hațegului. Monografie istorică și arheologică," *Sargetia*, 16-17 (1982-1983), 333-359; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 214 -215.

<sup>130</sup> Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoara*, XII; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 368.

<sup>131</sup> Rusu, "Cetatea Hațegului," 342.

<sup>132</sup> Rusu, "Cetatea Hațegului," 343.

<sup>133</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 59.

<sup>134</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 217, 255.

<sup>135</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 58, 215-216.

<sup>136</sup> See Radu Lupescu, "Domeniul cetății Hunedoara în timpul Hunedorenilor (The estate of Hunedoara castle in the time of the Hunyadis)," *Mediaevalia Transilvanica* 5-6 (2001-2002), no. 1-2, 26.

The preserved sources disclose that Strei, Streisângeorgiu, Densuș, Leșnic, and Sântămărie Orlea belonged at various moments to the estates of the Hațeg, Deva or Hunedoara castles.<sup>137</sup> The Hațeg, Hunedoara and Deva castles were royal until they were granted to John Hunyadi or to the Hunyadi family. In 1409, John's father and some of his relatives received Hunedoara castle.<sup>138</sup> Hațeg and Deva were granted to John Hunyadi probably in 1441<sup>139</sup> and 1443/ 1444 respectively.<sup>140</sup> It has been noted that the knezes living on royal lands, unlike the knezes living on noble or Church estates, were able to preserve their right of property and their local organization for a longer time. The Romanian nobles mainly emerged from among these knezes in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries.<sup>141</sup> When the Hațeg, Hunedoara and Deva castles were donated by the king, lordship over the Romanian knezes living on their estates changed. However, some of the knezes had already received royal charters of confirmation by knezial law for their lands, and the historical context allowed them continuation of their upward social course. It has been noted that, unlike the knezes on royal estates given to other nobles, many of those having John Hunyadi as their new lord experienced a rising social path.<sup>142</sup> John Hunyadi generously rewarded the knezes on his estates who took part along with him in the anti-Ottoman war. He made many knezes or voivodes his retainers (*familiars*), confirmed their possessions, granted them new lands and offices; some of them even became his relatives, closer or distant.<sup>143</sup> Consequently, the middle of the fifteenth century saw the flourishing of Romanian leaders in Hunyad County.<sup>144</sup> The Căndeas of Râu de Mori and the Mușinas of Densuș are the Romanian leaders whose service for John Hunyadi significantly boosted their fortune and social status.

<sup>137</sup> See the catalog at the end of this work.

<sup>138</sup> Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoara*, XI.

<sup>139</sup> Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoara*, XV.

<sup>140</sup> Aurel Răduțiu, "Domeniul cetății Deva. Localitățile: 1453-1673" [The estate of Deva castle. The settlements: 1453-1673], in *Studii istorice. Omagiu profesorului Camil Mureșanu* [Historical studies. In Honor of Professor Camil Mureșanu], ed. Nicolae Edroiu (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1998), 66.

<sup>141</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 220; Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Elita românească din Transilvania în secolele XII-XIV (origine, statut, evoluție)" [The Romanian elite in Transylvania, twelfth-fourteenth centuries (origin, statute, evolution)], in *Nobilimea românească*, ed. Marius Diaconescu, 47. See also Rusu, "Geneza," 64, 66.

<sup>142</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 120.

<sup>143</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 30-36. The knezial or noble Romanian families from Grădiște, Clopotiva, Densuș, Peșteana, and Hălmașiu were related to John Hunyadi. See also Nicolae Drăgan, "Țara Hațegului. Contribuții documentare și arheologice. Originile individualității istorice a Țării Hațegului în evul mediu" [The Hațeg Land. Documentary and archaeological contributions. The origins of the historical individuality of Hațeg Land in the Middle Ages], *AIAC* 25 (1982), 33-35.

<sup>144</sup> More than forty charters issued by John Hunyadi, King Ladislas Posthumus and King Matthias Corvinus in the period 1445-1466 have been preserved, granting noble status to the knezes from Hațeg (Drăgan, "Țara Hațegului," 34).

Some representatives of the Romanian elites in the Záránd County, including the voivodes of Hălmaġiu, Ribița and Crișcior, experienced a similar development in the fifteenth century.<sup>145</sup> The villages of Hălmaġiu, Ribița and Crișcior were situated in the eastern part of Záránd County in the upper basin of the River Crișul Alb. From the time they appear in the sources they belonged to the estate of the Șiria castle.<sup>146</sup> Hălmaġiu and Ribița were also the centers of two districts bearing their respective names.<sup>147</sup> The castle, probably built at the end of the thirteenth century, was initially royal and its castellan was usually the count or vice-count of Záránd County.<sup>148</sup> In 1439, King Albert granted the castle together with 110 villages to the Serbian despot George Branković. Thereafter, its lords would be powerful nobles, including John Hunyadi, who held it from 1444 until his death, in 1456. In 1444, George Branković donated the castle and its estate to John Hunyadi together with “the Hungarian and Romanian nobles of the castle, who have always and from old times belonged to that castle, so that they remain in their nobility, rights and liberties granted to them by the holy kings.”<sup>149</sup> Among these *nobiles castrenses* we should consider also the voivodes of Hălmaġiu, Ribița and Crișcior. In the first half of the fifteenth century they were confirmed their possessions and are sometimes mentioned as faithfully fulfilling services in the name of the lord of the castle.<sup>150</sup> The Moga family of Hălmaġiu had an especially successful career. In 1451, John Hunyadi confirmed ownership over the voivodates of Căpâlna, Hălmaġiu and Băița to voivode Moga and his sons Michael and Sandrinus, amounting to more than 120 villages.<sup>151</sup> The ascension of the Mogas in the middle of the fifteenth century

<sup>145</sup> It has been noted that the Romanian elites in the Hunyad County, Banat and the Land of Crișul Alb had a similar development in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. However, research on the knezes of Záránd is less advanced (Rusu, *Citori si biserici*, 21, 30).

<sup>146</sup> See the Catalog.

<sup>147</sup> The district of Hălmaġiu is mentioned for the first time in 1390 (Doc. Val., 398; Victor Eskenasy, “Hălmaġiu, un sat medieval din Țara Crișului Alb (secolele XIV-XV). Considerații istorice” [Hălmaġiu, a medieval village in the Land of Crișul Alb (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries). Historical considerations], *Ziridava* 5 (1975), 24). The district of Ribița occurs for the first time in the sources in 1441 (Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Cetăți*, 68).

<sup>148</sup> On the history of Șiria castle see Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Cetăți*, 67-70; David Prodan, “Domeniul cetății Șiria la 1525” [The estate of the Șiria castle in 1525], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj* 3 (1960), 37-38; Borcea, “Considerații,” 186-190.

<sup>149</sup> “...nobilibus Ungaris et Walachis castrensis, semper et ab antiquo ad ipsum castrum spectantibus, sic, quod eisdem, in eorum nobilitate, iuribus et libertatibus, per divos reges ipsis concessis, permanentibus...” (DRH, D, I, 380).

<sup>150</sup> See e.g. a document from 1445 in which Ladislau Maróti, the lord of Șiria castle, assigned his “beloved voivodes” Moga, Ladislau de Bolya, Stephen of Birtin, John de Fenywpataka, Șerban and John of Ribița, certain attributions in solving a dispute between the jobagiones on the estate of Baia de Criș and the mint of Sibiu (Hurmuzaki, *Documente* I/2, 714-715; Hurmuzaki, *Documente* XV/1, 33; Eskenasy, “Hălmaġiu,” 26).

<sup>151</sup> Márki, *Aradvármegye*, vol. 1, 501; Eskenasy, “Hălmaġiu,” 26.

was also favored by their kinship with Hunyadi.<sup>152</sup> The family maintained its wealth and relative high social status throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>153</sup>

When they reached a certain social and material status, Romanian leaders were also able to build churches, usually in their villages of origin. Many of these churches have been preserved in Hunedoara County. The majority are of modest dimensions and have a simple plan: a rectangular nave and a rectangular, semicircular or polygonal sanctuary. Many have also a tower, usually at the western end of the nave.<sup>154</sup> When present, the narthexes are usually later additions.<sup>155</sup>

Auxiliary spaces such as the diaconicon and prothesis do not seem to have been part of the local architectural tradition. Only the church of Densuș has a chapel attached to the south of the sanctuary, but both its dating and function remain uncertain.<sup>156</sup> The churches exhibit Romanesque and Gothic architectural features, mainly in the articulation of the window and door framings, the plan of the sanctuary and sometimes the vaulting systems. Thus, the majority of the Orthodox churches were architecturally similar to Catholic churches in the region. In general, specific Byzantine architectural features – such as the cross-in-square and triconch plan, an apse that is semicircular in the interior and polygonal on the exterior or a narthex – are very rare occurrences in fourteenth-fifteenth-century Transylvanian churches. The Byzantine tradition became widespread in the Romanian church architecture in eastern Hungary only from the eighteenth century on.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 35-36. On the family relationships between Moga of Hălmașiu and John Hunyadi see also Adrian A. Rusu, “Un proces de moștenire din anul 1426 la Grădiște (Sarmizegetusa) și implicațiile lui în Hunedoara și Zaránd” [An inheritance law suit in 1426 at Grădiște (Sarmizegetusa) and its implications in Hunedoara and Zaránd], *Ziridava* 18 (1993), 91-99.

<sup>153</sup> On the history of the family in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries see Borcea, “Considerații,” 191.

<sup>154</sup> Exceptions are the churches of Colț and Densuș, which have a tower over the sanctuary and the middle of the nave respectively.

<sup>155</sup> A narthex was added to the churches of Strei and Densuș in the fifteenth century. Also, the church of Râmeș situated in Alba County was built with a narthex.

<sup>156</sup> Interestingly, the north chapel of the church of Cuhea, in Maramureș, so-called “sacristy” because the plan of the sanctuary was Gothic (polygonal), was actually used as a crypt (Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, 212-213).

<sup>157</sup> For the characteristics of Orthodox church architecture in Transylvania see Eugenia Greceanu, “Influența gotică în arhitectura bisericilor românești de zid din Transilvania” [The Gothic influence on the architecture of the Romanian masonry churches in Transylvania], *SCIA.AP* 18 (1971), no. 1, 33-59; Eugenia Greceanu, “Pătrunderea influențelor de tradiție bizantină în arhitectura bisericilor românești de zid din Transilvania (până la sfârșitul veacului al XVII-lea)” [The penetration of Byzantine influences in the architecture of the Romanian masonry churches in Transylvania (until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century)], *SCIA.AP* 19 (1972), no. 2, 195-221; Eugenia Greceanu, “Spread of Byzantine Traditions in Mediaeval Architecture of Romanian Masonry Churches in Transylvania,” *Études byzantines et post-byzantines* 1 (1979), 197-238. While the overall conclusions are still valid, these articles are quite outdated and contain some inaccuracies regarding the history of some churches, which were pointed out in later research.

The donors of the paintings researched for this dissertation were Romanian knezes or voivodes, even though their family was not always the one that also built the church. The churches of Sântămărie Orlea, probably also Chimindia, were built by and belonged for a while to Latin patrons. Only later did the churches become the possession of Romanian patrons. In some cases, archaeological excavations revealed the existence of a residence, attributed to the knezial family, in close proximity to the church – Streisângeorgiu, Strei, Densuș, Hălmagiu. However, the exclusive private use of the churches cannot be ascertained.<sup>158</sup> Also, the votive inscriptions at Streisângeorgiu, Crișcior and Ribița refer to the church as “monastery.” In the absence of other data, some historians have understood the term in its literal sense,<sup>159</sup> while others have considered its use rather a convention.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Radu Popa uses the term “family churches,” “court chapels” or “court churches” when he refers to the churches built by the knezes. In general, his arguments in support of this status are the foundation of the churches by knezes, the existence of a knezial residence in close proximity to the church, and the small dimensions of the churches (Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 157 and subchapter “Biserici și mănăstiri” [Churches and monasteries]). Adrian Rusu disagrees with the term “court chapel” because it suggests an exclusively private use, which may not be supported by other sources. In his opinion, the fact that the churches are situated outside the precincts of the knezial residence and have significant dimensions are arguments against an exclusively private use (Rusu, *Cititori și biserici*, 142; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 258-259).

<sup>159</sup> Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița,” 8.

<sup>160</sup> Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 260; Vătășianu, “Vechile biserici,” 31; Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 42.

### 3. Lay Portraits and Inscriptions

Several lay portraits as well as dedicatory and supplicatory inscriptions have been preserved in the Orthodox churches once situated in Hunyad and Zaránd Counties. The portraits are either part of the votive painting, in which the donors are represented offering the church to the patron saint, or represent the donor as supplicant. The inscriptions accompany the portraits of the donors or the figures of various saints, expressing the prayer of a person or a family. The analysis of the lay portraits and of the inscriptions commissioned by donors provides information on the personal piety of the sponsors as well as their social and material status.

#### 3.1. Strei

Several lay figures, represented in different parts of the church, appear in the paintings of Strei, which probably date to the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>161</sup> The present poor state of preservation of the paintings allows just partial description of these figures, variously identified by different scholars over time. On the south wall of the sanctuary, a man is represented standing with his hands joined in prayer (figs. 3.1, 3.2). He stands at the same height as St Nicholas, whom he addresses in his prayer. The supplicant wears a brownish-red coat that terminates above the knees and tight trousers. His coat fits tightly at the chest and has buttons at the front and on the sleeves, from wrist to elbow. The man also wears a low-slung, narrow belt, now barely visible.<sup>162</sup> Towards the middle of the fourteenth century, men's tunics started to fit more closely the shape of the body and became shorter.<sup>163</sup> The tunic of the supplicant at Strei, tight on the torso and looser at the hips, together with the low-slung belt fit male fashion at the middle and the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>164</sup> This type of tunic was worn by people from all social classes. It is the costume's details, like the fabric and the type and number of buttons that reflect the difference in status. The lay figure in the sanctuary of Strei also wears a hood with a

<sup>161</sup> On the date of the paintings see the Catalogue.

<sup>162</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 270, have described the belt as being knotted at the front.

<sup>163</sup> See Levi-Pisetzky, *Storia*, vol. 2, 37-46; Eduard Wagner, Zoroslava Drobná and Jan Durdík, *Medieval Costume, Armour and Weapons* (Mineola, New York: Dover, 2000), 16, 17, 23-24, pl. 11-31/I; Thiel, *Geschichte des Kostüms*, 198-199.

<sup>164</sup> Maria Irina Popescu and Liana Tugearu have concluded that Grozie's costume was common in the fourteenth century and indicates a middle-class status (Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 239).

neck-cape and a long point hanging down the back. The hood with short cape, also called a *chaperon*, was already in use in the West by the end of the twelfth century, and, with some variations, stayed in fashion until the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>165</sup> The type of *chaperon* represented at Strei, with the thin, long point (called a cornet or liripipe), appears and was very popular in the fourteenth century, when it could be worn by people from virtually all walks of life.<sup>166</sup>

The inscription running above the suppliant's head reads: "Grozie of master Ivaniș painted the church [...]."<sup>167</sup> It has been suggested that the genitive construction indicates that Grozie was the son of master Ivaniș.<sup>168</sup> Popescu and Tugearu have also been able to read the letters ...ли at the end of the inscription, and proposed the word be completed as **НИКОЛИ**.<sup>169</sup> Thus, they have suggested that the initial dedication of the church, now called the Dormition of the Virgin, was to St Nicholas. St Nicholas is also represented on the south wall of the nave, in the same decorative frame as the Martyrdom of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia (fig. 3.4).

Taking into account the importance given to the portrait and the accompanying inscription, it may be assumed that Grozie, probably the son of master Ivaniș,<sup>170</sup> was the main painter of the church.<sup>171</sup> Some scholars have identified Ivaniș with the lay figure represented in the nave, in the upper register of the triumphal arch (fig. 3.5).<sup>172</sup> The man is represented behind the Archangel Gabriel, who is part of the Annunciation scene, and to the right of the Archangel Michael, whom he addresses in prayer. The figure, much smaller than the archangel, was probably represented

<sup>165</sup> François Boucher, *A History of Costume in the West* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 198, 445; Levi-Pisetzky, *Storia*, vol. 2, 65-68; Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 59, note 18.

<sup>166</sup> François Boucher, *A History of Costume in the West* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 198; Thiel, *Geschichte des Kostüms*, 202.

<sup>167</sup> **ГРОЗИЕ МЕЩЕРА ИВАНИША / Ё ПИСАЛЪ ЦРКВА**. See Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 50-53; Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 241, 270. The name Grozie also appears in a grafitto, probably from 1544/5, on the eastern jamb of the south entrance (Popescu and Tugearu, 260, 278; Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 42, 65). Sorin Ullea and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei have given a different reading to the inscription – **[АМБ]РОЗИЕ МЕЩЕР А ИВАНИЦА Ё ПИСАЛЪ ЦРКВА...** (Ambrozie master, and Ivanița painted the church...) -- which Breazu considers very improbable (Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 62; Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 52). Also I. D. Ștefănescu, reading just ...розие, had suggested that the full name of the man was **АМБРОЗИЕ** (Ștefănescu, *La peinture*, 218).

<sup>168</sup> Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 52; Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 241.

<sup>169</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 241.

<sup>170</sup> According to Monica Breazu, the word **МЕЩЕР** (master) should be understood as designating a craftsman with a high degree of training, who was able to lead a working team (Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 52).

<sup>171</sup> Drăguț, "Din nou," 21; Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 245. Starting from a different reading of the inscription (see the Catalogue), Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei identifies Grozie (Ambrozie in her reading) as the main stone mason for the church, while Ivaniș would have been the main painter (Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 62).

<sup>172</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 62; Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 245-246.



kneeling. His arms are bent and his palms turned towards his chest. He seems to wear the same type of costume as Grozie, but blue. While Grozie is beardless, with the appearance of a young man, the figure on the triumphal arch is a mature man with a brown, forked beard and a moustache. According to Popescu and Tugearu, he may be Grozie's father, Ivaniș. The scholars have suggested that the man had died by the time of the painting, because he directs his prayers to Archangel Michael, who was believed to lead souls to Paradise and also to perform the weighing of the souls after death.<sup>173</sup> Whether identified as Ivaniș or not, the lay figure has been attributed various roles by different researchers: the second painter of the church,<sup>174</sup> the main painter of the church<sup>175</sup> and the donor of the paintings.<sup>176</sup>

At least four other lay portraits appear in the church. The bust of a man is visible on the south side of the triumphal arch, in the lower register, under the figure of St Petka (figs. 3.6, 3.7). The man is depicted frontally, but his head is turned to his right. His left arm is bent at the level of his abdomen and the other is bent and raised to the level of his shoulder. Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei has noted that another lay figure, depicted on the east jamb of the south entrance, is shown a similar position (fig. 3.8). At the time she conducted her research in 1975, shortly after the restoration of the paintings (1972), she observed that this latter figure, looking southwards, held in his left hand a small tool, probably a chisel, and in his right an instrument like a wooden hammer. According to Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei both men were masons.<sup>177</sup> The hypothesis is plausible if we see their attitudes as working postures.<sup>178</sup>

On the upper part of the east jamb of the south entrance, above the already described figure, there is another portrait. The standing figure is represented in three-quarter profile, turned towards the nave and raising his hands in prayer (fig. 3.9). Cincheza-Buculei thinks the figure is that of a man, one of the painters,<sup>179</sup> while Drăguț,<sup>180</sup> and Popescu and Tugearu<sup>181</sup> believe the figure is rather that of a woman, described as having long hair and a long dress.

<sup>173</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 245-246. On Archangel Michael's cult and iconography see *LCI* 3, col. 255-265.

<sup>174</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 246.

<sup>175</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 58-60, 62.

<sup>176</sup> Drăguț, "Din nou," 20, 25-26.

<sup>177</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 56-58. Cincheza-Buculei has also noted that the presence in the church of portraits of masons, stone carvers and painters implies that the church was painted shortly after it was built. Therefore, she assumes the building and the painting were carried out in the fourteenth century, within a reasonable time span (Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 69-70).

<sup>178</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 252, also agree with Cincheza-Buculei's interpretation.

<sup>179</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 58.

One more portrait has been described by Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, on the north wall of the space under the tower, where at present only traces of a female saint are visible (fig. 3.10).<sup>182</sup>

The scholar has described a lay figure richly dressed and shorter than the female saint who stands to his left. The female saint, who gave a blessing in the direction of the man, has been identified as the Virgin Mary, to whom the church was probably initially dedicated.<sup>183</sup> In Cincheza-Buculei's view, the position occupied by this painting is a prominent one in the church and therefore appropriate for the representation of a founder. The scholar considers that the man was the ktetor, while the other lay figures in the church were painters and masons. However, one should also keep in mind that the space under the tower is very narrow and offers less visibility than the walls of the nave. The men on the upper part of the triumphal arch and in the sanctuary occupy places of honor in the church. Moreover, other important portraits may have existed on the north wall of the nave, where the painting has been completely destroyed.

The painters of Strei had Western training, as demonstrated by the Gothic and Trecento features of the paintings.<sup>184</sup> Relatively few artist portraits have been preserved from the Middle Ages.<sup>185</sup> On the territory of medieval Hungary, two other painter portraits have come down to us, aside from those at Strei. Both of them depict Johannes Aquila of Radkersburg, who represented himself in two churches that he painted.<sup>186</sup> In the church of the Holy Trinity at Velemér (1377-1378), his portrait is situated in the sanctuary, in the upper register of the north wall, next to Evangelist Matthew. He is shown kneeling, with his hands joined in prayer and holding a scroll

<sup>180</sup> Drăguț, "Din nou," 21.

<sup>181</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 278.

<sup>182</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 63-64, fig. 10. For a description of what could be seen of the scene in 1985, see Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 279-280.

<sup>183</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 63, note 26.

<sup>184</sup> On the style of the paintings and the identification of different hands at work see Drăguț, "Biserica din Strei," 312-315; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 19-21; Drăguț, "Din nou," 21-25; Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," 64-69.

<sup>185</sup> On artist self-representations in the West see Omar Calabrese, *Die Geschichte des Selbstporträts* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2006); Kurt Gerstenberg, *Die deutschen Meisterbildnisse des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1966). Artists portraits are very rare in Byzantine painting and have been preserved only in manuscripts and icons. When they represented themselves, the artists usually did it in their capacity of donors. No painters' portraits have been preserved in a monumental painting. On this topic see Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, "Painters' Portraits in Byzantine Art," *DChAE* 17 (1993-1994): 129-142.

<sup>186</sup> On the two portraits of Johannes Aquila see Thomas von Bogyay, "Die Selbstbildnisse des Malers Johannes Aquila aus den Jahren 1378 und 1392," in *Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes, vol. 3, Akten des 21. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn 1964* (Berlin, 1967), 55-59. On Johannes Aquila and his work see especially Ernő Marosi, ed., *Johannes Aquila und die Wandmalerei des 14. Jahrhunderts. Tagungsbeiträge und Dokumenten aus den Sammlungen des Landesdenkmalamts* (Budapest, 1989); Janez Höfler and Janez Balažic, *Johannes Aquila* (Murska Sobota: Pomurska Založba, 1992); Janez Balažic, "Johannes Aquila," in *Gotik*, ed. Höfler, 232-237.

on which only part of the inscription could be read: ...*ane Aquila pictore*. His coat of arms lies at his feet. No other lay portraits exist in the church of Velemér, whose paintings are only partially preserved. In the church of St Martin at Martjanci (1392-1400), the portrait of Johannes Aquila is located in the upper part of the southeast wall of the sanctuary (fig. 3.12). He is represented on his knees, dressed as a noble and with his coat of arms at his feet. The painter joins his hands in prayer and holds a scroll with the text: *Omnes s(anc)ti orate p(ro) me / Johanne Aquila pictore*. At Martjanci, the parish priest Erasmus is also portrayed kneeling on the north wall of the sanctuary. Two other lay figures in prayer were represented in the nave, one on the triumphal arch, the other on the north wall. The villages of Velemér and Martjanci belonged to the estate of the Upper Lendva castle, owned by the Szécsi family. It has been argued that the commissioners of the paintings were not the Szécsi family but the local communities, in which the lay elite and the parish priest played an important role.<sup>187</sup> This situation would have favored the self-assertion of the painter who represented himself in prominent places in the church.<sup>188</sup> The church of the Assumption at Turnišče (1380- 1389), also painted by Aquila and his workshop, was the family church of the powerful Bánfis. The portraits of the founders were represented in the sanctuary and their coat of arms decorates the triumphal arch. Most probably the painter did not introduce a portrait of himself in the decoration of this church. However, he left a supplicatory inscription in the apse under the image of Christ in Glory: ...*memento mei Johanne Aquila* ... Finally, Johannes Aquila also made his presence felt in the sanctuary of the church of the Augustinians in Fürstenfeld, which was painted by his workshop in the early fifteenth century. Above the niche of the tabernacle, an inscription reads: *Orate deum pro me Iohanne Aquila pictore*. The coat of arms of the painter is also represented in the sanctuary next to St Veronica. In the nave, the image of an Augustinian monk depicted as donor has been preserved next to St Oswald. The analysis of Johannes Aquila's portraits and inscriptions lead to the conclusion that he was one of the rarely recorded examples of late medieval painters who vigorously expressed their self-consciousness as artists.<sup>189</sup> It has been also argued that the painter asserted himself to the extent

<sup>187</sup> Bogyay, "Die Selbstbildnisse," 58.

<sup>188</sup> Bogyay, "Die Selbstbildnisse," 58-59.

<sup>189</sup> Bogyay, "Die Selbstbildnisse," 55-56; Elga Lanc, "Johannes Aquila und seine Werkstatt in Radkersburg und Fürstenfeld," in *Johannes Aquila*, ed. Marosi, 68. According to Bogyay, the self-portraits of Johannes Aquila would even be the earliest self-portraits of a painter preserved in the West, excluding the portraits in manuscripts.

to which the status of the commissioners allowed. It was thus easier for him to boost his selfhood in a church where the beneficiary was a collectivity rather than a powerful noble family.<sup>190</sup>

In the church of Strei, the painter Grozie represented himself in the sanctuary and it is plausible that at least two other lay figures, depicted in the lower register in the nave, were mason portraits. The presence of the painter in the sanctuary suggests that he either had a social status close to the main donors or was counted among them. The type of votive portrait encountered in Transylvanian Orthodox churches painted around 1400 and later – the founders offering the church to the patron saint – is absent and unfortunately we will never know if it ever existed.

Vasile Drăguț and Radu Popa have suggested that the church belonged to the knezial family of Strei, which occurs in the sources in the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>191</sup> The first known member of this family would have been *Zayk de districtu fluvii Stryg* (or *Stirik*), whose son, Peter, together with his cousin Nicholas, son of Ladislav of Streisângeorgiu, received in 1377 from the Voivode of Transylvania, for faithful service, three Romanian villages to be owned by knezial law.<sup>192</sup> From a copy of a charter issued in 1404, we learn that Ladislav, grandson of Zayk and son of Peter *de Zeikfalua*, was confirmed in his property rights over the village of Strei (*Zeykfalua*).<sup>193</sup> Radu Popa, who brought to light the remains of a residence close to the church, suggested this was the court chapel of the knezial family.<sup>194</sup>

If the knezes commissioned the painting, then it is difficult to locate their portraits in the church.

Vasile Drăguț suggested that the man represented on the triumphal arch would be Peter, son of Zayk,<sup>195</sup> while Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei thinks the ktetor was represented under the tower.<sup>196</sup>

The history of the church and of the village is too poorly known for a precise identification of the numerous lay figures in the church. The multitude of portraits rather suggests a collective contribution towards the decoration of the church, even if the existence of a main commissioner should not be excluded.

<sup>190</sup> See Bogay, “Die Selbstbildnisse,” 58-59.

<sup>191</sup> Drăguț, “Din nou,” 25-26; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123-124.

<sup>192</sup> *DRH C*, vol. 15, no. 170 and 173; Popa, “O spadă medievală,” 76-81; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123. See more on the history of the village and of the knezial family in the Catalogue under Strei.

<sup>193</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123. Mályusz, *Zsig. okl.*, II/1, no. 3370, however, doubts the authenticity of the document, which has been preserved only in a later copy. In 1453, the village is called by the name Strigfalva (Hurmuzaki, *Documente* II/2, 35).

<sup>194</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 234.

<sup>195</sup> Drăguț, “Din nou,” 26.

<sup>196</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “Portretele,” 63-64.

### 3.2. Ribîța

The votive portraits in the church of St Nicholas at Ribîța are situated on the south wall of the nave (figs. 13, 14). The painting occupies a large surface on the lower register, opposite to the Holy Kings of Hungary who are represented on the north wall. The western edge of the votive painting, once covered by a pier, has been almost completely lost. The scene represents the donors offering the church to St Nicholas, whose standing figure dominates the picture. To the right, two men and two women are depicted, most probably kneeling.<sup>197</sup> The first man offers the church to St. Nicholas, who receives it and gives a blessing in the direction of the church and of the donors. The other figures, including the little girl depicted on her knees under the model of the church, stretch out their hands in prayer.

The donors are accompanied by inscriptions with their names.<sup>198</sup> The two men are župans Vladislav and Miclăuș and the two women are their wives. The little girl is Ana, the daughter of župan Vladislav. Above the church, an inscription reads: Župan Vladislav offers the church to St Nicholas.<sup>199</sup> Another text, written with black paint, not white as for the other inscriptions, was placed in a red frame in the upper part of the scene. According to its partial reading,<sup>200</sup> it appears that “the monastery of St Nicholas” was built and painted at the initiative of brothers Vladislav and Miclăuș and their wives, Stana and Sora.<sup>201</sup> The end of the inscription, which is very poorly preserved, was partially deciphered in 1929 by Silviu Dragomir.<sup>202</sup> According to his reading, the church was finished in 1417. However, this date should be confirmed by a re-examination of the inscription after the completion of the restoration works. Before Dragomir, other proposed readings of the year were 1404<sup>203</sup> or 1414/1415.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>197</sup> Tugearu, “Biserica Sf. Nicolae,” 132, 143 also estimates that the donors are represented kneeling.

<sup>198</sup> See the inscriptions of the votive painting in the Catalogue.

<sup>199</sup> Tugearu, “Biserica Sf. Nicolae,” 143.

<sup>200</sup> See Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 252-254; Tugearu, “Biserica Sf. Nicolae,” 146. See also the Catalogue.

<sup>201</sup> Sora, whose figure came partially to light after recent restoration work, may be one of the daughters of Bălea, the founder of the church of Crișcior (see also Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 258, note 1, who assumes she was the granddaughter of Bălea).

<sup>202</sup> Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 254.

<sup>203</sup> The reading of Ödön Nemes, in 1868 (Ödön Nemes, “A ribicei templom 1404-ből” [The church of Ribîța, 1404], in *Hazánk s a Külföld* 4, no. 4 (1868), 64).

<sup>204</sup> The reading of the parish priest, on the occasion of the church’s being repaired in 1869-1870 (Silviu Dragomir, “Studii din istoria mai vechi a românilor de pe teritoriul diecezei Aradului” [Studies of ancient history of Romanians on the territory of the diocese of Arad], in Silviu Dragomir, *Studii de istorie medievală* [Studies of medieval history] (Cluj-Napoca: Fundația Culturală Română, 1998) (originally published in *Transilvania* 48, no. 1-6 (1917), 12-33), 121, 128. Adrian A. Rusu also proposed 1414 as the correct reading (Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribîța,” 7-8).

No other certain information has been preserved about the donors of the church, but members of the next generation appear in sources as voivodes of Ribița, faithfully serving the lord of Șiria castle.<sup>205</sup> In 1868, Ödön Nemes, possibly a descendant of the family, came up with an interesting story.<sup>206</sup> According to Nemes, Vladislav's<sup>207</sup> father, Nexa Theodor of Ribița, was granted Ribița and other villages by King Louis I as a reward for his bravery. However, Vladislav lost the paternal estate because of disloyalty. In 1404, the property was restored to Vladislav's sons, Mathias, Vladislav and Miclăuș. Thanking God for that, they built the church of St Nicholas.<sup>208</sup> It has been suggested that Nemes's account was based on family archive<sup>209</sup> but so far no documents have come to light in support of his statements.

The type of votive painting representing the donors standing and offering the model of the church to Christ or to the patron saint was widespread in Late Byzantine painting.<sup>210</sup> From the second half of the thirteenth century, the donor portraits became increasingly important, coming to occupy large surfaces in the decoration of the church.<sup>211</sup> The donors were frequently depicted frontally, looking in the direction of the viewer. The holy figures – Christ, the Virgin or the patron saint – were often given little space in the composition.<sup>212</sup>

The votive painting at Ribița follows the Byzantine tradition, except in several details. The donors' kneeling posture is less usual. In Byzantine painting, the supplicants were generally represented standing with their hands raised in prayer.<sup>213</sup> They were depicted on their knees only occasionally.<sup>214</sup> The most common kneeling posture in Byzantine art is that of the *proskynesis*,

<sup>205</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 714-715, and Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. XV/1, 33.

<sup>206</sup> Nemes, "A ribicei templom;" Rusu, "Biserica de la Ribița," 7.

<sup>207</sup> Vratislav, in Nemes's spelling.

<sup>208</sup> Ödön Nemes read the votive inscription as follows: "In gratitude to God we raised this church, because King Sigismund returned the property lost by our father Vratislav. Matthias, Vratislav and Nicholas of Ribița, and the girls Ana and Johanka built it in 1404" (Nemes, "A ribicei templom," 64).

<sup>209</sup> Rusu, "Biserica de la Ribița," 7.

<sup>210</sup> On portraits and portraiture in Byzantine art in general see *ODB* 3, 1702-1706. On portraits in Late Byzantine wall painting see Velmans, *La peinture*, 59-97. On portrait in medieval Romanian art, with little relevance for Transylvania, see Maria Ana Musicescu, "Byzance et le portrait roumain au moyen âge," *Études byzantines et post-byzantines* 1 (1979), 153-179.

<sup>211</sup> Velmans, *La peinture*, 61-62.

<sup>212</sup> See Velmans, *La peinture*, 79-80.

<sup>213</sup> The praying posture practiced from the Early Christian times involved standing with hands outstretched and looking upwards (see Tomáš Špidlík, S.J., *La spiritualité de l'Orient chrétien*, vol. 2 [*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 230 (1988)], 88; *RBK*, vol. 2, col. 772).

<sup>214</sup> See the examples analyzed in Ioannis Spatharakis, "The Proskynesis in Byzantine Art," *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 49 (1974): 190-205; Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 1976); Velmans, *La peinture*, 85.

which ranges from the torso leaning forward up to full prostration.<sup>215</sup> In the West, kneeling with a straight back was the common praying posture from the thirteenth century onwards.<sup>216</sup>

However, the significant difference between the depiction of Orthodox and Catholic supplicants seems to be in the position of their hands: the Orthodox kept their hands slightly apart while the Latins usually folded them.<sup>217</sup> At Ribița, and, as we shall see, at Crișcior as well, the donors are represented kneeling with upright torsos. It is possible that the preference for the kneeling posture, probably favored because it was deemed suitable to express the piety of the donors, was influenced by Western models.<sup>218</sup> However, the donors' praying gesture belongs to the Byzantine tradition.

The appearance of St. Nicholas follows the Byzantine canons. He is depicted as an aged man with short white hair, a tall forehead, and a short beard. He wears the distinctive sign of bishops, the *omophorion*, but the decoration of his red *phelonion*, with small white crosses and groups of four pearls, is not typical. In Byzantine art, St Nicholas usually wears either the *polystavrion* or a plain *phelonion*, usually in purple or red. At Ribița the painters had a penchant for richly decorating the saints' garments, including the phelonia of some of the bishops.

The state of preservation of the painting allows only a partial understanding of the donors' look.

The men have ear-length hair and wear moustaches and short beards, matching the fashion in

<sup>215</sup> *Proskynesis* was a gesture of supplication or reverence that over the ages took different forms, from a simple bowing of the head to complete prostration. It was used in imperial ceremonies, but also in religious life as a posture of prayer, penance or for greeting holy men. On *proskynesis* see Spatharakis, "The Proskynesis," 191-192; *ODB*, vol. 3, 1738-1739. Aside from *proskynesis*, *gonyklisia* (genuflexion) is also mentioned as a prayer posture in Byzantine sources (see *ODB*, vol. 2, col. 134).

<sup>216</sup> Réau, *Iconographie*, vol. 1, 225. It has been noted that when they were represented on their knees, Byzantine supplicants leaned forward as compared to the Latins, whose torsos remained straight (Hans Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1970), 73). Hans Belting makes this observation when he refers to a supplicants' portrait in the bilingual, Greek-Latin, Hamilton Psalter (Ms. 78 A 9, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin), which he dates to the second quarter of the fourteenth century.

<sup>217</sup> On the Western prayer gesture with folded hands see Réau, *Iconographie*, vol. 1, 226.

<sup>218</sup> The influence of Western iconography is visible also in other scenes at Ribița, as for example the Crucifixion and the Harrowing of Hell. Examples of kneeling donors also exist in Wallachian and Moldavian art, but, with a few exceptions, they date to the post-Byzantine period. Nicholas Alexander, Voivode of Wallachia (1352-1364), is represented in a posture of genuflexion in the church of St Nicholas at Curtea de Argeș (1364-1365) (Barbu, *Pictura murală*, 37-38, fig. 58). Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia (1457-1504) is represented kneeling in the Gospel Book from Humor (1473) (Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, 227, pl. CLVI). In the sixteenth century, examples of church donors represented kneeling may be found in the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Humor (the chancellor Teodor Bubuioag and the castellan of Suceava Daniil and their wives), in the church of St Nicholas at Bălinești (the chancellor John Tăutu) and the church of John the Baptist at Arbore (the *hetman* Luca Arbore, in a votive painting in the burial chamber. For other post-Byzantine examples of kneeling donors represented on icons, liturgical textiles and goldsmith works, see Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*. It may be noted that kneeling donors are much more commonly found on small objects than in monumental painting, where the standing posture was preferred.

Central Europe in the late fourteenth century-first decades of the fifteenth century.<sup>219</sup> They wear large coats with bag-shaped sleeves (figs. 3.15, 3.16). Further cleaning of the painting might clarify if the sleeves are sewn into bands at the wrists or the wrist-bands are part of an underneath tunic. The coat has stitched decoration on the collar, the upper arm and, in the case of Miclăuș, also on the lower hem. The men also wear belts from which hang weapons.

The type of dress worn by the donors may be regarded as a variant of an overcoat that was popular in the late fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century in Western Europe. The wide outer garment with full, flared or bag-shaped sleeves was known under different names – *houppelande* (France), *pellanda* (Italy), or *Tappert* (Germany) – and it was worn by both men and women.<sup>220</sup> The houppelandes for women were always full-length and usually belted under the bust. The houppelandes for men in the beginning were calf- or ankle-length and belted at the waist or below it. From ca. 1420 they were more knee-length and belted at the hips. Two donors in the church of St Francis in Poniky (1415) are shown wearing similar dresses to those on the donor figures in the church at Ribița (fig. 3.18).<sup>221</sup> Also, one man in a scene that is possibly from the legend of St Nicholas in the Evangelical church at Mediaș (1420-1430), is shown wearing a similar garment (fig. 3.19). A proof that this fashion was also present in Moldavia at the court of Alexander the Good (1400-1432), is the latter's portrait on the epitachelion he donated to his foundation, the monastery of Bistrița (fig. 3.20).<sup>222</sup>

The belts of the male donors are not clearly visible, nor are the arms that hang from them. Further restoration will bring them to light, but it is possible that the weapons are similar to those of the donors of Crișcior, which I address in the following subchapter.

<sup>219</sup> Scott, "Die Höfische Kleidung," 264-265.

<sup>220</sup> On houppelandes see Scott, "Die Höfische Kleidung," 264-265; Piponnier and Mane, *Dress*, 68-69, 79-80; Boucher, *A History*, 195-196, 205, 206; Thiel, *Geschichte des Kostüms*, 201-202, 209, 224, 231. Typically, houppelandes were open at the front from top to bottom, often lined with fur and had standing collars although similar garments that were not completely open and did not have fur-linings are included in the same category (see e.g. Wagner et al., *Medieval Costume*, figs. 49/I, 51/I and 67, 3/I).

<sup>221</sup> On the church of St Francis Seraph in Poniky see Buran, *Studien*.

<sup>222</sup> Corina Nicolescu and Florentina Jipescu, "Date cu privire la istoria costumului în Moldova, sec. XV-XVI" [Data with regard to the history of costume in Moldavia, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c.], *SCIA* 4 (1957), 143-146, fig. 1, 2; Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, 144-145, 225-226, pl. CLIV, fig. 52. The Wallachian princes from the second half of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth century (Nicholas Alexander, Vladislav I, Mircea the Old), also used Western costumes (especially pourpoints and tight trousers)(see Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, 90-96; Alexianu, *Mode*, vol. 1, 45-49, 60-61, 63-66). The few preserved pieces of evidence also show the influence of Western fashion on the dress of fifteenth-century Moldavian and Wallachian boyars (Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, 145-149).



Ana, the little girl represented under the model of the church, wears a dress that falls in ample folds (fig. 3.17). It is a similar type of dress to that of the male donors, being characterized by very wide sleeves gathered at the wrist. Comparable female dresses may be seen on some luxury saddles that were fashionable among the aristocrats during the time of King Sigismund. The saddles are of Central European origin and date to the first decades of the fifteenth century.<sup>223</sup>

The girl at Ribița also has a long girdle, which she wears in an unusual way: it falls on her right shoulder and encircles her waist, with the two long ends falling down at the front. The girdle is red with yellow patterns, suggesting golden embroidery or fixtures.

The dresses of the two adult women represented behind their husbands are barely visible. Only the white veils wrapped around their heads can be discerned better. They are the simplest form of headdress for married women and are similar to those worn by other female donors at Crișcior and Streisângeorgiu.

The votive painting at Ribița occupies a large surface in the church and the donors' figures, even if represented kneeling, fit into the monumental scale of the painting. They form a family, in which the male figures and the child are given a prominent place. The fragmentarily preserved inscription shows that the spiritual goal was the perpetual commemoration of their kin and absolution on the day of the Last Judgment.<sup>224</sup> Vladislav's and Miclăuș's attire is that of well-to-do nobles and burghers of the time. The fact that they are represented wearing weapons is a reference to their military duties, which ensured them a high position in the Romanian society and was their main path to social improvement. The župans' representation opposite to the Holy Kings of Hungary calls attention to their position as servants of the Hungarian Crown.

Vladislav, Miclăuș and their wives are depicted as ktetors,<sup>225</sup> but it seems that other individuals were also allowed to contribute to the endowment of the church. An inscription of supplication painted next to the triumphal arch and accompanying the representation of St John the Baptist, reads: "The prayer of the servant of God Dobroslav and of his wife..." (fig. 3.21). It may be assumed that Dobroslav and his wife sponsored at least the representation of St John the Baptist. Unfortunately, we do not know what their relationship to the main donors was.

<sup>223</sup> See for example *Sigismundus rex et imperator*, cat. no. 4.65, 4.66, 4.67.

<sup>224</sup> According to an earlier reading of the inscription it seems that the church was also mentioned as an inheritance in perpetuity for the donors' heirs (see Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 254).

<sup>225</sup> The *ktetor* was the owner of the church, who either built it or contributed significantly to its rebuilding and/or decoration.

### 3.3. Crișcior

The votive painting at Crișcior occupies a large surface on the northwest corner of the nave (fig. 3.22). The original main entrance to the nave was on the north wall, directly opposite the south side of the votive painting. The votive painting is flanked on the left by the Holy Kings of Hungary and on the right, on the other side of the west door, by two warrior saints on horseback. Župan Bălea and his wife, Vișe, are represented on the west wall of the nave holding the church and offering it to Virgin Mary, as the accompanying inscription reads (figs. 3.23, 3.24).<sup>226</sup> Two flying angels stretch out their hands towards the church as if to take it over towards the upper register where the Dormition of the Virgin is represented. Under the model of the church, a little boy, probably one of Bălea's sons, raises his hands in prayer (fig. 3.25).<sup>227</sup> The votive painting continues on the north wall with two men, also represented in prayer (fig. 3.26, 3.27). Their names are Iuca and Laslo, most probably Bălea's sons as well.<sup>228</sup> Part of Laslo's legs are still visible and their oblique position suggests that the donors were represented kneeling.<sup>229</sup> It is possible that the votive painting continued further to the left, with the representation of Bălea's two daughters, but the later opening of a door in the south wall led to the destruction of their portraits.<sup>230</sup>

All the men are shown with short hair, but only Bălea wears a moustache and a beard. The dress of Bălea and his little son is the same with that of the donors at Ribița.<sup>231</sup> The attire of Iuca and Laslo is different, but it cannot be fully described because of the poor state of preservation of the painting. They wear white shirts with bouffant sleeves and probably sleeveless tunics and capes.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>226</sup> See the inscriptions accompanying the votive painting in the Catalogue.

<sup>227</sup> The inscription accompanying the boy has been lost, but, according to a reading from 1928, the boy's name was Stephen. According to Dragomir's reading, he was the son of Iuca (read Jova by Dragomir) (Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 230). According to Monica Breazu and Liana Tugearu's reading, the inscription indicated that the boy was the son of Bălea (Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 45, note 6; Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 74).

<sup>228</sup> According to Monica Breazu and Liana Tugearu, the inscriptions indicate Iuca and Laslo were sons of Bălea (Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 43-45, and Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 73-74, 90-91). Other scholars, such as Silviu Dragomir and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei have proposed a different reading for the inscriptions, according to which Iova (read Iuca by Breazu and Tugearu) was the son of Bălea and Laslo the son of Iova (Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 230-232; Cincheza-Buculei, "Date noi," 36-37). For the inscriptions, see the Catalogue.

<sup>229</sup> The same suggestion in Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 90-91 and Cincheza-Buculei, "Date noi," 38.

<sup>230</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Date noi," 37. The presence of the portraits of Bălea's two daughters, *Szor* and *Filka*, was recorded in 1773 (Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 238-240).

<sup>231</sup> Al. Alexianu also noted that the dress of župan Bălea was similar to that of Polish and Hungarian nobles (Alexianu, *Mode*, vol. 1, 57).

<sup>232</sup> Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 91.

At Crișcior, all the male figures wear mounted belts fastened at the front and with the free end forming a U-shaped loop. Belts made of leather or durable fabrics and adorned with metal attachments existed in the late Middle Ages both in the Balkans and the West.<sup>233</sup> However, the belts of Crișcior resemble those worn by male donors in Balkan churches (fig. 3.52, 3.53) because of their length and the form of their fittings.<sup>234</sup>

All male donors wear weapons that hang from their belts and reach approximately to their knees or below. The weapons have straight, symmetrical hilts with rivets, no visible cross-guards and straight blades (figs. 3.23, 3.25, 3.27, 3.28). One may see in the representation of one of the young male donors, Laslo, that the length of the blade is circa four times the length of the grip (fig. 3.27). The scabbard of Bălea's weapon is slightly asymmetrical suggesting that the blade was single-edged. Adrian Rusu classifies the weapons of the knezes at Crișcior as battle knives.<sup>235</sup> He also points out what he considers to be similar examples in other Transylvanian wall paintings, such as Ghelița (ca. 1330) (fig. 3.29), Mediaș (1420-1430) (fig. 3.19), and Mărtiniș (fourteenth century).<sup>236</sup> According to Rusu, battle knives were used in Transylvania by the military elite from the thirteenth century to the first decades of the fifteenth century, but the weapon was also affordable for members of the lower social classes and burghers.<sup>237</sup>

Marko Aleksić has proposed a different identification for Bălea's weapon, which he includes in the category of single-edged swords.<sup>238</sup> Aleksić presents a group of twelve single-edged swords that were found in excavations in Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and in two hoards in Slovakia.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>233</sup> See Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, 100-105; Parani, *Reconstructing*, 65; Ilse Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1971), 149-159.

<sup>234</sup> See the examples of belts in Parani, *Reconstructing*, 65, and Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, fig. 27. See also the belts of some of the male donors in the churches of Arilje, Psača (fig. 3.52), Dolna Kamenica (fig. 3.53) and Lesnovo.

<sup>235</sup> Rusu, "Cuțitele," 86-88.

<sup>236</sup> Rusu, "Cuțitele," 86-87. According to Rusu, the archaeological criteria that can differentiate a battle knife from a common knife are the length of its single-edged, straight blade (ca. 30 cm or longer) and the presence of a scabbard or a special device attaching the knife to the belt. Also, the hilt is asymmetrical and fastened with rivets or metal thorns. Exceptionally, the length of the weapon can reach ca. 70-80 cm. See Rusu, "Cuțitele," 93-95, 102-103.

<sup>237</sup> Rusu, "Cuțitele," 103.

<sup>238</sup> Marko Aleksić, *Mediaeval Swords from Southeastern Europe. Material from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Century* (Belgrade: Dedraplast, 2007), 113. Zeno-Karl Pinter also identifies the weapon as sword, but he does not comment on its details (Zeno-Karl Pinter, *Spada și sabia medievală în Transilvania și Banat (secolele IX-XIV)* [The medieval sword and saber in Transylvania and Banat (9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries)] (Reșița: Banatica, 1999), 250, pl. 24a).

<sup>239</sup> Aleksić, *Medieval Swords*, 113-115, 183-184. The single-edged swords have a hilt for one hand or one hand-and-a-half, no pommel, and wooden plating attached with rivets. The tangs are mostly straight and symmetrical. Many single-edged swords that were found in excavations did not have the cross-guards. When present, the cross-guard is distinctively short. Also, in some cases, instead of a cross-guard a thicker segment was used, sometimes with the ring-shape, at the junction of the blade and hilt. The blade has one edge sharp while the other is blunt. Almost all

They date to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The author draws attention to the fact that the area of use of this kind of sword is larger in the Late Middle Ages and suggests that the topic needs further research.<sup>240</sup> According to Aleksić, the single-edged swords seem to have been used by the higher social classes, noblemen and burghers. They could have also been part of the military equipment.<sup>241</sup>

These categories of battle knives and single-edged swords overlap to some extent and the issue needs further research. The weapons represented at Crișcior are closer in terms of their length and symmetrical hilt<sup>242</sup> to what has been classified as single-edged swords without cross-guards. However, they also resemble the longer battle knives.<sup>243</sup> A weapon similar to that at Crișcior might be the side-arm worn by Stibor II of Stiborze in the effigy on his tombstone (by 1434).<sup>244</sup> The knezes at Crișcior display neither a common sword nor courtly or knightly attire. Their weapons are less prestigious than a sword, but they have to be understood as a sign of their military duty, which they display as a badge of social status.<sup>245</sup>

### 3.4. Streisângeorgiu

The first votive inscription in the church of Streisângeorgiu is situated on the east wall of the sanctuary and was painted on the second layer of plaster (fig. 3.31).<sup>246</sup> The inscription reads that the church's construction was initiated in 1313/1314 by knez Balea (Balotă), to his help and the forgiveness of his sins. The end of the inscription contains a prayer for help and redemption of the priest Naneș, and mentions the name of the painter, Teofil.<sup>247</sup> A second votive inscription

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specimens have a narrow fuller running down most of the blade's length. The length of the weapons is around 90 to 110 cm and the blade is mostly around 75-85 cm long. However, shorter specimens have also been encountered.

<sup>240</sup> Aleksić, *Medieval Swords*, 17, 113-115.

<sup>241</sup> Aleksić, *Medieval Swords*, 115.

<sup>242</sup> In the case of voivode Bălea's weapon, the axis of the hilt seems slightly eccentric as relative to the axis of the blade. The painter may have simplified the shapes to certain extent. The cleaning of the paintings of Ribița will no doubt provide an important comparative example.

<sup>243</sup> See the examples mentioned in Rusu, "Cuțitele," 93-94, 102-103. On the use of weapons that look like long knives in other regions in the Middle Ages see also Andrzej Nadolski, *Polish Arms* (Wrocław, 1974), 23, 28, fig. 27; Wagner et al., *Medieval Costume*, 46, figs. 3/V, 9/V, 12/V.

<sup>244</sup> *Sigismundus rex et imperator*, cat. no. 4.51.

<sup>245</sup> As a rule, in the painting of Byzantine tradition, the donors do not display weapons. In the West, it is common for the nobles to be represented in their capacity of donors dressed in courtly attire with a dagger – which was worn with both military and civil dress – or in knightly outfit.

<sup>246</sup> Popa, "Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii," 23. See the inscription in the Catalogue.

<sup>247</sup> The end of the inscription appears to be a modification by the same scribe of the original ending (Popa, "Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii," 23; Breazu, "Studiu epigrafic," 55).

dates from 1408 and accompanies a votive painting situated in the nave, on the east side of the tower (fig. 3.32). The votive painting represents župan Chendreș (Cîndreș) and his wife, županitsa Nistora, supporting the model of the church. The inscription that accompanies Chendreș identifies him as the ktetor of the church who offers it to St George. Two other men, župan Lațco, standing behind Nistora, and Vlaico, behind his father Chendreș, are represented raising their hands in prayer. A long inscription under the model of the church informs us that “this monastery” was built by Chendreș, his wife Nistora and their sons, and it was finished in 1408, “in the days of King Jicmon and of the Transylvanian voivodes Ioaneș and Iacov.”

Unfortunately, the votive image from 1408 was heavily repainted in 1743 and the appearance of the donors was changed. At present, the painting is barely visible, but it was reproduced in a watercolor made by István Gróh in 1907. The composition is similar to that of Crișcior, but the donors are represented standing. Their clothes were obviously misinterpreted in the eighteenth-century repainting.<sup>248</sup> The men seem to wear tunics and calf-length coats, with large sleeves. It is, however, most probable that they wore coats that were similar to those worn by donor figures of Ribița and Crișcior, with bag-shaped sleeves. Their narrow belts are partly visible and the weapons that hang from them were repainted as sabers. Nistora wears a simple veil, similar to the married women at Ribița and Crișcior, but her dress was completely misunderstood, as shown by the apron that hangs over her open-front, belted coat.

The knez Chendreș of Streisângeorgiu appears in sources around 1400, in documents referring to his estate or as one of the king’s men (*homo regius*) during the implementation of certain orders.<sup>249</sup> As regards župan Lațco, his kinship to Chendreș is unclear: he may either be Lațcu, son of Nicholas of Streisângeorgiu, who appears in several documents around 1400 along with Chendreș,<sup>250</sup> or Chendreș’s son.<sup>251</sup> It has been suggested that the knez Balea mentioned in the oldest inscription in the church would be a common ancestor of the knezial families of Streisângeorgiu and Strei.<sup>252</sup> According to Radu Popa, Streisângeorgiu and Strei were centers of the knezat of Streisângeorgiu, an older Romanian territorial-administrative unit indicated by the patrimonial relations documented around 1400.<sup>253</sup> Members of the knezial family of

<sup>248</sup> The same opinion in Bratu, “Streisângeorgiu,” 291-292.

<sup>249</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124.

<sup>250</sup> Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii,” 11-12; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124-125.

<sup>251</sup> Mihăilă, “Cele mai vechi inscripții,” 37; Bratu, “Streisângeorgiu,” 291.

<sup>252</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124, with a genealogical tree.

<sup>253</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 176-178.

Streisângeorgiu continue to appear in fifteenth-century sources, demonstrating the integration of the family into the local gentry.<sup>254</sup>

The votive painting in the church of Streisângeorgiu follows the same pattern as the votive paintings of Ribița and Crișcior. It represents, at a monumental scale and in a prominent place, the founders entrusting their church to the patron saint. According to the votive inscriptions, the donors built the church hoping for heavenly help in this life and for redemption. The fact that the inscription from 1408, in addition to the year, mentions that the church was built at the time of King Sigismund and the Transylvanian Voivodes John Tamási and Jacob Lackfi, should be interpreted as a homage paid by the donors to their lords.<sup>255</sup> According to an old reading, the inscription from Ribița also included a similar formula.<sup>256</sup>

### 3.5. Leșnic

The votive painting of Leșnic is situated on the north wall of the nave, next to the iconostasis, under the image of St. George fighting the dragon. The painting is very poorly preserved but one can still see the ktetor represented frontally and holding to his left the model of the church (fig. 3.33a, b).<sup>257</sup> He has ear-length hair and wears a short beard. Based on previous descriptions, the donor had a coat with wide sleeves,<sup>258</sup> his overall appearance being probably similar to that of the donors at Ribița and Crișcior. The donor's wife is represented to his right. She wears a veil on her head that is similar to that depicted for the female donors at Ribița and Crișcior. The actual appearance of the church does not match its representation. The results from archaeological excavations show that the church could not have had a western masonry tower.<sup>259</sup> Only a small fragment has been preserved of the votive inscription, reading: "founder ..." <sup>260</sup>

<sup>254</sup> See Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 148, 149, 277, 395.

<sup>255</sup> Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, analyzing the dedicatory inscriptions in thirteenth-century churches in Greece, has suggested that the donors who mentioned the Byzantine emperor in their dedicatory inscriptions aimed at emphasizing their ties or homage to the central authority (Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), 25).

<sup>256</sup> See the reading of the inscription in Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 254.

<sup>257</sup> Mocanu has warned that the votive painting could have undergone some repainting (Mocanu, "Leșnic," 114).

<sup>258</sup> Mocanu, "Leșnic," 114.

<sup>259</sup> The archaeological excavations did not reveal the tower's foundations (Gheorghe I. Cantacuzino, "Cercetări arheologice la Leșnic, jud. Hunedoara" [Archaeological research at Leșnic, Hunedoara County], *Cercetări Arheologice* 8 (1986), 132). Radu Popa has suggested the church had a wooden tower over the nave (Popa, *Țara*

The patron saint is missing from the votive painting. It has been suggested that the patron saints to whom the church was dedicated were Peter and Paul, represented on the south wall, in front of the donors.<sup>261</sup> However, taking into account that the church is not placed between the two donors but eccentrically to the right, it cannot be excluded that the patron saint was represented on the north side of the triumphal arch, adjacent to the votive painting. Unfortunately, the medieval decoration of the triumphal arch is completely obliterated by eighteenth-century painting. At present, the dedication of the church is St Nicholas, who does not appear in the preserved murals. It has been suggested that another member of the donors' family may be the standing figure, schematically represented in the lower register of the south wall, under the scene of the Resurrection of the Dead (fig. 3.34).<sup>262</sup> The figure is represented frontally and small scale. He has short hair, wears a wide-sleeved coat and holds an object in each of his laterally raised hands. Maria Mocanu has suggested the objects represent a sword and an axe,<sup>263</sup> but this cannot be confirmed given the present state of preservation of the painting. The scholar connects the figure to a particular episode of the Resurrection, represented in the upper register: two men – one carrying an animal on his shoulders, the other a man killed by an arrow – head towards the Throne of the Last Judgment, represented on the west wall (fig. 3.35). The scene is accompanied by an inscription: “Oh, my brothers, how much did the fear enfold me on earth for my sins.”<sup>264</sup> Mocanu suggests that the scene evokes the unexpected death on the battle field of an important member of the donors' family, represented by the lay figure shown beneath.<sup>265</sup> However, the relationship between the two representations is not clear. They evidently belong to two different registers, separated by a red strip, and the painting surrounding the figure beneath has not yet been uncovered.

The same unusual episode from the Resurrection has been approached by Vasile Drăguț and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, who propose a different reading for the inscription: “Oh, my

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*Hațegului*, 238). Neither the square frame of the western entry, as represented in the painting, fits the assumption that the original framing of the entrance was pointed (Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 99).

<sup>260</sup> Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 114.

<sup>261</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “Ansamblul,” 49-51.

<sup>262</sup> Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 103-104.

<sup>263</sup> Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 104 and 110. Mocanu's opinion that the man's posture is that of an “orant” is, however, contradicted by the fact that he holds something in both hands.

<sup>264</sup> The reading of the inscription belongs to Monica Breazu (Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 48) and Maria Mocanu (Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 102, 110): ω(χ) БРАТНІ МОЕ КОЛІКО МЕ ОБИДОУ(ТЬ) СТРА(Х) НА ЗЕМ(Л)И / ЗА ГРѦХИ МОЕ.

<sup>265</sup> Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 102-104.

brother, how much did I suffer in foreign land for my sins.”<sup>266</sup> Drăguț has considered that the man, who in his interpretation carries a male goat, is a reference to Abraham’s sacrifice. In his opinion, the scene as a whole refers to the loss of a family member in one of the battles against the Turks.<sup>267</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei has interpreted the scene in a particular historical context, that of the battle of Hindău (Moldavia), which took place in February 1395. At the beginning of 1395, the Hungarian army, trying to impose Sigismund’s suzerainty on Prince Stephen I (1394-1399), attacked Moldavia but was finally defeated near to Hindău (probably today’s Ghindăoani). Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei suggests that the donor of the paintings, the knez Dobre of Leșnic, appearing in sources in 1394, participated to the battle on the side of the Hungarian army. Through the painting at Leșnic, he would have expressed his repentance for having killed his fellow Romanians in Moldavia.<sup>268</sup>

The interpretation of the scene remains open. Similar representations of lay figures carrying dead persons in scenes of the Last Judgment are present in the churches of Mugeni (second half of the fourteenth century) (fig. 3.36) and Svinica (second half of the fourteenth century) (fig. 3.37), but they too have not yet been given a detailed analysis.<sup>269</sup> Until further research is done on the topic, it may be accepted that the scene illustrates someone’s repentance for having killed a person. The man killed by the arrow was of a higher social status, as suggested by his clothes. He wears a tight-fitting garment with a pattern of horizontal strips. Tight-fitting, short coats were fashionable in the West from the middle of the fourteenth century on.<sup>270</sup> The horizontal strips may indicate quilted clothing. Different types of quilted clothing were used as part of the military outfit, beneath or over the armor, or as a single defence. From the military costume they also

<sup>266</sup> Drăguț, “Biserica din Leșnic,” 431; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 28; Cincheza-Buculei, “Ansamblul,” 54. Monica Breazu considers this reading incorrect – see Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 48-49. When Drăguț and Cincheza-Buculei wrote, the lay figure in the lower register was not visible.

<sup>267</sup> Drăguț, “Biserica din Leșnic,” 431; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 28-29.

<sup>268</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “Ansamblul,” 53-57. This is also the opinion of Sorin Ullea (Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 33-36).

<sup>269</sup> The scene at Svinica, which has certain similarities with that in Leșnic, illustrates a procession of people heading towards the Weighing of the Souls by the Archangel Michael. According to Marie Lionnet, the scene illustrates an intermediary state between death and personal Judgment, and it may refer to people who died in a particular battle that took place in the region (Marie Lionnet, “La réception des formes dans les régions frontières: Vierge de miséricorde et Jugement dernier dans les peintures murales du royaume de Hongrie au XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles,” *Acta Historiae Artium Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae* 46 (2005), 27-30). At Mugeni, a man apparently tries to rescue a soul from the mouth of Hell. It has been suggested that the scene refers to the help the living may provide to the souls of people who suffered a sudden death and did not have time to confess their sins (Lionnet, “La réception,” 32).

<sup>270</sup> Boucher, *A History*, 194-197.



passed into the civil dress..<sup>271</sup> Similar examples to that in Leşnic may be seen in a series of paintings from medieval Hungary dating from around 1400 (figs. 3.12, 3.38, 3.39).<sup>272</sup> The other two figures, one carrying a cattle-like animal, the other the man killed by an arrow, lack attributes that would point precisely to their social or professional status. They wear knee-length tunics and hose and one of them also wears a purse attached to his girdle. Whether the scene is related to a precise historical episode or whether it was inspired by particular eschatological texts remains to be established by further research.<sup>273</sup>

A supplicatory inscription, written in the upper register of the north wall, probably refers to another donor, of secondary importance. The inscription accompanies the representation of the Virgin with saints (figs 3.40.a, b) and it has been read as follows: “The prayer of the servant of God [...]işe and of his wife and of his son.”<sup>274</sup> The painting occupies the place above the Torments of Hell and represents the following saints within a common red frame: St Catherine, the Virgin with Child (Hodegetria type), St Petka, St Peter and St John the Baptist.<sup>275</sup> To the right of the Virgin there is an undulating vertical line that discretely divides the group of saints in two. The supplicatory inscription was squeezed in to the left of this line, by the Virgin’s feet. This detail suggests that the three supplicants sponsored the representation of the saints situated to the left of the line: St Catherine and the Virgin with Child. The type of representation grouping the Virgin and other saints within the same frame may be also seen in the church of

<sup>271</sup> On medieval coat-armor and quilted protection see Blair, *European Armour*, 33, 47, 75-76, 77-78. Coat-armor fell out of use approximately in the third decade of the fifteenth century. Blair notes that the quilted, long-sleeved, long-skirted coat-armor (jupon) was especially popular in Germany in the early fifteenth century (Blair, *European Armour*, 76).

<sup>272</sup> See for example the Passion cycle at Selo v Prekmurju (<http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, nos. 010945, 010946, 010948), the Beheading of St Catherine at Turnišče (<http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 010968), and the Revival of the knights by St Martin at Martjanci (<http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 011004). Also, the painter Johannes Aquila, in a self-portrait that clearly aimed to exalt his social status, represented himself wearing a similar dress in the church of Martjanci. Maria Mocanu has described the man at Leşnic as a soldier wearing a mail shirt (Mocanu, “Leşnic,” 110).

<sup>273</sup> Taking the reading of the inscription by Monica Breazu and Maria Mocanu to be correct – “Oh, my brothers, how much did the fear enfold me on earth for my sins” (Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 48; Mocanu, “Leşnic,” 102, 110) – one may also wonder whether the scene does not indicate particular sins, like stealing someone’s property and killing, possibly a person of a higher status (a knez or a noble?). Written sources make frequent reference to such incidents.

<sup>274</sup> Mocanu, “Leşnic,” 112. See also Cincheza-Buculei, “Ansamblul,” 47.

<sup>275</sup> The painting is now covered by a thick layer of impurities, but the saints have been identified by Mocanu, “Leşnic,” 112. The same identification may also be found in Cincheza-Buculei, “Ansamblul,” 46-47, with the exception of the first saint, whose name she could not see.

Strei. It goes without saying that the selection of saints reflected the donors' devotional preferences.<sup>276</sup>

Vasile Drăguț and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei have considered that the paintings of Leșnic were commissioned by the knez Dobre, who appears in the sources at the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>277</sup> Dobre was knez of Leșnic and served the royal castle of Deva. According to a charter from 1394, King Sigismund of Luxemburg granted to his "faithful Romanian Dobre, son of John of Leșnic," the knezat of the Leșnic wood, provided that he and his heirs would continue to carry out the owed duties to the castellans and vicecastellans of Deva.<sup>278</sup> In 1404, he was again rewarded for his loyal service to the king.<sup>279</sup> Unlike Drăguț and Cincheza-Buculei, Maria Mocanu suggests that at the end of the fourteenth century Dobre or other member of his family would have commissioned the painting of the sanctuary – now covered by eighteenth-century painting –, while another donor commissioned the painting in the nave at the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>280</sup>

The association between the painting of Leșnic and the only knezial family of Leșnic occurring in the sources is legitimate. Further restoration will make the stylistic analysis of the painting in the nave possible and could provide information about the first painting of the sanctuary and triumphal arch. Who exactly was the ktetor represented in the votive painting cannot be ascertained because of the absence of the dedicatory inscription. As in other Transylvanian churches, besides the main donor represented in the votive painting, there was at least one donor of secondary importance, who at Leșnic must have sponsored the representation of the Virgin and St Catherine, to which he added his supplication.

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<sup>276</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza Buculei interprets the painting as a Deesis that has a central place in the iconographic program of the church (Cincheza-Buculei, "Ansamblul"). She regards it as a prayer addressed by knez Dobre, the donor of the paintings, to Christ through the mediation of the Virgin and other saints, including the warrior saints represented in the same register, for help against the domination of the Hungarians. In my opinion, the painting, which with respect to the composition is far from a Deesis, does not occupy such a key place in the overall painted program. It is a selection of preferred saints, that is reminiscent of the grouping of saints around the Virgin in *Sacrae conversazioni* and on altarpieces (Vasile Drăguț has also compared it with representations of the Virgin accompanied by Holy Virgins – see Drăguț, "Biserica din Leșnic," 425-426). Also, the historical data regarding the presumed donor of the paintings, knez Dobre does not support the hypothesis of a hostile attitude towards the Hungarian royal authority.

<sup>277</sup> Drăguț, "Biserica din Leșnic," Cincheza-Buculei, "Ansamblul." On the medieval sources mentioning Dobre see the Catalogue.

<sup>278</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/2, p. 354, no. 298; *Doc. Val.*, no. 425, p. 481-482.

<sup>279</sup> Gündisch "Cnezii," 237.

<sup>280</sup> Mocanu, "Leșnic," 104-106.

### 3.6. Densuş

No votive portrait has been preserved, if it ever existed, in the church of Densuş, painted in the first half of the fifteenth century (by 1443).<sup>281</sup> At present, in the interior of the church, the medieval painting covers the walls of the sanctuary, the east wall of the nave and partially the piers. It is possible that there were no other medieval paintings in the nave.<sup>282</sup> An inscription with the name of the main painter – “Stephen painted” – has been preserved in the sanctuary, under the southeast window (fig. 3.41).<sup>283</sup> A recently discovered inscription in the nave, above the representation of St Nedelea, has been also attributed to him: “The much sinful and unworthy hierodeacon Stephen wrote.”<sup>284</sup>

The inscription according to which some historians have dated all the medieval paintings in the church,<sup>285</sup> reads as follows: “In the year 6952 (1443), October 23, it was painted for St Nicholas, archbishop of Myra in Lycia [...] the prayer of the servant of God Ianăşă for županitsa and daughter Anca, to St Nicholas for wise help on the day of the frightful judgment of Christ. Amen.”<sup>286</sup> The text is located on the northwest pier, on the side facing the entrance, under a representation of St Marina striking the devil with a hammer (fig. 3.42).

Three supplicatory inscriptions are associated with the other three paintings that decorate the piers, but this time they are written on the paintings themselves. On the northeast pier, on the lower border framing the Holy Trinity (fig. 3.43), is written: “The prayer of the servant of God Crăstea, son of Muşat”.<sup>287</sup> On the same pier, but on the lower border of St Nedelea’s icon is written: “The prayer of the servant of God [...] to St Nedelea” (fig. 3.44).<sup>288</sup> The name of the supplicant was hammered out most probably on purpose (*damnatio memoriae*). On the southeast pier, on the representation of St Bartholomew (fig. 3.45), at the saint’s feet, part of an inscription can still be read: “The prayer of the servant of God Crăstea and of his wife [...]”.<sup>289</sup> The paintings

<sup>281</sup> On the dating of the painting see the Catalogue.

<sup>282</sup> At present there are no traces of medieval painting on the remainder of the nave walls and no fragments of fresco have been found in the excavations.

<sup>283</sup> See Drăguţ, “Un zugrav,” 239; Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” 94.

<sup>284</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” 94.

<sup>285</sup> Drăguţ, “Un zugrav;” Drăguţ, *Pictura murală*, 54; Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 94.

<sup>286</sup> The inscription has been read by Ruxandra Lambru, after the recent restoration works (Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” 93).

<sup>287</sup> See Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 95 and Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 94.

<sup>288</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 94; Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 94.

<sup>289</sup> See Catalogue.

and prayers are situated in the central part of the nave, which made them highly visible to anyone who entered the church.

The preserved sources allow identification of two knezial families at Densuș, probably with a common ancestor: a knezial family “of Densuș,” and the Mușina family.<sup>290</sup> They belonged to the local Romanian elite and had successful social careers in the fifteenth century. From a series of documents issued around the middle of the fifteenth century, we learn that the Romanian nobles of Ciula, who apparently were related to the knezes of Densuș, also had ownership rights over a part of Densuș village.<sup>291</sup>

Crăstea, son of Mușat does not appear in any other source except for the painting, but he must have been part of the Mușina family.<sup>292</sup> In 1566, the death of another member of the family, “župan Andriiaș Mînjina,” was commemorated by a Slavonic grafitto on the depiction of St Bartholomew.<sup>293</sup> The decision to represent St Marina on the northwest pier has been hypothetically related to Marena, the widow of Andrew of Densuș, mentioned in a document from 1407.<sup>294</sup> According to this document, Marena and her two young sons resided in the knezial/nobiliary court at Densuș.<sup>295</sup>

Naturally, the subjects of the paintings accompanied by prayers reflected the personal devotion of the supplicants. Of the three representations, that of St Bartholomew particularly attracts attention because it is specifically Western. Similar representations can be found in several Catholic churches in medieval Hungary and in the Orthodox church of Hălmagiu (first half of the fifteenth century). It is probable that the Romanians adopted not only the Western iconography of the saint, but also particular aspects of his Latin cult. This issue will be addressed in a separate chapter.

The painter of Densuș left his signature in a conspicuous place in the sanctuary, under the southeastern window, next to the hand of the deacon Prochor. It seems that the inscription above

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<sup>290</sup> On the history of the knezes of Densuș see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 93-95, 114, 168-171; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 201-202. On the Mușina family see Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 104-107 (with two editorial flaws in the genealogical table: the third generation stems from Stoian, not from Boian, and the fifth generation from Sandrin, not from Stephen); Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 281-282.

<sup>291</sup> *ITH*, no. 131, 169. On the Ciula family see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 91; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 180-184; Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 284.

<sup>292</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 95.

<sup>293</sup> Drăguț, “Un zugrav,” 243; Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 65, 66, 70.

<sup>294</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 94. However, there is no supplicatory inscription on the representation of the saint as in the other three cases.

<sup>295</sup> *ITH*, 54-57 (no. 25).

the representation of St Nedelea, reading “The much sinful and unworthy hierodeacon Stephen wrote” was also written by him.<sup>296</sup>

### 3.7. Hălmagiu

Two paintings have been preserved in the church of Hălmagiu representing members of the donors’ family. They are situated at the eastern and western ends of the north wall of the nave, in the lower register. In between them are depicted two miracles from the Legend of St Nicholas: the rescue of a young boy, Basil, kidnapped by the Saracens, and the rescue of three imprisoned generals, unjustly accused of plotting against the Emperor Constantine.<sup>297</sup>

The votive painting, situated on the west end of the wall opposite the south entrance, is very poorly preserved (fig. 3.46). The figures of the donors, situated to the left, have almost completely faded away. Analyzing the paintings in 1984, Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei described the representation of an old man, followed by another figure, offering the model of the church to St Nicholas, the first patron of the church.<sup>298</sup> At present, the model of the church is still visible, as well as part of the figure of the holy bishop (fig. 3.47). He has white hair, a high forehead and a short beard. He holds a book and gives a blessing in the direction of the church. In the background is a crenellated wall. In the same scene, behind the bishop, stands a military saint, represented frontally (fig. 3.48). He has short, wavy hair and apparently no beard, most probably representing St George.<sup>299</sup>

The painting on the south and north walls of the nave has been dated to the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>300</sup> The donors represented in the votive painting probably belonged to the family Moga of Hălmagiu. According to the inscription on the triumphal arch – “By the hand of župan Moga and of his brother, they made it anew” – they also sponsored the first painting of the church, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>301</sup> Hălmagiu was the center of a district and voivodate with the same name, situated on the estate of Șiria castle. The first voivode of

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<sup>296</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” 94.

<sup>297</sup> The scenes were first described and identified by Cincheza-Buculei, “L’ensemble,” 15. It is not known if the legend of St Nicolas was illustrated in the upper register as well because the paintings there have been almost completely lost.

<sup>298</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “L’ensemble,” 16.

<sup>299</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “L’ensemble,” 16.

<sup>300</sup> Mardare, “L’ensemble,” 109; Cincheza-Buculei, “L’ensemble,” 22.

<sup>301</sup> On the history of the church, village and donors’ family see the Catalogue at the end of this work.

Hălmagiu, Moga, appears in the sources in the second quarter of the fifteenth century. He appears to have faithfully served the lords of the Șiria castle, and in 1451 John Hunyadi confirmed him and his sons in the possession over the voivodates of Căpâlna, Hălmagiu and Băița, comprising 120 villages. Another voivode from the same family, Petru Moga of Hălmagiu, is mentioned first time in a document from 1484.

Even if the precise identity of the donors in the votive painting cannot be established, their involvement in military affairs may be inferred from the introduction of the military saint into the votive scene. It has also been suggested that the crenellated wall in the background indicated that the church was situated within the precincts of a fortified settlement or castle.<sup>302</sup> So far, the archaeological test trenches at Hălmagiu have only brought to light a fortified court dating from the sixteenth-seventeenth century, situated a few hundred meters from the church. Scattered finds dating from the fourteenth-fifteenth century prompted the archaeologists to propose further research on the site.<sup>303</sup>

To the eastern end of the wall, in front of an enthroned Virgin with Child, two young figures are represented kneeling, with their hands raised in prayer (figs. 3.49, 3.50). The Child gives a blessing in the direction of the supplicants and the Virgin extends her right arm towards them in a gesture of mediation. The two figures have brown hair falling down their backs and wear long garments. They are probably two girls from the founding family. Both wear wreaths of blue flowers that could have been artificial or genuine. This type of headdress was worn by women, especially girls, during the Middle Ages.<sup>304</sup>

The representation of the two girls separately from the votive painting probably indicates they were in a special situation. Suggestions include either that they had died or had been kidnapped

<sup>302</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 16.

<sup>303</sup> Dan Căpățînă, "Cercetări arheologice la Hălmagiu și Vîrfurile (jud. Arad)" [Archaeological research at Hălmagiu and Vîrfurile (Arad County)], *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Seria Monumente Istorice și de Artă* 45, no.2 (1976), 80. Some types of fortified residences have been documented in case of the Romanian elites, in the fifteenth century (see Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 284-288).

<sup>304</sup> Rosita Levi-Pisetzky, *Storia del costume in Italia* (Milan: Istituto editoriale italiano, 1964-69), vol. 1, 277-279, vol. 2, 68, vol. 3, 292; Olga Šroňková, *Gothic woman's fashion* (Prague: Artia, 1954), 40; László Kósa, ed., *A Cultural History of Hungary: From the Beginnings to the Eighteenth Century* (Budapest: Corvina, Osiris, 1999), 98. A much later account, from the seventeenth century, describes the use of such a headdress in Wallachia. Travelling through Wallachia in the sixth decade of the seventeenth century, Paul of Alep noted that on ceremonial occasions the girls used to wear "artificial roses made in Venice or Germany, red flowers, jasmine etc.," as well as "coronets of gilded leather and yellow tin" (Maria Holban et al., ed., *Călători străini despre Țările Române* [Foreign travelers about the Romanian Countries], vol. 6 (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1976), 27, 122-123; Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, 174).

during a Turkish raid.<sup>305</sup> The hypothesis of a premature death may be supported by a particular archaeological find. In the northeast corner of the nave, below the painting representing the two children in prayer, the archaeologists found the tomb of a child, holding a silver coin from King Matthias (1458-1490) in his right hand.<sup>306</sup> The burial of the child in the second half of the fifteenth century would match the date attributed thus far to the painting in the nave (second half of the fifteenth century). For the hypothesis of the kidnapping, the main hint was the choice of a particular episode from the legend of St Nicholas represented in the same register, next to the votive painting.<sup>307</sup> The scene depicts St Nicholas rescuing a boy who had been kidnapped by the Arabs. It is difficult to say if the episode has any relation to the history of the children represented in prayer. However, the selection of two miraculous deliverances to be depicted in the donors' registers most probably reflects a particular concern of that time: falling prisoner to the Ottomans, whether in battle or during a plundering raid. The second episode from the legend of St Nicholas shows the saint's miraculous intervention in rescuing three generals held in prison. There is no information about members of the Moga family being held prisoners, but many Turkish raids are documented in Transylvania in the fifteenth century.<sup>308</sup> It is well known that besides looting, the raids resulted in civil and military people being taken prisoners. Occasionally, written sources from the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth contain references to Romanian noble families trying to ransom their relatives, men or women, held prisoners by the Turks.<sup>309</sup>

### 3.8. *Sântămărie Orlea*

<sup>305</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 19-21.

<sup>306</sup> Căpățînă, "Cercetări," 80. Probably because of the poor printing quality of the archaeological plan published in Căpățînă, "Cercetări," previous art historians have not noticed that the tomb M26, the earliest grave safely dated, is situated next to the representation of the two children in prayer. On the plan, another burial appears next to M26, but Căpățînă does not provide any details about it. The only other children's grave he mentions is in the north-east corner of the sanctuary although that could not be dated.

<sup>307</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 20.

<sup>308</sup> See Gustav Gündisch, "Siebenbürgen in der Türkenabwehr, 1395-1526," *RRH* 13, no. 3 (1974), 415-443.

<sup>309</sup> See Francisc Pall, "Știri noi despre expedițiile turcești din Transilvania în 1438" [New data about the Turkish expeditions in Transylvania in 1438], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj* 1-2 (1958-1959), 18-21; Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 142, 149. Cincheza-Buculei refers to an ethnographic source, "the fair of the kiss," which may have its origins during the Turkish invasions, as a celebration of the return of girls from Turkish captivity (Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 20-21).

Two lay figures are represented kneeling under the western gallery of the church, on the south wall. They face each other and raise their hands in prayer (fig. 3.51).<sup>310</sup> The hand of God gives them a blessing from above. Anca Bratu has identified the figures as two female donors.<sup>311</sup>

Today the painting is very poorly preserved and only the woman to the left is better visible. She wears long garments and raises her hands in prayer, in a manner characteristic of Orthodox supplicants.

Based on stylistic features and the composition of the fresco layer, the painting has been dated to the same period as the apostles' row in the sanctuary.<sup>312</sup> The apostles are accompanied by Slavonic inscriptions and their representation was probably commissioned by the Căndea family, after 1446, when they received the market town of Sântămărie Orlea. The church of Sântămărie Orlea, built at the end of the thirteenth century and dedicated to the Holy Virgin, initially served the local Catholic community.<sup>313</sup> In 1446, Sântămărie Orlea as well as other settlements or parts of settlements in Hațeg Land, were granted to John Căndea of Râu de Mori, his sons and his brother, Căndea.<sup>314</sup> The history of Căndea family, whose original residence was in Râu de Mori, can be documented from the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>315</sup> They pursued an exceptional social course from the fifteenth century onwards. As a reward for their military deeds and faithful service, they received confirmation of their knezial estates, new land donations and other sources of revenue, as well as important offices, among them that of castellan of Hațeg, count of Maramureș and castellan of Hust, count of Bereg and castellan of Munkačevo. Their relationship with John Hunyadi was particularly close and further fostered their social rise. In the second half of the fifteenth century, they were part of the upper strata of the middle noble class.

<sup>310</sup> For description and illustrations see Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 211-212, 230-232, fig. 6, 13. Anca Bratu described the right figure as holding a "conical" object in her hands (Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 230).

<sup>311</sup> Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 211-212, 230-232.

<sup>312</sup> Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 212.

<sup>313</sup> On the history of the church see the Catalogue.

<sup>314</sup> *ITH*, 137-138, no. 108. See also *ITH*, 141-143, no. 114, an eighteenth-century copy of a document issued in Pesta, on 1447, April 15, referring, with some differences, to the same grant. Adrian Rusu explains the donation of Sântămărie Orlea, until then a royal property, to the Căndeas by the fact that the settlement was in a state of decay after the Ottoman incursions from 1420 and 1438. According to Rusu, the context of the Church Union was also favorable for decorating the church with paintings having Slavonic inscriptions. See Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 36, 311.

<sup>315</sup> On the history of the Căndea family see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 117-118; Rusu, "Cnezi;" Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 274-277; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 201-212; Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 282-284.



The preserved documents permit a consistent reconstruction of the family's genealogical tree in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>316</sup> A Latin graffito on the supplicants' scene, which mentions the year 1484, sets a *terminus ante quem* for the painting.<sup>317</sup> The painting must have been executed at the time of the fourth to sixth documented generations of the family, but there are no additional hints for a precise identification of the supplicants represented under the gallery.

### 3.9. Conclusion

Two types of portraits occur in the researched churches: the votive portrait, in which the donors offer the church to the patron saint, and the portrait of the supplicant, represented in prayer to a certain saint or found isolated in the church. The first type can be found in the majority of the paintings dated around 1400 and later: Ribița, Crișcior, Streisângeorgiu, Leșnic, and Hălmagiu. The local leading family, who owned the village usually by knezial law,<sup>318</sup> was the only or main commissioner of the paintings. However, the supplicatory inscriptions preserved at Ribița and Leșnic show that other people aside from those represented in the votive painting could have also sponsored the representation of particular saints. The churches were private foundations, frequently situated in the neighbourhood of the knezial residence. However, they may also have served the local community. The inscriptions at Ribița, Crișcior and Streisângeorgiu refer to the churches as "monastery" and some historians have understood the term in its literal sense.<sup>319</sup> The building and decoration of the churches coincides with a period of social and material elevation for their owners.<sup>320</sup> We may safely assume that the founders felt confident with regard to the possession of the estate on which the church was built and for which they probably had confirmation charters. A fragment of inscription preserved at Ribița suggests that the donors built and decorated the church to be "uric" (hereditary property or the confirmation of a hereditary

<sup>316</sup> Rusu, "Miscellanea," Annex 9; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 274, 277.

<sup>317</sup> Bratu, "Sintămărie Orlea," 212, 232.

<sup>318</sup> It is possible that in the second half of the fifteenth century, the Moga family owned Hălmagiu with full nobiliary rights.

<sup>319</sup> See also Rusu, "Biserica de la Ribița," 8.

<sup>320</sup> With the exception of Streisângeorgiu, which was built much earlier than the painting that can be seen today.

property) for their sons.<sup>321</sup> The mentioning of actual rulers in the inscriptions of Ribița and Streisângeorgiu represents an homage paid by the founders to their lords.

In the majority of cases, the founders were a family who built and /or decorated the church. According to the preserved inscriptions, their goal was to obtain heavenly help and their kin's redemption. Building or decorating a church was also a matter of prestige, and the portraits of the founders took pride of place in their churches. The votive paintings at Ribița, Crișcior, Streisângeorgiu, Leșnic and Hălmagiu are situated in the nave and occupy generous surfaces, depicting the donors at almost actual size. The type of votive painting representing the founders standing and offering the church to God or to the patron saint was usual in the Balkans.<sup>322</sup> The kneeling posture of the donors at Ribița and Crișcior may however reflect the influence of Western models depicting donors.<sup>323</sup> The men's costumes at Ribița, Crișcior, probably also at Streisângeorgiu and Leșnic are similar and follow the fashion of the well-to-do in the Hungarian kingdom. The weapons displayed by the knezes of Ribița, Crișcior and Streisângeorgiu stresses their military duties, which characterized their status and ensured their social ascent. The spelling of the donors' names or their names are sometimes taken from the Hungarian (Miclăuș, Lațco, Laslo, Ianăș).<sup>324</sup> With the exception of the first inscription at Streisângeorgiu (1313/1314), the title used for the donors is not the one that occurs in official Latin documents – knez or voivode – but župan and županitsa, which basically designated a landlord, a person of higher social status.<sup>325</sup>

<sup>321</sup> See the inscription in Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 254. According to an account from 1868, the building and decoration of the church of Ribița came after the father of the founders had been punished for infidelity and the lands were restored to them by the king (see Nemes, "A ribicei templom"). However, the documents attesting such a situation have not been preserved. A similar situation has been claimed with regard to the knezes of Crișcior, but in this case too the documents have been preserved only in nineteenth-century copies (see Catalogue).

<sup>322</sup> Corina Popa suggests that the composition and monumentality of the votive portraits in Hațeg and Zarand were inspired by Serbian models, which, however, also followed the general model that was common in the Balkans from the fourteenth century on (see Corina Popa, "La peinture murale orthodoxe en Transylvanie au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle et ses relations avec le monde serbe," *RRHA* 33 (1996), 8-13). In her article, Popa points out several other iconographic topics represented in the churches of Hațeg and Zarand that may be found in Serbian art as well and may reflect the influence of Serbian art and culture.

<sup>323</sup> Until further cleaning of the painting, it cannot be excluded that the donors at Streisângeorgiu and Leșnic were portrayed in the same posture.

<sup>324</sup> Analyzing donor portraits in Cypriot churches in the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern age, Andreas and Judith Stylianou have also noted the Latin influence on the dress of the donors and the spelling of their names, as well as the frequent use of the kneeling posture in votive paintings from the second half of the fourteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century (A. and J. Stylianou, "Donors," 123-127).

<sup>325</sup> On the use and meaning of the term župan see Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 165-166; Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 265.

In the paintings of Densuș, which partially cover the interior of the church, there is no votive portrait, but rather several inscriptions, one of a votive character, the others of supplication type. The paintings were probably the common contribution of several local families, who were related among themselves and shared ownership of the village.

At Strei and Sântămărie Orlea, there is no votive painting, but there are portraits of supplicants. The church of Sântămărie Orlea was Catholic and already had painted decoration when the Căndea family took it over. The apostles on the east wall of the sanctuary and the portraits under the tribune have been attributed to their initiative. The numerous portraits of supplicants in the church of Strei suggests a collective sponsoring, although some of the portraits represent craftsmen, among them the main painter of the church as well. A knezial family from Strei is attested in the second half of the fourteenth century, but it is difficult to identify their portraits in the church. The self-representation of the painter in the sanctuary reflects a Western type of mentality and suggests that he had a comparable social status to the main commissioners. The name of the painter appears in several other churches in accordance with Byzantine tradition, either as an isolated signature in the church (at Densuș, probably also at Crișcior) or at the end of the votive inscription (Streisângeorgiu 1313/1314, Ribița).<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> On the occurrence of painters' names in late Byzantine church inscriptions and the information that can be derived from them see Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, "Painters in Late Byzantine Society. The Evidence of Church Inscriptions," *Cahiers archéologiques* 42 (1994), 139-158.

## 4. The Military Saints

The military saints have usually a prominent place in Transylvanian Orthodox churches. They are either represented standing (Densuș and Hălmagiu) or on horseback (Strei, Streisângeorgiu, Ribița, Crișcior, Leșnic).<sup>327</sup> The equestrian type of saint is clearly popular and sometimes they occupy unusual places in churches such as the sanctuary and the upper register of the nave. St George slaying the dragon is represented in the churches of Crișcior (figs. 4.1, 4.2), Ribița (figs. 4.4, 4.5) and Leșnic (figs. 4.6, 4.7). At Ribița and Crișcior, the princess rescued by the saint is included in the scene. In Byzantine painting, she is typically represented leading the dragon to the city (figs. 4.20, 4.21). The dragon was tamed by St George and leashed using her belt. At Ribița, the princess has been reduced to a small figure by the feet of the horse. She seemingly holds the leash, while St George slays the dragon.<sup>328</sup> At Crișcior, the princess stands behind the horse and covers her eyes, as if she were scared or crying (fig. 4.2). The representation is odd but fits the literary tradition. According to most versions of the legend, the princess, who had been given as a sacrifice to the dragon, was crying when she met St George and she also feared for his life.<sup>329</sup> In the upper right corner of the scene at Leșnic and Crișcior, an angel is represented giving a blessing to the saint. The paintings are accompanied by inscriptions that refer to the divine help that, according to the legend, St George received in his fight against the dragon.<sup>330</sup> At

<sup>327</sup> Other medieval Transylvanian Orthodox churches that preserve depictions of warrior saints include Râmpeț, Zlatna, Ostrov and Peșteana. In 1981, Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei dedicated a study to the representations of warrior saints in Transylvanian Orthodox churches (Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații"). In the following, I will add some new comparative material and propose a partially different interpretation of their message.

<sup>328</sup> The painting of Ribița is currently being restored.

<sup>329</sup> See Johannes B. Aufhauser, *Das Drachenwunder des Heiligen Georg in der griechischen und lateinischen Überlieferung* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1911) (*Byzantinisches Archiv* 5), 59-60, 96, 109, 204; *Legenda Aurea*, 442. The earliest text telling the miracle of St George with the dragon has been preserved in an eleventh-century Georgian manuscript, and the earliest preserved representations in art are also from Georgia (see Christopher Walter, "The Origins of the Cult of Saint George," *REB* 53 (1995), 321-322). In the West, the story was made popular especially by the Golden Legend. In Western art, it was common to represent the girl standing or kneeling, with her hands raised or joined in prayer, in front of or behind St George slaying the dragon (for illustrations showing the maiden standing behind St George see for example Sigrid Braunfels-Esche, *Sankt Georg: Legende, Verehrung, Symbol* (Munich: Georg D.W. Callwey, 1976), figs. 21 and 56). It is possible that the iconography of the scene at Crișcior reflects the influence of a Western model.

<sup>330</sup> The inscription at Crișcior reads: "The miracles of St George, which he performed [...] with the help [...]" (Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 95). The inscription at Leșnic reads: "The angel of God came to the help of St George" (Mocanu, "Leșnic," 114). The detail of the angel is unusual compared to the Byzantine iconography of the

Strei (figs. 4.10, 4.11) and Streisângeorgiu (fig. 4.13), St George is represented on horseback as well, but not fighting the dragon. At Streisângeorgiu, the two equestrian saints -- one of them assumed to be St George because of the church's dedication -- occupy a large part of the lower register of the north and south walls of the sanctuary (figs. 4.12, 4.13). The subject is unusual for the sanctuary of an Orthodox church, whose lower register is as a rule dedicated to another category of saints, the holy bishops. The inclusion of mounted saints in the sanctuary demonstrates a free approach to the decorative program and could have been prompted by the founder, the knez Balea, who made his presence felt in the sanctuary also through the votive inscription situated in the middle of the eastern wall.

Sometimes the mounted saints are represented in pairs, as at Crișcior (fig. 4.3a-b), Ribița (fig. 4.5) and Leșnic (figs. 4.8, 4.9). The paintings are poorly preserved, especially at Leșnic where one can only see a part of the horses. In the church of Leșnic, the equestrian saints are situated in the upper register of the nave, another unusual location for this subject. Some scholars, who analyzed the paintings in the past and were able to read the partially preserved inscriptions, identified the warriors at Crișcior as Demetrius and Theodore, and one of the saints at Leșnic as Demetrius.<sup>331</sup> At Crișcior, the beardless appearance of St Theodore is unusual, because both Theodore Tiron and Theodore Stratelates, popular warrior saints in Byzantium, as a rule were represented with beards.<sup>332</sup> At Ribița, St George was also followed by another mounted saint, but the latter's figure has been completely lost and only the head of the horse is now visible (fig. 4.5). In all three churches, the saints are represented side by side, heading in the same direction. According to Christopher Walter, the representations where warrior saints were shown closely connected to each other may be sometimes regarded as expressing the idea of comradeship.<sup>333</sup>

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scene and signals the need for further research with regard to the sources that lay behind the iconography. The angel occasionally occurs in Western depictions of the scene, as for example in the church of Martjanci (1392-1400).

<sup>331</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații," 10; Cincheza-Buculei, "Date," 41; Tugearu, "Crișcior," 94; Mocanu, "Leșnic," 112.

<sup>332</sup> Walter, *Warrior Saints*, 65; *LCI* 8, col. 445, 447-449. However, Theodore is represented beardless in the mosaics of the cathedral in Cefalù and of San Marco in Venice, as well as in other paintings in Italy. (see Kaftal, *Central and South*, no. 382 (Theodore Stratelates), 383 (Theodore Tiron); Kaftal, *North East*, no. 290 (Theodore Stratelates); Kaftal, *North West*, no. 222 (Theodore Stratelates).

<sup>333</sup> Walter, *Warrior Saints*, 289.

In Middle and Late Byzantine churches military saints were usually represented standing, in the lower register of the naos or pronaos.<sup>334</sup> It has been noted, however, that in the monumental painting of particular regions, such as Cappadocia, Georgia, Egypt, Syria, Crete and southern Morea (the Peloponnese), equestrian saints occur quite frequently.<sup>335</sup> It has been assumed that the status of border region or the influence of the Crusaders favored an attachment to mounted warrior saints in these areas. With regard to southern Morea, Sharon Gerstel has noted that the mounted saints started to be represented in village churches from the middle of the thirteenth century, after the region was conquered by the Crusaders.<sup>336</sup> The iconographic type continued to be used until the first half of the fifteenth century, when the Latin rule in the Peloponnese came to an end. Gerstel has suggested that two attitudes may have motivated this attachment to mounted saints: the defensive reaction of the Greeks against the Latin danger, as well as a certain appreciation of Frankish chivalric customs.<sup>337</sup>

In other regions, the equestrian saints occur occasionally in monumental painting, on the interior or exterior of the churches, which are frequently dedicated to them. They are represented either individually or in full cycles illustrating their legend.<sup>338</sup> The representation of mounted saints in the sanctuary's side chapels or in the sanctuary itself is very rare. Such examples are St George and the princess leading the dragon to the city represented in the diaconicon of the church of St George in Staraja Ladoga (ca. 1167),<sup>339</sup> St Procopius on horseback in the diaconicon of the church of St Nicholas in Melnic (end of the twelfth-beginning of the thirteenth century),<sup>340</sup> and two equestrian saints depicted on the vault of the prothesis and the lower register of the sanctuary

<sup>334</sup> See Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații," 16-18; Sharon E. J. Gerstel, "Art and Identity in the Medieval Morea," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 269-270.

<sup>335</sup> See Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații," 26; Gerstel, "Art and Identity;" Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land, From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187-1291* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 339 and note 800 at page 637, with further bibliography.

<sup>336</sup> After the Fourth Crusade, the Peloponnese fell to the Latins, who organized the Principality of Achaia, in the northwestern corner of the region. In 1262, the Byzantines regained a foothold in the southeast of the peninsula. The south of the Peloponnese was retaken at the end of the thirteenth century and by 1349 the Despotate of Morea was organized.

<sup>337</sup> The influence of Frankish chivalric culture in the Peloponnese has been noted on a linguistic and literary level (see Gerstel, "Art and Identity," 274-275).

<sup>338</sup> On the numerous cycles dedicated to St Demetrius and St George see Walter, *Warrior Saints*, 84-89, 134-138.

<sup>339</sup> On the church of Staraja Ladoga see Viktor Lazarev, *L'arte dell'antica Russia. Mosaici e affreschi* (Milano: Jaca Book, 2000), 112-119.

<sup>340</sup> See Liliana Mavrodinova, "Nouvelles considérations sur les peintures du chevet de l'église Saint-Nicolas à Melnic," *Actes du XV<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'études byzantines, Athènes Septembre 1976*, vol. 2, Art et archéologie, Communications (Athènes, 1981), 427-438.

in the church of St John the Theologian in Athens (first half of the thirteenth century).<sup>341</sup>

Churches that display groups of two or more equestrian saints are also relatively rare. On the western façade of the church of St George at Kurbinovo (1191), a mounted St George represented in the lunette was flanked by two other equestrian saints, probably Demetrius and Theodore.<sup>342</sup> Among the numerous carved reliefs that decorate the exterior of the cathedral of St Demetrius in Vladimir, built by Vsevolod III, Grand Prince of Vladimir (1177-1212), there is a sculpted frieze of twelve equestrian saints, situated on the south and west façades.<sup>343</sup> St George and Demetrius on horseback are represented in the church of St Euphemia in Constantinople (late thirteenth century) and the church of St Demetrios in Thessalonike, next to the entrance of St Euthymius chapel (thirteenth-early fourteenth century).<sup>344</sup> In the church of the Holy Virgin in Dolna Kamenica, three equestrian saints are represented in the narthex: Sts Theodore Tiron and Theodore Stratelates on the west wall (figs. 4.16, 4.17), and St Demetrius on the north wall (fig. 4.18).<sup>345</sup> In this small church, other military saints have been represented standing in the naos (St George), the ground floor of the narthex (St Procopius) and upper floor of the narthex (Sts Nestorius and Lupus). Many donor portraits have been preserved in the church, some of them closely associated with the warrior saints. It has been suggested that the founders of the church were either members of the family of Michael Šišman, the Bulgarian Tsar (1323-1330)<sup>346</sup> or a

<sup>341</sup> On the paintings of the church of St John the Theologian see E. Κουνουπιώτου-Μανωλέσσου, “Αθήναι: Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης Θεολόγος. Ἐργασίαι στερεώσεως,” *Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν* 8, no. 2 (1975), 140-151. The author notes the stylistic influence of Crusader art in the representation of the warrior saints in the prothesis.

<sup>342</sup> Lydie Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo. Les fresques de Saint-Georges et la peinture byzantine du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Bruxelles: Éditions de Byzantion, 1975), 275-283.

<sup>343</sup> See Monica White, “A Byzantine Tradition Transformed: Military Saints under the House of Suzdal,” *Russian Review* 63, no. 3 (2004), 493-513. The author argues that Vsevolod emulated the Byzantine emperors’ special cult of the warrior saints. On the twelfth-century sculpture of Vladimir-Suzdal’ churches see G. K. Vagner, *Skul’ptura Drevnei Rusi: XII vek: Vladimir, Bogoliubovo* [Sculpture of Ancient Rus: Vladimir, Bogoliubovo] (Moscow, 1969).

<sup>344</sup> See Gerstel, “Art and Identity,” 269, note 37, with further bibliography.

<sup>345</sup> For a detailed analysis of the architecture and paintings of the church of the Holy Virgin at Dolna Kamenica see Dora Piguet-Panayotova, *Recherches sur la peinture en Bulgarie du bas moyen âge* (Paris: De Boccard, 1987), 159-253. More recently, see also Teodora Burnand, *Църквата “Св. Воеводица” в с Долна Каменица (XIV в.)* [The Church ‘St Virgin’ in Dolna Kamenitsa (XIV c.)] (Sofia: Sinodalno Izdatelstvo, 2008). Teodora Burnand has suggested that the presence of the three equestrian saints in the church of Dolna Kamenica might also reflect a Western influence (Burnand, *The Church ‘St Virgin,’* 81-82 (English summary)).

<sup>346</sup> See Machiel Kiel, “The Church of Our Lady of Donja Kamenica (Dolna Kamenica) in Eastern Serbia. Some remarks on the identity of its founder and the origin of its architecture,” in *Actes du XIV<sup>e</sup> Congrès international des études byzantines, Bucarest, 6-12 Septembre 1971*, II, ed. M. Berza and E. Stănescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1975), 164-166; Piguet-Panayotova, *Recherches*, 220-232; Teodora Burnand, *The Church ‘St Virgin,’* 76 (English summary).

local noble.<sup>347</sup> The architecture has particular Gothic features, probably arrived through Hungarian mediation.<sup>348</sup> The paintings have been usually dated to approximately the second quarter of the fourteenth century.<sup>349</sup>

Based on the preserved examples, the presence of equestrian saints seems to have been customary in the decoration of Transylvanian Orthodox churches, at least around 1400 if not from the time of the first painting of Streisângeorgiu (1313/1314) to the first half of the fifteenth century. Whether or not they are located adjacent to the portrait of the donor – as at Crișcior, Leșnic and Hălmagiu – both mounted and standing warrior saints stand out in the small Transylvanian churches because of their locations, size and number. The importance given to these heavenly allies in battle comes from the military role of the donors and the border region status of Transylvania. The knezes fought in the light cavalry and military service was their main path to social advancement. It was mainly through military exploits that they received acknowledgement of their knezial estates and other grants of land; some of them eventually achieved full noble status. The military service, which was also the specific duty of the nobles, was a question of prestige. Therefore, the warrior saints were not only their holy protectors, but when displayed in churches they also reflected the knezes' social status and aspirations.<sup>350</sup> Chivalric culture, although present at the Hungarian court, penetrated the lower strata of the nobility to a low degree, but the chivalric ethos gradually permeated noble mentality.<sup>351</sup> The knightly saint par excellence was, for the Hungarians, King Ladislas (1077-1095), who was canonized in 1192.<sup>352</sup> He embodied all the knightly virtues and became the protector saint of the nobles and of the country. The legend of St Ladislas rescuing a girl who had been abducted by a Cuman warrior decorated dozens of medieval Hungarian churches in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. Along with St Ladislas, St George also embodied the virtues of the Christian knight

<sup>347</sup> See Liliana Mavrodinova, "La date des peintures de Dolna Kamenica et leur place dans l'histoire de la peinture bulgare," in *Actes du XXIIe Congrès international d'histoire de l'art, Budapest 1969. Évolution générale et développements régionaux en histoire de l'art*, vol. 1, ed. György Rózsa (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972), 219.

<sup>348</sup> Piguet-Panayotova, *Recherches*, 166-167; Kiel, "The Church of Our Lady," 162.

<sup>349</sup> See for example Mavrodinova, "La date," 220, and Piguet-Panayotova, *Recherches*, 159-253, who suggest a dating to the third decade of the fourteenth century. Teodora Burnand, *The Church 'St Virgin'*, 76 (English summary) proposes a date between 1323 and 1352/56.

<sup>350</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza Buculei has argued that the multitude of military saints represented a coded language expressing the opposition of the knezes to Hungarian rule and Catholic Church (see Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații"). However, the historical data do not support such an interpretation.

<sup>351</sup> See Kurcz, *Lovagi kultúra*; Rady, *Nobility*, 126-131.

<sup>352</sup> On the cult of St Ladislas see Chapter 5.



and was very popular in Hungary, as in general in the West.<sup>353</sup> In Hungary, he was also the patron saint of the knightly order founded by King Charles Robert of Anjou in 1326. The Order of the Dragon, founded by King Sigismund in 1408, was also inspired by the figure of St George as a Christian knight vanquisher of the evil, which for Sigismund were the pagans, the heretics and any enemies of his rule.<sup>354</sup> The badge of the Order represented an incurved dragon, with its tail winding around its neck and a red wound on its back, in the shape of a red cross on a white background. St George was particularly venerated by knights and soldiers in general, but his cult spread to all levels of society. Numerous representations of St George equipped as a knight and slaying the dragon have been preserved in the murals of medieval Hungarian churches (see, e.g., figs. 4.22-4.26).<sup>355</sup> The princess is usually present in the scene, and sometimes her parents and other figures as well, looking from behind the walls of the city. St George's shield is occasionally decorated with a cross, showing him as a Christian knight, defender of the faith. Sometimes the cross turns into the double cross of the Hungarian coat of arms, as in the churches of Szentsimon (1423) (fig. 4.25),<sup>356</sup> Daia (first half of the fifteenth century),<sup>357</sup> Tarpa (first part of the fifteenth century) (fig. 4.26),<sup>358</sup> and Vrbov<sup>359</sup> stressing St George's position as a protector saint of the Hungarian kingdom.<sup>360</sup> Although St Demetrius also enjoyed a special cult in Hungary as one of its patron saints, few representations of him have been preserved in Hungarian

<sup>353</sup> On the cult of St George in Hungary see Zoltán Magyar, "Szent György középkori kultusza Magyarországon" [The cult of St George in medieval Hungary], *Századok* 132 (1998), 161-182; Ágnes Kurcz, *Lovagi kultúra Magyarországon a 13-14. században* [Knightly culture in Hungary, thirteenth-fourteenth centuries] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1988), 213-215; Bálint, *Ünnepi*, vol. 2, 308-335. On the cult of St George in the West see Sigrid Braunfels-Esche, *Sankt Georg. Legende, Verehrung, Symbol* (München: Georg D.W. Callweg, 1976).

<sup>354</sup> On the two Hungarian knightly orders see D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown. The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325-1520* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 27-45, 348-355. On the Order of the Dragon see also Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 75-85.

<sup>355</sup> Representations of St George slaying the dragon have been preserved throughout Hungary in murals dating from the thirteenth through the fifteenth century: e.g. Ják, Martjanci, Velemer, Rattersdorf, Čerín, Sliache, Rimavská Baňa, Turičský, Szentsimon, Vizsoly, Tarpa, Lónya, Ófehértó, Laskod, Málánrcrav, Alma, Daia, Sighișoara, etc. See Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*; Bálint, *Ünnepi*, vol. 2, 325-326; Ivan Gerát, *Stredoveké obrazové témy na Slovensku: osoby a príbehy* [Medieval pictorial themes in Slovakia: figures and stories] (Bratislava: Veda, 2001), 154-155.

<sup>356</sup> Marosi, "Der Heilige Ladislaus," 246 and fig. 49.

<sup>357</sup> On the Calvinist church of Daia see Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek*, vol. 1, 104-105.

<sup>358</sup> On the Reformed church of Tarpa see Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 412-421.

<sup>359</sup> Terézia Kerny, "Szent László tisztelete és középkori ikonográfiája" [The cult and medieval iconography of St Ladislaus], in *Ave Rex Ladislaus* (Budapest: Paulus Hungarus Kairosz, 2000), ed. Béla J. Hanovszky, OP, Terézia Kerny and Zoltán Móser, 38.

<sup>360</sup> See Terézia Kerny, "A katonaszentek ikonográfiájának néhány sajátossága és szerepe a középkori magyar művészetben" [Several features of the iconography and role of the military saints in medieval Hungarian art], *Ars Hungarica* 12 (1984), 169.

medieval art.<sup>361</sup> No depictions of the saint can be identified with certainty in the existing murals of the medieval Catholic churches.<sup>362</sup>

A certain cult of St Ladislav among the Orthodox Romanians in Hungary is still a hypothesis, based mainly on particular legends whose origins have been traced back to the medieval period and the occurrence of the name in the Romanian onomastics.<sup>363</sup> The legend of his fight with the Cuman, an expression of his chivalric virtues, has not been preserved in the paintings of any medieval Orthodox church. Nevertheless, as a holy ruler and symbol of political power, along with St Stephen and St Emeric, he is represented in the churches of Ribița, Crișcior and Chimindia (figs. 5.1-5.4). The preserved paintings suggest that the main protector saints in battle remained the Byzantine saints, which by their number and mounted posture stand out in the small Romanian churches. The preference for mounted warrior saints might be explained by the fact that the knezes themselves fought as lightly armed cavalymen and by the general prestige of the knight also reflected in artistic media. Whether considered knightly or just nobiliary virtues,<sup>364</sup> valor, generosity, kindness, honesty and faithfulness were a set of merits that must have touched the knezial mentality as well. Such virtues were promoted through chronicles, legends and, most importantly, through royal deeds that aimed at building up loyalty towards the king.<sup>365</sup> The royal charters addressed to the Romanian knezes as well reward their loyalty, bravery and self-sacrifice. If one looks at the paintings of Ribița and Crișcior, the close association between the donors' portraits, the Holy Kings of Hungary and the mounted warrior saints seems to reflect precisely the adherence to such values.

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<sup>361</sup> On the cult of St Demetrius in Hungary see Péter Tóth, ed., *Szent Demeter: Magyarország elfeledett védőszentje* [Saint Demetrius: Forgotten patron saint of Hungary] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2007). On artistic representations of the saint see the chapter of Szilvester Terdik in the same book. According to Hungarian hagiographic sources, St Demetrius was born in Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica). It has been assumed that the Orthodox monastery of St Demetrius in Sirmium, which probably functioned from the eleventh through the middle of the fourteenth century, contributed to the spread of his cult in Hungary, from the foundation of the kingdom.

<sup>362</sup> See Szilvester Terdik, "Szent Demeter a művészetben," in *Szent Demeter*, ed. Tóth, 180-181.

<sup>363</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>364</sup> Iván Bertényi considers that chivalric culture blended into nobiliary culture so that it is difficult to distinguish between the two (Bertényi, "Hungarian Culture in the Middle Ages," in *A Cultural History of Hungary*, ed. László Kósa (Budapest: Corvina/Osiris, 1999), 113-116).

<sup>365</sup> Rady, *Nobility*, 129-131; Kurcz, *Lovagi kultúra*, 218-219.

## 5. The Holy Kings of Hungary in the churches of Ribița, Crișcior and Chimindia

The depiction of the Holy Kings of Hungary – Stephen, Emeric and Ladislas – has been preserved in three medieval Orthodox churches, in Hunedoara County: the church of St Nicholas at Ribița (fig. 5.3), the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Crișcior (figs. 5.1, 5.2), and the Calvinist church of Chimindia (fig. 5.4).<sup>366</sup> The donors of Ribița and Crișcior, who had themselves represented in the church, were local knezes, and the paintings date from the early fifteenth century.<sup>367</sup> The paintings of Chimindia have been uncovered relatively recently and the history of the church is little known.<sup>368</sup> Very few fragments of painting have been preserved in the church, among them the depiction of the Holy Kings of Hungary, which has Slavonic inscriptions and may date to the beginning of the fifteenth century.<sup>369</sup> Because in 1334 and 1336 the village is mentioned in the papal decimal lists,<sup>370</sup> it has been assumed that the church was initially Catholic and became Orthodox sometime before 1400.<sup>371</sup>

In all three churches, the Holy Kings of Hungary are represented as a group in the nave. They are depicted frontally, as full, standing figures. The depictions at Crișcior and Ribița are quite similar with regard to their iconography and style. Both images are also placed in the church in close proximity to the donors' portraits, the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross* and the warrior saints. In the church of Crișcior, the kings are represented on the south wall, to the left of the votive painting and to the right of the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross*. In the church of Ribița, they are represented on the north wall, opposite to the votive painting situated on the south wall and in between the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross* and the warrior saints.

<sup>366</sup> This chapter is a revised version of my article, "The Holy Kings of Hungary in medieval Orthodox Churches of Transylvania," *Ars Transsilvaniae* 19 (2009), 41-56.

<sup>367</sup> For details on the history of the churches see the Catalog.

<sup>368</sup> On the paintings of Chimindia uncovered in 2002-2004, see József Lángi and Ferenc Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* [Transylvanian wall paintings and painted furniture] (Budapest: Állami Műemlékhelyreállítási és Restaurálási Központ, 2002), vol. 1, 54-55; Zsombor Jékely and Lóránd Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben* [Medieval wall paintings in Transylvania] (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2008), 140-153; Béla Zsolt Szakács, "Saints of the Knights – Knights of the Saints: Patterns of Patronage at the Court of Sigismund" in *Sigismund von Luxemburg: Ein Kaiser in Europa. Tagungsband des internationalen historischen und kunsthistorischen Kongresses in Luxemburg, 8.-10. Juni 2005*, eds. Michel Pauly and François Reinert (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 326-328.

<sup>369</sup> The same dating is found in Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 140.

<sup>370</sup> György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza* [The historical geography of Hungary at the time of the Arpads] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963-1998), vol. 3, 296.

<sup>371</sup> Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 328.

The present state of preservation allows only a partial analysis of the kings' garments. In Crișcior (fig. 5.2), the saints wear a short-sleeved tunic over a long-sleeved shirt. The tunic, which is slit on the chest and reaches below the hips, looks like a coat-armor.<sup>372</sup> What is puzzling, however, is that it is not worn over armor, but apparently over a simple shirt, as much as one can see in the painting given its present state of preservation. The tunic could also be interpreted as a civilian dress, the so-called *doublet*, but in this case its short sleeves would be unusual.<sup>373</sup> The kings wear a narrow belt round their waists. The weapon that hangs down from it in the front is in all probability a dagger.<sup>374</sup> The hilt is stylized, but its shape, with the trilobe pommel and the guard composed of two lobes is similar to the dagger worn by St. Ladislav in the paintings of Crăciunel (first half of the fourteenth century)<sup>375</sup> and that of a soldier from the army of St Ladislav at Mărtiniș (fourteenth century).<sup>376</sup> As regards the way the lower body was clothed, the painting's poor state of preservation does not permit full analysis here either. Whether the kings wore light-colored – maybe white – leggings or they had some type of leg-defenses is impossible to ascertain today. Over the tunic, the kings are clad in long mantles fastened over the breast and richly decorated. The horizontal-strip design of the interior of the mantles comes from the depiction of their fur-lined mantles. However, the meaning of this motive is disregarded, as the interior of the mantle is further decorated with clusters of white pearls, denoting a search for embellishment to the detriment of the correct understanding of the drawing. The elegance of the figures is highlighted by their white gloves with manneristically

<sup>372</sup> The coat armor, also called *surcoat*, was a garment worn over the armor, which appeared in the middle of the twelfth century. Initially worn loosely, in the Late Middle Ages the coat armor was shaped closely to the body. See Claude Blair, *European Armour, circa 1066 to circa 1700* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1958), 28-29, 75-76. A short-sleeved, tight-fitting coat armor can be seen for example in the depiction of the three kings in the church of Tileagd (end of the fourteenth century).

<sup>373</sup> The doublet was a tight-fitting, jacket-like garment, often padded, worn over the shirt and fashionable from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. See François Boucher, *A History of Costume in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, c1987), 196, 446-447. The doublet is, for example, part of the holy kings' dress in the paintings of Mălâncrav (around 1400) and Lónya (1413). The representation of the Holy Kings at Mălâncrav was analyzed by Anca Gogăltan in "The Holy Hungarian Kings, the Saint Bishop and the Saint King in the Sanctuary of the Church at Mălâncrav," *Ars Transsilvaniae* 12-13 (2002-2003), 103-121.

<sup>374</sup> Because of the partial destruction of the painting, the weapon is only visible in the representations of St Stephen and Emeric, while in the case of St Ladislav it can only be assumed.

<sup>375</sup> Illustrations in Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu, "Nouvelles représentations de la Légende de Saint Ladislav a Crăciunel et Chilieni," *Revue roumaine d'histoire de l'art. Série Beaux-Arts* 45 (2008), fig. 4, 8 and 9, and Edit Madas and Zoltán György Horváth, *Középkori prédikációk és falképek Szent László királyról. San Ladislao d'Ungheria nella predicazione e nei dipinti murali* (Budapest: Romanika, 2008), 287, 409.

<sup>376</sup> The paintings have been preserved only in copies. See fig. 56 and 58 in László, *A Szent László-legendája*.

elongated cuffs in a ribbon-like extension.<sup>377</sup> Each king props against the ground a triangular shield, held on a guige. The shields, represented frontally, have a decorative frame, while the field is decorated with a red-brown cross on an orange-pink background. The saints wear lily crowns and Sts Stephen and Emeric hold in their right hand a stylized scepter, which resembles a blooming branch. St. Ladislav has a more war-like attitude, as he is represented holding up a battle-axe, his specific attribute.<sup>378</sup>

The representation of the Holy Kings at Ribița (fig. 5.3) is stylistically and to a certain extent also iconographically different from that found at Crișcior. The kings' coat at Ribița is short-sleeved and slit on the chest, but reaches to the knees. In addition, the kings at Ribița wear wide waist sashes. St Ladislav, whose figure has been largely destroyed, must have been represented in the same pose as at Crișcior. The distance between St Emeric, situated in the middle, and St Ladislav is much smaller in comparison to the distance between St Stephen and St Emeric, but it leaves enough space for St. Ladislav's hand to be represented raised, as in the church of Crișcior. The kings at Ribița also wear a dagger whose guard is composed of two lobes. Further restoration will reveal the whole hilt and make it clear whether this is the same as at Crișcior or of a slightly different type, which may be seen for example in the paintings of the central nave at Mediaș (in the "Fall of manna" and the St Nicholas scene, 1420-1430) or in the sacristy at Vel'ká Lomnica (St Ladislav, first quarter of the fourteenth century). In these cases, the weapon is a typical kidney dagger, which was very popular in the late middle-ages and was usually worn with civilian dress, but it could be used in the battle as well.<sup>379</sup>

In both churches the saints have the same haircut, fashionable in Central Europe in the first half of the fifteenth century:<sup>380</sup> the hair is cut short at the nape and curled at the ends. St Stephen is represented as an old man: he has white hair, a short beard and a moustache. St Emeric, his son, who died young, has a youthful appearance. . He is beardless and his hair is brown at Crișcior

<sup>377</sup> Aside from being a fashionable item of courtly dress, the gloves were also a symbol of power and dignity as part of royal and clerical regalia (see Thiel, *Geschichte des Kostüms*, 174, 179).

<sup>378</sup> Both at Crișcior and Ribița the painting representing St Ladislav was partially destroyed. At Crișcior one can still see the saint's right arm and the shaft of the battle axe.

<sup>379</sup> On the kidney dagger, so-called because of the shape of the guard, see Heribert Seitz, *Blankwaffen. Ein waffenhistorisches Handbuch*, vol. 1 (Braunschweig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1965), 210-213; Logan Thompson, *Daggers and Bayonets: A History* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1999), 27.

<sup>380</sup> Margaret Scott, "Die Höfische Kleidung Europas von 1400 bis 1440," in *Sigismundus. Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg 1387-1437, Ausstellungskatalog, Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, 18. März-18. Juni 2006, Luxemburg, Musée national d'histoire d'art, 13. Juli-15. Oktober 2006*, ed. Imre Takács (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 264-265.

and apparently blond at Ribița. The head of St Ladislav is no longer visible in either of the two churches, but most probably he was represented as a mature, bearded, dark-haired man, the type of portrait that was most frequently used for the saint.<sup>381</sup>

The inscriptions naming the kings have been partly preserved. Now in a poor state of preservation, they were read back in 1985 as follows: *ѣти стѣфан кралѣ, ѣти амвриха кралѣ* (for Ribița)<sup>382</sup> and *[sās] [ц]ѣ[фанѣ] [к]ралѣ, sās ам[в]рихъ к[ралѣ], sās владиславъ [кралѣ]* (for Crișcior).<sup>383</sup> At Crișcior, the Latin title *sanctus*, shortened to *sās* in the inscription, was used instead of the usual Slavonic *ѣти*.

At least until further restoration, it remains unclear whether the painters wanted to represent the kings dressed in courtly or in military attire. The Holy Kings of Hungary appear in medieval Catholic churches in both military outfits (Remetea, Tileagd (fig. 5.5), Rákoš (fig. 5.9), Plešivec, Khust etc.) or in courtly dress (all or some of the kings at Mălâncrav (fig. 5.6), Lónya, Rimavská Baňa, Štítňik etc.). It appears that the painters were not familiar with Western military and courtly dress, which they interpreted and used with the result we see now in the two churches. Their concern seems to have been to represent richly decorated and elegant garments as fitting for a royal figure and in keeping with Late Gothic taste. However, especially because of the frontally displayed shields decorated with the sign of the cross and St Ladislav's war-like attitude, the overall impression is that of military saints, protectors of Christianity.

The model used for the depiction of the Holy Kings at Chimindia (fig. 5.4) is essentially different from that used at Crișcior and Ribița, and the style of the painting is Late Gothic. The kings are represented on the south wall of the nave, within a richly decorated frame. The background is divided into two registers: the lower register is narrower and has green color, while the upper register is blue and decorated with a red pattern composed of four lilies. The same motif, originating in French miniatures and adopted in Central European painting, was used to decorate

<sup>381</sup> According to Ernő Marosi, St Ladislav was represented as a mature, bearded man in portraits that emphasized his royal dignity. Sometimes, in narrative scenes, another type of portraiture was used: that of a youthful, shaved man. However, from around 1400, the image of St Ladislav as a mature, energetic warrior king became the most popular. See Ernő Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus als ungarischer Nationalheiliger. Bemerkungen zu seiner Ikonographie im 14.-15. Jh.," *Acta Historiae Artium* 33 (1987-1988), 239-240.

<sup>382</sup> Liana Tugearu, "Biserica Sf. Nicolae din comuna Ribița (jud. Hunedoara)" [The Church of Saint Nicholas in the village of Ribița (Hunedoara county)], in *Pagini de veche artă românească* [Pages of old Romanian art] 5, no.1, ed. Vasile Drăguț (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1985), 141.

<sup>383</sup> Liana Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea Maicii Domnului din satul Crișcior" [The church of the Dormition of the Virgin in the village of Crișcior], *Pagini de veche artă românească* (Pages of old Romanian art) 5, no.1, ed. Vasile Drăguț (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1985), 91.

the background in the paintings of Dârjiu (1419) and Homorod (ca. 1420).<sup>384</sup> The three kings are dressed in long-sleeved tunics reaching close to the ankle and fastened with plate belts. They wear long mantles fastened at the right shoulder, pointed shoes and white gloves with flared, hanging cuffs. Sts Stephen and Ladislav hold orbs in their left hands. In his right hand, St Stephen holds a scepter, while St Ladislav most probably holds a battle-axe, whose shaft, longer than the shaft of Stephen's scepter, is still visible. St Emeric has a white lily in his right hand, a symbol of his chastity. In his left hand he might have equally held an orb or a book, sign of his life of prayer.<sup>385</sup> Only part of the heads of Stephen and Ladislav are still visible today. Both of them are shown with beards and their hair apparently falls on the nape of their necks. St Stephen is represented as an elderly, grey-haired man, St Ladislav as a bearded man with brown hair, while St Emeric must have had, as usual, a youthful appearance. The titles for St Ladislav and St Stephen have been partially preserved: [СѢН] ЛАДНЛА[А]ВЪ КРАЛЪ, and СѢН ШЕФА[Н]Ъ КРА[ЛЪ].

The representation type at Chimindia, which is less frequent than the depiction of the saints in courtly or knightly garments, stresses royal dignity and authority. Unfortunately, very few other fragments of paintings have been preserved in this church and seemingly none of them date to the same period as the three kings.<sup>386</sup> Therefore, unlike in the case of Crișcior and Ribița, further interpretation of the painting in relation to other subject matters that would have been represented in the church is not possible.

The Holy Kings of Hungary occur quite often in the painting of Catholic churches in fourteenth-fifteenth-century Hungary. In fact, their preserved representations as saints in different artistic media date from the second half of the thirteenth century, but their veneration started much earlier. Stephen I ((997-1038), the first king of Hungary was canonized in 1083. He was crowned king in Esztergom on Christmas 1000 or on January 1, 1001. The legend has it that Stephen received the royal crown together with “a cross to be worn as a sign of apostleship” from Pope

<sup>384</sup> Vasile Drăguț, *Arta gotică în România* [Gothic Art in Romania] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1979), 228; Dana Jenei, *Pictura murală gotică din Transilvania* [Gothic mural painting in Transylvania] (Bucharest: Noi Media Print, 2008), 87.

<sup>385</sup> Though Emeric, son of King Stephen and heir to the throne, died before inheriting the throne, he is sometimes represented with royal insignia – crown, orb, sometimes even scepter. On the attributes of St Emeric see Török, “Über die Ikonographie der Monatsbilder und der heiligen Könige,” 363, note 38, and Kerny, “A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIV. század közepéig,” 76.

<sup>386</sup> The other two important fragments of painting revealed in the church are a fragment of the Last Judgment on the south wall, dated to the second half of the fourteenth century, and another fragment of the Last Judgment on the north wall of the nave, dating to 1482 (Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 140-141).

Sylvester II.<sup>387</sup> King Stephen consolidated the political system left by his father Géza, and undertook the Christianization of his subjects, also started by his father. He was venerated as a “*rex iustus*,” the founder of the Hungarian kingdom, legislator, wise ruler and the apostle of the Hungarians.<sup>388</sup> Stephen’s son and designated heir Emeric (1031) died young in a hunting accident and was canonized as well in 1083. He was said to have preserved his virginity in marriage and was venerated as a paragon of the pious and chaste prince.<sup>389</sup> Both father and son were laid to rest in the church of the Holy Virgin at Székesfehérvár.

The third Hungarian holy king, Ladislas I (1077-1095), was an energetic ruler who consolidated the political and social system founded by Stephen and generously supported the Church.<sup>390</sup> He was canonized in 1192 and came to be venerated as the ideal Christian knight and protector of the country, especially against pagan invaders.<sup>391</sup> St Ladislas’s body was laid to rest in the cathedral he founded at Oradea, which subsequently became a popular pilgrimage place. A popular episode in his legend was his successful fight against the Cuman invaders in the battle of

<sup>387</sup> Nora Berend, “Hartvic, *Life of King Stephen of Hungary*,” in *Medieval Hagiography. An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 384.

<sup>388</sup> On the canonization and cult of St. Stephen, celebrated on 20 August, see Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 123-147. On the saint’s representation in medieval art see Tünde Wehli, “Szent István-kultusza a középkori magyarországi művészetben” [The Cult of St Stephen in Hungarian medieval art], in *Doctor et apostol. Szent István-tanulmányok* (Studia Theologica Budapestinensia 10), ed. József Török (Budapest: Márton Áron, 1994), 107-140.

<sup>389</sup> On the cult of St. Emeric, celebrated on 4 November, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 153-161. Also, two volumes have been published with studies touching on different aspects of St. Emeric’s cult, on the celebration of the 1000 years from Emeric’s birth: Terézia Kerny, ed., *Szent Imre 1000 éve. Tanulmányok Szent Imre tiszteletére születésének ezredik évfordulója alkalmából. 1000 Jahre heiliger Emmerich. Beiträge zu Ehren des heiligen Emmerich anlässlich seines 1000. Geburtstages* (Székesfehérvár: Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum, 2007), and Tamás Lőrincz, ed., *Az ezeréves ifjú. Tanulmányok Szent Imre herceg 1000 évéről* [The one thousand years-old youth. Studies on the one thousand years of the Holy Duke Emeric] (Székesfehérvár: Szent Imre-templom, 2007).

<sup>390</sup> Pál Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen. A history of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 32-33.

<sup>391</sup> On the canonization of St Ladislas, venerated on June 27, and his early cult see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 173-194. The medieval sermons on St Ladislas, a crucial source for understanding the cult of the saint, have been published by Edit Madas. The last critical edition, published in Madas and Horváth, *Középkori prédikációk és falképek Szent László királyról* [Medieval sermons and wall-paintings on the subject of on St Ladislas], contains twenty two sermons dating from the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The book is illustrated by Zoltán György Horváth with images of St Ladislas, mainly taken from medieval wall paintings representing the Legend of St Ladislas. It also contains a chapter by Mária Prokopp, dedicated to the medieval representations of St Ladislas in Italy. On the iconography of St Ladislas see especially Marosi, “Der heilige Ladislaus”; Terézia Kerny, “Szent László kultusz a Zsigmond-korban” [The cult of St Ladislas in the time of Sigismund], in *Művészet Zsigmond király korában 1387-1437*, ed. L. Beke, E. Marosi and T. Wehli, vol. 1 (Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 1987), 353-357; Terézia Kerny, “Szent László lovas ábrázolásai” [The representations of the mounted St Ladislas], *Ars Hungarica* 21 (1993), no. 1, 39-54; *eadem*, “Szent László tisztelete és középkori ikonográfiája” [The cult and medieval iconography of St Ladislas], in *Ave Rex Ladislaus*, ed. Béla Hankovszky, Terézia Kerny and Zoltán Móser (Budapest: Kairosz, 2000), 30-42; Tünde Wehli, “Szent László viselete középkori ábrázolásain” [St Ladislas’ apparel in his medieval portrayals], *A Hadtörténeti Múzeum Értésítője* 4 (2001), 45-51. On medieval representations of St Ladislas’ legend see the bibliography further down.



Kerlés.<sup>392</sup> During the battle, Saint Ladislav follows and defeats a Cuman warrior who has abducted a girl. This episode presented Ladislav not only as a champion against pagans, but also as an exemplar of chivalric virtues. His image of the ideal knightly saint is also stressed in liturgical sources and sermons, where he is praised for his moral and physical beauty as well as his military prowess.<sup>393</sup> St Ladislav was a representative saint for the nobility's aspirations and the story of his fight with the Cuman occurs in numerous fourteenth-fifteenth-century wall-paintings in churches where the patrons were Hungarian noblemen.<sup>394</sup> As a defender of the country against pagan invaders, the king also appears in the miracle of the victory against the Tartars. A story written in the second half of the fourteenth century tells that Ladislav's head reliquary miraculously disappeared from the Cathedral of Oradea during the battle against the Tartars in 1345.<sup>395</sup> Finally, it turned out that the saint himself participated in the battle, leading the Hungarian army to victory, and then returned to his place in the cathedral. Liturgical sources name Ladislav "the pillar of the Christian militia" (*columpna milicie christianae*), and "invincible defender and athlete of the fatherland" (*defensor indefessus et athleta patriae*).<sup>396</sup> Besides his image of valiant warrior, St Ladislav is also described in hagiographical sources as a just, merciful and pious ruler.<sup>397</sup>

The cult of the three kings<sup>398</sup> initiated by the Árpádians was meant to emphasize the supernatural legitimacy and the prestige of the Árpád dynasty.<sup>399</sup> Their cult was also adopted and further developed by the kings of the Anjou dynasty, Charles I (1301-1342) and Louis I (1342-1382). In

<sup>392</sup> The battle of Kerlés (Chiraleș, in Transylvania) took place in 1068 when Ladislav was not yet king. In reality the battle was fought against Petchenegs.

<sup>393</sup> On the chivalric features of St Ladislav's cult see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 187-194.

<sup>394</sup> The topic of St Ladislav's Legend in medieval wall painting has been touched on by many scholars, among them: Vasile Drăguț, "Legenda eroului de frontieră în pictura medievală din Transilvania" [The Legend of the "border hero" in medieval painting in Transylvania], *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Monumente Istorice și de Artă* 2 (1974), 21-38; Vlasta Dvořáková, "La légende de Saint Ladislav découverte dans l'église de Vel'ká Lomnica. Iconographie, style et circonstances de la diffusion de cette légende," *Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice* 41 no. 4 (1972), 25-42; Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus," 211-256; Gyula László, *A Szent László-legenda középkori falképei* (Budapest: Tájak-Korok-Múzeumok Egyesület, 1993); Dragoș-Gheorghe Năstăsoiu, "Nouvelles représentations de la Légende de Saint Ladislav à Crăciunel et Chileni," *Revue roumaine d'histoire de l'art. Série Beaux-Arts* 45 (2008), 3-22; Terézia Kerny, "Patronage of St Ladislav Fresco Cycles during the Sigismund Period in Connection with a Contract of Inheritance," in *Bonum ut pulchrum. Essays in Art History in Honor of Ernő Marosi on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Livia Varga et al. (Budapest: Argumentum, 2010), 259-272.

<sup>395</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 189.

<sup>396</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 188.

<sup>397</sup> Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus," 243-244, and Madas and Horváth, *Középkori prédikációk és falképek Szent László királyról*.

<sup>398</sup> Though Emeric did not live to be a king, when he is associated with the other two saints he usually receives the same title.

<sup>399</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 229, 298.

1301, the Árpád dynasty died out and Charles Robert of Anjou, related to the Árpáds on his paternal grandmother's side, had himself crowned king of Hungary. Charles stabilized his rule after two decades of fighting against other claimants to the throne and against the Hungarian oligarchs.<sup>400</sup> The Angevin kings intensely promoted the cult of the Árpáadian kings in order to legitimize their power. They placed themselves under the protection of Hungary's holy kings and presented themselves as heirs to their virtues.<sup>401</sup> After the extinction of the Anjou dynasty, King Sigismund (1387-1437), who also led a long fight to stabilize his position and enhance his authority,<sup>402</sup> continued to support the cult of the Árpáadian kings, particularly that of St Ladislás.<sup>403</sup>

Initiated by the court, the veneration of the Holy Kings quickly spread to the lower levels of society. At the end of the Middle Ages, the kings were venerated as patron saints of the Hungarian kingdom and ideal rulers by the aristocrats at court as well as by lesser nobility. St Ladislás came to surpass the popularity of the other two Hungarian saints, Stephen and Emeric.<sup>404</sup> As the model of a ruler, an ideal Christian knight and patron of the country, St Ladislás was venerated both by the king and the nobility. Queen Mary and her husband, King Sigismund particularly supported Ladislás's cult and chose as their place of burial the cathedral at Oradea.<sup>405</sup> The numerous depictions of St Ladislás and of his legend in paintings commissioned by nobles testify to his popularity among this social class in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. As a model of king and patron of the country, St Ladislás was a token that could be used both by the king's supporters to show their loyalty to the king and by the king's opponents to express their opposing political views. As Gábor Klaniczay has pointed out, during the fourteenth century the cult of the dynastic saints was gradually appropriated by the nobility,

<sup>400</sup> Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen*, 128-134.

<sup>401</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 322-326.

<sup>402</sup> In 1382, Louis I died without a male heir and his daughter Mary became queen (1382-1395). Almost two decades of political instability followed until Sigismund of Luxemburg, Mary's husband, crowned king in 1387, succeeded in imposing his authority. See Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen*, 195-208.

<sup>403</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 390 and Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 319-320.

<sup>404</sup> Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus," 246; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 361.

<sup>405</sup> Terezia Kerny, "Begräbnis und Begräbnisstätte von König Sigismund," in *Sigismundus. Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg 1387-1437, Ausstellungskatalog, Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, 18. März-18. Juni 2006, Luxemburg, Musée national d'histoire d'art, 13. Juli-15. Oktober 2006*, ed. Imre Takács (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 475-479. On the cult of St Ladislás at the time of Sigismund see also Terézia Kerny, "Szent László-kultusz a Zsigmond-korában" [The cult of St Ladislás at the time of Sigismund], in *Művészet Zsigmond király korában, 1387-1437* [Art in the age of King Sigismund, 1387-1437], vol. 1, ed. László Beke, Ernő Marosi and Tünde Wehli (Budapest:[n.p.], 1987), 353-363.

who eventually used it to support its own political ideals.<sup>406</sup> At the turn of 1402, a group of prelates and barons, dissatisfied with King Sigismund, took an oath on the relics of St Ladislav of Oradea, vowing to no longer regard Sigismund as their king and to set on the throne Ladislav of Durazzo.<sup>407</sup> According to Ernő Marosi, at the end of the fourteenth century St Ladislav had become the protector saint of the noble *natio* and the foremost patron saint of the country.<sup>408</sup> No individual representation of any of the Hungarian Holy Kings and no Legend of Saint Ladislav exists in the preserved paintings in medieval Orthodox churches. The kings are present only as a group of three and therefore special attention will be given here to the message incorporated in this iconographic type. In Catholic churches the saints appear individually, as a group of two, three or more individuals,<sup>409</sup> or, in the case of St Ladislav, also as protagonist in a series of episodes in his legend. When two saints are associated, they are usually St Stephen and St Ladislav or St Stephen and his son Emeric.<sup>410</sup> Other dynastic saints are sometimes added to them such as the Árpadian saints Elisabeth and Margaret.<sup>411</sup> There are quite a few Catholic churches in which the saints were represented in a group of three, similarly to the paintings at Crișcior, Ribița and Chimindia, showing that the iconographic type was quite common. The kings are represented frontally and standing, in the majority of cases isolated as a group by a frame, on either the interior or exterior of many churches: the Reformed church of Tileagd (end of the fourteenth century) (fig. 5.5),<sup>412</sup> the Reformed church of Remetea (beginning of the

<sup>406</sup> On the spread of the cult of the dynastic saints to the nobility in the fourteenth century and the change of the political function of the cult of the Hungarian royal saints in the late Middle Ages see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 367, 386-394.

<sup>407</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 392; Elemér Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn, 1387-1437* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), 66.

<sup>408</sup> Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus," 246; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 392-394.

<sup>409</sup> In one of her articles dealing with the representations of the holy kings of Hungary, Terézia Kerny mentions a wide array of churches that preserve or are known to have contained such representations (see Terézia Kerny, "Magyar szent királyok középkori kompozíciói a templomok külső falain" [Medieval representations of the Holy Kings of Hungary on the outer walls of the churches] in *Omnis creatura significans. Tanulmányok Propkopp Mária 70. születésnapjára. Essays in Honor of Mária Prokopp*, ed. Terézia Kerny and Anna Tüskés (Budapest: CentrArt Egyesület, 2009), 82-84 and endnote 5 for depictions in the interior of the churches). See also Năstăsioiu "Sancti reges Hungariae in Mural Painting of Late-Medieval Hungary," MA thesis, Central European University, Medieval Studies Department, Budapest, 2009.

<sup>410</sup> Terézia Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIV. század közepéig" [The cult and iconography of the Holy Kings of Hungary until the middle of the fourteenth century], in *Szent Imre 1000 éve*, 76.

<sup>411</sup> St Elisabeth († 1231), the sister of King Béla IV, was canonized in 1235, and St Margaret († 1271), daughter of King Béla IV, though venerated as a saint from the thirteenth century, was officially canonized only in 1943. On the cult of these Árpadian female saints see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*.

<sup>412</sup> On the paintings of Tileagd see Drăguț, *Arta gotică în România*, 209, 260-1; Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 177-8; Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések*, vol. 2, 82-3.

fifteenth century),<sup>413</sup> the Reformed church of Plešivec (ca. 1400),<sup>414</sup> the church of the Holy Trinity in Rákoš (around 1400),<sup>415</sup> the church of Krásnohorské Podhradie (Slovakia) (end of the fourteenth century)(fig. 5.7),<sup>416</sup> the church of the Holy Virgin in Rattersdorf (probably the last quarter of the fourteenth century) (fig. 5.8),<sup>417</sup> the Catholic church in Napkor (Hungary, first half of the fifteenth century),<sup>418</sup> and the Reformed church in Khust (Ukraine, last decades of the fourteenth-first decades of the fifteenth century).<sup>419</sup> The kings were represented as a threesome not only in wall paintings, but also in other media, such as sculpture, goldsmithing, textiles, panel paintings, illuminations and also occasionally on ecclesiastical and royal seals. It has been assumed that the three statues of the kings that stood in front of the Oradea cathedral were an influential iconographic model, even if not the prototype for the depiction of the kings in a group of three.<sup>420</sup> The statues from Oradea were commissioned by the bishop of Oradea, Demeter Futaki (1345-1372), in the second half of the fourteenth century and were destroyed by the

<sup>413</sup> On the paintings of Remetea see Porumb, *Dicționar de pictură*, 332-333; Vasile Drăguț, *Pictura murală din Transilvania* [The mural painting in Transylvania] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1970), 39-40; Drăguț, *Arta gotică în România*, 230; Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések*, vol. 2, 71-74.

<sup>414</sup> On Plešivec see Mária Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes in the Kingdom of Hungary* (Somorja: Méry Ratio, 2005), 27-30; Kerny, "Magyar szent királyok," 83; Năstăsoiu, "Political Aspects," 106.

<sup>415</sup> On the paintings of Rákoš see Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 135-136, Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes*, 21-26.

<sup>416</sup> Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIII. századtól a XVII. századig," 95; Năstăsoiu, "Political Aspects," 106.

<sup>417</sup> Năstăsoiu, "Political Aspects," 106.

<sup>418</sup> On the paintings of Napkor see Zsombor Jékely and József Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek a középkori Magyarország északkeleti megyéiből* [Wall paintings in north-eastern counties of medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2009), 266-273, 457.

<sup>419</sup> On the church of Khust see Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 148-149; Alajos Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei* [Monuments of the Sub-Carpathia] (Budapest: Tájak-Korok-Múzeumok Egyesület, 1990), 168-172, 217. A similar type of armor and, in certain cases, the rectangular shield with notch for the lance may be seen in paintings dating from late fourteenth-early fifteenth century in Hungary: St Ladislav and St Michael at Kraskovo (1380s-1390s or the last third of the fourteenth century), St Ladislav at Rimavská Baňa (last third of the fourteenth century or the 1380s), St Ladislav at Rákoš (last decade of the fourteenth century), St George at Málánecrav (ca. 1400), the Holy Kings at Plešivec (around 1400), St George at Szentsimon (1423). Cf. Năstăsoiu, "Political Aspects," 106, note 61.

<sup>420</sup> Tünde Wehli, "A 'Szent Királyok' és az udvar szentjei"[The "Holy Kings" and the courtly saints] in *Magyarországi művészet 1300-1470 körül* [Hungarian art, circa 1300-1470], vol. 1, ed. Ernő Marosi (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987), 207; Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIII. századtól a XVII. századig," 92. Along with Oradea, Székesfehérvár, the burial place of St Stephen and St Emeric, was another important centre of veneration of the Holy Kings, which may have established models (see Wehli, "A Szent Királyok," 207; Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus," 233; Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIV. század közepéig," 74).

Ottomans in 1660.<sup>421</sup> They were set on three columns and, together with the equestrian statue of St Ladislav set in front of the cathedral, they were revered as protectors of the city.<sup>422</sup>

Recently, several studies have been dedicated to the cult and iconography of the Holy Kings as a group.<sup>423</sup> Terézia Kerny has put together a wide array of written and artistic sources that reflect the saints' veneration as a group from the time of the Árpadians to the seventeenth century. As previous historians have also pointed out, grouping the dynastic saints was common in medieval Europe and served dynastic propaganda.<sup>424</sup> If initially the Holy Kings of Hungary supported the divine legitimacy of the royal power, they eventually became patrons and symbols of the country. According to Ernő Marosi, St Ladislav on his own incorporated a similar message.<sup>425</sup> The iconographic type presenting the Holy Kings as a group of three, comprising kings of three different ages and temperaments – the old and wise King Stephen, the middle-aged and energetic Ladislav and the young and innocent prince Emeric – was suggested by the liturgical and hagiographical texts, but it probably owes something as well to the influence of the cult and iconography of the three Magi.<sup>426</sup> Terézia Kerny suggests that a first possible inspiration could have been initiated by the passage through Hungary in 1189 of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, on his way to the Holy Land. On that occasion, the emperor could have offered King Béla III a piece from the relics of the three Magi, around which Béla III may have developed the cult of the three Hungarian kings.<sup>427</sup> Also, in 1357, during a joint pilgrimage with King Charles IV of Bohemia and Anne of Świdnica, the mother of King Louis I, Elizabeth Piast visited Cologne Cathedral, the shrine of the three Magi. There she founded an altar dedicated to Hungary's three kings, Stephen, Emeric and Ladislav.<sup>428</sup> The veneration of the Magi, the kings who recognized

<sup>421</sup> Jolán Balogh, *Varadinum. Várad vára* [Varadinum. The fortress of Oradea], vol. 1 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982), , p. 20.

<sup>422</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 339.

<sup>423</sup> Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIII. századtól a XVII. századig," 79-123, and *eadem*, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIV. század közepéig," 73-82. See also Dragoş Gheorghe Năstăsoiu "Sancti reges Hungariae in Mural Painting of Late-Medieval Hungary," MA thesis, Central European University, Medieval Studies Department, Budapest, 2009; Dragoş Gheorghe Năstăsoiu, "Political Aspects of the Mural Representations of the sancti reges Hungariae in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 16 (2010), 93-119.

<sup>424</sup> Ernő Marosi, "A XIV-XV. századi magyarországi művészet európai helyzetének néhány kérdése" [Some problems concerning the European place of Hungarian art in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries], *Ars Hungarica* 1973, 36; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 341.

<sup>425</sup> Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus," 233.

<sup>426</sup> Marosi, "A XIV-XV. századi magyarországi művészet európai helyzetének néhány kérdése," 34, 36; Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIV. század közepéig," 75-76.

<sup>427</sup> Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIV. század közepéig," 75.

<sup>428</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 342.

Christ as God and received his blessing, supported the idea of the divine origin of royal power and was popular with European rulers. The association between the Holy Kings of Hungary and the Magi certainly stressed the supernatural legitimacy of the Árpadian dynasty and its followers.<sup>429</sup>

The representation of the three Catholic saints in Orthodox churches has been interpreted in various ways. Silviu Dragomir has argued that their presence in Orthodox churches was a sign of homage towards the kings of Hungary, which the Romanian knezes were obliged to show if they wanted to erect stone churches. Dragomir's opinion was subsequently adopted by other art historians.<sup>430</sup> However, his assumption that the knezes were obliged to depict the three kings was based not on direct evidence, but was inferred from another restriction aimed at the Orthodox: a decree issued by the General Synod held in Buda in 1279, which forbade 'schismatics' from holding or constructing new churches or chapels unless they had the approval of the diocesan bishop in whose territory they lived.<sup>431</sup>

Other historians do not see the depiction of the three kings as an obligation, but rather as a choice made by the knezes in their own interests. Ernő Marosi has argued that the knezes represented the Holy Kings of Hungary in their churches because they venerated them as patrons of the country and wanted to present themselves as members of the nobility.<sup>432</sup> For Adrian Andrei Rusu as well, the presence of the Holy Kings in the knezial churches was an expression of their loyalty (*fidelitas*) towards the king as their supreme lord and a proof of their noble class consciousness.<sup>433</sup> Béla Zsolt Szakács also considers that by showing their veneration for the Holy

<sup>429</sup> Gyöngyi Török, "Über die Ikonographie der Monatsbilder und der heiligen Könige," 358; *idem*, "Lateinisches Gebetbuch (1432)" (Cat No. 7.70), in *Sigismundus: Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg, 1387-1437, Ausstellungskatalog*, ed. Imre Takács, (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 628-629. On the chapels dedicated to the Holy Kings of Hungary in Cologne and Aachen, see also Gábor Barna, "Szent István, Szent Imre és Szent László kultuszemlékei Aachenben és Kölnben. Az uralkodói reprezentáció és a 'régi magyar szentség,'" [Memories of the cult of St Stephen, St Emeric and St Ladislav in Aachen and Cologne. The royal representation and the 'old Hungarian holiness'], in *Szent Imre 1000 éve*, 66-70.

<sup>430</sup> Dragomir, "Vechile biserici din Zarand", 235-236. His opinion was adopted by Drăguț, *Pictura murală din Transilvania*, 39, Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea Maicii Domnului din satul Crișcior," 78, and *eadem*, "Biserica Sf. Nicolae din comuna Ribița," 134. Tugearu quoted Dragomir incorrectly as saying that the synod imposed the depiction of the three kings.

<sup>431</sup> *Perpetuo prohibemus edicto: quod schismatici sacerdotes, in terris nostrae legationis officiare ecclesias non sinantur, nec permittantur habere vel aedificare absque dioecesanorum, in quorum dioecesisibus vel jurisdictionibus commorantur, licentia et consensu nova oratoria vel capellas (...)*. Șerban Turcuș, *Sinodul general de la Buda (1279)* [The General Synod of Buda (1279)] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2001), 212.

<sup>432</sup> Marosi, "Der heilige Ladislaus," 230, 232, 245.

<sup>433</sup> Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii din vremea sa* [John Hunyadi and the Romanians of his times] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Presa Universitară, 1999), 137.

Kings, the knezes followed the example of the Hungarian nobility, who imitated Hungarian courtly patterns.<sup>434</sup>

Indeed, a closer look at the social situation of the Romanian knezes supports such an approach to the Holy Kings. At the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century when they built and painted their churches, the knezes of Crișcior and Ribița were landowners with limited privileges and in all probability their land was part of the royal estate of the Șiria fortress.<sup>435</sup> Though subordinated to the castellan of Șiria, their ultimate lord was the king and, as later evolution showed, they aimed at achieving equal rights to the “true” noblemen of the kingdom. In late medieval Hungary, being noble meant being a free landholder and any landownership had ultimately its origins in a royal grant. Adrian Rusu has pointed out that, similarly to other categories of the nobility, some of the Romanian knezes claimed their privileges from the foundation of the kingdom.<sup>436</sup> In a document from 1452, the nobles of Măciș in the Banat claimed that they held their possession *ab annis Domini millenis*,<sup>437</sup> and in a document from 1445, the knezes from Vișeu, in Máramaros County, held that their estate had been given to their ancestors by the “Most Holy King Stephen” (*sacratissimus rex Stephanus*).<sup>438</sup> Therefore, it has been assumed that the Romanian founders who had the Holy Kings depicted in their churches regarded them as originators and guarantors of their social status.<sup>439</sup> As regards the knezes from Zaránd, Ioan Drăgan has called attention to a detail in a document from 1444, which creates a parallel with the depiction of the Holy Kings in the churches of Crișcior and Ribița.<sup>440</sup> In this document, Despot George Branković and his family grants the Șiria fortress and its estate to the voivode of Transylvania, John Hunyadi, as a reward for his help in recovering Serbian lands

<sup>434</sup> Szakács, “Saints of the Knights,” 328.

<sup>435</sup> Liviu Borcea, “Considerații cu privire la satele, cnezii și voievozii din Zarand și Cîmpia Aradului” [Considerations regarding the villages, knezes and voivodes from Zarand and Cîmpia Aradului], *Crisia* 19 (1989), 188.

<sup>436</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 190-191.

<sup>437</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. 2/2, 14. .

<sup>438</sup> Adrian Andrei Rusu, Ioan Aurel Pop and Ioan Drăgan, eds., *Izvoare privind evul mediu românesc: Țara Hațegului în secolul al XV-lea (1402-1473)* [Sources concerning the Romanian Middle Ages: The Land of Hațeg in the fifteenth century] (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1989), 133-135 (No. 106).

<sup>439</sup> Adrian A. Rusu, “Românii din Regatul Ungariei și cetățile medievale (Privire specială asupra secolelor XIII-XIV)” [The Romanians in the Hungarian Kingdom and the medieval castles (with special regard to the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries)], *Mediaevalia Transilvanica* 7-8 (2003-2004), 95.

<sup>440</sup> Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania, 1440-1514* [The Romanian nobility in Transylvania, 1440-1514] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000), 210-211.

from the Turks.<sup>441</sup> George Branković, who received Şiria in 1439 from King Albert of Habsburg (1437-1439), grants it to John Hunyadi together with its estate and the Hungarian and Romanian noblemen who served the castle from ancient times, so that they might retain their nobility, rights and liberties which were conceded to them by the Holy Kings: *item nobilibus Ungaris et Walachis castrensibus semper et ab antiquo ad ipsum castrum spectantibus, sic, quod eisdem, in eorum nobilitate, iuribus et libertatibus, per divos reges ipsis concessis, permanentibus*.<sup>442</sup>

It has been argued that the knezes who served a royal castle – in documents sometimes called *kenesii castrenses*, *kenesii regales* – had a similar status, probably established in the twelfth century, as the *iobagiones castri* (castle-warriors).<sup>443</sup> The castle-warriors were a social category originating in the eleventh-twelfth centuries, which later became part of the Hungarian nobility.<sup>444</sup> They were bound to the service of a royal castle and received land in return for their military services. When, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the king started donating large parts of the royal estates, the castle-warriors were in danger of losing their privileged position. They then claimed they had received their “freedom” from Saint Stephen, calling themselves “*iobagiones* of the Holy King” or “freemen of the Holy King.”<sup>445</sup> In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, part of the castle-warriors received royal charters that acknowledged their free landownership and ensured their noble status.<sup>446</sup> Ioan Drăgan considers that the nobles of the castle – *nobiles castrenses* – referred to in the document from July 3, 1444 were conditional nobles, most probably remnants of the castle-warriors, both Hungarian and Romanian.<sup>447</sup> Once living on what were royal lands, they now had a noble as their lord and risked losing their privileged possessions. Some of the Romanian voivodes from the estate of Şiria fortress eventually became real nobles, among them the voivodes of Ribiţa, Hălmaşiu and

<sup>441</sup> *Documenta Romaniae Historica. D. Relaţii între Ţările Române*, vol. 1, ed. Mihail Berza, et al. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1977) (henceforth: *DRH, D*), 379-383.

<sup>442</sup> *DRH, D*, vol. 1, 380. However, according to *Lexikon latinitatis medii aevi Hungariae*, coord. János Harmatta (Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó – Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992), vol. 3, 212, *divus* is equivalent with *beatus*, *defunctus* in such contexts.

<sup>443</sup> See more recently the article of Rusu, “Românii din Regatul Ungariei şi cetăţile medievale,” 85-106. The author also has a short overview of Hungarian and Romanian literature on the topic.

<sup>444</sup> About castle-warriors see Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen*, 70-72; Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 20-22.

<sup>445</sup> Erik Fügedi, *The Elefánthy. The Hungarian Nobleman and His Kindred* (Budapest: CEU Press, 1998), 37; Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen*, 71.

<sup>446</sup> Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen*, 149; Fügedi, *The Elefánthy*, 43; Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 22, 80.

<sup>447</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 211.



Crișcior.<sup>448</sup> In fact, as regards the churches of Crișcior and Ribița, there is information that around the time when the churches were painted, the founders received royal charters acknowledging their privileged possession of some lands, including the villages in which the two churches were situated.<sup>449</sup>

As law protectors, the three Holy Kings of Hungary also appear in curses closing donation charters. Terézia Kerny has pointed out two charters issued by younger King Stephen (the future King Stephen V, 1270-1272) in 1269 and by King Ladislav IV (1272-1290) in 1279. In these charters the kings granted and confirmed respectively the ownership over particular lands to *comes* Mykud and his son, the *ban* Mykud.<sup>450</sup> Both documents put the curse of Sts Stephen, Emeric and Ladislav and of other saints, upon anyone trying to contravene these land donations. Vladislav Vlaicu, the voivode of Wallachia and vassal of King Louis I, made use of a similar curse at the end of a donation charter from 15 June 1372.<sup>451</sup> In this charter, Vladislav donated, *ex parte domini nostri regis et nostri*, estates from the duchy of Făgăraș, to one of his relatives, the Hungarian noble Ladislav of Dăbâca (*Dobka*) for his faithful services. The voivode held the duchy of Făgăraș from King Louis I as a fief.<sup>452</sup>

<sup>448</sup> Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 211.

<sup>449</sup> This information should be used with caution. In the case of Ribița, no charter has been preserved, but in 1868 Ödön Nemes, probably a descendant of the founders of Ribița using the archive of his family, claimed that in 1404 the three brothers Matia, Vladislav and Micăluș got back the lands confiscated from their father, Vladislav, who had been accused of *nota infidelitatis* (Rusu, “Biserica românească de la Ribița,” 7; Ödön Nemes, “A ribicei templom 1404-ből” [The church of Ribița, 1404], *Hazánk s a Külföld* 4, no. 4 (1868), 64). As regards Crișcior, in 1773, the Kristyóri nobles claimed that their ancestors received charters for a number of villages, including Crișcior in 1404 and 1415. The charters have been preserved only in 19<sup>th</sup>-century copies and a suspicion of forgery hovers over them (see Dragomir, “Vechile biserici din Zarand,” 240-245; Elemér Mályusz, “Gróf Kemény József oklevélhamisítványai” [The faked documents of Count József Kemény], *Levéltári Közlemények* 59 (1988), 212-213).

<sup>450</sup> Kerny, “A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIV. század közepéig,” 74. The charter from 1269 is published in *Erdélyi okmánytár*, 218-219 (No. 275). The charter from 11 July 1279 is published in *Hazai okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus patrius Hungaricus*, vol. 6, ed. Imre Nagy, et al. (Pápa: Jókai Mór Városi Könyvtár, 2004), 240-243 (No. 172). Note that in the *Erdélyi okmánytár* the charter is dated to July 8, 1279 (*Erdélyi okmánytár*, vol. 1 (1023-1300), 250 (No. 368)).

<sup>451</sup> ... *si nos vel aliquis successorum nostrorum in posterum litteras nostras presentes et donacionem presentem suprascriptam revocare intenderet, impedire recipere vellet et presente karte contradiceret et donacioni, fiat super talem aut tales furor et indignatio dei, beate virginis Mariae, omnium sanctorum, indignatio sanctorum regum Stephani, Ladyslai et Emerici*. The document is published in *DRH, D*, vol. 1, 103-106 (No. 60).

<sup>452</sup> See more on the historical context of this document in Maria Holban, “Contribuții la studiul raporturilor dintre Țara Românească și Ungaria angevină (Rolul lui Benedict Himfy în legătură cu problema Vidinului)” [Contributions to the study of the relations between Wallachia and the Angevin Hungary (The role of Benedict Himfy with respect to the Vidin issue)], in *eadem, Din cronică relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII-XIV* [From the chronicle of the Romanian-Hungarian relations in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1981), 155-211.

While there is now no doubt that not only the Hungarians but also the Romanians who were under the authority of the Hungarian king could call upon the Holy Kings as protectors of law and social order, the way the kings are represented in the churches of Crișcior and Ribița draws attention to another aspect of their cult. The representation of the kings with the frontally displayed shields decorated with the sign of the Cross shows them as holy rulers, protectors of Christianity. It is surprising that the shields display neither the coat of arms of the house of Árpád – red and white alternating horizontal stripes – nor the symbol of the Hungarian realm, the double cross. Both the coat of arms of the house of Árpád and the double cross as a symbol of royal power and then of the kingdom, had been in use for two hundred years.<sup>453</sup> In all the medieval iconic representations of the Holy Kings known to me, either as a group or individually, in which they bear a shield, this is decorated with the coat of arms of the Árpáds and/or the double cross. In particular cases, when represented as the hero of his legend, as in the Anjou Legendary,<sup>454</sup> or alone and on horseback, as on fifteenth-sixteenth-century stove tiles,<sup>455</sup> St Ladislav may also have a shield decorated with a cross. Military saints with cross-decorated shields occur in both Western and Byzantine art, and the representation of St Ladislav with such an attribute stressed his position as a “soldier of Christ” (*miles Christi*) as he was commonly referred to in liturgical sources.

The double cross, a symbol of the Hungarian Christian kingdom, was equally fit for designating a Christian warrior, though one whose virtues were probably seen as representative for Hungarian knights. Not only St Ladislav represented as a warrior,<sup>456</sup> but also St George slaying the dragon occasionally bears a shield decorated with a double cross.<sup>457</sup> The double cross coat of arms was introduced by King Béla III (1172-1196) as a symbol of royal majesty, but from the

<sup>453</sup> See Iván Bertényi, “Címerváltozatok a középkori Magyarországon [Variations of the coat of arms in medieval Hungary], *Levéltári közlemények* 59, no. 1 (1988), 3-80; Bernát L. Kumorovitz, “A magyar címer kettőkerestje” [The double cross of the Hungarian coat of arms], *Turul* 55 (1941), 7-62.

<sup>454</sup> Marosi, “Der heilige Ladislaus,” 246.

<sup>455</sup> Ana Maria Gruia, “Saint Ladislav on Stove Tiles,” *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 11 (2005), 100-101.

<sup>456</sup> Not only is St. Ladislav equipped with a shield displaying the double cross in iconic representations, but also in some of the wall paintings narrating his fight with the Cuman: in the Evangelical church in Kraskovo (last third of the fourteenth century) (Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes*, 60, 63), the Catholic church in Žehra (early fifteenth century) (Béla Hankovszky, Terézia Kerny and Zoltán Móser, ed., *Ave Rex Ladislaus*, fig. 90), the Unitarian church of Chileni (second half of the fourteenth century) (Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 282), probably also in the Catholic church in Michal na Ostrove (Madas and Horváth, *Középkori prédikációk és falképek Szent László királyról*, 99, 100, 383).

<sup>457</sup> St George killing the dragon has a shield decorated with a double cross in the Catholic church at Szentsimon (1423) (Marosi, “Der heilige Ladislaus,” 246 and fig. 49), in the Reformed church at Daia (first half of the fifteenth century) and in the Reformed church at Tarpa (beginning of the fifteenth century) (Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 417).

time of the Anjou dynasty it came to symbolize the “realm” (*regnum*) as opposed to the changing person of the king.<sup>458</sup> The nobility gradually identified itself with the *regnum*: while in the fourteenth century only the barons and prelates were considered members of the realm, by the middle of the fifteenth century the *regnum* included the common nobles too.<sup>459</sup> Therefore, displaying the double cross coat of arms did not necessarily reflect loyalty towards the actual king, but identification with the interests of those who constituted the Land (*ország*). According to Ernő Marosi, the relatively frequent depiction of St Ladislav with the double cross coat of arms around and after 1400 reflected precisely his special veneration as the “patron of the Land, of the noble nation.”<sup>460</sup>

The coat of arms of the Hungarian kingdom or of the Árpáds are absent from the shields of the Holy Kings in the churches of Crișcior and Ribița, and it is difficult to understand whether this was a deliberate choice, aimed at presenting the saints primarily as protecting Christian rulers and less as the saints of the *other* Church,<sup>461</sup> or just a proof of ignorance on the part of the painters with regard to the symbolic use of the two coats of arms. The painters made no mistakes in representing the characteristic physiognomy and attributes of the three kings, but it appears that they were not aware what constituted proper representation of a Western outfit. Two other instances have been noted where mistakes were made in the representation of the holy kings and both cases come from a German environment in or outside the Hungarian kingdom. The mistakes however lie not in details of the dress which the Western artists knew well, but in the attributes assigned to each king, and reflect a lack of knowledge on the part of the artists and probably a lack of familiarity with the Holy Kings’ appearance on the part of the commissioners too. On the Wiener-Neustädter winged altar commissioned in 1447 by Emperor Friedrich III and preserved in St Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna there are mistakes regarding the attributes and the names of the kings.<sup>462</sup> The other example comes from the environment of German burghers in Hungary. St Stephen and St Ladislav were painted in the sanctuary of the parish church of St

<sup>458</sup> Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen*, 86, 190.

<sup>459</sup> Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 158-159, 172; László Péter, “The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 81 (2003), 446-447.

<sup>460</sup> Marosi, “Der heilige Ladislaus,” 246. See also Kerny, “Patronage,” 262.

<sup>461</sup> This was my assumption in the first version of this article.

<sup>462</sup> See Gyöngyi Török, “Über die Ikonographie der Monatsbilder und der heiligen Könige von Ungarn aus einem Gebetbuch von 1432 (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLMAE 21590),” *Umění* 40 (1992), 363, note 39; Kerny, “A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIII. századtól a XVII. századig,” 98 and picture at page 97. The altar is now preserved in the Cathedral of St Stephen in Vienna.

James in the town of Levoča (end of the fourteenth century). St Ladislav was represented holding a lance instead of his most common attribute, the battle-axe.<sup>463</sup> In addition to nobile settings, the cult of the holy kings, especially Sts Stephen and Ladislav, also spread to the towns, where its manifestations were rather associated with collective patrons like guilds rather than with private patrons.<sup>464</sup> It has been suggested that royal patronage over royal towns resulted in a marked political character in the cult of the Hungarian kings, especially in the German milieu.<sup>465</sup> The cross that decorates the shields of the holy kings at Crișcior and Ribița presents them as Christian rulers and defenders of Christianity. This interpretation is further reinforced by the representation of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross next to the kings in both churches.<sup>466</sup> However, Crișcior and Ribița are not the only cases when this association is made. Sts Stephen, Emeric and Ladislav are also depicted next to St Helena with the Cross in the Reformed church of Khust, on the north wall of the nave, next to the triumphal arch, in the same position as in Ribița.<sup>467</sup> The church was Catholic and dedicated to St Elisabeth in the Middle Ages. It was probably built at the end of the fourteenth century<sup>468</sup> and functioned as the parish church of Khust, a settlement that was founded at the end of the thirteenth century by royal *hospites*. A royal castle was built in the first half of the fourteenth century, and in 1329 Khust, together with other towns inhabited by German and Hungarian *hospites*, received royal town privileges.<sup>469</sup> The paintings may date to the last decades of the fourteenth or the first decades of the fifteenth century.<sup>470</sup> The association between the holy kings as a group and cross-related themes occurs occasionally in art and is deserving of further research. Hagiographic and liturgical sources connect each of the kings to the cross as a religious or political symbol. Representing the three of them in association with the Crucifixion or the Finding of the Cross, for example, was probably meant to highlight their virtues as Christian rulers, and the role of the cross as the protector of the

<sup>463</sup> See Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIII. századtól a XVII. századig," 96; Kerny, "Patronage," 266.

<sup>464</sup> See Kerny, "A magyar szent királyok tisztelete és ikonográfiája a XIII. századtól a XVII. századig," 96, 98; Kerny, "Patronage," 265-267.

<sup>465</sup> Kerny, "Patronage," 266-267.

<sup>466</sup> On this topic see also Chapter 6.

<sup>467</sup> The placement of the Exaltation of the Cross and the Holy Kings on the south wall, next to the triumphal arch at Crișcior may be explained by the fact that the original side entrance to the church was on the north wall of the nave, a situation that conferred high visibility to the south wall, where part of the votive painting is also situated.

<sup>468</sup> Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei*, 168.

<sup>469</sup> On the history of the settlement see Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, 46-47, 84; Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei*, 165-168.

<sup>470</sup> The paintings of Khust were recently restored (2000 -2004) and need further research.

kings and the instrument of their victory. Thus, in the historical context of the Ottoman threat over Hungary, the three kings also appeared as the protectors of the kingdom against the enemies of the Cross.

The social position of the knezes, their military role, the rather favorable religious context for the Orthodox in the time of Sigismund<sup>471</sup> are all elements that help us to understand the presence of the Holy Kings in the painted decoration of the Orthodox churches. It is more difficult, however, to imagine the extent to which the cult of the three kings was integrated into liturgical practice, because no sources have been apparently preserved in this regard.<sup>472</sup> It has been argued, however, that, because some of the male members represented in the votive paintings have the name Vladislav (Ribîța), Laslo and Stephen (Crișcior), the Romanian founders of Ribîța and Crișcior must have had personal devotion for the Holy Kings.<sup>473</sup> The name Ladislav, with variants like Laslo, Lațcu, Vladislav or Vlad is indeed encountered among the knezes in medieval Hungary. The name leads us to another interesting issue, that of the adaptation of a saint's cult to specific needs and a different confession.

Two late sources call attention to another process that could have taken place with regard to the saints' cult, namely that of adaptation to specific needs and a different confession. Two legends of possibly medieval origin refer to "King Ladislav's" conversion to Orthodoxy.

The so-called "Legend of Ladislav and Sava" has been preserved in Dimitrie Cantemir's *Hronicul vechimei romano-moldo-vlahilor* [The Chronicle of the Antiquity of the Romano-Moldo-Vlachs] (second decade of the eighteenth century), who took and translated it from a "Bulgarian Chronicle," which also contained the story of Ladislav's fight with the Tatars.<sup>474</sup> The legend narrates how the Hungarian king Ladislav came into conflict with the Bulgarian king Vladislav, and the "metropolitan of the Bulgarians" Sava put an end to the conflict by his prayers followed by miracles. Impressed by the power of Sava's prayers, King Ladislav asked to be

<sup>471</sup> See Chapter 1.2. According to an account from 1868, in the church of Ribîța, there would have been an inscription reading "It was built under the shepherding of Pope Gregory and Anastasius, 1404." If true, the inscription suggests that the Pope had some authority over the Orthodox community (see more in Rusu, "Biserica românească de la Ribîța," 7-8).

<sup>472</sup> We know of one Romanian foundation, the church of Cuhea, in Maramureș, that in 1471 is mentioned as having the title of the Holy King Stephen. See Radu Popa, *Țara Maramureșului în veacul al XIV-lea* [The Maramureș Land in the fourteenth century] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997), 207-208, and Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii*, 120.

<sup>473</sup> Szliveszter Terdik, "A magyar szent királyok ábrázolásai román orthodox templomokban" [The representation of the Holy Kings of Hungary in Romanian Orthodox churches], in *Szent Imre 1000 éve*, 97.

<sup>474</sup> See the text of the legend in Ovidiu Pecican, *Troia, Veneția, Roma*, vol. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Ideea Europeană, 2007), 470-471.

baptized by the metropolitan. He thus converted to Orthodoxy receiving the name Vladislav and later he became a saint.

The other legend, the so-called “Gesta of Roman and Vlahata,” has been preserved in the “Moldo-Russian Chronicle,” included in the sixteenth century compilation of Russian chronicles *Voskresenskaja Letopis*.<sup>475</sup> The legend narrates the origins of the “Old Romans” and their settlement in Hungary. When King Ladislav of Hungary was attacked by the Tatars, he called the “Old Romans” to his aid. They were the descendants of Roman and Vlahata and lived in a town called “Roman,” in the “Old Rome.” As a reward for their support in battle, Ladislav gave them lands “in Maramureș, between the rivers Mureș and Tisa, the place called Criș.” He also allowed them to keep their Greek faith. According to the legend, King Ladislav was baptized by Sava, the Serbian archbishop who was also his relative, and kept the Orthodox faith in his heart, even though according to “his language and the royal law” he was a Latin.

It has been argued that the tradition about more historical figures concurred in the creation of the figure of King Ladislav in these legends, including among them the Holy King Ladislav. Ovidiu Pecican has recently dedicated several studies aimed to identify the historical context of the development of the two legends. In his opinion, both legends made use of the figure of Saint Ladislav and his purported Orthodoxy in order to ideologically support the religious and social needs of the Romanians in Hungary, at a particular time and space. In Pecican’s opinion, the Legend of Ladislav and Sava in the form transmitted through the so-called “Bulgarian Chronicle” was probably composed between 1366-1373 in the Banat, in a period of attempts to unite the Churches.<sup>476</sup> Pecican has also argued that the “Gesta of Roman and Vlahata” was probably written down for the first time between 1390 and 1439 in Maramureș, in an ecclesiastic or nobiliary setting, in order to support the privileged social position of the Romanians there.<sup>477</sup>

The adoption of the three Latin saints in an Orthodox setting required a strong social and political motivation, as well as a favorable ecclesiastical context. There is indeed no direct

<sup>475</sup> See Petre P. Panaitescu, ed., *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV-XVI publicate de Ion Bogdan* [The Slavic-Romanian chronicles from the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries published by Ion Bogdan] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1959), 152-161; Pecican, *Troia, Veneția, Roma*, 477-478.

<sup>476</sup> According to Pecican, the origins of the legend are in Serbia, in the second half of the thirteenth century. The version transmitted by the “Bulgarian Chronicle” resulted from the transformation of the original Serbian legend in a particular historical context that he describes. See Ovidiu Pecican, *Troia, Veneția, Roma*, vol. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Ideea Europeană, 2007), 249-286.

<sup>477</sup> Pecican, *Troia, Veneția, Roma*, 334-336; Ovidiu Pecican, “Die Gesta des Roman und Vlahata,” in *Interethnische- und Zivilisationsbeziehungen im siebenburgischen Raum. Historische Studien* (Studii de istorie a Transilvaniei III), ed. Sorin Mitu and Florin Gogâltan (Cluj: Asociația Istoricilor din Transilvania și Banat, 1996), 64-99.

evidence that the Latin Church, supported by the lay arm, imposed the cult of the Holy Kings or their depiction in Orthodox churches, even though the cult of dynastic saints was strongly supported by the Hungarian royal court and prelates and had a marked political character. Instead, the preserved sources show the knezes' efforts to avoid the loss of their privileges and to achieve full noble status. Therefore, they may have been interested or open to adopt the cult of the three Holy Kings. By representing the Holy Kings of Hungary in their churches the knezes acknowledged them as ideal rulers and showed their loyalty to the Crown. At the same time, they also displayed those whom they held to be grantors and protectors of their privileges. Furthermore, the kings' look of soldiers of Christ and their association with the Exaltation of the Cross seem to be a reference to a common concern for both Orthodox and Latins at the time: the Christian faith and the fight against its enemies. The case of the two legends about King Ladislas calls attention to a type of adaptation that may have been applied to the Hungarian Holy Kings although this phenomenon has only sparse documentation.

## 6. The Exaltation of the Cross

### 6.1 Description of the paintings in the churches of Ribița and Crișcior

Fragments of painting have been preserved in the churches of Crișcior and Ribița. They attest that a scene including St Helena was represented on the nave wall, next to the sanctuary and to the representation of the Holy Kings of Hungary.

At Ribița the empress is represented on the south wall of the nave, next to the triumphal arch (figs. 6.1 and 6.2). Her figure is for the most part preserved, and above her head a fragment of an inscription reads: [ΕΛΕ]ΝΑ Ц[Α]РНИЦА (Empress Helena). Behind the empress there is a smaller figure whose head is no longer visible. The left half of the scene has been completely destroyed by the opening for a new window. St Helena is represented standing, in frontal pose. To her right there must have been an upright cross, from which only the end of the horizontal arm is now visible. She probably supported the cross with her right hand, while with her left she presented it. The empress wears a yellow dress adorned with white pearls grouped by four. White pearls also trim her cuffs, arm-bands and waist sash decorated with a palmette creeping stem. The pearl decoration surprisingly extends to the inner side of her mantle. The latter has bluish-gray color with blue horizontal strips, a stylized look of a fur-lining, which seemingly the painter misunderstood and further embellished with pearls.<sup>478</sup> The exterior of Helena's mantle is red and decorated with small undulating lines. Patterns of this type but in a brown or black color on a white or light background were commonly used to depict ermine.<sup>479</sup>

At Ribița, St Helena wears a white veil and a Western type of crown (fig. 6.3). The veil is frilled around her face and falls onto her shoulders. Frilled veils were popular in medieval Western Europe from the end of the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century, but the thick border of Helena's veil rather suggests a particular type called *nebulé* or *Kruseler*, which was composed of

<sup>478</sup> See for example, the fur-lined mantle of St Helena at Čerín, Martjanci and Štítňík (figs. 6.33, 6.34, 6.35).

<sup>479</sup> See for example, the mantle of St Helena at Sliache, Ragály and Velyka Byihan' (figs. 6.28, 6.29, 6.38), of St Elisabeth at Porumbenii Mari (fig. 6.6) or the mantle of St Barbara at Liptovský Ondrej (fig. 6.8).



several layers of thin veils frilled at the edges. Such multi-layered frilled veils were fashionable in Central and Northern Europe from around the middle of the fourteenth to the first decades of the fifteenth century.<sup>480</sup> St Helena wears a fur-lined mantle and such a headdress – although more voluminous and also with a frilled lower rim -- in the majority of representations of her in medieval Hungarian churches (see e.g. figs. 6.33, 6.28, 6.29, 6.30, 6.35, 6.38, 6.53, 6.54). The same outfit may be seen in the depiction of other royals figures, such as St Elisabeth of Hungary (fig. 6.6)<sup>481</sup> and the various queens represented in the *Illuminated Chronicle* (1358) (fig. 6.4). A veil with less rich borders, closer to the type represented at Ribița, may be seen in the recently uncovered depiction of St Helena in the Evangelical church of Dârlos (fifteenth century) (fig. 6.52).<sup>482</sup> It appears that the *Kruseler* fashion even touched the princely court of neighboring Wallachia. Anne, the wife of Voivode Vladislav I (1364-ca.1376), an intermittent vassal of Louis I of Hungary, was represented in the church of St Nicholas at Curtea de Argeș most probably wearing such a headdress. This head gear was misinterpreted, however, in the nineteenth-century repainting (fig. 6.7).<sup>483</sup>

The representation of St Helena at Ribița has important common features with the Western model that circulated in medieval Hungary. However, there are also elements of Byzantine tradition in the representation of her garments including:<sup>484</sup> decorative motifs such as the white pearls and the palmette creeping stem as well as the type of tunic with ornamental bands on the

<sup>480</sup> Thiel, *Geschichte*, 211; Wagner, *Medieval Costume*, 18-19; Stela Mary Newton, *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince. A Study of the Years 1340-1365* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1980), 87-88, 94-97; Scott, "Die Höfische Kleidung," 268.

<sup>481</sup> See for example, the image of St Elisabeth in the reformed church of Porumbeni Mari (Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések*, vol. 1, 81) and Keszthely (Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet*, fig. 1281).

<sup>482</sup> Thanks to Dr. Zsombor Jékely for calling my attention to the recently uncovered paintings in the church of Dârlos.

<sup>483</sup> On the identification of the figures represented in the votive painting and its dating (1369 or 1365) see Nicolae Constantinescu, "Curtea domnească din Argeș, probleme de geneză și evoluție" [The princely court of Argeș, problems of genesis and evolution], *Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice* 40 (1971), no. 3, 17-18; Barbu, *Pictura murală*, 25-26; Pavel Chihaia, "Contribuții la identificarea portretelor din biserica Sfântul Nicolae Domnesc și din biserica lui Neagoe de la Curtea de Argeș" [Contributions to the identification of the portraits in the princely church of St Nicholas and in the church of Neagoe Basarab at Curtea de Argeș], in Pavel Chihaia, *Artă medievală*, vol. 1, *Monumente din cetățile de scaun ale Țării Românești* [Medieval art. Monuments in the princely seats of Wallachia] (Bucharest: Albatros, 1998), 77-79. Pavel Chihaia has assumed the painting was made in 1827 after a 17<sup>th</sup>-century model in the church of Neagoe Basarab, which in its turn, was a copy of the fourteenth-century original (see also Pavel Chihaia, "Despre biserica domnească din Curtea de Argeș și confesiunea primilor voievozi ai Țării Românești" [On the princely church in Curtea de Argeș and the religious confession of the first voivodes of Wallachia] in *Artă medievală*, vol. 1, 44-45).

<sup>484</sup> The combination of Byzantine and Western iconographic elements is also visible in other paintings of the same church.

upper arms and the waist sash.<sup>485</sup> The figure behind St Helena also wears a yellow dress decorated with white pearls, and a waist sash with a rhomboid motif and with a pearl trim. Unfortunately, the left half of the scene was destroyed by the subsequent opening of a large window in the wall. While Sts Constantine and Helena flanking the Cross would be a common theme in the naos of an Orthodox church, the presence of the female attendant is reminiscent of depictions of the finding of the Holy Cross. In scenes representing the Finding of the Cross by St Helena, the empress usually has a retinue, but in depictions of Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross attendants never appear.

In the church of Crișcior, on the lower register of the south wall and east of the Holy Kings of Hungary, some fragments of painting have been preserved, which suggest a scene inspired, again, from the finding of the Holy Cross (figs. 6.9-6.13). Originally, the painting was situated next to the triumphal arch, but after the demolishing of the first sanctuary and the extension of the nave to the east, it came to occupy the middle of the south wall. At present, the scene is almost completely destroyed, partly because of the opening of a new door in the wall. However, some essential details of the scene have been preserved. One can still see a fragment of St Helena's head, accompanied by the inscription ἀει[α] [φά]πθφ[ύ]. St Helena wears the same type of veil as at Ribîța and a Western type of crown (fig. 6.11). To the right of St Helena, fragments of an upright, double cross are still visible. The double or "patriarchal" cross, whose upper arm represents the *titulus*, and the triple cross, which in addition displays the *suppendaneum*, signified the True Cross. These types were extremely widespread in Byzantine iconography, including in the depictions of Sts Constantine and Helena and in the Exaltation of the Cross.<sup>486</sup> In the West, the single cross-bar cross type – the so-called "Latin cross" – is the most common in representations of St Helena or the Legend of the Cross. From the examples preserved from medieval Hungary, the double cross appears only in depictions of Sts Constantine and Helena at Vizsoly (fig. 6.51) and Dârlos (fig. 6.52), and in the Finding of the

<sup>485</sup> This type of female dress can be found in Byzantine art, but is not specific to the imperial dress. In artistic representations, the costume of Byzantine empresses consists of either the *chlamys* – an ankle-length mantle of semicircular cut – usually fastened on the right shoulder, and a full-length tunic, or, most frequently, of a gown and the *loros*, a long, decorated scarf draped round the torso. Byzantine empresses wear an open crown with the upper rim adorned with arched or pointed projections. The crown rests either directly on their hair or on a hairnet or kerchief, which covers the hair and upper part of the shoulders. On Byzantine imperial costume see Parani, *Reconstructing*, 11-50.

<sup>486</sup> On various types crosses see *LCI* 2, col. 569-570. On the double and triple cross and its significance in Byzantine art see also Kühnel, "Kreuzfahrerrideologie," 398-400.

Cross at Sântămărie Orlea (fig. 6.41). As shown by their style, the paintings at Dârlos and Sântămărie Orlea relied to a great extent on the Byzantine artistic tradition.

To the right of the Cross at Crișcior there was another figure, richly dressed and seemingly supporting the Cross with his left hand. On the lower part of the Cross one can see three hands of smaller proportions, two of them supporting the Cross from behind (fig. 6.12). To the left of the upper part of the Cross, part of the title of the scene has been preserved: [...]aro κ[...]. The inscription has been interpreted in different ways. Sorin Ullea, followed by Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, has proposed its completion as “The Exaltation of the Venerated Cross” – [въздви́женіе хр҃сѣθv]ϣ̣γ̣ξ κ[π̣ρ̣ς̣ϣ̣] -- arguing that this is the name of the Byzantine feast and the Finding of the Holy Cross is an unusual scene in Orthodox painting.<sup>487</sup> Sorin Ullea considers that the scene contains no references to the finding of the Cross but rather that it represents the elevation of the Cross, solemnly supported on each side by Patriarch Macarius and St Helena.<sup>488</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei suggests that the scene at Crișcior was a combination of the finding of the Holy Cross by St Helena and its elevation by Patriarch Macarius in Jerusalem. He would be the figure represented on the left.<sup>489</sup> Irina Tugearu has proposed a partial completion of the inscription -- [ρβ-ς]ϣ̣γ̣ξ κ[π̣ρ̣ς̣ϣ̣], “of the Holy Cross” – and she has also proposed that the figure to the left is Patriarch Macarius.<sup>490</sup> Cincheza-Buculei and Tugearu consider that there is a similarity between the painting of Crișcior and the central part of the Finding of the Holy Cross represented in the Transylvanian Reformed church of Sântămărie Orlea (1311) (figs. 6.41-6.44). The two main figures flanking the Cross at Sântămărie Orlea have been identified by many art historians as Empress Helena and Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem, but the latter’s identification is, in my opinion, questionable.<sup>491</sup>

Enough iconographic details have been preserved from both scenes of Ribița and Crișcior to indicate that it was not the usual Byzantine icons of Constantine and Helena or the Exaltation of the Holy Cross were represented in these churches. In order to propose a possible completion of the fragments existing today and to understand the message these representations would have conveyed to their medieval beholders, I will address the themes of Constantine, Helena, the

<sup>487</sup> Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 44-45; Buculei, “Crișcior,” 39.

<sup>488</sup> Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 44-47.

<sup>489</sup> Buculei, “Crișcior,” 38-40.

<sup>490</sup> Tugearu, “Crișcior,” 78-80, 92.

<sup>491</sup> The scene of the Finding of the Cross at Sântămărie Orlea and its similarity with the parallel scene at Crișcior is addressed in subchapters 3 and 4 respectively.

Finding and the Exaltation of the Cross in Byzantine and Western art in the following. Afterwards I will take a special look at these subjects in medieval Hungarian painting.

## **6.2. Saints Constantine and Helena, the Exaltation and the Finding of the Holy Cross in Byzantine Tradition**

In medieval Orthodox churches, Sts Constantine and Helena were represented in imperial garments, standing on each side of the Cross, which they usually hold together (figs. 6.14-6.16). Compared to this iconographic theme, the Exaltation, and especially the Finding of the Holy Cross occur much more rarely in Byzantine art. The representation of Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross most probably goes back to the beginning of the fifth century,<sup>492</sup> but, as the preserved sources suggest, the image enjoyed its greatest success after iconoclasm.<sup>493</sup> In the Middle and Late Byzantine period, the subject is represented in various artistic media, but the largest number of examples has been preserved on cross reliquaries and in wall paintings.<sup>494</sup> In illuminated *menologia*,<sup>495</sup> Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross illustrate the feast of the saints, on May 21.<sup>496</sup> However, the message of this image was strongly connected not only to the cult of Constantine and Helena, but also to the cult of the Cross, because the lives and cult of the two emperors were intimately interwoven with the history and cult of the Cross. Constantine and Helena's cult developed gradually from the fourth century onwards. From at least the ninth century they were commemorated together on May 21.<sup>497</sup> The readings for the feast in the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*<sup>498</sup> narrate the main events in their lives:

<sup>492</sup> Klaus Wessel, "Konstantin u. Helena," *RBK*, vol. 4, col. 363-364; Frolov, *Les reliquaires*, 220-223. See also more recently della Valle, "Iconografia," 315-321.

<sup>493</sup> Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross."

<sup>494</sup> Wessel, "Konstantin u. Helena," *RBK*, vol. 4, col. 363-366; Frolov, *Les reliquaires*, 217-219; Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross," 176-187; Walter, *Constantine*, 46-51, 65-76, 99-103.

<sup>495</sup> The *menologia* are collections of saints' lives arranged according to their feast date. The text may also include homilies for the respective feast. The late tenth-century collection compiled by Symeon Metaphrastes was to become the standard edition of the *menologion* (*ODB*, vol. 2, 1341).

<sup>496</sup> Wessel, "Konstantin u. Helena," *RBK*, vol. 4, col. 366.

<sup>497</sup> Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross," 170; Walter, *Constantine*, 46.

<sup>498</sup> The *synaxarion* is a liturgical book that contains the text to be read at matins (*orthros*), which narrate the life of the celebrated saint or the history of the feast. The texts are much shorter than those in the *menologia* and were included in the *menaia* (*ODB*, vol. 3, 1991). The *Synaxarion* of Constantinople probably formed in the tenth century. A later version of it, preserved in the twelfth-thirteenth-century *Codex Sirmondianus*, has been critically edited by Hypolyte Delehaye in *Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris. Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e codice Sirmondiano, nunc Berolinesi, adiectis synaxariis selectis* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1902).

Constantine's vision of the Cross and his victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine's building of Constantinople and his dedication of the city to God, his summoning of the first Council at Nicaea, Helena's finding of the True Cross in Jerusalem, her death after her return to Constantinople and Constantine's death and burial in the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.<sup>499</sup> The *troparion*<sup>500</sup> for the feast in the *Typikon of the Great Church*<sup>501</sup> celebrates Constantine as Christ's apostle among the emperors, who, being called to the faith directly by God, like Paul, placed the imperial city in the hands of God.<sup>502</sup> In the *Menaion*,<sup>503</sup> the liturgical texts of the feast present Constantine as equal to the apostles (ἰσαπόστολος) and the ideal Christian ruler who was invested by God and who laid the basis of the Christian empire. He is revered as the protector of the Church and of the orthodox faith as well as as a wise, just and merciful ruler.<sup>504</sup> In the *Synaxarium* and the *Menaion*, Helena is praised as Constantine's wise and faithful mother.<sup>505</sup> The main event of her life referred to in this context is the finding of the True Cross. At Constantine's request and inspired by her love for Christ she went to Jerusalem and found the True Cross, restoring to the faithful the main instrument of the Passion and the sign of Christ's victory. The Cross is the victorious weapon against all enemies, and Sts Constantine and Helena's mediation is invoked for all orthodox emperors and for the Christ-loving army.<sup>506</sup>

Another feast in which the two saints are involved is the Exaltation of the Cross, celebrated on September 14. The feast originated in Jerusalem, where it commemorated the finding of the Holy Cross and the dedication of the Martyrium on Golgotha and of the Anastasis rotunda.<sup>507</sup> At least from the beginning of the seventh century, it was also celebrated in the Constantinopolitan church of St Sophia. The lection of the *Synaxarium* for the feast narrates the vision of

<sup>499</sup> *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, col. 697-700.

<sup>500</sup> The *troparion* is a liturgical stanza (see *ODB*, vol. 3, 2124).

<sup>501</sup> The *typikon* is a liturgical book containing instructions for the celebration of the feasts (see *ODB* 3, 2131-2132). The *Typikon of the Great Church* was the liturgical ordinal of Hagia Sophia church in Constantinople. The earliest preserved manuscripts of the *Typikon of the Great Church* date from the tenth century. (see *ODB* 3, 2132-2133)

<sup>502</sup> *Le Typicon*, vol.1, 296-297.

<sup>503</sup> The *menaion* is a set of twelve volumes, one for each month, contains the texts proper to the vespers and the matins (*orthros*) of the feasts that have a fixed date (*ODB*, vol. 2, 1338).

<sup>504</sup> *Menaion tou Maiou*, 72-78. For a synthesis of Constantine's cult as resulting from the Greek liturgical sources see also Konstantinos G. Pitsakis, "Sainteté et empire. A propos de la sainteté impériale: formes de sainteté 'd'office' et de sainteté collective dans l'Empire d'Orient?," *Bizantinistica* 3 (2001), 193-201.

<sup>505</sup> *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, col. 700; *Menaion tou Maiou*, 72-78.

<sup>506</sup> See the chant in honor of Sts Constantine and Helena by Patriarch Methodios (843-847) (*Menaion tou Maiou*, 78; W. Christ and M. Paraniakas, ed., *Anthologia graeca carminum christianorum* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1871), 99)

<sup>507</sup> On the history of the feast see P. Bernardakis, "Le culte de la croix chez les grecs," *Échos d'Orient* 5 (1901-1902), 195-199; Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 17-39.

Constantine and the finding of the True Cross by Helena.<sup>508</sup> Probably, the feast of the Exaltation received a new impulse when, in 631, Emperor Heraclius (610-641) restored the relic to Jerusalem after it had been captured by the Persians in 614.<sup>509</sup> A few years later in the face of the Arab invasion, in 635, Heraclius transferred the Cross to Constantinople. The relic was solemnly installed in the church of St Sophia by the Patriarch Sergius. In the Byzantine liturgy there were also other feasts celebrating the Cross, including the third Sunday of Lent, the Holy Friday, March 6, May 7 and August 1. The first two were more important than the other, minor, celebrations.<sup>510</sup>

Constantine had his vision of the Cross before the battle against Maxentius,<sup>511</sup> which took place in 312, at the Milvian Bridge, or, according to other sources, before a fight against a horde of barbarians by the Danube.<sup>512</sup> On the eve of the battle, Constantine had the vision of a brilliant cross in the sky, accompanied by the words “By This Conquer.” He had a military standard with the sign of the Cross made and defeated the pagan Maxentius. This event significantly reinforced his option for Christian faith and the sign of the Cross became his safeguard against every hostile power.

I am going to elaborate more on the legend of the Finding of the Cross, whose main protagonist is Empress Helena because the details of the legend are important for understanding the iconography of the subject. The legend came into being between the end of the fourth century and the middle of the fifth century. Its earliest versions have been classified into three groups: the so-called *Helena Legend*, the *Protonike Legend* and the *Judas Cyriacus Legend*.<sup>513</sup> The *Judas*

<sup>508</sup> *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, col. 43-45. See also in Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 16-17, the English translation of the full text dedicated to the feast in the *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. gr. 1613).

<sup>509</sup> Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 35.

<sup>510</sup> On these feasts see Bernardakis, “Le culte,” 257-264; Joseph Hallit, “La croix dans le culte byzantin. Histoire et théologie,” *Parole de l’Orient* 3, no. 2 (1972), 287, 293-302; Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 3-4.

<sup>511</sup> See Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Imperatoris Constantini*, Book 1, chapters 28-29 (PG 20, col. 943).

<sup>512</sup> Some details of the legend vary from one author to another. In one version of the legend, which early on was attached to the legend of the Finding of the Cross in its Judas-Cyriacus variant, Constantine’s vision took place by the Danube, on the eve of his battle against a horde of barbarians (Stephan Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiskell International, 1991), 151). The text for the feast in the *Menologion of Basil II* (Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 16) and in some *synaxaria* (see *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, col. 43) makes reference also to the variant according to which Constantine fought the “Scythians” (actually the Goths) at the Danube. In the *Ecclesiastical History* of Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (ca. 1256-1317), Book VII, chapters 29, 47, 49, and in the panegyric that the Patriarch Euthymius of Tirnovo (1375-1393) dedicated to Sts Constantine and Helena, Constantine has no less than three visions of the Cross, one of them by the Danube, on the occasion of his fight against the Scythians (see PG 145, col. 1327 and Mihăilă, *Cultură*, 230).

<sup>513</sup> See Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*. The *Protonike Legend* attributed the discovery of the Cross to Protonike, the wife of Emperor Claudius (41-54). Its area of distribution was confined to the Syriac and Armenian speaking regions.

*Cyriacus Legend*, whose earliest versions are in Syriac, Greek and Latin, dates from the first half of the fifth century and became the most popular and widespread version in the Middle Ages.<sup>514</sup> The legend narrates how Helena went to Jerusalem and found the Holy Cross. Once in Jerusalem, she asked the help of Judas, a Jew who had a good knowledge of the Law, in order to find the place where the Cross was buried. Initially, Judas refused to collaborate. Helena punished him by having him thrown into a dry well. After seven days of starvation, Judas agreed to collaborate and, in answer to his prayers, God revealed to him the place where the Cross was hidden. He immediately started digging and found the cross of Christ and the two crosses of the robbers who were crucified with him. The True Cross was identified when Judas placed it on a dead youth who came back to life as a result. During the process of the finding of the Cross, Judas converted, recognizing Christ as Savior of the world. He received baptism, and would later become bishop of Jerusalem under the name of Cyriacus. At Helena's request, he also miraculously found the Holy Nails. Cyriacus, who represents the converted Jew, suffered martyrdom under Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363).<sup>515</sup> In the *Helena Legend*, the Judas Cyriacus figure is absent and the empress discovers the place of Golgotha by divine revelation. The testing of the Cross is carried out by Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem.<sup>516</sup> Macarius places the True Cross on a mortally ill woman, who is cured as a result. Both variants of the legend circulated in Byzantine and in the Orthodox world in general.

In some accounts of the story, after the discovery Macarius raises the Cross so that everybody can see and venerate it.<sup>517</sup> Actually, the lifting up of the Cross is the central ritual element in the liturgical celebration of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.<sup>518</sup> It gave the feast its name (Ἡ Ὑψωσις τοῦ τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ) and, besides recalling the finding of the Cross, expresses its triumph. The ritual as performed in the church of St Sophia in Constantinople also

<sup>514</sup> On the Judas Cyriacus Legend see Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 165-180, and Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 145-184.

<sup>515</sup> Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 179-180; Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 150-151.

<sup>516</sup> Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 79-80, 141-142; Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 40-46.

<sup>517</sup> See e.g. *Menologion of Basil II* (976-1025) (Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 17) and *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, col. 44.

<sup>518</sup> On the ritual elevation of the Cross and in general on the liturgical celebration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross see *Le Typicon*, vol.1, 28-33; *Menaion tou Septemvriou*, 87-96; Bernardakis, "Le culte," 199-202; Holger A. Klein, "Constantine, Helena and the Cult of the True Cross in Constantinople," in *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, ed. Jannic Durand and Bernard Flusin (Paris: Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2004), 41-51.

inspired the icon of the feast.<sup>519</sup> The earliest preserved example is in the *Menologion of Basil II* (976-1025), Vat. Gr. 1613, dated to ca. 1000 (fig. 6.17). The image represents a bishop on an ambo holding up a cross. He is accompanied by four clerics on the side stairs. With some variations, the image is present in other liturgical manuscripts, icons and churches.<sup>520</sup> Sometimes a haloed emperor also attends the ceremony (fig. 6.18). According to the *Book of Ceremonies*, the emperor took part in the ritual of the elevation of the Cross, standing on the steps of the ambo.<sup>521</sup> From the sixteenth century on, there are representations that associate the exaltation with scenes from the Legend of the Cross in the same composition: the finding and/or the testing of the Cross (fig. 6.19, 6.20).<sup>522</sup> The *Painter's Guide* by Dionysius of Fournà (1733) prescribes, for the Exaltation of the Cross, the depiction of Patriarch Macarius on an ambo, elevating the Cross. According to Dionysius, St Helena, officials and a multitude of people looking upwards with their hands raised should be represented below the ambo.<sup>523</sup>

The Exaltation of the Cross, along with the third Sunday of the Great Lent and Friday of the Holy Week were the most important Byzantine feasts dedicated to the veneration of the Holy Cross. For the most part, the liturgical texts of the feast of the Exaltation refer to the Cross as an instrument of Salvation, celebrating once again the Resurrection of Christ. The Cross is also venerated as the protector of emperors, of the empire and of Christian people against enemies.

<sup>519</sup> George Galavaris, "Kreuz II. Teil: K. nachikonoklastisch," *RBK*, vol. 5, col. 277; Sirapie Der Nersessian, "La 'Fête de l'Exaltation de la Croix,'" *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 10 (1950), Mélanges Henri Grégoire, 193-198; Kurt Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 294.

<sup>520</sup> Galavaris, "Kreuz II," *RBK*, vol. 5, col. 277-278; Der Nersessian, "La 'Fête,'" 193; Vokotopoulos, "Η Εὑρεση," 260-261; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 153-155; Walter, *Constantine*, 116-121, figs. 110 and 111.

<sup>521</sup> Walter, *Constantine*, 117.

<sup>522</sup> Stylianos, *By This Conquer*, 99-106; Vokotopoulos, "Η Εὑρεση." Vokotopoulos assumes that there could lie a Palaeologan, probably Constantinopolitan model from the second half of the fourteenth century behind the Cretan icons that combine the Exaltation and the Finding of the Cross on two registers. Vokotopoulos's arguments are that this type of iconography cannot be found in the numerous painted churches on Crete and that the iconography of other subject matters represented on Cretan icons had its origins in Constantinopolitan art (Vokotopoulos, "Η Εὑρεση," 261-262, 265). Two churches in Moldavia also preserve compositions in which the Exaltation is accompanied by the Finding (Arbore (1541 or 1503-1520)) or both the Finding and the Testing of the Cross (Dobrovăț (1527-1531)). On the recently restored paintings in the narthex of Arbore see the summary of Terezia Sinigalia's paper "De nouveau sur la peinture du narthex de l'église Arbore," in "Session annuelle du département d'art médiéval de l'Institut d'Histoire de l'Art 'G. Oprescu' de Bucharest: nouvelles données dans la recherche de l'art médiéval de Roumanie (2004, 2005)," *RRHA* 43 (2006), 85-86; Constanța Costea, "The Sources of the Medieval Painter. The Cycle of Saint John the Baptist at Arbore," *RRHA* 43 (2006), 3-9. On the painting at Dobrovăț see Ștefănescu, *L'art byzantin*, 108-109, pl. LI, 2; Vasile Drăguț, *Dobrovăț* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1984), 32; Constanța Costea, "Narthexul Dobrovățului" [The narthex of Dobrovăț], *RMI* 60, no. 1 (1991), 21.

<sup>523</sup> Dionysius of Fournà, *Carte*, 205.



The Cross is also the emperors' weapon for peace and an unconquerable trophy.<sup>524</sup> Some of the liturgical hymns also make explicit reference to Constantine's vision of the Cross and to the finding of the Cross by Helena.<sup>525</sup> The vision and the finding are seen as two related events: the vision revealed the Cross as an instrument of victory, while the finding went further by bringing the True Cross to light and thus ultimately establishing its triumph.

A twelfth-century Byzantine hymn explicitly links the vision and the finding of the Cross with the image of the two emperors and the Cross: Constantine saw the Cross in the sky, Helena found it buried in the ground, but both of them consolidated its veneration on earth. It is therefore appropriate to reunite the three in a single image.<sup>526</sup> Probably Constantine and Helena with the Cross may also represent an icon for the feast of the Exaltation. The liturgical and iconographic context in which this image was used support this assertion. Constantine and Helena with the Cross expressed the triumph of the Christian emperors and of Christianity in general. Statues of Constantine and Helena flanking the cross existed in Constantinople on top of the *Milion*, in the Forum of Constantine and in the Forum Bovis.<sup>527</sup> The image of the Cross containing the relic is flanked by Constantine and Helena on many Cross reliquaries dating from the tenth century on as well.<sup>528</sup> The reliquaries of the Cross were displayed for public veneration during feasts associated with the Cross, among them the feast of the Exaltation too.<sup>529</sup> The presence of the two emperors indicated their contribution to the consolidation of the Cross's cult and, by referring to the finding, guaranteed the authenticity of the relic.<sup>530</sup> It has been argued that the use of this type of representation for reliquaries contributed to the perception of Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross as an icon of the True Cross.<sup>531</sup> Also, because the Finding of the Cross seems to have been so rare in Byzantine art, some scholars have assumed that the composition of Constantine and Helena on either side of the Cross represented this event

<sup>524</sup> *Le Typicon*, vol. 1, 29-33; *Menaion tou Septemvriou*, 87-96; Bernardakis, "Le culte," 199-201.

<sup>525</sup> *Menaion tou Septemvriou*, 89.

<sup>526</sup> Jacob Gretser, *Opera omnia*, vol. 3 (Regensburg, 1734-), 349, cited in Frolow, *Les reliquaires*, 224.

<sup>527</sup> Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross," 172, 174-176; della Valle, "Iconografia," 317. The *Milion* was a structure with a dome supported by four arches, which marked the center of the city (see *ODB*, vol. 2, 1346).

<sup>528</sup> Frolow, *Les reliquaires*, 217-225; Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross," 182-187.

<sup>529</sup> The two saints are sometimes represented on processional crosses (Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross," 186).

<sup>530</sup> Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross," 182.

<sup>531</sup> Frolow, *Les reliquaires*, 217; Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross," 188.

symbolically.<sup>532</sup> It has been supposed that the use of Constantine and Helena with the Cross to illustrate the feast of the Finding of the Cross in two twelfth-century manuscripts in the West reflected a Byzantine approach to the image.<sup>533</sup>

In Middle and Late Byzantine churches, and in medieval Orthodox churches in general, Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross are frequently represented, usually in the row of saints, in the lowest register of church decoration.<sup>534</sup> The Exaltation of the Cross was rarely depicted in churches during the Byzantine period. If the church had a painted calendar cycle -- in scholarly literature called painted *menologion* or *synaxarion* -- then the Exaltation could be part of it, as for example in the churches of Staro Nagoričino (1316-1318) (fig. 6.21 ), Gračanica (1321-1322) (fig. 6.18), Dečani (1348-1350) and Markov Manastir (1371).<sup>535</sup> Outside the painted *synaxaria*, the representation of the Exaltation in a church remains extremely rare. To my knowledge, only a few medieval cases have been preserved, all in Cretan village churches: the church of Saint Paraskevi in Arkadi (Mylopotamos, Rethymnon, ca. 1400),<sup>536</sup> the church of Saint George in Ano Viannos (Viannos, Herakleion, 1401),<sup>537</sup> and the church of Sts Constantine and Helena in Avdou (Pedias, Herakleion, 1445).<sup>538</sup> In these churches the scene is represented on the barrel vault of the naos. At Avdou it is accompanied by the Finding of the Cross and other scenes from Constantine's life.

The iconography of the Exaltation in the church of Saint George in Ano Viannos is peculiar and ecclesiastical and political messages have been attributed to it. The painting of the church was commissioned by George Damoro, probably a local landowner, and realized by a painter who was also a priest.<sup>539</sup> In the Exaltation scene, a holy bishop elevates the Cross together with other instruments of the Passion towards the Hetoimasia, the throne prepared for the Last Judgment, on which the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit is represented (fig. 6.22). A group of holy bishops

<sup>532</sup> Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 33, 63-64; George Galavaris, "Kreuz II," *RBK*, vol. 5, col. 277. It has been noted that no representation of the Finding exists on the preserved Byzantine Cross reliquaries, although Sts Constantine and Helena are depicted on some of them (Vokotopoulos, "Η Εὑρεση," 260; Frolow, *Les reliquaires*, 217-225).

<sup>533</sup> Baert, *Heritage*, 128.

<sup>534</sup> For examples see Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross;" Walter, *Constantine*, 99-104.

<sup>535</sup> *RBK* V, Kreuz, 278; Pavle Mijović, *Menolog* (Belgrade, 1973), 260, 287, 318, 346, and figs. 19, 119.

<sup>536</sup> Walter, *Constantine*, 116, fig. 111; Ioannis Spatharakis, *Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete. Rethymnon Province*, vol. 1 (London: The Pindar Press, 1999), 85-90, fig. 80.

<sup>537</sup> Walter, *Constantine*, 116-121, fig. 110; Spatharakis, *Rethymnon*, 90-97; Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete* (Leiden: Alexandros Press, 2001), 148-152, fig. 131; Titos Papamastorakis, "Η ένταξη των προεικονίσεων της Θεοτόκου και της Ύψωσης του Σταυρού σε ένα ιδιότυπο εικονογραφικό κύκλο στον Άγιο Γεώργιο Βιάννου Κρήτης," *DChAE* 14 (1987-1988), 315-328.

<sup>538</sup> Spatharakis, *Dated*, 197-199; Walter, *Constantine*, 122.

<sup>539</sup> Papamastorakis, "Η ένταξη," 315.

wearing polystavria are shown on the left. In front of them there are three small figures, two of them wearing black garments and black headdresses. The first bishop places his right hand on the head of one of these small figures, who holds an open book with the text “the Elevated Cross.” Several emperors also attend the ceremony, the majority grouped on the right side. Before them stand Sts Constantine and Helena. Titos Papamastorakis has suggested that three small figures represent real persons who were members of the clergy. In his opinion, the gesture of the first bishop is a blessing or an ordination gesture, meant to express the authority and protection of the Orthodox Church over the Cretan Greek clergy.<sup>540</sup> The throne, the symbol of the Father, with only the dove on it and without the book, which signifies the Son, was meant to express the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, as opposed to the Latin dogma of Filioque.<sup>541</sup> In Papamastorakis’s understanding, the group of emperors refers to the Palaiologan dynasty and one of them, represented separately on the left, could have been the actual Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425).<sup>542</sup> The scholar concludes that besides its theological message, the painting was an expression of an attitude against the Latin occupation and against the renewed and disputed attempts at the Union of the Churches.<sup>543</sup>

Judging from the preserved sources, the representation of the Finding of the Cross was also very rare in Byzantine art, in striking contrast with its frequent occurrence in Western art. A few cases are known in Byzantine art: the miniature in the *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Paris. gr. 510, f. 440r (879-882)<sup>544</sup> (fig. 6.23), and the wall paintings in two Cretan churches: the *parekklesion* of the church of the Mother of God in Spina (Chania, end of the fourteenth century) (fig. 6.24) and the church of Sts Constantine and Helena in Avdou (1445).<sup>545</sup> In all these cases,

<sup>540</sup> Papamastorakis, “Η ένταξη,” 323, 326.

<sup>541</sup> Papamastorakis, “Η ένταξη,” 326.

<sup>542</sup> Papamastorakis, “Η ένταξη,” 326.

<sup>543</sup> Papamastorakis, “Η ένταξη,” 326-327.

<sup>544</sup> Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 163-169, fig. 45; Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 29-33; Vasiliki Tsamakda, “Zwei seltene Szenen aus der Kreuzauffindungslegende in Kreta,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 97 (2004), 162-163; Walter, *Constantine*, 56-58.

<sup>545</sup> On the Cretan paintings, see Tsamakda, “Zwei seltene Szenen,” Walter, *Constantine*, 115, 122; Spatharakis, *Dated*, 198. Another quite poorly preserved painting in the church of St Constantin in Kritsa (Merabello, Lassithi, 1354/55) can also be considered a representation of the Finding of the Cross, as previously identified by Maria Vasilaki, “Εικονογραφικοί κύκλοι από τη ζωή του Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου σε εκκλησίες της Κρήτης,” *Κρητική Εστία* 4, no. 1 (1987), 80, note 56. Vasiliki Tsamakda and Christopher Walter have identified it as the Testing of the Cross, because there seems to be no digging going on and the empress and the bishop are shown sitting (Tsamakda, “Zwei seltene Szenen,” 164-165; Walter, *Constantine*, 113-114, fig. 106). I consider Vasilaki’s interpretation more plausible, especially because the four nails are shown as they would lie in the pit, on either side of the cross. Also, in

the Finding is accompanied by other scenes from the Legend of the Finding or the life of Constantine. The Finding scene at the Spina church and in the ninth-century manuscript show a figure, probably Judas, unearthing the Cross, with Helena watching from the edge of the pit and onlookers standing behind Judas. It has been also assumed that the miniatures in two Carolingian manuscripts dating from around 800 depicting events from the Legend of the Finding of the Cross reflect Byzantine models (fig. 6.25).<sup>546</sup> Based on the preserved examples, in the Orthodox world the theme reappears only in the post-Byzantine period. As already noted, it is associated on icons with the Exaltation of the Cross, while in wall paintings it can be also part of a larger cycle dedicated to Sts Constantine and Helena or to the Legend of the Finding of the Cross as in Cypriot, Serbian or Moldavian churches.<sup>547</sup> It has been argued that the stress put on the figure of

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post-Byzantine Cretan icons a somehow similar scheme is used for the Finding of the Cross (see illustrations in Vokotopoulos, “Η Εὑρεση”). The painting is accompanied by two scenes from the life of Constantine. George Galavaris also mentions the existence of a fragment of the Finding scene in the paintings of the church of the Holy Cross Monastery, in Georgia, probably dating from the fourteenth century (Galavaris, “Kreuz II,” in *RBK*, vol. 5, col. 277).

<sup>546</sup> The manuscripts are the *Wessobrunner Gebetbuch* (Ms. clm. 22053, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich) and the Vercelli *Canones conciliarum* (Ms. CLXV, Biblioteca Capitolare, Vercelli). On the eighteen miniatures that illustrate the legend of the Finding of the Cross in the *Wessobrunner Gebetbuch*, see Stylianos, *By This Conquer*, 21-28, Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 28-44, and Baert, *Heritage*, 72-76. On the two miniatures inspired by the legend of the Finding of the Cross in the Vercelli manuscript see Stylianos, *By This Conquer*, 29, Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 23-28, Walter, *Constantine*, 58-59, and Christopher Walter, “Les dessins Carolingiens dans un manuscrit de Vercelli”, *Cahiers archéologiques* 18 (1968), 99-107, reprinted in Walter, *Pictures as Language: How the Byzantines Exploited Them* (London: Pindar Press, 2000), 1-13. Also, two Syriac manuscripts dating from the twelfth-thirteenth century illustrate the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross with scenes from the legend of the finding of the Cross (Stylianos, *By This Conquer*, 38-41).

<sup>547</sup> Images illustrating the legend have been preserved in a few churches on Cyprus – the church of the Holy Cross in Agiasmati, near Platanistasa (1494), the church of the Holy Cross in Kyperounda (1521), and the church of the Virgin Mary *Chrysopantanassa* in Palaeochorio (end of the sixteenth century) --, in Serbia – the church of St Nicholas in Banja Pribojska (1571) --, and in Romania – the church of St John the Baptist in Arbore (1541 or 1503-1520) and the church of the Pentecost in Dobrovăț (1527-1531). On the Cypriot churches see Stylianos, *By This Conquer*, 67-99 and Andreas Stylianos and Judith Stylianos, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus. Treasures of Byzantine Art* (Nicosia: A.G. Leventis Foundation, 1997), 198-205, 219, 287-288. On the church of Banja Pribojska see Stylianos, *By This Conquer*, 64-67; Miltiadis-Miltos Garidis, *La peinture murale dans le monde Orthodoxe après la chute de Byzance (1450-1600) et dans les pays sous domination étrangère* (Athens: C. Spanos, 1989), 332-333; Vojislav Djurić, “Le nouveau Constantin dans l’art serbe médiéval”, *Λιθόστροφον. Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte. Festschrift für Marcell Restle*, ed. Brigitt Borkopp and Thomas Steppan (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2000), 58. The church was built in 1329 by King Stephen Dečanski (1321-1331) and was restored in 1571 after being damaged by the Turks. It has also been assumed that the Finding of the Cross was represented on the southern façade of the church of Sts Constantine and Helena in Ohrid. The scene would have been part of a cycle dedicated to Sts Constantine and Helena dating from the second half of the fifteenth century, but probably copied the original painting dating from the end of the fourteenth-century (Gojko Subotić, *Sveti Konstantin i Jelena u Ohridu* (Belgrade, 1971), 126, 130-131 (French summary); Garidis, *La peinture murale*, 101-102, with further bibliography). Recent restoration work in the narthex of the church of St John the Baptist in Arbore brought to light three scenes with Constantine as the protagonist: the Vision of the Cross, the Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross (I thank Elena Firea for providing me with the pictures of the newly-restored paintings). In the narthex of Dobrovăț the scenes represented are the Finding, the Exaltation and the Testing of the Cross. For bibliography on the churches of Arbore and Dobrovăț see above, footnote 523.

Constantine by the fourteenth and fifteenth-century mural cycles dedicated to the saint on the Venetian-occupied Crete, expressed the wish of the Greek population to connect religiously, and to a certain extent also politically, to Byzantium.<sup>548</sup> On Cyprus, the cult of St Helena was fostered by a tradition according to which the empress stopped on the island on her way to and from Jerusalem. On that occasion, she left pieces of the True Cross on Cyprus and founded several churches.<sup>549</sup> An anti-Ottoman message has been attributed to the cycles dedicated to Sts Constantine and Helena in the churches of Agiasmati (Cyprus, 1494)<sup>550</sup> and Ohrid (Republic of Macedonia, second half of the fifteenth century, probably copying fourteenth century paintings).<sup>551</sup> The same can be inferred with regard to the meaning of the three scenes that have Constantine as a protagonist in the church of Arbore (Romania, 1541 or 1503-1520): the Vision of Constantine, the Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross (fig. 6.20).<sup>552</sup> At Arbore, the association with the seven Oecumenical Councils also highlights the emperor as a model of the Christian ruler defender of Orthodoxy. Likewise, at Banja Pribojska (Serbia, 1571), the cycle dedicated to the lives of Sts Constantine and Helena gave homage to the founder of the church, King Stephen Dečanski (1321-1331), regarded as a “second Constantine” and fighter for the orthodox faith.<sup>553</sup>

Keeping in mind that only a little part of the medieval painted decoration has come down to us, one can still safely conclude that Sts Constantine and Helena represented as a couple was a more frequent and widely known visual token than various scenes from the Legend of the Cross. The multi-faceted message of Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross was in relation to both the history and the symbolism of the Cross and to the cult of the two imperial saints. When represented on vaults, ceilings or near the entrance doors, the apotropaic function of the Cross

<sup>548</sup> Vasilaki, “Εικονογραφικοί κύκλοι,” 80-81.

<sup>549</sup> Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 97-98; Carolyn L. Connor, “Female Saints in Church Decoration of the Troodos Mountains in Cyprus,” in *Medieval Cyprus. Studies in Art, Architecture and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, ed. Nancy Patterson Ševčenko and Christopher Moss (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 222-223.

<sup>550</sup> Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 98; Stylianou, *The Painted Churches*, 188, 198.

<sup>551</sup> Garidis, *La peinture murale*, 101-102.

<sup>552</sup> On the historical context of the painting and its anti-Ottoman message see Sorin Ulea, “Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I)” [The origin and the ideological meaning of the Moldavian exterior painting (I)], *SCIA* 10, no. 1 (1963), 74-76. Although at that time Sorin Ulea identified the Vision as a “cavalcade” – St Constantine accompanied by mounted warriors, similar to the cavalcade of Pătrăuți – and not as the Vision of the Cross, as became clear after recent restoration, his interpretation remains valid in the respective historical context.

<sup>553</sup> Garidis, *La peinture murale*, 332-333; Djurić, “Le nouveau Constantin,” 58.

prevailed.<sup>554</sup> The Cross as a symbol of Passion and Resurrection lies at the basis of the image being associated with Christological scenes related to the death of Christ, with the Last Judgment or with funerary spaces.<sup>555</sup> The liturgical function of the cross also explains the occasional placing of Constantine and Helena with the Cross near the water basin, used for the blessing of the water at the Epiphany or in the prothesis niche.<sup>556</sup>

Another important meaning of Sts Constantine and Helena was connected to the two emperors as symbols of imperial power and ideal Christian rulers. Not only Byzantine, but also Serbian, Bulgarian and Russian rulers presented themselves as followers of Constantine, sometimes also with a view to support their own legitimacy.<sup>557</sup> They were praised as “new” or “second” Constantines thanks to their love and support of the Church, to their victories in the name of the Cross, to their love of justice, mercifulness and piety. In church decoration such messages were conveyed by representing actual rulers in close association with the image of Sts Constantine and Helena – for example in the Pigeon-House of Çavuşin (965),<sup>558</sup> the church of St Sophia in Kiev (middle of the eleventh century),<sup>559</sup> the church of the Ascension in Mileševo (ca. 1225), the King's Church in Studenica (1314), the church of Saint George in Staro Nagoričino (1316-1318), the church of Saint Nicholas in Psača (1365-1371) (fig. 6.14), the church of St Demetrius of the Markov Monastery (1376-1381) and in the ossuary church of Bačkovo (1344-1365).<sup>560</sup>

Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross also played a protective role against the threat posed by “infidels.” This symbolic representation reminded the faithful of Constantine and Helena’s deeds as supporters and defenders of Christianity and of the Christian state, and exalted the Cross

<sup>554</sup> Teteriatnikov, “The True Cross,” 177; Walter, *Constantine*, 103-104. On the role played by the image of Constantine and Helena with the Cross in Cappadocian churches see also Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, *L’arte della Cappadocia* (Milano: Jaca Book, 2001), 386-387.

<sup>555</sup> Teteriatnikov, “The True Cross,” 180-182.

<sup>556</sup> Teteriatnikov, “The True Cross,” 177-178.

<sup>557</sup> On Constantine as a model for Byzantine emperors see Paul Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994). On Constantine as a model for other rulers within the Byzantine commonwealth, see: Djurić, “Le nouveau Constantin,” 55-65; Antoine-Émile N. Tachiaos, “Le culte de Saint Constantin en Bulgarie au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Medieval Christian Europe: East and West. Traditions, Values, Communications*, ed. Vassil Giuzelev and Anisava Miltenova (Sofia: Gutenberg, 2002), 79-84; Petre Guran, “Aspects et rôle du saint dans les nouveaux états du ‘commonwealth byzantin’ (XI<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles),” in *Pouvoirs et mentalités*, ed. Laurențiu Vlad (Bucharest: Babel, 1999), 54-56; Maria Pluchanova, “Il culto di Costantino il Grande nella Russia antica,” *Bizantinistica* 6 (2004), 191-215.

<sup>558</sup> Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, “L’image du pouvoir dans l’art byzantin à l’époque de la dynastie macédonienne (867-1056),” *Byzantion* 57 (1987), 456-458; Jolivet-Lévy, *L’arte della Cappadocia*, 71-73.

<sup>559</sup> Teteriatnikov, “The True Cross,” 172.

<sup>560</sup> Wessel, “Konstantin u. Helena,” *RBK*, vol. 4, col. 365-366; Djurić, “Le nouveau Constantin,” 56-57; Walter, *Constantine*, 106-110.

both as a sign of Christ's victory and as the victorious standard of Christian rulers.<sup>561</sup> As the Ottoman threat in the Balkans grew, the rulers were exhorted to follow Constantine's example and defend the Christendom.<sup>562</sup> Occasionally this defensive attitude against the Muslims is expressed by representations from the legend of St Constantine or the image of the emperor accompanied by mounted warrior saints.<sup>563</sup> However, based on the preserved evidence, the symbolic representation of Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross was generally favored in the Byzantine world compared to narrative scenes from the lives of the two emperors.<sup>564</sup> In contrast, in the late medieval West, the narrative cycles dedicated to the finding of the Cross by Helena, its recovery by Emperor Heraclius, or the entire story of the Wood of the Cross from the time of Adam to the Crucifixion enjoyed special popularity.

<sup>561</sup> About the cross as the victory-bearing instrument of Christian emperors see André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1936), 33-39.

<sup>562</sup> Djurić, "Le nouveau Constantin," 63; Tachiaos, "Le culte." The panegyric of Euthymius, Patriarch of Tirnovo (1375-1393) in honor of Sts Constantine and Helena, delivered in the cathedral of Tirnovo on the feast day of the saints, in the presence of Tsar Ivan Šišman (1371-1393) was meant to present Constantine as a model for the tsar in the face of the Turkish threat. The text of the discourse spread among the Orthodox Slavs and enjoyed popularity in Wallachia and Moldavia as well (Tachiaos, "Le culte," 84; Emil Turdeanu, *La littérature bulgare du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle et sa diffusion dans les pays roumains* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, Librairie Droz, 1947), 101-110; G. Mihăilă, *Cultură și literatură română veche în context european* [Old Romanian culture and literature in European context] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979), 259-274; Liviu Pilat, "Modelul constantinian și imaginarul epocii lui Ștefan cel Mare" [The Constantinian model and the imaginary of Stephen the Great's age], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt, atlet al credinței creștine* (Putna: Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2004), 429-444).

<sup>563</sup> The equestrian St Constantine accompanied by other mounted warrior saints exalted the emperor's military virtues in service of the empire and Christendom. The subject occurs occasionally in Byzantine and post-Byzantine wall painting: in the church of St Eustathius in Göreme (Cappadocia, 10<sup>th</sup> century), the Christ's church in Kasano (Crete, early 14<sup>th</sup> century), the church of the Transfiguration in Sklavopoula (Crete, Selino, Chania, second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century), the church of St Constantine in Drymiskos (Crete, Agios Vasileios, Rethymnon, ca. 1400), the church of Sts Constantine and Helena in Ohrid (second half of the fifteenth century), the church of the Holy Cross in Pătrăuți (Romania, 1497-1499). The image of St Constantine accompanied by an army of mounted saints in the church of the Holy Cross at Pătrăuți has been interpreted as a reflection of Prince Stephen's efforts to hold back the Turks and ultimately to defeat them (see André Grabar, "Les croisades de l'Europe orientale dans l'art," *L'art de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*, vol.1 (Paris: Collège de France, 1968), 169-172; Dumitru Năstase, "Ștefan cel Mare împărat" [Stephen the Great emperor], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt, 1504-2004. Portret în istorie* (Putna: Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2003), 577-580). Liviu Pilat considers that the scene had rather an eschatological meaning, Stephen being regarded as the Last Emperor (Liviu Pilat, "Mesianism și escatologie în imaginarul epocii lui Ștefan cel Mare" [Messianism and eschatology in the imaginary of Stephen the Great's age], *SMIM* 22 (2004), 108-112). On the Cretan and Cappadocian cases see Vasilaki, "Εικονογραφικοί κύκλοι," 81, note 60, and Walter, *Constantine*, 121-122. On the church of Ohrid see Subotić, *Sveti Konstantin i Jelena u Ohridu*, 86-87 and scheme 9, and Garidis, *La peinture post-byzantine*, 101.

<sup>564</sup> Cf. Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 33, 63-64.

### 6.3. Constantine, Helena and the Legend of the Cross in the West

In the West, Constantine was never formally canonized, but was usually regarded as a model of the Christian emperor and as the founder of the Christian state.<sup>565</sup> He was praised as a virtuous ruler, protector of the Church, lawgiver and guarantor of the Law. The Church saw in Constantine a model of a secular ruler who supported its autonomy and was respectful of the sacerdotal power. Also, because of the emperor's involvement in the first Council of Nicaea (325), which condemned the Arian heresy, he was regarded as a defender of the orthodox faith. According to the Legend of St Sylvester, very popular in the West, Constantine received baptism from Pope Sylvester (314-335) who also cured him of leprosy.<sup>566</sup> By the so-called "Donation of Constantine" (*Constitutum Constantini*), a forged charter dating from the second half of the eighth century, Constantine handed over authority over the city of Rome, the province of Italy and the "western regions" of his empire to Pope Sylvester I and his successors to the Roman see. In the same document, Constantine also granted the primacy over all other Churches to the pope.<sup>567</sup> During the Middle Ages, the popes invoked the "Donation," when they considered that their temporal power or ecclesiastical primacy were threatened. The existence of the "Donation" cast a shadow over the figure of Constantine from the point of view of the lay power that opposed papal pretensions. Other shortcomings of his personality and career occasionally surfaced in medieval sources, such as the murder of his son, Crispus, his wife, Fausta, his brother-in-law, Licinius I and the latter's son, Licinius II, his conversion to Arianism towards the end of his life and his leaving the Old Rome and western part of the empire prey to Barbarians.<sup>568</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>565</sup> On the image of Emperor Constantine in the West see the following: Eugen Ewig, "Das Bild Constantins des Grossen in den ersten Jahrhunderten des abendländischen Mittelalters," Eugen Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, vol. 1 (Munich: Artemis, 1976), 72-113 (originally published in *Historisches Jahrbuch* 75 (1956), 1-46); Herwig Wolfram, "Constantin als Vorbild für den Herrscher des hochmittelalterlichen Reiches," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 68 (1960), 226-243; Linder, "The Myth," Thomas Grünewald, "'Constantinus novus.' Zum Constantin-Bild des Mittelalters," in *Costantino il Grande dall'Antichità all'umanesimo. Colloquio sul Cristianesimo nel mondo antico, Macerata 18-20 Dicembre 1990*, vol. 1, ed. Giorgio Bonamente and Franca Fusco (Macerata: Università degli Studi di Macerata, 1992), 461-485; Rolf Quednau, "Konstantin der Grosse als Vorbild weltlicher Herrschaft im Westen," in *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse, Ausstellungskatalog*, ed. Alexander Demandt and Josef Engemann (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2007), 455-456.

<sup>566</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, 128-141; Samuel N.C. Lieu, "Constantine in Legendary Literature," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 298-301.

<sup>567</sup> H. Fuhrmann, "Konstantinische Schenkung," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 5 (1991), col. 1385-1387; John Van Engen, "Donation of Constantine," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. 4 (1989), 257-259; Lieu, "Constantine," 301-303.

<sup>568</sup> See especially Grünewald, "Constantinus novus."



these negative aspects did not represent the main trend with regard to views of Constantine during the Middle Ages in the West.

Constantine's figure was most frequently encountered in hagiographical and liturgical sources related to the cult of the Cross.<sup>569</sup> Constantine's vision and first victory in the name of the Cross are usually included in the prelude to the legend of the Finding of the Cross,<sup>570</sup> and the emperor is frequently mentioned as the initiator of Helena's search for the Cross.<sup>571</sup> Moved by his profound belief, the emperor would have asked his mother to go to Jerusalem and find the Holy Cross. Constantine's vision and victory over Maxentius are also referred to in hymns dedicated to the Cross<sup>572</sup> and in the Liturgy of the Hours for the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross.<sup>573</sup> Constantine's triumph in the name of the Cross also led to his being regarded as a model of the crusading ruler.<sup>574</sup> However, for Westerners, the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-641), who defeated the Persians and restored the relic of the Cross to Jerusalem, represented par excellence the prototype of the crusading ruler.<sup>575</sup> His story was at times given eschatological meaning. Heraclius was seen as a prefiguration of the Last Emperor, who would lay down his crown and scepter on Golgotha at the End of Time, transferring imperial power to Christ.<sup>576</sup> In the West, the recovery of the Cross by Emperor Heraclius was celebrated on September 14, the feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross. Most probably the feast of the Exaltation was introduced in the West, in Rome, in the second quarter of the seventh century.<sup>577</sup> It has been

<sup>569</sup> Linder, "The Myth," 63-67.

<sup>570</sup> Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 151, 255-302; *Legenda Aurea*, 518.

<sup>571</sup> Linder, "The Myth," 90.

<sup>572</sup> Linder, "The Myth," 66 and note 56 at page 54; Frolow, "La déviation," 56; Joseph Szövérfy, *Hymns of the Holy Cross* (Brookline: Classical Folia Editions, 1976), 26, 29, 58, 74.

<sup>573</sup> The first three readings (*lectiones*) for the feast of the Finding of the Cross in the Roman Breviary tell the story of Constantine's vision and victory over Maxentius (*Breviarium Romanum novissime impressum* (Lugdunum, 1508), fol. CCLXXXIII, cited in Linder, "The Myth," 67).

<sup>574</sup> Linder, "The Myth," 64-65.

<sup>575</sup> A. Frolow, "La déviation de la 4<sup>e</sup> Croisade vers Constantinople. Note additionnelle. La Croisade et les guerres persanes d'Héraclius," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 147 (1955), 50-61; Baert, *Heritage*, 164, 185-193. In 614, the Persians sacked Jerusalem and took with them the relic of the True Cross. Heraclius defeated the Persian King Chosroes II and restored, probably in 631, the Cross to Jerusalem. Because of the Arab threat, Heraclius transferred it from Jerusalem to Constantinople in 635 (*ODB*, vol. 3, 2125). According to the legend, after Heraclius defeated Chosroes, the Persians converted to Christianity and were baptized. Also, Heraclius had the youngest son of Chosroes baptized and gave him rulership over the Persian kingdom. The legend also says that upon returning the Cross to Jerusalem Heraclius wanted to enter the city on horseback and dressed in imperial garments. However, the gate miraculously closed before the emperor and an angel warned him that Christ had humbly entered the same gate before his Passion. Heraclius then took off his imperial insignia and entered the gate barefoot, carrying the Cross on his shoulder (*Legenda Aurea*, 1038-1043).

<sup>576</sup> Baert, *Heritage*, 152-159, 176-178.

<sup>577</sup> On the early history of the feast in the West see Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 52-61, 275-280.

assumed that the recovery of the Cross by Heraclius was an important impetus for initiating this celebration.<sup>578</sup> In the West, the feast spread from Rome when the Carolingians, drawing mainly on the Roman rite, standardized the liturgical practice in the Frankish realm. However, a feast dedicated to the finding of the Cross was already known in the West before the seventh century and was set to May 3.<sup>579</sup> After the Carolingian reform, liturgical practice included both feasts: while May 3 remained the feast dedicated to the Finding of the Cross, the Exaltation of the Cross, on September 14, came to celebrate the recovery of the relic by Emperor Heraclius.<sup>580</sup>

From a liturgical point of view both feasts were related to Good Friday. As in Eastern Christianity, their principal aim was to commemorate the Cross and the Redemption that was worked through it.<sup>581</sup> In the West, as in the East, during the Exaltation feast, the public display and veneration of the Cross took place.<sup>582</sup> The Mass for both the Exaltation and the Finding feasts did not usually make reference to the finding or the recovery of the Cross, but the Divine Office for each feast contained texts about these events.<sup>583</sup> As the Divine Office was usually recited only by monks and canons, lay people came in contact with episodes from the Legend of the Cross especially through sermons, which frequently retold the legend of the day,<sup>584</sup> various epics, religious plays,<sup>585</sup> and artistic representations.

Unlike Constantine, Helena has been venerated as a saint in the West, where her cult is documented at least from the ninth century.<sup>586</sup> August 18, the feast day mentioned in the ninth-century Martyrology of Usuard and in other liturgical sources, was adopted in the post-Tridentine Roman Martyrology and has become the established date for the feast in the West. However, in medieval sources there are also other dates for the commemoration of St Helena such as April 15 or February 7. The latter day frequently commemorates the transfer of her relics

<sup>578</sup> Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 57-59, 275-276.

<sup>579</sup> Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 4, 63-64.

<sup>580</sup> Baert, *Heritage*, 70-71.

<sup>581</sup> Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 278-279.

<sup>582</sup> Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 53-54, 76, 118-122, 276-278.

<sup>583</sup> Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 189-191; Van Tongeren, *Exaltation*, 279-280.

<sup>584</sup> Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 191.

<sup>585</sup> See Baert, *Heritage*, 192, note 165; Michael Curschmann, "Constantine-Heraclius: German Texts and Picture Cycles," in *Piero della Francesca and His Legacy*, ed. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin (*Studies in the History of Art* 48) (Hanover and London: National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1995), 49-61.

<sup>586</sup> The earliest mention of Helena (*Haelina* in the text) as a saint in the West seems to be in the *Willibrord Calendar* from Echternach, dating from the first half of the eighth century (Eugen Ewig, "Kaiserliche und apostolische Tradition im mittelalterlichen Trier," *Trierer Zeitschrift* 24-26 (1956/1958), 159-160 and Andreas Heinz, "Das Bild der Kaiserin Helena in der Liturgie des lateinischen Westens," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 60 (2008), 56). In the *Willibrord Calendar*, Saint *Haelina* is commemorated on August 11.

from Rome to Hautvillers.<sup>587</sup> The preserved sources show that Helena's veneration was particularly strong in Germany and Britain where local traditions fostered the development and spread of her cult. Around the middle of the ninth century, on the occasion of Helena's relics being transferred from Rome to the Abbey of Hautvillers in the diocese of Reims, monk Altman of Hautvillers (ca. 830-889) wrote a legend of St Helena, *Vita s. Helenae*.<sup>588</sup> According to this legend, Helena was born in Trier to an aristocratic family and donated her palace to be transformed into the episcopal church. She also donated many relics from Jerusalem to Trier, among them the "Holy Tunic" of Christ, one of the nails with which Christ was crucified, the knife from the Last Supper, and the relics of Apostle Matthew.<sup>589</sup> The church of St Maximin and the cathedral of Trier also came to possess important relics of St Helena.<sup>590</sup> Emperor Charles IV (1355-1378) donated the head of St Helena to the cathedral of Trier. In the diocese of Cologne too, there were churches that claimed that they were founded by Empress Helena and promoted her cult – the church of Sts Cassius and Florentius in Bonn, the church of St Gereon in Cologne and the church of St Victor in Xanten.<sup>591</sup> In Britain there was another tradition in which it was claimed that Helena was the daughter of Coel (Coilus/Clohelis), a king of the Britons. Important centers that developed and diffused Helena's cult in Britain were York, London, and Abingdon.<sup>592</sup>

Beyond the differences between various traditions regarding her life, St Helena was venerated in the West as a model of a Christian empress and supporter of Christianity and the Church along with her son. She initiated the building of many churches in the Holy Places and elsewhere, and was outstanding in her strong faith and charity.<sup>593</sup> As a result of her role in the legend of the

<sup>587</sup> On the different dates of St Helena's commemoration see AASS *Augusti* III, 576-577; AASS *Februarii* I, 765; AASS *Februarii* II, 152; Ewig, "Kaiserliche," 159-160. There were other female saints with the same or similar name with Empress Helena and this seems to have occasionally lead to confusion among them.

<sup>588</sup> AASS *Augusti* III, 580-599. On the *Vita Helenae* see Michael Embach, "Kaiserin Helena in der lateinischen Legendarik des Mittelalters," *Archiv für mittelhochdeutsche Kirchengeschichte* 60 (2008), 35-38, and Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 22.

<sup>589</sup> Josef Dietz, "St. Helena in der rheinischen Überlieferung," in *Festschrift Matthias Zender. Studien zu Volkskultur, Sprache und Landesgeschichte*, ed. Edith Ennen and Günter Wiegmann, vol. 1 (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1972), 361-363.

<sup>590</sup> Dietz, "St. Helena," 364, 371; Embach, "Kaiserin Helena," 38.

<sup>591</sup> On the cult of St Helena in the diocese of Cologne see Dietz, "St. Helena," 364-369, 372-377; Ewig, "Kaiserliche," 184-185; Heinz, "Das Bild," 58-59.

<sup>592</sup> On the cult of St Helena in Britain see Linder, "The Myth," 91-93; Dietz, "St. Helena," 357.

<sup>593</sup> See Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 181-183; Heinz, "Das Bild," 64-69. On St Helena being the original model of the holy queen see Jo Ann McNamara, "Imitatio Helenae: Sainthood as an Attribute of Queenship," in *Saints. Studies in Hagiography*, ed. Sandro Sticca (New York: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1996), 51-80. Other aspects of Helena's cult have been mentioned, for example, her role as protector saint of nail and needle makers, of

Finding of the Cross, she also became a model of proselytizing for Christianity against pagans and Jews. According to the legend, the Cross, the instrument of the Passion but also the instrument through which Jesus defeated death and showed himself as God, had been kept hidden by Jews and pagans.<sup>594</sup> Its discovery signified the victory of Christianity over pagans and Jews and over unbelievers and heretics in general.<sup>595</sup> The finding of the Cross gave proof of the Resurrection and defeated the devil once more. In his oration on the death of Emperor Theodosius I (379-395), St Ambrose (c. 339-397) compared St Helena with Mary.<sup>596</sup> Both Helena and Mary were filled with the Holy Spirit and both of them vanquished the devil: Mary gave birth to Christ, making God visible, and Helena brought the Cross to light, giving proof of Christ's Resurrection and restoring to the faithful the instrument of victory over death.<sup>597</sup> The finding of the Cross and its subsequent elevation by the bishop of Jerusalem, so that everybody could see and venerate it, signified the victory and spread of the Christian faith over the whole world.

Besides the religious significance of the event, there was also a political significance. The finding and exaltation of the Cross was regarded as the symbolic founding of the Christian Empire, the establishment of Christian rule on earth, the victory of Christianity as the state religion. In Ambrose's oration on the death of Theodosius, the empress plays a central role in the Christianization of the empire.<sup>598</sup> Helena, wishing to ensure divine help for her emperor son, set out for Jerusalem. There, filled by the Holy Spirit, she found the Cross and the nails with which

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the miners in the Alps, protector against storms and fires, helper of people suffering particular diseases or having lost an object (*LThK*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 5, 209; Réau, *Iconographie*, vol 3/2, 634; *Il grande libro dei santi*, vol. 1, ed. Claudio Leonardi et al. (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1998), 577; Dietz, "St. Helena," 382).

<sup>594</sup> Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 143-145; *Legenda Aurea*, 520-523.

<sup>595</sup> On the apologetic and anti-Jewish character of the Judas Cyriacus legend see Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 177-180, 184-188; A. Linder, "Ecclesia and Synagoga in the Medieval Myth of Constantine the Great," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 54 (1976), 1035-1046.

<sup>596</sup> Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii oratio*, *PL* 16, c. 44-47. See also Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 112-113 and Baert, *Heritage*, 24-29, 230.

<sup>597</sup> 43. *Venit ergo Helena, coepit revisere loca sancta, infudit ei Spiritus ut lignum crucis requireret, accessit ad Golgotha, et ait: Ecce locus pugnæ, ubi est victoria? Quæro vexillum salutis, et non invenio (...) Quomodo me redemptam arbitror, si redemptio ipsa non cernitur?* 44. (...) *Quid egisti, diabole, ut absconderes lignum; nisi ut iterum vinceris? Vicit te Maria, quæ genuit triumphatorem, quæ sine imminutione virginitatis, edidit eum, qui crucifixus vinceret te, et mortuus subjugaret. Vinceris et hodie, ut mulier tuas insidias deprehendat. Illa quasi sancta Dominum gestavit, ego crucem ejus investigabo: illa generatum docuit, ego resuscitatum: illa fecit ut Deus inter homines videretur, ego ad nostrorum remedium peccatorum divinum de ruinis elevabo vexillum* (Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii*, c. 43-44). See also Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 113; Baert, *Heritage*, 26-28, 230.

<sup>598</sup> Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii*, c. 40-53. On the legend of the Finding in the funeral oration of Ambrose see also Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 108-113; Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 60-66.

Christ was crucified.<sup>599</sup> According to Ambrose and other authors, by finding the Holy Nails, Helena fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy, that of Zechariah, which foreshadowed the establishment of Christian rule on Earth.<sup>600</sup> The empress had one of the nails made into a bit for the bridle of Constantine's horse and yet another fixed into a diadem. The bit is a reminder to the emperors to be virtuous and faithful and to rule according to Christian principles. The nail of the diadem is a sign of their Christian faith. Symbolically, the diadem places the Cross at the head of the empire. By the passing down the bridle and the diadem, the Christian faith was transmitted to future emperors. According to Ambrose, Mary was visited by the Holy Spirit to liberate Eve, and Helena was visited so that the emperors might be redeemed.<sup>601</sup> Thus, Helena emerges as the founder of the Christian imperial lineage.<sup>602</sup> For her contribution to the founding and consolidation of the Christian empire, Helena is praised in liturgical hymns as *domina orbis* and *mater imperii*.<sup>603</sup> In the sermon *De laude et inventione s. crucis* by Berengosus († 1125), abbot of St Maximin Abbey in Trier, St Helena emerges as a figure superior to Constantine: the empress is a saint, while the emperor is simply a righteous.<sup>604</sup>

In Western medieval art, Helena appears either individually or in scenes related to the finding of the Cross. When represented individually, most often her distinguishing attribute is the Cross, although at times she may also hold other attributes, like the Holy Nails or the Crown of Thorns.<sup>605</sup> Constantine also occurs in artistic media on his own – as a mounted or standing figure

<sup>599</sup> According to some versions of the legend of the Cross, including Ambrose's, Helena found not only the Cross, but also the nails with which Christ was crucified. She had one of the nails made into a bit for the rein of Constantine's horse, and another fixed on his helmet or, according to Ambrose, fashioned into a diadem. See Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 47-49, 61, 62-63, 152, 159-160; *Legenda Aurea*, 522-525.

<sup>600</sup> Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii*, c. 40 and c. 47. The prophecy Ambrose refers to is in Zechariah 14:20: "In that day that which is upon the bridle of the Horse shall be holy to the Lord omnipotent." The fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy through the finding of the Holy Nails is also mentioned in Sozomen's and Theodoret's *Church Histories*, written in the 440s (Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 105, 108, note 62 at page 112), and in the Judas Cyriacus legend (Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 171; Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 160).

<sup>601</sup> *Visitata est Maria ut Evam liberaret: visitata est Helena, ut imperatores redimerentur. Misit itaque filio suo Constantino diadema gemmis insignitum, quas pretiosior ferro innexas crucis redemptionis divinae gemma connecteret. Misit et frenum. Utrouque usus est Constantinus, et fidem transmisit ad posteros reges* (Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii*, c. 47).

<sup>602</sup> Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 66; Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 112-113.

<sup>603</sup> Heinz, "Das Bild," 65.

<sup>604</sup> Embach, "Kaiserin Helena," 46.

<sup>605</sup> On the iconography of St Helena see LCI 6, col. 485-490; Braun, *Tracht*, col. 321-324; George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1986), no. 176; George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1986), no. 138; George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy* (Florence: Sansoni, 1978), no. 124; George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy* (Florence: Sansoni, 1985), no. 113.

-- or as a character in the Legend of St Sylvester and the Legend of the Cross.<sup>606</sup> Compared to Byzantine art, Constantine and Helena are rarely represented as a couple in Western medieval art.<sup>607</sup> Occasionally Helena may be associated with Emperor Heraclius, who restored the Cross to Jerusalem and was regarded as a second Constantine and a model of the Crusader ruler.<sup>608</sup> The two imperial figures were represented on each side of the western arch of the north nave in the Calvary Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem. The mosaic was created under the patronage of the crusader King Fulk of Anjou (1131—1143) and his wife, Melisende, who were the first Crusaders rulers to be crowned in the Holy Sepulchre Church, on the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14, 1131.<sup>609</sup>

The first preserved representations of the Finding of the Cross and of the Heraclius' legend in the West date from the second half of the eighth century<sup>610</sup> and the second half of the eleventh century respectively.<sup>611</sup> The two stories were later included in the Golden Legend, which became the main source for the iconography of both themes. The famous hagiographic collection increased the popularity of both legends and the number of their representations in art reached a peak in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>612</sup> The Golden Legend also included, as a prologue to the feast of the Finding of the Cross on May 3, the legend of the Wood of the Cross, which tells the story of the wood of the Cross from Adam to Christ. The legend of the Wood of the Cross had a wide circulation in medieval literature and had great impact on medieval art too.<sup>613</sup> The legend of the Finding and the Legend of Heraclius become artistically associated from the

<sup>606</sup> On the iconography of Emperor Constantine see Ernst Günther Grimme, "Novus Constantinus. Die Gestalt Konstantins des Großen in der imperialen Kunst der mittelalterlichen Kaiserzeit," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 22, 1961, 7-20; *LCI* 2, col. 546-551; Braun, *Tracht*, col. 434; Kaftal, *Central and South Italian*, no. 90; Kaftal, *Tuscan*, no. 74; Kaftal, *North East*, no. 73; Kaftal, *North West*, no. 64.

<sup>607</sup> See *LCI* 2, col. 548; Braun, *Tracht*, col. 434; Baert, *Heritage*, 128-129; Grimme, "Novus Constantinus," note 57 at page 20.

<sup>608</sup> *LCI* 6, col. 488; Frolov, "La déviation," 56-58.

<sup>609</sup> Gustav Kühnel, "Kreuzfahrerideologie und Herrscherikonographie. Das Kaiserpaar Helena und Heraklius in der Grabeskirche," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 90 (1997), 396-404; Jaroslav Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098—1187* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 234, 239.

<sup>610</sup> The iconography of the *Inventio crucis* develops in the Carolingian period, the first known example being in the *Gellone Sacramentary* (750-790). On the Finding of the Cross in the Carolingian and Romanesque art see Chapter 2 in Baert, *Heritage*, 54-132.

<sup>611</sup> The first known depiction of the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross in the West is in the *Sacramentary of Mont Saint-Michel* (1060). On the legend of the Exaltation of the Cross in Western art, see Baert, *Heritage*, 133-193 and Susanne Pfleger, *Eine Legende und ihre Erzählformen: Studien zur Rezeption der Kreuzlegenden in der italienischen Monumentalmalerei des Tre- und Quattrocento* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), 36-41.

<sup>612</sup> Baert, *Heritage*, 7-8, 194-288.

<sup>613</sup> On the complex literary tradition of the Legend of the Wood of the Cross see Baert, *Heritage*, 289-349.

twelfth century,<sup>614</sup> but full cycles of the Legend of the Cross, which includes the legend of the Wood of the Cross, the finding of the Cross and its recovery by Heraclius, are only known from the end of the fourteenth century onwards.<sup>615</sup>

The partial or full representation of the Legend of the Cross in various artistic media carried, depending on the specific historical circumstances, theological, devotional and political messages related to the Cross and to the main characters of the legend.<sup>616</sup> With the first crusades, the number of Cross relics as well as artistic representations of the Finding of the Cross significantly increased in the West.<sup>617</sup> Besides being regarded as models of Christian emperors, and of Christian rulers in general, Constantine, but especially Heraclius were also seen as models of crusaders<sup>618</sup> while Helena was a model of pilgrimage to the Holy Land.<sup>619</sup> The Legend of the Cross expressed the victory of the Cross and of Christian rulers over pagans and heretics. The feast days of the Finding of the Cross and of the Exaltation of the Cross were preferred days for preaching the Crusade. Subject matters from the Legend were also included in recruitment sermons.<sup>620</sup> The cult of the Cross was used by the papacy in crusading propaganda and from the thirteenth century mendicant friars played a major role in preaching the Cross.<sup>621</sup> However, the representation of scenes from the Legend of the Cross was not exclusively related to crusading programs, but also to imperial ideology, to the veneration of Cross relics, to calls to pilgrimage, routes to the Holy Land, and to the special devotion to the Passion of Christ that characterized the High and Late Middle Ages.<sup>622</sup> The flourishing of the Italian monumental cycles dedicated to the Legend of the Cross in the Franciscan milieu at the end of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, has been attributed to many factors, in particular the Franciscans'

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<sup>614</sup> Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*, 38.

<sup>615</sup> See Baert, *Heritage*, 350-451.

<sup>616</sup> On the representation of the Legend of the Cross in medieval art see especially Wiegel, *Darstellung*; Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*; Piero della Francesca: *The Legend of the True Cross in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo*, ed. Anna Maria Maetzke and Carlo Bertelli (Milano: Skira, 2001); Baert, *Heritage*.

<sup>617</sup> Baert, *Heritage*, 132; Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 43-44.

<sup>618</sup> On Heraclius as an exemplar of crusading ruler see Frolow, "La déviation," Baert, *Heritage*, 164, 185-193; Kühnel, "Kreuzfahrerideologie." On Constantine see Linder, *The Myth*, 64-66; Penny J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095-1270* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Medieval Academy of America, 1991), 196, 199, 205, 214, 215.

<sup>619</sup> Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 65, 72; Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 59.

<sup>620</sup> Christoph T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 108, 112-113; Cole, *The Preaching*, 196, 199, 205, 208, 214, 215.

<sup>621</sup> Maier, *Preaching the Crusades*; Clement Schmitt, "Der Anteil der Franziskaner an der Kreuzzügen," in *800 Jahre Franz von Assisi. Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters*, Krems-Stein, Minoritenkirche, 15. Mai-17. Oktober 1982 (Vienna, 1982), 213-220; Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*, 24.

<sup>622</sup> See Baert, *Heritage*; Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*.

special devotion to the Cross, their missionary goals, and their custody of certain sacred places, including the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem from 1342.<sup>623</sup>

#### **6.4. Constantine, Helena and the Legend of the Cross in Wall Paintings in Medieval Hungary**

St Helena appears to have been a popular saint in late medieval Hungary. Her numerous representations in art are matched by the importance given to her feast in liturgical sources. According to Polikárp Radó, her feast on May 22 was among the most cherished in the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>624</sup> Among the feast days celebrating the Holy Queen Helena (*Helena regina*) in the preserved liturgical manuscripts that circulated in medieval Hungary, May 22 is by far the most frequent, followed at a distance by February 8, when the transfer of Helena's relics from Rome to Hauvillers was probably celebrated.<sup>625</sup> May 22 is also St Helena's feast day in the Ordinal of Eger (*Liber Ordinarius Agriensis*), which regulated the mode of celebrating the liturgy in the cathedral of Eger and the diocese of Eger, which included the Zaránd County.<sup>626</sup> The number of churches dedicated to St Helena that can be documented in the territory of

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<sup>623</sup> See Baert, *Heritage*, 350-405; Nancy M. Thompson, "The Franciscans and the True Cross: The Decoration of the Cappella Maggiore of Santa Croce in Florence," *Gesta* 43 (2004), 61-79; Pfleger, *Kreuzlegende*, 45-122; Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *The Place of Narrative. Mural Decoration in Italian Churches, 431-1600* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 99-118. Interestingly, in a sermon on St Francis delivered in Paris in 1262, St Bonaventure considered that God revealed the victorious sign of the Cross particularly to two people: Emperor Constantine, who embraced the Christian faith, brought peace to the empire in the name of the Cross and brought to light the relic of the Cross, together with his mother, and St Francis, who lived an exemplary life of humility and penitence (Saint Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 9 (Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1901), 586-587). See also Jack Freiberg, "In the Sign of the Cross: The Image of Constantine in the Art of Counter-Reformation Rome," in *Piero della Francesca and His Legacy*, ed. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1995), 78 and note 50; Lavin, *The Place of Narrative*, 193-194 and note 147.

<sup>624</sup> Polycarpus Radó, *Libri liturgici*, 17.

<sup>625</sup> The feast of May 22 is mentioned in more than fifteenth liturgical manuscripts catalogued by Polikárp Radó (Radó, *Libri liturgici*). The manuscripts were used in Hungary and date from the end of the twelfth century to the end of the fifteenth century. In order of their frequency, other feast days of "Queen Helena" in the liturgical books catalogued by Radó are February 8 (nine times), April 15 (six times), May 21 (five times), February 7, May 18, April 16 and October 12 (once) (Radó, *Libri liturgici*, passim.). It is obvious that there is an occasional confusion in the liturgical calendars between *Helena regina* and another saint or saints, called *Helena virgo*, mentioned four times on April 15 and once on February 8. According to *AASS Maii*, vol. 5, 152, the Holy Virgin Helena of Auxerre (fifth century) is celebrated on May 22.

<sup>626</sup> *Liber Ordinarius Agriensis (1509)*, ed. and introd. László Doboszay (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Zenetudományi Intézet, 2000), 104. The Ordinal of Eger was printed in 1509 and contains medieval regulations regarding the liturgical celebration in the cathedral of Eger and to a certain extent also in the diocese of Eger (*Liber Ordinarius*, 6-7).



medieval Hungary is also significant.<sup>627</sup> Presumably the feasts of the Finding of the Cross and Exaltation of the Cross had a similar importance in Hungary as in the West in general.<sup>628</sup> Numerous medieval churches were dedicated to the Holy Cross<sup>629</sup> and the two feasts along with the Passion Week were the liturgical moments when the Cross was specially venerated. As elsewhere, the presence of the relics of the Cross, unfortunately sporadically documented, must have contributed to the local development of the cult of the Cross.<sup>630</sup>

St Helena is represented in many wall paintings in medieval Hungary, most of them dating from the end of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>631</sup> The saint is usually depicted wearing a dress and a mantle, which is frequently red and lined with fur. Her head is covered with a white veil, in most cases of the *Kruseler* type, and sometimes she also wears a crown. Her specific attribute is a big wooden cross with one cross-arm. In some churches, such as Keszthely and Kraskovo, St Helena is represented close to Passion scenes. In many churches, however, she is accompanied by or placed in the same register with other female saints such as Mary Magdalen, Margaret, Dorothy, Catherine, Barbara, or Elisabeth (at Bădești, Bodony, Čerín, Horiany, Keszthely, Martjanci, Otomani, Poniky, Racu and Smrečany). Sometimes she is represented next to or in the same frame with the Schutzmantelmadonna (Čerín, Poruba, Rákoš, and Sliache) or next to Anna Selbdritt or the Holy Kindred (Kraskovo, Chornotysiv and Tornaszentandrás).<sup>632</sup>

St Helena with the Cross is both an icon of the saint and of the True Cross. The image also reminds the viewer of the finding of the holy relic in which the empress played the main role. At Martjanci, a small figure with pointed hat, an attribute that identifies him as a Jew, was

<sup>627</sup> Mező, *Patrocíniumok*, 116-118 mentions 34 churches.

<sup>628</sup> Canon 38 of the Synod of Szabolcs, held on May 20, 1092 and presided over by King Ladislas (1077-1095) contained a regulation that listed the Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross among the feasts that should be celebrated during the year (*The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 1 (1000-1301), translated and edited by János M. Bak, György Bónis and James Ross Sweeney (Bakersfield, California: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1999), 58; Mező, *A templomcím*, 119).

<sup>629</sup> Mező, *Patrocíniumok*, 170-189.

<sup>630</sup> Mező, *A templomcím*, 119.

<sup>631</sup> See the Table at the end of this chapter listing the medieval churches exhibiting a representation of St Helena, with a selected bibliography on their painted decoration and a short description of the painting showing the saint. It should be noted that the bulk of the preserved murals in medieval Hungary date from the fourteenth-first half of the fifteenth century. St Helena as an individual saint, or scenes from the Legend of the Finding and the Legend of Heraclius occasionally also occur on winged altars, which date from approximately the last quarter of the fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth century (see Dénes Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország táblaképei* [The panel painting in medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1955)).

<sup>632</sup> The association of Helena with Mary and the Holy Kindred brings to mind the text of St Ambrose's funeral oration on the death of the Emperor Theodosius.

introduced in the representation of St Helena holding the Cross (fig. 6.34). The man supports the lower part of the Cross and carries a pick on his shoulder. According to the legend, Judas himself dug for the Cross, but in paintings illustrating the finding of the Cross he is sometimes helped or replaced by other men. The little figure of the Jew at Martjanci, as well as in other churches, like Štítník (fig. 6.35), can be interpreted as a representative of the Jews, who were thus confronted with the evidence of Christ's Resurrection. The Finding of the Cross is also represented in Hungarian churches in both simplified and more elaborate versions. The simplified version, in which Helena supports the Cross and a man digs to its bottom, can be seen in the churches of Rákoš (fig. 6.36, 6.37) and Štítník (fig. 6.35). The scene is composed of three figures – Helena and two Jews – at Svinica (fig. 6.40),<sup>633</sup> Velyka Byihan'<sup>634</sup> (fig. 6.38, 6.39) and Chornotysiv.<sup>635</sup> The iconography and the style are similar at Velyka Byihan' and Chornotysiv, and the paintings may be attributed to the same master or workshop.<sup>636</sup> Some of the lost paintings of the Reformed church in Sighetul Marmăției have been assigned to the same painter.<sup>637</sup> Among them there was also a representation of the Finding. Its iconography was more complex, but cannot be fully elucidated because only some of its details have been preserved, thanks to a description and a watercolor from the nineteenth-century (fig. 6.49).<sup>638</sup> All these paintings in churches situated in Sub-Carpathia – Velyka Byihan', Chornotysiv and Sighetul Marmăției – belonged to the same workshop and have been dated to the fifteenth century.<sup>639</sup> In the church of Khust, situated in the same region, one may also see the fragments of a representation that includes St Helena with the Cross. The scene is situated on the north wall of the nave, in a setting similar to that of Ribița and Crișcior: next to the triumphal arch and associated with the representation of the Holy Kings of

<sup>633</sup> At Svinica, all three crosses are represented and, in addition to Judas digging for the Cross, there is another figure who supports one of the thieves' crosses.

<sup>634</sup> Except for Judas represented digging, there is also a small figure with pointed hat who supports the base of the Cross.

<sup>635</sup> The paintings of Chornotysiv are only partially preserved and heavily restored, but a drawing of the Finding scene has been preserved thanks to Flóris Rómer, who analyzed the paintings of Chornotysiv (see Rómer, *Régi falképek*, 80).

<sup>636</sup> See also Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 217.

<sup>637</sup> According to Flóris Rómer, the paintings of Pidvynohradiv, Chornotysiv and some of the paintings of Sighetul Marmăției were executed by the same painter (Rómer, *Régi falképek*, 93, 94). More recently, the paintings of Velyka Byihan' have been assigned to the same painter or workshop (Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 217).

<sup>638</sup> See Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 216, 238-239.

<sup>639</sup> On the wall paintings in Sub-Carpathia, from which little has been preserved, see Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 48-49. See also the Table for the churches of Velyka Byihan', Chornotysiv, Sighetul Marmăției and Khust.

Hungary. The painting could date from the last decades of the fourteenth-first decades of the fifteenth century.<sup>640</sup>

The most complex version of the Finding of the Cross has been preserved in the church of Sântămărie Orlea, in the Hațeg region. The scene is situated in the lower register of the north wall, next to the triumphal arch (figs. 6.41-6.44). It belongs to a layer of painting that covers the north, east and south walls of the nave and dates from 1311, a time when the church was Catholic.<sup>641</sup> Because the style and the iconography of the paintings have analogies with Serbian and Italian painting from the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century, it has been assumed that the painter could have come from South Dalmatia.<sup>642</sup> The scene of the Finding is almost symmetrically organized around the True Cross, which is represented vertically, coming out of a pit. In the pit, one can still see the faded contours of a figure holding up a double cross. Another standing figure supports the cross from behind. St Helena is represented to the left, accompanied by a retinue of women and soldiers. The soldiers have shields decorated with red and white stripes,<sup>643</sup> and hold a banner with three fluttering streamers at the end (fig. 6.44).<sup>644</sup> St Helena wears a crown of Byzantine type, but the white veil draped around her neck is uncommon for a representation of a Byzantine empress (fig. 6.42). She wears a red mantle, fastened in the front.<sup>645</sup> The empress shows the Cross with her right arm and with her left she supports it. From above, the hand of God bestows a blessing on her. To the right stands a holy man dressed in a brown garment and wearing a white headdress (fig. 6.43). He also supports the Cross and points towards it with his right hand. Behind him there is a smaller figure with pointed hat, and other men wearing white headdresses. A small fleeing devil is depicted behind the head of the saint. Although the scene is quite damaged at its extreme right end, one can see contours of what could be an open coffin, by the feet of the saint. The presence of the coffin suggests that

<sup>640</sup> On the paintings of Khust see also Chapter 5.

<sup>641</sup> On the paintings of Sântămărie Orlea see Porumb, *Dicționar*, 360-362, with the bibliography until 1998. More recent works are Marie Lionnet, "Le culte de la croix au cœur de l'ensemble peint a Sântămărie Orlea," *Mediaevalia Transilvanica* 5-6 (2001-2002), 65-82, and Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom."

<sup>642</sup> Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 15-16; Drăguț, "Picturile bisericii din Sîntă Mărie Orlea," 69-72; Bratu, "Sîntămărie Orlea," 203-207.

<sup>643</sup> In Szabó's view, the decoration of the shields at Sântămărie Orlea represents the coat of arms of the Árpáds (Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi falfestmények feltárása," 39).

<sup>644</sup> This type of banner was a crusaders' flag, which occurs in scenes illustrating the crusades and occasionally also in scenes of the Legend of the Cross (see Baert, *Heritage*, 164; William Voelkle, *The Stavelot Triptych: Mosan Art and the Legend of the True Cross* (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1980), 14; Kelly M. Holbert, "Relics and reliquaries of the True Cross," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in the Northern Europe and the British Isles*, vol. 1, Texts, ed. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 341).

<sup>645</sup> On Byzantine imperial dress see above, footnote 486.

the testing of the crosses, followed by the resurrection of a deceased person was also included in the scene.<sup>646</sup> In fact, the finding and the testing were frequently included in the same scene.

Some art historians have identified the holy man in the painting of Sântămărie Orlea as Patriarch Macarius,<sup>647</sup> while others consider him as Judas.<sup>648</sup> Several researchers who have identified him as Macarius interpreted the saint's headdress as a "kamelaukion,"<sup>649</sup> and his garments as those of a monk.<sup>650</sup> I consider that the figure at Sântămărie Orlea represents Judas.<sup>651</sup> He carries no signs of a bishop and his now white headdress that looks like a cowl is probably a veil wrapped around his head. The drawing made by Ottó Sztéhlo in 1873 after the scene of the Entry to Jerusalem, situated directly above the Finding of the Cross in the same church, shows the Jews wearing similar headdresses.<sup>652</sup> In both Byzantine and Western painting, the Jews are sometimes represented wearing a veil wrapped around their heads, which sometimes looks like a cowl. Also, in some paintings illustrating the legend of the Finding of the Cross, Judas himself or other figures who can be identified as Jews wear this type of headdress,<sup>653</sup> as in the Prayer Book of Johanna of Naples (1346-1362),<sup>654</sup> Benedetto di Bindo's paintings on the relic chest in Museo del Duomo, Siena (1412) (figs. 6.45-6.47),<sup>655</sup> the Farfense Chapel of the Church of St Francis in

<sup>646</sup> Marie Lionnet describes two figures on the far right of the scene: one figure is crouched and the other standing, apparently rising from the coffin (Lionnet, "Le culte," 77). However, at present, I was not able to distinguish these figures by direct examination of the paintings.

<sup>647</sup> Ștefănescu, *La peinture en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, 234; Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 401; Drăguț, "Picturile bisericii din Sîntă Mărie Orlea," 71; Bratu, "Sîntămărie Orlea," 221; Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom," 74.

<sup>648</sup> Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 241-242; Lionnet, "Le culte," 76.

<sup>649</sup> Ștefănescu, *La peinture en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, 234; Bratu, "Sîntămărie Orlea," 221; Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom," 75.

<sup>650</sup> Bratu, "Sîntămărie Orlea," 221; Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom," 75. Lionnet, "Le culte," 76, also considers that the saint wears a monk's habit, although she identifies him as Judas.

<sup>651</sup> I am aware of only one occasion where Patriarch Macarius would wear the monastic habit, including the black hood (*koukoulion*), as a protagonist in the legend of the Cross. Analyzing several episodes of the finding of the Holy Cross in a Syriac Lectionary (Sachau 304, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, 13<sup>th</sup> century), Andreas Stylianos assumes that the figure who wears the monastic habit and performs the testing of the Holy Cross is Patriarch Macarius (Stylianos, *By This Conquer*, 41 and fig. 26).

<sup>652</sup> See Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi falfestmények feltárása," fig. 11; Szabó, "Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom," fig. 134.

<sup>653</sup> It cannot be excluded that the Jews who have their head covered by a cloth represent men learned in Jewish Law. According to the Judas Cyriacus Legend and to the *Legenda Aurea*, once in Jerusalem, Helena summoned the wisest Jews, or the Jews who had the best knowledge of the Law in order to find out where the Cross was buried. Threatened by Helena, they indicated that Judas was the one who could answer her questions as he was the son of "a just man and a prophet" and an expert in the Law (Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 260-263, 283-285, 295-298; *Legenda Aurea*, 520-521. At Sântămărie Orlea, the Jews wearing a white headdress, including Judas, could represent these learned people.

<sup>654</sup> Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 125-127; Baert, *Heritage*, 266-271 and fig. 68.

<sup>655</sup> Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 128; Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*, 94 and figs. 78-80; Kaftal, *Tuscan*, figs. 549-554.

Montegiorgio (1425-1430),<sup>656</sup> a panel painting by the circle of Hans Multscher (around 1440, Museum of Ulm),<sup>657</sup> the church of the Holy Cross in Andria (fifteenth century) (fig. 6.48),<sup>658</sup> and the church of the Holy Cross in Agiasmati, Cyprus (1494).<sup>659</sup> In Western art, the main protagonist of the finding, along with Helena, is most frequently Judas, a situation that corresponds to the popularity of the Judas Cyriacus Legend in the Middle Ages. The small devil represented fleeing behind the head of the saint at Sântămărie Orlea also recalls an episode from the Judas Cyriacus Legend. After the True Cross is identified by its power to resurrect a dead man, the devil appears and acknowledges his defeat. In some variants, he also threatens Judas, who damns him to eternal fire in the name of Christ.<sup>660</sup> At Sântămărie Orlea, Judas is represented as a saint, with a halo. This is an exceptional but not unique case. In the process of the discovery of the Cross, Judas acknowledged Christ as Saviour. He then received baptism, was consecrated bishop of Jerusalem under the name Cyriacus and suffered martyrdom under Emperor Julian the Apostate. His representation with a halo in scenes of the legend of the Finding, even before the moment of his baptism, was justified by his later sanctification.<sup>661</sup>

It has been argued that the scene of the Finding at Sântămărie Orlea is part of an iconographic program reflecting a special cult of the Cross.<sup>662</sup> The historical context in which the church and its paintings were made is barely documented, although several possible reasons have been proposed for the special attention given to the Cross in the painted program: the potential

<sup>656</sup> Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 132-137; Baert, *Heritage*, 386-392 and fig. 84 e-f.

<sup>657</sup> Baert, *Heritage*, 249-252 and fig. 57.

<sup>658</sup> Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 128, 351-352.

<sup>659</sup> Some of the Jews in the group interrogated by Helena have a similar headdress, although it is not white (see Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, fig. 39 and Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus*, fig. 113).

<sup>660</sup> Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 268, 286-287, 300; *Legenda Aurea*, 522-523; Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 303. Other paintings in which the devil is represented in the scenes of the Testing or of the Finding of the Cross by Judas are: the Cross Legend cycle in the Brunswick Cathedral (1240-1250; description in Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 163 and Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*, 39), the Finding of the Cross in a French manuscript of the Golden Legend (British Museum, Ms. Royal 19B XVII, f. 126, ca. 1340; mentioned in Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 431), the Rajhrad Altarpiece (Brno, Moravian Gallery, ca. 1452; description in Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 199 and picture in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator*, ed. I. Takács, cat. no. 6.18), and the predella by Michele di Matteo (Venice, Galeria dell' Accademia, ca. 1430; description in Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 234-235).

<sup>661</sup> Judas is represented with a halo in some of the the scenes illustrating the legend of the Finding in the Cathedral of Braunschweig (1240-1250) (Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 164-165; Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*, 39) and with a radiant halo throughout the cycle of the Finding on the predella of an altarpiece in Santa Croce at Sassoferrato, painted by Antonio da Fabriano (second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century) (Kaftal, *Central and South*, col. 549 and fig. 627-628).

<sup>662</sup> Lionnet, "Le culte."

existence of a relic of the Cross in the church, the crusade ideology and the influence of Franciscan spirituality.<sup>663</sup>

Another complex scene inspired from the Legend of the Cross has been preserved on the north wall of the nave of the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Zlatna (fig. 6.50). The painting is poorly preserved and has also suffered repaintings. It has been concluded that originally the church belonged to a local Saxon community. However, in the first half of the fifteenth century (1424) some Romanians appear as the new ktetors of the church.<sup>664</sup> As no systematic archaeological and architectural research has been carried out on the church and no detailed historical study is yet available, it is difficult to propose a safe dating for the poorly preserved painting.<sup>665</sup>

Constantine, represented with a halo, accompanies Helena in four Catholic churches in medieval Hungary: at Vizsoly (middle of the fourteenth or first half of the fifteenth century), Crăciunel (first half of the fifteenth century), Dârlos (fifteenth century) and Tornaszentandrás (end of the fourteenth -beginning of the fifteenth century). At Vizsoly (fig. 6.51) and Crăciunel (fig. 6.53), Helena and Constantine, in Western attire, flank the Cross. At Crăciunel, both saints support the Cross, while at Vizsoly they raise their hands in adoration and an angel descends from the sky giving a blessing in the direction of the Cross. In both cases, Constantine appears beardless and is a little shorter than Helena.<sup>666</sup> The painting in the church of Dârlos (fig. 6.52), which in the Middle Ages belonged to a Saxon community, came to light recently and is part of a larger decorative ensemble, incompletely uncovered. The Byzantine tradition, obvious in the style of the painting, has been partially preserved in the iconography as well. St Constantine wears the Byzantine imperial garments, with the exception of the crown, and the triple cross is characteristic for late Byzantine representations of the two emperors. However, St Helena's

<sup>663</sup> In support of a possible Franciscan influence, Marie Lionnet mentions the existence of a Franciscan monastery, not far from Sântămărie Orlea, at Orăștie, attested for the first time in 1302 (Lionnet, "Le culte," 80).

<sup>664</sup> On the history of the building see more recently Gheorghe Fleșer and Toma Goronea, "Noi elemente în stabilirea etapelor de construcție a bisericii „Adormirea Maicii Domnului” din Zlatna” [New elements in establishing the building stages of the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Zlatna], *Apulum* 27-30 (1990-1993), 293-299; Gheorghe Petrov, "Biserica „Adormirea Maicii Domnului” din Zlatna, jud. Alba" [The church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Zlatna, Alba County], in *Arhitectura religioasă medievală din Transilvania. Középkori egyházi építészet Erdélyben. Medieval Ecclesiastical Architecture in Transylvania*, vol.2, ed. Adrian Andrei Rusu and Péter Levente Szócs (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 2002), 123-135.

<sup>665</sup> Marius Porumb identifies the scene as the Exaltation of the Cross and proposes a dating in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries (Porumb, *Pictura românească*, 35; Porumb, *Dicționar*, 461).

<sup>666</sup> The figure accompanying Helena could not, in my opinion, be that of Emperor Heraclius, because he used to be represented as a mature, bearded man (see *LCI*, vol. 2, col. 242).

garments are of Western type: she wears a Western type of crown, frilled veil, a dress and a fur-lined mantle.

In the church of Tornaszentandrás, the scene of the Finding of the Cross apparently includes a representation of Constantine as well (fig. 6.54). The painting is situated in the nave, on the south side of the triumphal arch. Archaeological excavations showed that below the image there was an altar table dating from the fourteenth century.<sup>667</sup> It has been assumed that the altar was dedicated to the Cross and St Helena.<sup>668</sup> The painted composition is centered on the upright cross. Helena stands to the left, supporting the Cross. To the right there are three lay figures. One of them is of smaller proportions and seems to prop a pick or a spade with his left hand. With his right hand he points towards his eyes, a gesture that could identify him as a Jew who converted with the finding of the Cross. Behind him there are two other men, with pointed hats and rich costumes who seem to represent the mistrustful Jews.<sup>669</sup> Behind the empress, there is a standing figure, with long hair, crown and mantle. In his left hand he holds a wand that appears to be a caduceus. The face is no longer visible, but the figure could be that of Constantine.<sup>670</sup> Located symmetrically to the scene of the Finding, on the opposite side of the triumphal arch, there is a representation of a sitting holy pope, wearing purple garments. He holds a cross in his left hand and receives the triple tiara and probably a key from two angels.<sup>671</sup> Based on the preserved facial features – white hair and a short curly beard -- the pope has been identified as the Apostle Peter, the first bishop of Rome.<sup>672</sup> To the left, slightly turned towards the pope, there is a holy bishop with his right hand raised in blessing. Other fragments of paintings have been preserved in the church, among them the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul.<sup>673</sup>

<sup>667</sup> Ilona Valter, “A tornaszentandrás r.k. templom kutatása” [Research of the Roman Catholic church in Tornaszentandrás], *Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve* 19 (1980), 114, 128.

<sup>668</sup> Mária Prokopp, “A tornaszentandrás templom középkori falképei” (The medieval wall paintings of the church in Tornaszentandrás) in *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok a közeli és a régmúltból. Emlékkönyv Székely György 70. születésnapjára*, ed. Ilona Jónás (Budapest, 1994), 66.

<sup>669</sup> In her last study on the paintings of Tornaszentandrás, Mária Prokopp has supposed that the three figures to the right of the Cross are disguised portraits of Bebek family members (Prokopp, “A tornaszentandrás templom,” 66).

<sup>670</sup> The figure has also been identified as such in Mária Prokopp, “Falfestészet. Az itáliai festészeti kapcsolatok és hagyományok,” in *Magyarországi művészet*, ed. E. Marosi, vol. 1; Prokopp, “A tornaszentandrás templom,” 66.

<sup>671</sup> The key-shape is no longer identifiable – at present it looks rather like a scepter -- but the assumption is based on the fact that the key or keys “of the kingdom of heaven” (see Matthew 16:19) was a common attribute of St Peter and his successors in the Roman see.

<sup>672</sup> Prokopp, “A tornaszentandrás templom,” 66.

<sup>673</sup> For the rest of the painted program of the nave see Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 187; Prokopp, “A tornaszentandrás templom,” 66-67. Some scenes receive a different identification in Valter, “A tornaszentandrás r.k. templom kutatása” 116-117.

Mária Prokopp has argued that the painted program of Tornaszentandrás has an ecclesiastic message that reflects the Latin Church's concerns in the period 1370-1417 – shortly before and during the Western Schism (1378-1417). In Prokopp's view, the representation of St Peter as the first bishop of Rome and the attention the apostle enjoys in the painted decoration of the church convey the ideas of the papal primacy and of Rome as the only legitimate papal see.<sup>674</sup> Besides the fact that the holy pope is depicted with insignia that stress his spiritual and secular power, with which he is invested from above, the point of view of the Church is also manifest in the way Constantine is represented. He is shown in a position inferior to his mother, being represented behind St Helena and a little shorter than her. The caduceus he holds in his left hand is an unusual attribute and may be interpreted as a symbol of peace and concord.<sup>675</sup> While further research targeted specifically on the history and written sources of the period may refine the interpretation, the depiction of Constantine in the framework of the Finding of the Cross at Tornaszentandrás matches the Church's approach to the emperor. He was remembered as a pious ruler who brought peace to the empire and to the Church, which he respected and protected.<sup>676</sup> The Finding of the Cross, in which St Helena played the central role, signified the victory of the Cross and of the Church over the whole world, a process in which the contribution of Constantine was decisive and remained exemplary for secular rulers.

Mária Prokopp has also noted that St Helena and the Finding of the Cross were popular representations in Hungary at the end of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, when the country was threatened by the Ottoman Turks.<sup>677</sup> In her opinion, the presence of Constantine is an allusion to King Sigismund, who played an important role in ending the Western Schism and also aspired to the imperial crown, which he received in 1433.<sup>678</sup> Prokopp has dated the paintings in the nave to the last decades of the fourteenth century - beginning of the fifteenth century. She has assumed that Detre II Bebek, who held the offices of ban of Dalmatia

<sup>674</sup> See Prokopp, "A tornaszentandrási templom," 66-67.

<sup>675</sup> In Antiquity the caduceus was an attribute of Mercury but also of several goddesses such as Felicitas, Pax and Concordia. As an attribute of Felicitas, Concordia and Pax, or combined with other symbols of peace, prosperity and power, the caduceus is found on the reverse of Roman coins from different periods (Seth William Stevenson, C. Roach Smith and Frederic W. Madden, *Dictionary of Roman Coins* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1889), 149). Occasionally, the emperors had themselves represented with divine attributes, including the caduceus. On the caduceus as a symbol of peace and harmony in relation to the portraits of Roman rulers see Christopher H. Hallett, *The Roman Nude. Heroic Portrait Statuary 200 BC-AD 300* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 235-236.

<sup>676</sup> See Ewig, "Das Bild," 108-109.

<sup>677</sup> Prokopp, "A tornaszentandrási templom," 67.

<sup>678</sup> Prokopp, "A tornaszentandrási templom," 66-67.



and Croatia (1383) and palatine of the country (1387-1401), could have been the donor of the paintings.<sup>679</sup> The village of Tornaszentandrás had entered the property of the Bebek family in the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>680</sup>

Constantine is present at the finding and/or the testing of the Cross in several works of art from Germany and Bohemia.<sup>681</sup> Most versions of the legend of the Finding recount that Helena went to Jerusalem at the initiative of Constantine, while a few versions relate that Constantine directly participated in the finding of the Cross.<sup>682</sup> Introducing the emperor in these scenes was certainly meant to emphasize his importance and his contribution to the finding of the holy relic and to the victory of the Cross.<sup>683</sup> Along with Charlemagne, Constantine was also a model for the Holy Roman Emperors. One of the imperial insignia of the Holy Roman Empire was actually a relic of the True Cross. Charles IV of Bohemia, Holy Roman Emperor from 1355 to 1378, was also a follower of the Constantinian model, as demonstrated by his piety and his attitude towards the Church, which he protected and supported.<sup>684</sup> He had himself and his third wife, Anna of Świdnica, depicted in the guise of Constantine and Helena flanking the Cross above the portal of St Catherine Chapel in Karlštejn Castle.<sup>685</sup> The special veneration of the Cross and the

<sup>679</sup> Prokopp, "A tornaszentandrási templom," 67.

<sup>680</sup> On the history of the village and the church see Ilona Valter, "A tornaszentandrási r.k. templom kutatása" [Research on the Roman Catholic church in Tornaszentandrás], *Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve* 19 (1980), 99-130; Prokopp, "A tornaszentandrási templom."

<sup>681</sup> Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 69-72, 88-92, 196-209; Baert, *Heritage*, 257-263. The majority of the works of art analyzed by Wiegel and Baert date from the first half of the fifteenth century.

<sup>682</sup> On Latin and Syrian sources relating that Constantine directly participated in the finding of the Cross see Linder, "The Myth," 53, 67; Wiegel, *Darstellung*, 263, 266, 276-277.

<sup>683</sup> The topic of Constantine's presence in these works of art has not yet been systematically studied. Barbara Baert has noted that many works of art that represent Constantine as taking part to the finding of the Cross come from regions on or close to the Danube (Southern Germany and Bohemia). She suggests that the tradition, according to which Constantine had the vision of the Cross on the eve of a fight against the barbarians at the Danube, a legend that also came to be associated with Charlemagne, must have played a role in the special importance given to Constantine in these artistic representations (Baert, *Heritage*, 9, 258). Besides the variant relating that Constantine had the vision of the cross before a battle against Maxentius, there is also another version of the legend according to which the emperor's fight actually took place by the Danube against a horde of barbarians (Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found*, 151; Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Th. Graesse (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller Verlag, 1969), 305). Constantine fights Maxentius at the Danube also in Pelbartus de Themeswar (†1504), *Pomerius de sanctis, Pars hiemalis*, Sermo LXXX, De sanctae crucis inventione, Sermo I cum legenda (<http://sermones.elte.hu/pelbart/index.php?file=ph/ph080>), and in the Érdy Codex (1527) (*Érdy codex*, vol. 1, 422, [http://kt.lib.pte.hu/cgi-bin/kt.cgi?konyvtar/kt06010401/4\\_0\\_2\\_pg\\_422.html](http://kt.lib.pte.hu/cgi-bin/kt.cgi?konyvtar/kt06010401/4_0_2_pg_422.html)), which drew on Pelbartus.

<sup>684</sup> See Rudolf Chadraba, "Der 'zweite Konstantin:' zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in der karolinischen Kunst Böhmens," *Umění* 26 (1978), 505-520; Kateřina Kubínová, "Karl IV. und die Tradition Konstantins des Grossen," in *Kunst als Herrschaftsinstrument unter den Luxemburgen. Böhmen und das Heilige Römische Reich im mitteleuropäischen Kontext* (Beiträge des internationalen Symposiums, Prag 9.-13. Mai 2006), ed. Jiří Fajt and Andrea Langer (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009), 320-327.

<sup>685</sup> Kubínová, "Karl IV.," 325; Chadraba, "Der 'zweite Konstantin,'" 510-512 (however, Chadraba avoids providing any identity for the "crowned woman" under the guise of Helena).

appreciation of the Constantinian model are also visible in other works of art related to the Luxemburg dynasty.<sup>686</sup> Charles IV's son, Wenceslas IV and his wife have been also identified in the appearance of Constantine and Helena in the Exaltation of the Cross in a breviary dating from ca. 1410.<sup>687</sup> Sigismund of Luxemburg, son of Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor from 1433 to 1437, was depicted as Constantine in the Turin-Milan Hours, attending the finding of the Cross (second decade of the fifteenth century)<sup>688</sup> and probably also in the Constantine and Helena altarpiece by Cornelis Engelbrechtsz (ca. 1517, Alte Pinakothek, Munich).<sup>689</sup> Sigismund's son-in-law and daughter, Albert II of Habsburg and Elisabeth of Luxemburg, appear in the guise of Constantine and Helena in the Finding of the Cross panel of the Rajhrad Altarpiece (ca. 1452).<sup>690</sup> Also, one of Sigismund's emblems was the Radiating Cross, which he probably devised on the eve of the crusade of Nicopolis (1396). The cross, which was later introduced in the badge of the Order of the Dragon as well, founded by Sigismund in 1408, reminded viewers of the victorious sign Constantine saw in his vision.<sup>691</sup> Sigismund of Luxemburg took his consecration as king and emperor seriously and became involved in matters of the Church. He played an important role in ending the Great Schism (1378-1417)<sup>692</sup> and engaged in the crusade against the Hussite heretics, who disrupted his rule in Bohemia.<sup>693</sup> He also thought of a possible union between the Latin and the Greek Churches as a

<sup>686</sup> See Dušan Buran, "Die Ausmalung der Friedhofskapelle in Riffian. Meister Wenzel, Südtirol und böhmische Kunst um 1400," *Umění* 54 (2006), 298-315.

<sup>687</sup> Dušan Buran, "Die Ausmalung der Friedhofskapelle in Riffian. Meister Wenzel, Südtirol und böhmische Kunst um 1400," *Umění* 54 (2006), 310.

<sup>688</sup> Buran, "Die Ausmalung," 309.

<sup>689</sup> Buran, "Die Ausmalung," 310. However, Frolow identified the emperor as Heraclius not Constantine (Frolow, "La déviation," 58).

<sup>690</sup> Buran, "Die Ausmalung," 310; Milena Bartlová, "Eine Neudatierung des sog. Raigerner Altars und die Folgen für die Chronologie der böhmischen Tafelmalerei des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 65, no. 2 (2002), 145-179; Milena Bartlová, Cat. no. 6.18, "Die Auffindung des wahren Kreuzes (vom Altar von Raigern)," in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator*, ed. I. Takács, 503-504.

<sup>691</sup> On the Radiating Cross see Ernő Marosi, "Reformatio Sigismundi. Künstlerische und politische Repräsentation am Hof Sigismunds von Luxemburg," in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator*, 26-27; Ernő Marosi, "Sigismund, the Last Luxemburg," in *Prague. The Crown of Bohemia 1347-1437*, ed. Barbara Drake Boehm and Jiří Fajt (New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 125; Pál Lövei, Cat. no. 4. 43, "Textilstück mit Flammenkreuz und der Devise AEIOV," in *Sigismundus Rex et imperator*, ed. I. Takács, 342-343.

<sup>692</sup> See Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 191-221, 244-278.

<sup>693</sup> On Sigismund's Hussite politics see Brigit Studt, "Zwischen Kurfürsten, Kurie und Konzil. Die Hussitenpolitik König Sigismunds" in *Sigismund von Luxemburg: ein Kaiser in Europa*, 113-125. On Sigismund as the follower of Constantine and fighter against heretics and pagans see also Buran, "Die Ausmalung," 309-310.

prerequisite for the help he intended to give to the Byzantines against the Turks.<sup>694</sup> He even envisioned the reunion of the two halves of the empire, and a common effort to overcome heresy and the Turks.<sup>695</sup> If Sigismund's military help for the Byzantines never became reality, the emperor still was active in rejecting the Turkish threat to Hungary and Western Europe. Sigismund was the first Hungarian king who had to face the direct threat of the Ottomans. After the defeat of the crusaders at Nicopolis (1396), he adopted a defensive strategy meant to protect the southern border of Hungary.<sup>696</sup> Until 1526, the next rulers of Hungary resisted the Turks through defensive and occasionally offensive measures. In the fifteenth century, both the papacy and the Hungarian leadership regarded the country as the bulwark of Christendom against the infidel.<sup>697</sup>

Most of the murals representing the Finding of the Cross and St Helena with the Cross in medieval Hungary date from the end of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century.<sup>698</sup> It may be assumed that the Turkish threat was one of the important factors stimulating attachment to such themes, as crusading ideas have been frequently identified among the messages conveyed by the artistic representations of the Legend of the Cross.<sup>699</sup> Nevertheless, other aspects of St Helena's cult, already mentioned, or of the cult of the Cross -- like the special devotion to the Passion that characterized the Late Middle Ages and the presence of the relics of the Cross -- should be also taken into consideration in further research regarding the popularity of St Helena and the Finding of the Cross in medieval Hungary. The painters' own artistic repertory could have also lead to the spread of a particular subject matter, but even so the image must have bore a meaning that was easily recognized by the local audiences or fit well into its new setting.

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<sup>694</sup> Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 180, 433. In 1436, the last year of his reign and before a planned campaign against the Turks, Sigismund became involved in preparations for the Ecumenical Council, proposing Buda as a place for the future council (Malyusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 153-154).

<sup>695</sup> Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 180.

<sup>696</sup> Bak, "Hungary and Crusading," 116-118.

<sup>697</sup> Bak, "Hungary and Crusading," 118-119.

<sup>698</sup> It is also true that the bulk of the preserved murals from medieval Hungary date to the second half of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. St Helena with the Cross or scenes from the Legend of the Cross are also represented on winged altarpieces from the late fifteenth and the first three decades of the sixteenth century.

<sup>699</sup> Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, 44; Lavin, *The Place of Narrative*, 99-118; Pflieger, *Kreuzlegende*, 24, 45-52; Baert, *Heritage*, especially chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6.

### ***6.5. The interpretation of the paintings at Ribița and Crișcior***

The Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross were rarely depicted in Byzantine churches. The icon for the feast of the Exaltation, celebrating the finding of the Holy Cross, did not have a primarily narrative character, but was inspired by a liturgical ritual that synthesized the essential meaning of the feast: the triumph of the Cross, and, in fact, the triumph of Christ. Sts Constantine and Helena with the Cross, however, occur frequently in Byzantine churches. The image celebrates not only the two emperors, but also the Cross and its power, and could have worked as an icon for the Exaltation feast too. In contrast, in Western medieval art, Constantine and Helena are rarely depicted as a pair, although in medieval Hungary there are a few examples. The Roman Church never canonized the emperor, but Helena is celebrated as a saint and in terms of Christian virtues she appears superior to her son. In the West, St Helena is frequently represented, either as an individual saint with the Cross as her main attribute, or as a protagonist in the legend of the Finding of the Cross.

As regards the representations at Crișcior and Ribița, it is clear that they were not based on the Byzantine icon of the Exaltation. They are, however, related to representations of the Finding of the Holy Cross in medieval Catholic churches in Hungary. Several iconographic details support this assumption. The dress of St Helena both at Crișcior and Ribița is basically Western and similar to that of Helena in Catholic churches in Hungary. The figure supporting the base of the Cross at Crișcior and the lady-in-waiting at Ribița are details present in other scenes of the Finding in Hungary and elsewhere. The amount of space dedicated to the scene at Crișcior and the fragments preserved of the figure standing to the left indicate that the core of the composition consisted of two figures flanking – probably supporting -- the upright Cross. The figure to the right is Helena. The one to the left had richly decorated garments suggesting he might be Constantine. The fragments of hands visible at the base of the Cross show that the scene draws on depictions of the finding of the holy relic, not on the elevation of the Cross by Patriarch Macarius. As has been shown, the presence of Constantine at the finding of the Cross was not alien to a certain tradition in Western art and hagiography. The artist may have drawn on such a Western model. Alternatively, it may be that the figure to the right of the Cross is Judas-Cyriacus or Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem. Giving Judas an importance equal to Helena's by placing him, sumptuously dressed, to the right of the Cross, would be very unusual taking into account the

Byzantine artistic tradition and the liturgy of the feast.<sup>700</sup> Some of the historians who identify the second main figure at Sântămărie Orlea as Macarius, have also argued that the painter at Crișcior used the Finding of the Cross at Sântămărie Orlea as a model, representing St Helena and Patriarch Macarius flanking the Cross.<sup>701</sup> As I have shown, there are many arguments to believe that the figure at Sântămărie Orlea is not Macarius, but rather Judas. Naturally, it is possible that the painter of Crișcior used the model of Sântămărie Orlea, taking Judas for Macarius.<sup>702</sup>

Although the legend usually mentions only Macarius as the main figure in the testing and the exaltation of the Cross, there are versions of the legend in which the bishop closely collaborates with Helena in all stages of the search for the Cross.<sup>703</sup> In post-Byzantine art there are examples where the patriarch is represented attending the unearthing of the Cross, together with Helena, and sometimes Constantine (figs. 6.19, 6.20).<sup>704</sup> To conclude, the second figure represented supporting the Cross at Crișcior could have been either Constantine or Macarius. As regards the painting of Ribița, the left half of the scene has been completely destroyed by the subsequent opening of a window in the wall. It could have represented the Finding of the Cross with Helena supporting the Cross and the Jews digging for it – as in many Hungarian churches – or, taking into account the strong iconographic and stylistic similarities between the mural ensembles of Ribița and Crișcior, it was probably similar to the scene at Crișcior.

The iconographic formula used at Crișcior and probably also at Ribița, might be unusual by Byzantine standards, but the message seems quite clear in the historical context. Whether the inscription at Crișcior read the “Exaltation of the Holy Cross” or the “Finding of the Holy Cross,” this would not have changed the meaning of the image. The painting functioned as an icon for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross when the Orthodox celebrate the finding of the

<sup>700</sup> Even in Western art, I am not aware of any instance where Judas is shown clad in sumptuous garments at the Finding or Testing of the Cross, that is, before he becomes the Bishop Cyriacus. Indeed, he is a saint according to both the Byzantine and Latin liturgical calendars.

<sup>701</sup> Buculei, “Crișcior,” 39; Tugearu, “Crișcior,” 78-80. Sorin Ullea, although he assumes that the figure to the left is Patriarch Macarius, makes no comparison with Sântămărie Orlea. Nor does he provide any comparative examples (Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 44-47).

<sup>702</sup> However, in Byzantine painting, Macarius generally wears a *polystavrion*.

<sup>703</sup> E.g. in the treatise on the Finding of the Cross by Alexander the Monk (PG 87/3, col. 4061-4064) and the Panegyric of Patriarch Euthymius of Tirnovo (Slavonic text and eighteenth-century Romanian translation published in Mihăilă, *Cultură*, 281-379).

<sup>704</sup> See Vokotopoulos, “Η Εὑρεση,” and the painting of the church of St John the Baptist at Arbore (1541 or 1503-1520). In both cases, the scene is associated with the Exaltation of the Cross, represented in the upper register. A possible earlier example may be found in the church of St Constantine in Kritsa (1354/55) (see above footnote 546): as in the Cretan icons, Macarius and Helena are represented seated, attending a scene that probably represents the finding of the Holy Cross and of the Holy Nails.

Holy Cross by St Helena.<sup>705</sup> On September 14, Catholics in Hungary also celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross. Even though for Catholics the historical event related to the feast was Heraclius's recovery of the Cross from the Persians, references to Constantine and Helena can be found in Latin liturgical texts. In fact, for both confessions this important feast was fundamentally a celebration of the Cross as the instrument of Salvation, a celebration of Christ's death on the Cross and Resurrection. On such occasion a cross or, where available, Cross reliquaries were exposed for veneration in the church. Sometimes processions with these relics took place. The particular attention given to this feast in the paintings of Ribița and Crișcior probably reflects concerns that were common for both Catholics and Orthodox at that time. The paintings in the two churches date from a period when the Turks had become a serious menace at the southern borders of the medieval Hungarian kingdom. The donors of the paintings had military duties and belonged to a particular social category, the Romanian knezes and voivodes, who participated in the defense of the kingdom. The Muslim threat prompted the Christians to leave behind their confessional dissensions and unite their forces under the banner of the Cross. It is possible that the feast of the Exaltation and the veneration of the Cross were understood as common points before the threat against Christendom. Regarded in the context of the Late Crusade, the Exaltation of the Cross in the churches of Ribița and Crișcior can be seen as an invocation of the power of the Cross against Muslim aggression. In addition, the Exaltation of the Cross is represented next to the Holy Kings of Hungary. With the vision and victory of Constantine in the name of the Cross, this became the sign of rulers' heavenly alliance with the Christian God.<sup>706</sup> Their authority came from God and it was his will that they had to carry out. The Cross was the instrument of their victory and the expression of their triumph.<sup>707</sup> The association of the Holy Kings of Hungary with the Exaltation of the Cross shows them as defenders of Christian faith and exemplary Christian rulers. However, the meaning of the Exaltation at Ribița and Crișcior was not merely reduced to this political message. One should not forget that the significance of the feast was essentially theological, celebrating the Cross as the instrument of mankind's Redemption, and that the Cross worked as a powerful protection against any evil, either material or spiritual. The interpretation

<sup>705</sup> Therefore, the convention of calling the scene represented at Crișcior and Ribița the Exaltation of the Cross is appropriate, even if its iconography is not that of the Byzantine Exaltation. If Constantine is indeed the second figure supporting the Cross then the representation also expresses the veneration of the two holy emperors.

<sup>706</sup> Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 182.

<sup>707</sup> On the Cross as instrument of imperial victory see Grabar, *L'empereur*, 32-39.

of the Exaltation as the victory of the Christian truth over unbelief and heresy, or the possible existence of Cross relics in the region, should be also taken into consideration in further research.

## Table

Wall Paintings in medieval Hungary that include representations of St Helena with the Cross, Constantine and Helena or scenes from the Legend of the Finding of the Cross.

|   | Church  | Date   | Helena with the Cross  | Constantine and Helena | Finding of the Cross |
|---|---|--|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Bădești (Romania, Cluj County) <sup>708</sup><br>Reformed church                      | End of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>709</sup><br>Beginning of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>710</sup> | Nave, north wall, lower register; in a group of saints represented on the north-east corner of the nave (Sigismund, Catherine, Helena, St John the Baptist and the enthroned Virgin with Child)<br><br>Picture: Jékely and Kiss, <i>Középkori falképek Erdélyben</i> , 16, 18. |                        |                      |
| 2 | Bodony (Hungary, Heves County) <sup>711</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Michael | Beginning of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>712</sup>   | Sanctuary, intrados of the eastern window<br><br>Picture: Jékely and Lángi, <i>Falfestészeti emlékek</i> , 62, 63.   |                        |                      |
| 3 | Čerín (Slovakia)  | First quarter of the   | Nave, north side of the  |                        |                      |

<sup>708</sup> Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 8-25.

<sup>709</sup> Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 10.

<sup>710</sup> Marosi, "Saints at Home," 196.

<sup>711</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 50-65.

<sup>712</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 51.



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|   | Zvolen District) <sup>713</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Martin  | 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>714</sup><br>1380-1390 <sup>715</sup> | triumphal arch. In the lower register: St Helena with the Cross, flanked by Sts Dorothy and Catherine. In the upper register: Schutzmantelmadonna. |  |  |
| 4 | Chornotysiv (Чорнотисів) (Ukraine, Zakarpatska Region) <sup>716</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Rosalia | 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>717</sup>                             |  |  | Nave, lower register of the north wall.<br>The painting depicts the finding of the Cross, with St Helena holding the cross and two little figures helping to unearth it. The scene is represented in a register of saints, next to the Holy Kindred.<br><br>Accompanying inscription of St Helena: <i>Sancta [Helena mater] Constantini</i> <sup>718</sup> |

<sup>713</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 136-137; Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 83-87; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 146-147.

<sup>714</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 87.

<sup>715</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 136.

<sup>716</sup> Rómer, *Régi falképek*, 74-84; Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 136; Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei*, 157-158; Horváth and Kovács, *Kárpátalja kincsei*, 108-113.

<sup>717</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 136; Horváth and Kovács, *Kárpátalja kincsei*, 111, 113.

<sup>718</sup> Rómer, *Régi falképek*, 80.

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|   |   |   |   |  | Picture: drawing in Rómer, <i>Régi falképek</i> , 80, fig. 58. |
| 5 | Crăciunel (Romania, Harghita County) <sup>719</sup><br>Unitarian church   | First half of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century                |   | Nave, lower register of the north wall; next to the Adoration of the Magi (from the same period) and the Nativity (earlier period) |  |
| 6 | Dârlos (Romania, Sibiu County) <sup>720</sup><br>Evangelical church       | 15 <sup>th</sup> century                                  |   | Sanctuary, south wall  |  |
| 7 | Dobšiná (Slovakia, Rožňava District) <sup>721</sup><br>Evangelical church | First half of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>722</sup> | Sanctuary, east wall<br><br>Picture: Jékely and Lángi, <i>Falfestészeti emlékek</i> , 83. |  |  |
| 8 | Horiany (Горішні) (Ukraine, Zakarpatska) <sup>723</sup>                   | Paintings in the rotunda: 1360-1370 <sup>724</sup>        | Lower register of the south-west apse; next to two female saints,                         |  |  |

<sup>719</sup> Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek*, vol. 1, 44-45.

<sup>720</sup> Porumb, *Dicționar*, 102-103; Fabini, *Atlas*, 161-163.

<sup>721</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 72-85.

<sup>722</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 74.

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|   | Region) <sup>723</sup>   |  | probably Catherine and Elisabeth<br><br>Picture: <i>Huszka József, a rajzoló gyűjtő. Huszka József. Collector and Sketch Artist</i> (Exhibition Catalog), ed. Zoltán Fejős (Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum, 2006), fig. 93 (water-color). |  |  |
| 9 | Khust (Хуст) (Ukraine, Zakarpatska Region) <sup>725</sup><br>Reformed church | Last decades of the fourteenth-first decades of the fifteenth century <sup>726</sup> | North wall of the nave, next to the triumphal arch. The painting, which is partially preserved (only the lower part of St Helena and the Cross are visible), is represented next to the Holy Kings of Hungary.                       |  |  |

<sup>724</sup> Marosi, "A gerényi rotunda," 302; Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet 1300-1470 körül*, vol. 1, 475-476; Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei*, 58.

<sup>723</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 141-142; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 153; Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet 1300-1470 körül*, vol. 1, 194, 475-476; Ernő Marosi, "A gerényi rotunda építéstörténetéhez," *Építés-Építészettudomány* 5 (1973-1974), 296-304; Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei*, 56-60, 217; Horváth and Kovács, *Kárpátalja kincsei*, 22-35.

<sup>725</sup> n.a., "A Huszti református templom" [The reformed church of Hust], *Archaeologiai Értesítő* 8 (1888), 447-448; Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 49, 148-149; Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei*, 168-172.

<sup>726</sup> Based on the dating of the Holy Kings of Hungary represented next to St Helena (see Chapter 5 ).

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| 10 | Keszthely<br>(Hungary, Zala<br>County) <sup>727</sup><br>Catholic church<br>(former Franciscan<br>church)<br>Title: Holy Virgin | Most probably<br>between 1386-1397 <sup>728</sup>      | North-east wall of the<br>sanctuary; next to a<br>series of scenes from<br>the Passion of Christ<br>and in the same register<br>with other female saints<br>(Mary Magdalen,<br>Margaret, Dorothy,<br>Catherine, Barbara,<br>Claire and Elisabeth) <sup>729</sup><br><br>Picture: Prokopp, “A<br>keszthelyi templom,”<br>fig. 7; Marosi, ed.,<br><i>Magyarországi<br/>művészet</i> , vol. 2, fig.<br>1282. |  |  |
| 11 | Kraskovo (Slovakia,<br>Rimavská Sobota<br>District) <sup>730</sup><br>Evangelical church  | Last third of the<br>fourteenth century <sup>731</sup> | Nave, lower register of<br>the north wall;<br>St Helena is<br>represented next to<br>Anna Selbdritt, and in a<br>larger decorative frame  |  |  |

<sup>727</sup> Mária Prokopp, “A keszthelyi plebánia templom gótikus falképei” [The Gothic wall paintings of the parish church in Keszthely], *Építés-Építészettudomány* 12 (1980), 367-385; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 107, 158-159; Mária Prokopp, “Keszthely és Siklós újonnan feltárt gótikus falképei” [The newly discovered Gothic paintings at Keszthely and Siklós], *Ars Hungarica* 23 (1995), 155-167; Zsombor Jékely, “Keszthely, ehemalige Franziskanerkirche” in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator*, ed. Imre Takács, 420-421.

<sup>728</sup> Jékely, “Keszthely, ehemalige Franziskanerkirche” in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator*, ed. Imre Takács, 420-421. Mária Prokopp has proposed a dating to the 1380s (Prokopp, “A keszthelyi templom,” 385; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 159).

<sup>729</sup> Prokopp, “A keszthelyi plebánia templom gótikus falképei,” *Építés-Építészettudomány* 12 (1980), 371. Also in the iconographic scheme in Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet 1300-1470 körül*, vol. 1, 596.

<sup>730</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 107-112; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 157; Barbora Glocková, “Nástenné mal'by v Kraskove,” in *Gotika*, ed. Dušan Buran, 675-676; Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 54-64.

<sup>731</sup> Barbora Glocková, “Nástenné mal'by v Kraskove,” in *Gotika*, ed. Dušan Buran, 676; Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 55 (1380-1400).

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|    |  |   | that encloses also the Pietà with St John and St Magdalene.<br><br>Picture: REALonline ( <a href="http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/">http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/</a> )  |  |  |
| 12 | Martjanci (Slovenia, Prekmurje region) <sup>732</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Martin | 1392-1400 <sup>733</sup>                            | Sanctuary, lower register of the northeast wall; in a row of female saints (Dorothy, Helena, Barbara, Margaret, Apolonia, Hedvig)<br>St Helena holds a big cross, and a little figure with pointed hat supports its foot, while holding a pick on his shoulder<br><br>Picture: REALonline ( <a href="http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/">http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/</a> ) |  |  |
| 13 | Moacșa (Romania, Covasna County) <sup>734</sup><br>Reformed church,                          | Middle of the fourteenth century (?) <sup>735</sup> | Nave, north wall. The paintings, which had been already damaged,  |  |  |

<sup>732</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 160-162; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 165-166; Janez Höfler and Janez Balažic, *Johannes Aquila* (Murska Sobota: Pomurska, 1992), 38-43, 122-126; Janez Balažic, “Johannes Aquila,” in *Gotik in Slowenien. Katalog zur Ausstellung der Narodna Galerija, Ljubljana, 1. Juni bis 1. Oktober 1995*, ed. Janez Höfler, (Ljubljana: Narodna Galerija, 1995), 233, 235-237.

<sup>733</sup> Janez Balažic, “Johannes Aquila,” in *Gotik in Slowenien*, ed. Janez Höfler, 233.

<sup>734</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 170; Mihály Jánó, “A maksai református templom ‘kifehérítése’” [The “whitewash” of the reformed church in Maksa], *Acta Siculica* 2007, 467-480.

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|    | demolished in 1893  |  | have been preserved only in copies from the end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century (watercolors, drawings and photographs). In the watercolors one can see a female saint, wearing a <i>Krüselér</i> and holding a big cross. <sup>736</sup><br><br>Picture: Watercolor by József Huszka (1892) in Fejős, ed. <i>Huszka</i> , fig. 63, page 55. |  |  |
| 14 | Nyíribrony (Hungary, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County) <sup>737</sup><br>Reformed church | Around 1400 <sup>738</sup>                                 | Nave, south wall.<br>St Helena holds a cross on the top of which there is a scroll with the inscription <i>INRI</i> .<br><br>Picture: Jékely and Lángi, <i>Falfestészeti emlékek</i> , 306, 307.   |  |  |
| 15 | Otomány (Romania, Bihar County) <sup>739</sup><br>Reformed church                     | Second half of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>740</sup> | Nave, north wall.<br>The paintings represented St Helena   |  |  |

<sup>735</sup> The legend of St Ladislas, represented in the upper register of the same wall, has been dated to the middle of the fourteenth century (László, *A Szent László-legenda*, 69).

<sup>736</sup> It has been assumed that in fact there were three scenes illustrating episodes from the legend of the finding of the Holy Cross (see János, “A maksai templom,” 470, 471, 472), but in my opinion that cannot be ascertained based on the watercolors.

<sup>737</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 304-309.

<sup>738</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 305.

<sup>739</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 193.

<sup>740</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 193.

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|    |   |  | in a register with other female saints. <sup>741</sup>   |  |  |
| 16 | Poniky (Slovakia, Banská Bystrica District) <sup>742</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Francis Seraph | 1415 <sup>743</sup>                                      | Sanctuary , second register of the south wall;<br>in a register of other female saints (Mary Magdalen turned towards Helena, Barbara, Catherine, Margaret, Dorothy, Apolonia, and Agnes).<br><br>Picture: REALonline ( <a href="http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/">http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/</a> ) |  |  |
| 17 | Poruba (Slovakia, Prievidza District) <sup>744</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Nicholas             | Beginning of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>745</sup> | Nave, north pier of the triumphal arch;<br>St Helena and St Barbara on each side of the<br>Schutzmantelmadonna.<br><br>Picture: Gombosi, <i>Köpönyegem</i> , fig. 31.1 and 31.2.   |  |  |

<sup>741</sup> Drăguț, "Iconografia," 65; Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 193.

<sup>742</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 131-132; Dušan Buran, *Studien zur Wandmalerei um 1400 in der Slowakei. Die Pfarrkirche St. Jakob in Leutschau und die Pfarrkirche St. Franziskus Seraphicus in Poniky* (Weimar: VDG, 2002).

<sup>743</sup> Buran, *Studien*, 119-121.

<sup>744</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 179; Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 132-134; Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet*, vol. 1, 478-479; Gombosi, *Köpönyegem*, 155-156.

<sup>745</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 134.

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| 18 | Racu (Romania, Harghita County) <sup>746</sup><br>Catholic church                         | 15 <sup>th</sup> century  | Nave, south side of the triumphal arch, lower register.<br>Helena, who holds a tau-shaped cross, is represented next to St Elisabeth.<br><br>Picture: Lángi and Mihály, <i>Erdélyi falképek</i> , vol. 1, 19. |  |   |
| 19 | Ragály (Hungary, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) <sup>747</sup><br>Reformed church           | End of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>748</sup>                                    | Intrados of the triumphal arch<br><br>Picture: Jékely and Lángi, <i>Falfestészeti emlékek</i> , 385, 386  |  |   |
| 20 | Rákoš (Slovakia, Rožňava County) <sup>749</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: Holy Trinity | 1390s <sup>750</sup><br>Second quarter of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>751</sup> |   |  | North wall of the nave, next to the triumphal arch.<br>St Helena supports the Cross with both hands. A smaller figure, with pointed hat, is partially visible and was probably represented digging at the base of |

<sup>746</sup> Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 149; Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek*, vol. 1, 18-19.

<sup>747</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 380-391.

<sup>748</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 380.

<sup>749</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 135-136; Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes*, 21-26; Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes*, 22-26.

<sup>750</sup> Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes*, 22; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 176 (end of the fourteenth century).

<sup>751</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 135.



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|    |  |  |   |  | the Cross. Schutzmantelmadonna is represented on the adjacent wall. |
| 21 | Rudabánya (Hungary, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) <sup>752</sup><br>Reformed Church | End of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>753</sup><br>Ca 1400 <sup>754</sup><br>1420-1430 <sup>755</sup> | Choir, south wall <sup>756</sup><br>To the right of St Helena, in a separate decorative frame and probably dating from a later period, <sup>757</sup> is represented St Sophia with her three daughters.<br><br>Picture: Marosi, ed., <i>Magyarországi művészet</i> , vol. 2, fig. 1292; REALonline ( <a href="http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/">http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/</a> ); Radocsay, <i>Wandgemälde</i> , fig. 79; Jékely and Lángi, <i>Falfestészeti emlékek</i> , 397, 398. |  |   |
| 22 | Sântămărie Orlea   | 1311 <sup>759</sup>  |   |  | Nave, lower register of   |

<sup>752</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 26, 169; Nóra Pamer, “Rudabánya középkori temploma” [The medieval church in Rudabánya], *Műemlékvédelem* 24 no. 4 (1980), 193-210; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 178; Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 392-403.

<sup>753</sup> Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 178.

<sup>754</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 393.

<sup>755</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 26, 169.

<sup>756</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 169.

<sup>757</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 393 (ca. 1420); Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 178 (first half of the fifteenth century).

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|  | (Romania,<br>Hunedoara<br>County) <sup>758</sup><br>Reformed church |  |  |  | the north wall, next to the triumphal arch. The composition is symmetrically organized around the upright Cross, which comes out of a pit. In the pit one can see the bust of a figure who supports the Cross. Another standing figure supports the cross from behind. St Helena is represented to the left, accompanied by a retinue of women and soldiers. She shows the Cross with her right arm and with her left supports it. From above, the hand of God gives her a blessing. To the right stands a holy man, dressed in a brown garment and wearing a white headdress. He |
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<sup>759</sup> According to the dedicatory inscription, which is situated on the south wall of the nave and was read for the first time by Entz Géza (Entz, “A középkori,” 247). See Catalog.

<sup>758</sup> Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 11-17, 40-42; Drăguț, “Picturile bisericii din Sîntă Mărie Orlea;” Bratu, “Sîntămărie Orlea;” Porumb, *Dicționar*, 360-362; Lionnet, “Le culte ;” Szabó, “Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom;” Tekla Szabó, “Az őraljaboldogfalvi falfestmények feltárása és korabeli másolataik” [The uncovering and contemporary copies of the murals of Sântămărie Orlea], *Műemlékvédelmi Szemle* 14 (2004), 39-64.

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|    |  |   |  |  | also supports the Cross and points towards it with his right hand. Behind him there is a smaller figure with pointed hat, and other men wearing white headdress. A small fleeing devil is depicted behind the head of the saint. The right extremity of the scene is quite damaged, but at the feet of the saint one can see an open coffin. The presence of the coffin suggests that the testing of the crosses, followed by the resurrection of a dead, was also included in the scene. <sup>760</sup> |
| 23 | Selo v Prekmurju (Slovenia, Prekmurje region) <sup>761</sup> | Probably early 15 <sup>th</sup> century | A possible depiction of St Helena, on the lower register of the rotunda, was signaled in the |  |  |

<sup>760</sup> On the right extremity of the scene Marie Lionnet describes two figures, one crouched and the other standing, seemingly rising from the coffin (Lionnet, “Le culte,” 77). However, at present, on direct examination of the paintings, I was not able to distinguish these figures.

<sup>761</sup> Rómer, *Régi falképek*, 55-57; Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 187-188; France Stelè, *Gotsko stensko slikarstvo* [Gothic wall paintings] (Ljubljana, 1972), LXII; Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 164-167; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 169; Höfler, ed., *Gotik in Slowenien*, 226, 233, 245-246.

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|    | Catholic church<br>Title: Holy Virgin<br>and St Nicholas                                  |                          | 1870s, but it has not<br>been preserved. <sup>762</sup> |  |   |
| 24 | Sighetul Marmăției<br>(Romania,<br>Maramureș<br>County) <sup>763</sup><br>Reformed church | 15 <sup>th</sup> century |   |  | Nave, south wall of the<br>south aisle.<br>The old church was<br>almost completely torn<br>down in the 1860s,<br>therefore the paintings<br>are known only from<br>descriptions and<br>several copies<br>(watercolors and<br>drawings). Fragments<br>of a scene that was<br>identified as the<br>Finding of the Holy<br>Cross were reproduced<br>in a 19 <sup>th</sup> -century<br>watercolor: a man<br>holds a cross and<br>behind him a bearded<br>man was probably<br>represented digging;<br>behind the later, there<br>are two girls each of<br>them holding a big<br>cross. <sup>764</sup><br><br>Picture: Jékely and |

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<sup>762</sup> Rómer, *Régi falképek*, 56; Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 167; Stelè, *Gotsko stensko slikarstvo*, LXII.

<sup>763</sup> Rómer, *Régi falképek*, 88-94; Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 48, 49, 172 ; Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 214-217.

<sup>764</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 216 and illustration at pages 238-239.

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|    |  |  |  |  | Lángi, <i>Falfestészeti emlékek</i> , 238-239 (watercolor); Rómer, <i>Régi falképek</i> , fig. 60, p. 92 (drawing). |
| 25 | Sliače (Slovakia, Liptovský Mikuláš District) <sup>765</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: Apostles Simon and Judas         | End of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>766</sup><br>First quarter of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>767</sup> | Nave, south side of the triumphal arch, upper register; in pendant with Schutzmantelmadonna, represented on the north side of the triumphal arch<br><br>Picture: REALonline ( <a href="http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/">http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/</a> ). |  |   |
| 26 | Smrečany (Slovakia, Liptovský Mikuláš County) <sup>768</sup><br>Catholic church,<br>Title: Purification of the Holy Virgin | Ca. 1400 <sup>769</sup><br>First half of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>770</sup>                               | Nave, north wall; in a register with other female saints   |  |   |
| 27 | Štítnik (Slovakia, Rožňava District) <sup>771</sup>  | 1460s <sup>772</sup><br>Middle of the 15 <sup>th</sup>   |  |  | Nave, south side of the triumphal arch  |

<sup>765</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 142-143; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 154-155.

<sup>766</sup> Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 154.

<sup>767</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 143.

<sup>768</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 178-179; Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 143-144; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 185.

<sup>769</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 178; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 185.

<sup>770</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 144.

<sup>771</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 137-138; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 148-149; Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes*, 31-40; Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 154-160.

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|    | Evangelical Church   | century <sup>773</sup><br>1400-1450 <sup>774</sup>  |  |  | <p>Helena supports the upright cross and a gray-haired man digs with a spade in a rock, at the base of the cross.</p> <p>Picture: REALonline (<a href="http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/">http://www.imareal.oew.ac.at/realonline/</a>)</p>   |
| 28 | Svinica (Slovakia, Košice-okolie District) <sup>775</sup><br>Reformed church | 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>776</sup><br>Second half of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>777</sup> |  |  | <p>Exterior wall painting, in a niche on the south wall of the western tower.</p> <p>St Helena supports a Cross in front of her. Two smaller crosses come out from the same pit, one of them being supported by a small figure with pointed hat. Another figure is represented digging at the base of the three crosses.</p> |

<sup>772</sup> Prokopp, *Medieval Frescoes*, 32.

<sup>773</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 160.

<sup>774</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 138.

<sup>775</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 148-150; Barbora Glocková, "Nástenné mal'by vo Svinici," in *Gotika*, ed. Buran, 678; Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 340-375.

<sup>776</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 148.

<sup>777</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 344; Barbora Glocková, "Nástenné mal'by vo Svinici," in *Gotika*, ed. Buran, 678.

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|    |  |  |  |  | Picture: Jékely and Lángi, <i>Falfestészeti emlékek</i> , 374-375   |
| 29 | Tornaszentandrás<br>(Hungary, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) <sup>778</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Andrew | Late 14 <sup>th</sup> -early 15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>779</sup> |  |  | Nave, south side of the triumphal arch, lower register.<br>St Helena, followed by a holy king, probably Constantine, stands to the right of the upright Cross. On the other side of the Cross there are three standing male figures. One of them is smaller and points with his finger towards his eyes. He seems to have been represented holding a pick in his left hand. The other two figures are taller and wear rich garments and pointed hats.<br><br>Picture: Marosi, ed., <i>Magyarországi művészet</i> , vol. 2, fig. |

<sup>778</sup> On the paintings in the church: Valter, “A tornaszentandrás r.k. templom;” Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 187; Valter, *Tornaszentandrás*; Mária Prokopp, “A tornaszentandrás templom középkori falképei” [The medieval wall paintings of the church at Tornaszentandrás] in *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok a közeli és a régmúltból. Emlékkönyv Székely György 70. születésnapjára*, ed. Ilona Jónás (Budapest, 1994), 63-68.

<sup>779</sup> Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 187 (end of the fourteenth century); Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet*, vol. 1, 605 (early fifteenth century); Prokopp, “A tornaszentandrás templom,” 67 (late fourteenth-early fifteenth century).

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|    |  |   |  |  | 1374; Valter, “A tornaszentandrás r.k. templom,” fig. 16.  |
| 30 | Turčianske Jaseno (Slovakia, Martin District) <sup>780</sup><br>Catholic church<br>Title: St Margaret of Antioch | Last third of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>781</sup>                                     |  |  | Nave, north side of the triumphal arch, upper register.<br>The scene is partially preserved. One can see St Helena supporting the upright Cross and, on the upper right corner, an angel giving a blessing in the direction of the Cross. The painting could have represented the Finding of the Cross. <sup>782</sup> |
| 31 | Turičský (Slovakia, Poltár District) <sup>783</sup><br>Evangelical church  | End of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>784</sup><br>15 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>785</sup> | Sanctuary, lower register of the south wall; in a register of saints<br><br>Picture: Marosi, ed., <i>Magyarországi</i> |  |  |

<sup>780</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 95-96 (the fresco with St Helena had not yet been uncovered); Zuzana Gécsová and Vladimír Plekanec, “Stredoveké nástenné mal'by v Kostole svätej Margity v Turčianskom Jasene” [The medieval wall paintings of the church of St Margaret in Turčianske Jaseno], *Pamiatky a múzeá*, 1998, no. 1, 24-27.

<sup>781</sup> The painting was attributed to a painter that worked also in the church of Necpaly (Barbora Glocková, “Nástenné mal'by v Čerine,” in *Gotika*, ed. Buran, 675). See also Gécsová and Plekanec, “Stredoveké nástenné mal'by,” 25, 27.

<sup>782</sup> In Gécsová and Plekanec, “Stredoveké nástenné mal'by,” 27, the scene is wrongly identified as the Annunciation.

<sup>783</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 135-136; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 150-151.

<sup>784</sup> Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 151.

<sup>785</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 136.



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|    |   |   | <i>művészet</i> , vol.2, fig. 1343 |   |  |
| 32 | Velyka Byihan' (Велика Бийгань) (Ukraine, Zakarpatska Region) <sup>786</sup><br>Reformed church | 15 <sup>th</sup> century  |                                    |   | North wall of the nave, upper register, next to the triumphal arch.<br>Helena supports the Cross and points towards it. Two smaller male figures support the Cross and dig at the base of it, respectively.<br><br>Picture: Horváth and Kovács, <i>Kárpátalja kincsei</i> , fig. 44-46, p. 53. |
| 33 | Vizsoly (Hungary, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) <sup>787</sup><br>Reformed church                | Middle of the 14 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>788</sup><br>1400-1450 <sup>789</sup> |                                    | Nave, north wall.<br>Helena and Constantine stand on each side of the Cross, with their hands raised in sign of veneration. |  |

<sup>786</sup> Horváth and Kovács, *Kárpátalja kincsei*, 52-55; Deschmann, *Kárpátalja Műemlékei*, 118.

<sup>787</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 181-182; Prokopp, *Italian Trecento*, 190; Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 422-451.

<sup>788</sup> Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 426.

<sup>789</sup> Radocsay, *Wandgemälde*, 181.

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|    |   |  |  | <p>An angel comes down from the sky, giving a blessing in the direction of the Cross.</p> <p>Picture:<br/>Jékely and Lángi,<br/><i>Falfestészet i emlékek</i>, 447</p> |   |
| 34 | <p>Zlatna (Romania, Alba County)<sup>790</sup><br/>Orthodox church<br/>Title: Dormition of the Virgin</p> | 15 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>791</sup> |  |  | <p>Nave, north wall.<br/>Scene from the Legend of the Cross: A holy figure wearing a crown or mitre and accompanied by two other figures (one of them probably a deacon) holds a big cross. To the right and left there are two saints, possibly Helena</p> |

<sup>790</sup> Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 64-65; Porumb, *Pictura românească*, 33-35; Porumb, *Dicționar*, 458-461; Maria Mocanu, “Biserica ortodoxă Adormirea Maicii Domnului din Zlatna,” in *PVAR* 5, 301-312; Gheorghe Petrov, “Biserica Adormirea Maicii Domnului din Zlatna, jud. Alba,” in *Arhitectura religioasă medievală din Transilvania* (Medieval Ecclesiastical Architecture in Transylvania), vol. 2, ed. Adrian Andrei Rusu and Péter Levente Szöcs (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 2002), 123-131.

<sup>791</sup> Porumb, *Dicționar*, 461. In an earlier work, Porumb has proposed a dating to the first half of the fifteenth century (Porumb, *Pictura românească*, 35).

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|  |  |  |  |  | <p>and Constantine, accompanied by kneeling figures. The painting has suffered abrasions and repainting. The saint to the left is accompanied by a later inscription indicating him as St Constantine.</p> <p>Picture: Porumb, <i>Pictura românească</i>, fig. 60; Porumb, <i>Dicționar</i>, 460.</p> |
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## 7. Painting in the Sanctuaries

### 7.1. *The Iconographic Program*

The majority of the paintings preserved in medieval Orthodox churches in Transylvania deviate to varying degrees from what is commonly considered the Byzantine iconographic canon of the time. Probably the only sanctuary where the paintings faithfully follow this canon is in the church of Colț.<sup>792</sup> The paintings, now badly damaged, are executed in a late Palaeologan style and are of a high quality. The Virgin was represented in the conch, the Communion of the Apostles in the first register, and the Celebrating Bishops in the second register above the dado. All other churches that preserve paintings in the sanctuary -- Streisângeorgiu, Strei, Densuș, Ribița, Hălmagiu and Sântămărie Orlea -- display peculiar features as a result of the particular architecture of the church, the provincial milieu and the influence of Western painting.

The subjects represented in the sanctuary of Byzantine churches were closely connected to the function of this space, where the essential part of the Eucharistic liturgy was performed. Particularly from the eleventh century on, the influence of the Mass on the decoration of the sanctuary became increasingly evident.<sup>793</sup> The standard iconographic program of late Byzantine churches displayed the Virgin in the conch and the celebrating bishops in the lower register of the sanctuary. This was the most frequent iconographic scheme used in Constantinople, the Balkans and Russia in the last centuries of Byzantium. If space permitted, the Communion of the Apostles, occasionally also the Heavenly Liturgy, were introduced in the first two registers under the conch.

As the instrument of the Incarnation, foremost mediator between God and men, and symbol of the Church, the Virgin, usually with the Child, was a typical subject for the decoration of the eastern conch in the post-iconoclast period. The Communion of the Apostles, a liturgical interpretation of the Last Supper, occurred for the first time in monumental painting in the tenth

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<sup>792</sup> The paintings of the church of Colț have been analyzed by Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei in Cincheza-Buculei, "Le programme," 81-91. The scholar has proposed a date for them to the end of the fourteenth century. The poorly preserved remains of the medieval frescos were badly repainted in the last years.

<sup>793</sup> For an overview on the iconographic program of the Byzantine church see Klaus Wessel, "Bildprogramm," *RBK*, vol. 1, col. 662-690.

century, but it was frequently represented in the sanctuary only from the thirteenth century on.<sup>794</sup> The Heavenly Liturgy, modeled on the Great Entrance ritual, represents the angelic powers as concelebrants of the Mass. It was usually painted in the dome, with the first preserved examples dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century. Occasionally, however, it was also represented in the sanctuary or the prothesis.<sup>795</sup> From the end of the eleventh century, the theme of the Celebrating Bishops gradually became the typical decoration of the lower register of the sanctuary.<sup>796</sup> The bishops, until then represented frontally and holding closed books, turn towards the east, where a Eucharistic theme was painted. They hold open scrolls with texts taken from the Mass of St John Chrysostom, St Basil the Great or the Mass of the Presanctified Oblations.<sup>797</sup> From the thirteenth century on, by far the most popular subject represented to the east was the Christ Child, lying directly on the altar table or on the paten.<sup>798</sup> The legends that accompanied it varied, but the most frequent was *Δμελισμός* (dismembering, dividing), which is commonly used as a name for this particular iconographic subject.<sup>799</sup> The representation, inspired from Liturgy and theological writings and debates, pointed to the authenticity of Christ's sacrifice during the Liturgy and to the real presence and incorruptibility of the body of Christ in

<sup>794</sup> On the development and meaning of this subject matter see Klaus Wessel, "Apostelkommunion," *RBK*, vol. 1, col. 239-245; *LCI*, vol. 1, col. 173-176; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 48-67; Walter, *Art and Liturgy*, 184-189, 215-217.

<sup>795</sup> On the Heavenly Liturgy see Klaus Wessel, "Himmliche Liturgie," in *RBK*, vol. 3, col. 119-131; *LCI*, vol. 3, col. 103-106; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 217-221; Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 111-114; Papamastorakis, *Ο διάκονος*, 135-165.

<sup>796</sup> See Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 125-158; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 15-36.

<sup>797</sup> For the inscriptions on their scrolls see Gordana Babić and Christopher Walter, "The Inscriptions upon Liturgical Rolls in Byzantine Apse Decoration," *Revue des études byzantines* 34 (1976), 269-280; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 144-158; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 32-34.

<sup>798</sup> On the representation of Christ as the Eucharistic offering, also called *Melismos*, see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 25-115; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 40-47. Other subjects represented to the east were *Hetoimasia* (the Throne prepared for the Second Coming), the altar table with the chalice and paten sitting on it, or other less usual themes. See Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 19-23, 65-73; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 38-40; Tania Velmans, "Interférences sémantiques entre l'Amnos et d'autres images apparentées dans la peinture murale byzantine," in *Αρμός. Τιμητικός τόμος στον καθηγητή Ν.Κ. Μουτσόπουλο για τα 25 χρόνια πνευματικής του προσφοράς στο Πανεπιστήμιο*, vol. 3 (Thessalonica: Aristotle University of Thessalonica, 1991), 1905-1928.

<sup>799</sup> *Melismos* is the Greek liturgical term for the breaking of the consecrated bread which the priest performs before the communion, reciting: "The Lamb of God is broken and distributed; broken but not divided. He is forever eaten yet is never consumed, but He sanctifies those who partake of Him" (see Brightman, *Liturgies*, 393). Another frequent inscription is "The Lamb" (ὁ ἄμνος), which is also used in art historical literature as a generic term for the Eucharistic Christ. On the various inscriptions that accompanied the Eucharistic Christ see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 51-63.

the Eucharist.<sup>800</sup> The procession of the celebrating bishops around the Eucharistic Christ stands for the whole Eucharistic celebration, and testifies to the orthodoxy of the Eucharistic teaching. The decoration of the Transylvanian Orthodox churches present deviations from this program. The paintings in the sanctuaries of Strei, Hălmagiu and in part possibly also of Streisângeorgiu were carried out by artisans trained in Western painting. The frescoes in Streisângeorgiu are the oldest, dating from 1313/4. Their style is rustic, characterized by strong contours, relatively naïve drawing and flat modeling. Christ in Glory blessing with both hands is represented on the vault of the rectangular sanctuary (figs. 7.1, 7.2, 7.3). He is accompanied by the apocalyptic beings holding books – only two of them are visible today<sup>801</sup> –, by thrones (winged wheels) and four seraphim situated on the corners of the vault. The paintings are yet incompletely uncovered, but it is possible that a prophet is represented on the upper register of the south wall (fig. 7.4). In the lower register, to the east, on each side of the earliest votive inscription (1313/4), two bishops stand in a frontal pose, holding a closed book and making a blessing gesture (fig. 7.5). The bishop to the north wears a skull cap and the accompanying inscription identifies him as St Basil (fig. 7.6). Two warrior saints on horseback are represented on the north and south walls. According to Vasile Drăguț, who described the paintings in 1978, at the top of the soffit of the triumphal arch there should be a representation of the Lamb of God.<sup>802</sup> As suggested by the stylistic differences between the *Maiestas Domini* (Christ in Majesty)<sup>803</sup> and the warrior on the north wall, on the one side, and the bishops and the warrior on the south wall, on the other side, two painters worked on the decoration of the sanctuary, the second having slightly better training, as demonstrated by the careful drawing and use of slender modeling. The rustic style of the paintings makes the stylistic evaluation difficult but the iconography of the vault suggests that its painter may have had Western training.

The paintings of Strei are in Gothic style and may date to the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>804</sup> Christ in a mandorla supported by two angels is represented on the eastern section of

<sup>800</sup> On the theological and liturgical meaning of the Eucharistic Christ see particularly Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 25-48; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 44-47; Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 106-111; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 207-212; Babić, “Les discussions,” 384-386.

<sup>801</sup> The lion and a figure bearing the title “Luke.” On the symbols of the Evangelists in Byzantine art see Robert Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface*, 15-53.

<sup>802</sup> Drăguț, “Streisângeorgiu,” 39. The representation is no longer visible.

<sup>803</sup> As recommended by *LCI*, vol. 3, col. 136, the term *Maiestas Domini* will be here used to designate the representation of Christ in Glory accompanied by the apocalyptic beings.

<sup>804</sup> On various dates proposed for the paintings see the Catalogue. Vasile Drăguț has pointed out stylistic similarities with the paintings in Murska Sobota, Chyžné and Butoniga (see Drăguț, “Biserica din Strei,” 314-315).

the groined vault (figs. 7.7, 7.8). He has his right hand extended in blessing and in his left he holds a closed Gospel book. Unfortunately, the paintings on the other three sections of the vault have been lost. Apostles under arcades are represented in the first register of the walls (figs. 7.9, 7.10). Among them, in the northeast corner, the enthroned Virgin with Child is depicted, slightly turned towards a male saint who holds probably a book (fig. 7.11). Previous scholars have described him as having a blossoming rod in his left hand, but this detail is no longer visible.<sup>805</sup> The lower register is dedicated to the bishops (fig. 7.12), two on each wall: to the north, an unknown bishop and St Kalinik (fig. 7.13), to the east St John (fig. 14) and St Cyril (fig. 7.15), and to the south St Peter (fig. 7.16) and St Nicholas (fig. 7.17). Five of them are represented frontally. They each hold a closed book and give a blessing. Next to each bishop on the north and south walls there is the model of a church. St John is represented kneeling to the right of the Man of Sorrows, depicted under the eastern window (fig. 7.18). He holds an open book on which the writing has faded away. A lay figure, probably the main painter, is represented in prayer next to St Nicholas, at the western end of the south wall. On the soffit of the triumphal arch there are four medallions, most likely of prophets, as in many Hungarian medieval churches. One of the prophets can be identified as Moses (fig. 7.19) by comparing his attribute with that of Moses in the church of Kraskovo (end of the fourteenth century) (fig. 7.20). He holds a staff with a snake on it, a reference to the brazen serpent made by Moses on God's command in order to cure the Israelites of snakebites. The bronze snake raised on the pole was a type of Christ on the Cross.<sup>806</sup> To the north and south, under the medallions are represented two holy virgins and the two holy physicians, Cosmas and Damian. The painting decorating the summit of the soffit has almost completely faded away.

The paintings of the sanctuary and triumphal arch of Hălmagiu are in late Gothic style and date from the first half of the fifteenth century. Their iconography and style is similar to a series of paintings dating from the end of the fourteenth-beginning of the fifteenth century in Slovakia, characterized as deriving from the Friul school (see figs. 7.54-7.61).<sup>807</sup> On the barrel vault of the sanctuary, in a rectangular frame, a fair-haired, bearded Christ is represented, blessing with both hands (figs. 7.21, 7.22). The background is decorated with stars and on each side of his head are

<sup>805</sup> See Drăguț, "Din nou," 19, note 9; Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 264.

<sup>806</sup> See Numbers 21: 6-9 and John 3: 14-15.

<sup>807</sup> See e.g. the paintings in the churches of Rimavské Brezovo, Rimavská Baňa, Kyjatice, Rákoš and Chyžné and their respective descriptions in Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*.

the sun and the moon. The image of Christ is supported on the four corners by angels (fig. 7.23). To the south and north, in between the angels and grouped two by two, are depicted the four evangelists (fig. 7.24). Only fragments of them are now visible: they were represented sitting and writing the Gospel while being inspired by an angel. The beginning of the Gospel of Matthew can still be seen on one of the books: кнн[га] [ρϞ]ΔΓς//τρ[α].<sup>808</sup> Two angels with six wings covered with eyes are shown on the upper register of the east wall, on each side of the window (fig. 7.26). They are accompanied by inscriptions reading χερσ[...]/ шестѡ[...], respectively [...] / много оучѣта.<sup>809</sup> In the lower register, to the east, under the central window, the leg of a table, which must have been part of an altar as well as a piece of a veil are visible, suggesting that most probably the Eucharistic Christ was represented there. To the left and right of the table there are two angels swinging a censer and giving a blessing (7.27). On the north and south walls are depicted five bishops holding open scrolls. They are not oriented towards the east in the direction of the, where the altar table was represented, but stand in a frontal pose. At the far left of the north wall there is a representation of St Bartholomew (fig. 8.1) followed by an unknown bishop and then St Sylvester and St Clement (figs. 7.28, 7.29). On the south wall, St John Chrysostom and St Basil are accompanied on their right by a deacon, turned completely to face them (figs. 7.30, 7.31). At the western end of the south wall St Nicholas is depicted giving a blessing towards a chalice with the Christ Child in it (figs. 7.33, 7.34). A falling figure is shown at his feet. The intrados of the triumphal arch is decorated with four medallions with saints, most probably prophets (fig. 7.25). At the top of the soffit appears the Lamb of God, with a cross on his back and blood pouring from his throat into a chalice.

The paintings in the sanctuary of Ribița, dating probably from the second decade of the fifteenth century, are largely executed in the Byzantine tradition, although Western influences are also visible, particularly in the iconography. The paintings are presently under restoration and have

<sup>808</sup> I thank Dr. Elissaveta Moussakova, who, on the basis of my photos, read this inscription.

<sup>809</sup> In Old Testament texts the cherubim are characterized as many-eyed (Ezekiel 10:12 and the seraphim as six-winged (Isaiah 6:2). However, the characteristics of the two angelic powers were frequently mixed, and both seraphim and cherubim could be shown as six-winged and many-eyed. One of the reasons for this blend lies in the text of the prayer recited at the beginning of the Anaphora in the Liturgy of John Chrysostom : “We also thank You for this liturgy which You are pleased to accept from our hands, even though You are surrounded by thousands of Archangels and tens of thousands of Angels, by the Cherubim and Seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed, soaring with their wings, singing the victory hymn, proclaiming, crying out, and saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory (...)” (see Brightman, *Liturgies*, 385). See also D. I. Pallas, “Himmelsmächte, Erzengel und Engel,” *RBK* 3, col. 65-66, 83-86.



not yet been completely uncovered, but several similarities of the iconographic program with the paintings of Hălmagiu are already visible. In the lower register, on the south and north walls, there are frontally represented bishops, some of them holding scrolls, others books (figs. 7.35-7.37). The Archdeacon Stephen occupies the same place as the deacon at Hălmagiu, but at Ribița he is frontally represented (fig. 7.37). St Nicholas is represented to the west end of the south wall, next to an altar table with a chalice (fig. 7.38). A falling figure has recently been brought to light in the lower part of the scene. Two angels, slightly turned towards the central axis, are depicted in the lower register of the east wall (figs. 7.39, 7.40). Further restoration will reveal if there are any remains of the central image that must have been destroyed to some extent when the eastern window was enlarged. In the upper register of the east wall, to the north, one can see a fragment of an angel whose wings are covered with eyes (fig. 7.39). Another similar angel seems to be represented symmetrically to the south, as in the church of Hălmagiu. The recently uncovered fragments suggest that the sitting evangelists were also depicted on the lower register of the barrel vault.

The paintings of Densuș, probably dating from 1443 or a little earlier, stylistically fit into the framework of Palaeologan painting. The fragments preserved on the vault show that the bust of Christ Pantokrator was represented in the conch of the semicircular sanctuary (fig. 7.41).

Fragments of six-winged angels are still visible on each side of the Pantokrator. The first register is occupied by the Communion of the Apostles. In the second register, the bust of the Virgin Orant with Christ Child on her chest is accompanied by the archangels Michael and Gabriel and other saints, among them St John the Baptist and the righteous Simeon (fig. 7.43).<sup>810</sup> In the lower register, to the east, on an altar table with a ciborium, there is a paten with the Christ Child covered by the aer<sup>811</sup> and the star. An inscription designates the Child as the Lamb of God (αἰνὴ βασιλῆως). On each side of the Eucharistic Christ there are two angels holding ripidia<sup>812</sup> and censuring in the direction of the bishops. Some of the bishops are represented in three-quarter pose and hold scrolls while others hold closed books and are represented either frontally or in near profile (figs. 7.44-7.48). Only some of them could be identified based on the partially preserved

<sup>810</sup> The saints were first identified by Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei. See Cincheza-Buculei, "Din nou," 90 and the iconographic scheme in the Catalogue.

<sup>811</sup> The aer is a liturgical veil used to cover both species.

<sup>812</sup> Liturgical fans.

inscriptions: St Nicholas, St Arsenius and St Athanasius.<sup>813</sup> Amongst the hierarchs there are also three deacons. St Prochoros, situated next to the Melismos, holds a chalice and incenses. St Stephen, situated next to the Man of Sorrows represented at the prothesis,<sup>814</sup> holds an incense container in his left hand and in his right a censer. Finally, St Romanus who, slightly turned towards the last bishop on the south wall, holds a chalice and a censer.<sup>815</sup> The intrados of the triumphal arch is decorated with the portraits of eight prophets (fig. 7.42).

Compared with the usual Byzantine decoration, one notes that in the case of these Transylvanian churches the uppermost zone of the sanctuary is dedicated not to the Virgin, but to Christ: Christ in Glory, *Maiestas Domini* or Pantokrator. It has been frequently argued that in churches with no dome, the subject matters that would otherwise decorate it were accommodated in the highest zones of the sanctuary and nave.<sup>816</sup> According to liturgical exegesis the dome of the church symbolizes heaven, and from the ninth century on Christ Pantokrator (Almighty) gradually became the typical decoration for the cupola. It depicts Christ in bust – only occasionally he is represented full-figure and enthroned – holding the Gospel Book and giving a blessing.<sup>817</sup> The main meaning of Christ Pantokrator in the dome is that of the creator, ruler, bearer and overseer of the whole universe. He is surrounded by his heavenly court, composed of various angelic

<sup>813</sup> The bishops have been identified by Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 91. See also the iconographic scheme in the Catalogue.

<sup>814</sup> As already noted by Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 91, the zone left unpainted under the depiction of the Man of Sorrows clearly suggests that the table of the prothesis was there..

<sup>815</sup> I. D. Ștefănescu has described Prochor and Roman as holding a paten, not a chalice (Ștefănescu, *La peinture*, 255-256, 432). Based on the shape of the vessel it is difficult to conclude whether this is a paten or a chalice. In the case of Prochoros, the image of the vessel is partially damaged but in the case of Romanos it is clear that the whole content of the vessel is dark red, which could be interpreted as the color of wine.

<sup>816</sup> See Karin M. Skawran, *The Development of Middle Byzantine Fresco Painting in Greece* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1982), 54; Melita Emmanuel, “La peinture byzantine de l’île d’Eubée en Grèce au XIIIe et XIVe siècles.” XXXVIII *Corso di Cultura sull’arte ravennate e bizantina* 38 (1991), 188; Kalopissi-Verti, “Osservazioni,” 199-200.

<sup>817</sup> Except for Pantokrator, another subject occasionally represented in the central dome was the Ascension. On the decoration of the dome see Suzy Dufrenne, “Les programmes iconographiques des coupôles dans les églises du monde byzantin et postbyzantin,” *L’information d’histoire de l’art* 10 (1965), 185-199; Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration* (New Rochelle, New York: Caratzas Brothers, 1976), 17-20; Nikolaos Gioles, *Ο βυζαντινός τρούλλος και το εικονογραφικό του πρόγραμμα (μέσα 6<sup>ου</sup> αι. -1204)* (Athens, 1990); Papamastorakis, *Ο διάκονος*; Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 57-62; Spieser, “Liturgie,” 581-584. On the representation and symbolism of Pantokrator see also Jane Timken Matthews, “The Changing Interpretation of the Dome Pantocrator,” in *Actes du XV<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d’études byzantines, Athènes, Septembre 1976*, vol. 2 (Athens, 1981), 419-426; Thomas F. Mathews, “The Transformation Symbolism in Byzantine Architecture and the Meaning of the Pantokrator in the Dome,” in *Church and people in Byzantium, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Twentieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Manchester, 1986*, ed. Rosemary Morris (Birmingham: Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham, 1990), 191-214; Per Jonas Nordhagen, “The Absent Ruler: Reflections on the Origin of the Byzantine Domed Church and its Pictorial Decoration,” *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 15 (2001), 319-335.

orders. The prophets, who foretold his coming, are represented lower down on the drum. In the pendentives, appear the evangelists, who witnessed and made known his redemptive work, appear. Christ Pantokrator was also regarded as the image of the Father, God made visible, and its theophanic meaning was a synthetic reference to the Incarnation, Ascension and his Second Coming.

When the Pantokrator is represented in the conch of the sanctuary, it is this meaning that comes to the fore. According to liturgical commentators, the sanctuary is the image of the world above, dwelt in by spiritual and incorporeal beings,<sup>818</sup> the place where Christ is enthroned with his twelve apostles, and the place of his Second Coming.<sup>819</sup> The altar table stands for Christ's grave and the table of the Last Supper, but also for the throne of God, on which he sits on his cherubim-drawn chariot.<sup>820</sup> During the Liturgy, the priest repeatedly entreates God, the King of Glory, enthroned in heaven, sitting upon cherubim, to look upon his suppliants and once again come down and make possible the participation of the faithful in his mysteries and in his kingdom to come. The sanctuary is the place of a renewed theophany, the central place of the Eucharistic liturgy, which mystically reenacts the history of Salvation, from the Incarnation to the Second Coming.

Therefore, Christ in Glory, as he appears in representations of prophetic visions, the Ascension and the Second Coming, appears to be a more explicit form for such a message than the Pantokrator. In fact, the decoration of the sanctuary with Christ and various other figures inspired by prophetic visions (Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 1:4-28), the Apocalypse of St John (Revelation 4:2-9) and the Ascension (Acts 1:9-11), is characteristic for the pre-iconoclast period and continued in the eastern periphery of Byzantium, in different forms, until the fourteenth century.<sup>821</sup> In to the post-iconoclast Constantinopolitan tradition of church painting followed in the Balkan Peninsula and Russia, the conch is dedicated to the Virgin. However, there are occasions, particularly in

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<sup>818</sup> Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 44-46, 115-116, on Maximus the Confessor's and Symeon of Thessalonica's exegeses.

<sup>819</sup> Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 72, on Germanus of Constantinople's liturgical exegesis.

<sup>820</sup> Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 71-72, on Germanus of Constantinople's liturgical exegesis.

<sup>821</sup> See an overview of the apse decoration in what Tania Velmans calls the "Oriental periphery of Byzantium" -- Georgia, Armenia, Cappadocia, Syria, Palestine, Coptic Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia -- in Velmans, *Rayonnement*, 43-92. Christ Emmanuel in glory, accompanied by the symbols of the Evangelists, is also represented in the middle of the second, upper row of officiating hierarchs in the church of the Annunciation (formerly Dormition) in Arkaži, near Novgorod (1189). Lazarev has considered it an expression of the influence of Romanesque art (Lazarev, *L'arte*, 161). Other scholars have interpreted the image in its liturgical context, as an expression of the Theophany reenacted by the Eucharistic liturgy (see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 21-22).

small provincial churches, when the Deesis or Pantokrator occupy the conch. Several reasons have been proposed for such a choice. Probably the most widely held idea is that absence of a dome lead to placing the Pantokrator in the conch.<sup>822</sup> It has also been argued that the pre-iconoclast tradition, mediated by Eastern examples, lies behind the use of the Deesis, and more rarely the Pantokrator, as sanctuary decoration in the churches of South Italy, Mani Peninsula, Crete, Naxos and other Greek islands.<sup>823</sup> Finally, there is also the hypothesis that the pre-iconoclast tradition in the decoration of the conch would have continued in the “periphery” of the Balkans, without necessitating contact with the Eastern examples, up to the late centuries of Byzantium.<sup>824</sup>

It cannot be excluded that a certain tradition of decorating the conch with the image of Christ somehow existed in peripheral artistic areas, probably fostered by the type of church without a cupola. In Transylvania, an additional factor that could have nourished, if not prompted this iconographic option was the Western iconography of the sanctuary, proposed by painters of Western school who worked on Orthodox churches, like Strei and Hălmagiu .

In the West, Christ in Glory was the typical decoration for Romanesque sanctuaries and had its origins in earlier prototypes developed in the Eastern Christendom and Rome.<sup>825</sup> The decoration of the sanctuary’s vault with Christ in Glory, frequently accompanied in the lower register by the apostles, survived into the Gothic period, particularly in Central Europe.<sup>826</sup> In late medieval

<sup>822</sup> See above footnote 817.

<sup>823</sup> Tania Velmans, “La koinê grecque et les régions périphériques orientales du monde byzantin. Programmes iconographiques originaux (X<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> s.),” *JÖB* 31/2 (1981), 714-715; Velmans, *Rayonnement*, 135-137.

<sup>824</sup> This is the assumption made by André Grabar in his analysis of the paintings of Ljutibrod (fourteenth century), which display Christ Pantokrator in the conch (Grabar, *La peinture*, 223-224). According to Grabar, the fourteenth-century paintings of Zemen and Ljutibrod, which have both stylistic and iconographic pre-iconoclast features, testify to the continuation of the pre-iconoclast tradition in the Balkans (see Grabar, *La peinture*, 183-227). The hypothesis has been accepted also by A. Xyngopoulos (André Xyngopoulos, “Une icône byzantine a Thessalonique,” *Cahiers archéologiques* 3 (1948), 127-128). Also, at the end of her iconographic study dedicated to the Middle Byzantine church paintings in Greece, Karin Skawran admits that “It is not impossible that the iconographic programs of Middle Byzantine basilicas owed something to pre-Iconoclast tradition, and did not develop exclusively from the adaptation of the scheme of decoration evolved for contemporary domed churches.” (Skawran, *Development*, 56). One should also note that, in particular cases, another reason for representing Christ in the conch could have been the dedication of the church to Christ and the wish of the founder to express his political authority (see Melita Emmanouil, “Η Αγία Σοφία του Μυστρά. Παρατηρήσεις στις τοιχογραφίες και στο εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα,” in *Μίλτος Γαρίδης* (1926-1996), *Αφιέρωμα*, ed. Athanasios Paliouras and Angeliki Stavropoulou (Ioannina: University of Ioannina, Department of Archeology, 2003), 158).

<sup>825</sup> Otto Demus, *Romanesque Mural Painting* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1970), 14-18.

<sup>826</sup> See Günther Brucher, ed., *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst in Österreich*, vol.2, *Gotik* (München, London & New York: Prestel, 2000), 406; France Stelé, “Slovenska gotska podružnica in njen ikonografski kanon” [The Slovenian Gothic and its iconographic canon], *Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja* 4 (1964), 315-328, with French summary; France Stelé, *Monumenta Artis Slovenicae I, Srednjeveško stensko slikarstvo. La peinture murale au moyen-âge* (Ljubljana:

Hungary there are many churches where the vault of the sanctuary is decorated with Christ in Glory accompanied by other figures— most frequently the evangelists or their symbols, the doctors of the church (St Augustine, St Ambrose, St Jerome and St Gregory the Great), various angels and the Virgin – while the apostles occupy the walls of the sanctuary (see e.g. figs. 7.54-7.56, 7.58-7.66).

Even if the vault was occupied by Christ, the Virgin with Child, a symbol of the Incarnation, was also represented in the sanctuaries of Strei and Densuș. At Densuș, the bust of the Orant Virgin with the Christ child on her bosom is situated in the second register, above the Melismos (fig. 7.43). At Strei, the Virgin with Child is represented standing, in the register of the Apostles, in the north-east corner (figs. 7.10, 7.11). The Child presses his cheek against the face of his mother, a type of representation known as Eleousa (“compassionate”) in Byzantine art. The Eleousa type spread to the West no later than the twelfth century and was very popular in thirteenth-fourteenth century Italian painting.<sup>827</sup> The Virgin is turned towards a saint whose identity is open to speculation. His name and to a great extent the two objects he held in his hands have faded away. In his right hand he must have held a scroll or rather a book,<sup>828</sup> while in his left he held, according to previous descriptions, he holds a flowering twig which he shows to the Virgin.<sup>829</sup> At a first glance he would appear to be one of the twelve apostles, or even one of the four evangelists: he is the twelfth male saint in the register of the apostles and the fourth to hold, apparently, a book. If the figure at Strei was meant to be one of the evangelists, then he could only be Luke or Mark, because John and Mathew are identified by the preserved inscriptions.<sup>830</sup> However, none of them would usually have branches as their attribute. Another

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Akademska Založba, 1935), 7-8; Dvořáková et al., *Středověká nástenná mal'ba*, 15-17 ; Vasile Drăguț, “Iconografia,” 13-17; Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet*, 182.

<sup>827</sup> On the “Eleousa” iconographic type and its meaning see Victor Lasareff, “Studies in the Iconography of the Virgin,” *The Art Bulletin* 20, no. 1 (March, 1938), 36-42; Mirjana Tatić-Djurić, “Eléousa. À la recherche du type iconographique,” *JÖB* 26 (1976), 259-267; Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 101-103.

<sup>828</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, “Biserica din Strei,” 264 and myself in a previous article, “Western and Eastern Themes,” have described it as a scroll. However, the interpretation should be treated cautiously, because only the underlying drawing of the object has been preserved, along with some secondary lines that seem to belong to a sketch of the saint’s body.

<sup>829</sup> See footnote 14.

<sup>830</sup> However, on the south wall it is not Matthew who holds the book but another apostle, probably Bartholomew ([ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΣ]), represented next to him.

hypothesis would be that the saint is the prophet Isaiah<sup>831</sup> and the twig a hint to his prophecy: *And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root* (Isaiah 11:1).<sup>832</sup> According to Christian tradition, this prophecy announced the coming of Christ, the root being Jesse, the father of David, the stem the Virgin (*virga de radice Iesse*, interpreted as *virgo*), and the flower, Christ.<sup>833</sup> In medieval art, a green branch, a flower, or a blossomed rod, symbolizing the Incarnation is frequently an attribute of the Virgin and sometimes also of Isaiah and the forefathers.<sup>834</sup> Because of his prophecies regarding the birth of Messiah (particularly Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 11:1), Isaiah is frequently associated with Marian representations in medieval Western art.<sup>835</sup> It may be assumed that for medieval beholders the twig also evoked the Life-Giving Wood of the Cross. It has been argued that the *virga de radice Iesse* and the Tree of Jesse, which was inspired by Isaiah 11:1 and represented the human genealogy of Christ, were sometimes regarded also as a symbol of the Cross, the Tree of Life.<sup>836</sup> The apostles are represented in the scene of the Communion, specific to Byzantine painting, in the church of Densuș, where the painter demonstrated good knowledge of Byzantine painting.<sup>837</sup> In the churches of Strei and Sântămărie Orlea the apostles were represented as an echelon, as they frequently appear in many contemporary Hungarian churches (see e.g. figs. 7.61, 7.63, 7.64, 7.66). At Sântămărie Orlea only the apostles on the east wall of the sanctuary are now visible

<sup>831</sup> Although Isaiah is usually represented as an old man with long beard (*LCI*, vol. 2, col. 355), he occasionally appears as a middle-aged man (See e.g. nos. 003901, 003978, 005404, 005749A, 007204 in <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline>). Also, he may carry either a scroll or a book (*LCI*, vol. 2, col. 355).

<sup>832</sup> *Egredietur virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius ascendet* (Vulgata).

<sup>833</sup> See Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vol. 1, 26.

<sup>834</sup> Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vol. 1, 26. For Isaiah see also *LCI*, vol. 2, col. 355. One of the Old Testament figures whose attribute was often a blossoming rod was Aaron, the traditional founder of the Jewish priesthood. The rod of Aaron, which blossomed after one night in the tabernacle of witness, leading to his designation as the priest of Israel (Numbers 17), was a type of the Birth of Christ from the Virgin, of Mary's virginity and of the Cross. As a rule, Aaron is represented dressed in priestly garments, which is not the case at Strei (on Aaron see *LCI*, vol. 1, 2-4). Another figure that occasionally is represented holding a flowering rod or a lily is Joseph, Mary's husband (see *LCI*, vol. 7, 213-214), but the scroll or book are not among his attributes. Finally, if the figure at Strei was meant to be one of the evangelists, Luke or Mark, and the twig may be taken for a reference to the Incarnation and the human descent prophesized by Isaiah, then Luke would be the best candidate because, except for Matthew (Matthew 1:1-16), he is the evangelist who mentions in detail the ancestry of Christ (Luke 3: 23-38). However, the identification of the saint at Strei with St Luke holding a branch inspired by the prophecy of Isaiah needs more thorough argumentation.

<sup>835</sup> *LCI*, vol. 2, col. 357; Réau, *Iconographie*, vol. 2/1, 366.

<sup>836</sup> See Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vol. 1, 28-29; Eleanor Simmons Greenhill, "The Child in the Tree: A Study of the Cosmological Tree in Christian Tradition," *Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion* 10 (1954): 323-371, esp. 338-357.

<sup>837</sup> The Communion is also represented in the church of the Monastery of Colț, which was painted in a late Palaeologan style and has not been included in the present research. The paintings of Colț have been analyzed in Cincheza-Buculei, "Le programme."

(fig. 7.49, 7.50). They are slightly turned towards the eastern window and hold scrolls or books with their names on them.<sup>838</sup> The paintings were commissioned by 1484, by the Romanian Cânde family, who received the church together with the market town in 1447. They are painted in a rustic, local style, which demonstrates some knowledge of Byzantine painting, but their disposition is reminiscent of the Western model. Similar to Christ in Glory, the echelon of the apostles was no longer part of the late Byzantine canon, having been gradually replaced, from the eleventh century on, by the Communion of the Apostles.<sup>839</sup> In the West, however, it remained in use during the Romanesque and, in certain regions, the Gothic period. As regards the Transylvanian churches, based on the preserved monuments, it may be concluded that the painters who had a better knowledge of Byzantine painting and were more experienced were also able to paint such scenes as the Communion of the Apostles. Painters trained in Western training or local painters who combined both traditions and probably painted for both the Orthodox and the Catholic communities, had the echelon of the apostles in their artistic vocabulary.<sup>840</sup> The prophets are represented in medallions on the intrados of the triumphal arch at Strei and Hălmagiu. At Densuș, they are represented half-length, in square frames. The decoration of the intrados of the triumphal arch with prophets was common in the pre-iconoclast period, and in Cappadocia continued in the Middle Byzantine period.<sup>841</sup> In other Byzantine regions it is rare and it has been considered “archaic.”<sup>842</sup> The representation of the prophets at the entrance to the sanctuary is justified by the fact that they announced and prepared the coming of Christ. In Byzantine churches with domes they had their consecrated place in the drum, but in late Byzantine churches lacking a dome they were placed in the upper zones of the nave.<sup>843</sup> Busts of

<sup>838</sup> The representation of the scrolls is unusual because yellow lines separate each of them into halves and draw rubrics over the text. Further analysis of the painted layer may decide whether the yellow paint is a later addition.

<sup>839</sup> Although the echelon of the apostles was frequently represented in Oriental churches until the eleventh century, this tradition, dating back to the pre-iconoclast period, unlike the Pantokrator in the conch, does not seem to have continued elsewhere in the Eastern Christian world.

<sup>840</sup> I.D. Ștefănescu (Ștefănescu, *La peinture*, 215-218, 227) and Corina Nicolescu (Corina Nicolescu, “Considérations sur l’ancienneté des monuments roumains de Transylvanie,” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* 1(1962), no.2, 425) have also noted the pre-iconoclast origin of the theme of the echelon of the apostles and its later use in Cappadocia and the West (Italy and Spain). Vasile Drăguț has pointed out the numerous Catholic churches displaying this theme in medieval Hungary and supported the Western origin of this theme as depicted in Transylvanian Orthodox churches (see Drăguț, “Biserica din Strei,” 306-312; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 21-22, 40; Drăguț, “Din nou,” 19).

<sup>841</sup> Jolivet-Lévy, *L’arte*, 157-158.

<sup>842</sup> Apostolos G. Mantas, “Überlegungen zur Deesis in der Hauptapsis mittelbyzantinischer Kirchen Griechenlands,” in *Byzantinische Malerei. Bildprogramme – Ikonographie – Stil*, Symposium in Marburg vom 25.-29.6.1997, ed. Guntram Koch (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2000), 171-172.

<sup>843</sup> Dionysius of Furna, *Carte*, 256.

prophets in decorative frames are frequently depicted on the intrados of the triumphal arch in medieval Hungarian churches (see e.g. figs. 7.57, 7.58, 7.67).

The apex of the soffit of the triumphal arch at Hălmagiu, possibly also at Streisângeorgiu,<sup>844</sup> is decorated with the Lamb of God (figs. 7.22, 7.25). The lamb was a type of Christ, which prefigured his sacrifice and his triumph over death. Old and New Testament texts (Exodus 12: 3-13, 29:38-42; Numbers 28; Isaiah 53:7-12; John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1Peter 1: 19; Revelation) lay at the basis of the symbolism of the lamb, on which theologians further elaborated and which was taken over in the liturgy.<sup>845</sup> The Quinisext Council (691/692) recommended that Christ should be represented in his human form and not as a lamb, in order to state the fulfillment of the prophecy and the reality of the Incarnation.<sup>846</sup> Thereafter, the representation of Christ as a lamb in the East almost came to an end.<sup>847</sup> The Latin Church, however, did not follow the recommendation of the council and the Lamb of God remained common motif in Western medieval art. As a symbol of Eucharist and an eschatological symbol, the Lamb is often found in the upper zones of the sanctuary. In wall paintings in medieval Hungary he is sometimes represented on the intrados of the triumphal arch accompanied by prophets, a context which also stresses its significance as a fulfilled prophecy, as in the church of Hălmagiu.<sup>848</sup> The Lamb at Hălmagiu, whose meaning may be also related to the Second Coming painted on the triumphal

<sup>844</sup> See Drăguț, "Streisângeorgiu," 39.

<sup>845</sup> On the liturgical and theological meaning of the Lamb of God and its iconography see Danielou, *Bible et Liturgie*, 228-234; *LCI*, vol. 3, col. 7-14; Klaus Wessel, "Agnus Dei," *RBK*, vol. 1, col. 90-94; Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vol. 2, 129-133; Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vol. 3, 187-192; Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vols. 5/1 and 5/2, passim.

<sup>846</sup> See the text of Canon 82 of the Quinisext Council (692) in Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1986), 139-140.

<sup>847</sup> Analyzing three representations of the Lamb in Cappadocian murals dated to ca. ninth-early eleventh century, Catherine Jolivet-Lévy concludes that the decision of the Quinisext Council did not forbid the use of the Old Testament symbols in general and of the Lamb in particular, but stated the superiority and recommended the anthropomorphic representation of Christ (see Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "Le Canon 82 du Concile Quinisexte et l'image de l'Agneau: à propos d'une église inédite de Cappadoce," *DChAE* 17 (1993-1994): 45-52). However, the representations of the Lamb of God in Late Byzantine art, as in the sculptures of Parigoritissa at Arta (thirteenth century) and Dečani (first half of the fourteenth century) are connected to Western influence (see Linda Safran, "Exploring Artistic Links Between Epiros and Apulia in the Thirteenth Century: The Problem of Sculpture and Wall Painting," in Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συμποσίου για το Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου (Arta, May 27-31, 1990) (Arta: Mousikophilologikos Syllogos Artis "O Skouphas," 1992), 455-474; Janko Maglovski, "Dečanska skulptura - program i smisao" [The Sculpture of Dečani - Program and Meaning, in Serbian with English summary], in *Dečani et l'art byzantin au milieu du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. À l'occasion de la célébration de 650 ans du Monastère de Dečani, Septembre 1985*, ed. Vojislav J. Djurić (Belgrade: Académie des Sciences et des Arts Niro "Jedinstvo," Priština, 1989), 193-223). The Lamb of God reappears in post-Byzantine monumental art (see e.g. its representations in the Moldavian painting, in Anca Vasiliu, *Monastères de Moldavie, XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles: les architectures de l'image* (Paris: Méditerranée, 1998) 103-109).

<sup>848</sup> E.g. at Čečevojce (mid-fourteenth century) (Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, fig. 30) and Szalonna (1426).



arch, is represented with a wound on his chest, from which blood pours into a chalice. This type of representation, which occurs for instance in the chapel of the castle at Siklós (ca. 1420, on the soffit of a lateral niche decorated with the figures of St Leonard and St Ladislav) further stresses the Eucharistic meaning of the theme.<sup>849</sup>

In the lower register of the Transylvanian Orthodox sanctuaries, holy bishops are frequently represented in frontal pose, holding a closed book or an open scroll and giving a blessing. Frontally represented bishops holding closed books decorated the curved walls of the Byzantine sanctuaries in the tenth-twelfth centuries. From the twelfth century on, the celebrating bishops gradually became typical decoration for the lower register. However, examples of sanctuary apses decorated with standing, frontally represented hierarchs occur sporadically until the fifteenth century.<sup>850</sup> Most frequently, however, the frontal bishops holding books are represented on the flat walls of the sanctuary, the intrados of the entries to the sanctuary<sup>851</sup> and its lateral chapels. The preference for the frontal pose in Transylvanian churches may be due to the perpetuation of the “archaic” scheme. However, the square plan of the sanctuaries might have also played a role in this preference for the frontal pose. This is particularly clear in the case of Ribița and Hălmagiu. In these churches we may safely assume that the Eucharistic Christ was represented on the east wall. However, the bishops holding open scrolls – at Ribița some of them also hold closed books – are not oriented towards the Melismos, but rather toward the actual altar table (figs. 7.28-7.31, 7.35-7.38).

The sanctuary of Densuș is semicircular and one would have expected an orderly procession of celebrating bishops. However, the lower register is occupied by a succession of bishops and deacons in a variety of postures. Some of the bishops are in three-quarter pose and hold scrolls while others hold books and are represented frontally or in near-profile (figs. 7.44-7.48). I.D. Ștefănescu has proposed the hypothesis that the painter was trying to represent, however imperfectly, moments in the Great and Little Entrance.<sup>852</sup> However, this interpretation is difficult to support because, as I.D. Ștefănescu has also noted, the representations are not fully consistent with the ritual of the successive processions. Most probably the various postures of the bishops

<sup>849</sup> See Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vol. 2, 130-133.

<sup>850</sup> Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 126-127; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 19-20. In particular cases, frontal representation can be interpreted as reflecting certain practices related to the funeral ritual and the Little Entrance (see Gerstel, *Beholding*, 20-21).

<sup>851</sup> See Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 127; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 22-23.

<sup>852</sup> Ștefănescu, *La peinture en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, 256, 433.

reflect attachment to a certain, rather peripheral, painting custom, which did not stick to the orderly representation of the celebrating bishops, in three-quarter pose and holding scrolls.<sup>853</sup> Nevertheless, the deacons at Densuș seem to correspond to particular rituals or to highlight particular liturgical places. St Stephen, holding a censer and a pyxis, is represented next to the place where the rite of the prothesis took place (fig. 7.44). The trace of the prothesis table attached to the north wall is still visible under the image of the Man of Sorrows. Another deacon, St Romanos, holding a censer and a chalice, is situated next to the entrance to the south lateral chapel (fig. 7.47). His position might indicate the place where the liturgical vessels were kept, whether this was from the beginning a chapel or just a niche.<sup>854</sup> Finally, the third deacon, St Prochoros, is represented to the east, nearby the Melismos and a candlestick with three candles, a reference to the Holy Trinity (fig. 7.46). He holds a censer and a liturgical vessel and participates in the Eucharistic liturgy. Above his head the painter, who, according to an inscription preserved in the naos, was a hierodeacon, that is, a monk deacon, left his signature (ΠΙΣΑ[Λ] ΣΤΕΦΑΝ).<sup>855</sup> In Byzantine sanctuaries, the deacons appear usually at the western extremities of the sanctuary's wall and in the prothesis and diaconicon niches or chapels.<sup>856</sup> They are rarely represented in the central apse, taking part to the Eucharistic ritual together with the bishops.<sup>857</sup> Some observations should also be made regarding the paintings of Streisângeorgiu and Strei. At Streisângeorgiu only two bishops are represented, frontally, on the east wall, on each side of the first votive inscription (figs. 7.5, 7.6). They hold closed books and give a blessing. On the side walls, in the same register, two military saints on horseback are partially visible (figs. 4.12, 4.13). The saint riding the white horse is probably St George, to whom the church was dedicated. It may be assumed that such a peculiar decoration for the sanctuary answered the preoccupations of the founder, the knez Balea (or Balotă), whose votive inscription takes pride of place in front of the altar table.

At Strei, five of the six bishops are frontally represented, holding books and giving blessings. Their appearance owes much to Western models. A church that looks like a Romanesque

<sup>853</sup> On representations of officiating hierarchs holding open or closed books see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 127 and Konstantinidi, "Μελισμός," 419-421.

<sup>854</sup> It is not clear if the opening towards the south chapel existed when the painting was done.

<sup>855</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei has identified the author of both inscriptions, in the sanctuary and in the naos, with the painter of the sanctuary and the east wall of the nave (Cincheza-Buculei, "Le programme," 94). For the inscriptions see also Chapter 3 and the Catalogue.

<sup>856</sup> Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 68-69, 90-91.

<sup>857</sup> See Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 123.

cathedral is represented next to each hierarch situated on the north and south walls (figs. 7.12, 7.13, 7.16, 7.17). This attribute was probably meant to stress their episcopal authority. The kneeling posture of the bishop shown to the right of the Man of Sorrows (fig. 7.14) also comes from Western representations of celebrating priests. The saint, identified by the inscription as the Holy Bishop John, holds an open book towards which he points with his right index.

Unfortunately, the text on the book has faded. One may assume that the saint was meant to be St John Chrysostom and the text was a fragment from his Liturgy.

The typical vestments of the officiating bishops in Byzantine churches are the omophorion, specific for the episcopal office, the polystavrion, sticharion, epitacheilion, epimanikia and epigonation.<sup>858</sup> The bishops' dress in Transylvanian churches display several special characteristics. Quite frequently the hierarchs do not wear the classic polystavrion but rather a phelonion, either plain or decorated with various motifs (see e.g. figs. 7.13, 7.14, 7.28, 7.31, 7.36, 7.46). For the artists of Western training who painted at Strei and Hălmagiu, the representation of the bishops' attire was not a big challenge because the main Latin episcopal vestments – pallium, chasuble, alb and stole<sup>859</sup> – were relatively similar to the vestments of their Byzantine correspondents – the omophorion, phelonion, sticharion and epitacheilion. However, they remained indebted to their Western models. At Strei, the chasubles of Cyril and Peter were decorated with crosses, which make them look like the Byzantine polystavrion. In case of John and Kalinik, who wear red chasubles, one can see a Y-shaped stripe of cloth, which could be either the pallium or a decoration of the chasuble. The median stripe that can be seen on the checked chasuble of St Nicholas (fig. 7.17) is certainly an embroidered decoration and not a pallium, because the later should have been decorated with crosses. In the West, the pallium was an attribute of the pope and the metropolitans.<sup>860</sup> The vestment symbolized papal power and was conferred by the pope on metropolitans and only rarely on simple bishops. In the Orthodox Church, the omophorion was the sign of the episcopal office, which all bishops received at their ordination. Therefore, the bishops always wear the omophorion in Byzantine painting, while in the West not all bishops have the pallium. Particularly striking are the colored omophoria (red

<sup>858</sup> On the Byzantine episcopal garments see Athanasios Papas, "Liturgische Gewänder," in *RBK* 5, col. 741-775; Joseph Braun S.J., *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1907); Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 7-34; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 25-29; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμύς*, 130-132.

<sup>859</sup> On the Latin episcopal garments see Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*; Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 115-119.

<sup>860</sup> Braun, *Liturgische Gewandung*, 627.

and ochre) of the bishops represented on the north wall at Ribița (figs. 7.35, 7.36). As a rule, the omophorion was white and originally it was made of wool. According to liturgical commentators, it symbolized the straying sheep, that is, human nature, which Christ, the Good Shepherd, took upon himself and redeemed. As such, the omophorion signified the bishop's pastoral role.<sup>861</sup> In Western painting, the pallium appears also with other color than white. It is possible that the paintings of Ribița drew on models that had assimilated Western influences. In the church of Sântămărie Orlea (1311), whose paintings have been characterized as Byzantine with Italian influences, the bishop represented on the south wall has a richly decorated omophorion, on which the crosses, now abraded, alternated with red bands (figs. 7.51, 7.52). The epigonation, a badge of rank specific to Byzantine bishops, was not represented at Hălmagiu and cannot be discerned in the paintings of Strei either. At Densuș, where the painters were familiar with the Byzantine tradition, the bishops wear the epigonation as well (figs. 7.44, 7.47). Some of the bishops wear a headdress too. In Byzantine art, the officiating bishops were depicted bareheaded, with several exceptions: St Cyril of Alexandria and other bishops of Alexandria, who wears a white cap usually decorated with one or more crosses, St Sylvester, Pope of Rome, represented wearing a bonnet or a mitre, St Spyridon, who wears a plaited bonnet, and St Methodius who has a piece of cloth knotted under his chin.<sup>862</sup> Byzantine authorities acknowledged the right of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria to celebrate the Liturgy with their head covered.<sup>863</sup> Spyridon's and Methodius's headdresses are personal attributes that are mentioned in the legends of their lives.<sup>864</sup> In the church of Ribița, the bishop wearing a white cap decorated with a cross could be St Cyril of Alexandria (fig. 7.35), while the bishop wearing a red cap could be St Sylvester (fig. 7.36). In the church of Densuș one hierarch has a cap (fig. 7.48), but its details as well as the name of the saint have almost completely faded away, making the identification of the saint difficult.<sup>865</sup> Two other bishops in the same church, identified by inscriptions as Arsenius and Athanasius (fig. 7.45), seem to have been also represented with cap, but the poor preservation of the painting invites caution. St Athanasius could have been

<sup>861</sup> Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 116.

<sup>862</sup> On the headgear of the officiating bishops see Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 29-30; Christopher Walter, "The Portrait of Jakov of Serres in London. Additional 39626," in Christopher Walter, *Pictures as Language: How the Byzantines Exploited Them* (London: Pindar, 2000), 69-76; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 131-132.

<sup>863</sup> Walter, "The Portrait," 69-70; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 29, 105; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 131-132.

<sup>864</sup> Walter, "The Portrait," 72-75; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 105-106.

<sup>865</sup> Only the end part of the saint's name can be read: ...ρη

represented with a cap because he was patriarch of Alexandria (328-373).<sup>866</sup> St Arsenius is an unusual presence at Densuş because a saint with this name rarely appears among the officiating bishops in the sanctuary. Arsenije I, disciple of St Sava of Serbia and second archbishop of Serbia (1233-1263), is represented in several Serbian churches.<sup>867</sup> Nevertheless, he is not usually shown with a cap. Sometimes he may be tonsured, as in the church of the Holy Trinity at Sopoćani (1263-68), the church of St Achilleios at Arilje (1295/6) or the prothesis of the church of the Holy Virgin Hodegetria in Peć (ca. 1330).

The issue of the headgear emerges also at Streisângeorgiu, where the bishop identified in the inscription as St Basil wears a white, relatively tall head-dress, whose details are no longer visible (fig. 7.6). The saint may be identified as St Basil the Great, author of Liturgy usually represented together with St John Chrysostom on the east wall of the sanctuary. The long, pointed beard is characteristic of him, but the headdress is highly unusual.<sup>868</sup> Although a final explanation cannot be provided here, three hypotheses should be kept in mind for further research. Given the poor quality of the paintings of Streisângeorgiu, a possible mistake of the painter with regard to the choice of the model cannot be ruled out. He could have for instance confused him with St Cyril of Alexandria, who has a similar appearance to St Basil but wears a white cap, usually decorated with crosses.<sup>869</sup> A second hypothesis is the influence of a Western model. St Basil the Great was venerated in the West as well, although his Western representations are much rarer than in Byzantium. In Western art St Basil is sometimes represented as a Latin bishop, wearing mitre.<sup>870</sup> Such a model might have lain behind the type

<sup>866</sup> The patriarchs of Alexandria had the right to celebrate the Liturgy with their head covered, but usually only St Cyril is depicted with the specific headgear. An exception is St Peter of Alexandria who, in the prothesis of the church of St Demetrius, Markov Manastir (1376/77 or 1380/81), is represented wearing the white cap decorated with crosses (see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 132). There are also examples of Athanasius wearing the headdress, but not when he is depicted officiating the Liturgy (see Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 104-105).

<sup>867</sup> On the officiating bishops that usually accompany the Melismos see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 132-143; Konstantinidi, "Μελισμός," 327-341. On representations of St Arsenije I see *LCI* 5, col. 252-253; Branislav Todić, *Serbian Medieval painting. The Age of King Milutin* (Belgrade: Draganić, 1999), 62-63; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 134, 140, 141; Konstantinidi, "Μελισμός," 356-358, 363. In BHG only Arsenius, bishop of Kerkyra (10<sup>th</sup> century), celebrated on 19 January, is mentioned (BHG, 2044-2045). In AASS, besides Arsenius, bishop of Kerkyra (AASS *Ianuarii*, vol. 2, 227; AASS *Octobris*, vol. 11, 84), two other holy bishops with this name are mentioned in the Greek-Slavic ecclesiastical year, published in AASS *Octobris*, vol 11: Arsenius I, archbishop of Serbia (AASS *Octobris*, vol. 12, 416; AASS *Octobris*, vol. 11, 264), and Arsenius, bishop of Tver (1390-1409) (AASS *Octobris*, vol. 11, 84).

<sup>868</sup> On the iconography of St Basil in East and West see *LCI* 5, col. 337-341; Künstle, *Ikongraphie*, 120-121; Kaftal, *Central and South*, no. 47; Kaftal, *North East*, no. 35; Kaftal, *Tuscan*, no. 43; Braun, *Tracht*, 122.

<sup>869</sup> On the iconography of St Cyril of Alexandria see *LCI* 6, col. 19-21.

<sup>870</sup> See e.g. Kaftal, *North East*, no. 35; Kaftal, *Tuscan*, no. 43; Braun, *Tracht*, 122.

used at Streisângeorgiu. Finally, even if the majority of the Eastern rite bishops were represented bareheaded when officiating, on other occasions they could wear various headgears.<sup>871</sup> The bishops who before their ordination were monks could wear a black cowl or cap, while the others had a white bonnet. The mitre was also in use among bishops, although not all of them were authorized to wear it and the testimonies regarding its use become more frequent only from the late fifteenth century on.<sup>872</sup> Further research might bring to light an image of St Basil wearing a mitre or a cap, or suggest the reasons why the painter would have singled him out by such an attribute.<sup>873</sup> In the church of Strei, Cyril, Nicholas and an unidentified bishop wear the Latin mitre (figs. 7.15, 7.17). The explanation in these cases obviously lies in the Western models used by the painters.

The deacons' vestments at Densuș follow the Byzantine canon: over the tunic, they wear a large dress called sticharion, a wide belt and the orarion, the stole specific to deacons. The epimanikia (cuffs) are also visible. In the case of the deacon at Hălmagiu the cuffs are not visible and the sticharion is shorter and slit at the sides from the bottom upwards (fig. 7.32) in the way the Latin deacons' dalmatic is frequently represented.<sup>874</sup>

The identity of the bishops in Transylvanian churches is known only in part. Some of them belong to the group of bishops commonly represented in Orthodox churches: St John Chrysostom, St Basil the Great, St Nicholas, St Cyril of Alexandria or Jerusalem, and St Sylvester, pope of Rome.<sup>875</sup> In Byzantine churches both authors of Liturgy usually flank the Eucharistic Christ, but this custom was not the rule for the painters of Transylvanian churches, as suggested by the preserved paintings. Among the few bishops that could be accommodated in the small sanctuaries there are also rare names whose real identity is difficult to pinpoint. One of

<sup>871</sup> See Walter, "The Portrait," 70-72, 76-81.

<sup>872</sup> On the use of mitre see also *RBK* 5, col. 766-769.

<sup>873</sup> In Vasile Drăguț's view, St Basil's headdress is a "mitre with the appearance of a bonnet, according to a model common for Oriental monks" (Drăguț, "Streisângeorgiu," 39). The fact that St Basil was also venerated as the founder of Eastern monasticism may be taken into consideration, although, at least according to the observations so far, if the headdress is a cap and not a mitre, its color should have been black. Drăguț has also proposed as a working hypothesis a South-Italian influence on the iconography of the paintings of Streisângeorgiu, mediated by Basilian monks who would have arrived in the thirteenth century from South Italy (Drăguț, "Streisângeorgiu," 42). However, this hypothesis has not yet been confirmed by other historical data.

<sup>874</sup> Latin deacons used to wear the same main garment pieces as the Byzantine deacons: alb (tunic), dalmatic, which is shorter than the alb and has wider sleeves, and stole, worn over the shoulder. As a rule, the deacon's stole or orarion used to be worn over the left shoulder, but in artistic representations, both Eastern and Western, this rule was not always followed.

<sup>875</sup> On the officiating bishops who used to be represented in Byzantine sanctuaries and the place they occupied in the apse see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 132-143; Konstantinidi, "Μελισμός," 327-341; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 23-25.

them is the already mentioned St Arsenius, represented in the sanctuary of Densuş, who could be the Serbian archbishop or another bishop whose identity remains, at least for the moment, obscure. It has been also argued that St Clement represented at Hălmagiu could be St Clement of Ohrid (fig. 7.29), although his identification with Clement of Alexandria, frequently represented in Orthodox sanctuaries, cannot be excluded.<sup>876</sup> St Arsenius I was venerated by the Serbs, St Clement of Ohrid primarily in the Archbishopric of Ohrid and in general among Bulgarians. The saints' representation in Transylvanian wall paintings would suggest close contacts with these regions, the nature of which may only be elucidated by further research.

Another special presence is that of St Kalinik, in the church of Strei. The bishop, represented on the north wall of the sanctuary, is identified by the inscription written above the church next to him: The church of bishop Kalinik ([цр]ква кѣлиника ꙗ҃па ) (figs. 7.13a, 7.13b). The other three churches depicted next to the bishops on the side walls are not accompanied by any inscriptions.<sup>877</sup> Kalinik was not a common name among the widely venerated bishops in the Orthodox world. The chances that out of the six bishops represented in the sanctuary one of them would be the relatively little known patriarch of Constantinople (693-705) are very small.<sup>878</sup> However, as one of the few bishops in the sanctuary, Kalinik was certainly a special figure for the commissioners of the paintings. Bishops of local or regional importance were commonly represented in Orthodox churches, including in the sanctuary.<sup>879</sup> Their presence conveyed

<sup>876</sup> On the possible identity of St Clement see more in the next subchapter.

<sup>877</sup> Because of the painting's state of preservation it cannot be ascertained whether such inscriptions ever existed or not.

<sup>878</sup> BHG lists only one bishop under this name, Callinicus (Kallinikos), patriarch of Constantinople (†705) (BHG, vol. 1, nos. 288-289; Novum auctarium BHG, nos. 287z, 288), celebrated on 23, 24 or 30 August. In AASS the same patriarch is the only holy bishop bearing this name (AASS *Augusti*, vol. 4, 644-647; AASS *Propylaeum ad Novembris*, col. 917-920; AASS *Octobris*, vol. 11, 205-206). Kallinikos was patriarch of Constantinople from 693 to 705, during the rule of three emperors, Justinian II (685-695, 705-711), Leontios (695-698) and Tiberios III (698-705). He was said to have rebuked Justinian for his disturbed behaviour and the emperor considered removing him from his office. At some point Justinian requested the patriarch's blessing for tearing down a church situated next to the imperial palace. Kallinikos refused answering that the Church had prayers only for building churches, not for demolishing them, but the church was finally torn down. Kallinikos sided with the strategos Leontios, who in 695 deposed Justinian, had his nose cut and sent him into exile. On his return to power, in 705, Justinian had the patriarch blinded and sent him in exile to Rome, where he died. Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, does not mention any representation of Kallinikos among the celebrating bishops in the many churches she has dealt with. His figure has not been included in *LCI* either.

<sup>879</sup> On portraits of local bishops in wall paintings see Christopher Walter, "Portraits of Local Bishops: A Note on Their Significance," in Christopher Walter, *Prayer and Power in Papal and Byzantine Imagery* (Ashgate: Variorum, 1993), no. II (originally published in *ZRVI* 21 (1982), 1-17); Christopher Walter, "Portraits of Bishops Appointed by the Serbian Conquerors on Byzantine Territory," in Christopher Walter, *Pictures as Language: How the Byzantines Exploited Them* (London: Pindar, 2000), no. XII, 212-226; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 222-224; Chara Konstantinidi,

various messages, depending on the historical situation: it stressed the local Church, its attachment to the Universal Church, its orthodoxy, sometimes its apostolicity or autocephaly. The local bishops represented as saints were not necessarily officially canonized, and some of them were still alive at the time when they were represented in painting. It is possible that Kalinik was a bishop of such local significance.<sup>880</sup> Further research on the history of the local Church and its relationships might shed some light on his identity.<sup>881</sup>

The Melismos, the Eucharistic Christ on the altar table that was represented most frequently at the center of the bishops' ceremony, is now visible only in the church of Densuș (fig. 7.43). The fragments of fresco depicting part of a table and a veil under the eastern window at Hălmagiu suggest a similar representation. One may assume an altar table with the Eucharistic Christ or the chalice and the paten was also represented between the angels at Ribița. The altar table depicted in the eastern axis of the Byzantine sanctuary was usually flanked by two angels. They could have been the Archangels Michael and Gabriel – more rarely Raphael and Uriel – or anonymous angels, described in the accompanying inscription as “the angels of God.”<sup>882</sup> Their vestments were those of a deacon and they held ripidia, occasionally also a censer. The angels at Densuș are dressed as deacons and bear the title “angel of God.” They hold a ripidion inscribed with the beginning of the Sanctus – “Holy, holy, holy”<sup>883</sup> – and swing a censer. The Western training of the painter at Hălmagiu makes itself evident once again in the representation of the eastern angels (fig. 7.27). They are not dressed as deacons, but in a chiton and a himation, swing a censer and give a blessing in the direction of the painted altar table. The blessing gesture is reserved for priests and does not appear among the angel-deacons flanking the Melismos. The angels on the east wall at Ribița have not been completely uncovered (figs. 7.39, 7.40). However, it may be observed one of them holds a globe in his left hand, inscribed with the words [ΙΓ ΧΘ] / **ΝΙ ΗΑ**. The attribute is unusual for angels accompanying the Melismos. The globe was a symbol of God's dominion over the universe and, from the Middle Byzantine period onwards, the angels

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“Le message idéologique des évêques locaux officiants,” *Zograf* 25 (1996): 39-50; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 140-142.

<sup>880</sup> St Arsenius I, archbishop of Serbia and St Clement of Ohrid themselves belonged to this category.

<sup>881</sup> In a previous article I have suggested that the bishop standing opposite to St Kalinik could be the apostle Peter, who represented the Church of Rome (Prioteasa, “Western and Eastern Themes”). Further research may clarify if the donors had any intention to stress their relationship to the Latin Church.

<sup>882</sup> On the angels accompanying the Melismos see Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 117-122.

<sup>883</sup> The Sanctus or epinikios (victory) hymn is sung during the Liturgy at the Anaphora (Brightman, *Liturgies*, 385). It was inspired by the cry of the seraphim in the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:3).



holding it appear dressed in imperial attire, wearing either the chlamys or the loros.<sup>884</sup> They were represented individually or as a group, accompanying Christ or the Virgin, or taking part in various scenes. The closest composition to that of Ribița seems to be the heavenly altar, which also symbolizes the throne of God, guarded by archangels and depicted in some representations of the Heavenly Liturgy.<sup>885</sup>

The six-winged angels painted on the upper register at Hălmagiu (fig. 7.26) and Ribița (fig. 7.39) fit well with both the image of Christ on the vault and the Melismos in the lower register. The cherubim or seraphim that frequently accompany the image of Christ originate in prophetic visions and liturgical texts.<sup>886</sup> The cherubim or seraphim that are sometimes represented behind or above the Melismos were also inspired by liturgical texts – like the Thrice-holy hymn (Trisagion), the Cherubic hymn (Cherubikon), and the Sanctus (epinikios) – and liturgical commentaries.<sup>887</sup> The presence of angels in the representation of the Melismos, and especially the iconographic theme of the Heavenly Liturgy, reflect a basic tenet, namely that the celebration of the Eucharist on Earth imitates and joins the angelic Liturgy eternally celebrated in Heaven.<sup>888</sup> In the church of Strei, instead of the altar table with the Eucharistic Christ or the liturgical vessels, another Eucharistic theme was chosen, the Man of Sorrows (fig. 7.18). The iconographic type representing Christ in bust or half-figure, nude and with his eyes closed, had its origins in the East, and was adopted in the West in the thirteenth century.<sup>889</sup> For the Byzantines it was a

<sup>884</sup> On the globe as an attribute of angels see D. I. Pallas, “Himmelsmächte, Erzengel und Engel,” *RBK* 3, col. 37-40; Papamastorakis, *Ο διάκοσμος*, 129-130.

<sup>885</sup> See e.g. the Heavenly Liturgy in the church of the Ascension, Ravanica (1380s) and the church of Sts Constantine and Helena, Ohrid (1380s). See Marina Belović, *Ravanica, istorija i slikarstvo*, fig. XV and Subotić, *Sveti Konstantin i Jelena*, scheme 1.

<sup>886</sup> See D. I. Pallas, “Himmelsmächte, Erzengel und Engel,” *RBK* 3, col. 56-89.

<sup>887</sup> See Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 120-121 with further bibliography.

<sup>888</sup> See Klaus Wessel, “Himmlische Liturgie,” in *RBK*, vol. 3, col. 120-122; René Bornert, *Les commentaries byzantins de la Divine Liturgie du VII<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Institut Français d’Études Byzantines, 1966), 122, 176-178, 206, 242-243.

<sup>889</sup> On the history and meaning of the Man of Sorrows see *LCI* 4, col. 87-95; Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, vol. 2, 210-245; Gabriel Millet, *Recherches sur l’iconographie de l’Évangile aux XIV<sup>e</sup>, XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles, d’après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos* (Paris: Fontemoing et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1916), 483-488; Demetrios I. Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz. Der Ritus - das Bild* (Munich: Institut für Byzantinistik und neugriechische Philologie der Universität, 1965), 197-289; Hans Belting, “An Image and Its Function in the Liturgy: The Man of Sorrows in Byzantium,” *DOP* 34-35 (1980-81), 1-16; Henk van Os et al., *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages 1300-1500* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1994), 104-129; Draginja Simić-Lazar, *Kalenic et al dernière période de la peinture byzantine* (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1995), 85-99; Draginja Simić-Lazar, “Sur le thème du Christ de Pitié en Serbie à la fin du Moyen Age et dans le Balkans à l’époque post-byzantine,” in *Μίλτος Γαρίδης (1926-1996). Αφιέρωμα*, ed. Athanasios Paliouras and Angeliki Stavropoulou (Ioannina: Panepistimio Ioanninon, Tomeas Archaialogias, 2003), 689-728.

symbolic image of the Passion and played an important role in Passion rituals.<sup>890</sup> The subject also had an Eucharistic meaning,<sup>891</sup> being frequently represented in the prothesis niche or chapel.<sup>892</sup> The prothesis rite, during which the oblations, bread and wine, are prepared for the Liturgy, reminds of Christ's birth from the Virgin and his sacrifice on the Cross, while the place of the prothesis symbolically represents Golgotha.<sup>893</sup> Only exceptionally was the Man of Sorrows represented on the east wall of the sanctuary, between the officiating bishops.<sup>894</sup> In the West, the Man of Sorrows had par excellence a Eucharistic meaning and was an important devotional image. The special cult of the Passion and of the Eucharist in the late Middle Ages led also to emphasis on his bleeding wounds. Sometimes he is represented with his eyes open, as at Strei, a detail that points to Christ's victory over death, and to the Eucharist as his living and life-giving body. In Catholic churches in medieval Hungary the subject is frequently represented in the sanctuary, most often in relation to the tabernacle and the sacristy, but sometimes also above or below the eastern window, in a location similar to that in Strei.<sup>895</sup> The decoration of the east wall of the sanctuary at Strei with the Man of Sorrows was thus the mediating solution between the Western iconographic language and the requirements of the Orthodox program. No painting has been preserved in the lower register under the image of the Man of Sorrows, but it is not excluded that the altar table was attached to the east wall.<sup>896</sup> The Man of Sorrows had an important devotional function and was frequently represented also in the nave or the exterior walls of the churches. At Strei as well he is depicted in the lunette above the western entrance to the church, accompanied by instruments of his Passion.

Because the preserved examples are few and of varying style and quality, it is difficult to draw hard and fast conclusions regarding the medieval practice of decorating Orthodox churches in Transylvania. Several general observations can, however, be made. What is commonly considered the canon in the decoration of a late Byzantine sanctuary has not been strictly

<sup>890</sup> On the icon's relationship to the liturgy see especially Belting, "An image."

<sup>891</sup> Pallas, *Die Passion*, 274-280.

<sup>892</sup> See Altripp, *Die Prothesis*, 89-91.

<sup>893</sup> On the symbolism of the prothesis rite see Schulz, *Byzantine Liturgy*, 64-67, 98-99, 120-123, 128.

<sup>894</sup> See Velmans, "Interférences," 1912-1914; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 98, 213, fig. 247.

<sup>895</sup> See e.g. in the churches of Žehra (third quarter of the fourteenth century), Csaroda (end of the fourteenth century) and Maconka (beginning of the fifteenth century). On representations of the Man of Sorrows in medieval wall paintings and altarpieces in Hungary see Gerát, *Stredoveké*, 48-59 and Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet*, 200-202.

<sup>896</sup> Unfortunately, the results of the archaeological excavations, which could have documented the foundation of the altar table have not been fully published (see Catalogue).

followed in any of the churches analyzed here. Deviations may be attributed to the training of the painters, who were the bearers of provincial or Western models, and to the requirements of a frequently rectangular sanctuary, in a church without a dome. It is often difficult to discern to what degree each of the afore-mentioned factors contributed to the choice of a theme or to the way this was represented. In all cases that have been analyzed Christ is represented on the vault of the sanctuary, accompanied by angels, the symbols of the evangelists or the evangelists themselves. The prophets decorate the soffit of the triumphal arch in three of the churches. The lower register of the walls is dedicated to the bishops and when the sanctuary was tall enough, the apostles, as an echelon or in the Communion scene, were depicted in the upper register. The three quarter, celebrating pose was not the rule for the depiction of bishops. Rather the frontal posture, with scroll or book is most common. The Melismos is present, replaced by the Man of Sorrows or absent. The iconographic programs of Ribița and Hălmagiu are almost identical and raise the question of whether around 1400 there was a type of program commonly used for barrel-vaulted, rectangular sanctuaries. Unfortunately, the paintings of Leșnic and of Crișcior, which date from approximately the same period and could have verified this hypothesis, are painted over or, respectively, completely lost. Besides the cases that have been analyzed here, only the church of the Monastery of Colț has also preserved paintings in the sanctuary. In this case, however, the painter displayed a strict adherence to the Byzantine program. Even if the church had no dome, the Virgin was represented on the vault; even if the sanctuary had a rectangular plan, the Celebrating Bishops and the Communion of the Apostles decorate the walls. The high quality Palaeologan style of the frescoes betrays the painter's good knowledge of the Byzantine tradition.

In contrast to the painters of Colț are the painters of trained in Western painting who painted Orthodox churches. They adapted their iconographic language to the requirements of the Orthodox sanctuary and over time, some of the subjects they proposed or just the way they represented them could have been assimilated as proper for the decoration of the Orthodox churches. Particular stylistic traits, as well as the presence of some Western iconographic details connect Ribița to a group of paintings that have been characterized as Byzantine with Italian influences. They date from the fourteenth century and decorate several medieval Catholic churches in Transylvania (Unirea, Sântimbru-Ciuc and Vălenii de Mureș). The existence of commissions coming from patrons of both confessions may have contributed to the perpetuation of

this “cross-border” versatile type of painting, first attested in Transylvania in the church of Sântămărie Orlea (1311).

Besides reflecting interactions on an artistic level, the paintings of the sanctuary provide hints about the particular interests or attitudes of the comissioners. It may be assumed that many times, in addition to the main donors, the priest also followed the decoration of the church. The priests are mentioned by name at the end of the votive inscriptions of Streisângeorgiu and Ribița, and they were probably of the same social class or family as the donors.<sup>897</sup> At Densuș, the painter himself was member of the clergy. The surprising presence of Kalinik and Arsenius among the bishops of Strei and Densuș respectively, is the result of a special choice, which other types of sources may elucidate. Other subjects that draw attention by their peculiar iconography are a particular representation of St Nicholas in the churches of Hălmagiu and Ribița, and the apostle Bartholomew in the sanctuary of Hălmagiu and the naos of Densuș. The possible message of these paintings will be addressed in the following sections.

## ***7.2. Orthodoxy of Faith, Byzantine Rite and the Latin Church in the Paintings at Hălmagiu and Ribița***

The lower register of the south wall at Hălmagiu has a special iconography. To the west, a bishop identified by an inscription as St Nicholas the Fast-Helper (сѣти никола скоропо[люшѣнникъ]) is represented standing and giving a blessing in the direction of a chalice (figs. 7.33, 7.34). In the chalice sits the bust of Christ Child, who is also shown making a blessing. The painting in the middle section of the scene has been lost, but at the bottom one can still distinguish the outline of a bent figure, with his hands and head downwards and his hair falling in disorder. The scene is accompanied by a partially readable inscription ending with a reference to the Holy Trinity: [...preached] the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (...а ѡ[тѣ]ц[...]) [проповѣд]аше ѡ[тѣ]ц[оу и сѣ]ноу и сѣ[мо]у дѣ[х]оу.<sup>898</sup> On the same wall, to the left are represented St Basil (сѣти васил[иѣ]), St John Chrysostom (злѣт[ог]сѣт) and a deacon holding a book and incensing in their direction (figs. 7.30-7.32).

<sup>897</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>898</sup> ...а ѡтѣц[...]) [проповѣд]аше ѡтѣц[оу и сѣ]ноу и сѣ[мо]у дѣ[х]оу. The end of the inscription is similar to that of Ribița (see below).

Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei has found a close similarity between this apparently unique scene, and the Vision of St Peter of Alexandria, a subject quite frequently represented in Late Byzantine churches.<sup>899</sup> According to the legend, St Peter<sup>900</sup> was in prison, officiating Mass, when a twelve-year old Christ miraculously appeared to him, dressed in a torn tunic. When Peter asked Christ who had torn his tunic, he answered that Arius had done it and advised the bishop not to accept him at the Holy Communion. Arius (d. 336), a popular preacher in Alexandria, was to be declared heretic at the first Council of Nicaea (325) because he taught that the Son was not coeternal with the Father, but was created by him from nothing. The first Council established the dogma according to which Christ is consubstantial with the Father. Christ's being fully God implies that the deification of mankind through his sacrifice is also possible.

From the fourteenth century on, the Vision of St Peter of Alexandria was many times represented in the sanctuary of Orthodox churches, being invested with Eucharistic meaning.<sup>901</sup> Usually, the scene shows Peter, bishop of Alexandria, in front of an altar table on which stands a young Christ with a torn tunic (fig. 7.53). Arius is also frequently represented, at the bottom of the scene falling or being swallowed by a dragon that symbolizes Hell. The tear in Christ's tunic was regarded as a symbol of schism in the Church, but most frequently as the heretic denial of Christ's divine nature, his separation from the Father, a division inside the Trinity.<sup>902</sup> In the sanctuary, the Vision is a condemnation of those who, by denying Christ's divinity implicitly contest the validity of the Eucharist. It also points out the real presence of Christ-God in the Eucharist.

<sup>899</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 9-11. On the iconography of St Nicholas see *LCI* 8, col. 45-58; Réau, *Iconographie*, vol. 3/2, 976-988; Braun, *Tracht*, col. 545-551; Kaftal, *North East*, No. 219; Kaftal, *North West*, No. 174; Kaftal, *Tuscan*, No. 224; Kaftal, *Central and South*, No. 269; Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, *The Life of St Nicholas in Byzantine Art* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1983). On the vision of St Peter of Alexandria and its representation in art see Gabriel Millet, "La vision de Pierre d'Alexandrie," in *Mélanges Charles Diehl*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1930), 99-115; André Grabar, "Un rouleau liturgique constantinopolitain et ses peintures," *DOP* 8 (1954) 176, 188; *LCI* 8, col. 175-176; Constantinides, *Olympiotissa*, vol. 1, 183-185, and vol. 2, 70-73; Michael Altripp, *Die Prothesis und ihre Bildausstattung in Byzanz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Denkmäler Griechenlands* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), 164-168.

<sup>900</sup> Peter, bishop of Alexandria (AD 300-311), died as a martyr in 311.

<sup>901</sup> Millet, "La vision," 106-109; Altripp, *Die Prothesis*, 167. Sometimes the Vision is associated with the representation of the first Council and then its dogmatic message comes to the fore (see Millet, "La vision," 107; Christopher Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine* (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1970), 246-248, 251, 114.

<sup>902</sup> Millet, "La vision," 102-105.

St Nicholas, bishop of Myra (first half of the fourth century), was believed to have participated in the first Council of Nicaea.<sup>903</sup> From the fourteenth century on, in Latin and Eastern Christian sources, a particular episode in his legend occurs.<sup>904</sup> It relates that, during the disputes at the First Council, St Nicholas had slapped Arius in the face. As a result, the saint was deprived of the episcopal insignia and put in prison. However, Christ and the Mother of God miraculously returned the Gospel book to him as well as the *omophorion*, restoring the saint to his bishopric dignity.<sup>905</sup> In many representations, usually in Byzantine art and very rarely in Western art, the saint is accompanied by the small figures of Christ and the Mother of God presenting him with the Gospel book and the *omophorion*.<sup>906</sup> The scene of St Nicholas slapping Arius is known only from post-Byzantine representations of the First Council.<sup>907</sup>

Saint Nicholas was extremely popular in the Late Middle Ages in both Byzantium and the West.<sup>908</sup> In the Byzantine world he was venerated as a teacher of the Church, a model of priesthood, defender of the Trinitarian dogma, defender of the orthodox faith and fighter against any heresy, as well as a “pillar” of the Church.<sup>909</sup> His role as a fighter against heresy emerges occasionally also in Western sources.<sup>910</sup> Some references in this respect occur in late medieval Hungarian sermons as well. The Franciscan preacher Pelbárt of Temesvár (ca. 1435-1504) dedicated four sermons to St Nicholas, thus placing him among the saints particularly venerated

<sup>903</sup> His participation is mentioned in both Byzantine and Latin sources. See Gustav Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaus in der griechischen Kirche. Texte und Untersuchungen* (Leipzig and Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1913, 1917), vol 1, 205, and vol. 2, 299-301, 303, 392-394; *Legenda Aurea*, 46; Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus sanctorum [et] gestorum eorum ex diversis voluminibus collectus* (Argentine: Flach, 1513), Book 1, Chapter 33, [http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00018876/image\\_21](http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00018876/image_21) (Accessed: August 28, 2010).

<sup>904</sup> See Michele Bacci, *San Nicola: il grande taumaturgo* (Roma: Laterza, 2009), 74-75; Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, vol. 1, 459-460, and vol. 2, 392-394.

<sup>905</sup> The Latin version of the legend, preserved in Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus*, Book 1, Chapter 33 ([http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00018876/image\\_21](http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00018876/image_21), [http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00018876/image\\_22](http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/bsb00018876/image_22), accessed August 28, 2010), is slightly different: after St Nicholas slapped an Arian at the Council, the fathers withdrew his right to wear the mitre and the pallium. However, two angels miraculously restored the two episcopal insignia to the saint while he was celebrating Mass.

<sup>906</sup> Originally, the image was inspired by another story according to which St Nicholas, shortly before his investiture, had a vision of Christ and the Virgin presenting him with a Gospel book and the *omophorion* respectively. Later on, the icon inspired by this episode was reinterpreted in light of St Nicholas's dispute with Arius. See Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, vol. 2, 393; Bacci, *San Nicola*, 73-75; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 103-104, 110.

<sup>907</sup> See Dionysius of Furna, *Carte*, 206; Walter, *L'iconographie*, 89; Christopher Walter, “Icons of the First Council of Nicaea,” in Christopher Walter, *Pictures as Language: How the Byzantines Exploited Them*, no. VIII, 185-186.

<sup>908</sup> From the rich literature on the cult of St Nicholas see e.g. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, and Bacci, *San Nicola*, with a comprehensive bibliography. On St Nicholas's cult in Hungary see Bálint, *Ünnepi*, vol. 2, 29-57.

<sup>909</sup> The aspects of St Nicholas's cult are more numerous as the saint was venerated in both East and West particularly as a helper of needy people, healer, protector of children, prisoners, sea travelers etc.. Here, however, I focus on aspects relevant to the researched topic.

<sup>910</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Martyrologium* (mid. 9<sup>th</sup> c.), PL 110, col. 1183; *Legenda Aurea*, 46; Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus*, Book 1, Chapter 33.

in Hungary at that time.<sup>911</sup> In the first sermon he relates an episode that would have happened at the Council of Nicaea, where St Nicholas fought the heretics who opposed the Trinitarian doctrine. St Nicholas then performed a miracle, grasping a brick out of which came fire and water, while the clay remained in his hand. He thus provided an image of the unity of the three persons in the Holy Trinity.<sup>912</sup> St Nicholas's victory against heretics is shortly referred to in a sermon dedicated to him and preserved in a Dominican compilation from the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>913</sup> St Nicholas is quite frequently represented in medieval Hungarian churches and altarpieces, as an individual saint or in narrative scenes inspired by his legend,<sup>914</sup> although no representation related to the first Council or his fight against Arians is known. Therefore, the representation at Hălmagiu is in keeping with the cult of St Nicholas as defender of the Holy Trinity in both the Eastern and the Latin Church, although a representation similar to that of Hălmagiu has not yet come to light. The painter of the sanctuary was undoubtedly trained in Western painting and partially ignored the Byzantine canons. St Basil and St John Chrysostom do not follow the established Byzantine iconography of the saints, both being depicted with white, long hair and long beards. Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei has assumed the iconography of the scene at Hălmagiu drew on the Byzantine representation of the Vision of St Peter of Alexandria, basically by replacing St Peter with St Nicholas. The scholar has argued that this representation was inspired by the Byzantine tradition of St Nicholas participating in the first Council and his veneration as a fighter against heresy and defender of the Trinitarian dogma.<sup>915</sup>

<sup>911</sup> In the introduction to his collection, Pelbárt states that for important feasts he provided four sermons.

<sup>912</sup> *Ferturque in chronica quadam Nicolaum Niceno interfuisse concilio, ubi cum haeretici contra Trinitatis fidem plurima disputassent, Nicolaus arrepto latere in manu dixit: "Quid haeretice de Deo impossibile loqueris, quod suo modo vides in creatura?" Tactoque latere mox flamma evolavit, aquaque de latere defluxit et lutum in manu permansit. Ecce ait: "Vide tria fore in uno latere! Quid ergo mirum, quod tres personae probantur in una deitate?"* (fragment from the Pelbárt of Temesvár's *De sancto Nicolao. Sermo primus persequens legendam*, in idem, *Sermones Pomerii de sanctis I [Pars hiemalis]* (Augsburg, 1502), <http://sermones.elte.hu/pelbart/index.php?file=ph/ph006> (Accessed: August 28, 2010)). It is interesting that Pelbárt attributes an episode to St Nicholas that in post-Byzantine art is attributed to St Spyridon, bishop of Trimithous, on Cyprus (fourth century), who was equally believed to have participated to the first Council of Nicaea (Dionysius of Furna, *Carte*, 206; Walter, "Icons," 186). The *Érdy Codex* (1526/1527), a Hungarian sermon collection that drew on Pelbárt's work, assigns the same episode to St Nicholas (*Érdy codex*, ed. György Volf, vol. 1 (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Nyelvtudományi Bizottsága, 1876), 235-236).

<sup>913</sup> *In petra, id est in Christo, exaltavit me, et nunc exaltavit caput meum, id est sanctum prelatum, super inimicos meos, id est demones et hereticos.* ( *De Sancto Nicolao, Sermo primus*, in *Sermones compilati in Studio Generali Quinqueecclesiensi in Regno Hungariae*, ed. Eduardo Petrovich (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992), 31).

<sup>914</sup> See Drăguț, "Iconografia," 37, 40, 78-79; Tünde Wehli, "Védő és segítő szentek" [Protecting and helping saints], in Marosi, ed., *Magyarországi művészet*, 211; Gerát, *Stredoveké*, 148-149, 260-261; Bálint, *Ünnepi*, vol. 2, 44-46.

<sup>915</sup> The scholar went even further, assuming that the scene at Hălmagiu is an original illustration of those passages in the Akathistos hymn dedicated to St Nicholas, which praise him as victorious against Arius and defender of

The inscription invoking the Holy Trinity at Hălmagiu is an affirmation of the Trinitarian doctrine, while the presence of the Christ Child in the chalice points to the real presence of Christ, God and Man, in the Eucharist.<sup>916</sup> As has already been pointed out, the acknowledgement of Christ's fully divine nature and of his position as one of the three hypostases of the Triune God remained at the heart of the Salvation doctrine, by the fact that the Son of God united in himself the divine and human natures. The figure represented falling at the bottom of the scene is a defeated heretic. By being denied or refusing the Holy Communion, he falls out of the Church. A painting recently uncovered on the south wall of the sanctuary of Ribița has important common features with the scene at Hălmagiu (fig. 7.38). St Nicholas is represented standing and giving a blessing in the direction of an altar covered by a ciborium, situated to his right. On the altar there is a chalice accompanied by an inscription, reading: "This is dedicated to the maker of miracles Saint Nicholas, the fighter and the father hierarch who [...] preached for the Father [and the Son and the Holy Spirit]." <sup>917</sup> A falling figure is depicted at the foot of the altar. Here again the holy hierarch is presented as a defender of the Trinitarian dogma, which, by the representation of the altar table and the chalice, is also put in relation to the Eucharist. The inscription of Hălmagiu had probably ended in similar manner as that of Ribița, referring to St Nicholas who preached (the unity of?) the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As in the case of Hălmagiu, St Basil, then another bishop,<sup>918</sup> and finally St Stephen, the archdeacon, are represented to the right of St Nicholas. As revealed during recent restoration works, the program of the sanctuary of Ribița as a whole is very similar to that of Hălmagiu.

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orthodoxy (Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 11). Indeed, the likelihood that the scene was inspired by liturgical texts is very great if one takes also into consideration the texts of the Vespers and the Matins in the Menaion.

<sup>916</sup> The fact that St Nicholas is represented giving a blessing towards the chalice is a reference to the Epiclesis, that part of the Mass when the bread and wine are transformed with the power of the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body and Blood. Also, the representation of Christ Child in the chalice, making the gesture of blessing points to his role as both sacrifice and priest, as recited in the liturgical prayer during the Cherubic Hymn (Brightman, *Liturgies*, 378; Cabasila, *Tîlcuirea*, 104-105).

<sup>917</sup> This translation of the partially preserved inscription was published by Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei in the abstract of her paper "Nouveaux éléments dans l'iconographie des peintures des églises roumaines de Transylvanie au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle (Ribița et Hălmagiu)," presented at the annual conference of the Institute of History of Art "George Oprescu" in Bucharest ("Session annuelle du département d'art médiéval de l'Institut d'Histoire de l'Art "G. Oprescu" de Bucharest: nouvelles données dans la recherche de l'art médiéval de Roumanie (2004, 2005)," *Revue roumaine d'histoire de l'art. Série Beaux-Arts*, 43 (2006), 88).

<sup>918</sup> His identity is still to be revealed by future restoration works.



Although St Nicholas was the patron saint of the church of Ribița, and most likely also of Hălmașiu,<sup>919</sup> and therefore deserved a special place in the church decoration, the concern with the Trinity issue probably came as the result of a heretical threat.<sup>920</sup> Even if no source has been preserved referring precisely to the region where the two churches are situated, the presence of dualist heresies in the Late Middle Ages in south-eastern Hungary is certain. In the southern Banat, the Bogomils arrived in five waves during the eleventh-fifteenth centuries, the last two dating from 1393 and the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>921</sup> Bartholomew of Alverna, the vicar of the Franciscan province of Bosnia (1367-1407), whose missionaries were active in the southern regions of Hungary and Wallachia, accused the schismatics in Hungary of being connected to the “Paulicians” from Wallachia and the heretics of Bosnia.<sup>922</sup>

In addition to the anti-heretical message, the painting of the south wall at Hălmașiu, possibly also at Ribița, seems to stress the orthodoxy and the attachment to the Eastern liturgical rite.<sup>923</sup> In late Byzantine sanctuaries, the authors of the two main Byzantine liturgies, St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great, are usually represented to the east, on each side of the Melismos, at the head of the two rows of celebrating bishops. At Hălmașiu, the Melismos was placed on the east wall of the sanctuary, framed by two incensing angels, while the two hierarchs were moved to the south wall, next to St Nicholas (figs. 7.26, 7.27, 7.30, 7.31). They are represented frontally, holding liturgical scrolls. To the left end of the wall there is a deacon, who censes not towards the Melismos on the east wall as one would expect, but in the direction of the three bishops on the south wall.<sup>924</sup> The whole composition in the lower register of the south wall seems to be, therefore, emphasizing the Byzantine liturgy and its orthodoxy.<sup>925</sup>

<sup>919</sup> In the church of Hălmașiu, St Nicholas is represented as the patron saint in the votive painting, which is later than the painting in the sanctuary. However, it is not excluded that he was also the first patron of the church.

<sup>920</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza Buculei suggests a similar interpretation (Cincheza-Buculei, “L’ensemble,” 24-25).

<sup>921</sup> See Ioan Silviu Oța, “Mormintele bogomile din sudul Banatului (secolele XII-XV)” [The Bogomil graves in southern Banat (twelfth-fifteenth centuries)], *Arheologia Medievală* 2 (1998), 113-123.

<sup>922</sup> Papacostea, “Întregiri,” 235-236. On the presence of Bogomils in Wallachia and the fight against them, as deduced from the correspondence of Nicodim, abbot of Vodița and Tismana, with Patriarch Euthymius of Tarnovo, see Răzvan Theodorescu, *Bizanț, Balcani, Occident: la începuturile culturii medievale românești (secolele X-XIV)* [Byzantium, the Balkans, the West: at the beginnings of the Romanian medieval culture] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1974), 241-253.

<sup>923</sup> A full analysis of the scene at Ribița can only be carried out after the painting of the south wall of the sanctuary is completely uncovered.

<sup>924</sup> The scheme does not reiterate on the lower register of the north wall, where three other bishops and St Bartholomew are represented.

<sup>925</sup> Particularly St Basil the Great, but also St John Chrysostom were also venerated as defenders of the Trinitarian doctrine.

One may also regard the paintings of Hălmagiu from the perspective of the relationship between the Latin and the Orthodox Churches. The Latin Church was relatively tolerant with regard to the Byzantine rite as long as it was not contrary to Catholic faith and the “schismatics” were willing to accept papal authority. When it tried to impose its authority over the Greek Church or when the Union came into discussion, the main issues were the primacy of the Pope – and his being commemorated at the Mass –, the doctrine of the Filioque, the matter of the Purgatory and the use of leavened and unleavened bread for the Eucharist.<sup>926</sup> Nevertheless, especially in periods of aggressive attempts at conversion, serious accusations with regard to ritual practices were voiced.

In Hungary, the Franciscan Bartholomew of Alverna who had the mission to convert the heretics and schismatics in the province of Bosnia, which at that time also included the Banat, Hațeg and Wallachia,<sup>927</sup> considered null and void the sacraments officiated over by the schismatic priests of the Serbians, Bulgarians and Vlachs, whom he called “false priests” (not canonically ordained). He particularly pointed out the “errors” they made in the baptismal rite and in the Eucharistic liturgy. The priests were accused of improperly preparing the Eucharist – e.g squeezing a grape into the chalice, or using hydromel or wine made from herbs, or not adding the right amount of water, etc. – and of erroneously considering that the transformation of the offerings into the body and blood of Christ took place during particular prayers in the prothesis rite. The priests were accused of ignorance and rusticity and of not following either the Latin or the Byzantine rites.<sup>928</sup> Moreover, in Bartholomew’s opinion, the mistakes made in the baptismal ritual were partly a consequence of the ignorant schismatic priests having connections with the Paulicians from Wallachia and the heretics from Bosnia. Nevertheless, in another letter, he agrees that ordinary people had a basic Christian education – similar to that of the Latin Christians – and, something he considers essential common ground, they confess the belief in the Holy Trinity. Therefore, in

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<sup>926</sup> For the themes that were discussed in the negotiations for Church Union see Joseph Gill, S.J., *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198-1400* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1979), and idem, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959). As regards the Eucharist, two main issues were discussed at the Council of Florence: the use of leavened and unleavened bread in the Eucharist and the moment of transubstantiation. The Council decreed as legitimate both the Greek use of leavened and the Latin use of unleavened bread, but the issue of the transubstantiation was left out because no agreement was reached: the Greeks held that the transubstantiation took place at the Epiclesis, while the Latins believed it happened at the Anamnesis.

<sup>927</sup> Papacostea, “Întregiri,” 226 and note 12.

<sup>928</sup> To support his critics, he adds that both the emperor John V Palaeologos and several monks from the Mount Athos believed that these priests did not follow the correct Greek ritual.

his opinion, these people could be easily converted if their schismatic priests were chased away and replaced with Latin priests.

This aggressive attempt at conversion is also documented after the Union of Ferrara-Florence. It has been argued that the Union was favorable for the social assertion of the Romanian elites<sup>929</sup> and in the first years after the Council of Ferrara-Florence the Hungarian authorities were quite favorable towards the Orthodox.<sup>930</sup> However, as the opposition to the Union became more manifest, the Catholic Church was moved to use harsh measures to bring the schismatics back into the Uniate Church.<sup>931</sup> It has been argued that one supporter of the anti-unionist movement in Hungary was the Serbian despot George Branković, who received big estates in Hungary from King Sigismund, among them also the estate of Șiria castle, which he held from 1439 to 1444.<sup>932</sup> In 1455-1456, the Franciscan inquisitor John of Capistrano led a vigorous campaign for the conversion of the schismatics and heretics (Hussites, but also Bogomils) in southern Hungary, Transylvania, Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia.<sup>933</sup> In Transylvania he exhorted the nobles to set fire to the churches of the schismatics, which he called the “synagogues of Satan,” and to chase away the priests who refused to convert. He also had the *pseudo-episcopus* John of Caffa, who resided in Hunedoara, arrested. Capistrano referred to him as *haeresiarcha et magister omnium schismatum et haeresum*. He and his many followers followed neither the Latin nor the Greek rite. Finally, John of Caffa officially retracted all the “errors” he was accused of. He was received in the Catholic Church and was “restored in his dignities” by the Pope. All “priests of the Romanians” ordained by him had to be reconfirmed. It has been argued that the aim of John Capistrano’s campaign against the schismatics was their return to the Union and that John of Caffa was pursued because he was an anti-unionist.<sup>934</sup>

Unfortunately, the still vague dating of the paintings of Hălmagiu in the first half of the fifteenth century and the scarcity of the preserved data on the history of the Church in the region, makes it difficult to precisely define the religious context of the paintings. It may be assumed that the type

<sup>929</sup> Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 117-118, 127.

<sup>930</sup> Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 33-38.

<sup>931</sup> Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 38, 41-42, 45.

<sup>932</sup> On George Branković’s support for the Orthodox see Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 38-40; Damian, “Unire,” 56.

<sup>933</sup> On John of Capistrano’s actions against the Orthodox in Transylvania see Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 42-45 and Damian, “Iancu de Hunedoara,” 3-4, from where the following information was also taken.

<sup>934</sup> Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 38-45 (Diaconescu even assumes that John of Caffa was part of the anti-unionist campaign supported by George Branković). See also Damian, “Iancu de Hunedoara,” 3-6.

of allegations Bartholomew of Alverna made, accusing the schismatic priests of ignorance, ritual mistakes, and liturgical misinterpretations were common place. On occasions, the schismatics were also considered vulnerable to heretical influences or set on a par with the heretics.<sup>935</sup> Such accusations, which really affected the Orthodox only when the Catholic Church resorted to forceful conversion and received the support of the lay power, may well have been an impulse for the Orthodox to explicitly assert their religious identity and orthodoxy. Nevertheless, based on the historical context and particular artistic features, the paintings of Hălmagiu do not seem to reflect an anti-Latin attitude as well.

On the north wall of the sanctuary, three bishops are represented, but the inscriptions have been preserved for only two of them, Sylvester and Clement (figs. 7.28, 7.29).<sup>936</sup> Sylvester is certainly the pope of Rome (314-335), who, according to some legends, baptized Constantine the Great and took an anti-Arian stance.<sup>937</sup> The identity of Clement is hard to pinpoint: he could be Clement of Rome, Clement of Ancyra or Clement of Ohrid, all of them occasionally represented in Orthodox sanctuaries.<sup>938</sup> While the first two occur in churches throughout the Byzantine world, Clement of Ohrid was particularly represented in Macedonian and Bulgarian churches.<sup>939</sup> St Clement († 916), a pupil of Sts Cyril and Methodius, one of the organizers of the Bulgarian Church and its first Slavic bishop was mainly venerated in the Archbishopric of Ohrid and in Bulgaria. Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei considers that the saint in the sanctuary of Hălmagiu is Clement of Ohrid, suggesting that his cult would have been brought to Transylvania by Serbian immigrants fleeing the Turkish invasion. In Cincheza-Buculei's opinion, the representation of St Nicholas's scene and of St Clement of Ohrid reflects an anti-heretical and anti-Latin attitude.

<sup>935</sup> Iulian-Mihai Damian also points out the close association the Franciscan inquisitors made between schismatics and heretics (Damian, "Unire," 63). On the Latins calling the schismatics heretics see also Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 245.

<sup>936</sup> Inscriptions for the first time read by Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 8.

<sup>937</sup> *LThK*<sup>2</sup> 9, col. 757-758; *ODB* vol. 3, 1900; Réau, *Iconographie*, vol. 3/3, 1217-1220; *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, 128-141. In Byzantine painting St Sylvester was frequently represented grey-haired and wearing a cap or a mitre. There are however occasions when he does not have a headdress. See *LCI* 8, col. 353-354; Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 132; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 104; Dionysius of Furna, *Carte*, 189.

<sup>938</sup> Because all three saints are commonly represented as grey-haired and with long beards, when the inscription mentions only the name "Clement" it is difficult to distinguish between the three. See *LCI* 7, col. 320 (Clement of Rome), 323 (Clement of Ancyra), 324-325 (Clement of Ohrid); Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 108. Clement of Ancyra could be also represented with brown hair (e.g. in the church of Episkopi, Mani --see Velmans, *La peinture*, fig. 162) or with a rounded beard (Dionysius of Furna, *Carte*, 191; *LCI* 7, col. 323).

<sup>939</sup> See Cvetan Grozdanov, "Apparition et introduction des portraits de Clément d'Ohrid dans l'art médiéval" (in Serbian, with French summary), *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 3 (1967), 47-72; Cvetan Grozdanov, "Les portraits de Clément d'Ohrid dans la peinture d'Ohrid du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle" (in Serbian, with French summary), *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 4 (1968), 101-118.

The author has argued that, in the face of the Catholic offensive, the opposition of the Orthodox was reinforced by the Serbian immigrants, despot George Branković's support of the Orthodox Serbs in Hungary, and the Hesychast movement that spread from Serbia. One exponent of the Hesychasts was the monk Nicodim († ca. 1406), who opposed the Catholicization policy of King Louis I (1342-1382).<sup>940</sup>

However, there are a few facts that do not support a situation of conflict with the Latins at the time when the sanctuary of Hălmagiu was presumably painted. The paintings date from the first half of the fifteenth century and that was no longer a period of aggressive Catholicization. Unlike Louis I, King Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437) did not make the conversion of schismatics one of his aims, but had a pragmatic attitude towards them. For the internal stability of the country and the establishment of a common front before the Turks, he chose a tolerant attitude towards the Orthodox.<sup>941</sup> Although monk Nicodim had been an opponent of Louis's I Catholicization policy, he had good relations with Sigismund, probably because both understood they had to unite their forces against the Turks.<sup>942</sup> King Sigismund (1387-1437), King Wladislas I (1440-1444), as well as John Hunyadi, regent (1446-1453) and captain general of the kingdom (1453-1456), were favorable to the Union, which was partially implemented in Hungary. The evolution of the Moga family, who donated the paintings, was one of success, as attested by sources from the middle and second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>943</sup>

As regards the paintings themselves, their Western style and the presence of St Bartholomew with a typical Western iconography also suggest a milieu which was not hostile to exchanges with the Latins. While the identity of St Clement cannot be at present ascertained, the presence of St Sylvester may be regarded as a reference to the Church of Rome. He is one of only six hierarchs represented in the small sanctuary, although in Byzantine programs he would not normally be given that much importance. Besides John and Basil, the bishops of first choice in Byzantine sanctuaries were St Gregory the Theologian, St Athanasius of Alexandria, St Cyril of

<sup>940</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 11-13, 22-24.

<sup>941</sup> See Papacostea, "Bizanțul," Ciocîltan, "Înțelesul."

<sup>942</sup> See Ciocîltan, "Înțelesul." On Nicodim see more in Chapter 1.

<sup>943</sup> See Chapter 2 and the Catalogue.

Jerusalem and St Nicholas.<sup>944</sup> Therefore, it may be assumed that St Sylvester was chosen not only as a defender of orthodoxy, but also as a representative of the Church of Rome.

The nature of the jurisdictional relationship between the Latin and Orthodox Churches is yet to be clarified. An inscription in the church of Ribița, no longer visible but recorded in 1868, reportedly read: “It was built under the shepherding of Pope Gregory and Anastasius, 1404.”<sup>945</sup> It has been inferred that the inscription reflects the acknowledgment of a double religious authority.<sup>946</sup>

To conclude, the paintings on the south wall of the sanctuary at Hălmagiu, and probably also at Ribița, were conceived of, in my opinion, as an exaltation of the Byzantine rite and its orthodoxy. St John Chrysostom and Basil the Great are honored as the authors of the two most frequently used liturgies in the Byzantine Church and the scene of St Nicholas is an affirmation of the Trinitarian doctrine in close connection with the Eucharist. The anti-heretic message may have been introduced as a reaction to a heretical threat, but also as a response to old and periodic persecutions that associated the Orthodox with the heretics. However, the historical and art historical data do not suggest a situation of conflict, but rather of concord between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches.<sup>947</sup> The tolerance shown towards the Orthodox as the Turkish threat on the southern border of Hungary grew was meant to ensure social and political cohesion for a common military effort. The donors of the paintings themselves were prominent local leaders of

<sup>944</sup> See Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 223, 236-237; Gerstel, *Beholding*, 24. On various hierarchs and the place they held in the ceremony of the celebrating bishops represented in Byzantine sanctuaries see also Konstantinidi, *Μελισμός*, 132-143.

<sup>945</sup> Nemes, “A ribicei templom,” 64.

<sup>946</sup> Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița,” 7-8.

<sup>947</sup> One may even surmise that this delimitation from heretics was also meant to place the Orthodox donors on the side of the Catholic Church in its fight against heresies, and to stress a common fundamental point with the Latins, namely the belief in the Holy Trinity. When dealing with the relationships between the Orthodox and the Catholic in Hungary, one should not overlook their own search for common ground. Even Bartholomew of Alverna noted that the belief in the Holy Trinity was a fundamental common point with the Orthodox (Lasić, “Fr. Bartholomaei,” 71; Papacostea, “Întregiri,” 235, note 37). Sigismund of Luxemburg, although politically motivated, was quoted as saying that one should not proceed to the confessional assimilation of the Greeks, because they confess the same belief as the Latins (Papacostea, “Bizanțul,” 63; Ciocîltan, “Înțelesul,” 157; on Sigismund’s aims at the Congress of Luck see Wilhelm Baum, *Kaiser Sigismund. Hus, Konstanz und Türkenkriege* (Graz: Styria, 1993), 214-216). Nevertheless, there was also a problem between the Orthodox and the Catholics with regard to the Holy Trinity, namely the procession of the Holy Spirit. The Latins believed that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son (*Filioque*), while the Greeks considered this a heretical addition to the symbol of faith as defined in the two oecumenical councils. The *Filioque*, together with the papal primacy, were the major obstacles in all negotiations for the Church Union. Finally, at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, the *Filioque* doctrine was accepted by the Unionist Greeks, but the Eastern Church was not bound to add it to the symbol of faith. Only in 1457, noting that the principles of the Union were not observed by the all Uniate Orthodox, did Pope Calixt III issue a bull by which he required the Greeks to recite the symbol of faith with *Filioque* (see Gill, *The Council of Florence*, 393; Diaconescu, “Les implications,” 47-48).

the Romanians and had military duties, serving the castle of Șiria. Therefore, a hostile attitude towards the official religion on the part of the donors is difficult to imagine. On the north wall of the sanctuary St Sylvester and St Bartholomew testify to connections with the Latin Church. The representation of St Sylvester among the celebrating bishops was probably meant to be a reference to the Roman See, although one cannot say if this was just symbolic homage paid to Rome or whether it also reflected a particular jurisdictional situation, as suggested by the inscription at Ribița.

## 8. Saint Bartholomew the Apostle in the Churches of Hălmagiu and Densuș <sup>948</sup>

Two medieval Orthodox churches in the eastern part of medieval Hungary contain a depiction of the apostle Bartholomew that is unusual for Byzantine painting. The apostle is depicted as a naked flayed man, carrying his skin on a staff over his shoulder. In his other hand he holds up a knife, the instrument of his martyrdom. The paintings, one in the sanctuary of the church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Hălmagiu (fig. 8.1) and the other in the nave of the church of St. Nicholas at Densuș (fig. 8.2), date from the first half of the fifteenth century.

In the church of Hălmagiu, the Apostle Bartholomew is depicted on the far eastern end of the north wall, left of the prothesis niche in which the Man of Sorrows was painted, probably in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>949</sup> Archaeological excavations have revealed that the prothesis table was originally situated in front of the present niche.<sup>950</sup> Thus, the apostle would have been situated to the left of the celebrant, on the level of the prothesis table.

In the church of Densuș St. Bartholomew is depicted in the nave, on the northern side of the south-eastern pier. While the paintings in the sanctuary and on the east wall of the nave were executed by a well-versed painter in a Palaeologan style, the paintings on the piers are quite rustic and were certainly the work of a local painter. After recent restoration, the name of the saint appears to be сѣ[и] тома, unless part of the inscription has faded away.<sup>951</sup> Under the image of the saint, a partially preserved inscription in Old Church Slavonic reads: “The prayer of the servant of God Crăstea [and of his wife...to St Toma/Bartholomew?]” (†молен[и]е [раба] бѣжи крѣстѣ [и] п[од]рѣж[а] ...] ома).<sup>952</sup>

In Byzantine painting the Apostle Bartholomew is usually depicted as a young, bearded man, wearing a tunic and a mantle (the ancient *pallium*) and holding a scroll or a book as a sign of his

<sup>948</sup> This chapter retains largely the shape of my paper, “The Apostle Bartholomew in Transylvanian Orthodox Churches -- A West-Inspired Devotion to the Saint,” given at the Byzantine Studies Conference in Toronto, October 2007.

<sup>949</sup> As its margins suggest, the niche was either designed from the beginning and was enlarged at a later time, or was completely carved sometime after the building of the church.

<sup>950</sup> See Căpățînă, “Cercetări,” 79.

<sup>951</sup> Because the representation of the saint is so peculiar, confusion with the Apostle Thomas or an ignorance of the apostle’s Latin cult is difficult to imagine. No inscription is preserved with the representation of the saint at Hălmagiu.

<sup>952</sup> See also Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 94 (†моление ра[в] бѣжи крѣстѣ).



evangelisation work.<sup>953</sup> In the West, however, the skin and the knife became his common attributes in late medieval art. The oldest preserved examples show that the knife has been an attribute of the saint since the twelfth century, and the skin since the thirteenth century.<sup>954</sup> Sometimes the apostle was represented flayed, holding his skin on his arm or over his shoulder.<sup>955</sup>

In medieval Hungarian wall paintings he is frequently represented as a flayed man carrying his skin on a staff over his shoulder and holding a knife.<sup>956</sup> In the Evangelical church of St Margaret of Antioch in Mediaș, the saint is represented on the north wall of the north aisle, in the same frame with St. Catherine of Alexandria and St Barbara (figs. 8.3, 8.4). To the right of this panel there is the Crucifixion, and the painting probably dates from 1420.<sup>957</sup> The apostle was similarly depicted in the Reformed church of Sighetul Marmăției (fifteenth century), on the north wall of the nave.<sup>958</sup> Four other examples have been preserved in Slovak churches. In the Evangelical church at Štítnik, St Bartholomew is depicted in the north aisle, on the east wall (fig. 8.5). On the same wall, above him, there is a large image of the Crucifixion, continuing the Passion cycle from the north wall. The painting dates from the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>959</sup> In the Catholic church of the Holy Trinity at Rákoš the saint is depicted on the lower register of the north wall of the nave (fig. 8.6.). The painting is very poorly preserved and may date to the end of the fourteenth century. St. Bartholomew also occurs in the nave of the Catholic church of St. Martin at Čerín, on the southern part of the triumphal arch (figs. 8.7, 8.8). He is depicted turning towards a standing Man of Sorrows, whose blood pours into a chalice. To the right, on the adjacent south wall, there is an image of St Ladislav with a donor. The paintings, dating from the second half of the fourteenth century or first quarter of the fifteenth century<sup>960</sup> were probably meant as a decoration for a masonry altar table, attached to the western side of the triumphal

<sup>953</sup> *LCI* 5, col. 323.

<sup>954</sup> *LCI* 5, col. 324-326 and Braun, *Tracht*, col. 119-121.

<sup>955</sup> It seems that the earliest known example dates from the thirteenth century and it has been preserved in the church of St. Zeno in Verona (Kaftal, *North East*, col.109).

<sup>956</sup> In *LCI* 5, col. 326-327, the example in the fifteenth-century *Breviarium Glagoliticum* from Istria is considered unique.

<sup>957</sup> Vasile Drăguț, "Picturile murale de la Mediaș, o importantă recuperare pentru istoria artei transilvănene" [The mural paintings in Mediaș, an important retrieval for the history of Transylvanian art], *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Monumente Istorice și de Artă* 45, no.2 (1976), 22).

<sup>958</sup> The paintings are completely lost, only drawings based on the paintings have been preserved (see Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 217, 236)

<sup>959</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 159.

<sup>960</sup> Dvořáková et al., *Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba*, 86-87; Gerát, *Stredoveké*, 136.

arch. The last example in Slovakia is found in the Catholic church of St Catherine of Alexandria at Kvačany (fig. 8.9). The painting, dating to around 1450,<sup>961</sup> is situated on the north wall of the nave and represents the saint a second time, in the same scene that depicts his martyrdom. The next scene is the Weighing of the Souls by the Archangel Michael.<sup>962</sup> This particular iconographic type, which circulated in medieval Hungary but also in other Western countries, was adopted in the two Transylvanian Orthodox churches as well.<sup>963</sup>

The difference between the Western and Byzantine representations derives from the various traditions regarding his martyrdom. According to Byzantine sources,<sup>964</sup> the apostle died by crucifixion in Greater Armenia, in Arbanoupole (or Urbanopoli). Consequently, in Byzantine iconography the martyrdom of the apostle is the crucifixion.<sup>965</sup> The only known Byzantine author who speaks about flaying instead of crucifixion is St Theodore Studites († 826), in his encomium of Saint Bartholomew.<sup>966</sup> The Golden Legend, the influential thirteenth-century collection of saints' lives, makes reference to Theodore and Latin Church writers, noting that the tradition with regard to Bartholomew's death is heterogeneous, including scourging, crucifixion, flaying and beheading. Jacobus de Voragine tries to reconcile these different legends and concludes:

<sup>961</sup> Gerát, *Stredoveké*, 85.

<sup>962</sup> Recently, a new painting illustrating St Bartholomew accompanied by scenes of his legend has been uncovered in the church of Abaújvár (see Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 27, 30-31, 34, 35). The painting dates probably to the beginning of the fifteenth century. The bald head of St Bartholomew suggests that he was represented flayed, but the poor preservation of the painting does not allow further observations about his appearance and possible attributes.

<sup>963</sup> The iconographic type depicting St Bartholomew flayed and holding his skin on a staff deserves further research. In *LCI* 5, col. 326-327, the example in a fifteenth-century *Breviarium Glagoliticum* from Istria is described as unique. However, the saint occurs like this in other works of art as well, as for example: in the presbytery of the church of St. Gall at Myšenec, in Bohemia (mid fourteenth century), in the nave of two Austrian churches -- the parish church of the Birth of the Virgin at Gobelsburg (Lower Austria, around the middle of the fourteenth century) and the chapel of St. John at Prutz (Tirol, Austria, ca. 1350) -- and on the altar of St Bartholomew at Niedizica (Nedec) (1440-1450), illustrating the last episode of the saint's legend. See: Jaroslav Pešina, ed., *Gotická nástěnná malba v zemích českých* [Mural gothic paintings in Bohemian countries], vol. 1, 1300-1350 (Prague: Nakladatelství Československé Akademie Věd, 1958), 282-290; Elga Lanc, *Die mittelalterlichen Wandmalereien in Wien und Niederösterreich* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1983), 90-92; Waltraud Kofler-Engl, *Frühgotische Wandmalerei in Tirol. Stilgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur "Linearität" in der Wandmalerei von 1260 - 1360* (Innsbruck: Löwenzahn, 1995), 146, 147, 152, 220-221; Radocsay, *Magyarország táblaképei*, 408-409, pl. XXXII.

<sup>964</sup> The *Menologion* of Symeon Metaphrastes (P.G. 117, 493), the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* and the *Menaion* for June 11, as quoted by A. Ευγγόπουλος, "Περὶ μίαν κρητικήν τοιχογραφίαν," *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 12 (1958), 336 and footnote 4. See also AASS *Augusti*, vol. 5, 28 and U. Holzmeister, "Crucifixio Christi et martyrium S. Bartholomaei," *Verbum Domini* 22 (1942), 83.

<sup>965</sup> Ευγγόπουλος, "Περὶ μίαν κρητικήν τοιχογραφίαν," 336-338.

<sup>966</sup> Ευγγόπουλος, "Περὶ μίαν κρητικήν τοιχογραφίαν," 336 and Holzmeister, "Crucifixio," 83.

The encomium of Theodore Studites was translated by Anastasius Bibliothecarius and was known to Jacobus de Voragine, who repeatedly refers to it in his text on St Bartholomew, in the *Golden Legend*.

“Hec autem contrarietas taliter solui potest ut dicatur quod primo fuit cesus et postea crucifixus; deinde, antequam ibidem moreretur, de cruce fuit depositus et ob maiorem cruciatum fuit excoriatus, postremo capite truncatus.”<sup>967</sup> However, the flaying of the apostle was very often mentioned in *Martyrologia*, *Breviaria*, liturgical hymns, religious poems and sermons in the medieval West. In Western medieval art, the flaying was the most commonly depicted type of martyrdom as regards St Bartholomew.<sup>968</sup> This torment, however, was rare among other saints.<sup>969</sup> It has been sometimes described as unique and has proven to be a rich source of inspiration for Christian thinkers, because of the symbolic polyvalence of the skin. Medieval sermons dedicated to the saint,<sup>970</sup> medieval narratives touching on the flaying motif,<sup>971</sup> as well as liturgical hymns and prayers dedicated to the apostle<sup>972</sup> shed light on the message the image of the flayed apostle held for the medieval beholder.

The verse from Job 2:4 – Skin for skin, and all that a man has he will give for his soul – is the most common Bible verse used in thirteenth-century sermons on the apostle.<sup>973</sup> According to the *Glossa ordinaria* and Latin writers, the meaning of this verse is that in the face of danger one protects what he has more fragile with what he has stronger, what he has more valuable with what he has less valuable, the interior with the exterior.<sup>974</sup> In the same way, Bartholomew sacrificed his material, earthly life in order to achieve eternal life. The skin the apostle gave up is

<sup>967</sup> Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998), 835.

“And this contradiction can be solved by saying that first he was cudgelled and then he was crucified; thereafter, before he died, he was taken down from the cross and in order that he should suffer greater torment he was flayed and last of all beheaded.”

<sup>968</sup> *LCI* 5, col. 328.

<sup>969</sup> On several other saints who were martyred by flaying see Sarah Kay, “Original Skin: Flaying, Reading, and Thinking in the Legend of Saint Bartholomew and Other Works,” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2006), 66, note 11.

<sup>970</sup> In the following I will refer to the sermons of Jacobus de Voragine dedicated to the saint and to Nicole Bériou, 's article “Pellem pro pelle (Job 2,4). Les sermons pour la fête de saint Barthélemy au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Micrologus* XIII (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2005), 267-284. I thank my colleagues Stanislava Kuzmova and Ottó Gecser for calling my attention to these two references many years ago when I started my research. Voragine's sermons will be mentioned from Jacobus de Voragine, *Sermones aurei de praecipuis sanctorum festis et laudibus deiparae Virginis*, vol. 2, ed. Rudolphus Clutius (Augustae Vindelicorum et Cracoviae: Apud Christophorum Bartl, 1760). Sermon IV is also published and translated on <http://www.sermones.net/spip.php?rubrique16&lang=fr> (last accessed March 2011).

<sup>971</sup> See Kay, “Original Skin,” 35-73.

<sup>972</sup> I based my research on *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, ed. Guido Maria Dreves and Clemens Blume (Leipzig, 1886-1922).

<sup>973</sup> Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 268, 270.

<sup>974</sup> Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 276-77.

seen as a coat, primarily the coat of sins, of material prosperity and of mortality. Bartholomew renounced them for the coat of glory, and the faithful were invited to follow in his path.

Giving up the coat of sins through penitence is a major theme in the allegorical interpretation of the apostle's flaying.<sup>975</sup> Sometimes penitence is explicitly related to confession, the faithful being exhorted to uncover their sins through confession.<sup>976</sup> One is freed from sin through baptism, which also liberated individuals from primordial sin, and through penitence. In sermons and hymns dedicated to St Bartholomew, a parallel is made between the stripping of the skin of sin and the circumcision in Christ.<sup>977</sup> The apostle is praised for his chastity and disregard for personal material needs and honours. He voluntarily sacrificed his earthly life for Christ and his patience during the tortures he endured is particularly highlighted.

Bartholomew sacrificed himself out of love for Christ, and this is another prominent theme in sermons dedicated to him.<sup>978</sup> He is compared with Jonathan, who gave his coat to David, whom he loved as his own soul (I Samuel 18: 3-4).<sup>979</sup> The apostle is described as burning with love for

<sup>975</sup> Bériou, "Pellem pro pelle," 275, esp. 280-281. Also, from the thirteenth century on, in moralized tales like the story of Hercules in *Ovide moralisé* and the story of Cambyse in *Gesta Romanorum*, the flaying is interpreted as a penitential act (see Kay, "Original Skin," 41-44).

<sup>976</sup> Bériou, "Pellem pro pelle," 280.

<sup>977</sup> St Bonaventure quotes from Colossians 2:11-12 in his sermon on St. Bartholomew (S. Bonaventura, *Sermones de tempore, de sanctis, de B. Virgine Maria et de diversis, S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* 9 (Florence: Quaracchi, 1901), 573). According to Bériou, "Pellem pro pelle," 271, note 14, the sermon actually belongs to Eustache d'Arras and was wrongly introduced in the edition of the complete works of St Bonaventure. The reference to the symbolic circumcision is also present in a fifteenth-century prayer to St Bartholomew: *Multis malis sum innisus./ Sed oro de te confisus,/ Ut ab his excorier/ Circumquaque circumcisis,/ Hoc sit mihi paradisus,/ Ut sic novus glorier* (Dreves, *Analecta Hymnica*, vol. 29, 136, Orat. ms. Carthusian. saec. 15. Cod Capit. Treviren. 116; also in Dreves, *Analecta Hymnica*, vol. 46, 245, Orat. ms. Campense anni 1462. Cod. Darmstadien. 521).

<sup>978</sup> Bériou, "Pellem pro pelle," 271.

<sup>979</sup> *And David and Jonathan made a covenant, for he loved him as his own soul. 4. And Jonathan stripped himself of the coat with which he was clothed, and gave it to David, and the rest of his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle* (I Samuel 18: 3).

*Diligebat eum Ionathas quasi animam suam; nam spoliavit se tunica sua, id est pelle sua, et dedit eam Christo. Iste beatus Bartholomaeus bene implevit illud quod dicitur Iob: Pellem pro pelle et cuncta, quae habet homo, dabit pro anima sua. Pellem mortalitatis dabit pro pelle immortalitatis.* (S. Bonaventura, *Sermones*, 570)

*Beatus Bartholomaeus bene probavit, quod diligebat Christus, quia amore ipsius sustinuit martyrium. Tu ergo, si diligas, sustineas pro Christo tribulationes; vende te ipsum, da te pro Christo; non potes te melius vendere.* (S. Bonaventura, *Sermones*, 571).

*Sed istam pellem Bartholomaeus multiplici ratione deposuit. Primo eam deposuit in signum fervidae charitatis. Solent enim homines calore nimio aestuantes exponere vestimenta. In hoc ergo quod B. Bartholomaeus pellem suam deposuit, ostenditur quanto igne amoris plenus fuit. Hoc significatum est, ubi dicitur: 'Diligebat Ionathas David quasi animam suam.' Nam expoliavit se tunica sua, et dedit eam David. Per Jonatham qui donum columbae interpretatur, beatus Bartholomaeus intelligitur, qui dono Spiritus sancti fuit repletus. Iste ergo qui diligebat David, id est Christum sicut animam suam, tunica se expoliavit, et dedit David, quando propter Christi amorem se excoriari permisit.* (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo IV, *Sermones*, 275).

Christ, and his martyred body as a host burning in the fire of his passion.<sup>980</sup> His soul was purified by being washed by his blood.<sup>981</sup> As with all martyrs, he was proved as gold is in the furnace and thus gained a glorious, immortal body, compared also to a gilded garment or a purple mantle.<sup>982</sup> It is probable that, confronted with the image of the flayed, red apostle holding his skin, the medieval beholder recalled these metaphors of the saint's body burning with love, consumed and purified by passion and finally glorified.<sup>983</sup> The image of the flayed apostle holding his skin may

<sup>980</sup> (...) *Job inquit, 'Pelle et carnibus vestisti me, etc.' Sed istam pellem Bartholomæus multiplici ratione deposuit. Primo eam deposuit in signum fervidæ charitatis. Solent enim homines calore nimio æstuantibus exponere vestimenta. In hoc ergo quod B. Bartholomæus pellem suam deposuit, ostenditur quanto igne amoris plenus fuit.* (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo IV, *Sermones*, 275).

*Primo a sublimitate perfectionis et vitæ in eo quod vocatur cælum. Dicit autem Isidorus: Cælum Philosophi ardens, volubile et rotundum esse dixerunt. Dicitur autem ipse cælum, quia fuit ardens per charitatem succensam. Ex qua charitate quatuor carbonem prodierunt. (...) ejus oratio ignita. (...) apostoli merita gloriosa. (...) Tertium carbonem direxit et destinavit ad Deum, qui ipsi Deo odorem faciet, et iste carbo fuit ejus caro concremata. (...) Quartum autem carbonem (...) fuit ipsius prædicatio ignita.*" (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo II, *Sermones*, 273).  
*Secundo commendatur a qualitate passionis et pænæ cum dicitur; Extendens cælum sicut pellem. Fuit enim excoriatus et pelle sui corporis denudatus et decollatus, tamen in Dei amore semper mansit invictus. Hoc significatum est ubi dicitur: 'Detracta pelle hostiæ, artus in frusta concident, et subjicient in altari ignem, strue lignorum ante composita. etc. intestinis et pedibus lotis aqua: adolebitque ea sacerdos super altare in holocaustum et suavem odorem Domino.' Ista hostia Dei fuit Bartholomæus, cui fuit pellis detracta, quando scilicet ipse fuit excoriatus. Fuerunt etiam artus in frusta concisi quando ipse fuit crucifixus et decapitatus. Fuerunt etiam ipsius intestina et pedes loti, quia affectiones ejus fuerunt emundatæ ab omni terrena concupiscentia et cupiditate ex divino sermone. 'Jam vos mundi estis propter sermonem quem locutus sum vobis.' Et ex Spiritu sancto a quo, et per quem ipse fuit mundatus, et de hoc legitur: 'Vos autem baptizabimini Spiritu sancto.' Fuerunt etiam ipsius Apostoli affectiones mundatæ in sanguine fuso. 'Laverunt stolas suas et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine agni.' Circa istam hostiam posita est strues lignorum, nam et intus in anima habuit ligna desideriorum Sanctorum, et ab extra ligna bonorum operum. Deinde subjectus est ignis, et ignis amoris in mente, et ignis passionis in corpore, et sic holocaustum extitit, quia totus intensus fuit ejus animus per amorem, et corpus ejus succensum fuit per passionem, verba per cæli ardorem, ejusque opera per fervorem. Et sic odorem suavitatis fecit Domino. Fecit enim odorem suavem per odoriferam famam, suaviorem per sinceram conscientiam, suavissimum odorem per spontaneam pœnam.* (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo II, *Sermones*, 273-274).

<sup>981</sup> *Fuerunt etiam ipsius Apostoli affectiones mundatæ in sanguine fuso. 'Laverunt stolas suas et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine agni.'* (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo II, *Sermones*, 273).

Also Bériou, "Pellem pro pelle," 282, note 43, quotes from a sermon of Nicholas de Gorran: (...) *Christus vero habuit vestimentum rubeum tinctum sanguine suo, ideo propter amorem eius et similem religionem voluit Bartholomeus habere rubeum indumentum.*

<sup>982</sup> *'Quam pellem abjecerit, quæ fuerit indutus, præpositis verbis insinuat. Pellem pro pelle, et cuncta quæ habet homo, dabit pro anima sua.'* (...) *Notandum tamen est, quod quadruplex est pellis, naturæ, culpæ, gratiæ et gloriæ. (...) Sic ipse libenter vestem mortalitatis exuit, quia se decorandum veste immortalitatis scivit. 'Astutit regina,' id est ejus anima quæ, corpus bene rexit, 'a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato,' id est cum corpore glorificato. 'Jussit Rex spoliari Jonatham vestibis suis, et indui eum purpura,' id est carne gloriosa, quod erit in generali resurrectione* (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo IV, *Sermones*, 275).

*Quarto deposuit pellem suam in odorem suavitatis. (...) Etiam dedit pellem corporalem pro carne glorificata.* (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo IV, *Sermones*, 275-276).

In Sermon IV, Jacobus de Voragine also refers to the three skins by which the Old Testament tabernacle was covered. One of them is the "pellis rubricata" (reddened skin): *Etiam induuntur pelle rubricata per immortalitatem. Hujus namque color est valde vivus, unde de homine rubicundo communiter dicimus: Iste est valde vivus. Justi autem in perpetuum vivent* (Jacobus de Voragine, Sermo IV, *Sermones*, 276). See also Bériou, "Pellem pro pelle," 281-283.

<sup>983</sup> See also Dreves, *Analecta Hymnica* vol. 29, 36; vol. 48, 59; vol. 34, 174; vol. 41, 123 etc.

also have emphasized another aspect. By giving up material things one does not die, but attains true life.<sup>984</sup> According to some legends, after being flayed alive, the apostle did not die, but continued to preach the Word of God and make miracles.<sup>985</sup> Thereafter, he was put to death by being beheaded. In some paintings, after the depiction of his martyrdom by flaying, the apostle is represented alive, holding his skin, and sometimes preaching to a group of people.

St Bartholomew stripped himself of the coat of mortality to put on the coat of immortality, he took off the “old man” to put on Christ. In sermons there is a constant link between him and the model of Christ’s disciple according to Paul (Eph. 4:22; Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:9).<sup>986</sup> It seems that because of the metaphor of the skin, a close link was established between the sacrifice of the apostle and the sacrifice of Christ. Humankind’s mortal nature is symbolized by the animal skins Adam and Eve put on after the Fall.<sup>987</sup> In medieval narratives like *Ovide moralisé* and *Gesta Romanorum*, the skin of Christ is a symbol of the human nature he assumed, of his body on the Cross and of his Passion.<sup>988</sup> His skin extended on the Cross is like a parchment written with his blood, a book of life or a charter confirming man’s redemption.<sup>989</sup> Also, Bartholomew’s flaying is compared in sermons<sup>990</sup> and in *Concordantiae Caritatis*<sup>991</sup> with the flaying of the calf offered at the temple (Lv.1:6), which was also an Old Testament type of the Crucifixion. Probably the popularity of the image representing the apostle flayed and carrying his skin relied also on a particular episode in his legend, which relates that after he was flayed he did not die,

<sup>984</sup> See also Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 283.

<sup>985</sup> The sequence of the apostle preaching the Word of God after having been flayed is mentioned by Petrus de Natalibus and in some sermons. See AASS *Augusti*, vol. 5, 29; Astrid Krüger, “Die Verehrung des heiligen Bartholomäus in Frankfurt am Main,” in *Der heilige Leib und die Leiber der Heiligen. Eine Ausstellung des Dommuseum Frankfurt am Main im ‘Haus am Dom,’ 23. März bis 27 Mai 2007*, ed. Stephanie Hartmann, A. Heuser and M.T. Kloft (Frankfurt: Dommuseum Frankfurt am Main, 2007), 60; Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 268, note 5, and 283.

<sup>986</sup> Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 280.

<sup>987</sup> Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 279.

<sup>988</sup> On Hercules story in *Ovide moralisé* and Cambyse’s story in *Gesta Romanorum* see Kay, “Original Skin,” 41-44.

<sup>989</sup> Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 283; Kay, “Original Skin,” 45-46. Also Jacobus de Voragine, Sermon III: ‘*Extendens cælum sicut pellem.*’ *Istud verbum multiplicem habet intellectum. (...) Primo videlicet ad scribendum. Fuit enim hæc pellis primo excoriata. ‘Pellem eorum desuper excoriaverunt.’ Eademque pellis fuit scripta intus per impressionem virtutum. ‘Candidiores Nazaræi ejus nive:’ et foris per impressionem passionum. Similiter et pellis carnis Christi fuit in cruce extensa. ‘Dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea;’ fuit scripta ab intus multiplicitate dolorum: ‘Attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus,’ et foris confixione clavorum: ‘Et me vos configitis gens tota.’*

<sup>990</sup> Bériou, “Pellem pro pelle,” 273-274; also Jacobus de Voragine, Sermons II and IV.

<sup>991</sup> Hedwig Munscheck, *Die Concordantiae caritatis des Ulrich von Lilienfeld. Untersuchungen zu Inhalt, Quellen und Verbreitung, mit einer Paraphrasierung von Temporale, Sanktorale und Commune* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), 410.

but continued to preach the Word of God and make miracles.<sup>992</sup> Besides conveying in a very expressive manner all the ideas related to the symbolism of the flaying, the representation also pointed to the apostle's special vocation as preacher of God, which is highlighted in the sources.<sup>993</sup> The fact that in some representations, including those in medieval Hungary, the saint holds his skin on a staff was probably inspired by one of the torments that preceded his flaying, namely the scourging or beating with staffs, which is mentioned in the *Legenda Aurea* and frequently in sermons and hymns dedicated to him. Moreover, the *Legenda Aurea* tells that he was flayed "*in morem follis*," which has been translated "as if they had wanted to make him into a bag."<sup>994</sup> His body was indeed compared to a bag, a container of a more important, inner reality, which was his soul full of God's grace and the heavenly glory he received after death.<sup>995</sup> One may also add that the image of the saint easily brings to mind medieval depictions of travellers/pilgrims holding their bags on a shouldered staff and that the saint himself was described as fervently travelling to spread the Christian faith. Except for his theological message, the apostle was also venerated at least in the modern period as protector saint of particular occupations or against particular diseases.<sup>996</sup> He was the patron saint of people working with animal skins, herdsmen, agricultural workers, winegrowers, miners and numerous other crafts. He also served as protector saint against skin and nervous diseases.<sup>997</sup> It is likely that some of these associations may have begun in the Middle Ages.

<sup>992</sup> See above footnote 987.

<sup>993</sup> *AASS Augusti*, vol. 5, 40 (in Anastasius, *Sermo S. Theodori*).

<sup>994</sup> Kay's translation of the text in Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (Florence: SISMELE-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998), 839 (*Nam postquam intolerabilia tormenta subiit ab eis decoratus in morem follis fuit*) is the following: "For after undergoing intolerable torments, Bartholomew was flayed by them as if they had wanted to make him into a bag" (Kay, "Original Skin," 39). *AASS Augusti*, vol. 5, 42, note i, speculates more on the possible meaning of the phrase "*in morem follis*," used in the Latin translation of the encomium by St Theodore Studita.

<sup>995</sup> *Corpora enim Sanctorum in hac vita multa claritate et miraculis fulgent. Si igitur tam pretiosus saccus exterius patet, quam pretiosus thesaurus est qui intus latet. In isto namque sacco latet duplex thesaurus, scilicet interior qui fuit animus gratia Dei plenus. 'Thesaurus desiderabilis et oleum in habitaculo justis;' et thesaurus superior, scilicet gloriæ cælestis. De quo dicitur: 'Vade et vende quæ habes, et da pauperibus et habebis thesaurum in cælo.' Istum thesaurum hodie beatus Bartholomæus recepit* (Jacobus de Voragine, *Sermo III, Sermones*, 274-)

<sup>996</sup> In this respect, however, the information comes most of the time from the modern period. See: *LCI* 5, col. 323; *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, vol. 1, ed. Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), col. 931-934; *Der heilige Bartholomäus: Geschichte, Kunst, Verehrung. Ausstellung Dommmuseum Frankfurt am Main, 24. August 1989 - 12. November 1989*, ed. Gabriel Hefele (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), 20-21; *Il grande libro dei santi: dizionario enciclopedico*, ed. Claudio Leonardi, Andrea Riccardi, and Gabriella Zarri (Torino: Edizioni San Paolo, 1998), vol. 1, 246; Bálint, *Ünnepi*, vol. 3, 262-267.

<sup>997</sup> In some texts he appears as a protector against plague. This aspect deserves more investigation, as the saint is not among the saints who were usually called upon in case of plague.

The representations of St Bartholomew preserved in medieval Hungarian churches might have been related to such specific types of devotion, but the theological interpretation of the saint's martyrdom was not ignored either. Taking into account the depiction of the saint in sermons, it may be safely assumed that the image of St. Bartholomew, a model for Christ's followers, functioned as a powerful exhortation to conversion through penitence. The association of the saint with the Weighing of the Souls in the church of Kvačany may have been a warning to repent and change one's life before the Day of Judgment. The saint's association with the Crucifixion, as in the paintings of Štítňik and Mediaș is meaningful in light of the parallel made between the apostle's martyrdom and Christ's sacrifice. It might also have worked as a caution against sin, as people who sin continue to crucify Christ. Also, the association of the flayed apostle with the Eucharistic Man of Sorrows at Čerín (Cserény) probably reminded the faithful about the importance of repentance and the necessity of confession when approaching the Holy Communion.

The peculiar representation of the saint in the Transylvanian Orthodox churches probably carried similar messages. It is easy to imagine that one or more aspects of the saint's "popular" cult regarding his patronage of various occupations or his protection against various diseases and calamities might have been adopted by the Orthodox too. Nevertheless, the depiction of the apostle in the sanctuary of Hălmagiu next to the prothesis table strongly suggests that its commissioners were also aware of the Latin theological interpretation of Bartholomew's figure. The depiction of a martyr saint at the prothesis is in agreement with Byzantine tradition and also suggests that the saint enjoyed a special veneration.<sup>998</sup> The rite of the preparation of the Holy Gifts symbolizes, according to Byzantine liturgical commentators, the birth of Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, Christ's assuming the human condition until the last consequence of sin, which is death.<sup>999</sup> Therefore, the figure of St. Bartholomew, *par excellence* a symbol of penitence and renouncement of the "old man," represented the perfect answer that a man could give to Christ's abasement. The parallel between the sacrifice of Christ and that of St. Bartholomew was certainly enhanced thanks to the apostle's instrument of martyrdom, the knife, which recalls the liturgical spear used in the prothesis rite. For Bartholomew, the knife was the instrument that separated him from sin, the instrument of his circumcision in Christ. In the

<sup>998</sup> Michael Altripp, *Die Prothesis und ihre Bildausstattung in Byzanz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Denkmäler Griechenlands* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), 239.

<sup>999</sup> On the symbolism of the prothesis rite see Altripp, *Die Prothesis und ihre Bildausstattung*, 38-67.



*prothesis* rite, the spear is the instrument through which the coming of Christ into the world and his sacrifice on the Cross are symbolically carried out. Thus, Christ's work of redemption and man's expected response to it are here perfectly united.

The Western image of St. Bartholomew does not bring in any new dogmatic content, but probably retained a great deal of the message it had in the Catholic Church. It seems that it was not difficult, at least for some members of the Orthodox community to adopt and maybe adapt particular aspects of the apostle's Latin cult. A surprisingly similar case can be found in Crete. St Bartholomew is represented flayed, carrying his skin on his shoulder in the church of St Pelagia in Ano Viannos, Viannos, Herakleion (1360) (fig. 8.9) and the church of the Holy Apostles in Drys, Selino, Chania (1382-1391) (fig. 8.10).<sup>1000</sup> A comparative study promises to enhance our understanding of why Orthodox people who lived in close contact with Catholics would have been drawn to the Latin cult of St Bartholomew.

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<sup>1000</sup> See Ioannis Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete* (Leiden: Alexandros Press, 2001), 111-114 (on the church of St Pelagia in Ano Viannos), and 121-123 (on the church of the Holy Apostles in Drys), with further bibliography.

## Conclusions

Particular topics that were represented in medieval Orthodox churches have been interpreted here in their social, political and religious context. The images have been regarded as instruments of communication that may be understood to the extent to which their historical framework can be reconstructed. It has been assumed that the donors and the priests were involved in the selection of at least some of the subjects represented in the church. The intervention of the donors was focused more on their self-assertion as sponsors of the paintings and sometimes owners of the church as well as on expression of particular devotional options. The priests were probably also involved in overseeing the decoration of the church, particularly the adaptation of the iconography to the liturgical requirements of the sanctuary or to particular concerns of religious nature. It is safe to assume that they collaborated with the owners of the church, especially since the sources suggest that they were more likely to be of the same social class and, sometimes, from the same family. The audience for the paintings consisted of the members of the ktetors' family and their peers, the clergy, probably also the peasants in the nearby knezial villages and virtually any lay or religious authority.

The investigated paintings have been selected from nine medieval Orthodox churches, situated in the medieval counties of Hunyad and Zaránd: Strei, Streisângeorgiu, Sântămărie Orlea, Densuș, Leșnic, Chimindia, Ribița, Crișcior and Hălmagiu. The paintings date to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and their donors were local Romanian leaders, knezes or voivodes. In some cases, the sources suggest that their families were also responsible for building the church. In any case, at the time when the analyzed paintings were executed the churches belonged to a knezial family and served their needs, possibly also those of the local community. The knezes who donated the paintings were landowners with limited privileges and their property was situated on the estate of a royal castle. One of their main duties was military service which also allowed them to move up the social scale. This is especially visible in the period that begins at the end of the fourteenth century, when the direct Ottoman threat required almost permanent military efforts. In late medieval sources the Romanians in Hungary appear usually as schismatics (Orthodox), although some of them are also mentioned as being Catholic or in the process of conversion. The only official Church was the Latin one and the elites were probably more prone to conversion for pragmatic reasons. This is especially likely because the few preserved sources

do not suggest a well organized local Church of Greek rite. The degree to which the Orthodox priests and hierarchs were subordinated to the Latin Church is a topic that deserves further research and one for which regions such as the Latin-occupied Greek territories may offer relevant parallels. As recently argued, the Union of Ferrara-Florence had some consequences in Transylvania, but institutionally the results quickly faded away. In general, both resistance to Catholic proselytism and conversion have been documented. Therefore, one should generally be cautious with regard to the relationship between the Orthodox and the Catholics at different points in time and space, unless the sources are sufficiently explicit. All the paintings analyzed here have Old Church Slavonic inscriptions which suggest, sometimes along with the iconographic program of the sanctuary, that the churches were used by Orthodox Christians.<sup>1001</sup> Situated in the vicinity of their residences, the knezial churches had not only a functional role, but also one of representation. In painting, this is primarily visible in portraits, through which the donors manifested their contribution to the construction or decoration of the holy place and their position within the smaller or larger community. These mundane intentions, however, do not exclude the religious goal of the painting. The donors' portraits and inscriptions were also meant to situate their prayer for salvation in perpetuity.

The votive paintings of Streisângeorgiu, Ribița, Crișcior, Leșnic, and Hălmagiu give pride of place to the knezes who founded or renewed the church. The type of votive painting and the appearance of the donors were probably similar in the first four churches, but the paintings' state of preservation permit closer analysis only for Ribița and Crișcior. The donors, represented as a family, entrust the church to its protector saint. The type of composition and the monumental scale of the votive paintings were common in Balkan Orthodox painting at that time. The kneeling posture, however, reflects the influence of Western models. The males' costumes and haircuts follow the Hungarian and Central European fashion, which in the second half of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth century was also attested at the Wallachian and Moldavian courts. The knezes do not wear military dress, but the weapons on their belts were probably meant to stress their military role, which was a characteristic feature of their social status. Sometimes, as in the churches of Leșnic and Ribița, in addition to the ktetors represented

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<sup>1001</sup> The sources regarding the religious life of the knezes are very poor. When I refer to a person or a church as Orthodox I imply that they practiced the Greek rite but not necessarily that they were independent from the Latin Church, as long as there is no clear information about that. Further research may clarify this situation from time to time and place to place.

in the votive painting there were also lesser donors, who left their inscribed supplications next to the saints' images they had commissioned. No donor portrait has been preserved in the church of Densuș, but many supplicatory inscriptions may be found in the nave. This situation suggests a collective sponsoring by several knezes who shared the ownership of the village and were related among each other. The case of Strei is also peculiar because no votive painting has been preserved, but numerous portraits of praying figures are scattered throughout the church, among them also a painter and two stone masons. Only further research on the local history may clarify the circumstances of the building and painting of the church.

The numerous warrior saints represented in the knezial churches reflect the concerns of the period and the importance of the military duty in the life of the donors. The equestrian saints in the churches painted around 1400 and in the church of Streisângeorgiu (1313/1314) stand out in terms of their number and their location in the church. The mounted warrior saints appear frequently in churches in Cappadocia, Georgia, Egypt, Syria, Crete and southern Morea. The researchers have explained the phenomenon as being the result of the intense military activity in frontier regions and, sometimes, by the influence of Western knightly culture. In the case of Transylvania, both types of explanations are valid. The military duty of the knezes, the location of Transylvania at the south-eastern border of Hungary and the prestige of the knight in the eyes of the knezes who themselves had a status close to a noble, all explain why the equestrian saints were so cherished in the knezial churches. For Hungarian nobles, the two most important models of holy knights were St Ladislav and St George. The legend of St Ladislav and the legend of St George rescuing the princess appear in numerous churches throughout medieval Hungary. No representation of St Ladislav's legend has been preserved in medieval Orthodox churches, although the saint appears together with the other two Holy Kings of Hungary in the churches of Ribița, Crișcior and Chimindia. In knezial churches, St George is joined by other warrior saints highly venerated in Byzantium, such as Demetrius and Theodore.

The Holy Kings of Hungary occupy places of honor in the naves of Crișcior and Ribița. They are closely associated with the portraits of the ktetors, the holy warriors and the Exaltation of the Cross. The kings are also represented in the church of Chimindia, which appears to have belonged for a period to Romanian knezes. The veneration of King Stephen I (997-1038), his son Duke Emeric (†1031) and King Ladislav I (1077-1095) was initiated by the Árpád dynasty and had a marked political character. Their cult supported the supernatural legitimacy and prestige of

the ruling dynasty and spread from the court to the lower strata of the society. The Holy Kings of Hungary embodied the virtues of the ideal ruler and eventually came to be venerated as patron saints of the country, being frequently represented in medieval Hungarian churches. Written sources suggest that at least the knezes living on royal land also regarded them as protectors of law and of their social status. The knezes of Crișcior and Ribița were landowners with limited privileges and served the royal castle of Șiria. Their aspiration was to achieve full noble status, a transformation that could have been brought about by the king. By representing Sts Stephen, Emeric and Ladislav in their churches, the knezes expressed their loyalty to the Hungarian Crown and joined the nobles of the country in their cult of the Holy Kings. The way the kings are represented at Ribița and Crișcior, with a cross-decorated shield, as well as their association with the Exaltation of the Cross seem to highlight their quality as Christian rulers, defenders of Christian faith, in a period when the Hungarian kingdom was involved in direct confrontations with the Ottomans. Later sources also suggest that a phenomenon of adaptation could sometimes take place as well. Two legends preserved in later copies but presumably of medieval origin, refer to a certain King Ladislav, in whom one may identify St Ladislav as well, as being a concealed Orthodox and supporter of the Romanians. Unfortunately, no sources have emerged to let us know to what extent the cult of the Holy Kings of Hungary was assimilated into the liturgical practice or personal devotion of the Orthodox in Transylvania.

The churches of Ribița and Crișcior partially preserve a scene that may be called the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. One may see St Helena standing on the left side of the Cross, as well as fragments of other secondary figures. The scene is situated in a prominent position in the nave, next to the sanctuary and the Holy Kings of Hungary. The iconography is peculiar and displays a mixture of Western and Byzantine features. The scene does not fully follow either the Byzantine Exaltation of the Cross or the iconic representation of the Holy Emperors Constantine and Helena with the Cross. The fragments of secondary figures are a reference to the Finding of the Cross and the dress of St Helena contains Western influences. St Helena with the Cross or the Finding of the Cross often appears in late medieval Hungarian murals. Their frequent representation may have been prompted by more factors that are not mutually exclusive: the special cult of the Cross promoted by the Franciscan friars, the cult of Cross relics and the Ottoman threat. The special attention given to the Exaltation of the Holy Cross at Ribița and Crișcior, may be related to the anti-Ottoman fight in which the knezes were also involved. The

Cross was also the weapon of Christian kings and their triumphal banner. Therefore, the depiction of the Exaltation next to the Holy Kings of Hungary shows them as exemplars of Christian rulers. Constantine and Helena with the Cross were frequently associated with depictions of Orthodox rulers for whom they were the models. However, the association between the Holy Kings of Hungary and the scene including St Helena and the Cross may be also found, situated in the same way, in the former Catholic church of St Elisabeth in Khust. The painting dates roughly from the same period (the last decades of the fourteenth through the first decades of the fifteenth century) and raises the issue of the origins and spread of this association of subjects.

The iconography of the sanctuary in the churches researched here displays some deviations from the common program found in late Byzantine sanctuaries. The precise extent to which space restrictions, archaic schemes, Western iconography and personal choice of the painter or of a clergyman contributed to the design of the sanctuary's decoration is difficult to assess. Together with the style, the iconographic peculiarities suggest infrequent contacts with regions where the painting of Byzantine tradition was strongly rooted. Nevertheless, the concern displayed to adapt the painting to the liturgical meaning of the sanctuary and to the basic lines of the Byzantine program is evident. Moreover, several subjects may be identified as reflecting specific local situations. Thus, the presence of less usual bishops like Kalinik at Strei and Arsenius at Densuș raises questions about their identity and suggests their figures were particularly cherished by the donors, a relationship that only further research may elucidate. Also, the Eucharistic scene represented in the churches of Hălmagiu and Ribița, with St Nicholas as the main protagonist, betrays a concern for the rejection of heresy. The nearby representation of the authors of the two main Byzantine Liturgies, St Basil the Great and John Chrysostom, accompanied by a deacon, seems to stress the attachment to the Greek rite and its orthodoxy.

Finally, the representation of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew, with his specific Western iconography in the sanctuary of Hălmagiu and the nave of Densuș, shows that aspects of his Latin cult were adopted by the Orthodox. The flaying of the saint, as part of his martyrdom, was specific to his Latin cult and gave rise to his representation as a flayed man carrying his skin and holding a knife. With this iconography, the apostle also occurs in the paintings of several Catholic churches in medieval Hungary. His martyrdom by flaying was interpreted as a symbol of repentance and conversion, but the apostle was also venerated as patron of various

occupations and protector against many diseases. Given the present state of research, it is difficult to single out with precision which aspects of his cult were adopted by the Orthodox. However, it appears that the theological interpretation of his martyrdom was not alien to them. The present work aimed at recreating the historical background of selected paintings and understanding their meaning in their respective contexts. This approach has been previously applied to some of the subjects, but the present research broadened the context, refined or contributed to previous interpretations, and included new subjects. The results highlight aspects of donors' life that largely characterize their border-line status. Socially, they were situated between peasants and nobles aspiring to and sometimes reaching the latter's status. Religiously, they belonged to an Orthodox Church that had to function within a Catholic state. Finally, geographically they lived by the eastern border of Hungary, something that favored their military role with consequences on their social evolution.

The processes of interaction between Western Hungarian culture and that of the Orthodox Romanians were naturally far more complex than the preserved sources allow us to see. Nevertheless, some observations can be made. The phenomenon of adoption is common on a formal level, as shown by the influence or use of Western styles and iconography. Adaptation also took place, for instance when the Western iconographic language is adapted to the requirements of the Orthodox sanctuary. The interaction that took place on the level of ideas is much more difficult to document. It is legitimate to ask to what extent the adoption of a particular Western representation in the decoration of an Orthodox church also meant adoption of the meaning the image had in its original context. The replacement of consecrated subjects such as Christological scenes or common saints with their Western variant probably did not usually bring in new or different content for the viewer. However, when did Western iconographic schemes or details retain their original meaning when placed in an Orthodox setting? This is a question that may be answered only with the help of other kinds of sources, which are, however, few with regard to the Transylvanian knezes. As a starting point, it may be assumed that when the subject was alien to the Eastern tradition or the form was highly specific for Latin Christianity then a great deal of the content was also adopted— this is the case of the Holy Kings of Hungary and St Bartholomew. To what extent there was also some degree of adaptation – consisting of conscious selection, change or misunderstanding of the original messages – is a more delicate issue to evaluate because of the paucity of sources.

In general, the paintings concur with other types of sources in rendering an image of the knezes who were quite well integrated within the Hungarian society as regards fashion, mentality and aspirations. Still, they were not completely assimilated into Western culture either. Their Orthodox cultural background is still visible in the use of the Greek rite, the choice of particular saints venerated primarily in the Byzantine world and the perpetuation of a style of painting that relied on Byzantine tradition.

The problem of the artists themselves as carriers of particular styles and iconographic topics has not been explicitly addressed here, but in the background the issue has not been ignored. It has been also considered that even if the painters favored particular topics or decorative schemes, the paintings contained messages that were understood by their contemporaries and were representative for them. It is true, however, that being able to identify the source of inspiration, the origins of the training and the movements of the artists may be of great help in the iconographic interpretation as well. Further research will focus on the style of the paintings and will probably help in specifying the filiations of various subjects. It could also refine their dating, which, in turn, should provide a more precise historical context, essential for accurate iconographic interpretation.

This dissertation has made a synthesis of various types of sources pertaining to social, political, religious and art history in order to create the necessary context for understanding the paintings. From this point of view, this work has also set the stage for further research and for adding new topics to the general picture that has been delineated here. The results of the research have revealed particular aspects of the donors' social, political and religious life as well as certain aspects of artistic practice. They reflect types of attitudes that might have been characteristic for groups of people within the researched period, but any generalization should be cautious because of the paucity of the preserved material. Further research may improve the proposed interpretations by expanding the use of primary sources and through comparative studies, and may also extend to other subjects represented in the painted decoration of the Transylvanian churches.



## Catalogue of Churches

### *Chimindia (Hunedoara County)*

The Calvin Church

#### Medieval History

The church has relatively recently entered the attention of historians and a thorough research is still to be done. The village is mentioned in the papal decimal lists in 1334 and 1336.<sup>1002</sup> This fact suggests that the present Calvin church, which has medieval origins, was a Catholic parish church at that time. A Latin parish priest in Chimindia is again mentioned in 1497.<sup>1003</sup> Two families appear in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in relation to the village of Chimindia: the Kemendis and the Varadis. Their members are often mentioned in the sources as men of the king, of the Voivode or the Chapter of Alba Iulia.<sup>1004</sup> It has been argued that the Kemendis and the Varadis had kinship relations with Romanian families from Hațeg.<sup>1005</sup> The fact that the depiction of the Holy Kings of Hungary, which may date to the early fifteenth century, has Old Church Slavonic inscriptions suggests that at that time the owners were Orthodox.<sup>1006</sup>

#### Building date

For the medieval part of the building, Ileana Burnichioiu has proposed a date by the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>1007</sup>

#### Architecture

The church has a rectangular apse which dates from the medieval period, and a semicircular sanctuary which was added probably in the eighteenth century. The church has a wooden roof built in the recent years. To the south-west of the church there is a bell-tower with a horse-shoe plan. The church has undergone many changes and repairs over time, which also remodeled or walled up the original windows. A window with semicircular arch has been recently brought to

<sup>1002</sup> György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza* [The historical geography of Hungary at the time of the Arpads] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963-1998), vol. 3, 296.

<sup>1003</sup> Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 328.

<sup>1004</sup> Burnichioiu, "Biserici," 347.

<sup>1005</sup> Burnichioiu, "Biserici," 348.

<sup>1006</sup> Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 328. Ileana Burnichioiu is preparing an article dedicated to the church that will deal in detail with the history of the church.

<sup>1007</sup> Burnichioiu, "Biserici," 346.

light on the south wall of the nave. The south entrance to the church has also a semicircular tympanon. Further research should elucidate if the buttresses visible today were built at the same time with the walls.

### **Painted decoration**

The partially preserved paintings were uncovered in 2002-2004 and date to different periods. A first layer of plaster preserves traces of the first consecration crosses. The representation of the Mouth of Hell on the south wall dates from a later period, probably the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>1008</sup> The representation of the Holy Kings of Hungary on the south wall and probably also of the Virgin on the tympanon of the entrance belong to a third stage in the decoration of the church, which may date to early fifteenth century.<sup>1009</sup> The Holy Kings of Hungary are covered by a layer that includes the consecration crosses with the year 1482. Finally, on the north wall of the nave there is a fragment of the Last Judgment, which could date from 1482 or soon thereafter.<sup>1010</sup>

### **Dedicatory inscription**

The church has no dedicatory inscription but one of the painting layers on the south wall preserves consecration crosses with the year 1482.

### **Archaeological excavations**

No archaeological excavations have been carried out.

### **Selected bibliography**

Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek*, vol. 1, 54-55; Jékely Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 140-153; Szakács, “Saints of the Knights,” 326-328; Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 341-348.

<sup>1008</sup> See Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 140.

<sup>1009</sup> See also Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 140; Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 345.

<sup>1010</sup> See Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 141; Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések*, vol. 1, 54.

## ***Crișcior (Hunedoara County)***

The Orthodox Church of the Dormition of the Virgin

### **Medieval history**

The village occurs for the first time in the sources in 1439, by the name of Kirchorfalva, when it is mentioned as belonging to the estate of the Șiria castle.<sup>1011</sup> Probably the village was situated in the district of Crișul Alb (*Feyerkeres*, Fehérkörös), which in 1444<sup>1012</sup> was part of the estate of Șiria castle. The village fails to be mentioned in the manorial survey of Șiria from 1525, but in 1561 is again on the castle's domain.<sup>1013</sup>

The history of the family who founded the church is blurred. Except for the preserved inscriptions in the church, there seems to be only one undoubtedly authentic medieval source, apparently referring to a member of the family.<sup>1014</sup> In 1445, the lord of Șiria castle, the Ban Ladislav Maróti, assigns particular attributions to his “beloved voivodes” Moga, Ladislav *de Bolya*, Stephen of Birtin, John of Brad, Șerban and John of Ribița in solving a dispute on the estate of Baia de Criș.<sup>1015</sup> It has been assumed that Ladislav *de Bolya* was the son of Bălea, the founder of the church of Crișcior.<sup>1016</sup>

In 1773, on the occasion of a law suit with the tax administration, the Kriscsóri family from Arad County came up with a history of their own family that went back to the founder of the church of Crișcior.<sup>1017</sup> The four documents that, together with the inscription in the church of Crișcior,

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<sup>1011</sup> Csánki, vol. 1, 736.

<sup>1012</sup> DRH D/I, 379-383. The district is also mentioned in 1404 (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 433-434). However, this source is part of a group of documents that have been preserved only in copies and their authenticity has been questioned (see Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 240-245). Silviu Dragomir has assumed that Crișcior was the center of the district Crișul Alb (Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 244-245). Nevertheless, it has also been argued (Borcea, “Considerații,” 187) that the name of the district came actually from the market town Baia de Criș (Keresbánya), which in 1390 appears as *Feyrkeresbanya* (Lukinich, *Documenta*, 398) and in 1445 as *oppidum Feyerkeresnaghbanya alio nomine Czibebanya* (Hurmuzaki I/2, 718; Csánki, vol. 1, 723).

<sup>1013</sup> Márki, “Arad és Zaránd vármegye,” 367.

<sup>1014</sup> Silviu Dragomir has also considered that a document dating from 1404 and published in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 428, mentioned the son of the founder of Crișcior, Ladislav *de Bolya* or *Ballya* (Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 245). However, more recently it has been noted that the correct name in the original document, dated to August 25, 1404 (DI. 29 454) is Ladislav *de Braza* (ITH, 47-48, no. 13).

<sup>1015</sup> The letter, dated September 3, 1445, is addressed by the Ban Ladislav Maróti to *nobilibus viris Moga, Ladislav de Bolya, Stephano de Birtin, Iohanni de Fenywpataka, Sorban et Iohanni de Ribicze, vaivodis nostris, nobis dilectis* (Hurmuzaki, *Documente* XV/1, 33; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 714-715).

<sup>1016</sup> Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 245-246; Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 164.

<sup>1017</sup> See Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 238-239.

were at the basis of their medieval genealogy are known only in nineteenth-century copies<sup>1018</sup> and their authenticity has been questioned.<sup>1019</sup> According to these sources, on August 24 or 25, 1404 King Sigismund granted Bălea (*Boalya*), son of *Boar de Kereztur* from the *Feyerkeres* district, several villages in the district of Crișul Alb for his loyalty and services.<sup>1020</sup> Later on, Bălea (*Bolya*, son of *Boar de Krisztol*) lost his properties and was sentenced to death for having killed a certain John of Nüremberg, one of king's *familiars*. Nevertheless, the king pardoned him,<sup>1021</sup> but before the royal decree took effect, the voivode was decapitated on the order of Pipo de Ozora, the count of Timiș. On September 9, 1415, Bălea's son, Ladislav, was restored the villages which had been confiscated from his father -- Crișcior, Rîșca, Zdrapți and Țărățel – as a reward for his many services, and especially for his deeds in the fight at the castle of *Balavar*, in Bosnia.<sup>1022</sup>

After a period of almost 150 years, a Kriscsori (of Crișcior) family reoccurs in the sources and the family can then be followed until the nineteenth century.<sup>1023</sup>

### Building date

Neither the architectural features nor the archaeological finds permit a closer dating than the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. Based on the dating of the paintings, the church could have been built at the end of the fourteenth-beginning of the fifteenth century.

### Architecture

The church had a rectangular nave with wooden ceiling, rectangular sanctuary and western tower. At some point in time the sanctuary and eastern wall of the nave were demolished and the

<sup>1018</sup> The documents were copied and published by Count József Kemény in "Magyar hazákban létező oláhok hajdani vajdaságaikról" [On the past voivodates of the Romanians in the Hungarian country], *Új Magyar Múzeum* 4 (1854), no. 2, 125-129. Sigismund's charter from August 24/25, 1404 is also published in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/2, 433-434.

<sup>1019</sup> Silviu Dragomir has assumed they were eighteenth-century forgeries (Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 240-245. Count József Kemény (1795-1855) himself, who made the copies in the nineteenth century, is known for his faking documents related to medieval Transylvania (see Mályusz, "Gróf Kemény József"). Although initially Elemér Mályusz considered all the documents as belonging to Kemény's fakes (Mályusz, *Zsig. okl.*, vol. 2/1, nos. 3365, 3366, 3423; Mályusz, *Zsig. okl.*, vol. 5, no. 1046), he eventually came to believe that the documents referring to the grant from 1404 might contain authentic information because on the same day Sigismund made several similar donations to other Romanians in the same region (Mályusz, "Gróf Kemény József," 212, footnote 58).

<sup>1020</sup> Kemény, "Magyar," 126-128; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 433-434; Mályusz, *Zsig. okl.*, vol. 2/1, nos. 3365, 3366, 3423.

<sup>1021</sup> The pardon decree is published in Kemény, "Magyar," 128-129, who dates it to ca. 1411-1414. See also Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 241-242.

<sup>1022</sup> Kemény, "Magyar," 125-126; Mályusz, *Zsig. okl.*, vol. 5, no. 1046; Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 242.

<sup>1023</sup> Kemény, "Magyar," genealogical table; Nagy, *Magyarország családai*, vol. 6, 466-467; Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 246.

church was extended to the east. New wide windows were also opened on the south and north walls of the nave. The original side entrance, situated on the north wall of the nave was walled-up, and a new entrance was opened to the south. A few of the original decorative elements have been preserved such as the pointed framing of the south window of the nave, and the trefoil framing of the south and east windows of the tower.<sup>1024</sup>

### Painted decoration

The preserved paintings are situated both inside and outside the church. Inside the church they cover the north, west and south walls of the nave, allowing an almost complete reconstruction of the iconographic program of the nave. The fresco's preparatory layer of plaster is made of lime, sand and traces of chaff.<sup>1025</sup>

Various dates have been proposed for the paintings, which were restored in 1968, ranging from the last decades of the fourteenth century to the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>1026</sup> According to a reference to the votive painting from 1773, it appears that there was an inscription mentioning 1411 as the year the church was painted.<sup>1027</sup> However, no inscription containing this date has been preserved nowadays. Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei pointed out a fragment of inscription on the embrasure of the original, northern entrance that could be an abbreviated painter signature.<sup>1028</sup>

A few fragments of painting from the scene of the Last Judgment have been preserved on the exterior north wall of the church.<sup>1029</sup> It has been assumed that the paintings are later than those inside the church,<sup>1030</sup> probably from the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>1031</sup>

### Dedicatory inscription

The inscriptions that accompany the donor portraits have been proposed slightly different readings. Here follows the reading by Monica Breazu and Liana Tugearu:<sup>1032</sup>

<sup>1024</sup> See some observations on the architecture of the church in Greceanu, "Influența gotică," 36, 46; Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 72.

<sup>1025</sup> Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 86.

<sup>1026</sup> See an overview of the dating of the painting by various art historians in Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 72, note 7, and Porumb, *Dicționar*, 91. Tugearu and Porumb accepts the dating of the painting to 1411, as given in a reference from 1773 to the votive painting (Tugearu, "Biserica Adormirea," 74; Porumb, *Dicționar*, 91).

<sup>1027</sup> Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 238-239.

<sup>1028</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Date noi," 40.

<sup>1029</sup> Silviu Dragomir mistakenly interpreted the figures of the kings he was able to see as members of Louis I's family (Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 236). The fragments were for the first time correctly identified as part of a Last Judgment scene by Ștefănescu, *La peinture*, 248. Presently the painting is in a very poor state of conservation.

<sup>1030</sup> Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 404-405 (later than the first half of the fifteenth century).

<sup>1031</sup> Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 30.

† раба б̑жи хтиторъ ж̑панъ вѣлк

жпрѣдаєтъ ма

настирь прѣстѣ

и б̑цѣ пріснодѣомріє

The servant of God, the ktetor župan Bălea offers the monastery to the Most Holy God-Bearer and Always Virgin Mary

† раба б̑жиѣ

ж̑паница више

The servant of God, županitsa Vișe

[раба вжи] юка ктитѡрю с̑ноу [The servant of God] Iuca, the son of the ktetor

[раба в] жи ласло вѣлкювѣ с̑ноу The servant of God Laslo, son of Bălea

Another inscription, now lost, which accompanied the little boy represented in the votive painting under the model of the church, can be read according to Silviu Dragomir, as follows:<sup>1033</sup>

раба вѡжи ѡѣфа

ноѣ вѣлкювоу с̑ноу

по...ѣ

вѣ...ѣ

...и х̑ъ (?)

The servant of God Stephen, son of Bălea [...] <sup>1034</sup>

### Archaeological excavations

The archaeological excavations were carried out in 1989.<sup>1035</sup> They revealed that the medieval church was built on the site of an older building with three rooms which must have had a residential function. It has been assumed that the building, dating 50-100 years earlier than the

<sup>1032</sup> Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 43-45, and Tugearu, “Biserica Adormirea,” 73-74, 90-91. For other readings of the inscriptions, also mentioned by the two scholars, see Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 229-232, and Cincheza-Buculei, “Date noi,” 36-37.

<sup>1033</sup> According to Silviu Dragomir, the inscription was read in 1928 by Ștefan Pașca (Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 230).

<sup>1034</sup> Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 45, note 6. Dragomir translates: “The servant of God Stephen Bălea, son of Iova” (Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 230).

<sup>1035</sup> The results are published in Lazăr et al., “Biserica de la Crișcior.”

church, had mixed media walls of stone, brick and wood. It was demolished when the church was built. The excavations also revealed the foundations of the sanctuary of the medieval church and of the altar table, situated in the middle of the sanctuary. It appears that the sanctuary had only two entrances from the nave. As a result of numerous reparations carried out at the church in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the graves inside the church were badly disturbed. The archaeological material is very poor and spans a time period between the fourteenth - nineteenth centuries.

### **Donors of the painting**

The votive painting represented on the north and west walls of the nave indicates that župan Bălea and his family were the donors of the painting.

### **Function**

The church is a private foundation, but its public use or its functioning as a monastery church cannot be excluded.<sup>1036</sup>

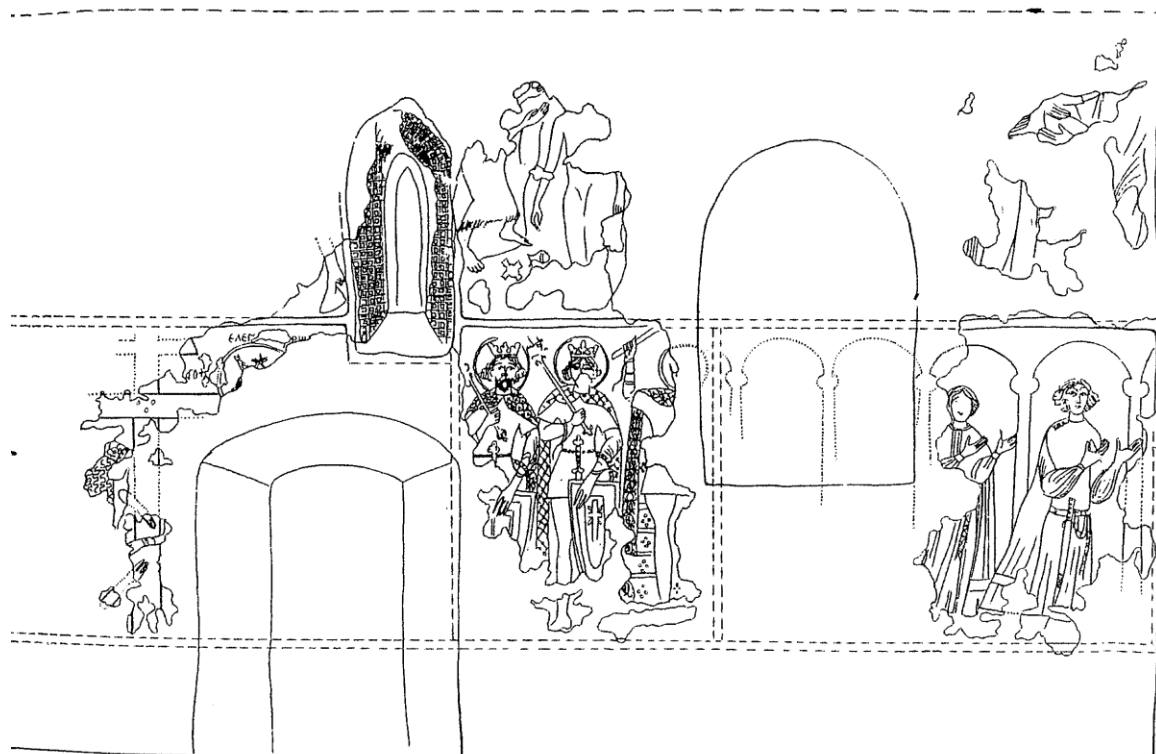
### **Selected bibliography**

Kemény, “Magyar,” 124-130 and genealogical table; Ștefănescu, *La peinture*, 242-248; Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 225-246; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 29-33; Cincheza-Buculei, “Date noi;” Porumb, *Pictura românească*, 23-26; Tugearu, “Biserica Adormirea;” Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 43-45; Lazăr et al., “Biserica de la Crișcior;” Porumb, *Dicționar*, 91-93; Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 16-31; Rusu et al., *Dicționarul mănăstirilor*, 121-122.

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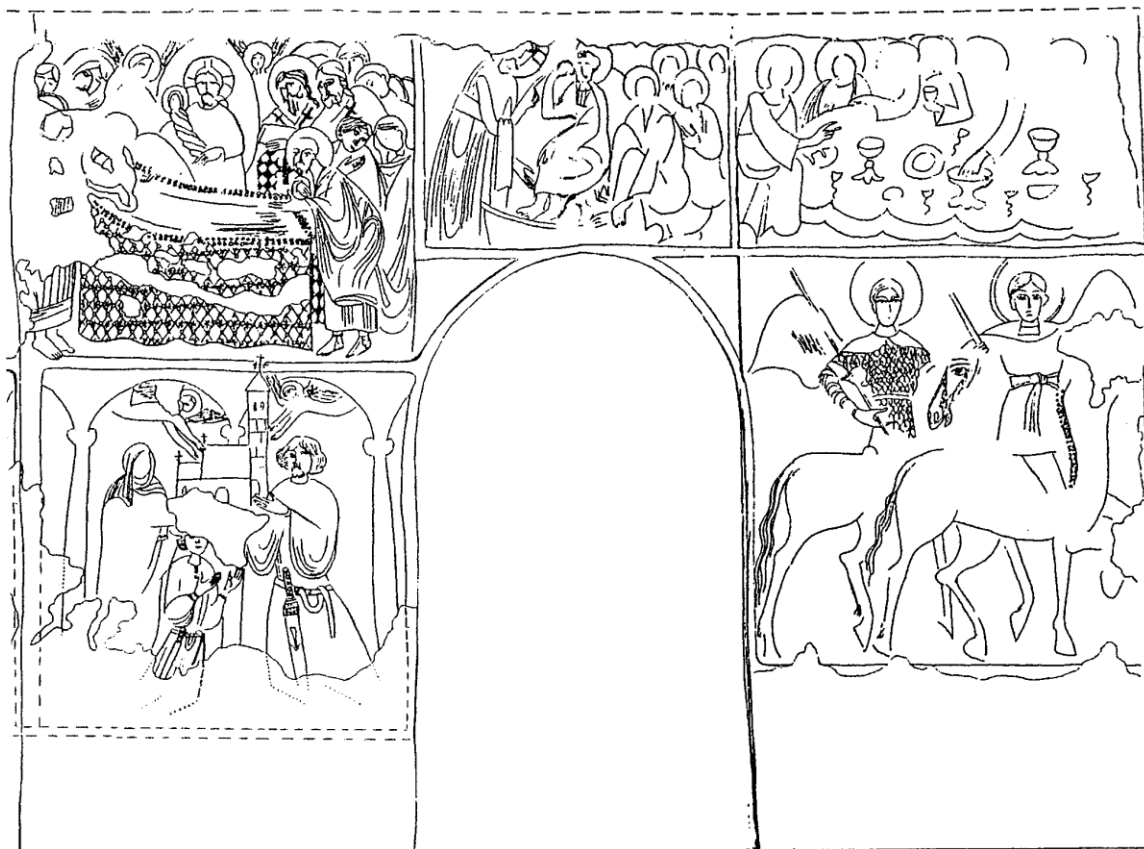
<sup>1036</sup> Adrian A. Rusu considers that the term “monastery” in the votive inscriptions of Ribița, Crișcior and Streisângeorgiu should be understood in its proper sense (Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița,” 8).

**Crișcior, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, iconographic schemes of the paintings**  
(Cincheza-Buculei, "Date noi," drawings by M. Buculei)

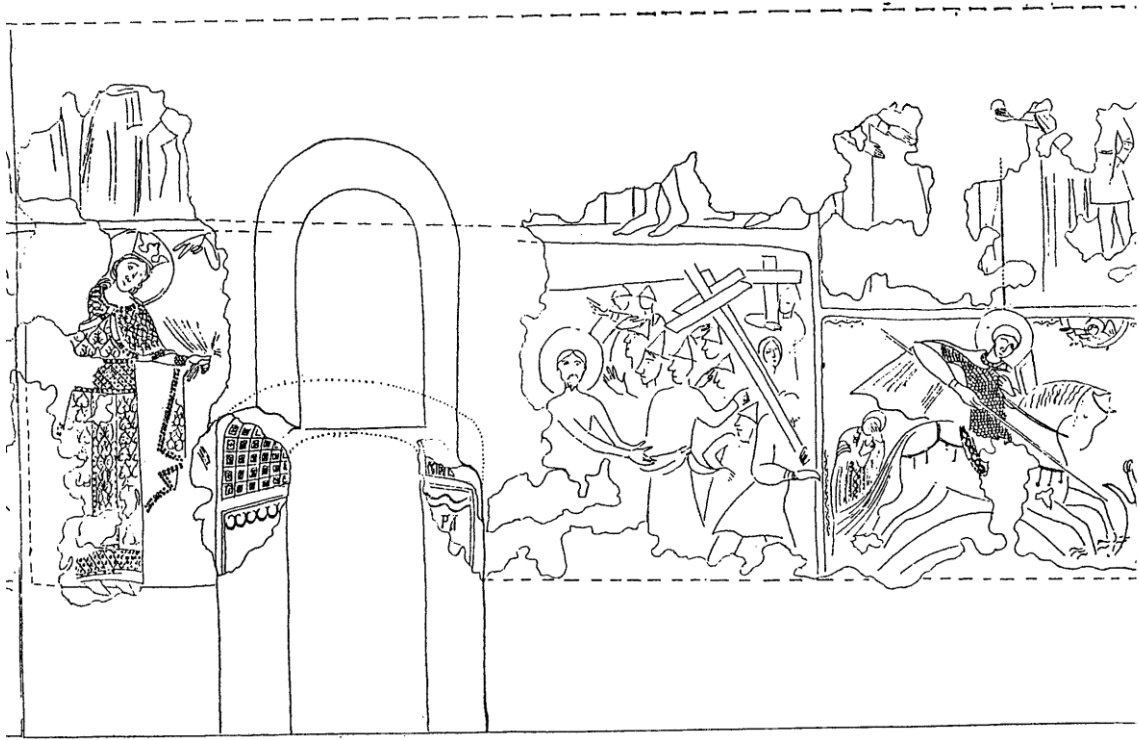


South wall of the nave





West wall of the nave



North wall of the nave

## **Densuș (Hunedoara County)**

The Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas

### **Medieval history**

The knezes of Densuș appear in the sources for the first time in 1360.<sup>1037</sup> From the second half of the fourteenth century, the preserved documents allow the identification of two branches of the family, one stemming from the knez Dușa of Densuș, the other from Mușana of Densuș. From the middle of the fifteenth century, the two families share ownership of the village of Densuș with the Romanian nobles of Ciula.<sup>1038</sup> The Mușinas had a also a fortified residence at Răchitova, starting with the end of the fourteenth century. In the second half of the fifteenth century, one branch of the Mușina family, the Arcas of Densuș, struggled with the rest of the Mușinas over the ownership of several estates, which also included parts of Densuș.<sup>1039</sup> It appears that the nearby nobiliary court, which functioned from the last decades of the fifteenth through the sixteenth century, belonged to the Arcas.<sup>1040</sup>

The knezial families of Densuș belonged to the leading families of Hațeg Land and in the fifteenth century rose steadily to prominence. In the second half of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth century, some members of these families are mentioned as jurors in the Knezial Assemblies of Hațeg Land or men of the king.<sup>1041</sup> The knezes of Densuș owned many villages or parts of villages situated on the middle course of Galbena River and its tributaries, and in the upper basin of the Cerna River.

### **Building date**

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<sup>1037</sup> On the history of the knezes of Densuș see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 93-95, 114, 168-171; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 201-202. On the Mușina family see also Adrian A. Rusu, "Istoria și implicațiile unei ctitorii românești necunoscute: Răchitova Mușineștilor" [The history and the implications of an unknown Romanian foundation: the Mușinas' Răchitova], *AIAC* 29 (1989): 83-101; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 104-107 (with two editorial flaws in the genealogical table: the third generation stems from Stoian, not from Boian, and the fifth generation from Sandrin, not from Stephen); Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 281-282.

<sup>1038</sup> On the Ciula family see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 91; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 180-184.

<sup>1039</sup> On the Arca family see Adrian A. Rusu and Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Familia nobiliară românească Arca din Țara Hațegului (sfârșitul sec. XV-începutul sec. XVI) [The Romanian noble family Arca from Hațeg Land (end of the fifteenth-beginning of the sixteenth century)]" *Acta Musei Napocensis* 21 (1984), 211-225.

<sup>1040</sup> The hypothesis belongs to Adrian A. Rusu who carried out the archaeological excavations at the site. See Adrian Andrei Rusu, "Biserica Sfântului Nicolae și curtea nobiliară a Arceștilor de la Densuș (jud. Hunedoara)" [The church of St Nicholas and the nobiliary court of the Arcas at Densuș (Hunedoara County)], *Arheologia Medievală* 7 (2008), 165-168.

<sup>1041</sup> *Homo regius* was a representative of the king or of the Transylvanian voivode for the implementation of certain orders.

The history of the building is complicated and raises many questions.<sup>1042</sup> The central part of the church, consisting of the sanctuary and the nave with the tower, was probably built in several phases, before 1300. The diaconicon and the space situated to the south of the naos date to the same period and could be later additions. The narthex was probably added in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The church also underwent many interventions in the modern period.

**Architecture:** The church has a square naos and a semicircular sanctuary covered by a conch continued with a barrel vault. Over the naos there is a tower supported by four pillars. To the south of the sanctuary there is a space with rectangular plan, covered by a barrel vault. The room may have functioned as a diaconicon. The entry way to this space is a pointed arch opening. The narthex, now uncovered, extends on the south side of the church with a space covered by a barrel vault, which has been characterized as a lateral chapel.<sup>1043</sup> Many Roman spolia were used in the construction of the church. The shape of the window openings and the zigzag frieze place the central part of the church – the naos with tower and the sanctuary – in the late Romanesque-early Gothic period.

**Painted decoration:**

The preserved medieval painting covers the walls of the sanctuary, the east wall of the nave, the pillars and the lunette above the entrance to the nave. An inscription under the representation of St Marina on the north-west pillar shows that the church of St Nicholas was painted in 1443, on October 23. In the sanctuary there is an inscription with the name of a painter, Stephen.<sup>1044</sup> The painting of the sanctuary, east wall of the nave and the lunette above the entrance, all attributed to Stephen, is in Byzantine style and of higher quality than the painting on the pillars, which is simplified and less skilled. While the painter of the pillars was certainly native, various suppositions have been made about Stephen: it has been assumed that he came from Wallachia,<sup>1045</sup> Moldavia<sup>1046</sup> or that he was a Transylvanian.<sup>1047</sup> Vasile Drăguț and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei have dated all the preserved medieval painting dates to 1443.<sup>1048</sup> An

<sup>1042</sup> See a detailed approach to this issue, with reference to previous historiography, in Rusu, "Biserica Sfântului Nicolae," Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 192-199 and Burnichioiu, "Biserici," 285-287.

<sup>1043</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 229; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 120, 198-199.

<sup>1044</sup> The inscription reads "Stephen painted."

<sup>1045</sup> Drăguț, "Un zugrav," 240; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 53. In Vătășianu's opinion, the paintings are stylistically related to the paintings of the church of St Nicholas at Curtea de Argeș (1362-1366) (Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 757).

<sup>1046</sup> Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 129-141.

<sup>1047</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "Din nou," 95.

<sup>1048</sup> Drăguț, "Un zugrav," Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 54; Cincheza-Buculei, "Din nou," 94.

inscription recently discovered on the north-east pillar – “The much sinful and unworthy hierodeacon Stephen wrote” -- has been attributed to the painter Stephen and has been considered a further argument for the contemporaneous dating for all the medieval paintings in the church.<sup>1049</sup> Sorin Ullea has suggested that the pillars alone were painted in 1443, while in his opinion Stephen must have painted in the third or fourth decades of the fifteenth century.<sup>1050</sup> Analyzing exclusively the painting of the sanctuary, east wall of the nave and lunette, and ignoring the existence of the inscription from 1443, I.D. Ștefănescu has proposed a date to the second third of the fifteenth century,<sup>1051</sup> and Virgil Vătășianu the middle of the fifteenth century, at latest.<sup>1052</sup>

Traces of painting have also been preserved on the east wall of the lateral chapel,<sup>1053</sup> and on the west wall of the nave. The latter are certainly post-medieval, possibly from the eighteenth century.<sup>1054</sup>

### Supplicatory inscriptions:

Under the representation of St Marina:

† В ЛѢ[Т]Ѣ СЦѢНѢ · МѢЦА ѠХ · КГ · ИСПИСА СЕ · СѢМЪ НИ

КОЛИ ДРХ МИР ЛК ѡ ПРОЗНИ [...] МЛНІЕ РАБА БЖІА ІАНЖШЖ ЗА ЖЗПА

НИЦЪ И ДЪЩЕРЪКИ АНКА КЪ СѢМЪ НИКОЛА[И] ЗА МЗДРОЖ ПОМО

ЩЪ ѡ ДНЪ СТРАШНАГО СЪДА ХВА · АМИНЪ

In the year 6952, October 23, it was painted<sup>1055</sup> to St Nicholas, archbishop of Myra in Lycia [...] the prayer of the servant of God Ianășă for županitsa and daughter Anca, to St Nicholas for wise help in the day of the frightful judgment of Christ. Amen.<sup>1056</sup>

Under the representation of St Nedelea:

† МОЛЕНИЕ РАБ[А] БЖИѢ...НЪ СѢА Н[Е]ДЕЛЕ

<sup>1049</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 94.

<sup>1050</sup> Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 135-136, 140.

<sup>1051</sup> Ștefănescu, *La peinture*, 257.

<sup>1052</sup> Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 758.

<sup>1053</sup> According to Istudor, “Studiul,” 23, the composition of the intonaco (lime and sand) is different from that of the painting in the sanctuary, east wall of the nave, and lunette (lime and chaff).

<sup>1054</sup> Noting the fragments of the Last Judgment preserved on the north side of the west wall of the nave, Vasile Drăguț has suggested that they might date from the second half of the eighteenth century (Drăguț, “Un zugrav,” 233).

<sup>1055</sup> Or “written.”

<sup>1056</sup> Reading by Ruxandra Lambru, in Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” 93.

The prayer of the servant of God ...to St Nedelea

Under the depiction of the Holy Trinity:

†МОЛЕНИЕ РАБ[А] БЖИѦ КРЪСТѦ МЪШАТОВЪ СНѦ<sup>1057</sup>

The prayer of the servant of God Crăstea, son of Mușat

At the feet of St Bartholomew:

†МОЛЕН[ИЕ] [РАБА] БЖИѦ КРЪСТѦ [И] П[ОД]РЪЖ [□...] ОМА<sup>1058</sup>

The prayer of the servant of God Crăstea and of [his] wife...

### Inscriptions in relation to the painter

Inscription under the south-east window of the sanctuary:

ПИСА[Л] СТЕФАН<sup>1059</sup>

Ștefan painted

Inscription above the representation of St Nedelea:

†ІСПИСА ЕРДКОЖ · МНОГО ГРѢШНАГО И НЕДОУГО СТЕФАНА:~<sup>1060</sup>

The much sinful and unworthy hierodeacon Stephen wrote

### Archaeological excavations

The last archaeological excavations did not unfortunately bring spectacular data because they were preceded by earlier unpublished excavations and other irreversible interventions to the church.<sup>1061</sup> It has been shown that the church did not develop from a Roman building, as previously suggested. The altar table has a slightly eccentric position, which suggests that the iconostasis had only two entries. The foundations of the diaconicon abut on the foundations of the apse but are joined with the foundations of the lateral chapel. The elevation of the chapel has been significantly changed by later interventions. The foundations of the narthex abut on the foundations of the nave. The narthex could date from the same period as the nobiliary house situated east of the church. Graves have been found in the nave, the lateral chapel, the narthex and around the church. They had poor or no inventory. The earliest datable graves in the nave and the narthex are from the sixteenth century. The earliest datable graves in the cemetery that

<sup>1057</sup> See also Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 95 and Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 94.

<sup>1058</sup> See also Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou,” 94 (†МОЛЕНИЕ РА[Б] БЖИѦ КРЪСТѦ).

<sup>1059</sup> Drăguț, “Un zugrav,” 239; Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” 94.

<sup>1060</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” 94. Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei has assumed hierodeacon Stephen is the same with the painter.

<sup>1061</sup> The archaeological excavations were conducted by Adrian A. Rusu and the results are published in Rusu, “Biserica Sfântului Nicolae.”

developed around the church date to the fifteenth century. The bell tower was built after the end of the eighteenth century. A nobiliary house has been excavated circa fifty meters east of the church. The house was in use in the last decades of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century, then it was abandoned.

### **Donors**

Members of the families who owned Densuș must have sponsored the painting of the church. The supplicatory inscriptions on the pillars argue for collective sponsoring.<sup>1062</sup>

### **Function**

Radu Popa has considered it a private chapel (“court chapel”), which, in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries became a parish church.<sup>1063</sup> Adrian A. Rusu suggests that in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries the church functioned as a monastic church.<sup>1064</sup> Ileana Burnichioiu also considers that the main function of the church in the Middle Ages must have been that of a parish church.<sup>1065</sup>

### **Selected bibliography**

Ștefănescu, *La peinture en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, 254–257, 432–433; Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 89–94, 755–758; Drăguț, “Un zugrav,” Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 48–54, 86–88; Cincheza-Buculei, “Le programme,” Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 93–95, 228–229; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 120–121, 192–203; Porumb, *Dicționar*, 104–108; Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 129–141; Rusu, “Biserica Sfântului Nicolae,” Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 285–295; Cincheza-Buculei, “Din nou” (with exhaustive bibliography by Suzana Móré-Heitel).

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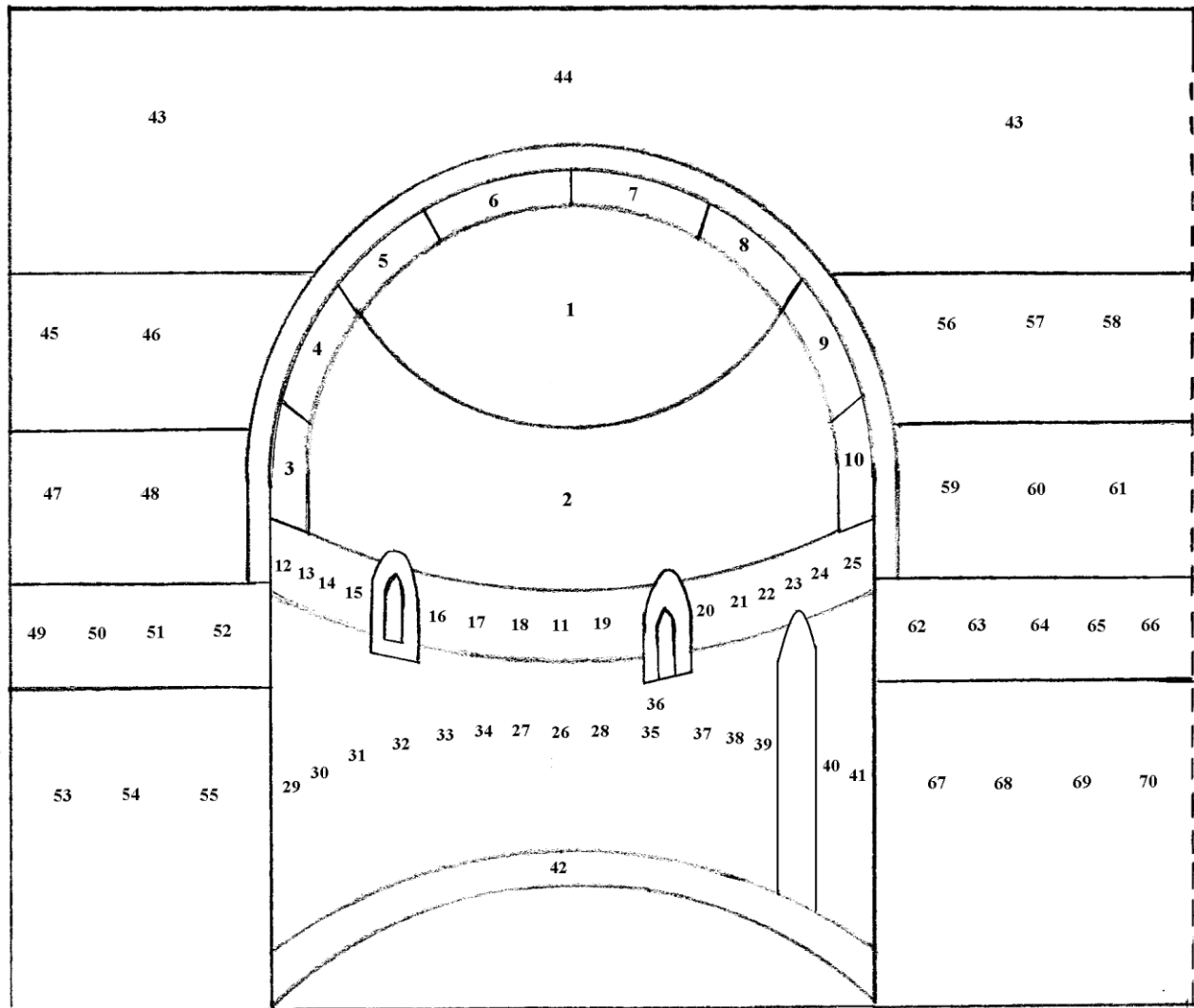
<sup>1062</sup> See also Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 57, 201; Rusu et al., *Dicționarul mănăstirilor*, 128.

<sup>1063</sup> In Popa’s opinion, the addition of the diaconicon, the lateral chapel and the narthex marked the building’s transformation into a parish church (Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 229).

<sup>1064</sup> Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 120–121; Rusu et al., *Dicționarul mănăstirilor*, 128.

<sup>1065</sup> Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 285.

**Densuş, the Church of St Nicholas, Iconographic scheme of the sanctuary and the east wall of the nave**



1. Christ Pantokrator accompanied by six-winged angels; 2. Communion of the Apostles; 3-9. Prophets; 11. Virgin Orans with Child; 12-15. Martyr saints; 16. St Simeon; 17. St John the Baptist; 18. Archangel Michael; 19. Archangel Gabriel; 20-21. Martyr saints?; 22. Hermit saint; 23. Stylite saint; 24-25. Saints ; 26. Melismos; 27, 28. Angel-deacons; 29. Holy bishop; 30. St Nicholas; 31. St Stephen the Deacon; 32 Man of Sorrows; 33. St Arsenius; 34. St Athanasius; 35. Candlestick; 36. Painter's signature; 37. St Prochoros the Deacon; 38. Holy bishop; 39. Holy bishop; 40. St Romanos the Deacon; 41. Holy bishop; 42. Drapery; 43. Annunciation; 44.



Mandylion; 45. St Cosmas; 46. St Damian; 47. St Panteleimon; 48. St Ermolaos; 49. St Kiron; 50. St Kaliporta; 51. St Paul the Apostle; 52. St Peter the Apostle; 53. St Procopius; 54. St Theodore; 55. St Nicholas; 56. St Barbara; 57. St. Petka; 58. Female saint; 59. St Magdalene; 60. St Mary; 61. Saint; 62. St Euphemia; 63. St Donosia; 64. St Anastasia; 65, 66. Martyr saints; 67. Archangel Michael; 68. St George; 69. St Demetrius; 70. St Nestorius.

## Hălmagiu (Arad County)

The Orthodox Church of the Dormition of the Virgin

### Medieval history

The first voivode of Hălmagiu named in the sources is Bybarch, *woyuoda Olakorum de Holmad*, who in 1359 was called to court together with the widow of a Romanian from Zlatna.<sup>1066</sup> The Romanian district of Hălmagiu (*Halmag*) is attested for the first time in 1390, when it is mentioned as belonging to the estate of the Șiria castle.<sup>1067</sup> The castle of Șiria, probably built at the end of the thirteenth century, was a royal possession until 1439, with a short intermezzo in 1390-1391, when it belonged to the count of Timiș, Ladislav Sárói.<sup>1068</sup> After 1439, when King Sigismund granted the castle and its estate to the Serbian despot George Branković, Șiria had various powerful nobles as lords.<sup>1069</sup> The district of Hălmagiu is again mentioned as being on the estate of Șiria in 1441, when King Vladislav I gives the castle to the count of Arad, Ladislav Maróti,<sup>1070</sup> and in 1444, when the castle enters the possession of John Hunyadi.<sup>1071</sup> The voivodate of Hălmagiu occurs in the sources in 1451 when John Hunyadi confirms the ownership of the voivodates of Căpâlna, Hălmagiu and Băița to the voivode Moga and his sons, Michael and Sandrin.<sup>1072</sup>

The voivode Moga of Hălmagiu was one of John Hunyadi's *familiares*,<sup>1073</sup> to whom he was also related through his wife, Helena. A document from 1429 permits reconstruction of Moga's family relations with Hunyadi. His wife came from the knezial family of Grădiște and had two

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<sup>1066</sup> DRH C, vol.11, 452-453; Căpățînă, "Cercetări," 76. See also Holban, *Din cronica*, 267, 292-293.

<sup>1067</sup> Doc. Val., 398; Eskenasy, "Hălmagiu," 24. The Romanian district is mentioned in a charter from August 14, 1390, by which King Sigismund granted Șiria castle to the count of Timiș, Ladislav Sárói.

<sup>1068</sup> On the circumstances of the castle being donated by King Sigismund of Luxemburg to Ladislav Sárói and then taking it back see Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 39-40.

<sup>1069</sup> On the history of Șiria castle see Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Cetăți*, 67-70; Prodan, "Domeniul," 37-38; Borcea, "Considerații," 186-190.

<sup>1070</sup> Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Cetăți*, 68.

<sup>1071</sup> DRH D/I, 379-383. On the context of the castle's being donated by Branković to John Hunyadi see Engel, *The Realm*, 286-287, 291-292; Peter Sugar et al., *A History of Hungary* (Indiana University Press, 1990), 64-65; Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Cetăți*, 68.

<sup>1072</sup> Márki, *Aradvármegye*, vol. 1, 501; Csánki, vol.1, 753; Eskenasy, "Hălmagiu," 26.

<sup>1073</sup> Eskenasy, "Hălmagiu," 25; Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 299-300.

sisters: one married the paternal uncle of John Hunyadi, Ladislás, and the other a Hungarian noble from Brănișca.<sup>1074</sup>

The voivode Moga of Hălmațiu, who also appears in two sources from 1445<sup>1075</sup> and 1446,<sup>1076</sup> created a prosperous future for his family.<sup>1077</sup> One of his successors was the voivode Petru Moga of Hălmațiu<sup>1078</sup> whose sons Stephen, John and Michael are mentioned in two sources from 1514<sup>1079</sup> and 1526<sup>1080</sup> with regard to some property issues.<sup>1081</sup> The “big and small voivodates” of Stephen Moga (*Waywodatus Stephani Moga, tam major quam minor*), comprising 48 villages, are listed in the first preserved manorial survey of Șiria castle, dating from 1525.<sup>1082</sup> In 1561, the possessions of Moga family on the estate of Șiria, then under the authority of Andrew Báthory, were reduced to ten villages, among them Hălmațiu, Ribița and Crișcior.<sup>1083</sup> Members of the family continue to appear in the sources in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>1084</sup>

### Building date

End of the fourteenth century- beginning of the fifteenth century.<sup>1085</sup>

### Architecture

The church has rectangular nave with wooden ceiling, rectangular sanctuary with barrel vault, and western tower. The original architecture has undergone some changes. Initially the church had eight buttresses, but they were removed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and only their bases were rebuilt

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<sup>1074</sup> Rusu, “Un proces.”

<sup>1075</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 714-715; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. XV/1, 33; Eskenasy, “Hălmațiu,” 26.

<sup>1076</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 729-730; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. XV/1, 33.

<sup>1077</sup> In 1410, a certain Șerban, son of Moga of Crișul Alb (*filius Moga Serban de Fejerkeres*) is involved in a law suit in the district of Beiuș (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 469; see also Eskenasy, “Hălmațiu,” 25 and Borcea, “Considerații,” 190). However, a sure link between this figure and the family Moga of Hălmațiu cannot be established.

<sup>1078</sup> In a source from 1484, Petru Moga of Hălmațiu (*Petrus Moga de Almad*), administrator of Deva castle, is accused of having attacked, in 1483, Cămpeni, which was the possession of the Chapter of Alba Iulia (Zimmermann et al., *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 7, 352, no. 4552; Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 255).

<sup>1079</sup> Andrei Căciora and Eugen Glück, “Cnezate și voievodate românești arădene” [Romanian knezates and voivodates in Arad], in *Studii privind istoria Aradului* [Studies on the history of Arad], ed. Eugen Glück (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1980), 162.

<sup>1080</sup> Căciora and Glück, “Cnezate și voievodate,” 162.

<sup>1081</sup> Another member of the family could have also been Ladislás Moga, mentioned as the administrator of Șiria castle in 1494. A copy made by Márki Sándor of the document from 1494 was published in Lupaș, *Voevozi*, 29-31. See also Márki, *Aradvármegye*, vol. 1, 360, 393, 501 (here, however, the author gives the year 1493 instead of 1494, though he refers to the same source); Eskenasy, “Hălmațiu,” 28; Drăgan, *Nobilimea*, 314. Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Cetăți*, 69. The administrator of the castle in 1525 was also called Ladislás Moga (Prodan, “Domeniul,” 41).

<sup>1082</sup> See Prodán, “Domeniul.” The voivodates, however, do not include the village of Hălmațiu.

<sup>1083</sup> Sándor Márki, “Arad és Zaránd vármegye 1558-1565” [Arad and Zarand counties, 1558-1565], *Történelmi Tár*, 1895, 363-370.

<sup>1084</sup> See Borcea, “Considerații,” 191; Márki, *Aradvármegye*, vol. 1, 360; Márki, *Aradvármegye*, vol. 2, 204.

<sup>1085</sup> Căpățînă, “Cercetări,” 80.

and are visible today.<sup>1086</sup> The two southern windows were walled up, new large windows were opened on the south and north walls, and the eastern window was enlarged.<sup>1087</sup> The framings of the original windows, two to the south and one to the east, were Gothic.<sup>1088</sup> The western and southern entrances also have pointed framings.<sup>1089</sup> The upper part of the tower dates from the modern period.<sup>1090</sup> An exo-narthex was built and then demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1091</sup>

### Painted decoration

The interior of the church is partially covered by paintings, most of them revealed during the restoration process started in 1970.<sup>1092</sup> The restoration resumed in the 1990s and has not yet been finished. The painting preserved in the sanctuary and the upper part of the triumphal arch are late Gothic and could date from around 1400 or the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>1093</sup> The fresco that partially covers the north and south walls of the nave, whose style has been characterized as Byzantine with Italian influences,<sup>1094</sup> probably dates from the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>1095</sup> The Annunciation represented on the west wall of the nave is the work of a less experimented painter, but might date from the same period. The embrasure of the middle south window of the nave, probably also the niche of the prothesis, was painted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1096</sup> Traces of paint have been found on the exterior south wall of the sanctuary and above the western entrance.<sup>1097</sup>

### Dedicatory inscription

The following inscription has been preserved on the eastern wall of the nave (triumphal arch), under the representation of Paradise, part of the scene of the Last Judgment:<sup>1098</sup>

ржкоѧ жѣпана мѡгы и бра[та] мѣ оѣ[чинили] нѡвѣж[д]ѡ

<sup>1086</sup> Căpățină, "Cercetări," 80; Adrian A. Rusu and George Pascu Hurezan, *Biserici medievale din județul Arad* [Medieval churches in Arad County] (Arad: Complexul Muzeal Arad, 2000), 98.

<sup>1087</sup> Mardare, "L'ensemble," 107. See *ibidem* more on the results of the architectural research.

<sup>1088</sup> Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Biserici*, 98.

<sup>1089</sup> The original pointed framing of the southern entrance, previously walled up, was brought to light on the occasion of the archaeological excavations in 1974. (Căpățină, "Cercetări," 80).

<sup>1090</sup> Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Biserici*, 99.

<sup>1091</sup> Căpățină, "Cercetări," 80.

<sup>1092</sup> See the results of the research in view of restoration in Mardare, "L'ensemble."

<sup>1093</sup> Irina Mardare dated it towards the end of the fourteenth century (Mardare, "L'ensemble," 109) and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei to the first half of the fifteenth century (Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 21).

<sup>1094</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 22.

<sup>1095</sup> Mardare, "L'ensemble," 109; Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 22.

<sup>1096</sup> Mardare, "L'ensemble," 111.

<sup>1097</sup> Mardare, "L'ensemble," 107.

<sup>1098</sup> Inscription read and translated by Ion Radu Mircea, and published in Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," 21.

“By the hand of župan Moga and of his brother, they renewed it”

The inscription belongs to the layer of painting dating from the end of the fourteenth century-first half of the fifteenth century. The inscription was covered by a later layer of painting, whose date may be established only by a specialized analysis during further restoration.<sup>1099</sup>

### **Archaeological excavations**

Archaeological excavations at the church and on a few other spots in the village were carried out in 1974.<sup>1100</sup> The excavations at the church of the Dormition revealed that the present church, probably dating from the end of the fourteenth-beginning of the fifteenth century, is the oldest building standing on its place. From the beginning, the sanctuary had an altar table placed in the middle of the sanctuary and a prothesis table attached to the north wall. The excavations brought to light burials outside the church, dating from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and ones inside the church as well. Inside the church there were graves both in the sanctuary and the nave. One of the graves in the sanctuary could be dated to the second half of the sixteenth century and the earliest dated grave in the nave dates to the second half of the fifteenth century. Two graves in the nave were covered stone slabs, one of them decorated with a carved double cross, probably dating from the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries.

Not far from the church of the Dormition, in the present center of the village, the archaeological test trenches indicated the existence of a nobiliary court that functioned during the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries.<sup>1101</sup> A test trench at another spot, traditionally called “at the crypt,” situated west of the village, revealed the existence of another church, with a rectangular nave, polygonal apse and western tower.<sup>1102</sup> In a later phase, a vaulted crypt was built under the sanctuary.

### **Donors of the painting**

The inscription preserved on the east wall of the nave, mentioning župan Moga and his brother, show that members of the Moga family, which appears in the sources in the first half of the fifteenth century, were the donors of the first layer of painting. The second layer of painting,

<sup>1099</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, “L’ensemble,” 21; Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Biserici*, 104-105.

<sup>1100</sup> The results of the excavations were published in Căpățînă, “Cercetări”.

<sup>1101</sup> Archaeological material from the fourteenth-fifteenth century also came to light during the excavations but in small numbers and in irrelevant stratigraphic position. Căpățînă, suggested the investigation be continued at this spot (in Căpățînă, “Cercetări,” 80). In 1604, the castle of Hălmagiu is mentioned as an ancient property of the Kasza family (see Eskenasy, “Hălmagiu,” 28; Márki, *Aradvármegye*, vol.2, 194 ).

<sup>1102</sup> Because the investigation was limited, Dan Căpățînă proposed a provisional dating for the church to the second half of the fifteenth century (Căpățînă, “Cercetări,” 78).

dated to the second half of the fifteenth century, could be attributed to the sponsorship of the same prominent family.

### **Function**

The historical and archaeological data suggest that the church was a private foundation of the family Moga of Hălmagiu.<sup>1103</sup> Though a private foundation, the church most probably served the local community as well. Arguments in favor include the fact that the church is relatively big, it does not seem to have been included in a residential complex, and a graveyard developed around the church from the fifteenth century onwards.

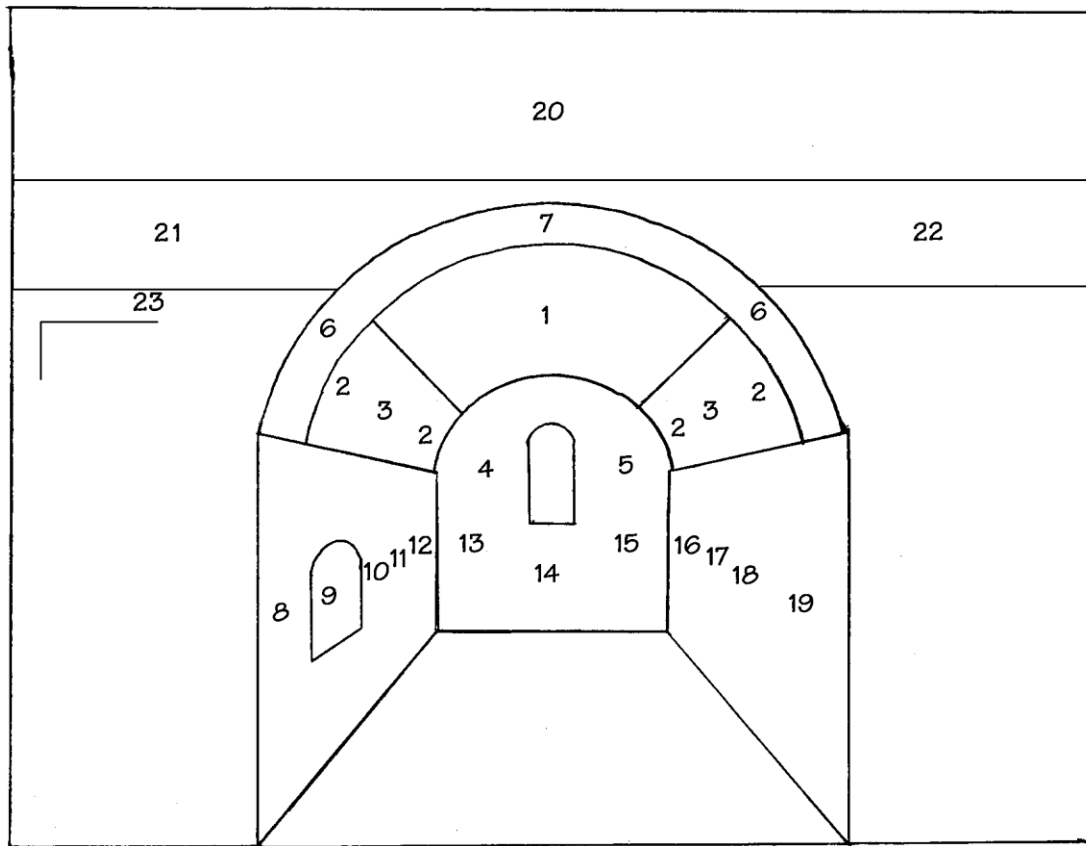
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“Biserica voievodală din Hălmagiu” [The voivodal church of Hălmagiu], *Mitropolia Banatului*  
30, no. 7-9 (1980): 550-557; Mardare, “L’ensemble;” Istudor, “Studiu;” 23, 27; Cincheza-  
Buculei, “L’ensemble;” Porumb, *Dicționar*, 156-158; Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Biserici*, 97-107.

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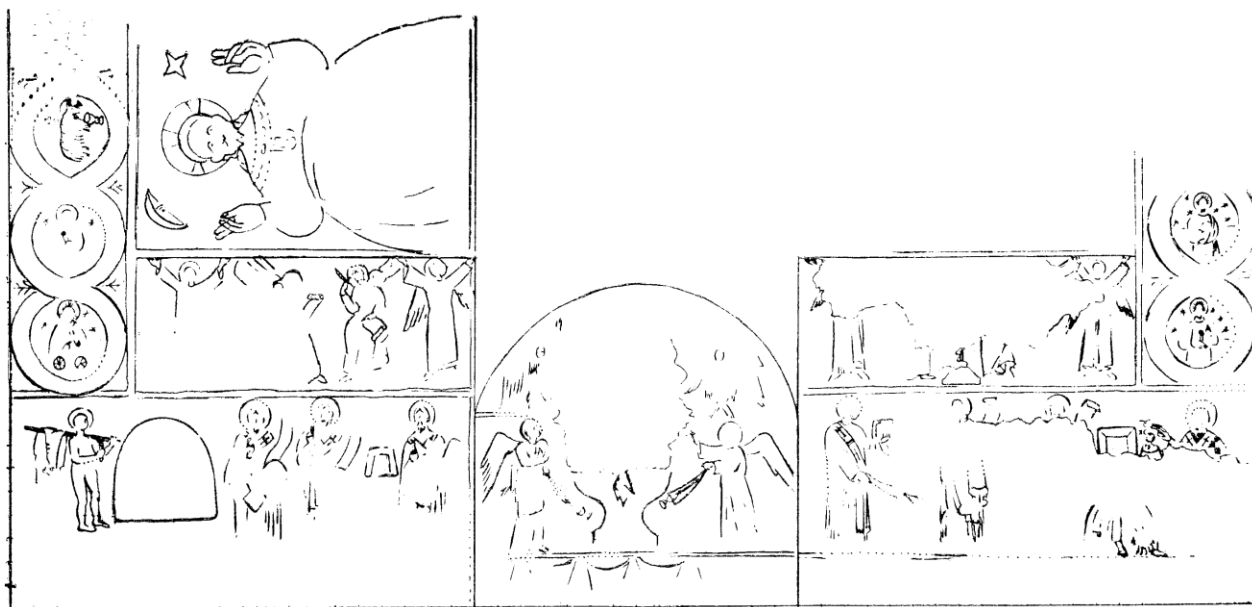
<sup>1103</sup> See Cincheza-Buculei, “L’ensemble,” 22 ; Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Biserici*, 103-105.

## Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, iconographic schemes of the paintings



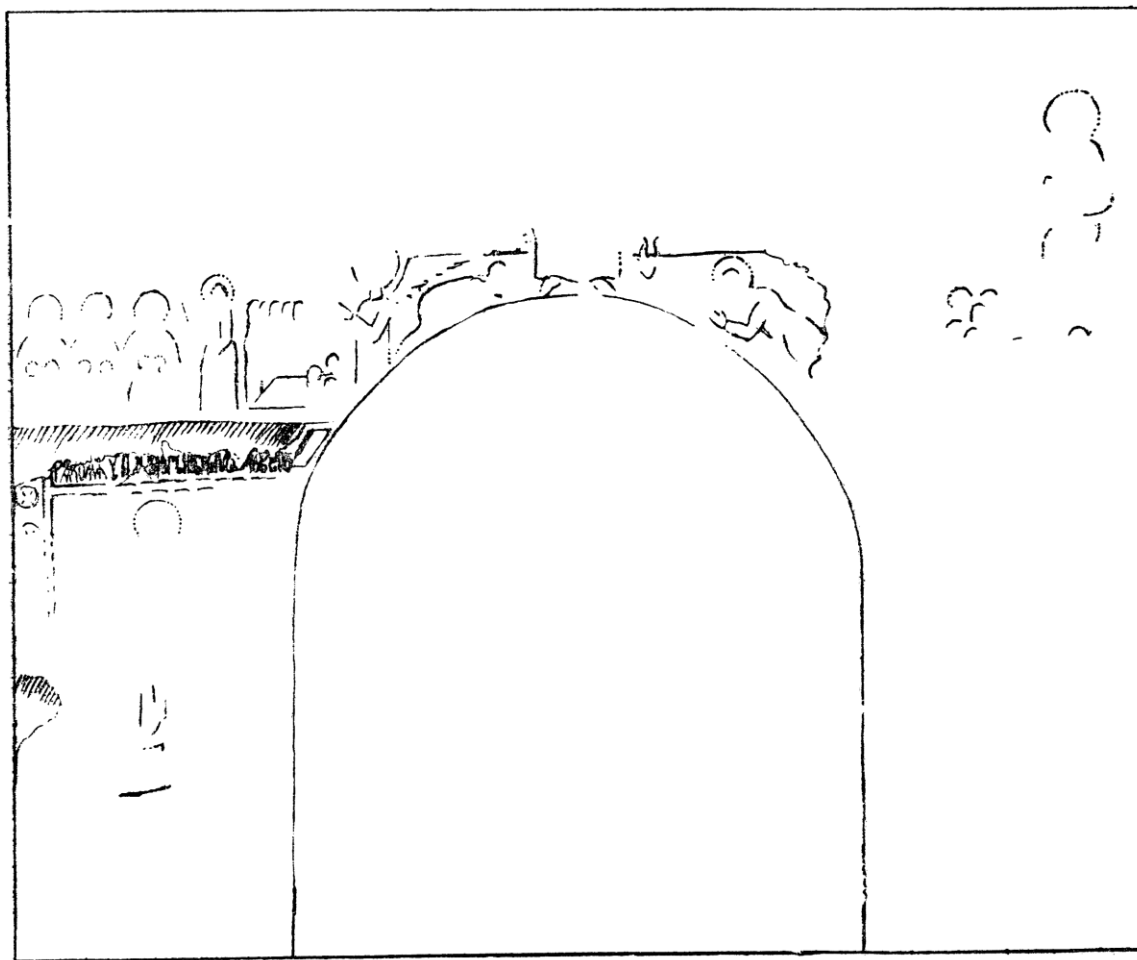
Iconographic scheme of the sanctuary and east wall of the nave

1. Christ in Glory; 2. Angel 3. Evangelists grouped by two; 4, 5. Cherubim or seraphim; 6. Prophets in medallions; 7. Lamb of God; 8. Saint Bartholomew; 9. Man of Sorrows (18<sup>th</sup> century); 10. Holy bishop; 11. Saint Sylvester; 12. Saint Clement; 13. Angel; 14. Fragment of an altar table; 15. Angel; 16. Holy deacon; 17. Saint John Chrysostom; 18. Saint Basil; 19. Saint Nicholas; 20. Last Judgment (Christ in Glory with the apostles); 21 Last Judgment (Souls heading towards Paradise); 22. Last Judgment (Souls cast to Hell); 23. Votive inscription

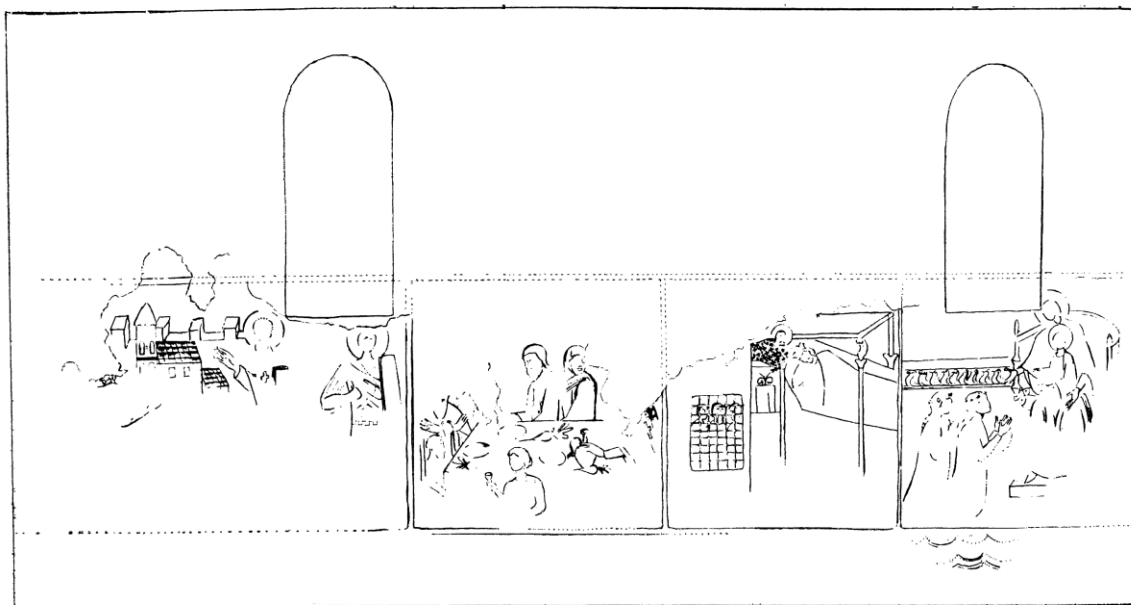


Iconographic scheme of the sanctuary (Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," fig. 1, drawing by M. Buculei)

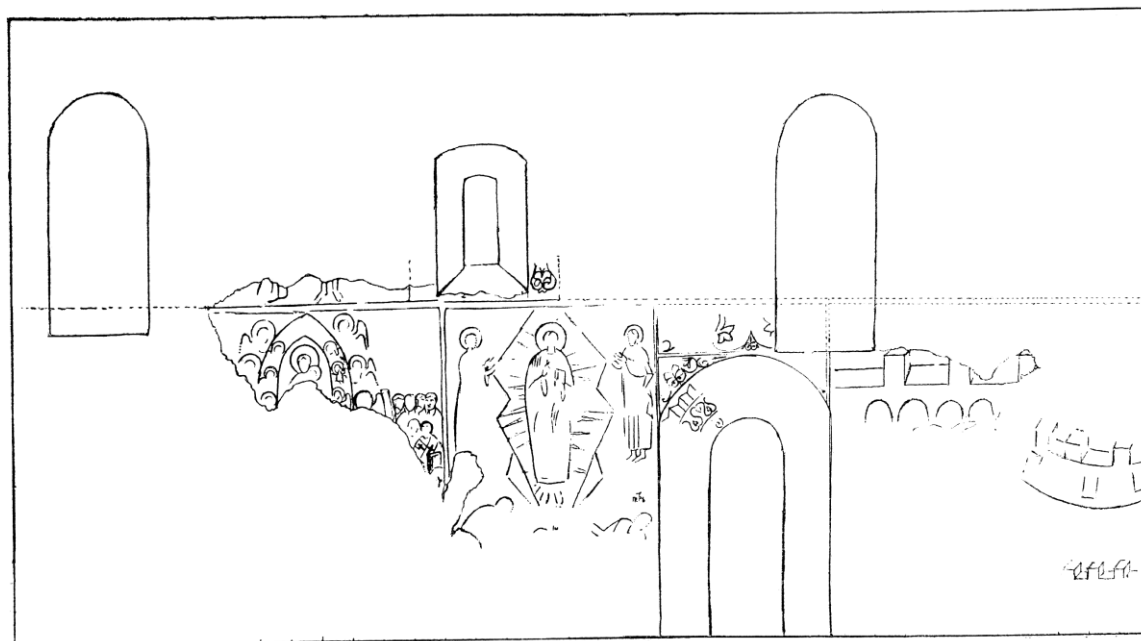




Iconographic scheme of the east wall of the nave (Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," fig. 2, drawing by M. Buculei)



Iconographic scheme of north wall of the nave (Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," fig. 3, drawing by M. Buculei)



Iconographic scheme of the south wall of the nave  
(Cincheza-Buculei, "L'ensemble," fig. 4, drawing by M. Buculei)

## **Leșnic (Hunedoara County)**

The Orthodox Church of St Nicholas

### **Medieval history**

The village of Leșnic is first attested in 1386, when knez Dobre, son of John *de Lesnuk* is confirmed in his ownership of a piece of land by the source of the River Leșnic.<sup>1104</sup> In 1394, King Sigismund of Luxemburg grants to his faithful Romanian Dobre, son of *Iwan de Lesnek*, the knezat of the wood “*Lesnek*,” which was situated in the dependencies of the royal castle of Deva, on the condition he and his heirs continue to carry out the duties befitting to the castellans and vice-castellans of Deva.<sup>1105</sup> In 1404, Dobre, son of John of Leșnic, together with the other knezes on the estate of Deva castle were rewarded for their faithful services towards the king.<sup>1106</sup> In 1453 and 1491 the village of Leșnic is still mentioned on the estate of Deva Castle.<sup>1107</sup>

### **Building date**

Around 1400.<sup>1108</sup>

### **Architecture**

The church has a rectangular nave with a wooden ceiling, a rectangular sanctuary with barrel vaulting, a masonry iconostasis and a narthex with a wooden tower over it. There is only one entrance to the church, situated on the west side. The narthex and the tower were added later, probably in the eighteenth century.<sup>1109</sup> The wall separating the nave and the narthex was opened on each side of the central entry when the narthex was built. Three of the four windows have pointed framings.

### **Painted decoration**

The medieval paintings preserved on the north, west and south walls of the nave have been dated to the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>1110</sup> Maria Mocanu suggests that in the Middle Ages the

<sup>1104</sup> On the history of the village see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 86-87, 100-102.

<sup>1105</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/2, 354 (no. 298); *Doc. Val.*, 481-482 (no. 425).

<sup>1106</sup> Gündisch “Cnezii,” 237.

<sup>1107</sup> Răduțiu, “Domeniul,” 67, 68, 75.

<sup>1108</sup> Drăguț, “Biserica din Leșnic,” 424; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 26; Cincheza-Buculei, “Ansamblul,” 56-57.

<sup>1109</sup> Cantacuzino, “Cercetări,” 128.

<sup>1110</sup> Drăguț, “Biserica din Leșnic,” 424 (beginning of the fifteenth century); Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 105-106 (middle of the fifteenth century).

church was painted in two phases.<sup>1111</sup> In a first phase, probably at the end of the fourteenth century, the church was built and the sanctuary, possibly also the east wall of the nave and the lunette above the entrance, were painted. The sanctuary and the east wall of the nave were covered by a new layer of fresco in the second half of the eighteenth century, after the building of the present masonry iconostasis.<sup>1112</sup> In a second phase, at the middle of the fifteenth century, the rest of the church interior was decorated. The painted wooden ceiling is dated by the preserved inscription to 1681.<sup>1113</sup> The restoration works in 1976 brought to light a representation of the Virgin and Child in the lunette above the entrance to the nave.<sup>1114</sup> At present the paintings are in a very poor state of preservation, which largely prevents their study.

### Dedicatory inscription

ХТИТОРЪ ИШДЕ...<sup>1115</sup>

Ktetor ...

**Supplicatory inscription** on the representation of the Virgin with saints:

МОЛЕНИЕ РАБ(А) БЖІ ... ИШЕ

ПОДРЪЖКА ЕГО И СНА ЕГО...<sup>1116</sup>

The prayer of servant of God...ișe/ and of his wife and son

### Archaeological excavations

Following the archaeological excavations<sup>1117</sup> it has been deduced that the narthex and the iconostasis are later additions, probably dating to the eighteenth century. No foundations were found that could have belonged to a tower attached to the west of the medieval church, as represented in the votive painting.<sup>1118</sup> Burial was practiced inside and outside of the church. The graves inside the nave were disturbed by later interventions. Little archaeological material came

<sup>1111</sup> Mocanu, "Leșnic," 105-106.

<sup>1112</sup> On the eighteenth-century paintings and their possible authors see Drăguț, "Biserica din Leșnic," 432-433. Some repainting was also carried out in the rest of the nave, but only further restoration work will definitely establish the extension of late interventions.

<sup>1113</sup> On the ceiling there is the following inscription: *Hoc opus Martinus Asztalos comitatus Liptovie Teplensis. Anno 1681, die 8 febr.* See Mocanu, "Leșnic," 99 and Porumb, *Dicționar*, 205.

<sup>1114</sup> Mocanu, "Leșnic," 98, note 1.

<sup>1115</sup> Mocanu, "Leșnic," 114.

<sup>1116</sup> Mocanu, "Leșnic," 112.

<sup>1117</sup> The archaeological research was conducted in May 1984 by Gheorghe I. Cantacuzino, who published the results in Cantacuzino, "Cercetări."

<sup>1118</sup> Cantacuzino, "Cercetări," 132 and Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 238, have assumed the church could have had a wooden tower attached to the west of the nave or, respectively, placed on the roof of the nave. On the use of wood and stone for the building of different spaces of the same church see Vătășianu, "Arta în Transilvania în secolele XI-XIII," [Art in Transylvania in the eleventh-thirteenth centuries], 126-127.

to light. A buckle in a grave situated next to the south wall of the nave could date from the second half of the fifteenth century or the sixteenth century. The earliest fragments of pottery may date from the fifteenth century. The excavations did not result in clear-cut data for the dating of the building, but do not exclude the date proposed so far – the end of the fourteenth century.

### **Donors of the painting**

Vasile Drăguț and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei have considered that the donor of the paintings was knez Dobre, son of John of Leșnic.<sup>1119</sup> Maria Mocanu suggests that the church was built and the sanctuary was painted towards the end of the fourteenth century, probably at the initiative of Dobre or some other member of his family. Then, in the middle of the fifteenth century, another donor commissioned the painting of the nave.<sup>1120</sup> Ileana Burnichioiu considers that one should not necessarily take Dobre or his father, John of Leșnic, to be the donors of the paintings. In her opinion, there could have been more knezial families in Leșnic and the patronage of the church could have been collective, as in the case of Densuș.<sup>1121</sup>

### **Function**

Radu Popa has included the church in the category of “court chapels,”<sup>1122</sup> but, as in the case of other cnezial churches, its public use cannot be excluded.

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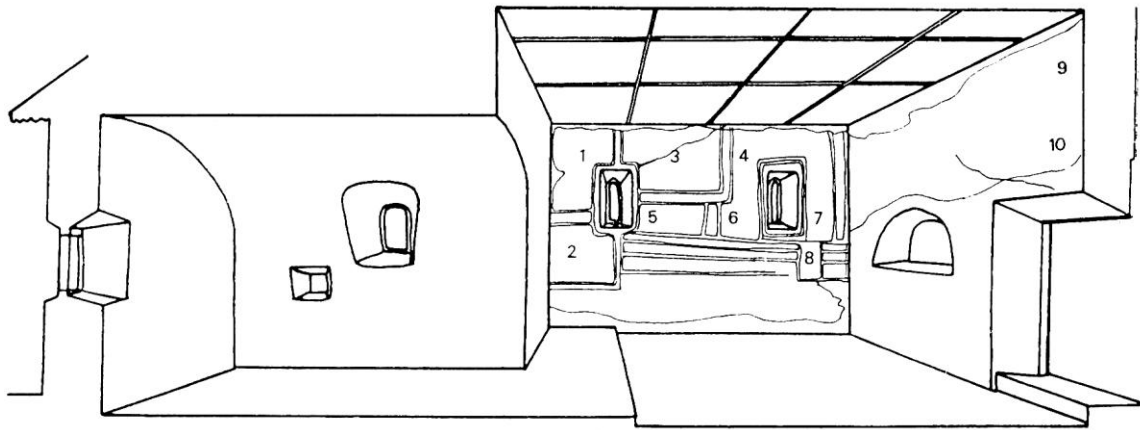
<sup>1119</sup> See Drăguț, “Biserica din Leșnic;” Cincheza-Buculei, “Ansamblul.”

<sup>1120</sup> Mocanu, “Leșnic,” 104-106.

<sup>1121</sup> Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 280.

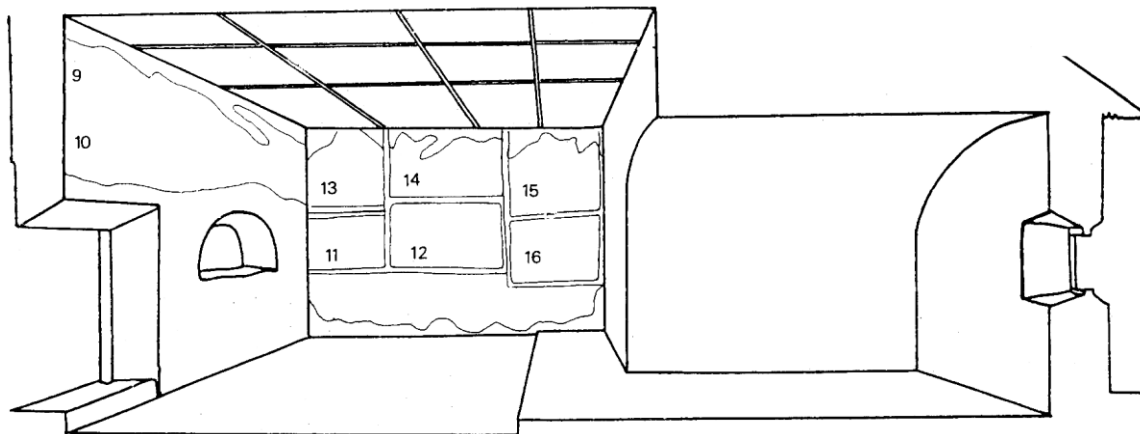
<sup>1122</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 238. According to the same author, the addition of the narthex marked the transformation of the building into a parish church.

**Iconographic schemes of the paintings (Mocanu, "Leșnic," pls. I and II)**



View of the south half of the nave

1. St Nedelea and St Barbara; 2. Sts Peter and Paul; 3. Crucifixion; 4. Resurrection of the Dead; 5. Six-winged and many-eyed angels; 6. Animals deliver the bodies of the deceased; 7. Scene with two lay figures; 8. Lay figure; 9. Last Judgment; 10. Hetoimasia



View of the north half of the nave

- 11, 12. Torments of Hell; 13. Warrior saints on horseback (Demetrius and Theodore?); 14. Virgin with Child and other saints; 15. St George killing the dragon; 16. Votive painting.



## ***Ribița (Hunedoara County)***

The Orthodox Church of St Nicholas

### **Medieval history**

The village of Ribița is found for the first time in the sources in 1439 when the castle of Șiria and its estate were granted to the Serbian despot George Branković by King Albert of Habsburg.<sup>1123</sup>

The village was the center of the Ribița district, which is mentioned in 1441,<sup>1124</sup> 1444,<sup>1125</sup> 1464<sup>1126</sup> on the estate of Șiria castle. According to the manorial survey of the castle from 1525, the village of Ribița belonged to the voivodate of Stephen Moga.<sup>1127</sup> In 1561, the village was still on the estate of the castle.<sup>1128</sup>

Except for the votive painting of Ribița, members of the family may be found for the first time in written sources in 1445, when Ladislas Maróti, the lord of Șiria castle, commissioned the noble men (*nobiles viri*) and esteemed voivodes Șerban and John of Ribița, along with other Romanian voivodes from the upper basin of Crișul Alb, with certain responsibilities in resolving a dispute on his estate.<sup>1129</sup> Other members of the family are sporadically mentioned in fifteenth-century sources (1453, 1461<sup>1130</sup> and 1494<sup>1131</sup>).

Similarly to Crișcior, there is more information on the founders coming from the modern descendants of the family. In a note on the church published in 1868, Ödön Nemes provided some details on the medieval history of the founders of Ribița.<sup>1132</sup> Most probably Nemes was a descendant of the founding family and it may be assumed that his account was based on the family archive.<sup>1133</sup> According to Nemes, in 1369, King Louis the Great granted the villages of Ribița, Mesteacănu de Jos, Mesteacănu de Sus, Brad and “Tértfalva” to Nexa Theodor *de Ribice* as a reward for his bravery. Afterwards, the paternal estate was confiscated from Nexa’s son, Vratislav because of disloyalty (*nota infidelitas*). In 1404, King Sigismund of Luxemburg

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<sup>1123</sup> Csánki, vol. 1, 743.

<sup>1124</sup> Rusu and Pascu Hurezan, *Cetăți*, 68.

<sup>1125</sup> *DRH D/I*, 380.

<sup>1126</sup> Márki, *Aradvármegye*, vol. 1, 393.

<sup>1127</sup> Prodan, “Domeniul,” 77-78.

<sup>1128</sup> Márki, “Arad és Zaránd vármegye,” 368.

<sup>1129</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. I/2, 714-715, and Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. XV/1, 33.

<sup>1130</sup> Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița,” 9.

<sup>1131</sup> Octavian Lupaș, *Voevozi și cneji români în județul Arad* (Arad: “Concordia” Gh. Munteanu, Institut de Arte Grafice Arad, 1941), 29-31.

<sup>1132</sup> Nemes, “A ribicei templom,” Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița,” 7.

<sup>1133</sup> Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița,” 7.



restored Nexa's property to the sons of Vratislav, Mathias, Vratislav and Nicholas. According to Nemes's reading of the votive inscription at Ribița, the three brothers built the church thanking God for the restitution of the property lost by their father. Nemes also relates that three families were born from the three brothers: Ribicey, Nemes and Brádi, attested in 1527.

The Ribiczey family recurs in the sources from the seventeenth century on.<sup>1134</sup>

### **Building date**

Based on the reading of the votive inscription, which mentions a year at the beginning of the fifteenth century,<sup>1135</sup> the church could have been built at the end of the fourteenth-beginning of the fifteenth century. The architecture of the church and the archaeological data do not contradict this dating.

### **Architecture**

The church has a rectangular nave with wooden ceiling, rectangular sanctuary with barrel vault, and western tower. The initial ceiling of the nave must have been of wood, but in the modern times a vault supported by arcs-doubleaux was built. It was later torn down. New windows were also opened and some of the initial windows were enlarged. The preserved original window and door framings are Gothic.<sup>1136</sup>

### **Painted decoration**

Few fragments of painting had been visible before 1994 when an intensive work began to uncover the murals. However, the work was interrupted and the restoration process, only resumed in the last years, is still ongoing. Some of the paintings were completely lost because of the addition of the piers supporting the arcs-doubleaux and the opening of new windows.

The style of the painting is of Byzantine tradition, but the Western influence is also visible, especially in the iconography. The preparatory plaster of the fresco is made of lime and sand with traces of chaff.<sup>1137</sup> Different dates have been proposed for the painting based on different readings of the partially preserved votive inscription: 1404,<sup>1138</sup> 1414/15,<sup>1139</sup> and 1417.<sup>1140</sup>

<sup>1134</sup> Nagy, *Magyarország családai*, vol. 9, 751; Rusu, "Biserica de la Ribița," 9.

<sup>1135</sup> See below various readings of the year.

<sup>1136</sup> See Greceanu, "Influența gotică," 46-48.

<sup>1137</sup> Tugearu, "Biserica Sf. Nicolae," 138; Istudor, "Studiu," 24, 27.

<sup>1138</sup> The reading of Ödön Nemes in 1868 (Nemes, "A ribicei templom," 64).

<sup>1139</sup> The reading of the parish priest, on the occasion of the repairs to the church in 1869-1870 (Dragomir, "Studii," 121, 128). Adrian A. Rusu also proposed 1414 as the correct reading (Rusu, "Biserica de la Ribița," 7-8).

<sup>1140</sup> The reading of Silviu Dragomir as published in 1929 (Dragomir, "Vechile biserici," 254).

Reportedly the church had also exterior paintings,<sup>1141</sup> but they were completely destroyed.<sup>1142</sup>

### Dedicatory inscription

The inscriptions that accompany the votive painting run as follows:<sup>1143</sup>

СѢТИ НИКОЛАЕ<sup>1144</sup>

РАВ[ГЪ] В[О]ЖИ/ЖУПАНЫ/ВЛАДИСЛАВЪ

“The servant of God župan Vladislav”

РАВ[ГЪ] В[О]ЖИ ЖУПАНЫ МИКЛАЪШУ

“The servant of God župan Miclăuș”

РАВА БѢЖ [...]

“The servant of God [...]

РАВ[А БѢЖИ] МИКЛАЪШЕВА Ж[УПАНИЦА]<sup>1145</sup>

“The servant of God the [jupanița] of Miclăuș”

РАВА В[О]ЖИА АНА ВЛАДИСЛА/ВА ДЪЦЬ

“The servant of God Ana the daughter of Vladislav.”

ХИТИТОРЪ ЖУПАНЫ ВЛАДИСЛА/ВЪ ПРѢДАЕТ МОНАСТИРЬ СВАТОМУ/НИКОЛАЕ

“The ktetor župan Vladislav offers the monastery to Saint Nicholas.”

† И С ВОЛЕМЪ О[Т]ЦЪ ПОМОЩЬ/Е ЖУПАНЫ ВЛАДИСЛАВЪ И СЪ ЖУПАНИЦА ЕГО СТАНА/СЪ СЫЗ/ [...] И БРАТОМЪ

ЕГО ЖУПАНЫ МИКЛАЪШУ/И ЖУПАНИЦА ЕГО СОРА И/ [...] НЕ [ВЕ]С[Ъ]Н [О]МЪ Ц[Ѣ]СА[Р]Ь[СТВ]Ъ СЪЗ[ИД]АШЕ

[...] И С[Ъ]ПИСАШЕ МОНАСТИРЬ С[В]ѢТ[О]МЪ НИКОЛАЕ Д/[...] И СЕМЕНЕМЪ ЕГО НА ВѢКА ВЪ ДНЬ [...]

“With the will of the Father and with the help [...] župan Vladislav and his jupanița Stana with the son<sup>1146</sup> and [...], his brother župan Miclăuș and his jupanița Sora [...] Heavenly Kingdom, built and painted the monastery of Saint Nicholas [...] and his stock for ever in the days [...]”

In 1929, Silviu Dragomir published a longer text of the inscription, translated as follows:<sup>1147</sup>

<sup>1141</sup> Nemes, “A ribicei templom,” 64; Drăguț, “Din nou,” 19, note 6.

<sup>1142</sup> Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribîța,” 8-9.

<sup>1143</sup> Except for the inscriptions uncovered after 1994, all the rest are rendered according to Tugearu, “Biserica Sf. Nicolae,” 143-146.

<sup>1144</sup> Inscription uncovered after 1994.

<sup>1145</sup> Inscription uncovered after 1994.

<sup>1146</sup> Adrian Rusu has cast doubts on the correctness of the reading “son” (see Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribîța,” 7).

“By the will of the Father and by the help of the Son and the accomplishing [...] župan Vladislav and his jupanița Stana and the son... and with his brother the župan Miclăuș and his jupanița Sora [...] to the Heavenly King, the monastery of Saint Nicholas was built and painted [to the memory ?] of him and of his stock for ever, until the day of the frightful judgment of Christ. In the days of Jicmund [...] to be *ourik* for his sons [...] finished<sup>1148</sup> in the sixth Saturday of the fast [...] Stana, to finish [...] and they with the blessing of the Holy Ghost finished [...] Priest Dragosin, in the year 6925 (1417), in the month of July 15, was finished and painted with the hand [...]”

In 1868, Ödön Nemes summarized the votive inscription as follows:

“In gratitude to God we raised this church, because King Sigismund returned the property lost by our father Vratislav. Matthias, Vratislav and Nicholas of Ribița, and the girls Ana and Johanka built it in 1404.”<sup>1149</sup>

An inscription of supplication has been recently uncovered next to the representation of St John the Baptist:

МОЛЕ[НІЕ] РАБѢ БЖІ/ДОБРОСЛАВЪ/[И] ПОДРЪЖІА/ЕГО [...]

“The prayer of the servant of God Dobroslav and of his wife...”

In 1868, Ödön Nemes rendered as follows the content of an inscription that has not been preserved, but would have been situated on the northern wall: “It was built under the shepherding of Pope Gregory and Anastasius, 1404.”<sup>1150</sup>

### Archaeological excavations

The archaeological excavations were carried out in 1990.<sup>1151</sup> They revealed the foundations of an iconostasis and of an altar table placed in the middle of the sanctuary. Many burials were placed both inside and outside the church. The stratigraphy had been greatly disturbed and the archaeological material was rather poor. Graves were found basically everywhere inside the

<sup>1147</sup> Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 254.

<sup>1148</sup> Ullea translates *сконча* with “died” (Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 15).

<sup>1149</sup> Nemes, “A ribicei templom,” 64.

<sup>1150</sup> Nemes, “A ribicei templom,” 64. As in the case of the votive inscription, most probably in this case as well Ödön Nemes does not give a word by word reading but a summary of the inscription. Adrian A. Rusu has analyzed the information transmitted by Nemes and proposed the identification of the two figures mentioned in the inscription with Pope Gregory XII and the metropolitan of Severin Anastasius (Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița,” 7-8).

<sup>1151</sup> The results were published in Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribița.”

church (in the sanctuary, nave and under the tower). The coins that were found date from the time of King Sigismund (1387-1437) to the eighteenth century. All funerary slabs lay in secondary position and were broken. One of them had a Latin inscription with the name of the deceased and the date of her death (March 16, 1694) suggesting that at that time the church was no longer Orthodox.

### **Donors of the painting**

The main donors of the paintings were jupans Vladislav and Miclăuș, members of the local leading family. There were also minor donors, like Dobroslav and his wife mentioned in the supplication written next to St John the Baptist.

### **Function**

Private, public and monastic uses have been all proposed for the church.<sup>1152</sup>

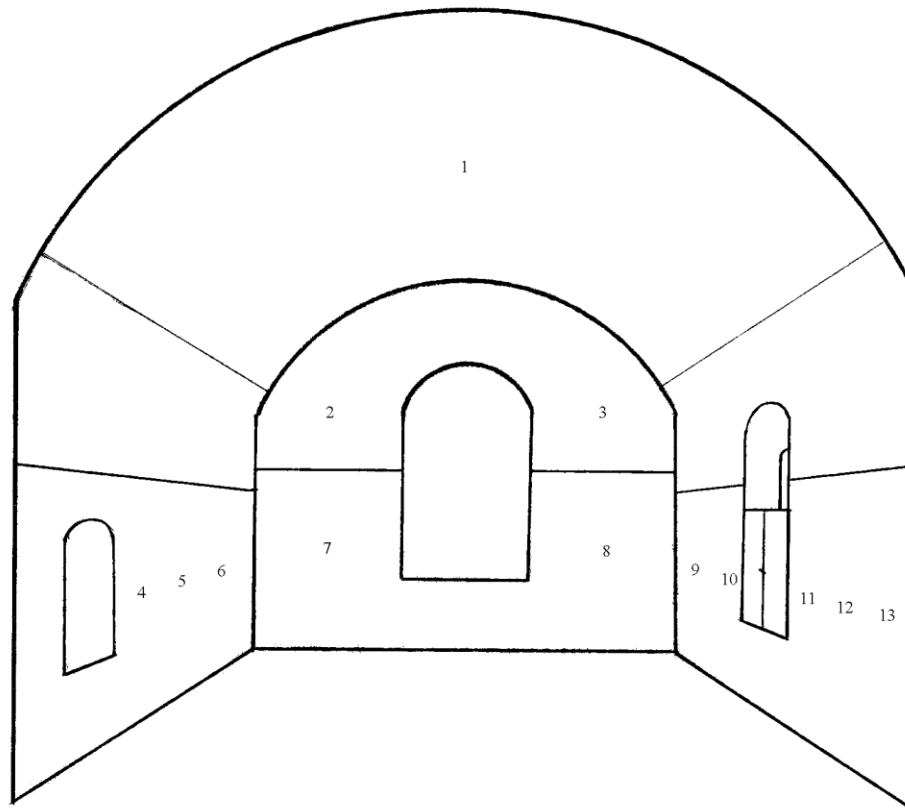
### **Selected bibliography**

Nemes, “A ribicei templom;” Dragomir, “Vechile biserici,” 246-256; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 34-36; Porumb, *Pictura românească*, 26-28; Tugearu, “Biserica Sf. Nicolae;” Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribîța;” Cincheza-Buculei, “Ipoteze;” Porumb, *Dicționar*, 333-336, with further bibliography; Ullea, *Arhanghelul*; Rusu et al., *Dicționarul mănăstirilor*, 216-217.

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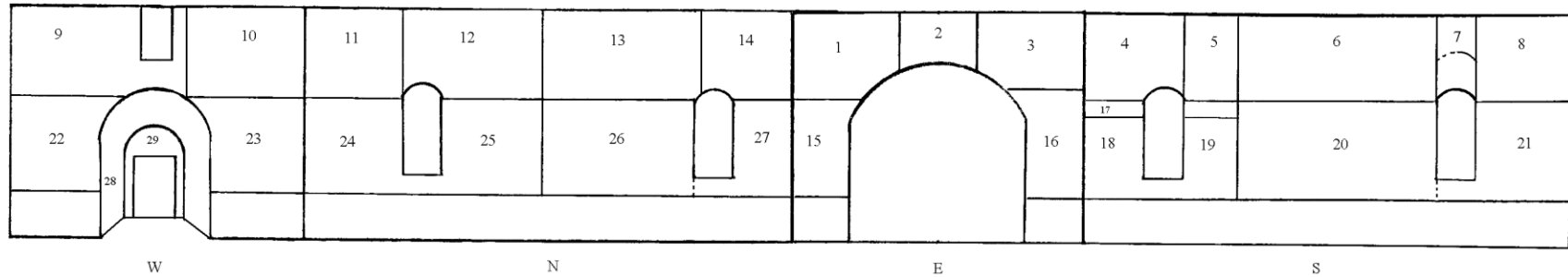
<sup>1152</sup> Rusu, “Biserica de la Ribîța,” 8.

# Iconographic scheme of the sanctuary



1. Christ; 2. Six-winged<sup>CE</sup> angels; 3. ? (Six-winged angel?) 4. Bishop (Cyril of Alexandria?); 5. Bishop; 6. Bishop (Sylvester of Rome?); 7. Angel; 8. Angel; 9. Deacon; 10. Bishop; 11. St Basil; 12. Altar table with chalice and falling heretic; 13. St Nicholas.

## Iconographic scheme of the nave



1. Annunciation; 2. Mandylion; 3. Nativity; 4. Presentation to the Temple; 5. ?; 6. Baptism; 7. Saints; 8. Transfiguration; 9. ?; 10. ?; 11. ?; 12. Crucifixion; 13. Resurrection; 14. Christ in Glory; 15. St Nicholas; 16. Female saint; 17. Inscription; 18. St John the Baptist; 19. St Panteleimon; 20. Votive painting; 21. The Patriarchs in Paradise; 22. Stylite Saint; 23. ?; 24. ?; 25. St George killing the dragon and another equestrian saint; 26. Holy Kings of Hungary; 27. Exaltation of the Cross; 28. Torments of Hell; 29. Christ Emmanuel.

## ***Sântămărie Orlea (Hunedoara County)***

### **The Calvinist Church**

#### **Medieval History**

The village occurs for the first time in the sources in 1315, under the name “villa Sancte Marie,” and in 1332 it was on the list of the papal tithes.<sup>1153</sup> In 1446, when the king granted it to John Căndeia of Râu de Mori, his sons and his brother Căndeia, *Bodogazzonfalva* (the village of the Holy Virgin) was already a royal market town (*oppidum regale*), holding the rights of market and custom.<sup>1154</sup> Radu Popa has assumed Sântămărie Orlea was one of the settlements of royal guests established in Hațeg Land in the second half of the thirteenth century, with the installation of the royal authority at Hațeg.<sup>1155</sup> The church, dating from the end of the thirteenth century, was built for the Catholic settlers.<sup>1156</sup> After Sântămărie Orlea was granted to Căndeia family as a reward for their military achievements, they commissioned several paintings in the church.<sup>1157</sup> The Slavonic inscriptions accompanying the paintings show that the new owners belonged to the Orthodox rite. The first court of the Căndeas at Sântămărie Orlea was built after the middle of the fifteenth century and was situated in the proximity of the church, on the place of the present-day castle.<sup>1158</sup> In the second half of the sixteenth century, the landlords, the now Magyarized Căndeia (Kendeffy) were Reformed Christians and a Reformed priest served at the church.<sup>1159</sup>

#### **Building date**

The building has been dated roughly to the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>1160</sup>

#### **Architecture**

The church has a rectangular nave with wooden ceiling, rectangular sanctuary with cross-ribbed vault and western tower. At some point in time, the sanctuary also had a sacristy.<sup>1161</sup> The

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<sup>1153</sup> On the medieval history of the village see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 122-123.

<sup>1154</sup> *ITH*, 137-138, no. 108; 141-143, no. 114.

<sup>1155</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 73-74, 280, 311.

<sup>1156</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 232.

<sup>1157</sup> Adrian A. Rusu has suggested that the transfer of the Catholic church to the presumably Orthodox Căndeas was possible in the context of the Church Union (Rusu, *Cititori și biserici*, 36, 313.).

<sup>1158</sup> Popa, “Cetățile,” 64.

<sup>1159</sup> On the history of the church from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century see Rusu, *Cititori și biserici*, 314-315.

Rusu suggests that in the sixteenth century the church was used by both Reformed and Orthodox Christians.

<sup>1160</sup> Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 77 (soon after 1272); Entz, “A középkori,” 246, 248 (middle of the thirteenth century); Grigore Ionescu, *Istoria arhitecturii în România* [The history of architecture in Romania], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1963), 99-100 (second half of the thirteenth century); Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 232 (probably 1270-1280).

<sup>1161</sup> Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 309.

architectural decoration has both Romanesque and Gothic features. The Gothic window at the first floor of the tower and the western gallery were probably built at the same time. The building of the gallery has been proposed various dates: fourteenth century,<sup>1162</sup> fifteenth century,<sup>1163</sup> or soon after 1447.<sup>1164</sup>

### Painted decoration

The church preserves paintings dating from four periods. The oldest paintings are represented by the ten consecration crosses decorating the sanctuary and the nave, which were painted soon after the church was built.<sup>1165</sup> The second layer, now visible only in the nave, is dated by a partially preserved inscription to 1311.<sup>1166</sup> Three scenes situated under the gallery, on the west and north walls of the nave, have been dated to the fourteenth century or beginning of the fifteenth century.<sup>1167</sup> The row of apostles in the sanctuary and the two supplicants on the south wall under the gallery were painted in the fifteenth century, after 1447, when the Căndeia family received the church and by 1484, the date of a graffito on the supplicants' portraits.<sup>1168</sup> The style of the paintings in the nave is Byzantine with Italian influences.<sup>1169</sup> Three of the scenes under the gallery are in late Gothic style.<sup>1170</sup> The apostles in the sanctuary and the female donors under the gallery are most probably the work of local painters familiar with Byzantine tradition.<sup>1171</sup>

Traces of painting have also been preserved at the exterior of the church: on the west and south portals and on the south side of the tower.<sup>1172</sup>

<sup>1162</sup> Entz, "A középkeri," 246. In Vătășianu's view the gallery was built at the same time as the church (Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 76).

<sup>1163</sup> Drăguț, "Picturile bisericii din Sântămărie Orlea," 63, nota 22.

<sup>1164</sup> Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 212, note 60; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 233-234; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 312.

<sup>1165</sup> Entz, "A középkeri," 247; Drăguț, "Picturile bisericii din Sântămărie Orlea," 62; Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 202.

<sup>1166</sup> Entz, "A középkeri," 247; Drăguț, "Picturile bisericii din Sântămărie Orlea," 72; Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 202.

<sup>1167</sup> Entz, "A középkeri," 247, 249 (middle of the fourteenth century); Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 210 (end of the fourteenth century); Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 42 (first decades of the fifteenth century).

<sup>1168</sup> Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 210-212; Entz, "A középkeri," 247, 249 (referring only to the apostles). Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 41-42, has dated the apostles and the donors together with the other three scenes under the gallery to the first decades of the fifteenth century.

<sup>1169</sup> Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 16 (the scholar pointed to South Dalmatia as a possible place where this synthesis took place); Drăguț, "Picturile bisericii din Sântămărie Orlea," 72-74; Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 207 (the painter could have come from the region of Kotor).

<sup>1170</sup> Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 207-209; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 41-42.

<sup>1171</sup> Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 210-212. However, Bratu assumes the painter of the apostles came from Wallachia, because the 10 mm intonaco made of lime and tow is not characteristic of Transylvanian painting.

<sup>1172</sup> Bratu, "Sântămărie Orlea," 212, 232.



The frescoes were uncovered at the end of the 60s-70s of the nineteenth century. The 1:1 scale drawings made after the paintings by Ottó Sztéhló, in 1873 and watercolors made by István Gróh in 1905-1907 are preserved in the archives of the National Office of Cultural Heritage, Budapest.<sup>1173</sup>

### **Dedicatory inscription**

The dedicatory inscription, situated on the south wall of the nave and now barely visible, has been read for the first time by Entz Géza:<sup>1174</sup>

H[I]S[T]A ECL[ESIA EST D]EDICAT[A]  
PRO [HONORE] BE(A)TE G[ENITRICIS] AN(N)O D(OMI)NI  
M° C[CC°] VND(E)C[IM]O.

### **Donors of the painting**

The church was initially a parish church and it is possible that the donors of the painting preserved in the nave were the local community that used the church. The apostles represented in the sanctuary and the scene with the two supplicants represented under the gallery must have been commissioned by Căndeia family after they received the church in 1447.

### **Function**

The church was initially a parish church serving a Catholic settlement.<sup>1175</sup> Radu Popa has assumed that when Căndeia family received it, the church became their “court church” and moved to the Orthodox rite.<sup>1176</sup>

### **Selected bibliography**

Entz, “A középkori,” 245-249; Ștefănescu, *La peinture*, 223-239; Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 74-77, 402; Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 11-17, 40-42; Drăguț, “Picturile bisericii din Sântămărie Orlea,” Bratu, “Sântămărie Orlea,” Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 122-123, 232-234; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 309-315; Porumb, *Dicționar*, 360-362; Lionnet, “Le culte ;” Szabó, “Az őraljaboldogfalvi falfestmények feltárása,” Szabó, “Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom,” Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 307-312.

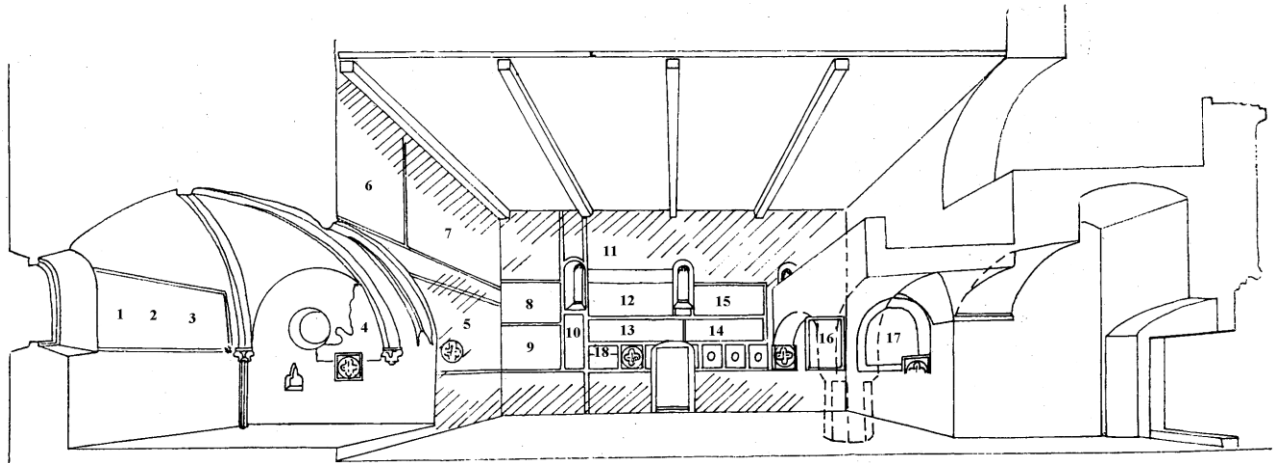
<sup>1173</sup> Tekla Szabó has carried out a new analysis of the paintings of Sântămărie Orlea based on these copies (Szabó, “Az őraljaboldogfalvi templom”). See also Szabó, “Az őraljaboldogfalvi falfestmények feltárása.”

<sup>1174</sup> Entz, “A középkori,” 247. See also Bratu, “Sântămărie Orlea,” 202, 224-225.

<sup>1175</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 232; Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici*, 311.

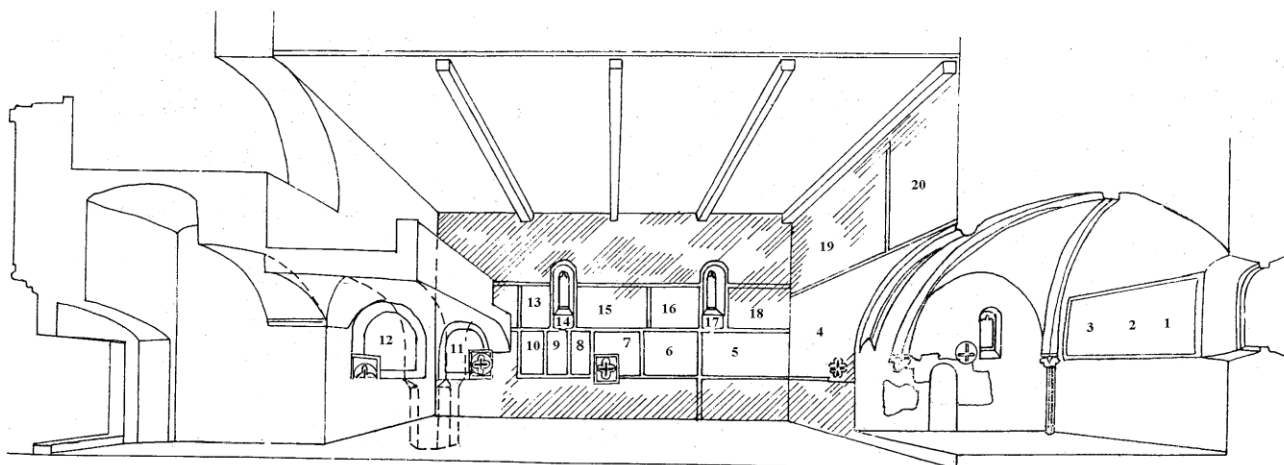
<sup>1176</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 233-234.

**Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, Iconographic schemes** (based on the schemes in Bratu, “Sântămărie Orlea”, pls. I and II)



View of the south half of the church

1. Apostle; 2. Apostle; 3. Apostle Matthew; 4. Apostle?; 5. Nativity; 6. Crucifixion; 7. Descent from the Cross; 8. Dormition of the Virgin; 9. Adoration of the Magi; 10. Holy bishop; 11. Christ in the Last Judgment; 12. Hetoimasia; 13. Souls enter Paradise; 14. Souls cast into Hell; 15. Torments of Hell; 16. Female donors; 17. St Elisabeth caring for the lepers; 18. Votive inscription.



View of the north half of the church

1-3. Apostles; 4. Annunciation; 5. Finding of the Cross; 6. Virgin Mary blessed by three great priests; 7. Birth of the Virgin; 8. Joachim and Anne meeting at the Golden Gate; 9. Annunciation to Joachim; 10. Annunciation to Anne; 11. Death of Poor Paul; 12. Scene from the life of St Elisabeth (?); 13. Unidentified scene; 14. Man of Sorrows. 15. Ascension; 16. Transfiguration; 17. Two martyr saints; 18. Entry to Jerusalem; 19. Way of the Cross; 20. Crucifixion

## ***Strei (Hunedoara County)***

The Orthodox Church of the Dormition of the Virgin

### **Medieval history**

The village was situated in medieval Hunyad County. It has been identified with a village called *Zeykfalua*, which appears in a document from 1404.<sup>1177</sup> In 1453, the village was called *Strigfalva* and belonged to the estate of Deva castle.<sup>1178</sup>

The first known member of the knezial family of Strei has been identified with *Zayk de districtu fluvii Stryg*, mentioned in two documents from 1377. Peter, son of Zayk, together with his paternal cousin Nicholas, son of Ladislav of Streisângeorgiu, receive in 1377 from the Voivode of Transylvania, three Romanian villages (Chitidul de Sus, Chitidul de Jos and Ocoliș), for faithful service, to be owned under knezial law.<sup>1179</sup> In 1404 Ladislav, grandson of Zayk and son of Peter “de Zeikfalua,” is confirmed the ownership of Strei (*possessionis suae Zeykfalua*).<sup>1180</sup> Zayk from the district of the river Strei, mentioned in 1377, was probably the same with Zayk/Zeyk who in 1363 sat in court for the possession of the village of Zlaști, situated not far from Strei.<sup>1181</sup> Radu Popa notes that this Zayk cannot be considered however the founder of the village (Zeykfalva - “the village of Zayk”), because the archaeological data show that the settlement of Strei existed already in the eleventh-twelfth century.<sup>1182</sup> According to the same scholar, the knezial families of Strei and Streisângeorgiu were related through a common ancestor who lived in the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>1183</sup>

### **Building date**

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<sup>1177</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123; Mályusz, *Zsig. okl.*, II/1, no. 3370, who, however, doubts the authenticity of the document preserved only in a later copy.

<sup>1178</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, II/2, 35; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123-124.

<sup>1179</sup> *DRH C*, vol. 15, no. 170 and 173; *Doc. Val.*, no. 233, 234; Radu Popa, “O spadă medievală din Valea Streiului și câteva considerații istorice legate de ea” [A medieval sword from the Valley of Strei and several historical considerations with regard to it], *Sargetia* 9 (1972), 78-81; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123;

<sup>1180</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123; Mályusz, *Zsig. okl.*, II/1, no. 3370, who, however, doubts the authenticity of the document preserved only in a later copy

<sup>1181</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123; *DRH C*, vol. 12, no. 157, 158; *Doc. Val.*, no. 124, 125; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/2, 73.

<sup>1182</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 123.

<sup>1183</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124. See also in the Catalogue, under Streisângeorgiu.

The building of the church is usually dated to the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>1184</sup> Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei has proposed a date in the fourteenth century because in her opinion the painting (mid fourteenth century) must have been carried out immediately after the building of the church.<sup>1185</sup> Also, according to Radu Popa, the irregular interior facing of the walls would not have allowed a long-term use of the church without any plastering. In his opinion, the absence of any plaster layer preceding the wall painting would argue for the building of the church in the first half of the fourteenth century, if the paintings date from the second half of the same century.<sup>1186</sup>

### Architecture

The church has a rectangular sanctuary with groin vaulting, rectangular nave with a wooden ceiling, a western wooden gallery and a western tower. The church has been regarded as a modest replica of the church of Sântămărie Orlea.<sup>1187</sup>

### Painted decoration

Various dates have been suggested for the painting: first third of the thirteenth century;<sup>1188</sup> third quarter of the fourteenth century;<sup>1189</sup> middle of the fourteenth century;<sup>1190</sup> fourteenth century;<sup>1191</sup> middle of the fifteenth century<sup>1192</sup> or the first half of the fifteenth century, at least for some of the paintings.<sup>1193</sup>

The paintings of the sanctuary and upper register of the nave have Romanesque and Gothic features. The paintings in the lower register of the south wall of the nave show the influence of the Trecento. The very poorly preserved paintings on the lower register of the west wall of the

<sup>1184</sup> Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 77, and idem, "Arta în Transilvania în secolele XI-XIII," 128 (soon after the building of the church of Sântămărie Orlea in ca. 1270); Drăguț, "Biserica din Strei," 303 (end of the thirteenth century). Other scholars have dated it earlier in the thirteenth century: Ștefănescu, *La peinture en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, 223 (beginning of the thirteenth century). For an overview of the literature on the building of Strei see Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 235, note 4.

<sup>1185</sup> Buculei, "Portretele," 70-71.

<sup>1186</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 234.

<sup>1187</sup> Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 77, and idem, "Arta în Transilvania în secolele XI-XIII," 128 ; Drăguț, "Biserica din Strei," 303.

<sup>1188</sup> Ștefănescu, *La peinture en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, 223.

<sup>1189</sup> Drăguț, "Biserica din Strei," Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 22; Drăguț, "Din nou," 24; Drăguț, *Arta gotică*, 204.

<sup>1190</sup> Porumb, *Pictura românească*, 12, 25; Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații sociale," 5; Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 40.

<sup>1191</sup> Buculei, "Portretele," 70; Popescu and Tugearu, "Biserica din Strei," 256.

<sup>1192</sup> Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 407.

<sup>1193</sup> Virgil Vătășianu, "Arta în Transilvania din secolul al XIV-lea pînă la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea" [The art in Transylvania from the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century], in *Istoria artelor plastice în România* [The history of fine arts in Romania], vol. 1, ed. George Oprescu (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1968), 217.

nave and the south wall of the space under the tower have been attributed to a local painter working in the Byzantine tradition.<sup>1194</sup>

The paintings were restored in 1970-1972.

### Inscription

An inscription has been preserved in the sanctuary, on the lower register of the south wall. It accompanies the portrait of a layman standing and raising his hands in prayer towards St Nicholas. Different readings have been proposed:

ГРОЗИЕ МЕЦЕРА ИВАНИША / Ё ПИСАЛЪ ЦРКВА... (Grozie [the son?] of master Ivaniş / painted the church...) <sup>1195</sup>

ГРОЗИЕ МЕЦЕРА ИВАНИША Ё ПИСАЛЪ ЦРКВА БРА... ЛИ (Grozie [the son?] of master Ivaniş painted the church...[of Saint Nicholas?])”<sup>1196</sup>

(АМБ)РОЗИЕ МЕЦЕР А ИВАНИЦА Ё ПИСАЛЪ ЦРКВА... (Ambrozie master, and Ivaniţa painted the church...) <sup>1197</sup>

### Archaeological excavations

Radu Popa dug test trenches in 1969-1970 and partially published the results of his archaeological research.<sup>1198</sup> The church was built on the perimeter of a Roman *villa rustica*, dating from the second-third centuries.<sup>1199</sup> The earliest graves with dating elements that would belong to the church come from the end of the fifteenth century. North-west of the church there are remains of a medieval residence.<sup>1200</sup> In the fifteenth century a masonry narthex was added to the west of the church, encompassing the western tower. The narthex was demolished at the latest around 1700, when a new chapel belonging to the Protestant rite was built on the northern side of the church, on top of a crypt. The chapel was demolished at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>1201</sup>

### Donors of the painting

<sup>1194</sup> For the stylistic analysis of the paintings see especially Drăguţ, “Biserica din Strei,” 312-315; Drăguţ, *Pictura murală*, 19-21; Cincheza-Buculei, “Portretele,” 64-69; Popescu and Tugearu, “Biserica din Strei,” 256-259.

<sup>1195</sup> Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 50-53. Buculei has given a different reading of the inscription: Ambrozie master, and Ivaniş painted the church-- which Breazu considers very improbable (Buculei, “Portretele,” 62; Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 52).

<sup>1196</sup> Popescu and Tugearu, “Biserica din Strei,” 241, 270.

<sup>1197</sup> Buculei, “Portretele,” 62; Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 51.

<sup>1198</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 40-45, 68-69, 234-235.

<sup>1199</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 40.

<sup>1200</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 234.

<sup>1201</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 234-235.

The donors were probably the knezial family of Strei, but the contribution of other people is also possible given the many lay portraits in the church.

### Function

It has been argued that the church functioned exclusively as a private chapel for the knezial family<sup>1202</sup> or as a public church, with knezial support.<sup>1203</sup>

### Selected bibliography:

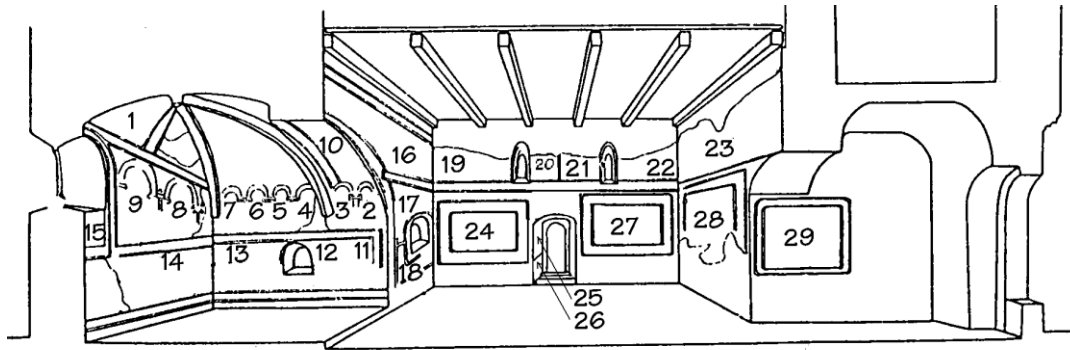
Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 40-45, 68-69, 123-124, 234-236; Gheorghe Baltag, “Podoabe din secolele XIV-XVIII din inventarul necropolelor de la Streisângeorgiu și Strei – județul Hunedoara” [Jewels from the fourteenth-eighteenth centuries in the inventory of the cemeteries of Streisângeorgiu and Strei – Hunedoara County], *RMM*, 1978, no.1: 53-56; Ștefănescu, *La peinture en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, 211-223; Vătășianu, *Istoria*, 77, 405-407; Drăguț, “Biserica din Strei,” Drăguț, *Pictura murală*, 18-23; Drăguț, “Din nou,” Buculei, “Portretele,” Popescu and Tugearu, “Biserica din Strei,” Porumb, *Dicționar*, 385-388, with further bibliography on the painting up to 1998; Ullea, *Arhanghelul*, 36-43, 50-55; Prioteasa, “Western and Eastern Themes,” Burnichioiu, “Biserici,” 319-324.

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<sup>1202</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 234. Popa has considered it a private chapel because of the nave’s small dimensions (ca. 30m<sup>2</sup>), the presence of the medieval residence in the proximity of the church, and the presence of donors’ portraits in the church.

<sup>1203</sup> Burnichioiu, *Biserici*, 320. Burnichioiu’s arguments are the church’s placement outside the residential court, the community cemetery that developed around the church and the apparent absence of other medieval church in the village.

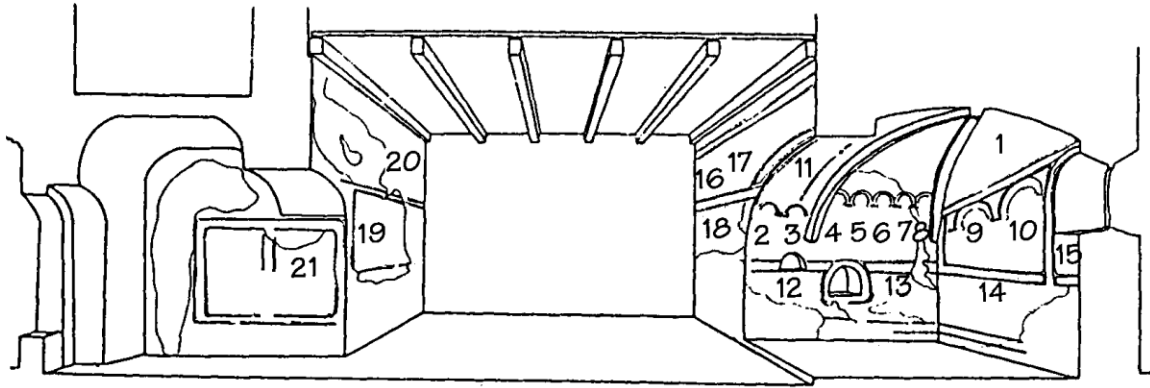
**Strei, Church of the Dormition, Iconographic schemes** (based on the drawings in Popescu and Tugearu, *Biserica din Strei*, pls. I and II)



View of the south half of the church

1.Christ in Glory; 2. Doctor Saint; 3. Saint Cosmas; 4. Apostle Luke; 5. Apostle Thomas; 6. Apostle Matthew; 7. Apostle Bartholomew; 8. Apostle John; 9.Apostle Peter; 10. Prophets in medallions; 11. Grozie; 12. Saint Nicholas; 13.Saint Peter; 14.Saint Cyril; 15. Man of Sorrows; 16. The Virgin of the Annunciation with two holy women 17. St Petka and St Sreda; 18. Lay figure; 19. Nativity; 20. Baptism; 21. Adoration of the Magi; 22. Flight into Egypt; 23. Last Supper; 24. 40 Martyrs of Sebasteia and St Nicholas; 25. Lay figure; 26. Lay figure; 27. Virgin with Child and other saints; 28. Saints; 29. Holy bishop and St George





View of the north half of the church

1. Christ in Glory; 2, 3. Female saints; 4-6. Apostles; 7. Saint (Prophet Isaiah?) 8. Enthroned Virgin with Child; 9. Apostle Jacob; 10. Apostle Paul; 11. Prophets in medallions; 12. Holy bishop 13. Bishop Kalinik; 14. St John; 15. Man of Sorrows; 16. Archangel Michael with a lay figure at his feet; 17. Archangel Gabriel in the Annunciation; 18. Schutzmantelmadonna; 19. Saints; 20. Unidentified scene (Crucifixion?); 21. Lay figure and female saint (Holy Virgin?)

## ***Streisângeorgiu (Hunedoara County)***

The Orthodox Church of Saint George

### **Medieval history**

According to the oldest votive inscription, the church was built in 1313/1314 for the help and forgiveness of sins of knez Balea (or Balotă), when priest was a certain Naneș. The village, situated in Hunyad County, appears for the first time in the sources in 1377, when *Ladislaus de Sancto Georgio* (or *Zengewrg*) and his cousin Nicholas, son of Zayk from the district of the Strei River, were granted three Romanian villages by the Voivode of Transylvania, Ladislas of Losoncz, for faithful services.<sup>1204</sup> The villages, which were to be held under knezial law, had been confiscated from knez Căndea (*Kend*), who was hanged for infidelity. His sons took refuge in Wallachia, from where they continued to be infidels to the king.<sup>1205</sup> In 1392, when Ladislas, son of Nicholas *de Zenthgeorgh* and Chendereș (*Kenderes*, Căndreș), son of Gregory *de eadem Zenthgeorgh* exchanged some estates, Streisângeorgiu was situated in the district of Deva.<sup>1206</sup> In 1453, the village (*Zenthgywrgh*) also belongs to the estate of the Deva castle.<sup>1207</sup> Radu Popa has assumed Streisângeorgiu and Strei were the centres of the knezat of Streisângeorgiu, a territorial unit that would have included the majority of the Romanian villages situated on the lower course of the river Strei.<sup>1208</sup>

The votive painting of 1408 represents the ktetor župan Chendereș, his wife Nistora, Chendereș's son Vlaicu and župan Lațco. The relationship between Chendereș and Lațco remains unclear. Radu Popa assumes Lațco (Lațcu) represented in the votive painting is the same with Lațcu mentioned in two documents from 1392 and 1404, as being a relative of Chendereș.<sup>1209</sup> G. Mihăilă and Anca Bratu assume Lațco represented in the painting is a son of Chendereș, and a

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<sup>1204</sup> *DRH C*, vol. 15, nos. 170 and 173; *Doc. Val.*, 271-273; Popa, "Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii," 10-11; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124.

<sup>1205</sup> More on this episode in Popa, "O spadă," 78-81.

<sup>1206</sup> *Doc. Val.*, 429-430; Radu Popa, "Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii de istorie românească din secolele XI-XIV în sudul Transilvaniei" [Streisângeorgiu. Evidences for Romanian History from the eleventh -fourteenth centuries in southern Transylvania), *RMM*, 1978, no.1, 11; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124.

<sup>1207</sup> Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, II/2, 35; Popa, "Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii," 12; Răduțiu, "Domeniul cetății Deva," 67, 78.

<sup>1208</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 176-178.

<sup>1209</sup> Popa, "Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii," 11-12; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124-125.

different person from the Lațco mentioned in 1392 and 1404.<sup>1210</sup> Cîndreș occurs as a *homo regius*<sup>1211</sup> in several documents from 1404 and 1406 and so does Lațcu on one occasion, in 1404.<sup>1212</sup> Radu Popa assumes a common ancestor, probably the knez Balea, for the knezial families of Strei and Streisângeorgiu.<sup>1213</sup>

### Building date

The church was built in the first half of the twelfth century.<sup>1214</sup> The building underwent several changes during the Middle Ages, among them the addition of the present western tower, in ca. 1408.<sup>1215</sup>

### Architecture

The church has a rectangular sanctuary with a modified groined vault, a rectangular nave with barrel vault and arc-doubleau, and a western tower supported by the western wall of the nave and two piers inside the nave.<sup>1216</sup> The present tower dates from ca. 1408. A wooden narthex has been added, probably in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The narthex caught fire around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was rebuilt in masonry. The masonry narthex was demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Painted decoration

The church was painted twice in the Middle Ages, but subsequent paintings largely covered the medieval decoration.<sup>1217</sup> Initially the interior of the church was only plastered. The first layer of painting is dated by the votive inscription in the sanctuary to 1313/4. It covers the walls of the sanctuary and a great deal of the nave. At present it is partially visible in the sanctuary and the north and south walls of the nave. Traces of painting, consisting of a zig-zag decorative motif

<sup>1210</sup> Mihăilă, “Cele mai vechi inscripții,” 37, and Bratu, “Streisângeorgiu,” 291. Mihăilă’s and Bratu’s arguments for the Lațco in the painting being the son of Cîndreș are the fact that Lațco has a rather young face and the votive inscription mentions as founders Cîndreș, his wife and their “sons.”

<sup>1211</sup> A representative of the king or the Transylvanian voivode for the enactment of particular orders.

<sup>1212</sup> Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124.

<sup>1213</sup> See the genealogical tree proposed by Radu Popa in Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 125.

<sup>1214</sup> Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii,” 26; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 225-226.

<sup>1215</sup> On the dating and the architectural history of the building see Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii,” Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 225-228, and Ș. Popescu-Dolj, “Rezultatele cercetărilor de arhitectură la biserica din Streisângeorgiu, județul Hunedoara” [The results of the architectural research of the church of Streisângeorgiu, Hunedoara County], *RMM* 1978, no. 1, 43-46.

<sup>1216</sup> The initial building underwent some changes in the Middle Ages. For the architectural evolution of the building see Ș. Popescu-Dolj, “Rezultatele cercetărilor de arhitectură la biserica din Streisângeorgiu, județul Hunedoara” (The results of the architectural research of the church of Streisângeorgiu, Hunedoara County), *RMM* 1978, no. 1, 43-46.

<sup>1217</sup> On the many layers of painting at Streisângeorgiu see Oliviu Boldura et al., “Rezultatul cercetărilor efectuate asupra picturilor medievale românești de la Streisângeorgiu” [The result of the research of the Romanian medieval paintings of Streisângeorgiu], *RMM*, 1978, no. 1, 47-50.

and crosses, have also been preserved on the exterior of the church around the entrance. The second layer of painting dates from 1408 and covers particular sections of the nave. Only the donors' portrait on the east wall of the tower is discernible within this layer. The restoration that started in 1976 was interrupted and the paintings are in a very poor state of preservation.

### Dedicatory inscriptions

The earliest votive inscription is on the east wall of the sanctuary :<sup>1218</sup>

1. ѿвѣ л: з : тѣсѣ ꙗе: и: и:сѣѣтно
2. и:к: и:в: почи[и]ѣмъ[?] црѣ: п
3. омоуиѣ сѣаго: гѣорги
4. ѣ и матере бѣа: и вѣсѣ
5. хѣ: сѣѣхѣ: [на] помоу[ѣ]
- 6 . [и ѡс(т)авение] грѣхѡмъ кнзѡу
7. балѣи: и на помоуѣ и спасение
8. ѿ: и ѡставение грѣ
9. хѡмъ попоу нане
10. шоу и рѣѡѣилѣ зогрѡѣѣ

“† In the year 6822 (1313-1314) we made (repaired) [?] the church with the help of Saint George and of the Mother of God and of all saints, [for] the help [and forgiveness] of sins of knez Balea and for the help and redemption † and forgiveness of sins of priest Naneș and of painter Theofil.”<sup>1219</sup>

In her study of the inscription, Monica Breazu made two new observations: she read the name of the knez as Balotă (балѡтѣ in the text) and proposed a different reading for the end of the inscription. Her translation is the following:<sup>1220</sup>

<sup>1218</sup> The inscription provided here is after G. Mihăilă, “Cele mai vechi inscripții cunoscute ale românilor din Transilvania (1313-1314 și 1408, Streisângeorgiu-orașul Călan, județul Hunedoara)” [The oldest known inscriptions of the Romanians in Transylvania (1313-1314 and 1408, Streisângeorgiu - the town of Călan, Hunedoara County)], *RMM* 1978, no. 1: 33-38. See also Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturie,” 22-23 and fig. 12; Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 53-55; Anca Bratu, “Biserica ortodoxă Sf. Gheorghe din satul Streisângeorgiu (Călan, județul Hunedoara)” [The Orthodox church of St George in the village of Streisângeorgiu (Călan, Hunedoara County)], *PVAR* 5/1, 293.

<sup>1219</sup> Mihăilă, “Cele mai vechi inscripții,” 34.

<sup>1220</sup> See Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 53-55.

“† In the year 6822 (1313-1314) we started the church with the help of Saint George and of the Mother of God and of all saints, for the help and forgiveness of sins of knez Balotă and for help and redemption † for forgiveness of sins of priest Naneș, and (being) painter Theofil.”

The votive painting situated on the eastern wall of the tower and repainted in 1743 also preserves the following inscriptions:<sup>1221</sup>

ра(в) вжї(и) жꙋпа(и) лацко

“The servant of God župan Lațco”

рава вжїе жꙋ(п)аница нистѡра

“The servant of God jupanița Nistora”

ктїтѡ(р) жꙋпа(и) ке(и) дрешꙋ:~ предаѣтъ манастирь сѣѣтомиꙋ гевѡргїе

“The ktetor župan Chendreșu dedicates the monastery to Saint George”

рав вжїи вланико снѣ ке(и) дреш

“The servant of God Vlaico, son of Chendreș”

† въ илѣ ѡца. и снѣ. и сѣаго

дѣа: съзида жꙋпан ке(и) дреш(ꙋ)

и негова жꙋпаница нистѡра :и снѣ

ве его: се(и) манастирь сѣаго велї

ко мꙋченика и страстѡтер(п)ца хр(и)

стова гевѡргїе : и соверши се

и написа се кодами [?] е(с) [?] на<sup>1222</sup>

здрав(и) [е] теле(с)ное и дѣшевно[е]

сп(с)нїе: въ днѣ жикмон(а)

кралѣ. и загорскїи[(х)] ввѡд[ѣ]

иѡанѣша и ѣакова: в л(т):

сцꙋї ѡкто(и): в д(и):~

<sup>1221</sup> The readings of the inscriptions are from Mihăilă, “Cele mai vechi inscripții,” 38. See also Bratu, “Streisângeorgiu,” 298.

<sup>1222</sup> For this row, Breazu proposed a different reading: и н писасе кода ми(с) е на... (Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 55).

“† In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, did župan Chendreșu and his županitsa Nistora and his sons build this monastery of the great martyr and soldier of Christ George; and it was finished and painted [...] for bodily health and soul redemption, in the days of King Jicmon and of the Transylvanian Voivodes Ioaneș and Iacov, in the year 6917, October, day 2.”<sup>1223</sup>

### **Archaeological excavations**

Archaeological excavations at the church and the surrounding cemetery were carried out by Radu Popa in 1975-1976.<sup>1224</sup> Popa has concluded that the present church was built in the first half of the twelfth century and it was preceded by a wooden church with the same ground plan and dimensions. The foundations of the church do not cut any graves and the cemetery that developed around it served a whole community. The earliest graves date from the end of the eleventh-beginning of the twelfth century. Only four graves have been found in the church. They are situated in the nave. One probably dates from the end of the fourteenth–beginning of the fifteenth century, the other three from the end of the eighteenth–beginning of the nineteenth century. The earliest burials outside the church date from the second half of the eleventh century and were related to the wooden church that preceded the masonry church built in the twelfth century. Test trenches revealed the existence of a knezial residence 50-100 meters north-west of the medieval church.<sup>1225</sup> This residence was abandoned at the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century. It appears that the family moved to a new residence, built in the fifteenth century, south of the church, now situated in the center of the village.

### **Donors**

Based on the votive inscription in the sanctuary, the paintings from 1313/1314 were commissioned by knez Balea (read also Balotă). In 1408, župan Chendreș (Cândreș) made some changes to the architecture of the church and commissioned its partial repainting. Chendereș occurs in sources around 1400 as a well-to-do knez of Streisângeorgiu.

### **Function**

<sup>1223</sup> Mihăilă, “Cele mai vechi inscripții,” 38. The Voivodes Ioaneș and Iacov are John Tamási and Jacob Lackfi.

<sup>1224</sup> On the results of the archaeological excavations see Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturie.”

<sup>1225</sup> See Victor Eskenasy, “Cercetări și sondaje arheologice pe teritoriul așezării medievale de la Streisângeorgiu” [Investigations and test trenches on the territory of the medieval settlement at Streisângeorgiu], *RMM*, 1978, no. 1: 57-62.

According to Radu Popa, the church primarily served the knezial family.<sup>1226</sup> Adrian A. Rusu considered that the term “monastery” in the votive painting from 1408 should be understood in its proper sense.<sup>1227</sup>

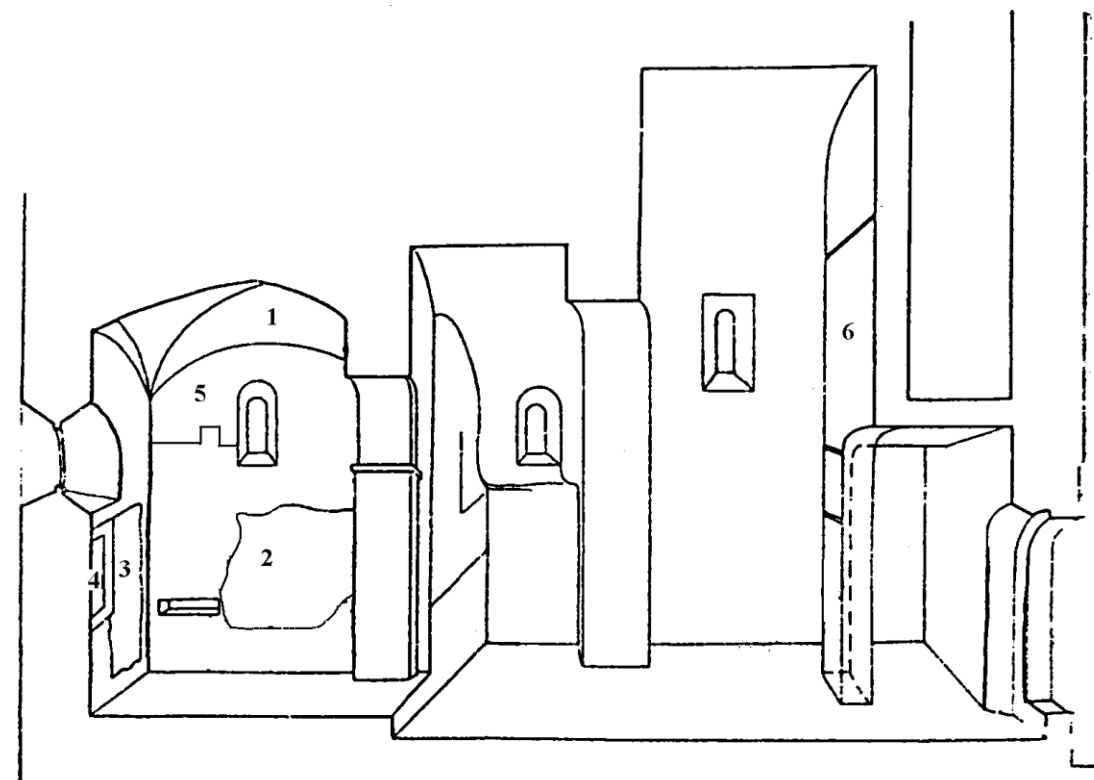
**Selected bibliography:** Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 124-125, 225-228; Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii,” Popescu-Dolj, “Rezultatele,” Eskenasy, “Cercetări,” Mihăilă, “Cele mai vechi inscripții,” Oliviu Boldura et al., “Rezultatul,” Drăguț, “Streisângeorgiu,” Baltag, “Podoabe,” Bratu, “Streisângeorgiu,” Breazu, “Studiu epigrafic,” 53-55; Porumb, *Dicționar*, 388-390, with further bibliography on the painting up to 1998; Rusu et al., *Dicționarul mănăstirilor*, 249-250; Prioteasa, *Western Influences*; Burnichioiu, *Biserici*, 324-327.

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<sup>1226</sup> Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii,” 30; Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 227. Popa’s arguments are as follows: the church’s small dimensions (16m<sup>2</sup> for the nave), the proximity of the knezial residence, a tribune that would have been built on the west side of the nave, and the votive inscriptions mentioning the knezes as founders. Radu Popa also assumes that the addition of the wooden narthex, probably in the sixteenth century, would have marked the transformation of the church into a parish church (see Popa, *Țara Hațegului*, 227; Popa, “Streisângeorgiu. Mărturii,” 29).

<sup>1227</sup> Rusu et al., *Dicționarul mănăstirilor*, 250.

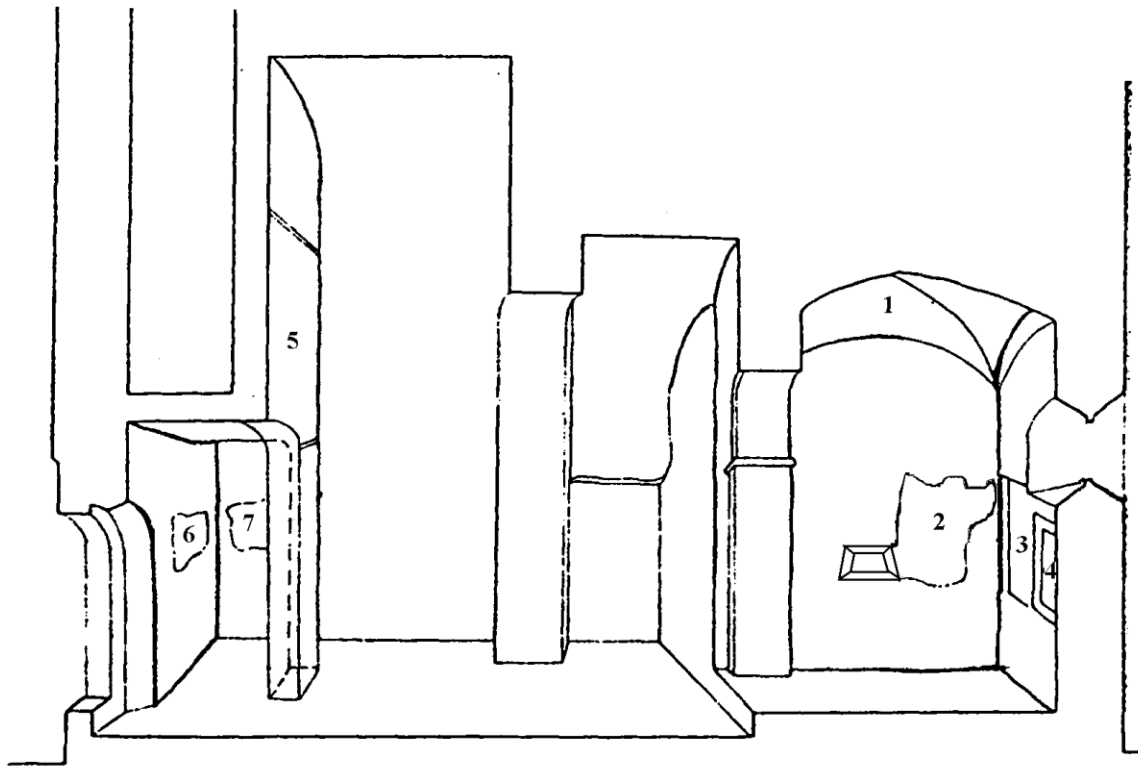
**Church of St George, Streisângeorgiu, iconographic schemes** (based on the plans in Bratu, “Streisângeorgiu,” pl. I and II)



View of the south half of the church

1. Maiestas Domini; 2. Warrior saint on horseback; 3. Holy bishop; 4. Votive inscription (1313/14); 5. Prophet?; 6. Votive painting (1408).





View of the north half of the church

1. Maiestas Domini; 2. Warrior saint on horseback; 3. St Basil; 4. Votive inscription (1313/14);  
5. Votive painting (1408); 6, 7. Torments of Hell.

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## Abbreviations

|   |  |
|---|--|
| AASS  | <i>Acta Sanctorum</i>  |
| BHG   | Halkin, François. <i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> . Subsidia hagiographica 8a. 3rd ed. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1957. <i>Novum auctarium Bibliothecae hagiographicae graecae</i> . Subsidia hagiographica 65. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1984.                         |
| Braun, <i>Tracht</i>                                  | Braun, Joseph. <i>Tracht und Attribute der Heiligen in der Deutschen Kunst</i> . Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1992.   |
| Csánki  | Csánki, Deszö. <i>Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában</i> [The historical geography of Hungary in the age of the Hunyadi]. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1890-.  |
| Dionysius of Furna, <i>Carte</i>                      | Dionysius of Furna. <i>Carte de pictură</i> . Translation by Smaranda Bratu Stati and Șerban Stati, foreword by Vasile Drăguț, introduction and illustrations by Victor Iernonim Stoichiță. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1979.  |
| <i>Doc. Val.</i>                                      | Lukinich, E. and L. Gáldi, ed. <i>Documenta historiam Valachorum in Hungaria illustrantia usque ad annum 1400 p. Christ.</i> Budapest, 1941.   |
| <i>DRH C</i>  | <i>Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania</i>   |
| <i>DRH D</i>  | <i>Documenta Romaniae Historica. D. Relații între Țările Române</i>  |
| Dvořáková et al., <i>Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba</i> , | Dvořáková, Vlasta, Josef Krása, and Karel Stejskal. <i>Stredoveká nástenná mal'ba na Slovensku</i> [The medieval mural painting in Slovakia]. Prague: Odeon, 1978; Bratislava: Tatran, 1978.   |
| <i>Erdélyi okmánytár</i>                              | Jakó, Zsigmond, ed. <i>Erdélyi okmánytár</i> [Register of Transylvanian charters], vol. 1 (1023-1300). Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1997.  |
| <i>Érdy codex</i>                                     | Volf, György, ed. <i>Érdy codex</i> , 2 vols. Régi magyar codexek és nyomtatványok, vols. 4-5. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Nyelvtudományi Bizottsága, 1876.   |
| Hurmuzaki, <i>Documente</i>                           | Hurmuzaki, Eudoxiu et al. <i>Documente privitoare la istoria românilor</i> [Documents regarding the history of the Romanians]. Vols. 1/2, 2/2 and 15/1. Bucharest, 1890, 1891, 1911.   |
| <i>ITH</i>  | Rusu, Adrian Andrei, Ioan Aurel Pop and Ioan Drăgan, ed. <i>Izvoare privind evul mediu românesc: Țara Hațegului în secolul al XV-lea (1402-1473)</i> [Sources pertaining to the Romanian Middle Ages. The Hațeg Land in the 15 <sup>th</sup> century (1402-1473)], vol. 1. Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1989. |
| Kaftal, <i>Central and</i>                            | Kaftal, George. <i>Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian</i>  |

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| <i>South</i>                                  | <i>Schools of Painting</i> . Florence: Le Lettere, 1986.  |
| Kaftal, <i>North East</i>                     | Kaftal, George. <i>Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy</i> . Florence: Sansoni, 1978.   |
| Kaftal, <i>North West</i>                     | Kaftal, George. <i>Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy</i> . Florence: Sansoni, 1985.   |
| Kaftal, <i>Tuscan</i>                         | Kaftal, George. <i>Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting</i> . Florence: Le Lettere, 1986.   |
| <i>LCI</i>                                    | Kirschbaum, Englebert and Wolfgang Braunfels, ed. <i>Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie</i> . 8 Vols. Rome, Freiburg, Basel and Vienna: Herder, 1994.  |
| <i>Legenda Aurea</i>                          | Jacobus de Voragine. <i>Legenda Aurea con le miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.</i> , 2 vols. Critical edition reviewed and commented under the supervision of Giovanni Paolo Maggioni. Italian translation by Francesco Stella et al. Foreword by Claudio Leonardi. Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo; Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2007.                             |
| <i>Le Typicon</i>                             | <i>Le Typicon de la Grande Église</i> . Ms. Sainte-Croix no. 40, X <sup>e</sup> siècle. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Juan Mateos S.J. Vol. 1: <i>Le cycle des douze mois</i> . Orientalia Christiana Analecta 165. Vol. 2: <i>Le cycle des fêtes mobiles</i> . Orientalia Christiana Analecta 166. Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1962, 1963. |
| <i>LThK<sup>2</sup></i>                       | Buchberger, Michael et al., ed. <i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i> . 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition. 10 Vols. Freiburg im Breisgau : Herder, 1930-1938.   |
| Mályusz, <i>Zsig. okl.</i>                    | Mályusz, Elemér and Iván Borsa, ed. <i>Zsigmondkori oklevéltár</i> . Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1951-.  |
| Marosi, ed.,<br><i>Magyarországi művészet</i> | Marosi, Ernő, ed. <i>Magyarországi művészet 1300-1470 körül</i> [Fine Arts in Hungary circa 1300-1470]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987.  |
| <i>Menaion</i>                                | <i>Μηναίων</i> , 12 vols., ed. Bartholomaios Koutloumousianos. Venice, 1861-. 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition.  |
| <i>ODB</i>                                    | Kazhdan Alexander P. et al., ed. <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> . 3 Vols. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.  |
| PG  | <i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne,   |
| PL  | <i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne.   |
| <i>PVAR 5/1</i>                               | Drăguț, Vasile ed. <i>Pagini de veche artă românească</i> [Pages of old Romanian art]. Vol. 5, no.1. <i>Repertoriul picturilor murale medievale din România (sec. XIV-1450)</i> [Catalogue of medieval wall paintings in Romania, 14 <sup>th</sup> century -1450]. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1985.   |
| Réau, <i>Iconographie,</i>                    | Réau, Louis. <i>Iconographie de l'art chrétien</i> . Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955-1959.  |
| <i>RBK</i>                                    | Wessel, Klaus and Marcel Restle, ed. <i>Reallexikon zur byzantinische Kunst</i> . Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1966-.   |

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| Schiller, <i>Ikonographie</i>                    | Schiller, Gertrud. <i>Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst</i> . 5 Vols. Güthersloh: Güthersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1966-1991.   |
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| AIAC    | <i>Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie Cluj-Napoca</i>       |
| AIIC    | <i>Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj</i>                        |
| AIAC    | <i>Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie, Cluj-Napoca</i>      |
| BZ      | <i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>                                       |
| BMI     | <i>Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice</i>                                 |
| CA      | <i>Cahiers archéologiques</i>  |
| DChAE   | <i>Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας</i>                |
| JÖB     | <i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantistik</i>                       |
| RMM     | <i>Revista Muzeelor si Monumentelor. Monumente Istorice si de Artă</i> |
| RRH     | <i>Revue roumaine d'histoire</i>                                       |
| RRHA    | <i>Revue roumaine d'histoire de l'art. Série Beaux-Arts</i>            |
| SCIA.AP | <i>Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică</i>       |
| SMIM    | <i>Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie</i>                            |

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## Concordance of Place Names

| Present Name             | Country  | Hungarian/German Name     |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| Alba Iulia               | Romania  | Gyulafehérvár/Weissenburg |
| Bădești                  | Romania  | Bádok                     |
| Čerín                    | Slovakia | Cserény                   |
| Chimindia                | Romania  | Kéménd                    |
| Chornotysiv (Чорнотисів) | Ukraine  | Feketeardó                |
| Crăciunel                | Romania  | Homoródkarácsonyfalva     |
| Crișcior                 | Romania  | Kristyor                  |
| Daia                     | Romania  | Székelydália              |
| Dârjiu                   | Romania  | Székelyderzs              |
| Dârlos                   | Romania  | Darlac /Durles            |
| Deva                     | Romania  | Déva                      |
| Dobšiná                  | Slovakia | Dobsina/Dobschau          |
| Ghelința                 | Romania  | Gelence                   |
| Hălmagiu                 | Romania  | Nagyhalmágys              |
| Hațeg                    | Romania  | Hátszeg                   |
| Horiany (Горяни)         | Ukraine  | Gerény                    |
| Hunedoara                | Romania  | Vajdahunyad               |
| Khust (Хуст)             | Ukraine  | Huszt/ Husst              |
| Kraskovo                 | Slovakia | Karaszko                  |
| Krásnohorské Podhradie   | Slovakia | Krasznahorkaváralja       |
| Kyjatice                 | Slovakia | Kiete                     |
| Leșnic                   | Romania  | Lesnyek                   |
| Mălâncrav                | Romania  | Almakerék/ Malmkrog       |
| Mărtiniș                 | Romania  | Homoródszentmárton        |
| Martjanci                | Slovenia | Mártonhely                |

|                                  |          |                         |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mediaș                           | Romania  | Medgyes/Mediasch        |
| Michal na Ostrove                | Slovakia | Szentmihályfa           |
| Moacșa                           | Romania  | Maksa                   |
| Mugeni                           | Romania  | Bögöz                   |
| Murska Sobota                    | Slovenia | Muraszombat             |
| Oradea                           | Romania  | Nagyvárad/ Großwardein  |
| Orăștie                          | Romania  | Szászváros/Broos        |
| Otomani                          | Romania  | Ottomány                |
| Pidvynohradiv<br>(Підвиноградів) | Ukraine  | Szőllősvégardó          |
| Plešivec                         | Slovakia | Pelsőc                  |
| Poniky                           | Slovakia | Pónik                   |
| Poruba                           | Slovakia | Mohos                   |
| Porumbeni Mari                   | Romania  | Nagygalambfalva         |
| Racu                             | Romania  | Csíkrákos               |
| Rákoš                            | Slovakia | Gömörrákos              |
| Rattersdorf                      | Austria  | Rótfalva                |
| Remetea                          | Romania  | Magyarremete            |
| Ribița                           | Romania  | Ribicze                 |
| Rimavská Baňa                    | Slovakia | Rimabánya               |
| Rimavské Brezovo                 | Slovakia | Rimabrézó               |
| Sântămărie Orlea                 | Romania  | Óraljaboldogfalva       |
| Selo v Prekmurju                 | Slovenia | Nagytótlak              |
| Sibiu                            | Romania  | Nagyszeben/Hermannstadt |
| Sighetul Marmăției               | Romania  | Máramarossziget         |
| Șiria                            | Romania  | Világos                 |
| Sliače                           | Slovakia | Háromszlács             |
| Smrečany                         | Slovakia | Szmrecsány              |
| Sremska Mitrovica                | Serbia   | Szávaszentdemeter       |
| Štítňik                          | Slovakia | Csetnek                 |

|                                 |          |                                     |
|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| Strei                           | Romania  | Zeykfalva                           |
| Streisângeorgiu                 | Romania  | Sztrigyszentgyörgy                  |
| Svinica                         | Slovakia | Petőszinye                          |
| Tileagd                         | Romania  | Mezőtelegd                          |
| Turčianske Jaseno               | Slovakia | Nagyjeszen                          |
| Turičký                         | Slovakia | Etrefalva                           |
| Turnišče                        | Slovenia | Bántornya                           |
| Velemer                         | Slovenia | Velemér                             |
| Vel'ká Lomnica                  | Slovakia | Kakaslomnic                         |
| Velyka Byihan' (Белика Бийгань) | Ukraine  | Nagybégány                          |
| Žehra                           | Slovakia | Zsegra                              |
| Zlatna                          | Romania  | Zalatna / Schlatten,<br>Goldenmarkt |



# Map



## **Illustrations**

Note: Unless otherwise mentioned, all photographs are by the author.

*Illustrations for Chapter 3. Lay Portraits and Inscriptions*



Fig. 3.1. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, sanctuary, lower register of the south wall



Fig. 3.2. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, St Nicholas and suppliant

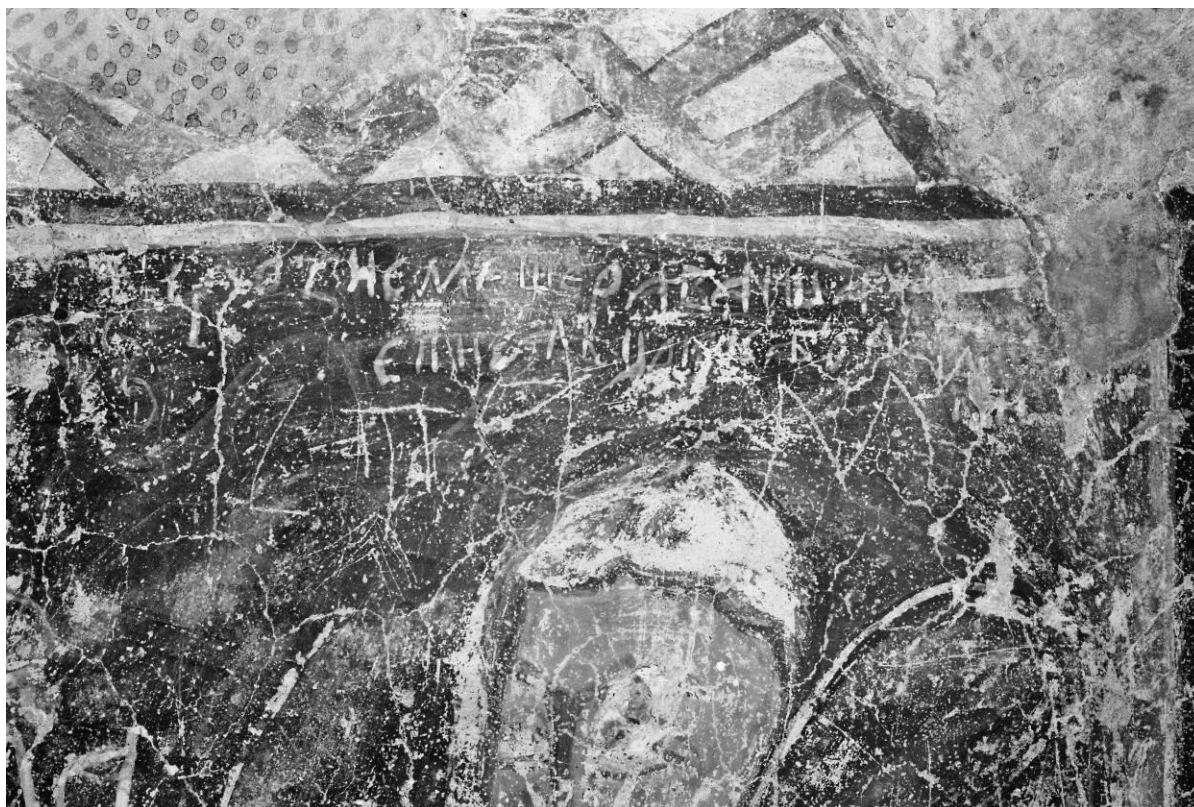


Fig. 3.3. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Inscription above the head of the suppliant situated on the south wall of the sanctuary



Fig. 3.5. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Archangel Michael, suppliant and Archangel Gabriel



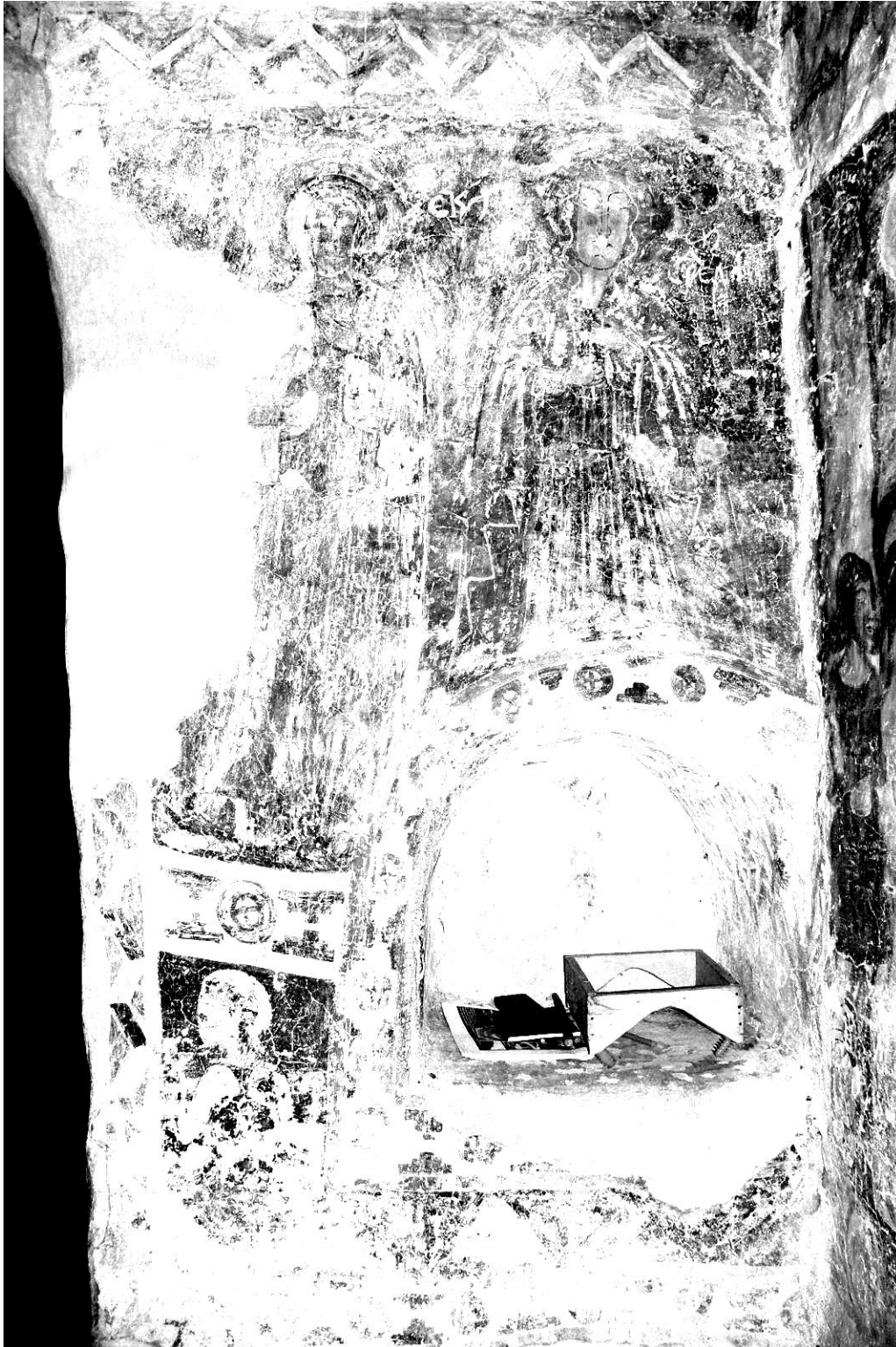


Fig. 3.6. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, lower registers of the east wall of the nave, female saints and lay figure



Fig. 3.7. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, layman on the east wall of the nave, lower register





Fig. 3.8. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, lay figure on the eastern jamb of the south entrance



Fig. 3.9. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, lay figure on the eastern jamb of the south entrance

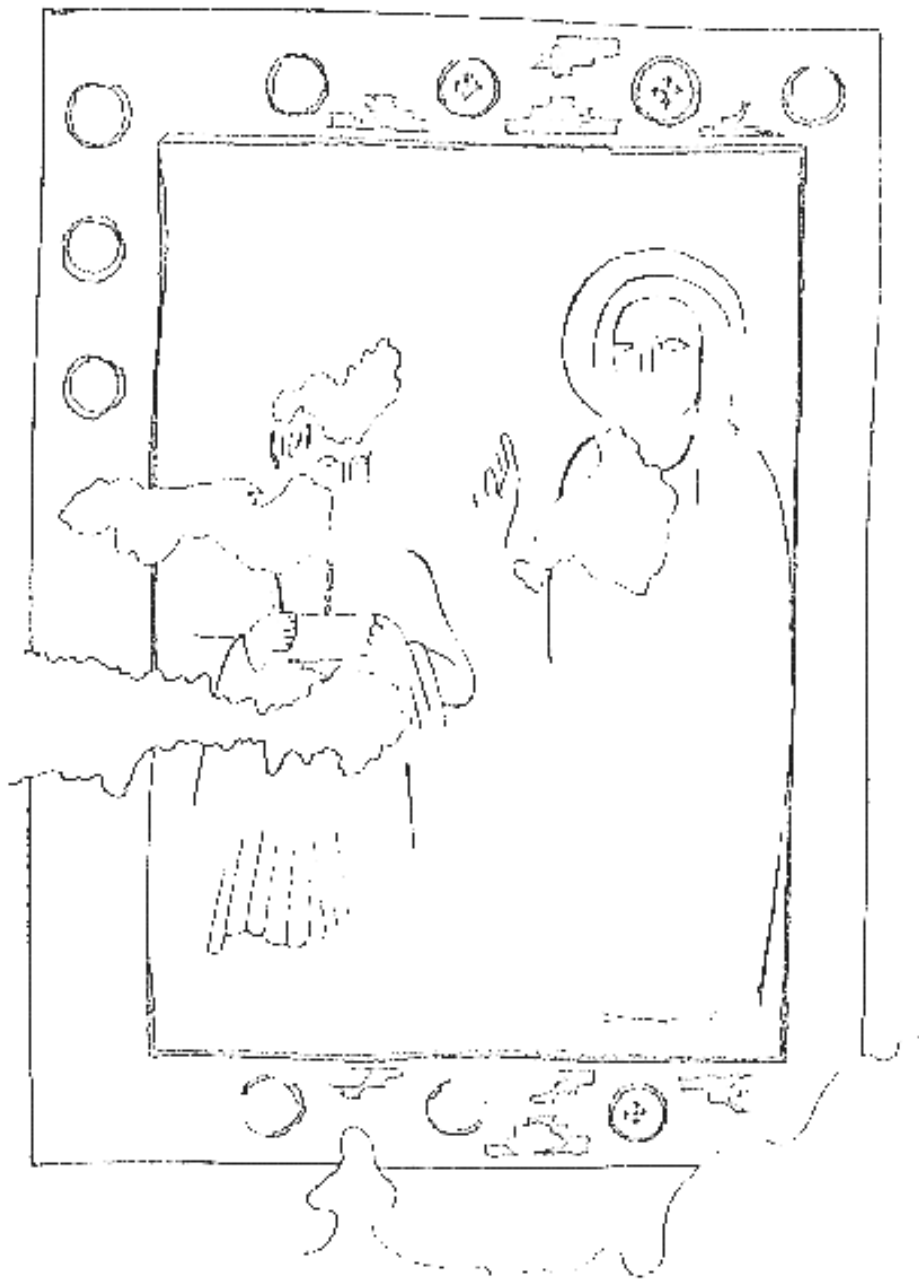


Fig. 3.10. Strei, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, scene on the north wall of the space under the tower, drawing by M. Buculei (Cincheza-Buculei, "Portretele," Fig. 10)



Fig. 3.12. Martjanci, Church of St Martin, self-portrait of painter Johannes Aquila, 1392-1400  
(photo: Höfler, ed., *Gotik*, fig. 128c)



Fig. 3.13. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, south wall of the nave, votive painting



Fig. 3.14. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, votive painting



Fig. 3.15. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, votive painting, detail





Fig. 3.16. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, votive painting, detail





Fig. 3.17. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, votive painting, detail, Ana



Fig. 3.18. Poniky, Church of St Francis Seraph, Rescuing of two donors from the Mouse of Hell by Virgin Mary, 1415 (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 012564)



Fig. 3.19. Mediaș, Evangelical church, scene from the legend of St Nicholas (?), 1420-1430



Fig. 3.20. Alexander the Good, prince of Moldavia (1400-1432), as donor. Detail of an epitrapezion, after 1421, The State Hermitage Museum, Sankt Petersburg (photo: Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului*, pl. CLIV, fig. 52)



Fig. 3.21. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, St John the Baptist and supplicatory inscription



Fig. 3.22. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, south-west corner of the nave



Fig. 3.23. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Župan Bălea, his wife, Vișe, and a little boy (Stephen?)





Fig. 3.24. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Župan Bălea and votive inscription





Fig. 3.25. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, votive painting, detail



Fig. 3.26. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, votive painting, Iuca and Laslo



Fig. 3.27. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, votive painting, Laslo



Fig. 3.28. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, detail of Bălea's weapon



Fig. 3.29. Ghelintă, Church of St Emeric, St Ladislas fighting the Cuman, ca. 1330



Fig. 3.30. Ragály, Reformed church, St Ladislav, second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (photo: Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 389)





Fig. 3.31. Streisângeorgiu, Church of St George, east wall of the sanctuary with the votive inscription from 1313/1314, situated under the window



Fig. 3.32. Streisângeorgiu, Church of St George, votive painting of 1408, repainted in 1743, representing župan Laţco, županitsa Nistora, župan Chendreş (Cîndreş), and Vlaico. Watercolor by István Gróh, 1907 (photo: Barta et al., *Histoire*, fig. 6)





Fig. 3.33a. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, votive painting

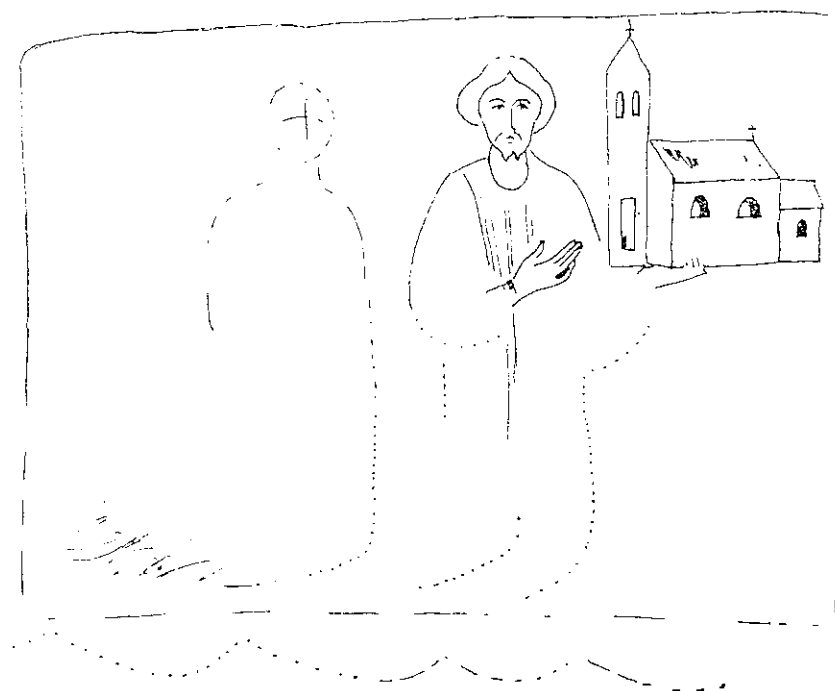


Fig. 3.33b. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, votive painting, drawing by M. Buculei (Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații," scheme 2)



Fig. 3.34. Leşnic, Church of St Nicholas, figure on the south wall of the nave



Fig. 3.35. Leşnic, Church of St Nicholas, scene on the south wall of the sanctuary, part of the Resurrection of the dead



Fig. 3.36. Mugeni, Reformed church, Last Judgment, detail with the Mouth of Hell, second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 3.37. Svinica, Reformed church, detail of the Last Judgment, second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 3.38. Martjanci, Church of St Martin, The Revival of the dead knights by St Martin, 1392-1400 (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 011004)



Fig. 3.39. Selo v Prekmurju, Church of St Nicholas, Betrayal of Christ, 1400-1420 (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 010945)



Fig. 3.40a. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, north wall of the nave, Virgin with Child and saints

Fig. 3.40b. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, Virgin with Child and saints, drawing by M. Buculei (Cincheza-Buculei, "Ansamblul," fig.3)





Fig. 3.41. Densuş, Church of St Nicholas, sanctuary, St Prochor the Deacon and the signature of the painter



Fig. 3.42. Densuş, Church of St Nicholas, view to the nave from the west

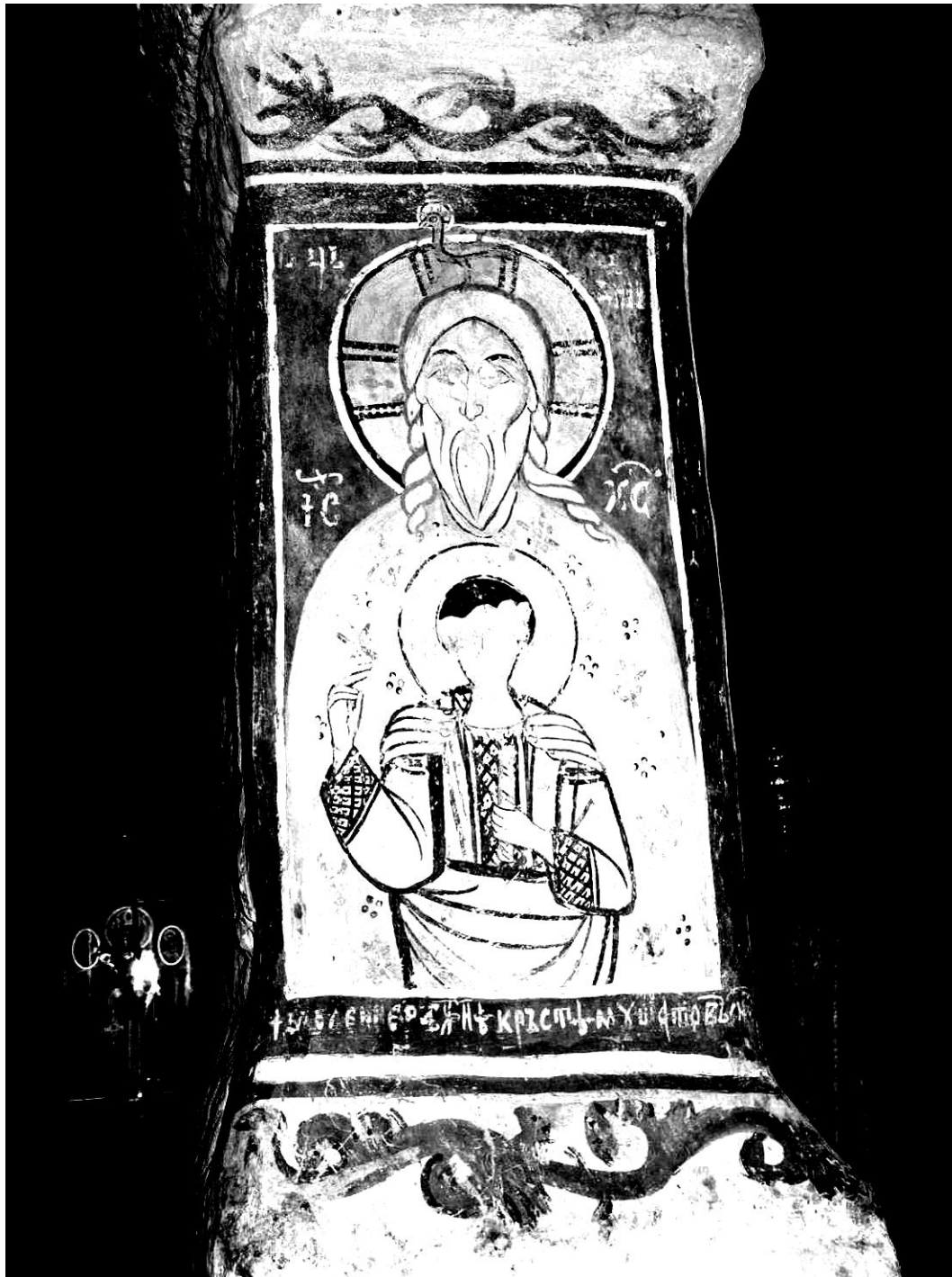


Fig. 3.43. Densuş, Church of St Nicholas, north-east pier, Holy Trinity

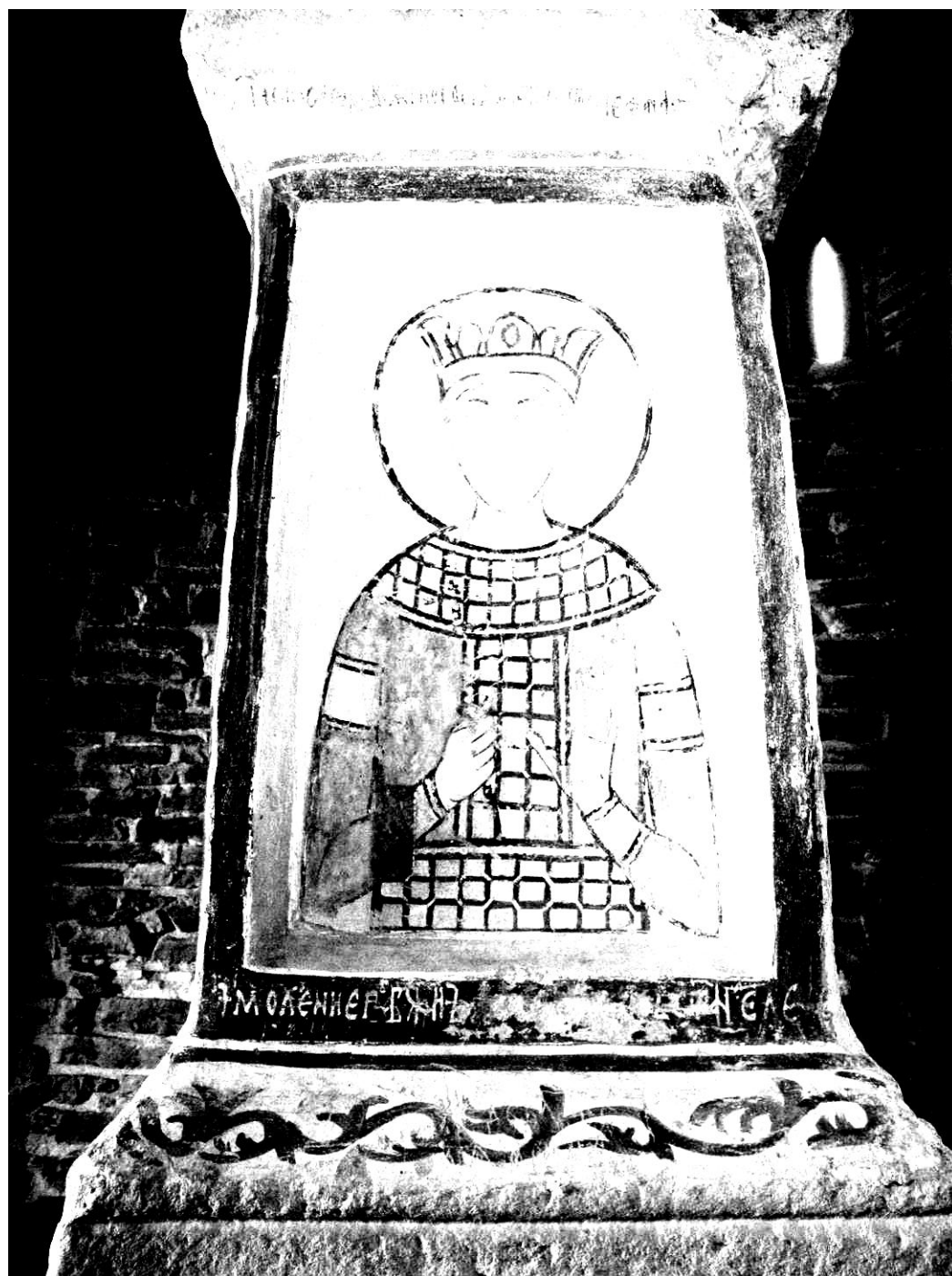


Fig. 3.44. Densuș, Church of St Nicholas, north-east pier, St Nedelea

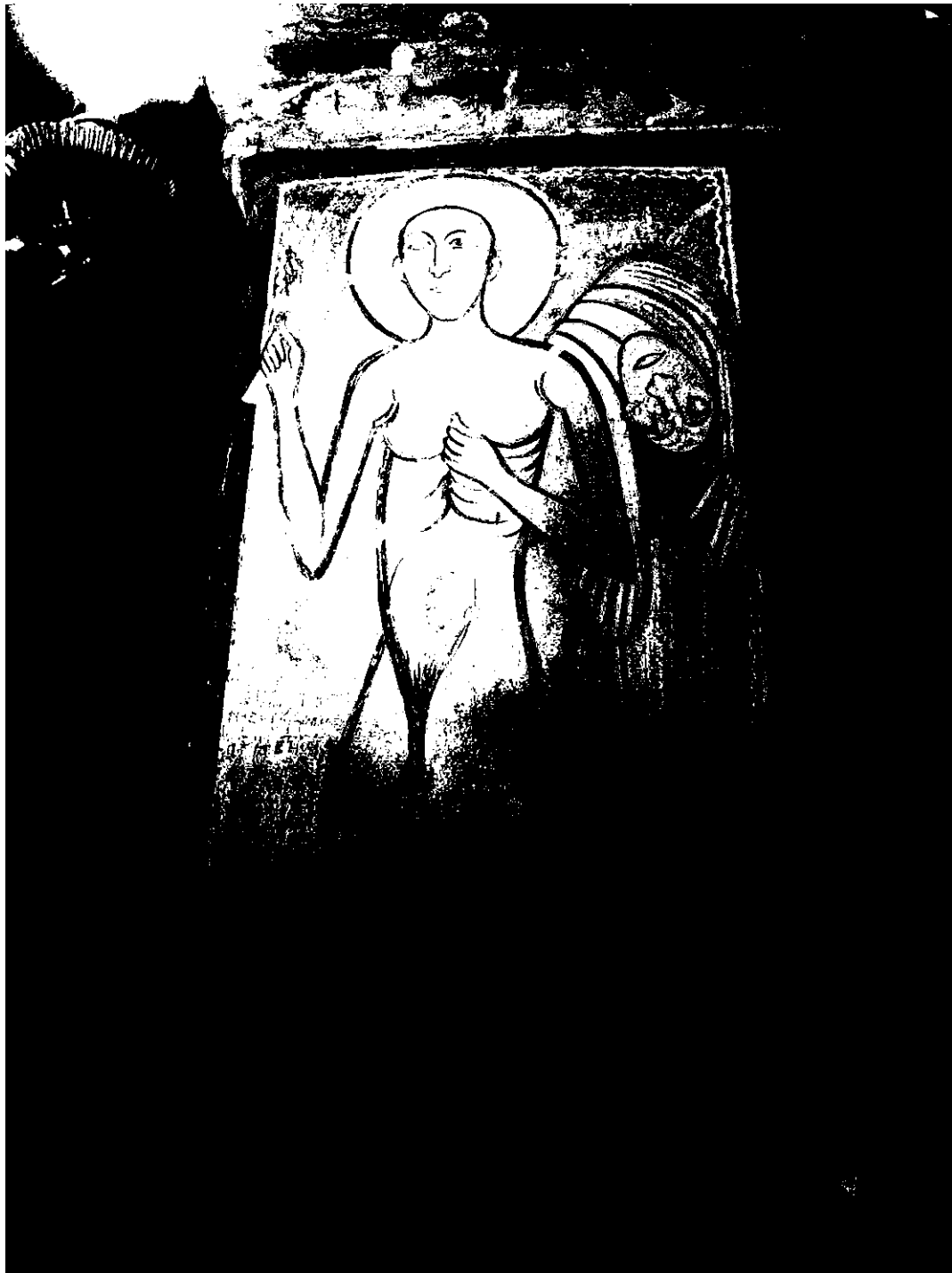


Fig. 3.45. Densuş, Church of St Nicholas, south-east pier, St Bartholomew



Fig. 3.46. Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, votive painting



Fig. 3.47. Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, votive painting, detail, St Nicholas blessing the church



Fig. 3.48. Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, St George, detail of the votive painting





Fig. 3.49. Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, supplicants in front of the enthroned Virgin with Child



Fig. 3.50. Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, supplicants in front of the enthroned Virgin with Child

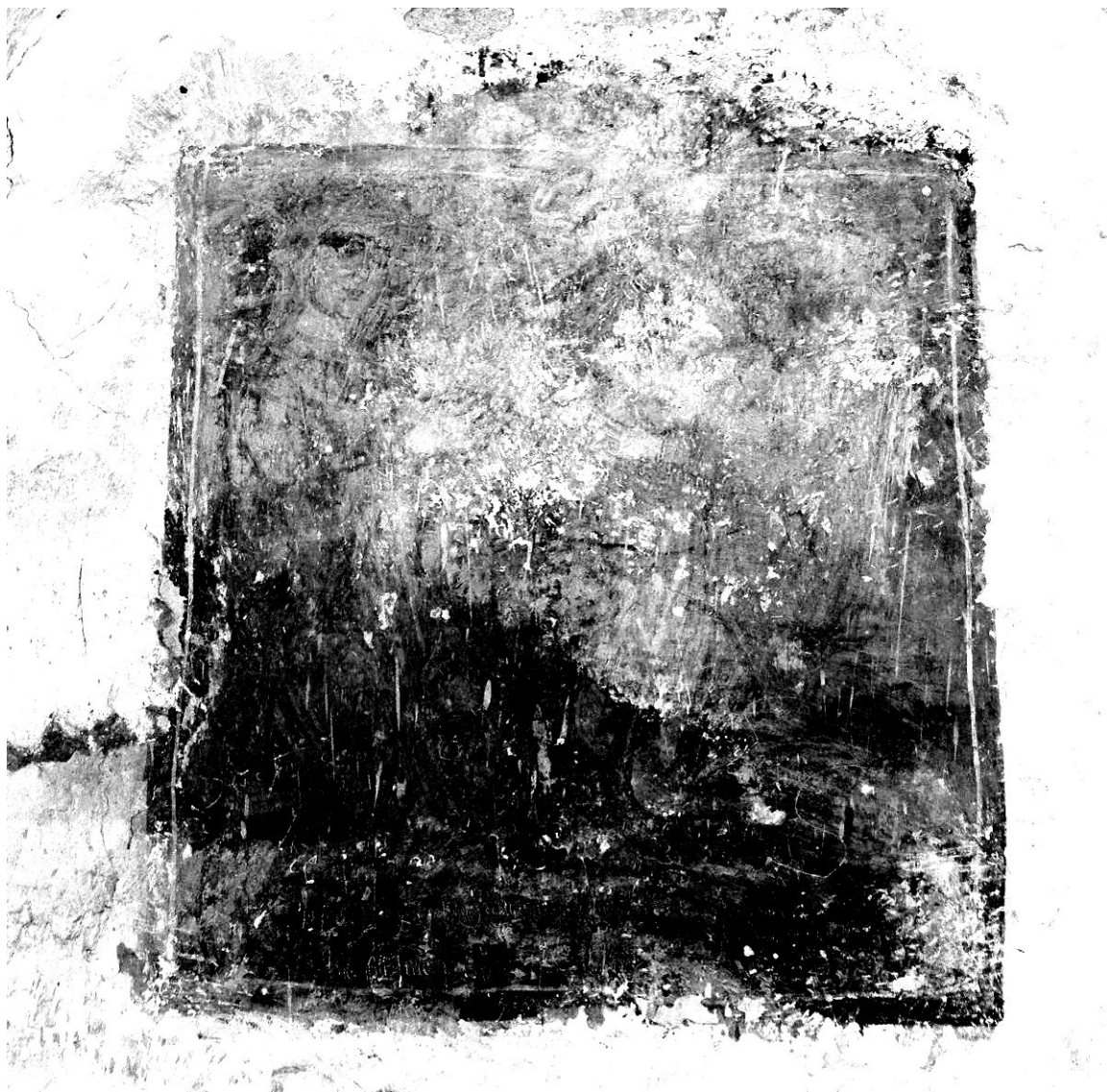


Fig. 3.51. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, donors under the tribune



Fig. 3.52. Psača, church of St Nicholas (1365-1371)



Fig. 3.53. Dolna Kamenica, church of the Holy Virgin (14<sup>th</sup> century)

*Illustrations for Chapter 4. The Military Saints*



Fig. 4.1. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, St George slaying the dragon





Fig. 4.2. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, St George slaying the dragon, detail



Fig. 4.3a. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, military saints (Demetrius and Theodore?)



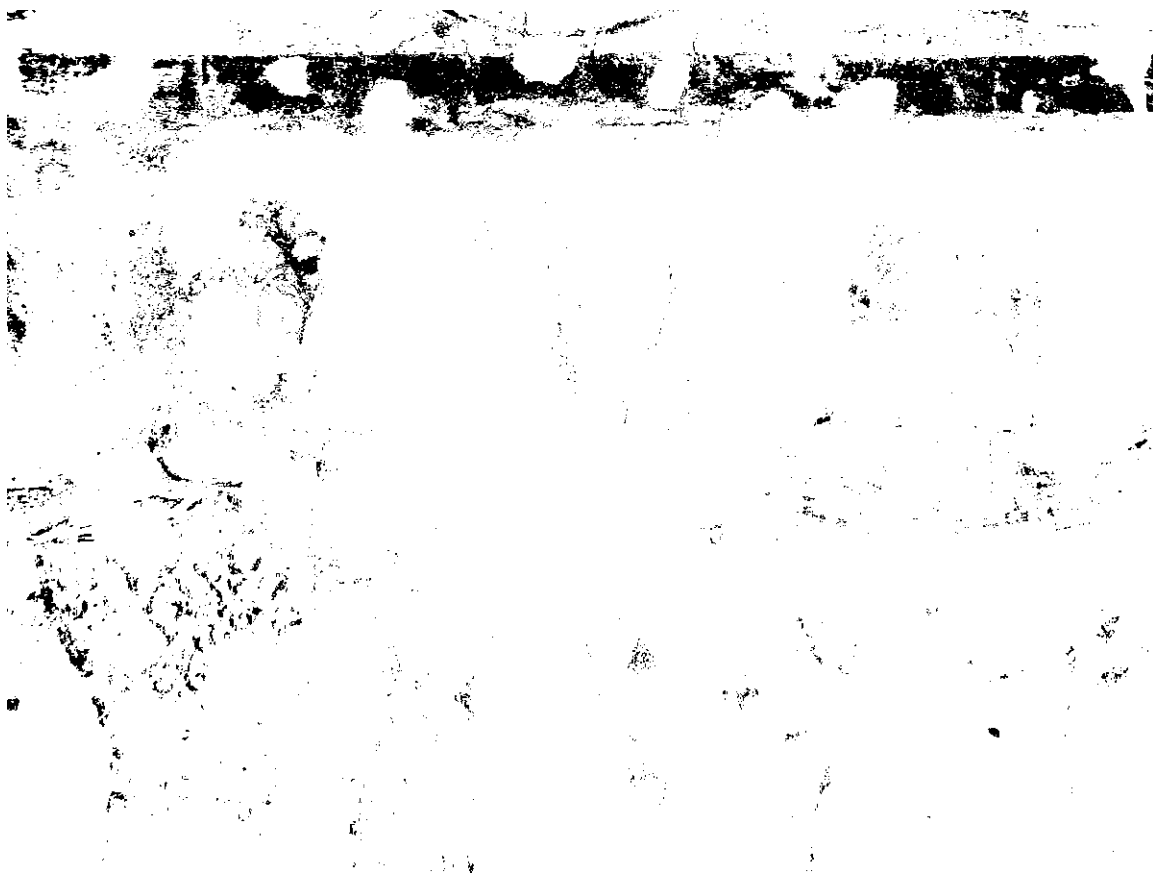


Fig. 4.3b. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, military saints, detail



Fig. 4.4. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, north wall of the nave, military saints and the Holy Kings of Hungary

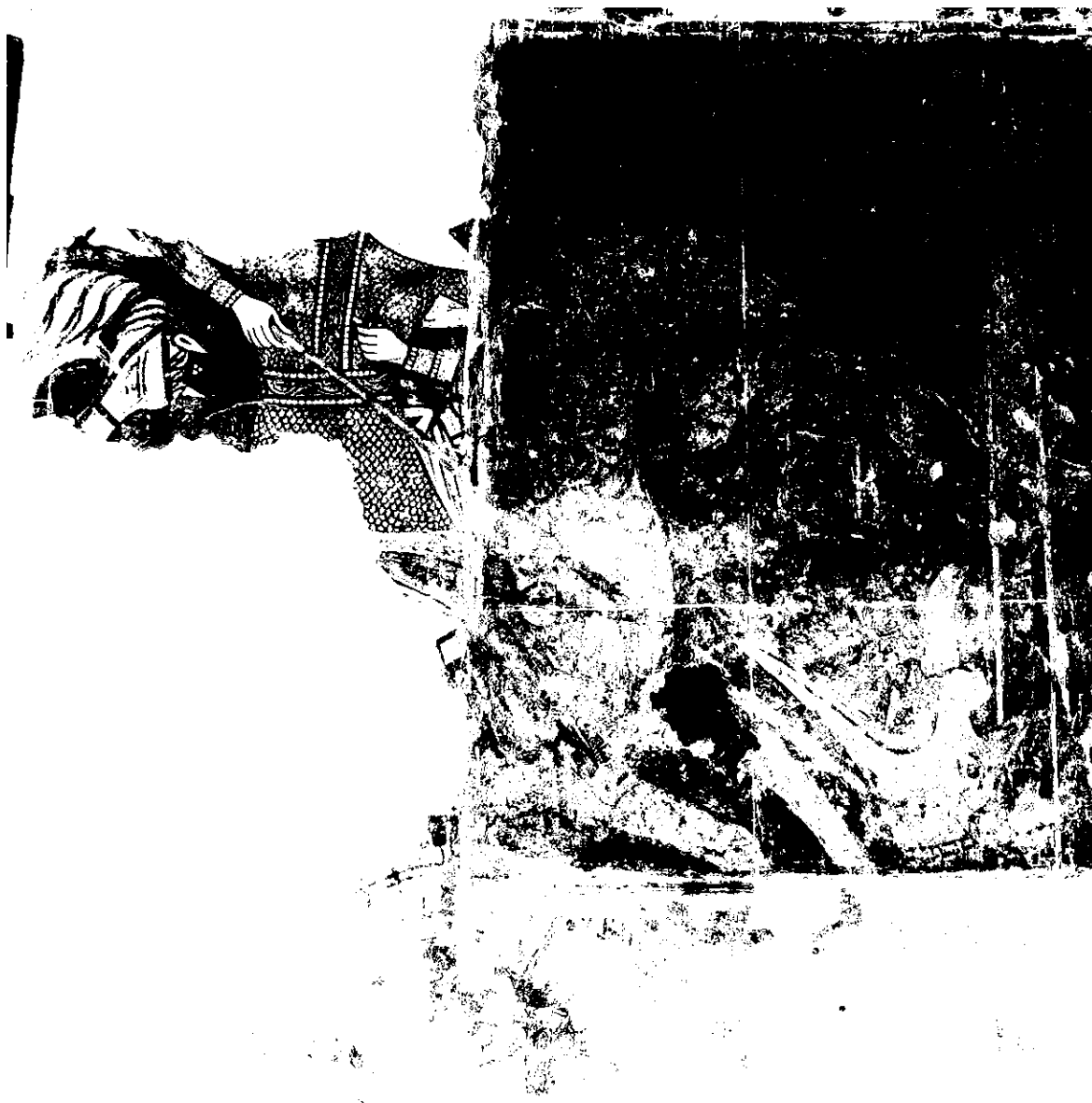


Fig. 4.5. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, St George slaying the dragon



Fig. 4.6. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, St George slaying the dragon

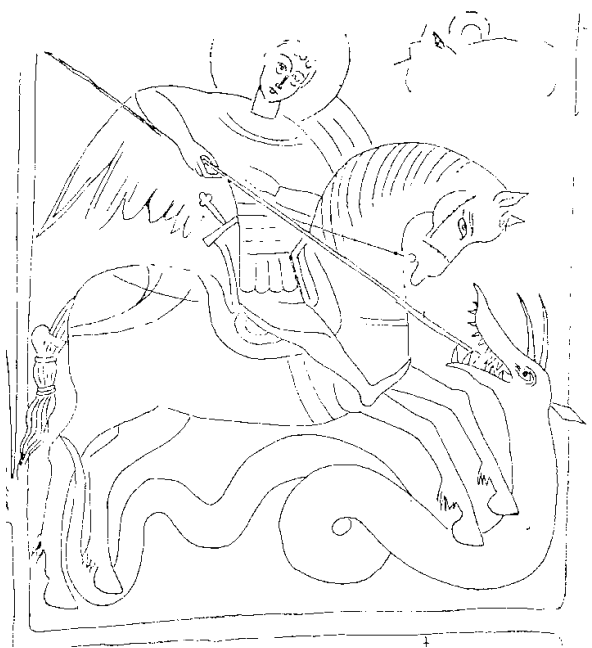


Fig. 4.7. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, St George slaying the dragon, drawing by M. Buculei (Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații," scheme 2)



Fig. 4.8. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, military saints (possibly Demetrius and another saint)

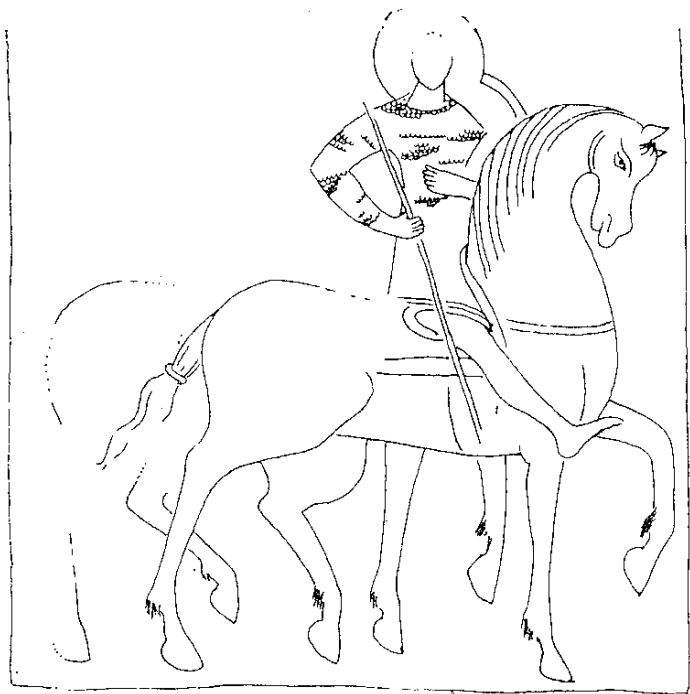


Fig. 4.9. Leșnic, Church of St Nicholas, military saints, drawing by M. Buculei (Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații," scheme 2)



Fig. 4.10. Strei, Church of the Dormition, St George

Fig. 4.11. Strei, Church of the Dormition, holy bishop and St George, drawing by M. Buculei (Cincheza-Buculei, "Implicații," fig. 2)



Fig.4.12. Streisângeorgiu, Church of St George, military saint





Fig. 4.13. Streisângeorgiu, Church of St George, military saint (St George?)



Fig. 4. 14. Densuş, Church of St Nicholas. Lower register: St Procopius, St Theodore and St Nicholas



Fig. 4.15. Densuș, Church of St Nicholas. Lower register: Archangel Michael, St George, St Demetrius and St Nestorius



Fig. 4.16. Dolna Kamenica, Church of the Holy Virgin, Sts Theodore Tiron and Theodore Stratelates, 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4.17. Dolna Kamenica, Church of the Holy Virgin, Sts Theodore Tiron and Theodore Stratelates, 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4.18. Dolna Kamenica, Church of the Holy Virgin, St Demetrius, 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4.20. Staro Nagoričino, St George rescues the princess, 1316-1318 (photo: Gabriel Millet, *La peinture du Moyen Âge en Yougoslavie*, vol. 3 (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1962), pl. 104, fig. 3)





Fig. 4.21. Dečani Monastery, Church of Pantokrator, St George rescues the princess, 1346/7  
 (photo: <http://www.srpskoblag.org/serbian-medieval-monasteries/monastery-decani>).





Fig. 4.22. Poniky, Church of St Francis Seraph, St George slaying the dragon, 1415 (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 012568)



Fig. 4.24. Čerín, Church of St Martin, St George slaying the dragon, 1380-1390 or the first quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century

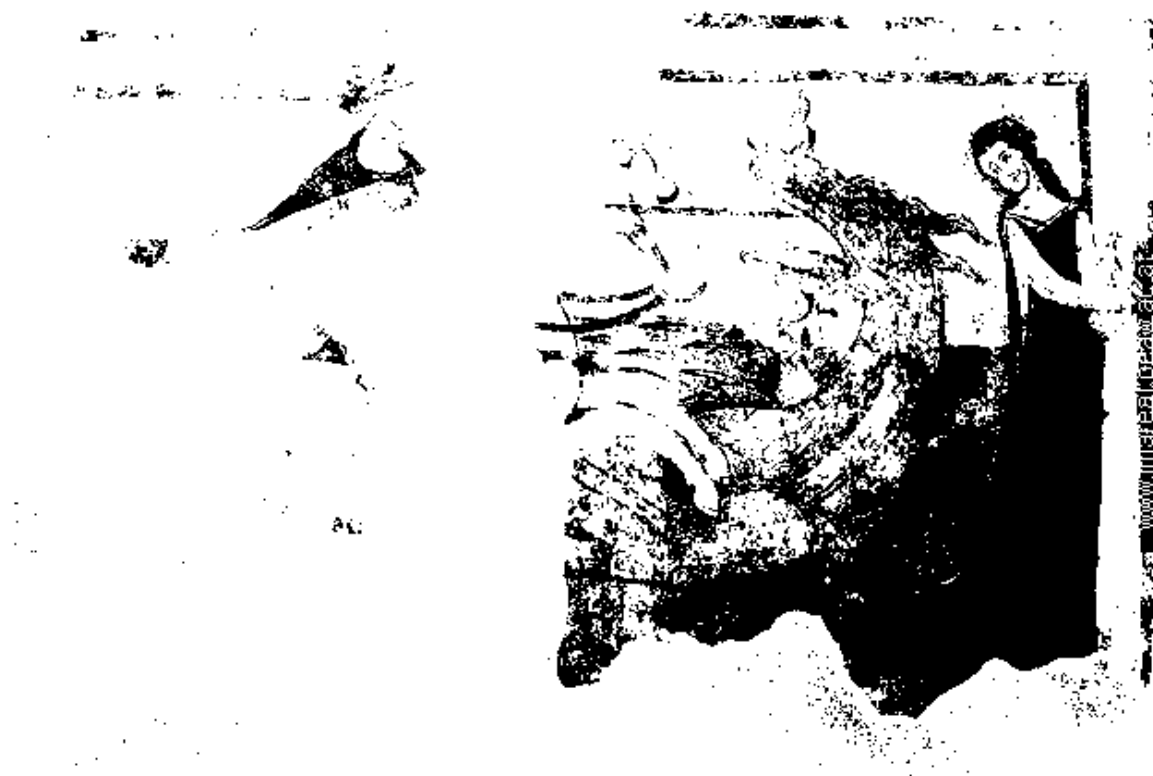


Fig. 4.24. Vizsoly, Reformed church, St George slaying the dragon, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 013463 )

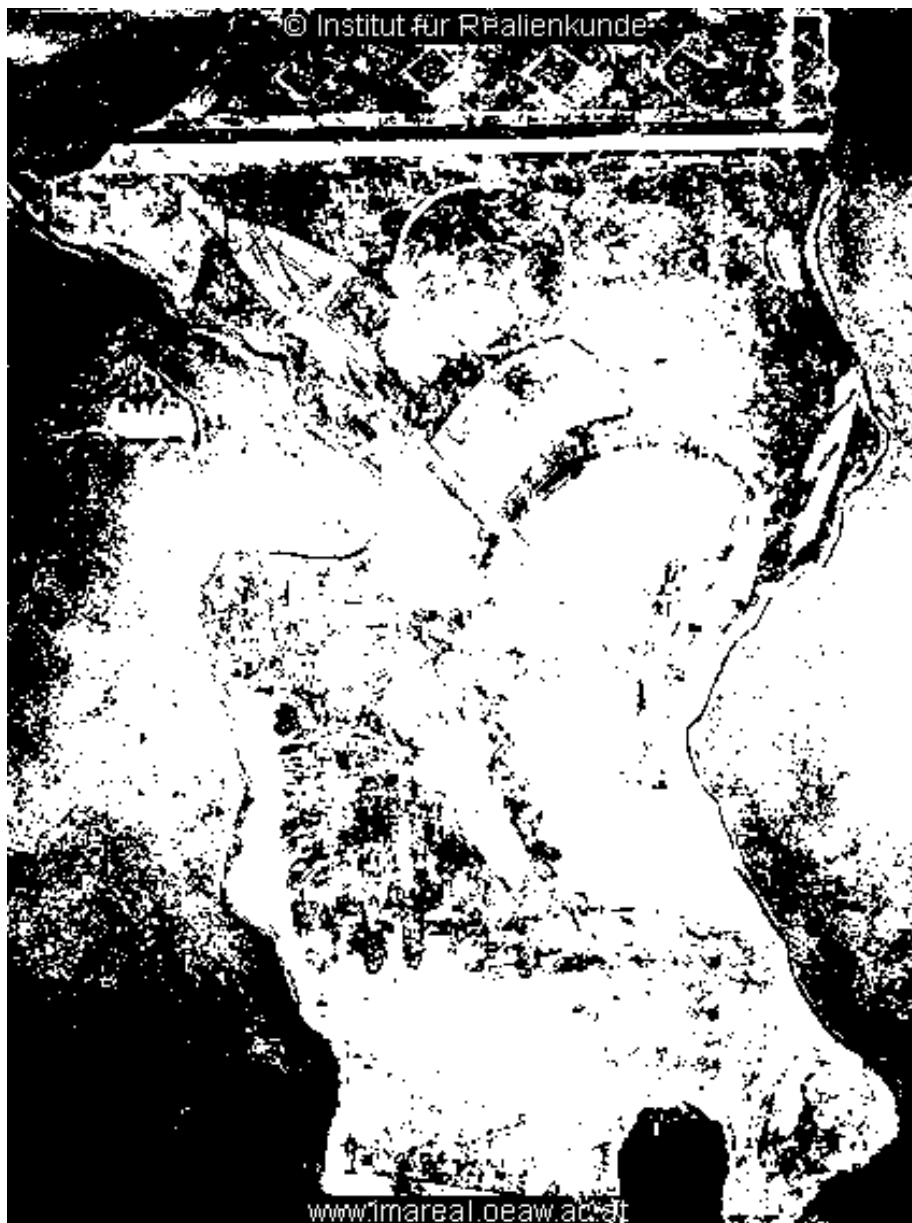


Fig. 4.25. Szentsimon, Church of the Apostles Simon and Judas, 1423 (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 013472)



Fig. 4.26. Tarpa, Reformed church, 15<sup>th</sup> century (photo: <http://psat.evt.bme.hu/horvi/kl-fresk.htm>)

*Illustrations for Chapter 5. The Holy Kings of Hungary*



Fig. 5.1. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, south-west corner of the nave



Fig. 5.2. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Holy Kings of Hungary



Fig. 5.3. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, Holy Kings of Hungary





Fig. 5.4. Chimindia, Calvinist church, Holy Kings of Hungary



Fig. 5.5. Tileagd, Reformed church, Holy Kings of Hungary, end of the 14th century



Fig. 5.6. Mălâncrav, Evangelical church: Holy bishop, St Ladislav, St Stephen, holy king and St Emeric, around 1400 (photo: REALonline, <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 014973)



Fig. 5.7. Krásnohorské Podhradie, Holy Kings of Hungary, 14<sup>th</sup> century (photo: REALonline, <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 012550)



Fig. 5.8. Rattersdorf, Church of the Holy Virgin, Holy Kings of Hungary, 14<sup>th</sup> century (photo: [www.bda.at](http://www.bda.at))



Fig. 5.9. Rákoš, Church of the Holy Trinity, south-west corner of the sanctuary, Holy Kings of Hungary, ca. 1400

*Illustrations for Chapter 6. The Exaltation of the Cross*



Fig. 6.1. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, Holy Kings of Hungary and scene with St Helena



Fig. 6.2. Ribîța, Church of St Nicholas, St Helena





Fig. 6.3. Ribița, Church of St Nicholas, St Helena



Fig. 6.4. The Illuminated Chronicle, National Széchényi Library, Budapest, Clmae 404, 1358-1370. Elisabeth of Poland, Queen consort of Hungary (1321-1342), and her sons (photo: *Képes krónika*, trans. Bellus Ibolya, notes Kristó Gyula et al. (Budapest: Helikon, 1987))



Fig. 6.5. The Hungarian Angevin Legendary, Ms. Vat. Lat. 8541, fol. 6v, scene from the life of St Peter, second quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (photo: Béla Zsolt Szakács)



Fig. 6.6. Porumbenii Mari, Reformed church, St Elisabeth caring for the lepers (photo: Lángi and Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek*, vol. 1, 81)



Fig. 6.7. Curtea de Argeș, church of St Nicholas, Voivode Vladislav I and his wife Anne, ca. 1369 (photo: Musicescu and Ionescu, *Biserica domnească*)



Fig. 6.8. Liptovský Ondrej, Church of St Andrew, St Barbara, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 6.9. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Exaltation of the Cross and Holy Kings of Hungary



Fig. 6.10. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Exaltation of the Cross





Fig. 6.11. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Exaltation of the Cross, detail



Fig. 6.12. Crișcior, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Exaltation of the Cross, detail

Fig. 6.13. Drawing representing the Finding of the Holy Cross at Crișcior (Tugearu, “Crișcior,” fig. 11)



Fig. 6.14. Psača, church of St Nicholas, Sts Constantine and Helena, tsar Uroš and king Vukašin (1365-1371)



Fig. 6.15. Arilje, Church of Saint Achilleos, Sts Constantine and Helena (1295/6)



Fig. 6.16. Lesnovo, Church of Archangels Michael and Gabriel, Sts Constantine and Helena, 1349



Fig. 6.17. Menologion of Basil II, Vat. Gr. 1613, Exaltation of the Cross, ca. 1000 (photo: Walter, *Constantine*, fig. 107)





Fig. 6.18. Gračanica, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Exaltation of the Cross in the menologion, 1321-1322 (Photo: Mijović, *Menolog*, fig. 120)



Fig. 6.19. Finding and Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Cretan school, second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, private collection (photo: Vokotopoulos, “Η Εύρεση,” fig. 1)

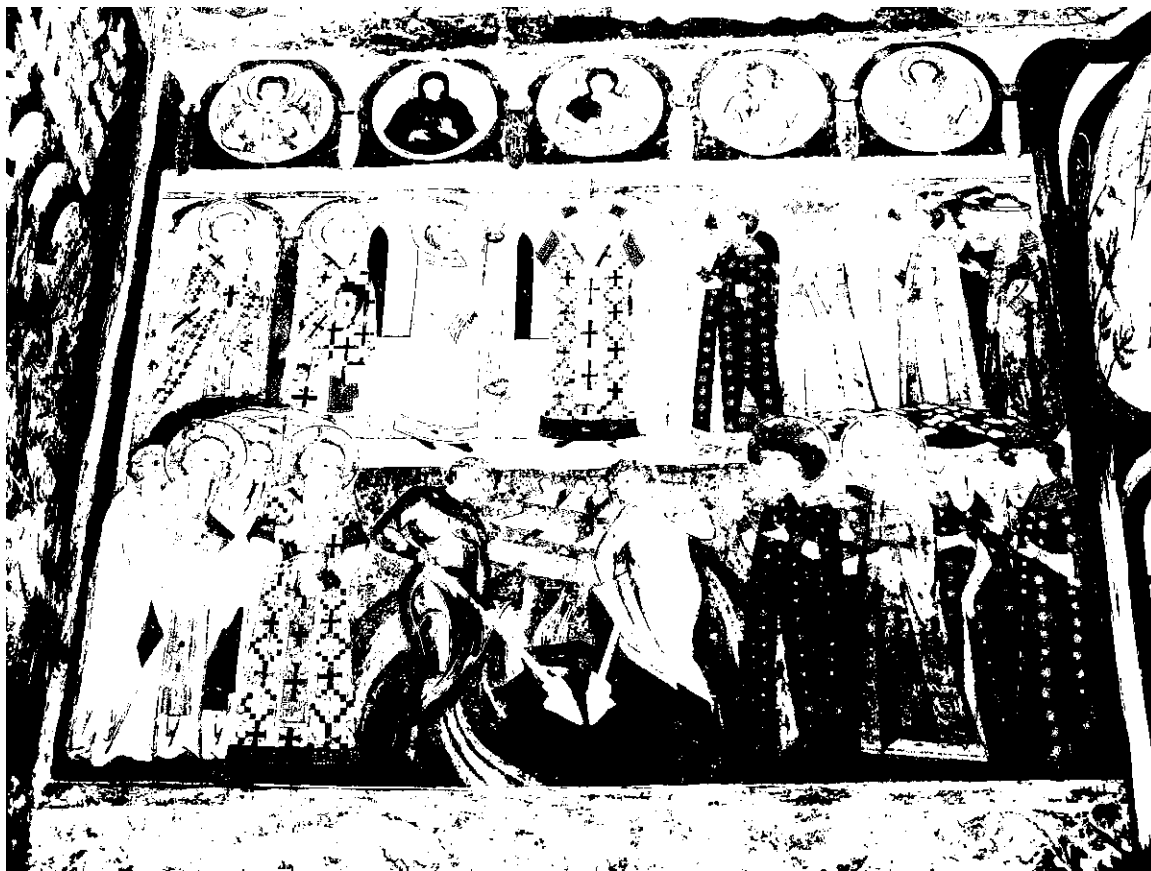


Fig. 6.20. Arbore (Romania), Church of St John the Baptist, Finding and Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 1541 or 1503-1520 (photo: Elena Firea)



Fig. 6.21. Staro Nagoričino, Church of St George, Exaltation of the Cross in the menologion, 1316-1318 (photo: Mijović, *Menolog*, fig. 19)

Fig. 6.22. Church of Saint George in Ano Viannos (Viannos, Herakleion, Crete), Exaltation of the Cross, 1401 (photo: Walter, *Constantine*, fig. 110)



Fig. 6.23. *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Paris. gr. 510, f. 440r, Constantine's dream, Constantine's vision before the battle at the Milvian Bridge, and Finding of the Cross, 879-882 (photo: Walter, *Constantine*, fig. 47)



Fig. 6.24. Church of the Mother of God, Spina (Kantanos, Chania, Crete), Finding of the Cross, end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (photo: Walter, *Constantine*, fig. 109)



Fig. 6.25. Vercelli *Canones conciliarum* (Ms. CLXV, Biblioteca Capitolare, Vercelli), f. 2r, Judas presents the Cross to St Helena, early 9<sup>th</sup> century (photo: Stylianou, *By This Conquer*, fig. 19)



Fig. 6.26. Kraskovo, Evangelical church, St Helena and Anna Selbdritt



Fig. 6.27. Kraskovo, Evangelical church, Pietà, St Helena and Anna Selbdritt





Fig. 6.28. Sliache, Church of the Holy Apostles Simon and Judas, St Helena (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 012691 )



Fig. 6.29. Ragály, Reformed church, St Helena (photo: Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 385)

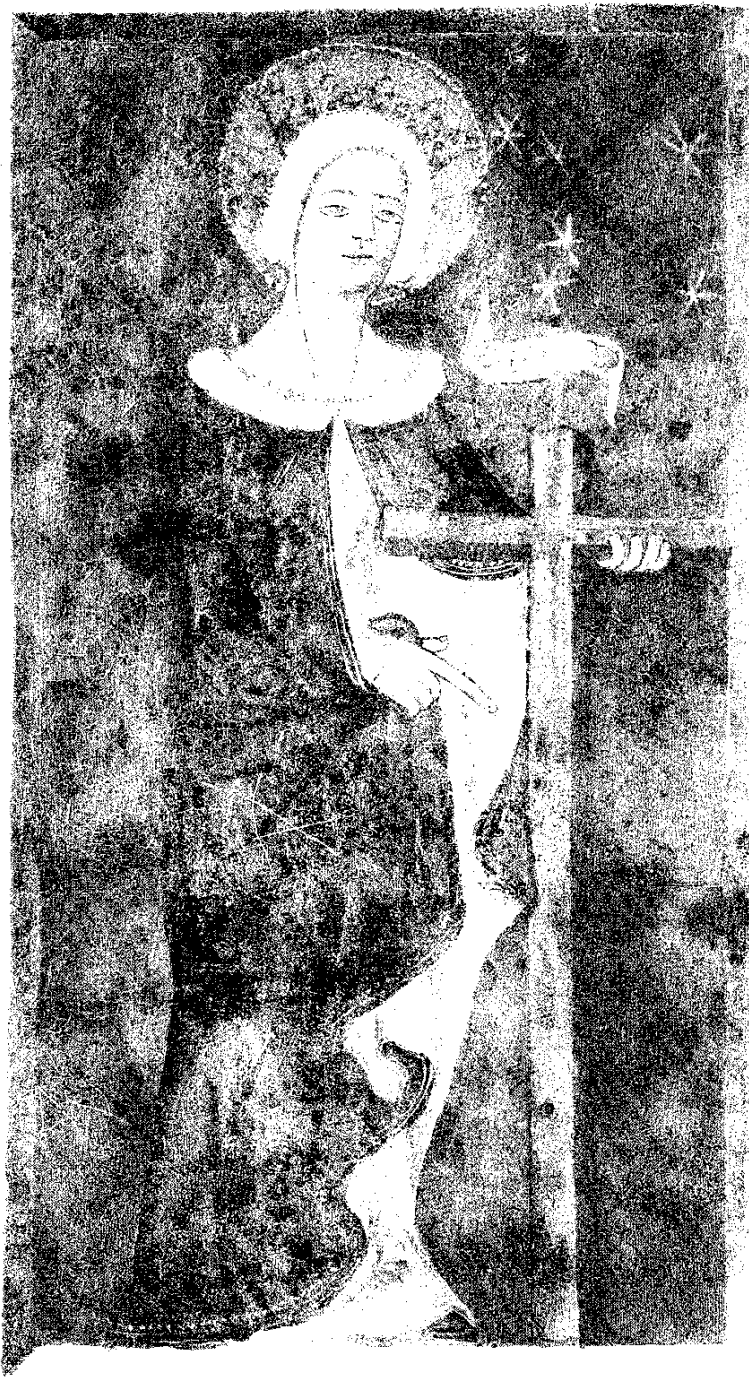


Fig. 6.30. Nyíribrony, Reformed church, St Helena (photo: Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 306)



Fig. 6.31. Rudabánya, Reformed church, St Helena (photo: <http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline/>, no. 013456)



Fig. 6.32. Turičský, Evangelical church, St Helena and holy bishop.



Fig. 6.33. Čerín, Church of St Martin, Sts Dorothy, Helena and Catherine





Fig. 6.34. Martjanci, Church of St Martin, St Helena



Fig. 6.35. Štítník, Evangelical church, St Helena





Fig. 6.36. Rákoš, Church of the Holy Trinity, St Helena and Schutzmantelmadonna



St Helena

Fig. 6.37. Rákoš, Church of the Holy Trinity ,



Fig. 6.38. Velyka Byihan', Reformed church, Finding of the Cross (photo: Horváth and Kovács, *Kárpátalja kincsei*, fig. 44)



Fig. 6.39. Velyka Byihan', Reformed church, Finding of the Cross, detail (Horváth and Kovács, *Kárpátalja kincsei*, fig. 46)

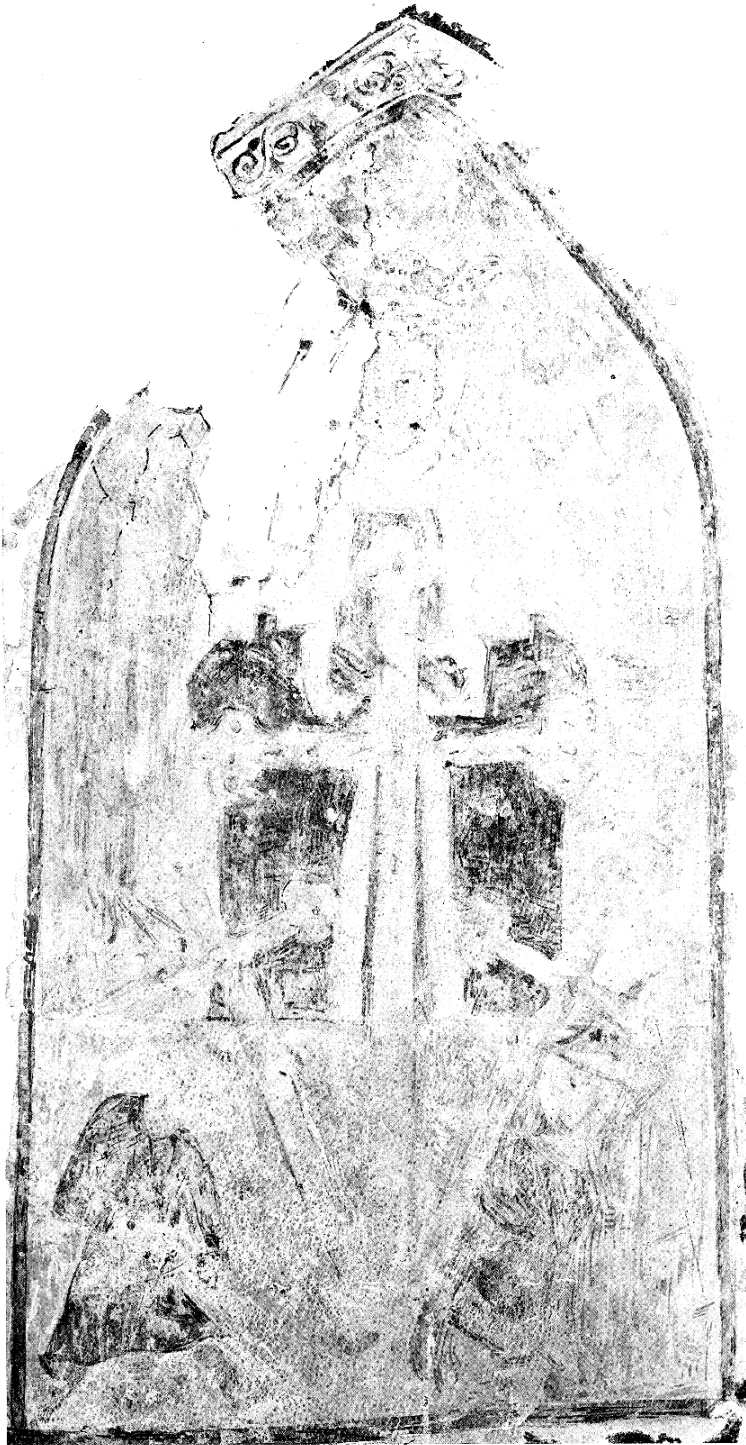


Fig. 6.40. Svinica, Evangelical church, St Helena, watercolor by István Gróh (photo: Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 374)



Fig. 6.41. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, Finding of the Cross



Fig. 6.42. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, Finding of the Cross, detail



Fig. 6.43. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, Finding of the Cross, detail



Fig. 6.44. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, Finding of the Cross, detail





Fig. 6.45. Benedetto di Bindo, paintings on relic chest (Museo del Duomo, Siena), Legend of the Cross, Helena orders Judas to find the Cross, 1412 (photo: Kaftal, *Tuscan*, fig. 550)



Fig. 6.46. Benedetto di Bindo, paintings on relic chest (Museo del Duomo, Siena), Legend of the Cross, Finding of the Cross, 1412 (photo: Kaftal, *Tuscan*, fig. 552)



Fig. 6.47. Benedetto di Bindo, paintings on relic chest (Museo del Duomo, Siena), Legend of the Cross, Judas brings the True Cross to Helena, 1412 (photo: Kaftal, *Tuscan*, fig. 554)



Fig. 6.48. Andria, Church of the Holy Cross, Finding and adoration of the Holy Cross, fifteenth century

(photo: <http://andriarte.it/SantaCroce/documenti/SCroce-IacoboneDiTriaTondolo.html>)



Fig. 6.49. Sighetul Marmăției, Reformed church, Finding of the Cross, 19<sup>th</sup>-century drawing (photo: Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 238)



Fig. 6.50. Zlatna, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Exaltation of the Cross (?)

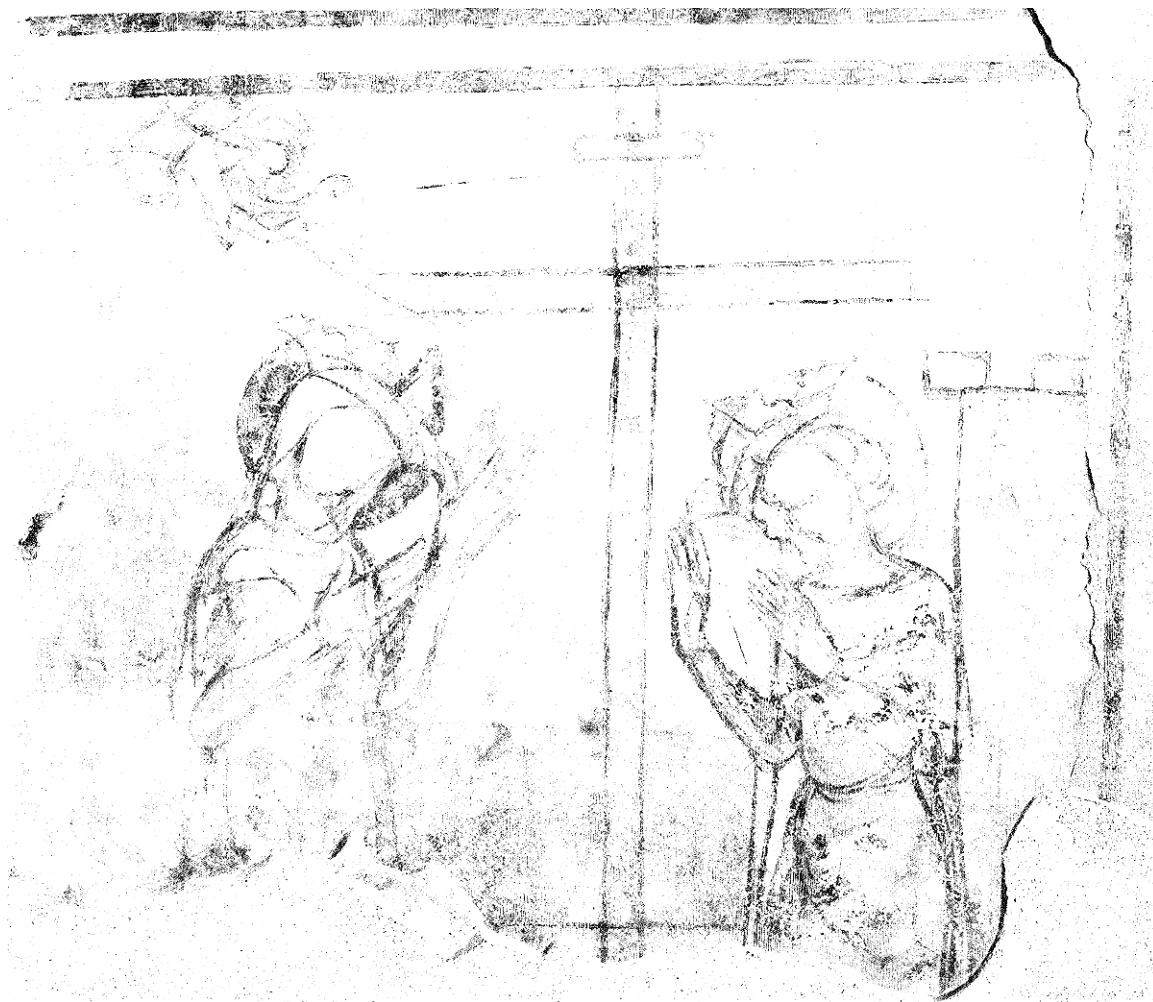


Fig. 6.51. Vizsoly, Reformed church, Sts Constantine and Helena (photo: Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 447)



Fig. 6.52. Dârlos, Evangelical church, Sts Constantine and Helena



Fig. 6.53. Crăciunel, Unitarian church, Sts Constantine and Helena (photo: Ferenc Mihály)





Fig. 6.54. Tornaszentandrás, Church of St Andrew, Finding of the Cross (photo: Dragoş Năstăsoiu)

*Illustrations for Chapter 7. Painting in the Sanctuaries*



Fig. 7.1. Streisângeorgiu, church of St George, view of the apse



Fig. 7.2. Streisângeorgiu, church of St George, Maiestas Domini



Fig. 7.3. Streisângeorgiu, church of St George, Maiestas Domini, detail



Fig. 7.4. Streisângeorgiu, church of St George, prophet (?)



Fig. 7.5. Streisângeorgiu, church of St George, east wall of the sanctuary





Fig. 7.6. Streisângeorgiu, church of St George, St Basil



Fig. 7.7. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, view of the sanctuary





Fig. 7.8. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Christ in Glory



Fig. 7.9. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, apostles on the south wall of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.10. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, apostles on the north wall of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.11. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Virgin with Child and saint





Fig. 7.12. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, south wall of the sanctuary, register of the bishops

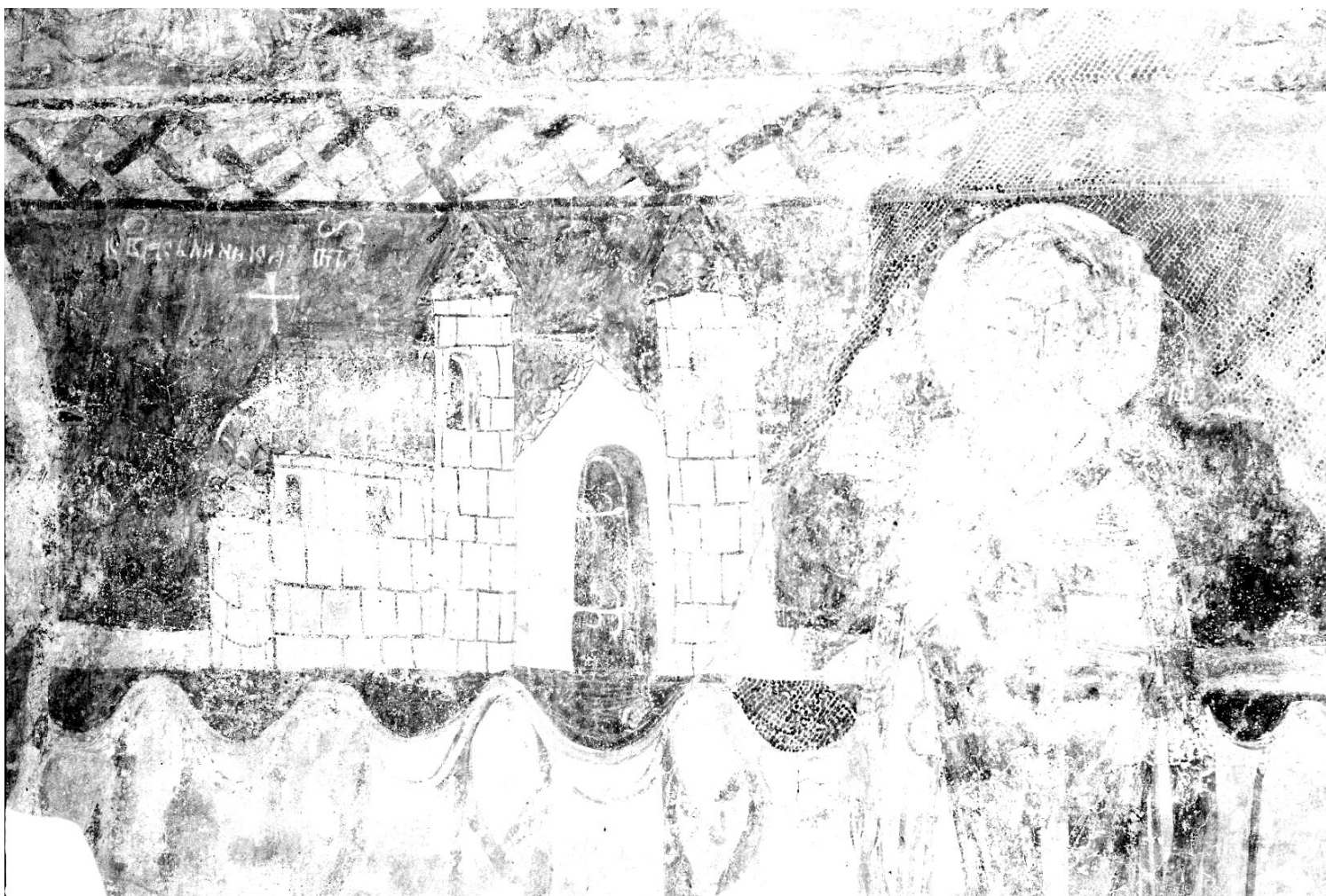


Fig. 7.13a. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Bishop Kalinik

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Fig. 7.13b. . Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, inscription reading “The church of bishop Kalinik”



Fig. 7.14. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Bishop John





Fig. 7.15. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Bishop Cyril



Fig. 7.16. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Bishop Peter



Fig. 7.17. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, St Nicholas and donor



Fig. 7.18. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Man of Sorrows





Fig. 7.19. Strei, church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Prophet Moses, intrados of the triumphal arch



Fig. 7.20. Kraskovo, Prophet Moses, end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 7.21. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, view of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.22. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, sanctuary, view of the vault





Fig. 7.23. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, angel supporting the image of Christ on the vault of the sanctuary

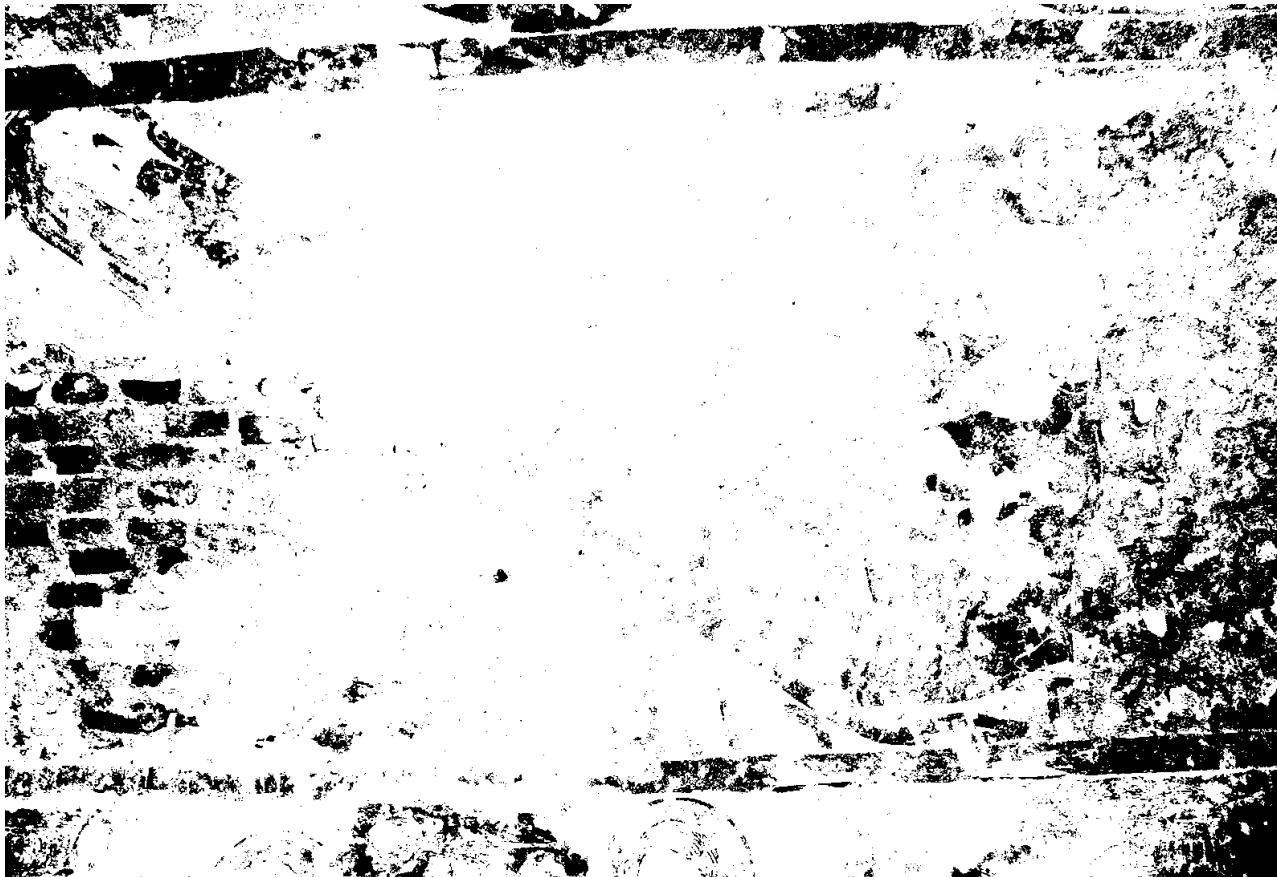


Fig. 7.24. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, sanctuary, evangelists inspired by angels



Fig. 7.25. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, intrados of the triumphal arch



Fig. 7.26. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, east wall of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.27. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, east wall of the sanctuary, lower register





Fig. 7.28. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, north wall of the sanctuary, unknown bishop and St Sylvester



Fig. 7.29. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, north wall of the sanctuary, St Clement



Fig. 7.30. Hălmăgiu, Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, sanctuary, south wall: holy deacon, St John Chrysostom, St Basil and St Nicholas





Fig. 7.31. Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, south wall of the sanctuary: holy deacon, St John Chrysostom and St Basil



Fig. 7.32. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, sanctuary, holy deacon



Fig. 7.33. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, south wall of the sanctuary, St Nicholas



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Fig. 7.34. Hălmagiu, church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, south wall of the sanctuary, St Nicholas



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Fig. 7.35. Ribîța, church of St Nicholas, bishops on the north wall of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.36. Ribița, church of St Nicholas, bishop on the north wall of the sanctuary





Fig. 7.37. Ribîța, church of St Nicholas, St Stephen the Archdeacon and holy bishop, south wall of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.38. Ribița, church of St Nicholas, St Nicholas giving a blessing to an altar





Fig. 7.39. Ribița, church of St Nicholas, east wall of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.40. Ribița, church of St Nicholas, archangel, east wall of the sanctuary, lower register

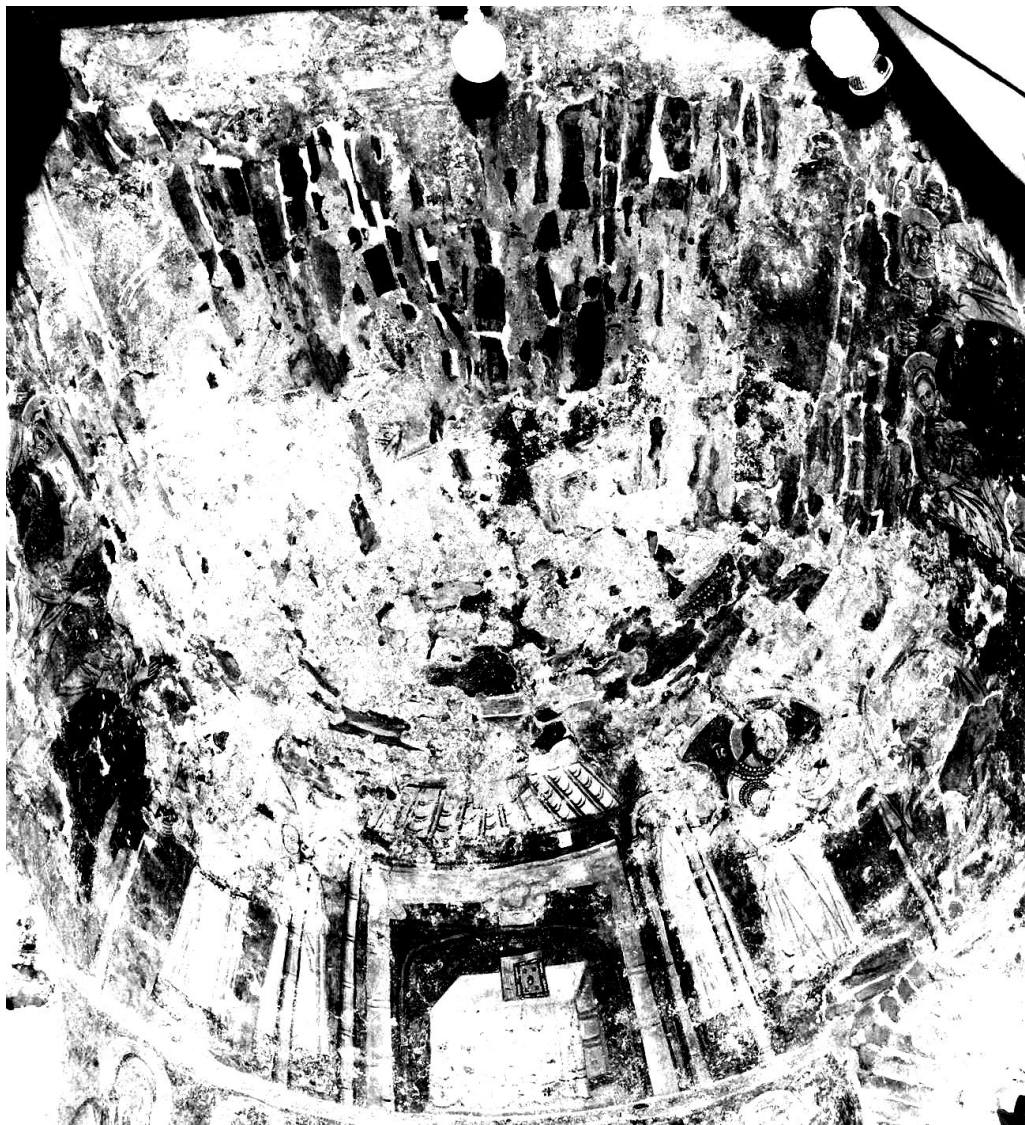


Fig. 7.41. Densuş, church of St Nicholas, the vault of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.42. Densuş, church of St Nicholas, prophet on the intrados of the triumphal arch



Fig. 7.43. Densuş, church of St Nicholas, Melismos





Fig. 7.44. Densuș, church of St Nicholas, sanctuary: Stephen the Archdeacon, Man of Sorrows, Bishop Arsenie and Bishop Athanasius



Fig. 7.45. Densuş, church of St Nicholas, Bishop Arsenie and Bishop Athanasius

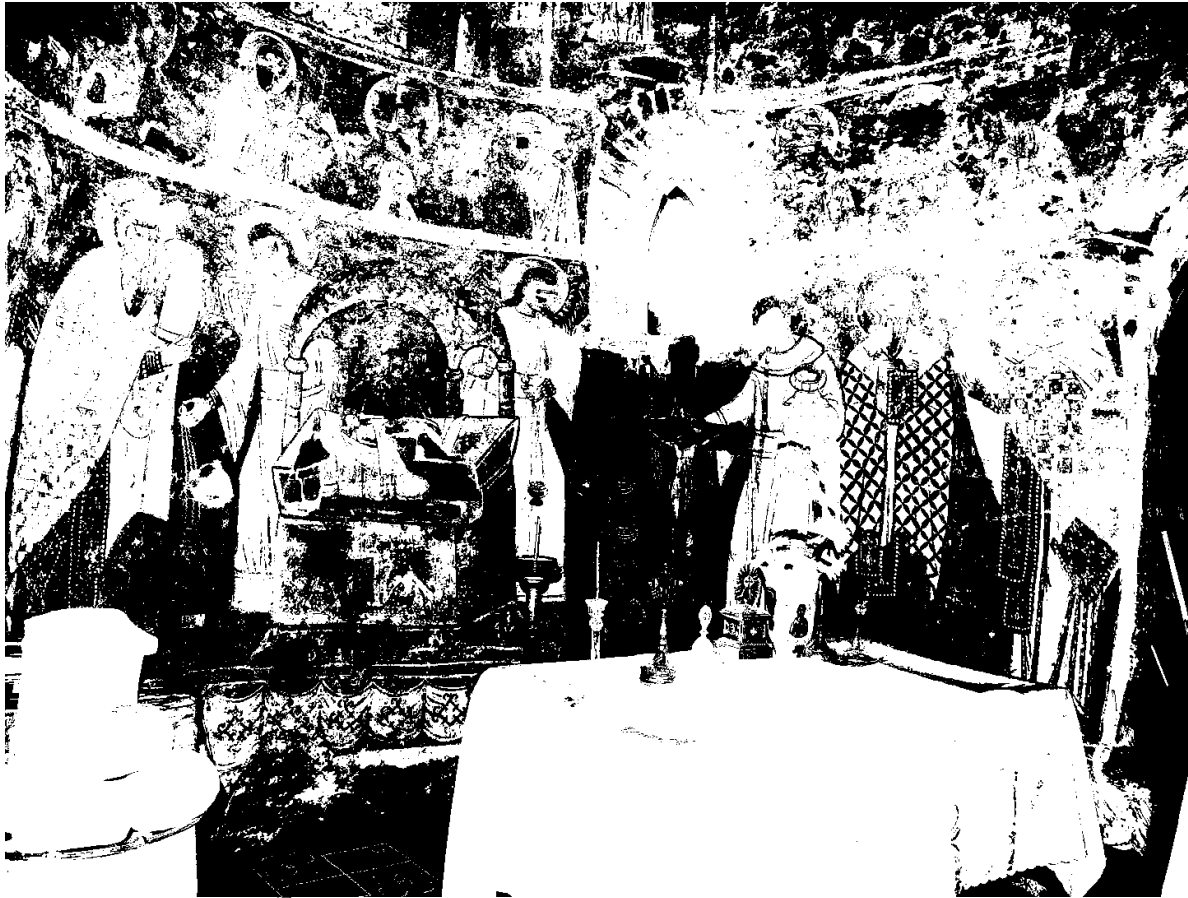


Fig. 7.46. Densuș, church of St Nicholas, view of the sanctuary showing in the lower register: St Athanasius, Melismos, Deacon Prochorus, and two unidentified bishops





Fig. 7.47. Densuș, church of St Nicholas, sanctuary, lower register: Deacon Prochorus, unidentified bishops, entry to the south chapel, Deacon Romanus, unidentified bishop



Fig. 7.48. Densuş, church of St Nicholas, sanctuary, Deacon Prochorus and two unidentified bishops



Fig. 7.49. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, east wall of the sanctuary, echelon of apostles, century



Fig. 7.50. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, sanctuary, apostles



Fig. 7.51. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, south wall of the nave, holy bishop, 1311



Fig. 7.52. Sântămărie Orlea, Reformed church, south wall of the nave, holy bishop, 1311

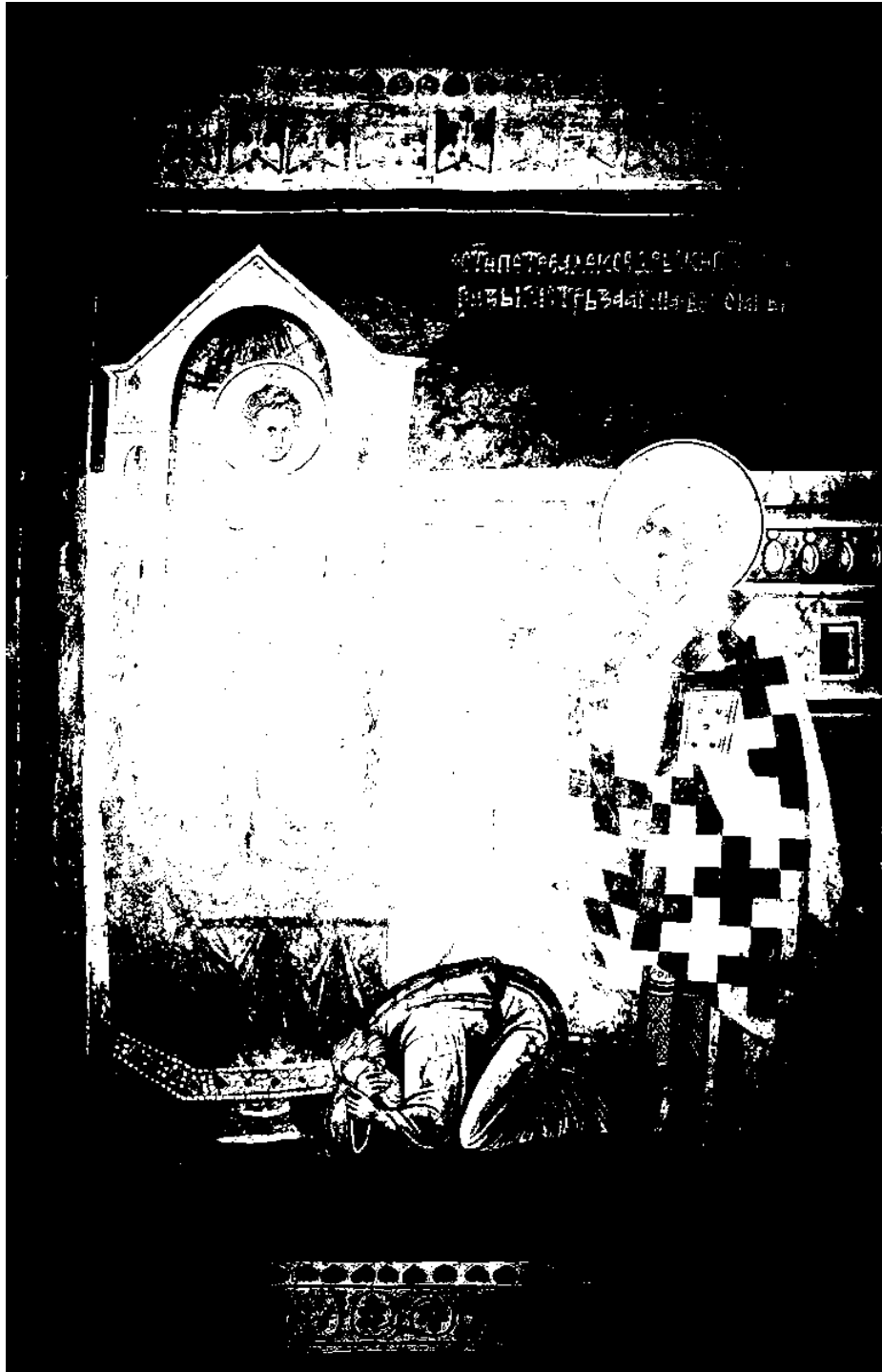


Fig. 7.53. Monastery of Gračanica, the Vision of St Peter of Alexandria, 1321-1322 (photo: <http://srpskoblag.org/Archives/Gracanica/exhibits/>)





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Fig. 7.54. Rimavské Brezovo, Evangelical church, vault of the sanctuary, early 15<sup>th</sup> century





Fig. 7.55. Rimavské Brezovo, Evangelical church, vault of the sanctuary, detail, early 15<sup>th</sup> century

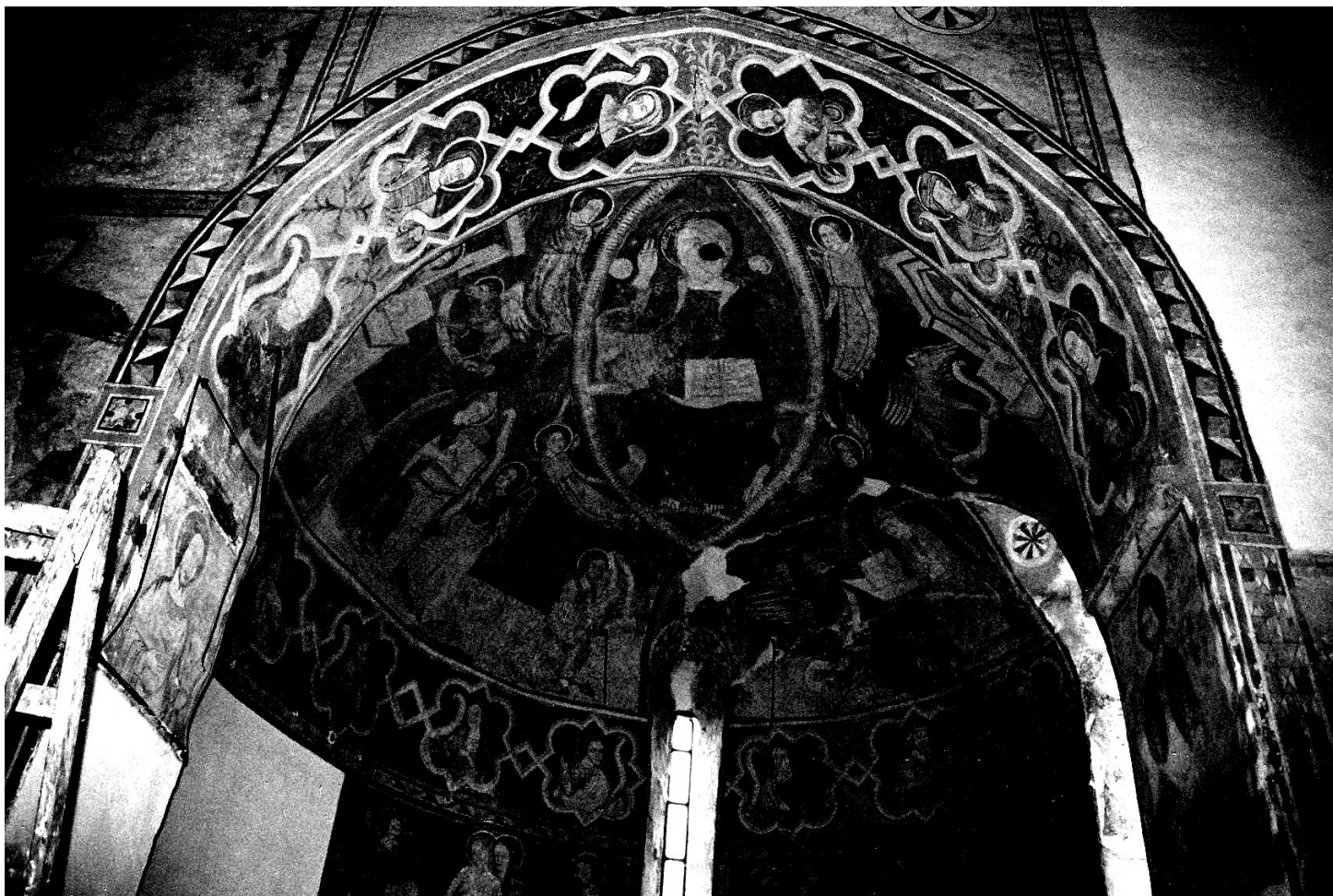


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Fig. 7.56. Rimavské Brezovo, Evangelical church, vault of the sanctuary, Church fathers inspired by angels, early 15<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 7.57. Rimavská Baňa, Evangelical church, intrados of the triumphal arch, prophets, beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century



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Fig. 7.58. Rákoš, Church of the Holy Trinity, view of the sanctuary's vault, around 1400



Fig. 7.59 Rákoš, Church of the Holy Trinity, Evangelist Matthew, around 1400





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Fig. 7.60. Chyžné, Church of the Annunciation, view of the sanctuary's vault, early 15<sup>th</sup> century

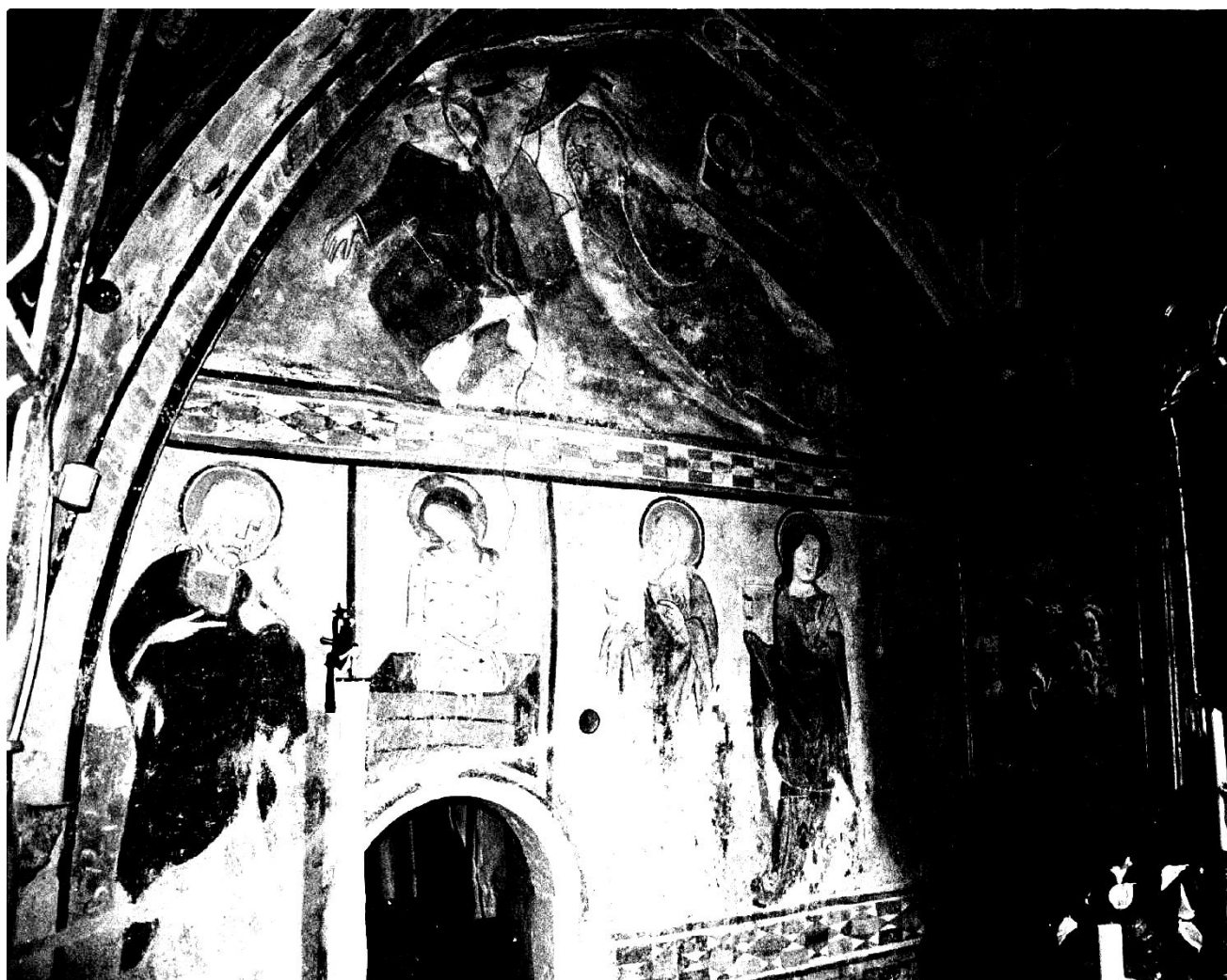


Fig. 7.61. Chyžné, Church of the Annunciation, north wall of the sanctuary, early 15<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 7.62. Kraskovo, Evangelical church, vault of the sanctuary, end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century





Fig. 7.63. Kraskovo, Evangelical church, south wall of the sanctuary, end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 7.64. Kraskovo, Evangelical church, north wall of the sanctuary, end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 7.65. Poniky, Church of St Francis Seraph, vault of the sanctuary



Fig. 7.66. Poniky, Church of St Francis Seraph, north wall of the sanctuary

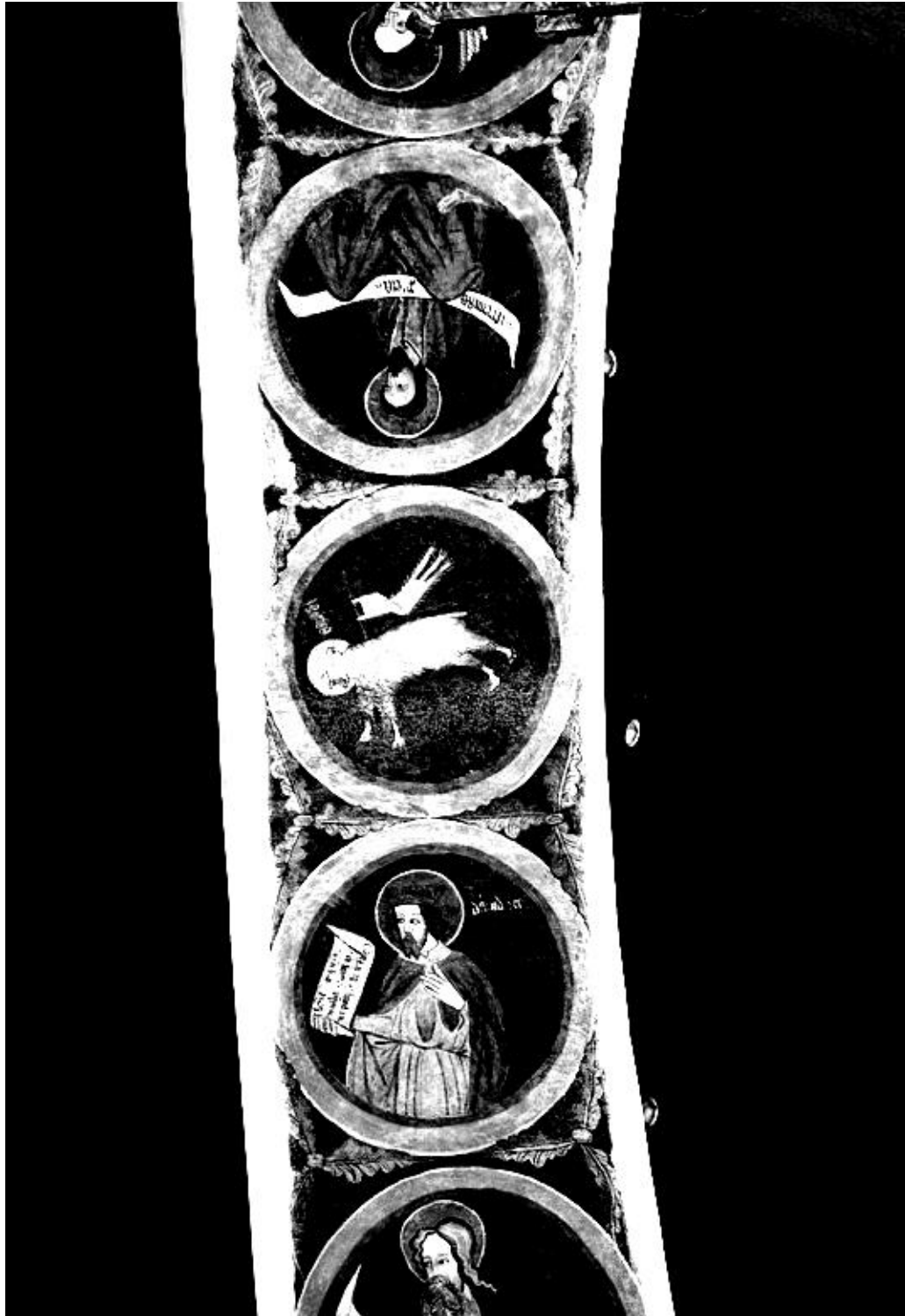


Fig. 7.67. Szalonna, Reformed church, intrados of the triumphal arch, 1417-1427.

*Illustrations for Chapter 8. Saint Bartholomew the Apostle*



Fig. 8.1. Hălmagiu, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, St Bartholomew





Fig. 8.2. Densuș, Church of St. Nicholas, St Bartholomew



Fig. 8.3. Mediaș, Evangelical church of St. Margaret of Antioch. Sts Bartholomew, Catherine of Alexandria and Barbara, and Crucifixion





Fig. 8.4. Mediaș, Evangelical church of St. Margaret of Antioch. Sts Bartholomew, Catherine of Alexandria and Barbara



Fig. 8.5. Štítník, Evangelical church, St Bartholomew



Fig. 8.6. Rákoš, Church of the Holy Trinity, St Bartholomew

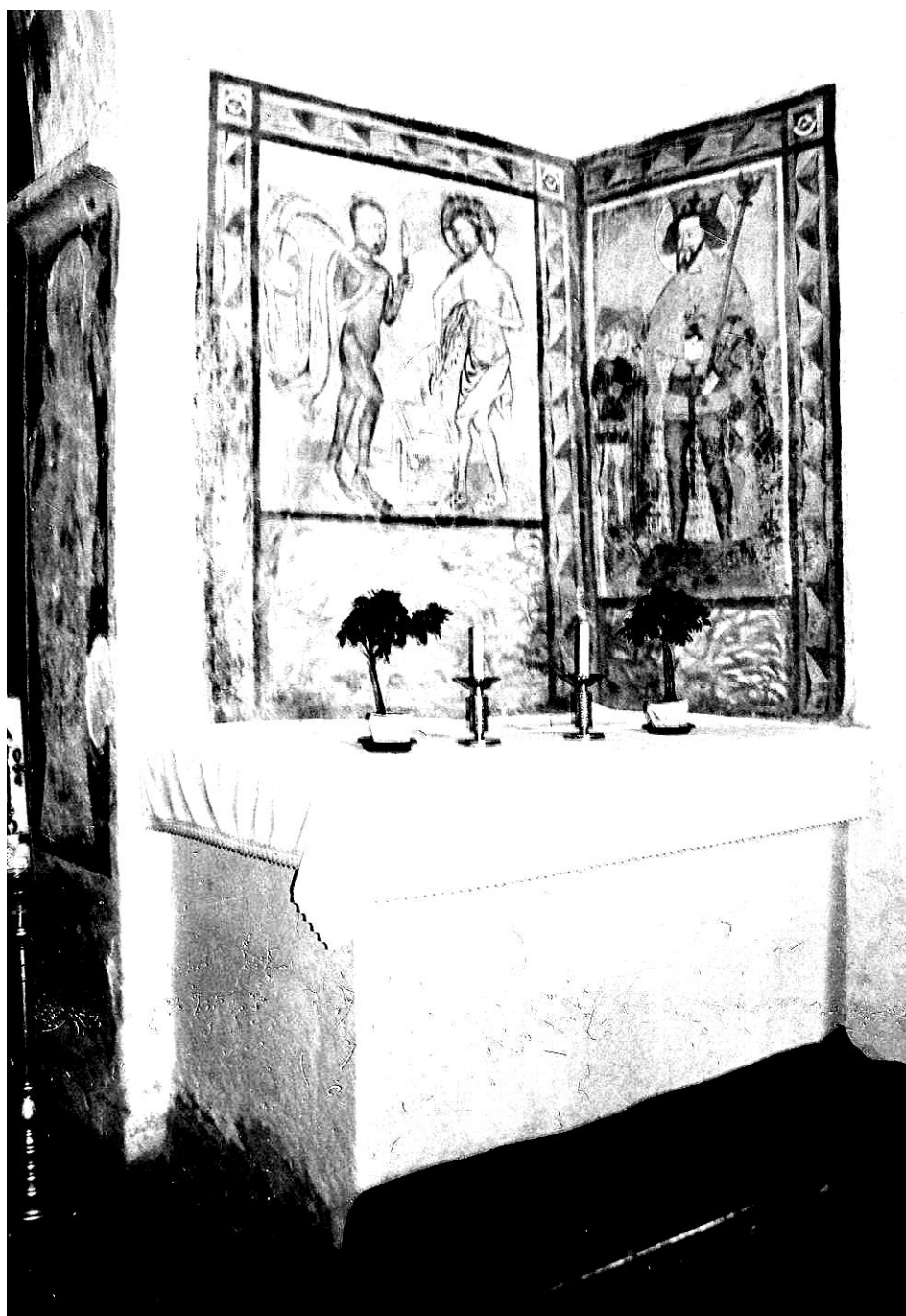


Fig. 8.7. Čerín, Church of St. Martin, south-east corner of the nave



Fig. 8.8. Čerín, Church of St. Martin, St Bartholomew and Man of Sorrows



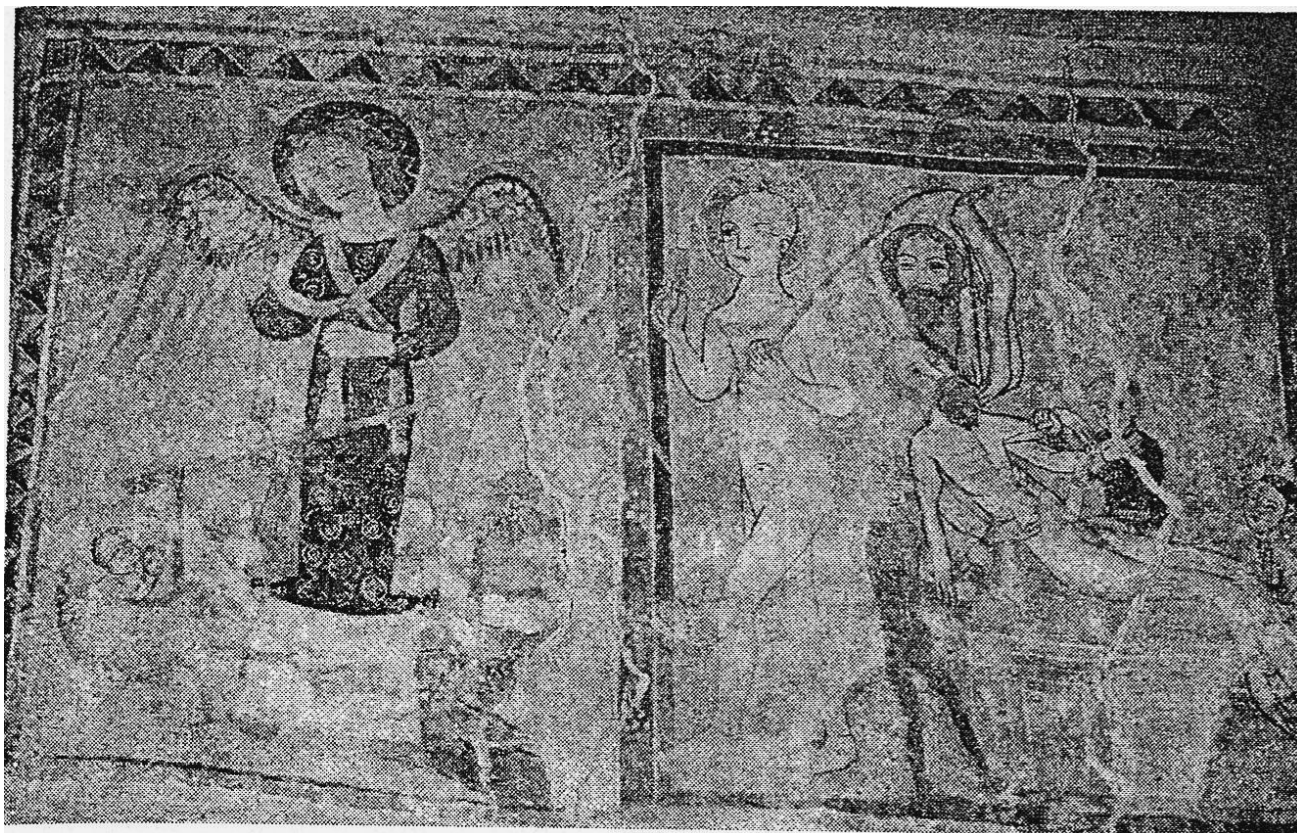


Fig. 8.9. Kvačany, Church of St Catherine of Alexandria, Psychostasis and St Bartholomew and his martyrdom , ca. 1450 (photo: Gerát, *Stredoveké*, fig. 30)

Fig. 8.9. Ano Viannos, Viannos (Herakleion, Crete), Church of St Pelagia, Sts Bartholomew, Mamas and Anthony the Great, 1360 (photo: Theocharopoulou, “Ο τοιχογραφικός διάκοσμος” fig. 17)

Fig. 8.10. Drys, Selino (Chania, Crete), Church of the Holy Apostles, St Bartholomew, 1382-1391 (photo: Konstantinos Kalokyris, *Αί βυζαντιναί τοιχογραφίαι της Κρήτης* (Athens, 1955), fig. 98)