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**THE BELT IN LATE-MEDIEVAL HUNGARY**  
**A COMPARISON OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PICTORIAL EVIDENCES**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2013

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**(Hungary)**

**Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,  
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements**

**of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.**

**Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.**

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**Supervisor**

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**May 2013**



**I, the undersigned, Kármén Anita Baráth, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.**

**Budapest, \_\_ May 2013**

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**Signature**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*I am truly grateful to my supervisor, József Laszlovszky for his useful and sharp advices, my consultations with him were always encouraging and inspirating. I would like to say thank you to Gerhard Jaritz who patiently read and corrected every single text I sent him, and who were ready to discuss problems even late at night, however he was not even my supervisor. He showed me the library of Krems, and brought me several precious literature on my topic without which I would not have been able to do a proper work. I am grateful to Katalin Szende and Béla Zsolt Szakács, whenever I asked something from them, they were always ready to help. I wish to say thank you to Judith Rasson who went through my lines and helped to make my style and grammar prettier.*

*A great thanks for Annabella, who patiently endured my late answers and still solved all of my problems.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### I. 1. Material-cultural studies – the roots of my methodology

In this master's thesis I hope to contribute to material culture studies, or putting it another way, I intend to borrow its approach to understand better a certain type of object and the roles it played in the society as a personal article and symbol. Basically material culture studies researches different aspects of everyday life, bringing together different research areas, perspectives and source materials. It creates a broad field at the intersection of archaeology and anthropology, involving history and art history as well, based on the idea that relationships between the social-cultural phenomena and the material should be used by scholars.<sup>1</sup> Three schools of research can be particularly mentioned in this context from three different regions of Europe. In France the historian Fernand Braudel of the Annales school focused on material cultural studies with his three-volume book called *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme, 1400-1800*,<sup>2</sup> where he dealt with social history by mixing traditional economic material with descriptions of social effects on the components of everyday life, as food, fashion, etc. In Poland after the World War II, first Tadeusz Roslanowski recognized the importance of research on everyday life; he defined the term for the discipline.<sup>3</sup> Witold Hensel and Jan Pazdur published the first book summarizing material culture, mainly using the archaeological sources as a base-line.<sup>4</sup> The Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology in the Polish Academy of Science – dealing with Polish material culture – has become one of the largest centers of material cultural studies in Europe. The Institut für

<sup>1</sup> Dan Hicks, "The material-cultural turn," in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, ed. Dan Hicks, Mary C. Beaudry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 26.

<sup>2</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme 15e-18e siècle* 1-3 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1979)

<sup>3</sup> Tadeusz Roslanowski, "Les études médiévales en Pologne après 1945," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 8 (1972-73): 537-566.

<sup>4</sup> Witold Hensel, Jan Pazdur, *Historia kultury materialnej Polski w zarysie* 1-2 [History of material culture in Poland], (Warsaw: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1978.)

Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in Krems (Austria), whose methodology I use myself, is the other large institute in Europe researching the multiple aspects of everyday life. The Krems institute was established in 1969 by the Austrian Academy of Science. It researches material culture as an interdisciplinary unit of archaeology, images, and texts, focusing mainly on the Middle Ages and the early modern period.<sup>5</sup> Basically their work defines my theoretical framework. Material cultural studies were recognized by Anglo-Saxon research in the 1980s, and it became particularly popular in British archaeology and social anthropology during the 1980s and 1990s, sheltering research on materialistic objects in humanistic themes such as consumption, identity, and experience. Scholars developed the theory of the cultural turn, which means that the cultural turn was a materialistic turn and vice versa. Cultural turn was characterized by a shift from objectivity to subjectivity and in practice it reinforced the divisions between archaeological and anthropological thinking – between the “material” and the “cultural”.<sup>6</sup> Material cultural studies were deployed to solve several significant, long-standing archaeological and anthropological problems, to make an interdisciplinary study of material things in the social sciences.<sup>7</sup>

In Hungary already around the turn of the nineteenth-twentieth century there were some efforts to represent Hungarian everyday life in historical publications, but the first works were rather economic history- and social history-based, and they barely deal with archaeological evidence and visual representations.<sup>8</sup> Archaeologists immediately recognized the significance of artifacts in cultural history, but the first who drew large amount of archaeological material into his cultural-historical work was an ethnologist, Kálmán Szabó.

<sup>5</sup> Gerhard Jaritz, “The Image as Historical Source or: Grabbing Contexts,” *Historische Sozialforschung* 16, No. 4 (1991): 102.

<sup>6</sup> Hicks, “The material-cultural turn:” 28.

<sup>7</sup> Hicks, “The material-cultural turn:” 26.

<sup>8</sup> Remig Békefi’s works on cultural history were gathered and published together, see: Remig Békefi, *Békefi emlékkönyv. Dolgozatok Békefi Remig emlékére* [In memoriam Remig Békefi. Essays in memory of Remig Békefi] (Budapest: Stephaneum Nyomda, 1912); *Magyar Művelődéstörténet* 1-2 [Hungarian cultural history], ed. Sándor Domanovszky et. al. (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1939-40)

Pictorial sources, though, are still absent in his publications.<sup>9</sup> Gyula László also used archaeology to reconstruct the people's everyday life in the Hungarian Conquest period and he included several visual representations.<sup>10</sup> László Gerevich did something similar for Csút, when he described life from the perspective of clothing based on the excavated late medieval material found in the cemetery at Csút.<sup>11</sup> The earliest research can barely be considered interdisciplinary, but the works of László and Gerevich already made the first step to studying medieval material culture using multiple sources. András Kubinyi's article about the *bicellus* provided a proper example how it is possible to identify a certain object using textual, archaeological and pictorial sources.<sup>12</sup> Among archaeologists it is András Pálóczi-Horvath, who relies on visual sources the most frequently in his studies on Cuman material culture. I do not want to go further into research history because the amount of literature on this subject is constantly increasing. Though I must say, even nowadays it is rare that a scholar, when describing a certain segment of material culture, places relatively equal emphasis on different source materials. In this thesis I aim to put a greater emphasis on images because they have never been explored entirely from this particular perspective, and the first step should be to learn and understand the whole unit of the material. An image, whether it is in a profane or religious context, public or personal space, bears compound, specific messages, some of them are intentionally built-in, others might be unconscious connotations, but eventually an image must be interpreted in a social, cultural context. But images are also collective sets of the material culture surrounding people, and the way this group of objects are represented through the filter of the creator helps to understand them as parts of the culture. Researching objects in

<sup>9</sup> Kálmán Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép művelődéstörténeti emlékei* [Cultural remnants of the Hungarian nation living in the Alföld] (Budapest: Országos Magyar Történeti Múzeum 1938)

<sup>10</sup> Gyula László, *A honfoglaló magyar nép élete* [Life of Hungarians during the Hungarian Conquest period] (Budapest: Magyar Élet Kiadása, 1944)

<sup>11</sup> László Gerevich, "Acsúti középkori sírmező" [The medieval cemetery in Csút], *Budapest Régiségei* 13 (1973): 103-166.

<sup>12</sup> András Kubinyi, "Bicellus: Adatok egy középkori fegyverfajta meghatározásához" [Bicellus, Defining a medieval weapon type], *Budapest Régiségei* 23 (1973): 189-193.

a visual context can serve well the conception of material cultural studies.<sup>13</sup> As Elisabeth Vavra notes, medieval images are usually used only as mere illustrations for representing other sources.<sup>14</sup> In Hungary the situation is similar. Although there are works here which aimed to change this treatment of images, like the doctoral dissertation of Annamária Kovács on the miniatures of the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle,<sup>15</sup> visual representations are rarely treated as independent source units, or base-line. In this thesis I plan to apply that to mural paintings.

## I. 2. Sources and the methodology

As a subject of this thesis I chose a rather talkative segment of material culture – clothing. I spent roughly one year on collecting material for my previous master thesis. I aimed to provide a rather general picture about potentials of mural paintings as visual sources. I chose late-medieval mural paintings as bases of my research and I made an attempt to compare the visual representations with artifacts. In that work also I have dealt with clothing, focusing on every kinds of costume accessories depicted in frescos including headdress, brooches, belt fittings, buttons and beads. There I gathered mural paintings from Transylvania (present-day Romania) and present-day Hungary and different artifactual material mainly from Hungary and some from Transylvania. Now my source base is more extensive, I included the whole Upper Hungarian (present-day Slovakia) fresco material, with which the image of the wall painting material can be considered more or less complete. Though there is still no comprehensive book on all the known mural paintings in medieval Hungary, one can

<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth Vavra, “Kunstgeschichte und Realienkunde,” in *Die Erforschung von Alltag und Sachkultur des Mittelalters. Methode – Ziel – Verwirklichung*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für mittelalterliche Realienkunde Österreichs 6 = Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 433 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984), 174.

<sup>14</sup> Elisabeth Vavra, “Mittelalterliche Kunstwerke – Illustration oder Quelle für die Sachkulturforschung,” *Bericht über den 16. Österreichischen Historikertag in Krems/Donau* 25 (1984), 430-448.

<sup>15</sup> Annamária Kovács, “Court, Fashion and Representation, The Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle Revisited.” PhD dissertation, Central European University, 2010.



say that in the past two decades the fresco research has revived, and the number of known frescos sharply increased. Several new mural paintings were discovered, more and more paintings – newly found and old ones – got to be restored, and then published in spectacular albums and multiple-volume books with high-quality photos and detailed analyses. Albeit these albums contain data which is not easy to detect, they lack proper quotations, and the frescos are analyzed rather from art historical point of view than from the perspective of costume, fashion, and material culture, the representations are pretty useful for further researches.<sup>16</sup> Upper Hungarian fresco examples show such details which cannot be seen anywhere else, so I can certainly say that my source material was significantly enriched by the new paintings. However my first aim was to follow my previous path and analyze again each group of dress accessories, I chose to focus only one tiny but more important part of it, the belts. According to my experiences cloak buckles could show high diversity and the research of cuts (related to beads and buttons) and shoes would be worthwhile too, but the belt is the object which, I believe, has far the most potential in it. It shows high variability both in frescos and in artifacts, concerning both the shape and the way of wearing it. The current circumstances in the archaeological research and the dating problems of artifacts also argued beside my choice. Through belts I aim to do a complex research on fashion, clothing, visual representations and surviving artifacts.

I have been always interested in clothing, since dresses and fashion are various-sided in every single context where they appear – in everyday life or in depictions of everyday life, in religious or secular context, in a public or private space. Broadly speaking scholars can examine dresses in three different contexts. First, from collections where usually valuable

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<sup>16</sup> Zsombor Jékely, Kiss Lóránd, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben* [Medieval mural paintings in Transylvania] (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2008); Zsombor Jékely, József Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek a középkori Magyarország északkeleti megyéiből* [Mural paintings from the north-eastern part of medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2009); József Lángi, Mihály Ferenc, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* 1-3 [Transylvanian mural paintings and painted furniture 1] (Budapest: Állami Műemlékhelyreállítási és Restaurálási Központ, 2002-2006)

dresses were kept, which are mainly indicators of the clothing of a thin, illustrious social layer. Remnants of dresses, and especially dress accessories appear in cemeteries, which is a rather slippery area regarding fashion, principally because of two reasons. The chronology of cemetery objects cannot be built up undoubtedly, which raises the question whether those clothing related objects can be considered as indicators of the current fashion at the time when the corpse was buried or they rather stand for previous fashion tendencies. In fashion one understands not only single pieces of clothes or pieces of accessories but particular compositions of them. Nevertheless the intention of placing goods in the grave and the purposes or reasons of the way how people dressed up the dead body can be varied. By examining the condition of the certain objects it is not difficult to decide if it was used already before it was put in the grave or it was produced for burial purposes. But even if it can be surely claimed that an object was worn, it does not mean that it carries proper information regarding the contemporary fashion, its presence can easily just serve a long tradition of particular burial customs or even show unpredictable personal (emotional) reasons. Paradoxically especially in the case of high status dead the fashion aspect can be really slippery. In their cases the tradition and the proper fashion together might make a composition. To make a relatively exact image the third context could provide help – the images. Dressing is unavoidable in figural depictions of art works such as sculptures, paintings (including miniatures, mural paintings, panel paintings, and stained glass) or everyday objects like textiles, seals or coins. This third context and the intersection of art history and archaeology is the base of my research. Hereinafter I am using the images to compare visual representations with material objects regarding shape, their assumed agency and identity; and I have chosen one particular clothing accessory, the belt to do so, and one type of visual source, the mural paintings.

Using visual representations as tools for analyzing artifacts is not a new but one of the oldest and most important methods among the comparative research methodologies. Nevertheless archaeological publications are rather inconsistent in using pictorial sources to represent them as contemporary analogies of material culture. Examining jewellery in depictions gives the impression of observing them in their original milieu. Paintings have often been used as pictorial sources to identify objects, to define accurately how or where they were used, and what role they played in everyday life. In publications however panel paintings or miniatures of illuminated codices serve this role and mural paintings are often neglected. I chose mural paintings of all the visual sources because there are only a few codex illustrations and panel paintings in the fourteenth and early-fifteenth century Hungary. Also there are just a few significant sculpture finds, as the one from Buda castle,<sup>17</sup> which might help a lot in fashion analysis. Frescos though is a large and relatively closed artistic unit; and a great number of them survived in medieval Hungary. They still have a lot of unexploited potentials in them, especially regarding material culture as I have indicated also in my previous master thesis. In the research on weaponry or costume, murals are frequently used for comparison, especially for the clothing of figures in the episodes of the legend of Saint Ladislaus, but still I must say that not all of the mural paintings are explored from the aspect of costume, and there is a great deal of work left related to them. This research hiatus is the one that I would plan to fill with my work regarding belts.

Frescos in medieval Hungary are rather minimalists, especially from the earlier periods; they have changed over time however, and they have become more and more detailed, therefore I believe it is worth placing emphasis on this comparison.

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<sup>17</sup> László, Zolnay, Ernő Szakál, *A budavári gótikus szoborlelet* [Gothic statue find in Buda castle] (Budapest: Corvina, 1976)

### I. 2. 1. Geographical framework of the sources

After selection of the topic the question emerges of how large an area should be examined to get reliable results. The ideal option would be all of medieval Hungary, including areas of present-day Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Slovakia, and Ukraine; a critical examination of all the surviving pictorial monuments in the Carpathian Basin, however, is too extended for a Master's thesis even if I deal with one type of object, the belts only. In order to limit the material I have decided to deal with the relevant mural paintings in the territory of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Since in my previous thesis I already covered the archaeological material and mural paintings of Hungary and Romania, I will include my previous results here too.

In Medieval Hungary probably due to the expansion of the Ottoman conquest a lot of churches perished. Basically there are three large areas, which were beyond the pale of the Ottoman Empire, and which such way are still exceptionally rich in mural paintings – the North-Eastern region of present-day Hungary (where protestants painted over the frescos with whiting and preserved a large number of them this way), Transylvania and Upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia). I believe that examples from these three territories characterize well the general feature of late-medieval mural painting in the country, so the other areas that were listed above I leave out from the research. I am conscious of the disadvantages of this necessary restriction; I know that it may separate some items from the same stylistic whole. If I reckon with the existence of wandering painters I might separate works that were produced by the same artists. I studied the church of Maramureş (Romania) for instance, but I avoided examining the paintings at Chornotysiv (Ukraine) and Pidvynohradiv (Ukraine), which, according to József Lángi, were all painted by one master.<sup>18</sup> Methodologically this is a vulnerability, but also defensible. In my case style analysis plays only an indirect role. It is

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<sup>18</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 217.

important for accurate dating and it helps identify foreign influences, but treating the style itself as an independent whole is irrelevant. I took this into consideration when I separated the works of Johannes Aquila from each other; the paintings of the only master working in Hungary from this era who is known by name and whose mural paintings are identifiable in Hungary, Slovenia, and Austria.<sup>19</sup> I treated the sequence of the mural paintings on the Saint Ladislaus legend in the same way.

### I. 2. 2. Chronological frame of the sources

Marking the chronological framework appeared to be even more difficult than the geographical one, especially regarding the upper limit, since the lower limit was defined by the first known and examinable mural paintings. One of the main questions was whether I should use the historical or the art historical periodization. According to certain art historians, the historical scheme is irrelevant in a publication dealing with art pieces. Dénes Radocsay – whose book analyzing the currently known mural painting material was published in 1954<sup>20</sup> – was criticized for having used a historical, dynasty-based time frame.<sup>21</sup> My case is a bit more complicated since I deal with not only art historical material but also archaeological objects. These finds are usually dated to centuries and they use dynasty-based historical dating, only if they have the opportunity. If a belt belongs to that part of the fourteenth century which occurred under the reign of Angevin kings, scholars usually specify that. If such find shows up which certainly refer to a given ruler, they never miss mentioning it. In frescos it is more conspicuous, because there are particular changes in iconography after dynastic changes, for instance the figure of Saint Sigismund appear more and more in the Sigimund period. In

<sup>19</sup> Ernő Marosi, ed., *Johannes Aquila és a 14. századi falfestészete* [Johannes Aquila and mural painting in the fourteenth century] (Budapest: MTA Művészettörténeti Kutatóintézete, 1989)

<sup>20</sup> Dénes, Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei* [Mural paintings of medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1954)

<sup>21</sup> Melinda Tóth, „Falfestészet az Árpád-korban” [Mural painting in the Arpadian Period], *Ars Hungarica* 23, no. 2 (1995): 137.

archaeology the point is not the dynastic change but the change in the material culture. Luckily apparent changes occurred after the Árpáadian era and the Angevin period as well.

Questions emerging from the periodization of Hungarian art have been disputed for more than a half century. A classification of Hungarian frescos was devised according to the Western European scheme around the early 1960s, or at least the first concrete suggestions were put forward then. Scholars had to reconcile an already elaborated model with previously used analytical methods, the dynastic classification. Dynastic changes did not have immediately a great deal of impact on artistic phenomena, but their influence is undeniable. A broad group of art historians talks about a long-lasting survival of the Romanesque style, the characteristics of which are detectable and significant well into the Gothic Era. Maria Prokopp took the stand that artistically the era of Charles I of Hungary and Louis the Great is a well-defined and closed period, easily separated from previous artistic phenomena.<sup>22</sup> Basically, there is only a slight difference between these two opinions; and I believe that they are not in opposition. The idea that the art of the Angevin Period is a closed whole does not obviate the survival of Romanesque stylistic elements, but it is true that drawing strictly defined lines is not possible. Finally, a unified classification was made which took into account the time lapse in medieval Hungary compared with Western Europe. As Ernő Marosi described scholars see the dominance of Romanesque art until the middle of the thirteenth century, when early Gothic elements gradually started seeping in. High Gothic art began in the beginning of the fourteenth century and the period from the turn of the fourteenth century until the 1430s is characterized by the International Gothic style. From the thirties of the fifteenth century up to the beginning of the sixteenth century Late Gothic art styles

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<sup>22</sup> Mária Prokopp, *Italian Trecento Influence on Murals in East Central Europe, particularly Hungary* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983)

dominated.<sup>23</sup> Since this is more or less still accepted today, I chose my upper limit from this classification.

From those centuries prior to the fourteenth century the archaeological sources are abundant but there is no such representation of accessories which could be used as visual analogy. In mural paintings of the Arpadian period one cannot find visually represented belts at all, so the lower limit was easy to define. Following the concept of Ernő Marosi I drew an imaginary upper line in the middle of the fifteenth century on the threshold of the Late Gothic Era where approximately the International Gothic Era ends.<sup>24</sup> This makes it possible to define the paintings that belong to my research, since art historical dating tradition draws a line around the mid-fifteenth century, and scholars usually date monuments to the first or second part of the fifteenth century. The clear division of the International and Late-Gothic style makes it relatively easy. All the mural paintings I will use for my research were made before the end of the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg. I do not go beyond the Sigismund Period and the International Gothic style, because if I did it would be hardly justifiable why I ignore panel paintings, when I deal with visual representations.

The other group of my primary sources, the archaeological material, will be from approximately the same timeframe. The dating practice for jewellery is also rather problematic. Most scholars follow the tradition of previous researchers; and they often lean on old publications when they date a particular object.<sup>25</sup> There is a tradition of dating simply decorated jewellery to earlier periods and prosperously decorated jewellery to later periods, which is often a mere misinterpretation. I believe that certain dress accessories may be younger than they have been dated by other scholars; especially in the case of fifteenth century belts the dating should be revised. For this reason I use some objects dated to the late fifteenth century; thus my timeframe of archaeological material seems to be wider, although it

<sup>23</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 26.

<sup>24</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Gerevich, „A csúti középkori sírmező”

is not. Most of my comparative material will be from the present-day Hungary, because from the other areas (present-day Romania and Slovakia) there are fewer artifacts due to the significantly fewer cemetery excavations. Szeklerland is a proper example for the phenomenon of relatively numerous paintings opposed to the exiguous number of excavated cemeteries.<sup>26</sup> In archaeological publications there is no one universally acceptable time periodization if it is about classifying the material; but the dynasty-based historical periodization appears more often than in art historical literature, especially in cases when more precise dating is possible by coins, however, one also finds hints only for centuries without any dynastic references. In my previous Master's thesis marking the chronological framework, the traditional art historical time classification was significant, but since both the art of the Angevin and Sigismund period is a well-defined unite and clearly separable from each other regarding its artistic style as well, and also since it is relevant for both the frescos and objects I decided to choose the dynasty-based periodization for the whole material.

### I. 2. 3. A particularly important source – murals of the Saint Ladislaus legend

Mainly in the fourteenth century there is a large thematically coherent group of mural paintings which depict certain episodes from the life of the Hungarian royal saint – Ladislaus (1077-1095). The depicted episodes of the legend based on his life are the only independent iconographical inventions of medieval Hungarian mural painting.<sup>27</sup> Today circa sixty churches are known where some traces of the depicted cycle is detectable.<sup>28</sup> Since my richest and most numerous sources are from this particular mural painting cycle I decided to dedicate

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Elek Benkő describes properly the problems of szekler archaeology in Romania. (Elek Benkő, „Mittelalterliche archäologische funde im Szeklerland,” in *Die Szekler in Siebenbürgen*, ed. Harald Roth, (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2009), 13-43.

<sup>27</sup> Zsuzsa Lukács, „A Szent László legenda a középkori falképfestészetben” [The Saint Ladislaus legend in medieval mural painting], in *Athleta Patriae. Tanulmányok Szent László történetéhez* [Athleta Patriae. Articles on Saint Ladislaus], ed. László Mezey (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1980), 163.

<sup>28</sup> Béla Hankovszky, Terézia Kerny, Zoltán Mózer, *Ave Rex Ladislaus* (Budapest: Kirosz Kiadó, 2000), 6.



a brief summary to it before I start to drop examples of the group.<sup>29</sup> Supposedly the first depictions appeared at the end of the thirteenth, or in the beginning of the fourteenth century. The iconographic type might evolve in the late thirteenth century.<sup>30</sup> A relative chronology was elaborated by Ernő Marosi and Gyula László with depicted clothing and weaponry, and using other pictorial analogies such as seals, coins and miniatures.<sup>31</sup> The cycle has profane characteristics, which manifests in the fashionable appearance of the figures and the assumed symbolism of the depictions. Dénes Radocsay suggested that the first depictions showed up in less strict iconographic contexts like castles, although without evidence this idea cannot be proven. According to Ernő Marosi the profane feature, their actuality made the images easier to understand. They had an instructive, didactic function and served examples of courageous and knightly behavior, as role model in front of men.<sup>32</sup>

The official center of the Saint Ladislaus cult was in Nagyvárád, but the origin and roots of the iconography are still disputed. Flóris Rómer brought up the idea that the fresco painted by an Italian master in Oradea (Nagyvárád, Romania) was the prototype, and served as base point for all the other examples.<sup>33</sup> Later many significant scholars accepted this idea of Italian artistic roots.<sup>34</sup> The Slovakian scholar Vlasta Dvoráková was the first one emphasized the importance of Norman-French influences on these visual representation.<sup>35</sup> Some Hungarian scholars argue that certain oriental-nomadic elements point to East instead of West and the origin of the depiction should go back to the Hungarian Conquest period or

<sup>29</sup> The most recent published book which deals with the complete surviving material – whether they are mural paintings or water-color copies, photos of them – is the book of Béla Hankovszky (Hankovszky, et al., *Ave Rex Ladislaus*)

<sup>30</sup> Lukács. „A Szent László legenda a középkori falképfestészetben.” 177.; Ernő Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás. Művészet és valóság a 14-15. századi Magyarországon* [Picture and image. Art and reality in the 14-15<sup>th</sup> century Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995), 67.

<sup>31</sup> Gyula, László, *A Szent László legenda középkori falképei* [Medieval mural paintings depicting the Saint Ladislaus legend] (Budapest: Tájak-Korok-Múzeumok Egyesület, 1992), 11.; Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás*, 69.

<sup>32</sup> Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás*, 70.

<sup>33</sup> Flóris, Rómer, *Régi falképek Magyarországon* [Old mural paintings in Hungary] (Budapest: Eggenberger-féle Akadémiai Könyvkereskedés, 1874.), 32.

<sup>34</sup> Kornél Diváld, „Magyarország középkori képzőművészete,” in *A művészetek története* 2, ed. Zsolt Beöthy (Budapest: Lampel R. (Wodianer F. és Fiai) R.T, 1927), 115; Dezső Dercsényi, *Nagy Lajos kora* [The age of Louis the Great] (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1941); Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*

<sup>35</sup> Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 164-166.

even further.<sup>36</sup> Even nowadays this debate divides scholars and there is no satisfactory consensus so far. Scholars who dealt with visual representations of the legend focused mainly on stylistic problems and this East versus West argument. There is no literature which misses to mention the importance of clothing and the representation of fashion but there is no work so far which analyzes profoundly the clothing depicted in it, with the exception of a few articles.<sup>37</sup> Usually five scene is represented – Departure from Várad (i.e. Nagyvárad; now Oradea, Romania), the battle of Kerlés, the wrestling scene, with Saint Ladislaus and the Cuman warrior, the beheading of this warrior and the Resting scene, when the exhausted king lays his head on the lap of the maiden. Concerning fashion the cycle is particularly interesting, because it depicts partially secular characters of several kinds, the king, his knights, the warriors of an ethnic group, the Cumans, and also a female character, the abducted maiden.

#### I. 2. 4. The case of water-colors and drawings made after quondam mural paintings

The demand for documenting mural paintings rose in the nineteenth century; numerous murals which are already lost remained in these nineteenth century graphics and aquarelle paintings. These copies served both representation and monument protection and they were considered in a similar horizon as independent artistic works; and for this reason one can question their reliability.<sup>38</sup> At the same time they must have followed certain criteria such as adherence to the original painting, and those artists, drawing teachers were just partially given a free hand; and they were under the control of the National Committee of Monument Protection.<sup>39</sup> Probably it is not that the copiers drew or painted details differently from what they saw on the church walls but in the place of already lost parts they invented

<sup>36</sup> Hankovszky, et al, *Ave Rex Ladislaus*; László, *A Szent László legenda középkori falképei*

<sup>37</sup> Annamária Kovács, „Costumes as symbols of warrior sainthood: The pictorial representations of the legend of King Ladislaus in Hungary,” *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 6. (2000): 145-162.

<sup>38</sup> Mihály János, *Színek és legendák* [Colors and legends] (Sepsiszentgyörgy: Pallas Akadémiai Kiadó, 2008), 72.

<sup>39</sup> Miklós Horler, „Az intézményes műemlékvédelem kezdetei Magyarországon (1872-1922)” [The early institutional monument protection in Hungary (1872-1922)], in *A magyar műemlékvédelem korszakai* [Periods of the Hungarian monument protection] ed. István Bardoly, Andrea Haris (Budapest: Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1996), 105.

details without notification or any kinds of sign showing that the given detail was not made after the original. In a comparative research which deals with such details as costume accessories this might be a problem. Just to mention one example, in Vítkovce at 1905 József Hanuka made a couple of copies of the perishing paintings. However he drew belts even on those Cuman figures which had quite insignificant straps on their waist, the long-strap girdle on Saint Ladislaus does not appear, yet in the real fresco it is there.<sup>40</sup> I am fully conscious about the disadvantages and the possible unreliability of them, but relying on my judgment, I still use some of their examples, which represent important details regarding belts.

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<sup>40</sup> László, *A Szent László legenda középkori falképei*, 122-123.

## II. BELTS IN THE LATE-MIDDLE AGES

### II. 1. Late-medieval belt in Europe and the international research

Due to the ample and spectacular material remained, medieval belt has a great deal of international literature concerning as the artifacts, so the research of their visual representations and written documents, where the accessory shows up. Significant amount of publications exist on belts' place in fashion including their value and meaning in the society. The treatment of the artifact is developed. Large amount of objects is collected and represented together, the material is classified, and the typo-chronology is more or less elaborated using the chronology of the pottery found nearby in England (where the dates are not specified in centuries but in ceramic phases)<sup>41</sup> or other finds as in the case of the Fuchsenhof hoard, which is an outstandingly well-elaborated new find.<sup>42</sup> The network of the workshops is drawn, relevant analogies are gathered, and the whole material is supported and demonstrated by multiple other sources.<sup>43</sup> Regarding dress accessories Western Europe is in a relatively lucky situation, since in many cases not only strap fittings but straps themselves were also preserved in a good condition (sometimes a the strap remained in its almost complete length, sometimes scholars could detect only some pieces of them trapped between strap ends or buckle plates), which allowed scholars to make extensive material analysis and to reconstruct the whole object. The belt material is huge in each context. Numerous examples of them turned up in deposits, church treasure collections, among castle and settlement finds and grave goods.<sup>44</sup> The large material made it possible to set typologies, and distinguish their examples according to material, structure, shape, and decoration, which scholars could

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<sup>41</sup> Geoff Egan, Frances Pritchard, *Dress Accessories c. 1150-1450* (London: Boydell Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Der Schatzfund von Fuchsenhof*, ed. Bernhard Prokisch, Thomas Kühtreiber, 133-229, Linz: Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum, 2004.

<sup>43</sup> See Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*; Ilse Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen un späten Mittelalters* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1971)

<sup>44</sup> Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen un späten Mittelalters*, 14-24.

arrange to a chronological line. Belt is a crucial element of the dress and the armor as well – it is regarded ostentatious ornament and it is indispensable both for women and men clothing. Their size, the types or character of their decoration, their material, and their location on the body is fairly talkative about fashion, the type or function of the clothes which it hold together, and the social status or wealth of the person who wore them.<sup>45</sup>

The medieval belt material is rather homogeneous in Europe. Despite particular heraldic decoration regional differences between the certain states are insignificant, and one can find perfect parallels for belts in the continent and the British Isles. Scholars agree that the varicolored way of decoration on belts appeared already in the twelfth and thirteenth century but regarding types and ornaments the fourteenth century brought the real abundance for belts. After the highly decorated early medieval belts from the high middle ages – the tenth to the early twelfth century there is a gap when even in Western-Europe one cannot find their examples neither among archaeological finds nor in literary or visual sources. The earliest belt mounts are from the 1160s, but the material is relatively poor these times, and there are only a few ornate prior to the late thirteenth century beside buckles and strap ends.<sup>46</sup> The material had become significantly rich and showed increasingly wide and flourishing variety of designs from the second quarter and middle of the fourteenth century, all along the late-middle ages.

In Western Europe before the thirteenth century high fashion was frequently defined by law as privilege of the upper classes with occasional concessions being made to the merchant classes. Fashion trends could reach lower social layers only when certain clothes which were already considered outmoded were sent to second-hand clothes dealers, where less illustrious people could buy them, naturally without their precious stone or metal

<sup>45</sup> Ronald W. Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum 1992), 306.

<sup>46</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 310.

fittings.<sup>47</sup> These times wearing spectacular belts was also the privilege of high rank people, but from the fourteenth century girdles of solid metal were already worn by rich bourgeoisie, and it became widespread in more and more circles of the society.<sup>48</sup> Fine girdles were worth a lot; its value is represented well in the custom of giving belts to brides, even at royal weddings, not only in the earlier periods when jeweled belts were counted as curiosities but afterwards too, and it became more and more widespread, in the late-middle ages.<sup>49</sup>

Belts were worn above or around the waist or on the hips. They can consist of several functional or purely ornamental elements. Its basis is a strap which is either leather or woven with silk, linen, or worsted. The decoration of it could be also varied. Certain examples of them could be simple, completely unadorned maybe except for knives, purses, keys or pouches which were hooked to small metal loops.<sup>50</sup> The decorated and plain versions existed together from the fourteenth century onwards; the lack or presence of ornament is not related to the chronology. The size of the belts could be also diverse. Medieval girdles came in 3 sizes: with broad, middle-sized and narrow strap. While the broad belt featured female fashion, middle-sized and narrow straps were rather worn by men.<sup>51</sup> Vagary of the current fashion and function also influenced the width of the strap, but apart from sword belts, they were not wider than sixty millimeters.<sup>52</sup> In certain areas there were regulations for girdles' sizes, and the width of belts was standardized.<sup>53</sup> The length of it was purely the matter of fashion. Already in the thirteenth century belts are longer than the circumference of the waist; people involved the strap once around their body, then tied it and a pendant was left to hang down in the front.<sup>54</sup> In the thirteenth-fourteenth century it reached almost to the feet of the

<sup>47</sup> Margaret Scott, *A visual history of costume* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1986), 14.

<sup>48</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 318.

<sup>49</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 320.

<sup>50</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 306.

<sup>51</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 309.

<sup>52</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 35.

<sup>53</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 36.

<sup>54</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 310.

wearer.<sup>55</sup> Interestingly in this period slides do not appear to have been used. Theoretically it could be possible that they were made of such materials that composed fast in the ground but visual representations make this idea unlikely. In depictions of illuminated manuscripts on effigies and monumental brasses one can observe different ways of handling the flagging strap but always avoiding the usage of slides. Looping it once or twice to the belt around the body is an often seen solution.<sup>56</sup> In Western-Europe several variously elaborated belt straps survived and even the formal variants of such belts which were not ornated by anything else but by shaping the strap itself are there to analyze. Stitched, stamped, incised, engraved, or punched decoration can be examined on them.<sup>57</sup>

The most common metal or bone element if there are any on belts is the buckle. In her extensive corpus Ilse Fingerlin collected together and analyzed the high- and late-medieval buckle material, and created a typology that scholars follow even nowadays.<sup>58</sup> Usually they consist of a frame with a pin, which is often from the same material as the frame, and occasionally but not necessarily a flat plate is tailed on the frame which could be absolutely simple or richly ornamented. On the other side of the strap the strap end – also a flat plate – was fit.<sup>59</sup> Since buckles provided a modest opportunity for fashionable expression at every level of society high diversity features them in all periods. Since there are no functional differences between the different shapes, fashion was probably the main consideration. Its range is from plain to highly decorative, from very crude to elegantly shaped pieces.<sup>60</sup> The form of the frame can be various; and unified typology was set up according to the shapes and width of the frames using several European examples from different countries. According to the shape of the frame scholars distinguished several buckle types and many additional sub-

<sup>55</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 35.

<sup>56</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 36.

<sup>57</sup> Ronald W. Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 319.

<sup>58</sup> Ilse Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen un späten Mittelalters* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1971)

<sup>59</sup> Ilse Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen un späten Mittelalters*, 11.

<sup>60</sup> Geoff Egan, Frances Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 50.

types considering the presence or absence of an attached plate, further decorating elements, and variations in their pins, etc.<sup>61</sup> Not all of the types appear at the same time but in late-middle ages most variant of them is present together. First the oval and 'D'-shaped buckle frame showed up, one can meet with their examples far earlier than the fourteenth century.<sup>62</sup> From the middle of the thirteenth century onwards the plain circular buckle,<sup>63</sup> certain rectangular- or square-shaped buckles spread.<sup>64</sup> In some cases it is not easy to differentiate belt buckles from those of belong to shoes or cloaks, because strap fittings were standardized from the fourteenth century onwards, and only the size can tell how to interpret a certain buckle. It is particularly true for circular buckles. Their late-medieval examples were also used on shoes and those that are over thirty millimeters are easy to confuse with annular brooches, some of them actually could serve both purposes.<sup>65</sup> Square-shaped buckles with central bar appeared in the late thirteenth century but became prevalent from the mid fourteenth century, the same time when double oval buckles probably turned up in the market.<sup>66</sup> There are some isolated types as for instance buckles with two loops (only one of them furnished with a pin) and an internal plate between them. It is present from the thirteenth century onwards. Possibly it had a specialized function which is not yet identified; maybe it belonged to the armor or horse equipment connecting together two separate straps.<sup>67</sup>

In the high society usually even ordinary wear was richly ornamented or studded.<sup>68</sup> Belt mounts were probably purely decorative, although to some extent they strengthened the strap and protected them from damage.<sup>69</sup> They were never used singly; their decorative effect was based on repetition on the strap. Mounts on the strap are mostly from the same metal and

<sup>61</sup> See Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen un späten Mittelalters*, or Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*

<sup>62</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 89-93.

<sup>63</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 57-64.

<sup>64</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 95-101.

<sup>65</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 64.

<sup>66</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 82-89.

<sup>67</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 109.

<sup>68</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 307.

<sup>69</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 210.



nevertheless there are examples for combination of two different kinds of mounts, their shape and size is usually identical.<sup>70</sup> Similarly to buckles mounts show high diversity. Probably they came into fashion in the mid twelfth century,<sup>71</sup> but became widespread and varied rather from the mid thirteenth century, when many different forms of them evolved, and from the late fourteenth century they showed up not only on straps but on shoes, purses or on the fringe of clothes as well.<sup>72</sup> They are usually evenly spaced, spanning the whole width of the leather. In some cases they are set very close together in other cases they are more widely spaced.<sup>73</sup> The combination of different strap fittings on the girdle might appear in the mid fourteenth century.<sup>74</sup> It presents some difficulty to define the date of mounts since sometimes they were detached and remounted again on a new belt.<sup>75</sup>

Probably the first strap fittings were rectangular-shaped. Pyramid-shaped mounts are detectable already around 1150, with other square-shaped variants from the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>76</sup> In the last couple of decades of the century, the image is already pretty colorful. Circular mounts became frequent, along with foiled fittings, lozenge (or diamond) shaped mounts, and certain asymmetrical forms.<sup>77</sup> A particular type, the bar mounts appeared also in the thirteenth century and became one of the most frequently used sword belt fittings. It is often represented in contemporary depictions on men's waist belts or military belts, as well as on horse-harness straps covering the whole late-middle ages.<sup>78</sup> Ring mounts and figurative mounts appeared the latest. Notwithstanding one can find figurative pieces in late thirteenth century deposits already, most of their examples show up rather after the middle of

<sup>70</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 215.

<sup>71</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 198.

<sup>72</sup> Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, 84-85.

<sup>73</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 209.

<sup>74</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 244.

<sup>75</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 307.

<sup>76</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 198.

<sup>77</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 165, 198, 234.

<sup>78</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 209-210.

the fourteenth century.<sup>79</sup> Rarely one can find loops too in the fourteenth century belt fitting material but it still cannot be considered a commonly used accessory.<sup>80</sup> Double belting is detectable already in the first couple of decades of the fourteenth century in male fashion. Men wore broad and richly decorated sword belt around the hips in addition to a narrow girdle around the waist. Fashion of belts worn on the hips slowly replaced the fashion of long, dangling strap girdles and by the fourteenth century their examples vanish from the market. Some hip belts were wholly of square-shape metal plaques but since they were weighty and much less flexible, they were considerably less common than the textile examples.<sup>81</sup>

Visual representations are well-exploited in Western-European literature on belts. Though first art works were interpolated only to explain forms and details of dress; and it took some time to art historians to accept the idea that art pieces could be eyewitness records to the contemporary scene and make such complex analysis on art as context not only as visual guide to help completing scholars' imagination. Stella Mary Newton is one of the pioneers who treated visual representations, especially mural paintings in a different level just to create a research trend among scholars dealing with the material culture of fashion.<sup>82</sup> In continental Europe the surviving visual sources are predominantly pictorial, while in the British Isles they are mainly funerary – effigies, brasses, and incised slabs. These sculptures are the only medium which can reproduce the three-dimensional effect of clothing on a body, and since the depicted deceased can be identified, the date of funerary sculptures seem to be easily determinable, together with the certain depicted fashion trends. It is not the case though. Sometimes funerary monuments were commissioned within the lifetime of those they were to commemorate, and sometimes long after their death. In many cases funeral effigies cannot be relied on to give accurate picture about the age or social status of the dead – there are several

<sup>79</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 184, 200.

<sup>80</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 154.

<sup>81</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 317.

<sup>82</sup> Stella Mary Newton, *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1980)

examples that the given person was represented differently, or in a rather standardized way.<sup>83</sup>

Pictorial sources are also problematic, since most of them do not depict concrete persons and their date is usually falls in a quite broad scale. However men's clothing appear to be more diverse in visual representations, the types of their costume do not cover a broad scale. Fashionable everyday garment rarely appears on sculptures, since men were usually dressed up in armor or rarely if they hold certain positions in official dress; women's clothing show much higher diversity.<sup>84</sup> On pictorial representations the situation is the opposite, the scale of the represented female fashion seems to be less wide.

## II. 2. Introduction to the medieval belt in Hungary

In Hungary also, the belt is one of the most important and spectacular costume accessories found in medieval graves from the fourteenth and fifteenth century. It abounds in both visual and written sources, which means that its formal characteristics, functions, and symbolic connotations can be examined from many perspectives. People considered belts valuable; they are often found in medieval hoards and metal decorations and belt buckles are often listed in inventories and testaments.<sup>85</sup> These sources significantly help scholars to estimate the characteristics of material, the shape of its decorative elements, and the way people wore it.

The written documents mentioning belts do not match with the period I deal with here. In Western Europe device became multitudinous in civil medium from the twelfth-thirteenth century onwards,<sup>86</sup> while inventories which provides most of the object-focused descriptions spread much later, in the fifteenth – sixteenth century.<sup>87</sup> In Hungary the first known

<sup>83</sup> Scott, *A visual history of costume*, 13.

<sup>84</sup> Scott, *A visual history of costume*, 14.

<sup>85</sup> Hereinafter I am going to write about them more in details.

<sup>86</sup> Katalin Szende, *Otthon a városban. Társadalom és anyagi kultúra a középkori Sopronban, Pozsonyban és Eperjesen* (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete 2004), 63.

<sup>87</sup> Szende, *Otthon a városban*, 131.

testaments are from the mid fourteenth century,<sup>88</sup> but it is the fifteenth-sixteenth century when the custom of willing prevailed widely as among nobility so the bourgeoisie and villeinage.<sup>89</sup> With a very few exceptions as King Stephan's inventory from 1254,<sup>90</sup> inventories showed up even later, than testaments, and they prevail widely only in the seventeenth century.<sup>91</sup> One has to be aware of certain features of written testaments, when he/ she uses them for the analysis of the contemporary material culture. Testaments never contain the utter wealth of the testator, and especially in the case of richest people, mentioning chattel was less important than enumeration of realties and the inheritable money. They selected the objects that they listed according to their value. For testators the point was to provide a description about certain objects according to which readers are able to identify them. For this reason those representative objects are described only by a few salient or unique characteristics, usually only the material or the value appear, and there was no need for further information.<sup>92</sup> Inventories served different purposes, therefore in ideal cases their writers listed more kinds of objects and provided more details. Regarding belts inventories contain the utmost items. Their material in these written sources at least as far as mounts are concerned is almost always silver. There are two types of belts in documents: plate-belts regarding which textile bases are not mentioned and belts with buckles and mounts which were sewed on precious textile straps. Due to their relatively high prices they were often pledged and the amount of money was marked in inventories. There are many items remained in written sources regarding the value of belts.<sup>93</sup> Apparently belts are well-documented in the early modern age, but using two-three hundred years later scripts as sources for the medieval material is rather problematic, and it might work only together with other relevant sources.

<sup>88</sup> Szende, *Otthon a városban*, 73.

<sup>89</sup> Szende, *Otthon a városban*, 70.

<sup>90</sup> László Zolnay, "Ifjabb Istváb király számadása 1264-ből" [King Stephan the younger's inventory from 1264], *Budapest Régiségei* 21 (1964), 79-114.

<sup>91</sup> Kálmán Szabó, *A pártav*. [The decorated belt] (Kecskemét: Első Kecskeméti Hírlapkiadó- és Nyomda-Rt, 1934), 67.

<sup>92</sup> Szende, *Otthon a városban*, 130.

<sup>93</sup> Szende, *Otthon a városban*, 138.

In visual representations like sculptures, miniatures, panel and mural paintings, the depictions of belts are usually as elaborated and detailed as those of the weapons, and they are often considered part of weaponry.<sup>94</sup> Opposed to Western-European literature where one meets with classifications regarding the shape of decoration and material, Hungarian scholars distinguish several types of belts from medieval Hungary based on their function as well, but these types are not strikingly different from each other either. Regarding their function, Hungarian scholarly tradition identifies three types of girdles: military belts, decorated belts, and belts only made for holding a garment together, and it can be either decorated or absolutely plain.<sup>95</sup> The military belt, the so-called *cingulum militare*, and the decorated belt show several similar features, and often only the contexts of finds help archaeologists to identify them by name. For this reason, publications are not consistent in terminology and they often mix the two terms.<sup>96</sup> There is no formal difference if one compares the fastenings found in hoards and defined as military belts with decorated belts, which are found in cemeteries. Usually archaeologists first analyze the grave of a dead person by examining the finds, trying to define his/her social status, and after that they decide on the type of belt.<sup>97</sup> This is a rather weak methodology, but it is still the traditional way that is found in works dealing with belts. In the Hungarian material decorated belt is a rather interesting type of girdle. Hungarian terminology has its own term for it namely the *pártaöv*, which literally means a sort of belt that is closely related to headdress. The expression shows up in a seventeenth century document for the first time, where two heirs are demanding for their inheritance and all those objects are listed which they vindicate. From the late seventeenth

<sup>94</sup> László Kovács, "Viselet, fegyverek" [Clothing and weaponry], in *Az Anjou-kor háborúi* [Wars of the Angevin period], ed. Gyula Kristó, (Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó, 1988), 246-247.

<sup>95</sup> László Selmeczi, "A Karcag-orgondaszentmiklósi kun szállásmető első sírjának lehetséges értelmezése" [A possible interpretation of the first grave of the Cuman settlement cemetery in Karcag-Orgondaszentmiklós] *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae* 2006: 260.

<sup>96</sup> Selmeczi, "A Karcag-orgondaszentmiklósi kun szállásmető" 265.

<sup>97</sup> In the case of Csút, László Gerevich states that since the dead were lower-class people, their belts cannot be weapon belts: László Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező" [The medieval cemetery in Csút], *Budapest Régiségei* 13 (1943): 150.

century it shows up frequently in written documents, but at the very end of the 1700s it disappears, probably from the material culture as well.<sup>98</sup> Its wear might come into fashion in the twelfth century and its first examples were not mounted but ornamented with metal piles, and those small metal plates attached to the strap appeared in the fourteenth century.<sup>99</sup> Decorated belts are characterized by long, narrow strap of the similar kind that one can see in the Western material but it might have additional connotations in certain contexts. Scholars do not seem to be sure what these connotations are though. Its name assumes that it had something to do with *párta*, the common headdress that maidens wore. And it is true that in many cases the most richly decorated belts came from such graves, where similarly ornated headdresses were found on the head of the corpse.<sup>100</sup> At the same time decorated belt is present in elder, probably matured, married women's grave as well. According to the tradition it symbolized not only pureness but fidelity at the same time, married men could also give it to their wife as token of their loyalty.<sup>101</sup>

Hungarian literature on belts is not small in numbers, but it cannot be called extensive. Such publication which would have intended to elaborate a typology on belts, and align them according to their presumed chronology is still missing. Archaeologists dealing with belts have to face two major, closely related problems: One is the 'lack of artifacts' in the earlier periods like the fourteenth century and the other is the chronology. There are only a few survived and known belt fragments made of organic fabric; and albeit there are a few works dealing with the textile remnants of dresses and accessories, like belts and headdresses,<sup>102</sup> the research on that field cannot be considered extensive. Most of the mounted belts found in

<sup>98</sup> Kálmán Szabó, „A pártaöv,” 67-65.

<sup>99</sup> Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép* [Cultural remnants of the Hungarian nation living in Alföld] (Budapest: Országos Magyar Történeti Múzeum 1938), 64.

<sup>100</sup> Gábor, „Középkori pártaövek Békés megyében,” 125.

<sup>101</sup> László Selmeczi, „A Karcag-orgondaszentmiklósi kun szállásteremtő,” 260-261.

<sup>102</sup> See e.g. Márta Knotik, „Táblácskás szövésű szalagtörödékek” [Tablet-woven stripe fragments] *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve* 1974-75/1: 375-378.; Márta Knotik, „Szalagtörödékek Csengeléről” [Stripe fragments from Csengele], *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve* 1976-77/1: 127-134.; Gabriella Gábor, „Középkori pártaövek Békés megyében” [Medieval decorated belts in Békés country], *A Békés Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei* 28 (2006): 111-142.

graves are dated to early periods like the thirteenth century, or to rather late such as the second half of the fifteenth century onwards. In the intervening one hundred and fifty years they are not completely absent, but they are relatively rare finds, compared with Western-European material, suspiciously rare. Several times the presence of decorated belt finds is the evidence of a particular cemetery being older than the fifteenth century,<sup>103</sup> and even when there is an attempt to place certain mounts to earlier periods scholars do so by mentioning both centuries. This phenomenon might have multiple reasons. The first one sounds rather simple, although it does not make the job of archaeologists easier.

In general, the richest graves are attributed to the Cuman ethnic group. From the second half of the thirteenth century there are a few richly decorated, maybe oriental-taste girdles in graves of high status Cumans.<sup>104</sup> It is clearly related to the funeral rites. Cumans were Christianized relatively early after coming to the Carpathian basin but some of their pagan features remained in their burial customs for long (e.g. aristocratas buried with horse and armor).<sup>105</sup> However certain pagan rites such as placing goods in the grave still featured Cumans, by the middle of the Angevin period, their material culture shows less and less characteristics that can be called ethno-cultural.<sup>106</sup> The costume accessories which come from their cemeteries are productions of Gothic workshops: they bought the same things that everyone else did in that era. The only difference was in how they were used or worn.<sup>107</sup> Since the same material culture repertoire characterized them as Hungarians, by analyzing Cuman

<sup>103</sup> Gábor Hatházi, „A perkáti kun szállásteremtő” [Cuman settlement cemetery in Perkáti], *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve* 1984-85/2: 658.; László Gerevich, „A csúti középkori sírmező,” 141.

<sup>104</sup> András H. Pálóczi, „A felsőszentkirályi kun sírlelet” [Cuman grave finds from Felsőszentkirály], *Cumania* 1 (1972): 72.

<sup>105</sup> See e.g. Bánkút, Csólyos, Erdőtelek, etc. (András, Pálóczi H., *Besenyők, kunok, jászok* [*Petchenegs, Cumans, Iasians*] (Budapest: Corvina, 1989), 89.); János Banner, „A bánkúti lovassír” [Horse burial in Bánkút], *Dolgozatok* 7 (1931), 187-199.

<sup>106</sup> This tendency was already described in the nineteenth century by Ödön Boncz: Ödön Boncz, „Kun és magyar viselet az utolsó Árpádok és Anjou-k alatt” [Cuman and Hungarian clothing during the reign of the last Arpadian kings and the Angevin dynasty], *Archaeológiai Értesítő* 7 (1887): 193-207.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. mounts bore special roles in Cuman clothing. Nevertheless they bought mounts produced in gothic workshops they wore them differently, sewed all over the garment, or sewed to the knot on the belt, etc. (Hatházi, „A kunok régészeti emlékei a Kelet-Dunántúlon:” 80-81.)

costume one can also draw conclusions about ‘Hungarian’ clothing.<sup>108</sup> One costume accessory in Cuman graves, however, shows just the opposite phenomenon – the belt. Military belt used to be a different case, because especially from the thirteenth century a few richly mounted weapon supporting belts were found.<sup>109</sup> In Hungarian belt research there is a long-standing tradition of rooting certain belt types from the East and the Byzantine Empire, especially regarding belts from the early and high middle ages. From the fourteenth century it is less common, and in most publications analyzing belts the idea does not even appear, only related to Cumans, but even in their case mainly concerning the thirteenth century material, as the rich Cuman military belts. Cumans troops were significant auxiliary forces in Hungarian military until the Sigismund period, and for this reason they were allowed to keep their independence as a nation.<sup>110</sup> The most significant examples are their single burials, where the deceased was lying in full armor. The burial rites can be related to Cuman burials in South-Russia. Their weapons and armature probably came from the Caucasus, or the cities of the Crimean peninsula, and khan centers along the Seversky Donets.<sup>111</sup> Among Cumans as well the belt was a part of the weaponry, but as it is seen in the surviving Cuman statues in the South-Russian steppes, usually it remained undecorated, and its functional role was the priority. The three rich mounted belts from Kígyópuszta, Csólyos and Felsőszentkirály is considered exceptional in Cuman material, and they were probably gifts to these warriors, made in Hungarian, not in Cuman workshops.<sup>112</sup> Especially the belt from Felsőszentkirály is often linked to belt finds from Bulgaria or the Cuban areas, where similar double fleur-de-lis-shape mounts showed up,<sup>113</sup> but Fingerlin proved that the type was far not unknown in the

<sup>108</sup> Gábor Hatházi, “A kun szállásteremtők néhány tanulsága” [The testimony of Cuman settlement cemeteries], *Opuscula Hungarica* VI. (2005): 103.

<sup>109</sup> See belts of Felsőszentkirály, Csólyos, or Kígyópuszta, etc. (See András, Pálóczi H., „ Régészeti adatok a kunok viseletéhez” [Some archaeological data for the clothing of Cumans], *Archaeológiai Értesítő* 109 (1982): 91.)

<sup>110</sup> Pálóczi, „Régészeti adatok a kunok viseletéhez.” 89.

<sup>111</sup> Pálóczi, „Régészeti adatok a kunok viseletéhez.” 91.

<sup>112</sup> Pálóczi, „Régészeti adatok a kunok viseletéhez.” 95.

<sup>113</sup> Pálóczi, „A felsőszentkirályi kun sírlet.” 194-195.



West either.<sup>114</sup> In Egan and Pritchard's book covering a huge Western belt material concerning both visual representations and archaeological sources, the Eastern origin of the similarly decorated types do not even come up.

The *pártaöv* is also absent from their cemeteries. Usually what archaeologists find in their graves are small, simple belt buckles and some fragmented textile or leather pieces. Probably most Cumans in the fourteenth and fifteenth century wore belts that practically sank without trace. They might have closed their garments with narrow, woven straps made of leather or textile and probably they used some kind of flat mount only to cover the knot where they tied the belt.<sup>115</sup> Certainly there are exceptions. In Perkáta (Hungary) some tiny, flat plates turned up around the waist which could be dress mounts but belt fittings as well. On belt straps they could be the decoration of narrow strips that hang from the girdle.<sup>116</sup> In Csengele a few female and child graves contained mounted belts.<sup>117</sup> In Szer some embossed belt mounts were found.<sup>118</sup> These Cuman embossed dress accessories are dated to the fourteenth-fifteenth century by scholars, more exact date is not really possible. Regarding Szer its researcher defined a three hundred time interval in which those object could be anywhere.<sup>119</sup> So there are always exceptions, but concerning belts the fourteenth-century Cuman material barely provides anything that is comparable with my visual sources, despite the fact that there are a lot of Cuman depictions, and they all represent warriors. This means, however, that Cuman archaeological material can be really helpful to reconstruct non-Cuman clothing; in the case of belts scholars have to rely on the scarce material that comes from churchyard burials.

<sup>114</sup> Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, 53-55.

<sup>115</sup> Gábor Hatházi, "A kunok régészeti emlékei a Kelet-Dunántúlon" [Cuman archaeological findings in eastern Transdanubia], *Opuscula Hungarica* 5 (2004): 151.

<sup>116</sup> Gábor Hatházi, "A perkátai kun szállásteremtő," 659.

<sup>117</sup> Ferenc Horváth, "Csengele középkori temploma [Medieval church of Csengele], *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve* 1976-77/1: 91-126.

<sup>118</sup> Ferenc Horváth, "Szer plébánia temploma és a település középkori története [The parish church of Szer and the history of the medieval settlement], *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve* 1974-75: 342-374.

<sup>119</sup> András H. Pálóczi, "A Balota pusztai középkori sirlelet" [Medieval grave finds of Balorapuszta], *Cumania* 11 (1989)

## II. 3. The belt in visual representations – mural paintings and artifacts

### II. 3. 1. Depicted belts in Angevin-period mural paintings

From the Angevin period twenty wall paintings represent belt as costume accessory (**Fig. 1.**). In the following I list them all, because there are several depictions which represent something unique; and the rate and number of them is far not insignificant in fashion analysis. In present-day Romania (Transylvania) I found six mural paintings, where girdles are perceptible, in the churches of Mugeni (Bögöz), Filia (Erdőfüle), Ghelinta (Gelence), Chichiș (Kökös), Porumbenii Mari (Nagygalambfalva) and Daia (Székelydália). In present-day Hungary I could gather five murals, where it is worth it to examine belts, in Füzér, Keszthely, Tereske, Velemér and Vizsoly. In present-day Slovakia I managed to find girdle representations in Chyžné (Hizsnyó), Veľká Lomnica (Kakaslomnic), Plešivec (Pelsőc), Podolíneč (Podolin), Šivetice (Süvete), Švábovce (Svábóc), Spišská Kapitula (Szepeshely), Vitkovce (Vitfalva) and Žehra (Zsegra). Both in this chapter and in the next one following it I go from belts on the waist to that of on hips, and from undecorated belts to ornamented examples.

#### *Undecorated waist belts*

Undecorated waist belt is clearly one of the most commonly depicted types, both in the Angevin and Sigismund period. In Mugeni in the mid-fourteenth century Last Judgement scene – which is situated in the undermost zone of the northern nave wall – among the blissful people in front of the gate of Paradise two men is wearing belt, one of them must be a royal person with a crown on his head (**Fig. 2.**).<sup>120</sup> The thin, plain straps are worn around their waist. Similar kind of belt was shown in the one-time early fourteenth century mural painting

<sup>120</sup> Zsombor Jékely, *A bögözi templom* [Church of Mugeni] (Sepsiszentgyörgy: Baász Kiadó, 1996), 25.

of Filia (only the water-color painting survived), on the figure of Saint Ladislaus, along with a thicker military belt slid down to his hips (**Fig. 3.**).<sup>121</sup> In Ghelinta in the depicted scene of the battle of Kerlés dated to 1300-1340,<sup>122</sup> a Cuman warrior wears a narrow, dark strap (**Fig. 4.**), just like the Cuman in the mural painting of Tereske (**Fig. 5.**).<sup>123</sup> In Upper Hungarian frescos this variant is the most commonly depicted belt type. In Veľká Lomnica, which is considered one of the earliest fresco representations of the Ladislaus legend dated to the first third of the fourteenth century,<sup>124</sup> the Saint have simple belt strap on him holding together his loose garment (**Fig. 6.**). The Cuman figure in Vitkovce wears two different kinds of belt in the two sequential scenes. In the beheading scenes his belt is a plain, white line, but in the fighting scene it is a loose, narrow strap, either with an alternating red and white pattern or with depicted mounts (**Fig. 7-8.**). This ulterior option is rather unlikely but not entirely impossible. In Šivetice in a mid-fourteenth century fresco detail depicting the Last Judgment on the apse wall,<sup>125</sup> a preying figure has a simple dark line around his waist (**Fig. 9.**). In a 1360-70s fresco from Švábovce Saint Ladislaus is wearing a double strap (**Fig. 10.**);<sup>126</sup> and in Žehra dated to the same time period as Švábovce<sup>127</sup> one can find this plain type on most of the figures of the Saint Ladislaus legend from around 1380 (**Fig. 11.**), but since the fresco was radically repainted in the seventeenth century, the painting hardly preserves detailed from the Angevin period.<sup>128</sup> In the parish church of Podolíneč the fresco cycle from the chancel representing the life of Christ, several characters have belts on them, like soldiers from the Passion scenes (**Fig. 12.**), and the kings from the Adoration of the Magi (**Fig. 13.**). In Füzér as the only

<sup>121</sup> Jánó, *Színek és legendák*, 102-103.

<sup>122</sup> István Balázs, Mihály Jánó, *A gelencei Szent Imre templom* [The Saint Emeran church in Ghelinta] (Sepsiszentgyörgy: T3 Kiadó 2003), 42.

<sup>123</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 350.

<sup>124</sup> Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás*, 21.

<sup>125</sup> Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 89.

<sup>126</sup> László A Szent László legenda középkori falképei, 128.

<sup>127</sup> Ernő Marosi, „A falképfestészet” [Mural painting], in *Művészet I. Lajos király korában (1342-1382)* [Art in the court of Louis I. (1342-1382)], ed. Ernő Marosi, Melinda Tóth, Livia Varga (Székesfehérvár: Szent István Király Múzeum, 1982), 285.; Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 48.

<sup>128</sup> László A Szent László legenda középkori falképei, 118.

woman bearing this accessory, the highly fragmented Virgin Mary from the Calvary scene has a belt-like line on her waist (**Fig. 14.**).<sup>129</sup>

*Long-strap decorated or undecorated waist-belts*

One can find less examples for decorated waist belts, although these examples are occasionally the most outstanding ones in the era. A simple leather-like strap – similar to the previously described type but with long strap and a bit richer in details – is shown on the figure of Saint Ladislaus in the mural painting of Ghelinta (dated to the 1330-40s) in the scene of Kerlés battle from the Saint Ladislaus legend (**Fig. 15.**).<sup>130</sup> On one of the Ladislaus figures in the duel scene between the Cuman and Saint Ladislaus, the belt is not mounted but in the end of the strap right beside the dagger, the painter depicted a square-shape buckle (**Fig. 16.**). In Veľká Lomnica also, while the king's belt lacks any kind of strap fittings, the riding Cuman warrior's belt possess a tiny, white circular belt buckle next to the quiver of arrows (**Fig. 17.**).<sup>131</sup> The murals of Vítkovce were made around the 1330s,<sup>132</sup> but the surviving details are highly fragmented.<sup>133</sup> In each scene Ladislaus wears a light greenish-color stripe with a rounded knot and long pendant in the front (See **Fig. 8.** and **Fig. 18.**).

The mural painting of the collegiate chapter church in Spišska Kapitula, made in 1317 depicts mounted waist-belts with long dangling strap on two figures, the king and the castellan of Szepes (**Fig. 19-20.**).<sup>134</sup> This is the only known long-strap belt-representation in murals painted when Charles I. was on the throne. The next earliest visually represented decorated belts were all painted decades later during the reign of Luis the Great around the mid fourteenth century. Another episode, of the mural in Ghelinta – the scene of 'Departure from Várad' – shows decorated belt on the waist of Saint Ladislaus (**Fig. 21.**). It appears also

<sup>129</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 88.

<sup>130</sup> Balázs, János, *A gelencei Szent Imre templom*, 42.

<sup>131</sup> Dvoráková, et al, *Středověká nástěnná*, 160-167.

<sup>132</sup> Mária Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben* [Medieval Mural paintings in Szepesség] (Budapest: Méry Ratio Kiadó, 2009), 44.

<sup>133</sup> László, *A Szent László legenda középkori falképei*, 122-123.

<sup>134</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 18.

on the western wall of the Unitarian church in Chichiş, also in the Várad scene on figure of a preparing knight (**Fig. 22.**),<sup>135</sup> on the waist of a female servant in Porumbenii Mari on the northern nave wall from the second half of the fourteenth century (**Fig. 23.**),<sup>136</sup> and on the wise and foolish virgins from the eastern wall of the triumphal arch in Chyžné, made in the mid-fourteenth century (**Fig. 24-26.**).<sup>137</sup> What one can see Chichiş, and Ghelinta is a rather rough depiction with the well-known narrow strap belt, decorated with dots. In Porumbenii Mari the mural painting is in a poor condition, only some dotted line is distinct, and in Chyžné also mainly the way of wearing decorated belts is detectable. The strap is looped once, and finishes in a strap end.

On the south-western wall of the triumphal arch in the catholic church of Vizsoly, the standing full-length figures of two soldier saints were depicted in the mid fourteenth century, assumedly Saint George and Saint Demeter wearing very detailed mounted belts (**Fig. 27-28.**).<sup>138</sup> The scene of Judas's kiss located on the northern wall of the chancel in the church of Žehra was probably made during the reign of Louis the Great.<sup>139</sup> The kneeling soldier being treated by Jesus wears similar decorated belt as it is present in Vizsoly (**Fig. 29.**).

#### *Decorated and undecorated hip-belts*

I am writing about hips belts together, whether they are decorated or not, since this is the type, which occurs the least in frescos of the era. In water colors painted after the one-time frescos of Filia, the wall paintings from the church of Keszthely, Daia, Tereske, Velemér, and Plešivec. In the depiction from Keszthely one can see only a dark line on the hips (**Fig.**

<sup>135</sup> Jékely, Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 154.

<sup>136</sup> József Lángi, Mihály Ferenc, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések 1* [Transylvanian mural paintings and painted furniture 1] (Budapest: Állami Műemlékhelyreállítási és Restaurálási Központ, 2002), 80-81.

<sup>137</sup> Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 96-97.

<sup>138</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 424-425.

<sup>139</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 53.; Marosi, "A falképfestészet," 285.

30.);<sup>140</sup> just as in Plešivec. There it appears on the southern wall of the presbytery; the figure of a soldier from the scene of the Crucifixion has a hip belt on, which is nothing else but a thick line deep under the waist (**Fig. 31.**). Probably it was painted by an Italian master around 1350.<sup>141</sup> In Daia also there is just a narrow strap on the riding Saint George,<sup>142</sup> interspersed with pearl-like small dots which might be only a stylistic, purely ornamental decoration seemingly without any intend from the artist to picture authentically mounted belt (**Fig. 32.**). In Tereske the depiction seems to be rather minimalistic also but a belt buckle articulates both the strap on the waist and the hips (**Fig. 33.**).<sup>143</sup> The belt on the figure of Saint Ladislaus in Johannes Aquila's paintings of Velemér – made in 1377-78 – is a kind of transitional type (**Fig. 34.**).<sup>144</sup> The strap is thick but unlike most of the hip belts, it is a bit longer than the circumference of the hips and a pendant dangles down after the rounded buckle-like element. Another knight figure from the Saint Ladislaus legend in Velemér wears a strap built from square-shape elements (**Fig. 35.**). In the sketches drawn after the already perished frescos of Filia the two ends of the belt are attached in a 'V'-shape (**Fig. 36.**).

### II. 3. 2. Interpretation of the represented belts in the Angevin-period mural paintings – cooperation and contradictions between visual representations and artifacts

In the surviving mural paintings schematic way of depicting costumes is rather frequent until the end of the fourteenth century. Often one can only see stylized cloth wrinkles and not realistic cut on figures; many times the costume lacks the belt or the loose dress itself

<sup>140</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 597-598.; Mária Prokopp, "A keszthelyi plébániatemplom gótikus falképei" [Gothic mural paintings in the parish church of Keszthely] *Építés-Építészettudomány* 12. (1980): 367–385.

<sup>141</sup> Mária Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben* [Medieval mural paintings in Gemér] (Budapest: Méry Ratio Kiadó, 2007), 28.

<sup>142</sup> Lángi, Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* 1, 104.; Mihály János, "A székelydályai református templom kutatása" [Research of the Calvinist church in Daia], *Műemlékvédelmi Szemle* 1993. No 1, 35.

<sup>143</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 350.

<sup>144</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 482.

covers the supposed line of it entirely.<sup>145</sup> Upper Hungary, present-day Slovakia showed the most plentiful picture of all the examined three territories, including as the number of frescos, so the diversity of the depicted belt types and also the abundance and preciseness of details.

Through the fourteenth century the way people wore belts changed following the changing costume fashion. László Gerevich, analyzing the cemetery of Csút, was the first to attempt to sketch the development of costume fashion, touching upon every kind of accessory. Certain arguments of the work might be outdated, but there are several important statements that still seem to be correct. Relying on the material he got from Csút, along with the relevant visual sources mainly from France and Germany, and using arguments from previous French, German and British fashion catalogues he claimed that until the middle of the century the belt was worn on the waist or a little bit below it, thereafter, when tight dresses following the lines of the body became popular, stylish people slid it further down on their hips. Loose clothes became widespread again at the turn of the fourteenth century, so for practical reasons the belt was again worn at the waist.<sup>146</sup> He states that the location of the belt on a corpse and also on figures depicted in visual sources has crucial significance for the dating of a grave or an art piece. I actually agree with him, nevertheless this is an undoubtedly slippery area. In several cases fashion representations helped scholars to refine the dating of certain paintings and at the same time several belts were dated according to their situation on the dead body.<sup>147</sup> Although since certain kinds of belts were worn for a long time, and in murals there are such types which are present for one hundred fifty years, one has to be careful with dating frescos only according to them. In addition it can easily happen and actually it is happening that scholars date a given fresco based on the depicted clothing, then later other scholars use these frescos dated according to general fashion trends as evidences for dating certain objects and to

<sup>145</sup> See e.g. Svinica, Last Judgement scene. Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 358.

<sup>146</sup> Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező:" 150.

<sup>147</sup> See the case of Kinána: Szabó, "Gótikus pártáövek a kishánai vár temetőjéből:" 63 or regarding the finds of Csút: Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező:" 150.

define when they spread. The only solution for this cyclic argumentation is if one in the earliest stage of research separates the dating of images and finds and relates only those which have a relatively certainly defined date, like an inscription on the painting or coins regarding finds. Obviously there are perceptible tendencies which certainly help to define the age, but they cannot stand alone as evidence. In the following first I deal with plain belts and after I switch to the ornamented, mounted girdles.

Unlike in Western-Europe, where considerable amount of textile and leather belts were preserved in a good condition as I mentioned above, in Hungary medieval organic belt elements are exiguous, and there is no comprehensive publication on the survived material, only such articles that elaborates a particular region from this aspect.<sup>148</sup> Mostly in cemeteries one can find only indirect traces of simple woven or leather belts. They could be with or without fitting on the strap; tiny buckles around the waist,<sup>149</sup> in the case of Cumans flat mounts found around the hips are the most common indirect evidences of them. Presumably this mount covered the knot holding together the two ends of the strap.<sup>150</sup> Cumans in mural paintings very rarely wear something else than a simple strap. Usually it is only a narrow, dark line just like on the Cuman in the mural painting of Tereske (see **Fig. 5.**).<sup>151</sup>

#### *A purse depiction in Upper Hungary*

The most remarkable examples of depicted unornamented belt straps were made in Podolínec, in Upper Hungary. In the Angevin period the city developed really fast. Since it was situated next to the trade route of Poprad valley going to Poland, which was one of the most important routes of the Central European trade, it gained international significance. The

<sup>148</sup> See footnote 102.

<sup>149</sup> This is the most common type of belt finds in cemeteries. Just to mention a few examples in several graves at Csút only buckle or textile fragments remained: Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező." 140; in the cemetery of Öttömös as well often only the buckles remained without mounts: Ferenc Móra, 'Ásatás a Szeged-Öttömösi Anjou-kori temetőben' [Excavation in the Anjou cemetery of Szeged-Öttömös], *Archaeológiai Értesítő* 26 (1906): 361-371. Etc.

<sup>150</sup> Hatházi, "A kunok régészeti emlékei a Kelet-Dunántúlon." 115.

<sup>151</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 350.



belt turns up in several scenes in the chancel, on the soldiers torturing Christ, on a male figure in the scene of Presentation of the Child Jesus and on two kings in the Adoration scene. The belts themselves do not have any remarkable characteristics; they are brownish thin lines around the waist. Still there is something outstanding in them, the purses and pouches attached to the strap. Purses, bags, knife holder elements are not considered parts of the belt but in a physical sense they are closely related. Except for a couple of depictions in Levoča from the Sigismund-period, these attachments do not appear in mural paintings, and what one can see in Podolíneč is completely unique. Five figures are depicted who have belt with a small bag hanging from it. As far as I know in Hungarian artifacts there are no surviving purses found in cemeteries, but certain finds indirectly refer to their presence. In the Cuman settlement cemetery of Perkáta several signs referred to the formal presence of purses. In one grave a piece of scrapped chain mail was found, which were probably reused as a purse proving that they were made not only of organic material (**Fig. 37.**). Otherwise small equipment as keys, knives, iron rings together refer to some kind of a bag in which they used to be kept. In a grave tiny beads were found together in the line of the waist serving as decoration of a quondam purse, in another grave a chain was found, which might be used for hanging the bag (See **Fig. 37.**).<sup>152</sup> In Csengele in a grave of a little girl some star-shape mounts were situated around the waist, probably decorating an already perished bag.<sup>153</sup> As far as I know in non-Cuman material purses do not show up but very likely not because it did not belong to the everyday clothing but rather because it was not needed in a Christian burial context or due to its material it disappeared without detectable traces. In Podolíneč there are two noticeable ways of attaching purses to the strap. In two cases it is hanging from one stripe (**Fig. 38-39.**) and in all the other cases the two ends of the bag is fixed to the belt (**Fig. 40-**

<sup>152</sup> Hatházi, „A perkáta kun szállásteremtő:” 661.

<sup>153</sup> Ferenc Horváth, *A csengelei kunok ura és népe* [The Lord and people of Cumans in Csengele] (Budapest: Archaeolingua Alapítvány és Kiadó, 2001), 71.

42.). In London a great deal of medieval purses and pouches were preserved.<sup>154</sup> Both types which appear in the frescos of Podolíneč are present in British artifactual material made of leather or textile. Visual sources proved that they were worn both by males and females attached to girdles, usually (with a few exceptions) to the right of the buckle.<sup>155</sup> In this upper Hungarian mural painting on most of the figures it is on the right side and only one man in the Presentation scene wears it on the left (see **Fig. 38.**). The purse dangling from one stripe was the rarer type (**Fig. 43-44**). The most common type of pouches was made of larger, rectangular piece of leather as they appear in the currently discussed wall paintings.<sup>156</sup> In Podolíneč there is only one depiction representing decorated pouch, on the side of a soldier in the scene of Undressing Jesus (**Fig. 45.**), which slightly reminds of a mounted purse found in London (**Fig. 46.**).<sup>157</sup> These British analogies came from deposits dated to thirteenth-fourteenth century, which means that it matches pretty well with the dating of the frescos.

#### *Belts with fittings*

However the plain belt was the most widespread type – in the mural paintings and in cemeteries as well – there is no trace of visual representation of knot-covering mounts – those that I mentioned above – and only two examples exist which depict buckle on the belt without any other fittings: in Ghelinta and in Veľká Lomnica. The visual representation of such a small detail is rare, not only in this early period but also afterwards. One is in Ghelinta (dated to the 1330-40s), in the scene of Kerlés battle from the Saint Ladislaus legend (**Fig. 47.**).<sup>158</sup> Like in whole Europe the belt loop was unknown in Hungary too until the middle of the fourteenth century, so the strap, which here as well was usually much longer than the circumference of the persons' waist hung down, sometimes even as far as the calves.<sup>159</sup> This

<sup>154</sup> These two terms can be used interchangeably.

<sup>155</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 342.

<sup>156</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 344.

<sup>157</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 354.

<sup>158</sup> Balázs, Jánó, *A gelencei Szent Imre templom*, 42.

<sup>159</sup> Kovács, "Viselet, fegyverek:" 246.

fashion could have been troublesome during fighting, so they attached the hanging strap into the belt. This kind of girdle could be both with and without decoration. In this fresco of the duel between the Cuman and Saint Ladislaus, the saint's belt is not mounted but in the end of the strap right beside the dagger, the painter depicted a square-shape buckle. In Vel'ká Lomnica also, while the king's belt lacks any kind of strap fittings, the riding Cuman warrior's belt possess a tiny, white circular belt buckle next to the quiver of arrows (**Fig. 48.**).<sup>160</sup> Its function here is in question, but most probably it might fasten the quiver to the belt strap. In the fourteenth century Hungarian material archaeologists differentiate four types of belt buckles by their shapes: two types with rounded – oval-shape – heads and two with square-shape heads.<sup>161</sup> In paintings both the oval- and square-shape types are shown, but the depictions are rather minimal so it is not possible to distinguish any further types. It is worthy of note that this unusually detailed buckle of Ladislaus in Ghelinta represents such a buckle type which is absent not only in the Angevin- but in the Sigismund-period artifacts as well. The head of the square-shape belt buckles in this period is usually short and flat, not oblong-shape like in the painting. From the cemetery of Homokmégy there is a trapezoid belt buckle which was dated to the fourteenth-fifteenth century, but the two sides of the head are not parallel with each other like in the fresco (**Fig. 49.**).<sup>162</sup> Regarding shape an elongated buckle with rounded end made in the 1520s from the cemetery of Kisnána is the closest to the depiction (**Fig. 50.**),<sup>163</sup> and a few fifteenth-sixteenth century buckles found around Kecskemét (**Fig. 51.**).<sup>164</sup> It is a question whether one can draw any conclusions of the color in visual representations. Since the depicted buckle is white it could refer to both metal and bone, although buckle made of bone without other fittings is not a typical find – they always show

<sup>160</sup> Dvoráková, et al, *Středověká nástěnná*, 160-167.

<sup>161</sup> Varga, "Középkori csontveretes övek a Kárpát-medencében:" 286-287.

<sup>162</sup> Andrea, Lantos, "Középkori temető és temetőrészlet Homokmégy-Szentegyházparton" [Medieval cemetery in Homokmégy-Szentegyházpart], *Archaeológiai Értesítő* 134 (2009): 272.

<sup>163</sup> Szabó, "Gótikus pártáövek a kishánai vár temetőjéből:" 63.

<sup>164</sup> Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 72.

up together with mounts.<sup>165</sup> Concerning the strap, with its dark shade most likely it represents leather. There are data of covering the strap base with red morocco,<sup>166</sup> but due to the nature of fading paints, the numerous repainting and restorations one has to be careful with color-related conclusions.

The next group is the long girdles with plain strap or with different decorative elements set on the straps, both types are considerable frequent. Regarding archaeological results this latter type appears to be more interesting. Until the late fourteenth century, Hungarian artifact material is really poor in mounted belts. As I mentioned above, they came into fashion probably in the fourteenth century, rather at the end of the century according to archaeologists,<sup>167</sup> albeit visual sources tend to show otherwise. In medieval Hungary there are not many mural paintings dated to the beginning of the fourteenth century, which depict belts, and if they do, they show plain straps. Though there is one example which is rather significant in many aspects. First of all supposedly it is the earliest survived representation of mounted belts. The mural painting of the provostal church in Spišska Kapitula, as it is written on the fresco, was made in 1317, so unlike in many other cases an exact date is known when it was painted. Second, the image depicts the first Angevin king, Charles's third coronation following the last king from the Árpád dynasty in the throne, and it is considered the first historical painting in Hungary (**Fig. 52**).<sup>168</sup> The provost of Spišska Kapitula ordered the work to pay reverence to Charles I. when he visited the town. Scholars agreed that the painter must be Italian or someone trained in Italy.<sup>169</sup> The question emerges immediately whether one can draw conclusions regarding the local fashion after a painting not painted by a local. Notwithstanding the secular participants of the coronation, like the king himself and the

<sup>165</sup> See e.g. Varga, "Középkori csontveretes övek a Kárpát-medencében"

<sup>166</sup> Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 64.

<sup>167</sup> Gábor, "Középkori pártáövek Békés megyében," 127. – Gabriella Gábor in her article summarizes the results of different archaeologists on metal mounted belts from Békés country.

<sup>168</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 18.

<sup>169</sup> Dvoráková, et al, *Středověká nástěnná*, 143.; Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 170.; Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 20.

provost of Szepes wear mounted belt with long, dangling strap following the fashion trends that might feature a certain layer.<sup>170</sup> Perhaps not only because of the perished state of the painting, the decorations are rough, there are simple greyish dots on a yellowish strap which definitely aim to picture the material which they might be produced from.

In the opinion of archaeologists, belts with metal mounts spread in medieval Hungary starting from the late fourteenth century, although examples are quite rare if one accepts the dating given in publications. In earlier works written in the first half of the twentieth century, scholars were braver in their dating and in these publications some mounted belts were dated to the Angevin-period.<sup>171</sup> Nevertheless, later it became a tradition to date every single metal mount to the fifteenth century and only undecorated buckled belts to the fourteenth century.<sup>172</sup>

Belts with bone mounts are disputed although this is the only type of belt which scholars usually dare to date to the fourteenth century. However Elek Benkő, who studied both metal- and bone-mounted belts,<sup>173</sup> claims that this belt type should have been dated to the fifteenth century, most scholars who have dealt with them recently are of the opinion that they were equally popular in both centuries.<sup>174</sup> Their forms show significant similarities with certain (later) representations (**Fig. 53-54**). Also, this is the only material which I could logically use in comparison, since bone mounts are the only belt mounts which some scholars date to the fourteenth century. At the same time, it is still problematic to fantasize them to a context like mural paintings and the topics and figures that murals depict. In the opinion of

<sup>170</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 20.

<sup>171</sup> See Móra, "Ásatás a Szeged-Ötömösi Anjou-kori temetőben:" 361-371; Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező:" 103-166.; Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 64. However Kálmán Szabó does not present entire garnitures from the fourteenth, he identified certain mounts as possible belt mounts and dated them to the fourteenth century.

<sup>172</sup> See e.g. Judit Gábor, Magdolna Hellebrandt, "A Herman Ottó Múzeum 1972. évi leletmentései" [Rescue excavations of the Herman Ottó Museum in 1972], *Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve* 12 (1973): 599-607.; Gábor, "Középkori pártaövek Békés megyében"; Ibolya Nepper, "Szentgyörgy templomának feltárása" [Excavation of the church in Szentgyörgy], *A Déri Múzeum Évkönyve* 1983-84: 91-114.; Béla Kovács, "Nagytálya középkori templomának feltárása" [Excavation of the medieval church in Nagytálya], *Az Egri Múzeum évkönyve* 10 (1973): 119-158.; etc.

<sup>173</sup> Benkő, "A középkori Nyársapát"

<sup>174</sup> Varga, "Középkori csontveretes övek a Kárpát-medencében"; Németh, "Csontosövek a középkori Magyarországon"

András K. Németh and Sándor Varga,<sup>175</sup> bone-mounted belts were the costume accessories of the lower social strata such as peasants or the bourgeoisie, and were never worn by the nobility. At the same time, mural paintings representing belts always imply a message. It is an unavoidable element of stylish appearance and rank, whether it carries positive or negative connotations. Both from deposits and graves there are headdresses which consists a strap base and mostly circular-shape mounts on it, like those from the excavations around Kecskemét (Hungary) (**Fig. 55**).<sup>176</sup> Nonetheless in Hungary there is no belt find with similar decoration dated to the fourteenth century, but from Great Britain there are numerous examples of them from the early fourteenth century (**Fig. 56**). One can certainly find adequate material in Western-European collections. In conclusion, in the case of the fourteenth century I have to face a rather serious issue. There is a relative abundance in visual sources for belts and a vacuum in the field of material culture. If I want to deal only with Hungarian material I have two options: either I choose to compare the depictions with material which is irrelevant in a social sense, namely, the bone-mounted belts, or I compare them with material which is, according to the research, an entire century older. The chronology apparently needs further revisiting. To do so a profound, extensive knowledge of sites and finds is unavoidable, along with a substantial knowledge of art works, among which, I believe, mural paintings can be truly inspiring, but separated from the rest of the evidences clearly not enough.

*Two unexampled representations: the mounted belt in Vizsoly and Žehra*

In their details the mural paintings of Vizsoly and Žehra are the most remarkable, because they depict something which absolutely standalone, and surprisingly elaborated and precise – they are one of the significant examples which proved that researching murals from the aspect of material culture is undoubtedly worthwhile. The clothing of the saints is a

<sup>175</sup> Varga, “Középkori csontveretes övek a Kárpát-medencében”; Németh, “Csontosövek a középkori Magyarországon”

<sup>176</sup> Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 59.

peculiar paradox in the combination of their archaic-taste cloak and outstandingly decorated military belt. On the strap finishing in an elongated strap end the master painted irregularly arranged and shaped mounts, which unlike the sloppily painted dots in Ghelinta or Chichiş must be more than random artistic ornament (**Fig. 57.**). As analogy two finds could occur immediately – the belt from the Árpadian cemetery of Szentgyörgy (**Fig. 58.**) and the double *fleur de lis* mounts from the belt garniture of Felsőszentkirály along with those oriental parallels represented by András H. Pálóczi in his publication on the belt.<sup>177</sup> Although this find of Felsőszentkirály was buried probably in the middle of the fourteenth century, it was made earlier, sometime around the late thirteenth century (the same applies to the Szentgyörgy garniture) (see **Fig. 58.**). Most likely it was a royal gift to the Cuman ‘aristocrat’. Similar mounts found in Hungary are all from centuries later periods, as the ones came from the graveyard of Zenta-Paphalom dated to the turn of the fourteenth-fifteenth century (**Fig. 59.**), and another one found in Zagyvapálfalva-Kotyháza (**Fig. 60.**), which is dated to a rather broad timeframe from the mid fifteenth to the mid sixteenth century.<sup>178</sup> According to Pálóczi these richly and often uniquely but archaically decorated garnitures are present in South-East Europe, where the Byzantine Empire had a great impact, and they were worn by the members of high society (**Fig. 61.**). In Hungary they might spread through Cumans; and slowly Hungarian workshops also started to produce them.<sup>179</sup> This idea is important to mention because it might explain the specific way of clothing of the two saints in Vizsoly. Depictions of full-length figures of Saint George and Demeter are popular mainly in areas of Byzantine range. In these murals in Vizsoly their garment is definitely archaic which could be considered pretty unusual together with this belt. But if one accepts the presumption that this kind of girdle is closely related to East, this might explain the exceptional composition of

<sup>177</sup> Pálóczi, “A felsőszentkirályi kun sírlelet.” 190-195.

<sup>178</sup> Pálóczi, “A felsőszentkirályi kun sírlelet.” 195.

<sup>179</sup> Pálóczi, “A felsőszentkirályi kun sírlelet.” 196.

clothes and accessory here. At the same time this type is far not absent in Western-Europe either, and similar thirteenth-century mounts were found in Hannover and Heilbronn.<sup>180</sup>

First I thought I found something totally unexampled depiction in Vizsoly but after going through the Upper Hungarian wall paintings I came by another depiction, the wall painting of the Holy Trinity church in Žehra, which is even richer in its details (**Fig. 62.**), which is unparalleled in the contemporary and also in the fifteenth century depictions. Practically both the structure of the girdle and shape of the mounts, buckles and strap ends are clearly perceptible. It is often said in literature on belts, especially regarding late thirteenth century, early fourteenth century examples that the belt consisted only of a strap going around the waist or hips but to this main body of the belt other shorter and narrower stripes were attached. The girdle from Felsőszentkirály represents exactly the same type with one long and several small rounded strap ends, and thin bar mounts with wider ends and a tiny circular element in the middle (**Fig. 63-64.**). This depiction – the ones in Vizsoly neither – has not shown up in any archaeology-related publication as a relevant visual source yet, which I believe, such a shortcoming that should be made up as soon as possible. This representation is unique even in this fresco unit and one cannot find other characters in Vizsoly dressed up in similar garment and belt. Did the artist intended to paint Roman soldiers or follow some kind of an oriental tradition? And if so why? It could be interesting to explore more in details how these depictions could occur here like this.

#### *Belts on female figures*

Female costume of the fourteenth century show less variability than male clothing,<sup>181</sup> not only concerning cuts but costume accessories too. Belt on a female figure is relatively rare in the Angevin period whether it is a plain waist belt or a long-strap decorated girdle. There is only one depiction of a woman wearing the line-like unornamented belt, in Füzér which its

<sup>180</sup> Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen un späten Mittelalters*, 353. cat. 105-106.

<sup>181</sup> Kovács, "Costumes as symbols:" 155.



researcher dated to the first third of the fourteenth century (See **Fig. 14.**).<sup>182</sup> The fresco is fragmented and it is not impossible that the faint line I understood as belt is only a misinterpretation of dress wrinkles. But otherwise it is not a rare phenomenon that female graves contain plain belts, where only the buckle is detectable.<sup>183</sup>

The murals from Chyžné and Porumbenii Mari are the only survived examples in the Angevin period of women depicted on walls wearing decorated belts (See **Fig. 23-26.**). The representation is not detailed here either, but the type of girdle is easily recognizable. The condition of the fresco in Porumbenii Mari is so poor that there is no way to do further analysis on this belt representation. The fresco from the triumphal arch in Chyžné is in a better situation but still there is no much to say about this simple belt depiction. It is another spectacular example for belts worn without loops, where the pendant was once tucked into the strap around the waist.

#### *A relatively rare type – the hip belt*

In Western areas around the first third of the fourteenth century there was a change in belt fashion, and increasingly broad and richly decorated sword belts appeared in the market, which were to wear around the hips often in addition to a narrow girdle around the waist as it was also seen in Filia and the water-color copies made after the frescos of Švábovce (see **Fig. 3., and 10.**). During the fourteenth century men often wore broader belts around their hips instead of the described long waist girdle.<sup>184</sup> There are types which represent something between the two, like the belt of the standing Saint Ladislaus in Velemér (**Fig. 65.**). Actually in Western-European effigies knotting a strap so that it hangs vertically at the front is shown as the representations of military dress from fourteenth-to mid-fifteenth century. In certain depictions the sword belt is worn with armor has a knot around the buckle passing in front of

<sup>182</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 88.

<sup>183</sup> See e.g. the cemetery of Csút, grave 33. (Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező." 112-113.)

<sup>184</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 317.

the frame and then behind the bar, to be looped up over the front of the other strap and down between the frame and the part already in front (**Fig. 66.**).<sup>185</sup> Maybe in Velemér this variant appears, however the condition of the painting does not allow to claim anything firmly. As in the West in Hungary also it is likely that hip belts showed up in the middle of the century, however it is in question whether they were part of the everyday fashion or not.

The relatively rare and late occurrence of the hip belts in visual sources suggests some reconsideration in dating of certain paintings. The mural of Tereske has never been dated to later periods than the mid-fourteenth century (See **Fig. 33.**), moreover it is often considered one of the earliest Angevin mural paintings.<sup>186</sup> One can think that if a hip belt could be represented in such a provincial art work, then it was probably present in contemporary clothing as well. According to this logic its quality apparently refers to a less skillful painter which could suggest that he was a local artist without international knowledge or experience, and he painted what he saw in his close environment, but probably there would be way too much guessing in an argument like this. Personally I would suggest to date this fresco a bit after the mid-fourteenth century. The four frescos – Daia, Velemér, Keszthely, Plešivec – which survived in a relatively fair condition and show this classic hip belt, are all from the last years of the reign of Louis the Great. Only Filia, which is not seen anymore in its original state, and Tereske was dated before that. In the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle from the 1360s this belt type is represented (**Fig. 67.**).<sup>187</sup> I do not consider it impossible that it started to spread not much later than the mid fourteenth century but probably it was not present in the everyday clothing. The waist and hip belt might have existed together around this late-Angevin period, but the hip belt turned up rather in military contexts on armor, and only men

<sup>185</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 72.

<sup>186</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 350.

<sup>187</sup> László Veszprémy, Tünde Wehli, József Hapák, *The book of the Illuminated Chronicle* (Budapest: Kossuth Publishing House, 2009), 14.

wore it yet, while the waist girdle was the more common accessory which could be considered widely spread in everyday fashion.

### II. 3. 3. Belts depicted belts in Sigismund-period mural paintings

The era of the Sigismund period has the most plentiful archaeological material. I found thirty-three wall paintings where belt depictions appear; among these the majority, eighteen frescos, are from present-day Slovakia – the Upper Hungarian images again show the greatest quantity and quality. In Transylvania there are some depictions which geographically belong to my framework but regarding context not. I do not deal with Romanian orthodox churches, because orthodox Christian art works with significantly different iconographic and formal traditions. I believe that such examples as Crișcior (Kristyor, Romania) culturally belong to Romania, with which I do not deal in this thesis.

The mural paintings worth discussing are the following: From present-day Romania belts are represented at Mălâncrav (Almakerék), Bădești (Bádok), Sânpetru (Barcaszentpéter), Martiniș (Homoródszentmárton), Chimindia (Kéménd), Alma (Küküllőalmás), Tileagd (Mezőtelegd), Chiliești (Sepsikilyén), Florești (Szászfenes) and Dârjiu (Székelyderzs). From Hungary belts appear in the mural paintings of: Lónya, Nyíracsa, Ófehértó, Ragály, Siklós and Szentsimon; while in present-day Slovakia they appear at Štítň (Csetnek), Kocel'ovce (Gecelfalva), Liptovské Sliače (Háromszléc), Kraskovo (Karaszko), Košice (Kassa), Kyjatice (Kiete), Lelesz (Leles), Levoča (Lőcse), Ochťná (Martonháza), Poniky (Pónik), Poprad (Poprád), Rákoš (Rákos), Rimavská Baňa (Rimabánya), Bijacovce (Szepesmindszent), Smrečany (Szmrecsány), Žehra (Zsegra), Želiezovce (Zselíz) and Žíp (Zsip) (**Fig. 68.**). All of the frescos from Transylvania and Hungary are dated to the first third of the fifteenth century, and probably only a few examples from Upper Hungary are from the last decade of the fourteenth century. Types of belts similar to earlier representations can be

found in the Sigismund period. This amount of visual material creates a unique situation, particularly with the relevant archaeological finds, to deal with the chronological issues of these objects and with the relationship of archaeological and pictorial sources in this context.

#### *Undecorated waist-belts*

For this type of belt the Saint Ladislaus frescoes offer a good starting point, although other images with different iconographic programs can also be taken into consideration. In Alma there is a barely perceptible but still visible belt on the figure of Saint George (**Fig. 69.**).<sup>188</sup> The waist belt is better seen above the weapon-supporting belt at both the castle chapel of Siklós, on the standing figure of Saint Ladislaus painted around 1410 (**Fig. 70.**),<sup>189</sup> and on the Saint Ladislaus depiction from 1419 at the Unitarian fortress church in Dârjiu (**Fig. 71.**).<sup>190</sup> From Transylvania the Ladislaus-figure's belt in Chilieni also marks out with its simplicity (**Fig. 72.**). The girdle on the Saint Dorothy figure from the inner side of the triumphal arch in Nyíracrásd can be considered a rarity (**Fig. 73.**).<sup>191</sup> In Upper Hungary, plain waist belts are depicted in only three churches: Rákoš, Bijacovce, and Levoča. In Rákoš, on the northern wall of the church, the Saint Ladislaus legend is represented from the turn of the fourteenth century.<sup>192</sup> The riding saint wears a thin insignificant strap on his waist separating the tight upper part from the loose skirt (**Fig. 74.**). The painting is rather damaged so little further information can be gathered from it. In the battle scene of the Ladislaus legend at Bijacovce, from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, Saint Ladislaus has a thick brown waist-belt on (**Fig. 75.**).<sup>193</sup> In the parish church of Levoča there are several figures on whom

<sup>188</sup> Jékely, Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 162-169.

<sup>189</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 614.

<sup>190</sup> József Lángi, Ferenc Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* 1, 106.

<sup>191</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 276-277.

<sup>192</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 22.; László, *A Szent László legenda középkori falképei*, 157.

<sup>193</sup> Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 115.

this type of strap shows up: in the scenes of the Life of Saint Dorothy, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the Corporal Works of Mercy in the nave, all dated to the 1390s.<sup>194</sup>

The range of the represented garments' cuts is quite wide. One can find tight dresses worn with stockings and rather loose coats tied at the waist, as on the torturing soldier figures above the kneeling Saint Dorothy (**Fig. 76.**) and the executioner in the decapitation scene (**Fig. 77.**). The executioner wears a thick strap, not tightly fastened around the waist but loosely hanging a bit over the hips. The function of this belt is clear, a large side-bag or purse is hooked on it. Among the frescos of Corporal Works of Mercy the wanderer in the scene of "Give drink to the thirsty" (**Fig. 78.**) the feet-washing figure from the "Clothe the naked" (**Fig. 79.**), and the merciful men in "Visit the imprisoned" scenes (**Fig. 80.**) wear simple brown straps.

Such belts, which have some kind of a fitting, practically for representing the function, but lack any other ornaments are shown in two frescos. In the previously mentioned Saint Ladislaus legend in Bijacovce on the figure of the riding Cuman a similar belt strap as at Veľká Lomnica is shown on the figure of the riding Cuman in (**See Fig. 17.; Fig. 81.**). It is also a rather narrow leather-like strip which serves the role of holding the quiver. Here the buckle does not show up as elaborately as in Veľká Lomnica. Maybe the state of the fresco can be blamed, since it has survived in relatively poor condition. Some traces of it are still perceptible, along with a small circular mount that probably served as a strap-distributor. In Levoča, in the Gluttony scene from the Cardinal Sins series, a man riding a donkey wears a really interesting strap slightly under the waistline (**Fig. 82.**). As on the executioner, here purse and knife are also attached to the belt, which is a long strap looped once in the front leaving a short hanging end, where even the holes for the buckle pin are represented. The buckle itself is the same color as the strap, dark brown.

<sup>194</sup> Marosi, „„A falképfestészet,” 284.

*Long strap decorated or undecorated waist belt*

Unluckily, the early fifteenth-century frescos of Mártiniş have survived only in drawings made by Lajos Huszka.<sup>195</sup> In the scenes of the martyrdom of Saint Margaret of Antioch, the torturing soldiers had girdles on, which both decorated and plain belts with the previously seen long strap reaching the knee (**Fig. 83.**). On one character the girdle is mounted in its full length, even the strap end is present; another one wears a strap where the dangling part remained plain, while a third soldier has an absolutely unornamented strap on. Belts here hold together a loose garment at the waist and no weapons are attached to them. Unfortunately these frescos survived only in drawings made by Lajos Huszka, therefore their value as source is limited. At the same time as I indicated in the introduction, copies are useable concerning details (not style obviously) so they can be built in the analysis. On the triumphal arch of the church in Ragály a similar type of belt is represented on a fragmentary figure.<sup>196</sup> It is on the hips, plain and thick; the strap is hanging down from a circular-shape buckle element (**Fig. 84.**). The same type is visible on the southern nave wall in the Roman Catholic church of Floreşti on the figure of Saint Catherine (**Fig. 85.**).<sup>197</sup> Again Upper Hungary has the most relevant examples. The classic long-strap decorated belt is shown in Kraskovo, Poniky and Smrečany. A plain long strap is fastened at the waist of the maiden in the Saint Ladislaus murals from the 1380-1390s in Kraskovo (**Fig. 86.**),<sup>198</sup> just as on the figure of the blindfolded Synagoga in the Living Cross scene in Poniky and Žehra from around the 1410-1420s (**Fig. 87-88.**).<sup>199</sup> Mounted belts of this kind are depicted only in

<sup>195</sup> László, *A Szent László legenda középkori falképei*, 77-80. Since the mural paintings of Mártiniş did not survive at all, the reliability of Huszka's copies can be questioned.

<sup>196</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 382.

<sup>197</sup> Lángi, Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* 1, 98.

<sup>198</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 59.; Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 106-111.

<sup>199</sup> Poniky: *L'art Gothique en Slovaquie* [Exhibition catalogue], Galerie Nationale Slovaque (Bratislava: Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1996), 56., Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 140.; Žehra: Marosi, „A falképfestészet,” 285.

Smrečany and Sliache on the Sheltering-Cloak Madonna (**Fig. 89-90.**) also from the twenties of the fifteenth century.<sup>200</sup>

Regarding the shape there is not much more to say about these belts; they depict the same long-strap type with a dangling pendant without a loop. These depictions cannot be considered high-quality paintings (Kraskovo was misdated for that reason by certain scholars)<sup>201</sup> – one cannot expect something closely following the supposed reality. In Štítník a mural painting depicts the scene of the Holy Face dated to the end of the fourteenth century (**Fig. 91.**).<sup>202</sup>

In Koceľovce the figures of the flagellating soldiers (**Fig. 92.**)<sup>203</sup> and in Ochtiná the ones crowning Christ (both from the early fifteenth century) have a narrow, mounted belt on, just a little below the waist (**Fig. 93.**).<sup>204</sup> In Rimavská Baňa a girdle like this is shown on a knight of Saint Ladislaus (**Fig. 94.**).<sup>205</sup>

#### *Undecorated hip-belts*

In the Sigismund era mostly girdles on the hips can be considered weapon-supporting belts, together with weapons or pouches their functional role is clear. Among depictions unarticulated belts are often shown with colors only slightly different from the garment (mostly brown). Apparently these examples are difficult to compare with the artifactual material but since they appear in several depictions it worthwhile to look into them separately. The figure of Saint George on the murals of Málánčrav<sup>206</sup> and Szentsimon,<sup>207</sup> the Saint

<sup>200</sup> Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 161.

<sup>201</sup> László, *A Szent László legenda középkori falképei*, 146.

<sup>202</sup> Togner, *Stredoveká Nástenná Malba v Gemi*, 44.

<sup>203</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 46.

<sup>204</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 46.

<sup>205</sup> Hankovszky, et al., *Ave Rex Ladislaus*, 72.

<sup>206</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 119-121; Marie Lionnet, „Almakerék, Szűz Mária plébániatemplom falképei” [Mural paintings of the Virgin Mary church in Málánčrav], in *Sigismundus Rex et imperator. Művészet és kultúra Luxemburgi Zsigmond korában*, ed. Imre Takács. Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2006, 424.

<sup>207</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 613.

Ladislaus depiction in Siklós,<sup>208</sup> the royal saint figures in Tileagd,<sup>209</sup> and again in Mălâncrav, in the chancel and on the soldiers of the Passion scenes, too, depict something similar.<sup>210</sup> (**Fig. 95-100.**) In Upper Hungary many depictions of this type are present. On the wall paintings of Kraskovo the figure of Saint Ladislaus wears something similar (**Fig. 101.**)<sup>211</sup> to what is shown in the water-colors painted after the former fresco, made sometime between 1390-1403, and on the Hungarian kings on the northern wall of the church in Leles (**Fig. 102-103.**)<sup>212</sup> and on the late fourteenth-century figures of Saint Ladislaus and Saint Stephan in Rákoš (**Fig. 104.**)<sup>213</sup> In the early fifteenth-century murals of Štítník<sup>214</sup> this simple hip belt appears on peasants working outside in the fields (**Fig. 105.**). The late fourteenth-century unknown female saint on the triumphal arch of the church in Žíp wears girdle on her hips (**Fig. 106.**)<sup>215</sup> and in the Living Cross scene in Žehra the type is also present on the figure of the victorious Ecclesia (**Fig. 107.**)<sup>216</sup> In Poprad frescos in the chancel of the apostle's martyrdom depict dark and thick hip-belts on the two torturing soldiers above Thaddeus (**Fig. 108.**).

#### *Mounted or decorated hip-belts*

Opposed to the previously described group, in depictions there is a particular type of belt, for which one can have better chance to find the relevant comparative archaeological material. This group is the decorated hip belts, in their cases it is more likely to find decorative elements coming from graves or deposits. These examples represented below

<sup>208</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 614.

<sup>209</sup> Lángi, Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* 2, 82-83.

<sup>210</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 119-121.; Lionnet, „Almakerék:” 424.

<sup>211</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 54-55.

<sup>212</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 154., 157.

<sup>213</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 22.

<sup>214</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben* 33.

<sup>215</sup> Milan Togner, *Stredoveká Nástenná Malba v Gemerí* [Medieval mural paintings in Gemer] (Bratislava: Tatran, 1989), 106.

<sup>216</sup> According to Mária Prokopp the image was made in the seventies of the fourteenth century (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 55-57.) but since the first depiction of Ecclesia and Synagoga in the medieval Hungary appears in the early fifteenth century, most scholars date the fresco to the 1410s. (Marosi, „A falképfestészet,” 285.; Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 80.) In my opinion the style analysis also points to the dawn of the fifteenth century, so I am discussing the mural painting here.



mainly belong to the garment of warriors or soldiers, which detail would be important also in the more complex analysis of the material. The fragmented figure of Saint Sigismund in Bădești,<sup>217</sup> the Saint Ladislaus depiction in Ragály,<sup>218</sup> and Dârjiu (**Fig. 109-111.**)<sup>219</sup> and the royal saint figures in Mălâncrav, Chimindia<sup>220</sup> and Lónya (**Fig. 112-114.**)<sup>221</sup> wear the same kind of decorated belt. In Upper Hungary one sees square-mounted girdles in two fresco units, Kraskovo and Rimavská Baňa. I have already dealt with murals of Kraskovo, although not in the Ladislaus legend but another scene from the 1380-90s,<sup>222</sup> in the Adoration of the Magi the three kings each wear a belt, each of them a different kind. The second king, probably Melchior, has what seems to be a plaque-belt with cuboid elements (**Fig. 115.**). Beside this example, on two figures from the church of Rimavská Baňa a similar belt is present. On the triumphal arch to the presbytery the full-length standing figure of Saint George wears a massive, ‘three-dimensional’ weapon-supporting plaque-belt (**Fig. 116.**), while the saint in the Ladislaus legend on northern wall has such a girdle, which is literally spatial because the painter used the plaster of the wall to elaborate the square plaques. A large rounded, barred buckle is represented in the front (**Fig. 117-118.**).

Circular-shape mounts are depicted in Kraskovo on the figure of Balthazar (**Fig. 119.**), in the Adoration scene there; on a servant from the scene of Saint Martin’s life in Želiezovce from the 1430s (**Fig. 120.**),<sup>223</sup> in Liptovské Sliače on a soldier stripping Jesus, dated to the 1420s,<sup>224</sup> and in Levoča several times, in episodes from the Life of Saint Dorothy, and the Seven Deadly Sins (**Fig. 121-124.**). Uniquely elaborated belts show up at Liptovské Sliače. (**Fig. 125-126.**). Another soldier grabbing Christ’s coat, has an interesting, unexampled- (so far) patterned belt with elements put in multiple rows. There is only one parallel for this

<sup>217</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 8.

<sup>218</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 382.

<sup>219</sup> Lángi, Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* 2, 106.

<sup>220</sup> Jékely, Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 140-147.

<sup>221</sup> Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 188.

<sup>222</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 55.

<sup>223</sup> Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 181.

<sup>224</sup> Togner, *Stredoveká Nástenná Malba v Gemeri*, 156.

depiction from Hungarian mural painting, the belt on one of the warriors from Saint Ladislaus's army at Rimavská Baňa (**Fig. 127.**). In Sliače in the Betrayal scene a Roman soldier and Judas also wear uniquely ornamented straps on their hips, with simple or rhomboid grid ornaments (**Fig. 128.**). In Štítnik, where the bricked-up southern wall was painted with the Seven Sacraments at the beginning of the fifteenth century,<sup>225</sup> the groom has a special girdle In the Marriage scene, (**Fig. 129.**), with maybe cross-shaped mounts. The exact pattern is not easy to define due to the condition of the mural painting, but this depiction is also unique so far. At the parish church in Levoča there is also a unique pattern on the belt strap worn by the figure of Dorus the patrician in the scene of his expulsion (**Fig. 130.**) and on a soldier torturing Saint Dorothy (**Fig. 131.**).

In Sânpetru, in the Last Judgement scene<sup>226</sup> a figure standing next to the fiery cauldron, and wearing red garment has a wide, hip belt with square-shape, scalloped-edge mounts (**Fig. 132.**). It is not entirely the same depiction, but there is another exceptional belt in Levoča as well, which slightly recall this pattern (**Fig. 133.**).

#### II. 3. 4. Interpretation of the represented belts in the Sigismund-period mural paintings – parallel examples and dichotomies between visual representations and artifacts

Based on the formal characteristics one can detect three distinct groups of depicted belts – practically the same types are present here as in the Angevin period, the difference is in the number of certain types, and the context where they appear. One can distinguish plain straps, long-strap mounted or unornamented girdles at the waist (in one case in Ragály on the hips /see **Fig. 84./**) and military belts worn low on the hips.

<sup>225</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 33.

<sup>226</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 615.

Among cemetery finds from the Sigismund period there are also three types of belts: simple woven belts for the waist, long and narrow mounted or plain belts at the waist or sometimes at the hips, and the weapon-supporting belts, always on the hips. In his important article about the cemetery of Csút, László Gerevich describes a change in fashion at the turn of the fourteenth century. He claims that tight dress fell out of use and loose-cut clothing came into fashion again, which changed the fashion of belts as well. Girdles again, like in the first half of the fourteenth century, were worn higher on the garment to compress loose tunics.<sup>227</sup> However, most of the fifteenth-century belts have this unstable and broad date, and visual sources from medieval Hungary do not support this idea at all – since the belt worn on the hips is shown in many mural paintings and in sculptures as well<sup>228</sup> – Gerevich's statement has become generally accepted in the research and scholars consider it an axiom even nowadays.<sup>229</sup> At that time the group of artifacts was not too numerous and he used Western European visual parallels, mainly effigies, for dating the material he found in Csút and drew general conclusions regarding the whole Hungarian material. He argued that the tight clothes appeared in the mid-fourteenth century and became widespread in the second half of the century, but he refers to mainly to mid-fourteenth century analogies and the only local example he mentions is the images from the *Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle*. This statement is proven properly, but when he suggests a late fourteenth-century fashion change he supports the argument with such late mounted belts from Csút, which he himself admits that should be considered examples for the general fashion trends.<sup>230</sup> He does not provide visual sources from medieval Hungary for this fashion phenomenon, nor from other areas of Europe, to prove his observations, even though they might have changed his results. After examining a

<sup>227</sup> The fifteenth-century belts from Csút were at the waist of the corpse, see: Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező:" 150, just like the decorated belts of Kinána, which were also found wrapped at the waist, see: János Gy. Szabó, "Gótikus pártásvék a kishánai vár temetőjéből:" 63.

<sup>228</sup> See e.g. in the Gate of Paradise of the dome in Magdeburg, etc. (Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező:" 148.)

<sup>229</sup> As in the work of Gábor Hatházi, see his: "A kunok régészeti emlékei a Kelet-Dunántúlon"

<sup>230</sup> Gerevich, "A csúti középkori sírmező:" 148.

great number of mural paintings I must say that except for the figures in the copies of frescos from Mărtiniş and in the mural paintings of Ochtiná and Kocel'ovce (see **Fig. 83, 92-93.**), in churches painters consistently painted close-fitting garments on stylish figures, which followed the narrow line of the waist and widened to a skirt below the hips and the belt was worn low on the body, just above the short, loose skirt (see, e.g. **Fig. 112.**).

Compared with the increased number of the mural paintings in the Sigismund period, the number of decorated waist belts depicted in frescos is relatively small. Such belts did not disappear completely, as one can see in Smrečany and Žehra (See, e.g. **Fig. 88., 90.**), but in comparison with the Angevin tendencies where it can be considered the most common type, it seems to have been less popular from the fifteenth century onwards. Both plain and ornamented variants are present in the era. The representations of these decorated belts are not even a bit different from those of the previous decades. A long strap is represented, which usually reaches the knee. It is rarely looped (See, e.g. **Fig. 90.**) and the two ends of the strap are usually held together by a barely elaborated but always rounded buckle in the front (See, e.g. **Fig. 85.**). In Mărtiniş the decorated and unornamented types are present together. One torturing man wears a strap where the pendant remained plain, but the strap around the waist is ornamented. For the phenomenon of a belt strap without mounts on its full length there are archaeological examples, for instance, from the cemetery of Kisnána, where the girdle of a four-year old girl remained unstudded on the back.<sup>231</sup>

Probably a kind of transitory type is represented in Ochtiná and Kocel'ovce at the beginning of the fifteenth century (see **Fig. 92-93.**).<sup>232</sup> I call it transitory because this is not the common type of either hip or waist belts. Its shape refers to long-strap girdles, but it is worn on the hips. The appearance is a bit different and the garment is also a bit different from that associated with 'classic' hip girdles. This strap is actually too narrow for a typical hip-belt,

<sup>231</sup> Szabó, "Gótikus pártáövek:" 59.

<sup>232</sup> Kocel'ovce: Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 46.; Togner, *Stredoveká Nástenná Malba v Gemeri*, 106.; Ochtiná: Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 46.; Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 100.

and the clothes which it accompanies are slightly longer and looser than the tight and relatively short garments worn with hip-belts.

The hip-belt was by far the most popular belt depicted in the era, the majority of belts is this thick strap variant on a close-fitting garment, tightly drawn at the hip (See e.g. **Fig. 109-112.**). Its simple, mostly dark brown version is quite common in visual representations (See e.g. **Fig. 112.**), which might support the argument of László Gerevich that plain leather belts never went out of fashion, especially in military clothing.<sup>233</sup> It is true that figures wearing this kind of clothes often have something to do with the military and the girdles on them are weapon-holding belts, which were still worn on the hips for practical reasons, otherwise they would have been impractical and uncomfortable. Iconography and the context may be a possible explanation why one sees nothing except “old-fashioned” clothing,<sup>234</sup> but one also has to take into consideration the possibility that this is the clearest evidence disputing the idea of a fashion change at the very beginning of the fifteenth century. For tight garments and hip-belts the military context was no longer the only thematic medium anymore. In the early fifteenth century on the murals at Štítník,<sup>235</sup> this simple hip belt appears on peasants or at least people who have nothing to do with any kind of army or fighting in the particular scene when they are playing a role (see **Fig. 105.**). This is rare, only in two cases are shown, but it also appears on women at Žíp and Žehra (See **Fig. 106-107.**). In Žíp, unfortunately, not much is known about the character depicted; there is no surviving attribute that could identify her. In Žehra the depiction of Ecclesia is the other example of a female figure wearing a hip belt. Ecclesia, the symbol of the Church, follows a well-defined tradition – she is riding victoriously, holding a flag, wearing a crown, and surrounded by evangelist

<sup>233</sup> Gerevich, “A csúti középkori sírmező:” 146.

<sup>234</sup> Now I am referring back to László Gerevich’s ideas. (See Gerevich, “A csúti középkori sírmező”)

<sup>235</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben* 33.

symbols.<sup>236</sup> This is certainly Christ's triumph over the old spiritually transcended world, which is symbolized by the defeated Synagoga. The name of this iconography is the *Ecclesia triumphans* (Ecclesia triumphant in Battle). In this aspect it would not be surprising to see a piece of armor or a military belt on her as a didactic symbol of her victory. I do not want to make the mistake of overanalyzing certain phenomena; this idea cannot be defeated properly but it is assailable in several aspects, so I would rather leave this presumption open.

Among decorated hip belts there are a couple of belt depictions bearing unusual and outstandingly representative patterns. In Liptovské Sliače a soldier grabbing Christ's coat has an interesting, uniquely patterned belt – with elements put in multiple rows (See **Fig. 126**). This depiction can be interpreted several ways. This belt could consist of three separate, narrow straps mounted with tiny circular fittings, attached together with thin strips. The other interpretation which is perhaps less likely is that this belt has one thick strap mounted with square fittings in two rows followed by rounded mounts in three rows. There is only one analogy for this representation from Hungarian mural painting, the belt on one of the warriors from Saint Ladislaus's army in Rimavská Baňa (See **Fig. 127**). Here the mounts lie in two rows on the strap. Whatever the solution is, in the Hungarian archaeological material, and as far as I know outside of Hungary also, there is no item which has mounts in multiple rows. This kind of surface decoration, however, could be artistic invention.

#### *The decorated belts depicted on the frescoes in Levoča*

The mural paintings of Saint Jacob parish church in Levoča are completely standalone examples. These murals were made during the city's heyday, the quality is outstanding just like the condition in which the paintings managed to survive. Regarding belts, I found three groups of murals particularly interesting: the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy and the Seven Deadly Sins on the northern wall of the northern aisle, close to the chancel, and the Life of

<sup>236</sup> Wolfgang Greisenegger, "Ecclesia," in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* No 1, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum, et. al. (Rom: Herder, 1994), 567-568.

Saint Dorothy to the west of these frescos. Most likely they were made between 1380 and 1400.<sup>237</sup> The depictions are richly elaborated, full of details that one cannot expect from most wall paintings. There are many decorated belts in the murals. The belt ornaments in Levoča are never depicted in different colors so that one could at least presume that their material is different from that of the strap's. There are hip-belts with rounded ornaments – considering the tendencies in mural paintings in general, surprisingly this makes up the majority. All these belts follow the same scheme (See **Fig. 121-124.**). The strap is wide, two parallel lines are depicted on the edges of the belt and between these lines come the large, rounded mounts sometimes, tightly next to each other, like in the Proposal scene from the Life of Saint Dorothy, sometimes more loosely, as on the allegorical figure of Suicide in Wrath among the Seven Deadly Sins. In the Proposal scene there is even some further decoration on the circular motifs. On the figure of the Roman emperor in the Expulsion scene from the Life of Saint Dorothy wears a belt with quatrefoil elements decorating it in the middle, framed above and below by the same pattern cut in half (**Fig. 134.**). This is an unlikely solution for studding mounts on a strap – it lacks artifactual analogies. At the same time, it could suggest another interpretation. In Hungary there are no examples of stamped leather belts, but in the Museum of London, for instance, many such pieces are preserved (none of them earlier than the fourteenth century), in relatively good condition.<sup>238</sup> Stamped belts could provide an archaeological example not only for these unique representations, but also for belts interpreted as mounted girdles (**Fig. 135-137.**), especially as superimposed on this decoration there could be mounts on the strap as well.<sup>239</sup> It is not impossible that girdles from Liptovské Sliače also represent stamped leather belts (**Fig. 138-139.**).<sup>240</sup>

<sup>237</sup> Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 148.

<sup>238</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 40-41.

<sup>239</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 44.

<sup>240</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 45.

### *Depicted purses*

In the Gluttony scene of Seven Deadly Sins in Levoča the man wears a highly elaborated belt strap with a purse to the right of the buckle. On the upper part of the attached purse appear two small circular elements, they might be studs which hold the purse on the belt (**Fig. 140.**). Above I already dedicated some lines to purses. Here probably a different type of it shows up than what I presented in the Angevin chapter – a leather purse with flaps. The purse depicted here does not hang with strings from the girdle anymore. The two elements with which it seems to be attached to the strap might be flaps instead. A few examples from England proved that these purses had a flap closing and they were directly fitted onto the girdles (**Fig. 141-142.**). This way they were more secure and less tempting to thieves. All of these purse types were from late-fourteenth, early-fifteenth century deposits, and they can be considered relatively common in this era.<sup>241</sup> Its pictorial analogy is in the Martyrdom of Thaddeus in Poprad, on the hips of a soldier (**Fig. 143.**). Albeit the painting is not detailed, the relatively wide flaps of the pouch might refer to the presumed same type as appears in Levoča. The dating of this mural painting is rather uncertain in several publications. According to Mária Prokopp it was completed not long before 1400.<sup>242</sup> Taking into consideration the shape of the purse, I must agree with her. From the Sigismund period there is only one representation of that purse type, which I described above related to some mid-fourteenth century images – the one that dangles on a stripe attached to the belt. In Štítník from the scene of the parable telling the story of the talentums on one of the servants' belt a purse is hanging on his left side (**Fig. 144.**).

<sup>241</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 350.

<sup>242</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 64.



### *Particular forms of belt decorations*

There are two more exceptional cases of nearly unique decoration. In Sânpetru, in the Last Judgment scene,<sup>243</sup> a figure standing next to the fiery cauldron, wearing a red garment has a wide hip belt with square-shape, scalloped-edge mounts (**Fig. 145.**).<sup>244</sup> Although it is not entirely the same depiction, there is an exceptional belt in Levoča as well, which slightly recall this pattern (**Fig. 146.**). This scalloped edge is not characteristic of metal mounts, it rather features belt fittings made of bone, moreover, it is especially common on bone mounts (**Fig. 147.**).<sup>245</sup> Therefore one might see a disproportionately large example of bone-mounted belts in Sânpetru, thus it would be the one and only representation of a girdle decorated with bone fittings. From the fifteenth century pearls were also used to decorate belts<sup>246</sup> and beadwork-edge mounts came into fashion, as one can see on the elements of the decorated belt from Tiszaörvény (**Fig. 148.**).<sup>247</sup> Belts depicted at Dârjiu and Chimindia could provide spectacular examples for their visual representation. The mounts in these frescos could be interpreted in two ways; they might represent large mounts with beadwork edges which were studded adjacent to each other (**Fig. 149-151.**), such as mounts found in the cemetery of Sály-Lator (**Fig. 152.**),<sup>248</sup> or they could represent small fittings with tiny gems, and pearls regularly sewn on the strap beside them. In Western areas, wholly embroidered girdles or ones richly decorated with pearls had become very common by the end of the thirteenth century,<sup>249</sup> and from the fourteenth century onwards gemstones were also added to mounts or sewn on a textile base.<sup>250</sup> From the fourteenth and fifteenth century there are no examples of this from Hungary. I also must note that seeing the elaboration of the nimbuses, crowns, harness, and

<sup>243</sup> Marosi, *A magyarországi művészet*, 615.

<sup>244</sup> I did not meet with other mount-depictions which was similar to this representation.

<sup>245</sup> Varga, "Középkori csontveretes övek a Kárpát-medencében"; Németh, "Csontosövek a középkori Magyarországon"

<sup>246</sup> Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 70.

<sup>247</sup> Béla Horváth, „A tisztaörvényi pártá és pártáöv” [Decorated headdress and belt from Tiszaörvény], *Folia Archaeologica* 21 (1970): 166.

<sup>248</sup> Gádor, Hellebrandt, „A Herman Ottó Múzeum:” 605.

<sup>249</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 318.

<sup>250</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 49.

the background in Dârjiu it is apparent that this rich bead decoration is a stylistic element of the art (see **Fig. 111.**),<sup>251</sup> which of course does not exclude the option that the style was inspired by jewellery and rich textiles. It still remains rather slippery, however, to compare this representation with artifacts.

#### *Belts on female figures*

In the Sigismund period it is still particularly rare to see belts on female figures in mural paintings. The figures who actually wear belts appear to be random. The maiden from the Saint Ladislaus legend wears one in a fresco at Kraskovo; two identified saints wear one, Saint Dorothy and Saint Catherine; they appear twice on Synagoga and once on Ecclesia, and once it also appears on the Virgin in a Sheltering-Cloak Madonna representation in Smrečany and Liptovské Sliače. This is all I found concerning female figures. This latter frescos are the only depictions of Maria where she wears an accessory other than a cloak fastening. Girdles are never shown on her. In Western European visual sources, due to the great number of effigies and brasses, many women are represented with belts on.<sup>252</sup> There it is apparent that from the fifteenth century they wore different girdles than men. The straps became wider than they had been for many centuries and it became fashionable to wear these belts above the natural waistline. Here nothing like this is perceptible and female characters seem to wear just the same types as before, except the two hip-belts I mentioned a few lines above. Decorated belts appear only three times. In Nyírac nád Dorothy wears her belt under her breasts (See **Fig. 73.**). Yellowish paint may refer to the material and the reddish square-shape pattern picture the decoration. One can suspect that the painter intended to represent mounts, but since the same pattern decorates the fringe of the dress, it is more likely that this is only a richly ornamented, gilded textile belt here. The unknown saint might wear a plaque-belt (See **Fig.**

<sup>251</sup> Lángi, Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések 2*, 106.

<sup>252</sup> See e.g. the stone effigy of a lady from an altar tomb dated to the mid-fourteenth century, in All Saints' Church of Clehonger (Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 37.)

106.), the same kind as seen on soldiers, and the one and only long-strap decorated belt is around the waist of the Virgin (See **Fig. 89-90.**). One cannot argue that female figures wear less fashionable garments, but it is undeniable that they wear significantly fewer costume accessories.

#### *Characteristic features of the Hungarian material*

The distance between artifacts and the visual representations – even despite a few particular frescos – is larger and larger. The Hungarian material, however, does not seem to be as varied as that from the West, but they certainly show greater variability than before. Square-shape and rounded mounts were still frequent, but other forms appeared, too, such as rosette-shape or star-shape pieces, etc. The ornaments on the surface of the mounts also became richer and richer.<sup>253</sup> In this regard, mural paintings in medieval Hungary are hard to compare with the material objects. With a couple of exceptions, mainly from Upper Hungary, one still cannot see anything but barely elaborated square- or sometimes circular-shape mounts, while artifacts show an increasing abundance (**Fig. 153-155.**). Mostly the width of the strap defines the shape of the mounts. The mounts from the same belt found in graves are usually identical. As time passed they were studded closer and closer to each other, sometimes they are even touching each other.<sup>254</sup> Mural paintings show similar examples; in paintings this is the most common variant, although in Lónya the yellowish mounts are sharply separated and the red-colored strap is visible between them.<sup>255</sup> In certain early fifteenth century murals among those listed above, such as Chimindia,<sup>256</sup> the royal saints wear a belt viewed from above; their painter made it look three-dimensional. These belts seem to consist of thick cuboid-shaped elements, maybe lined up in a string, tightly beside each other.

<sup>253</sup>See, e.g., Kovács, “Nagytálya középkori templomának feltárása.” 138.

<sup>254</sup>Kálmán Szabó, *Az alföldi Magyar nép művelődéstörténeti emlékei. Kecskemét város múzeumának ásatásai* [Cultural history of the Hungarian nation in the Alföld region. Excavations in Kecskemét city] (Budapest: Magyar Történeti Múzeum, 1938), 65.

<sup>255</sup>Jékely, Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 188.

<sup>256</sup>Jékely, Kiss, *Középkori falképek Erdélyben*, 140.

There is no proper analogy for this sort of belt in archaeology, but there are fittings where mounts are thick and were set densely beside each other, like a girdle from the graveyard of Bene (**Fig. 156.**).<sup>257</sup> As I mentioned in the introduction two kinds of decorated belts turn up in testaments and inventories: straps with mounts studded on the textile or leather and girdles wholly made of metal plaques.<sup>258</sup> These belts are absent from the Hungarian material. Probably because of their high value – plaques were presumably made of precious metal, silver or gold – they did not get into graves and there are no surviving examples in archaeological deposits either, maybe because of the reuse and melting down. In Western Europe, there are a few preserved plaque belts with large, mainly square, plaques, already from the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>259</sup> Implicitly due to their heavy weight and less flexible features they were not as common as the organic material-based belt variants.<sup>260</sup> In a great number of depictions the plaque-belt does not have a buckle (See, e.g. **Fig. 110., 113.**), but as far as I know belt fittings without buckles are absent from the archaeological material.

#### *Belt buckle*

In murals the belt buckle is rarely represented, and if it is the shape is usually rounded. In the archaeological material the tendency is different. Most frequently bone-mounted belts have rounded buckles (**Fig. 157-158.**).<sup>261</sup> It does not mean that a metal version did not exist, but mostly with some exceptions one finds them in thirteenth-century hoards or occasionally in fourteenth-century graves. In the early Sigismund period they are much less common archaeologically than in paintings of the era.<sup>262</sup> In the fifteenth century the number increases,<sup>263</sup> but the head of the buckle is usually small; the diameter is barely larger than the

<sup>257</sup> Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 65.

<sup>258</sup> Szende, *Otthon a városban*, 138.

<sup>259</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 324.

<sup>260</sup> Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 317.

<sup>261</sup> Sándor Varga, “Középkori csontveretes övek a Kárpát-medencében:” 287.

<sup>262</sup> András H. Pálóczi, “A balotapusztai középkori sírlelet” [Medieval burial find in Balotapuszta], *Cumania* 11. (1989): 126-127.

<sup>263</sup> Béla Kovács, “Nagytálya középkori templomának feltárása:” 153.

width of the belt strap. There are only a few examples in which an artifactual buckle shows the same proportions as that seen in depictions. Larger-sized buckles are more often found in hoards, but the question is whether they were used on a belt or a cloak. Even in Western research larger buckles are interpreted as cloak buckles.<sup>264</sup> In the fifteenth century also, such depictions are rare where the strap is not decorated but there is a fitting, like a single buckle, for instance. I found only two frescos of this kind. In Bijacovce the riding Cuman has some fittings on his belts, which I described above, and in Levoča, the Gluttony scene's riding figure has a belt equipped with a buckle of the same color as the strap (See **Fig. 81-82.**). It might raise the question of whether the buckle was covered by some organic material, maybe leather, and only the thin base of it was made of a stronger fabric, at the same time I cannot emphasize enough that one should not use color as basis for analyzing depictions of things.

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<sup>264</sup> Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 64-65.

### III. CONCLUSION

It is clear that what one can draw from the archaeological material and visual sources often do not seem to match; moreover, sometimes they show completely different tendencies in fashion. It is important to note that the purposes and subjects of the two contexts (the burial and the pictorial representation), where my material came from could be essentially distinct. With the exceptions of a couple of Cuman single graves, most of the cemetery finds are coming from religious context, just as the images in churches. The intention of representation affected by the conventions and personal motivations or elements plays an eloquent role in both contexts, although the features of these conventions and motivations differ and they are not implicitly definite. It is not by accident that different contexts show different phenomena, but yet I believe that there are certain tendencies that should at least broadly match. In the comparison I have tried to pay attention to the slippery matters and draw conclusions carefully.

In my opinion the dating of mural paintings seems to be more exact than that of the objects themselves. Of course there is always some uncertainty, since most of the paintings are not in that lucky position as Spišská Kapitula or Dârjiu,<sup>265</sup> etc. to have the exact date written on the wall, but there are several scholars dealing with murals simultaneously and defining the date apparently relying on previous researches but keeping a critical attitude, and there are only a low number of dating which differ significantly from each other.<sup>266</sup>

Above I was able to demonstrate that the schematic way of representing belts is rather frequent until the late-fourteenth century, and a great number of mural paintings do not even depict the accessory. Among those which represent girdles, Upper Hungarian examples are

<sup>265</sup> Spišská Kapitula: Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 18.; Dârjiu: Lángi, József, Mihály, Ferenc. *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* 1, 106.

<sup>266</sup> Like e. g. in the case of Žehra which was dated to the mid-fourteenth century by Mária Prokopp (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 52.), but to the 1420s by other scholars: Marosi, „A falképfestészet,” 285.; Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, 80.

the most abundant both in number and in profusion of details. I described certain theories and ideas which are prevailing in the research, such as the idea of fashion change in the beginning and then in the late-fourteenth century, but which after examining mural paintings do not seem to be right anymore. Instead of the idea of the an early fourteenth century fashion change, which suggested that loose garments fell out of fashion completely by the mid-fourteenth century, I would rather suggest a slow change not ending but starting in the mid-fourteenth century. In paintings loose garment and long-strap belts which held them together did not disappear at all, not even in the fifteenth century. They can be considered widespread during the whole fourteenth century, and tight clothes and hip-belts just slowly took over the dominance from them a bit after the middle of the century. Tight garments seemed to remain popular during the entire Sigismund-period, opposed to what scholars usually argue, namely that that loose garment returned around the last decades of the 1300s, and once again superseded the tight cut. Since the majority of mural paintings stands against this idea, it was also possible to revisit the date of a few paintings, such as Tereske, which should be a bit younger than what traditional argument say in publications.

According to the testimony of artifacts excavated in cemeteries, single graves or found in deposits, supposedly aristocrats, the burghers of towns and peasants all wore belts. In the Angevin period, maybe due to the few number of surviving frescos one cannot support such an argument, because belts usually appear in similar context or on such persons whose social status cannot be defined. They are a frequent element of military garment, mainly in the represented episodes of Saint Ladislaus legend, and sometimes on other saintly soldier figures as I showed above. Otherwise they only turn up in such scenes, which depict New-Testament stories and on characters whose social rank is not necessarily important in the given scene. They are present on Virgin Mary, who, as the Queen of Heaven, can be represented in the richest garment, but there it is not even sure that the faint line on her is a belt depiction or not.

Highly decorated belts are on the five wise and five foolish virgins in Chyžné. Their place in the society is unimportant and not specified in the parable. It is true that concerning clothing the five wise virgins show a homogenous picture, while the five foolish ones appear differently and give a bit more chaotic and less harmonic impression; and not even the cut of their dresses is identical. Apparently there must be a moral layer of the meaning of dress here, but it is not related to belts. Except one foolish virgin, all the others wear belts, mostly long-strap girdles.

When a visual representation of any kind shows a contemporary figure, that could refer to the feature how its creator understood that character or how that depicted person understood himself. Defining broad social layers such as peasantry, bourgeoisie and nobility is already difficult but making further distinctions inside these groups is an even harder task. It would be really useful if one could draw far-reaching and universal conclusions regarding the social status of those who are wearing belts in depictions or regarding the social role of belts in general, but the pure reality is that belt representations are heterogeneous and it is impossible to draw such conclusions which could be true in every case where a belt shows up. There are very few, isolated cases which might refer to general trends just to be disputed immediately by other examples. There are plenty of things and circumstances, which take an impact on how an artist depicted a certain person. Broadly speaking this person could be of three types: a historical character, a religious character and a contemporary actor who ordered to be portrayed or just happened to be depicted for various other reasons. In a figurative representation, all of these circumstances and reasons matter a lot and could influence essentially the final result. The intend of the artist who produced or the person who ordered the particular art piece plays the main role concerning the appearance of a figure, and both of them are such aspects which are hard to define, especially after centuries. A great deal of



things can affect intention and realization as well – social background, knowledge, experience, or skills of the artist, the context of the art piece, etc.

Donor depictions are one possible field to examine how people understood and represented social status. Donors could show up in several ways. Their appearance could be symbolic, where authenticity was not so important, but there are representations, where they clearly mark out from their environment in the image. The context and their appearance (in which clothing is a tool) usually help to identify them as donors. In Hungary, there are only very few surviving donor-depictions in mural paintings. In the Angevin period the fresco of Spišská Kapitula represents the only donor figure. Charles Robert appears in the fresco with his provost and both of them are wearing decorated girdles, whose mounts are painted with yellow, maybe to picture gold. That certainly proves that the higher social strata definitely wore long-strap mounted belts, and not only as weapon-supporting accessory on armor but also in such ceremonies like coronation, where representing their rank was one of the most important things. However, this fresco does not help to distinguish further strata among the nobility – the king and his follower wear exactly the same belt.

The Sigismund period is not richer concerning the belt representation on donors. In Štítník Jesus's parable of the talents described in the gospel of Matthew got to be represented in the 1420-30s.<sup>267</sup> The main character of the paintings here is Emperor Sigismund; the potentate in the scenes most probably stands for him. László Csetneki (Ladislaus from Štítník), the prebendary of Esztergom and confidant of the emperor, ordered the paintings and defined the thematic system of them. His main aim was to set a memory to his great benefactor, the king. In the first scene the potentate gives money (talents) to his servants, a different amount to each of them according to the gospel, and then the fresco represents the activity of these servants on how they used this money.<sup>268</sup> Since all of the servants wear a hip-

<sup>267</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 38-39.; Togner, *Stredoveká Nástenná Malba v Gemerí*, 162.

<sup>268</sup> Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 33.

belt, it is rather tempting to say that here the belts eventually appear on lower status people, on servants; but the protector probably interpreted the story in his own way, and the potentate is the emperor, while the servants are his close followers, people who are not even close to low social strata.

Despite this presented example, one still can say that in the Sigismund period belts appear on much more people and in more contexts than in the previous era. Still soldiers, kings and royal saints are the figures on whom belts appear most frequently, but the military context seems to lose its absolute monocracy. In Levoča, several figures acting in the Seven Deadly Sins, probably not from the highest layers, have belts. In the Corporal Works of Mercy the poor wanderer wears a belt and even if one knows that the wanderer stands for Jesus, the representation of his poverty is crucial here, and having a belt despite poverty does not seem to be a problem anymore. Represented social connotations could be a really interesting segment of fresco-research, especially in comparison with things that other sources tell. The problem of social differences in visual sources is various-sided, and a lot of details have to be taken into consideration to get to proper results; but I believe that this could be worth some further study.

Girdles are present on figures of both genders and practically all age groups. They appear in male, female, and child graves, but most frequently archaeologists find them in young people's graves, especially in female and child graves.<sup>269</sup> In mural paintings there are no depictions of children except for episodes from the childhood of Christ, whose clothing follows a strictly defined tradition that did not include a belt. This could mean that it is impossible to compare the finds from children's graves with their illustrated versions, but this is not the right approach. According to excavation results, children were usually buried with belts most likely inherited from their ancestors; thus, belts of adult men or women were put on

<sup>269</sup> Gabriella Gábor, "Középkori párták Békés megyében" [Medieval headdresses in Békés country], *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. Studia Archaeologica* 2 (1996): 111.

the corpse.<sup>270</sup> The decorated belt is prevalent in both graves of young girls and mature women, and in many cases it appears along a headdress, but this phenomenon is hardly comparable with the mural paintings - in depictions there is no connection between belts and headdresses. Presumably the belt was a commonly used costume element, and since it could be seen as a symbol of inner purity,<sup>271</sup> it would be more than reasonable to expect it to be depicted on female figures, who stand for moral values in churches. Mural paintings often show the opposite, though. It is particularly rare that a belt appears on a female figure in murals and if it does at all, then it is a representation of an undecorated most likely light, long textile or leather belt (for instance, on the maiden in the mural in Kraskovo (See **Fig. 86.**)). There are only a few examples of such gorgeously decorated straps that one can see among the archaeological finds.

Ethnicity is another significant question here, especially since in the depicted Saint Ladislaus legend Cumans appear as a clearly distinguishable group. This aspect could be rather explored through garments, armor, weaponry and headdress than through belt. As I mentioned above, in Hungarian research it is considered an accepted fact that decorated belts did not belong to the traditional Cuman fashion. Except a few mounted weapon-supporting belts (which are recognized as prestigious gifts) from the late-thirteenth, early fourteenth century, richly ornamented belts do not show up in Cuman graves, neither in visual representations. In the South-Russian steppes on Cuman tomb statues, which show how Cumans understood themselves – and which are useful visual sources for other dress accessories and garments – belts do not show up at all,<sup>272</sup> and in Hungarian frescos it is also rare that a Cuman wears a spectacular girdle. Most of the belt examples from depicted Cumans are plain and insignificant. At the same time; the belt is not always a show off

<sup>270</sup> János Gy. Szabó, “Gótikus pártáövek a kishánai vár temetőjéből” [Gothic decorated belts from the cemetery of Kishána Castle]. *Az Egri Múzeum Évkönyve* VIII-IX. (1972): 61.

<sup>271</sup> Gerevich, “A csúti középkori sírmező:” 146.

<sup>272</sup> András H. Pálóczi, “Le costume Coman au Moyen Age,” *Acta Archaeologica* 32 (1980): 404-405.

indicator of differences between the Christian king and the pagan warrior, since there are several depictions, where they wear the same, simple strap on them, like in the frescos of Vel'ká Lomnica or Žehra (See **Fig. 6.** and **11.**). Moreover, in an unexampled case in Vítkovce, the belt of the Cuman in the wrestling scene is more eye-catching than the one of Saint Ladislaus, maybe for symbolic reasons, emphasizing the negative feature of him (See **Fig. 8.**).<sup>273</sup> Ethnicity and orientalism are important questions in Hungarian mural paintings, but maybe not from the perspective of belts.

As mentioned above, dating belts in archaeology is a rather challenging task especially regarding sporadic finds and the belts which were not accompanied with any other finds that could help to date them. The more or less accepted practice is to date a belt according to the material it is made of. The two kinds of commonly used material were bone and metal (mainly bronze and silver). Some scholars argue with this methodology, but most of them accept and follow the tradition which dates the belt elements made of bone to the fourteenth century<sup>274</sup> and those made of metal to the fifteenth century, moreover, often to the late fifteenth-sixteenth century. The basis for dating these belt elements is frequently indirect and, for the lack of other datable materials, archaeologists date based on coins, often not even in the same grave, but near to it or in an adjacent grave. Often this is a necessary solution if a scholar needs to place a certain object in time, but it is a disputable methodology. This creates a large one-century gap where, according to the previous archeological observations, there were no decorated belts. This is the point, when other sources like mural paintings do contribute to the discussion. Studying them in a detailed way, both the artifacts and their

<sup>273</sup> Annamária Kovács wrote about dress symbolism in the represented Saint Ladislaus legend. (Kovács, "Costumes as symbols")

<sup>274</sup> According to Elek Benkő, this is a fifteenth-century accessory type: Elek Benkő, "A középkori Nyársapát" [Medieval Nyársapát], *Studia Comitatensia* 9 (1980): 339, while Sándor Varga believes that it is certainly a fourteenth-century belt type: Sándor Varga, "Középkori csontveretes övek a Kárpát-medencében" [Medieval belts with bone decoration in the Carpathian basin], *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. Studia Archaeologica* 11 (2005): 277-304. In the opinion of András K. Németh, the bone-mounted belt was popular in both the fourteenth and fifteenth century: András K. Németh, "Csontosövek a középkori Magyarországon" [Belts with bone decoration in medieval Hungary], *Opuscula Hungarica* 6 (2005): 277.

visual representations – seeing them beside each other – has been essential in my research, since I aimed to build up or dispute each idea on the relations between the two kinds of source.

In the chapters dealing with the Angevin and Sigismund period I attempted to show that archaeology in its current state does not make the scholar's job of comparative research easier. Maybe the most important thing as a first step is the reconsideration of the dating of late-medieval belts, which is a huge task. Extensive reanalysis of each grave and its deposits is needed, where belts were found; and the artifactual material is not small anymore. But anyhow, following the previous dating traditions is clearly no longer appropriate. Even if one does not have the opportunity to revisit the entire chronology, she/he has to be aware of these problems when she/he compares them with sources of the theoretically same timeframe. This is not the only problematic point: one also has to examine the contexts of the mural paintings. The technique and the possibilities arising there, the origin and background of the painters, the visual and iconographical traditions, the messages and multi-faceted social, ethnic, and moral connotations must all be taken into consideration; and only after this it will be possible to draw further conclusions. Images and in my case mural paintings are certainly should not serve only as illustrations, they have their own things to tell, and I hope that in this thesis representing a considerable amount of them I was able to show some of their values.

#### IV. LIST OF FIGURES

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3. Figure: Filia (Romania), Calvinist church. Detail of the mural painting, dated to the mid-fourteenth century. Copy drawn after the mural painting by Károly Gulyás.( János, *Színek és legendák*, 103.)
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- Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/28530134@N04/3209893401/in/photostream>
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Sources: <http://szgy47.blogspot.com/>

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129. Figure: Štítnik (Slovakia), Lutheran church. Detail of the mural painting, dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century. Engagement scene from the Seven Sacraments on the wall of the southern aisle. (Togner, *Stredoveká Nástenná Malba v Gemeri*, 163.)
130. Figure: Levoča (Slovakia), Saint Jacob parish church. Detail of the mural painting, 1380-1400. Scene of the emperor expelling Dorus on the northern wall of the northern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 80)

131. Figure: Levoča (Slovakia), Saint Jacob parish church. Detail of the mural painting, 1380-1400. Figure of a soldier torturing Saint Dorothy on the northern wall of the northern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 88.)
132. Figure: Sânpetru (Romania), Lutheran church. Detail of the mural painting, dated to the late-fourteenth century. Figure holding a cauldron in the scene of Last Judgment in the north-eastern chapel.
- Source: <http://www.kutyahon.de/erdelyi.templomok/barcaszentpeter/index.htm>
133. Figure: Levoča (Slovakia), Saint Jacob parish church. Detail of the mural painting, 1380-1400. Scene of the emperor expelling Dorus on the northern wall of the northern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 80.)
134. Figure: Levoča (Slovakia), Saint Jacob parish church. Detail of the mural painting, 1380-1400. Scene of the emperor expelling Dorus on the northern wall of the northern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 80.)
135. Figure: Leather girdle with stamped decoration. (Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 40.)
136. Figure: Levoča (Slovakia), Saint Jacob parish church. Detail of the mural painting, 1380-1400. Allegory of Suicide in Wrath from the Seven Deadly Sins. on the northern wall of the northern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 115.)
137. Figure: Leather girdle with stamped decoration. (Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 42.)
138. Figure: Liptovské Sliache (Slovakia), Saint Simon and Judas church. Detail of the mural painting, 1420s. Betrayal scene from the Passion cycle on the northern nave wall. (Dvoráková, et al., *Středověká nástěnná*, Figure 165.)
139. Figure: Leather girdle with stamped decoration. (Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 45.)
140. Figure: Levoča (Slovakia), Saint Jacob parish church. Detail of the mural painting, 1380-1400. Drinking figure in the Gluttony scene from the depicted Cardinal Sins on the northern wall of the northern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 113.)
141. Figure: Reconstruction of a purse from London. (Egan, Pritchard, *Dress Accessories*, 351.)

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143. Poprad (Slovakia), Saint Giles church. Detail of the mural painting, made before 1400. The martyrdom of Thaddeus apostle on the eastern wall of the chancel. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 63.)
144. Figure: Štítňik (Slovakia), Lutheran church. Detail of the mural painting, dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century. Depicted parable of Jesus about the *talentums* on the wall of the southern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori freskók Gömörben*, 38-39.)
145. Figure: Sânpetru (Romania), Lutheran church. Detail of the mural painting, dated to the late-fourteenth century. Figure holding a cauldron in the scene of Last Judgment in the north-eastern chapel.
- Source: <http://www.kutyahon.de/erdelyi.templomok/barcaszentpeter/index.htm>
146. Figure: Levoča (Slovakia), Saint Jacob parish church. Detail of the mural painting, 1380-1400. Scene of the emperor expelling Dorus on the northern wall of the northern aisle. (Prokopp, *Középkori falképek a Szepességben*, 80.)
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150. Figure: Dârjiu, (Romania) Unitarian church. Detail of the mural painting, 1419. The figure of Saint Ladislaus on the northern wall of the chancel.
- Source: <http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sz%C3%A9kelyderzs>
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152. Figure: Belt mount from the cemetery of Sály-Lator. (Gábor, Hellebrandt, „A Herman Ottó Múzeum:" 605.)

153. Figure: Mounts of a decorated belt from Bene (Hungary): Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 67.
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156. Figure: Mounted belts from Bene: Szabó, *Az alföldi magyar nép*, 67.
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158. Figure: Lónya, (Hungary), Calvinist church. Detail of the mural painting, dated to the early-fifteenth century. Royal saints on the southern wall of the chancel. (own photo)

## V. LIST OF THE USED MURAL PAINTINGS

### Present-day Hungary:

1. Füzér, Saint Stephan church
2. Keszthely, Virgin Mary church
3. Lónya, Calvinistchurch
4. Nyíracád, Calvinistchurch
5. Ófehértó, Saint Elisabeth church
6. Ragály, Calvinistchurch
7. Siklós, Castle chapel.
8. Szentsimon, Saint Simon and Judas church
9. Tereske, Virgin Mary church
10. Velemér, Holy Trinity church
11. Vizsoly, Calvinistchurch

### Present-day Romania:

12. Alma (Küküllőalmás)
13. Bădești (Bádok), Calvinistchurch
14. Chichiș (Kökös), Unitarian church.
15. Chileni (Sepsikilyén), Unitarian church
16. Chimindia (Kéménd), Calvinistchurch
17. Daia (Székelydália), Calvinistchurch
18. Dârjiu (Székelyderzs), Unitarian church
19. Filia (Erdőfüle), Calvinistchurch
20. Florești (Szászfenes), All Saints' church
21. Ghelinta (Gelence), Saint Emeram church
22. Mălâncrav (Almakerék), Virgin Mary church
23. Martiniș (Homoródszentmárton), Unitarian church
24. Mugeni (Bögöz), Calvinistchurch
25. Porumbeni Mari (Nagygalambfalva), Calvinistchurch
26. Sânpetru (Barcaszentpéter), Lutheran church
27. Tileagd Mezötelegd), Calvinist church

### Present-day Slovakia (Upper Hungary)

28. Bijacovce (Szepesmindszent), All Saints' church
29. Chyžné (Hizsnyó), Annuntiation church
30. Koceľovce (Gecelfalva), Lutheran church
31. Liptovské Sliače (Háromszlács), Saint Simon and Judas church
32. Kraskovo (Karaszko), Košice (Kassa), Lutheran church
33. Kyjatice (Kiéte), Lutheran church
34. Lelesz (Leles), Calvinist church
35. Levoča (Lőcse), Saint Jacob parish church
36. Ochtiňa (Martonháza), Lutheran church
37. Plešivec (Pelsőc), Calvinist church
38. Podolíneč (Podolin), Assumption of Mary church
39. Poniky (Pónik), Saint Francis of Assisi church
40. Poprad (Poprád), Saint Giles church
41. Rákoš (Rákos), Roman Catholic church
42. Rimavská Baňa (Rimabánya), Lutheran church
43. Šivetice (Süvete), Saint Margaret rotunda
44. Smrečany (Szmrecsány), Virgin Mary church
45. Štítnik (Csetnek), Lutheran church
46. Švábovce (Svábóc), Saint Philip and Jacob church
47. Spišská Kapitula (Szepeshely), Saint Martin cathedral
48. Veľká Lomnica (Kakaslomnic), Saint Catherine of Alexandria church
49. Vitkovce (Vitfalva), Saint Philip and Jacop apostle church
50. Žehra (Zsegra), Holy Trinity church
51. Želiezovce (Zseliz), Saint Jacob church
52. Žip (Zsip), Calvinist church

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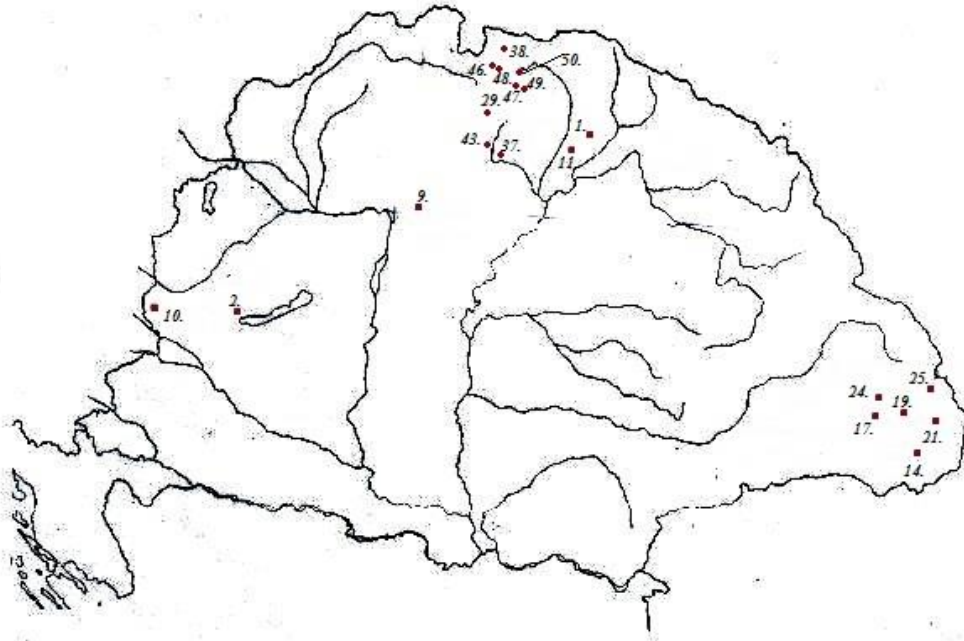
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## VII. FIGURES



**Fig. 1.** Map of Angevin mural paintings representing belts



**Fig. 2.** Leaving Várad, Mugaeni



**Fig. 3.** Saint Ladislaus, Filia



**Fig. 4.** Cuman warrior, Ghelinta

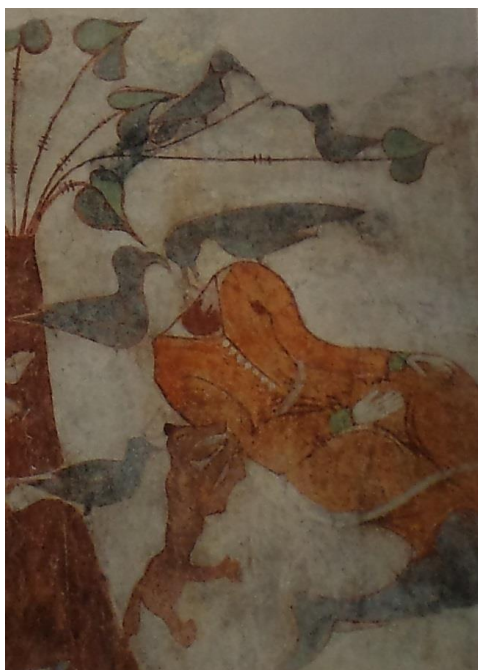


**Fig. 5.** Cuman warrior, Tereske



**Fig. 6.** Wrestling scene at Velká Lomnica





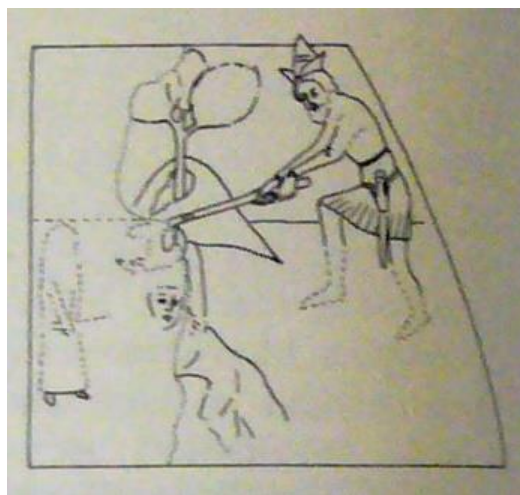
**Fig. 7.** Beheaded Cuman at Vítkovce



**Fig. 8.** Wrestling scene in Vítkovce



**Fig. 9.** Preying figures at Šivetice



**Fig. 10.** Beheading scene at Švábovce



**Fig. 11.** Battle scene at Žehra

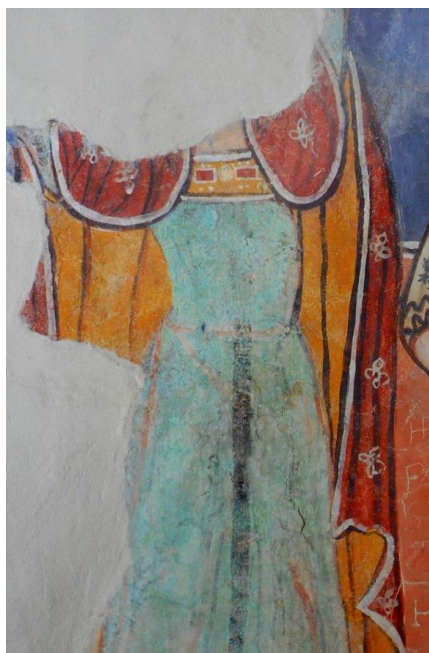


**Fig. 12.** Scenes from the Passion cycle at Podolíneč





**Fig. 13.** Adoration of the Magi at Podolíneć



**Fig. 14.** Virgin Mary at Füzér





**Fig. 15.** Beheading scene at Ghelinta



**Fig. 16.** Detail of the mural at Ghelinta



**Fig. 17.** Cuman warrior at Velká Lomnica



**Fig. 18.** Beheading scene at Vítkovce



**Fig. 19.** Charles I. at Spišska Kapitula

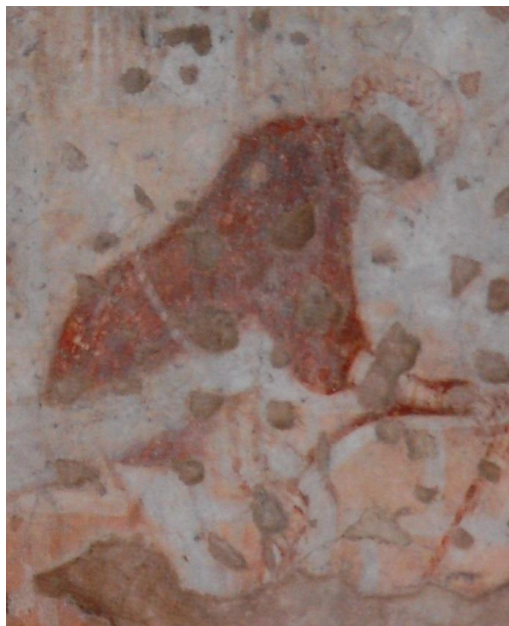


**Fig. 20.** Figure of the castellan of Szepes in Spišska Kapitula





**Fig. 21.** Saint Ladislaus at Ghelinta



**Fig. 22.** Figure of a knight at Chichiș



**Fig. 23.** Female figure at Porumbenii Mari



**Fig. 24.** Frescos of the triumphal arch at Chyžné

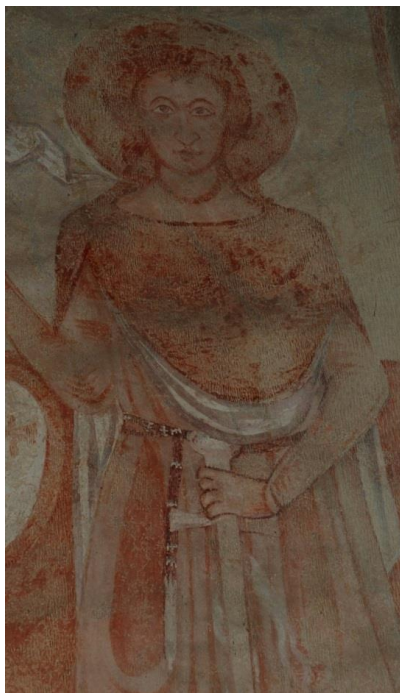


**Fig. 25.** Depicted wise virgins at Chyžné



**Fig. 26.** Depicted foolish virgins at Chyžné





**Fig. 27.** Soldier saint at Vizsoly



**Fig. 28.** Soldier saint at Vizsoly



**Fig. 29.** Soldier from the Betrayal scene at Žehra



**Fig. 30.** Figure of Pilate at Keszthely



**Fig. 31.** Soldier in the Crucifixion scene at Plešivec



**Fig. 32.** Saint George at Daia



**Fig. 33.** Saint Ladislaus at Tereske



**Fig. 34.** Saint Ladislaus at Velemér

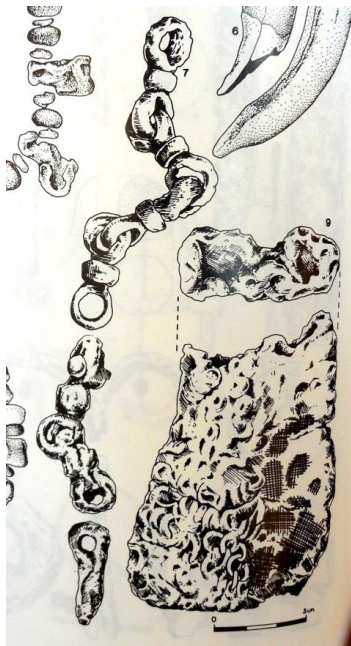


**Fig. 35.** Figure of a knight at Velemér



**Fig. 36.** Saint Ladislaus at Filia

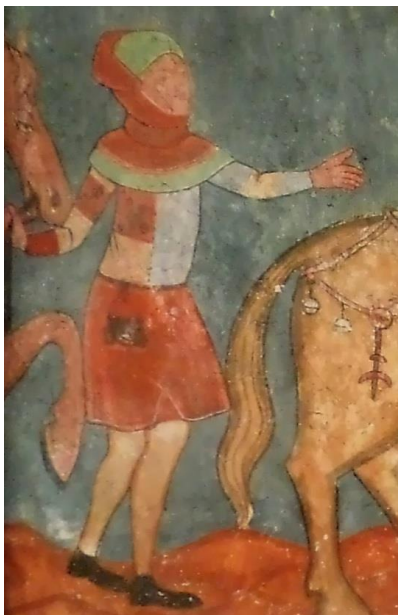




**Fig. 37.** Purse finds from Perkáta



**Fig. 38.** Figure from the Presentation scene at Podolíneč



**Fig. 39.** Servant figure at Podolíneč

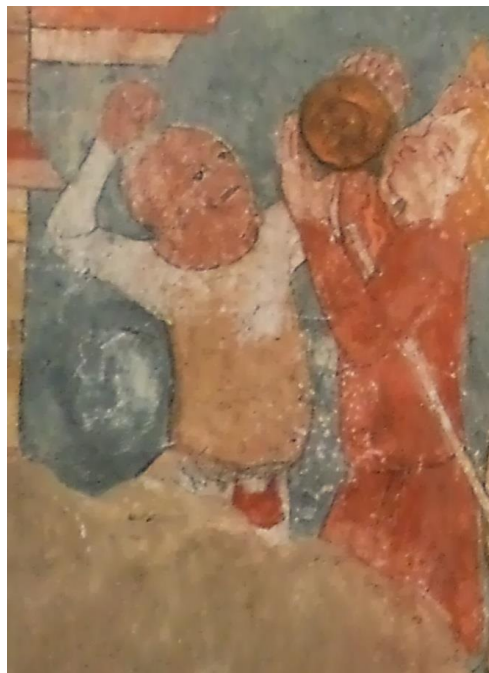


**Fig. 40.** Jesus before Pilate at Podolíneč





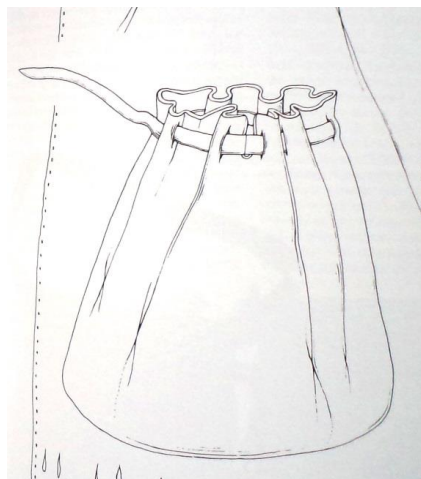
**Fig. 41.** Soldier from the Undressing scene at Podolíneć



**Fig. 42.** Servant figure at Podolíneć



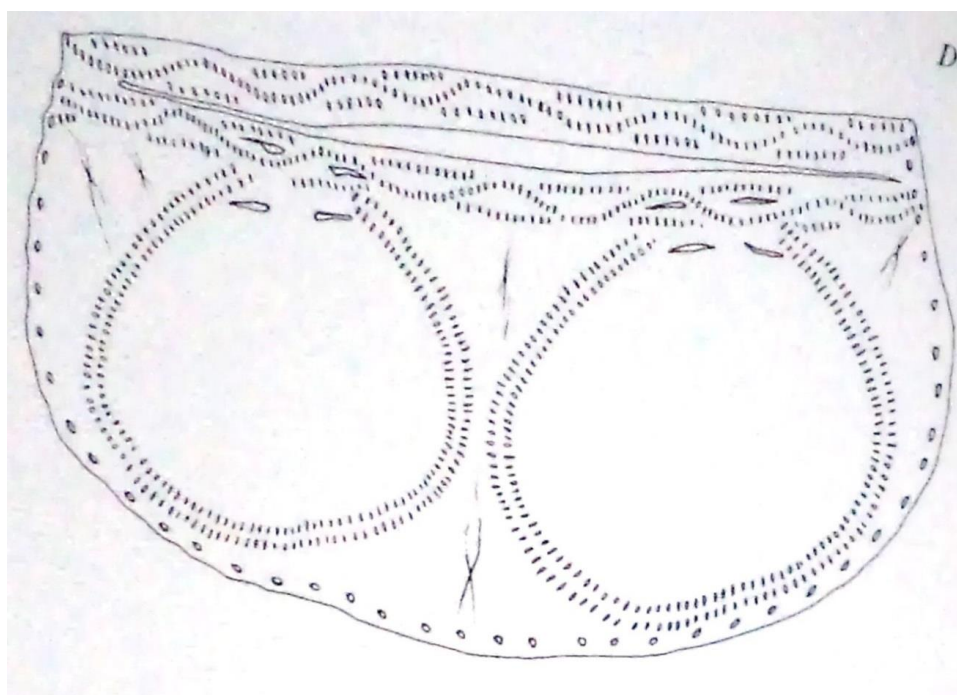
**Fig. 43.** Figure from the Presentation scene at Podolíneć



**Fig. 44.** Purse from London



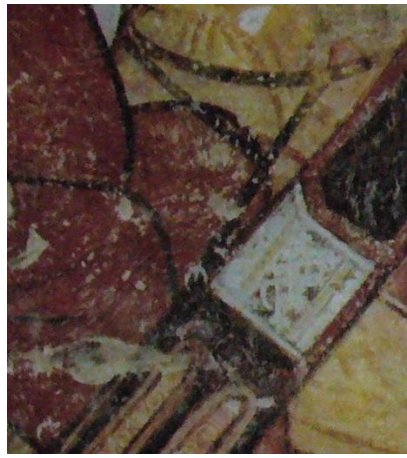
**Fig. 45.** Figure from the Undressing scene at Podolíneć



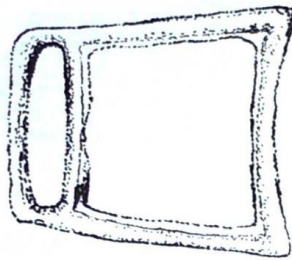
**Fig. 46.** Purse from London



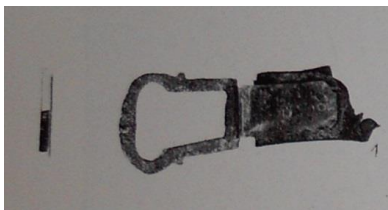
**Fig. 47.** Saint Ladislaus at Ghelinta



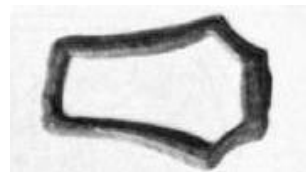
**Fig. 48.** Cuman warrior at Veľká Lomnica



**Fig. 49.** Belt buckle from Homokmégy-Szentegyházpart



**Fig. 50.** Belt buckle from the castle of Kislána

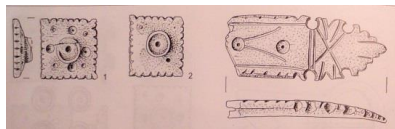


**Fig. 51.** Belt buckle from

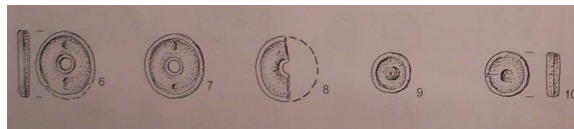




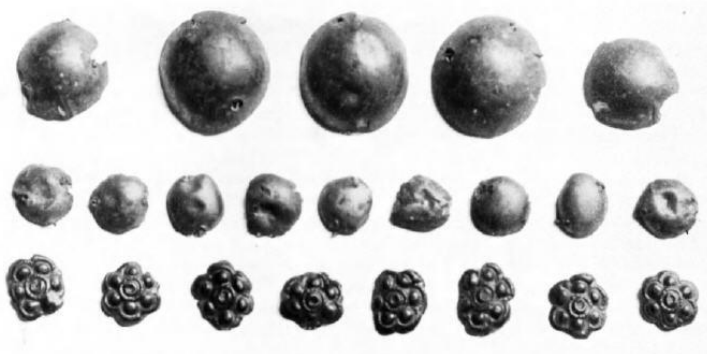
**Fig. 52.** Mural painting at Spišska Kapitula



**Fig. 54.** Bone mounts from Kaszaper



**Fig. 54.** Bone mounts from Kisszállás-Templomdomb



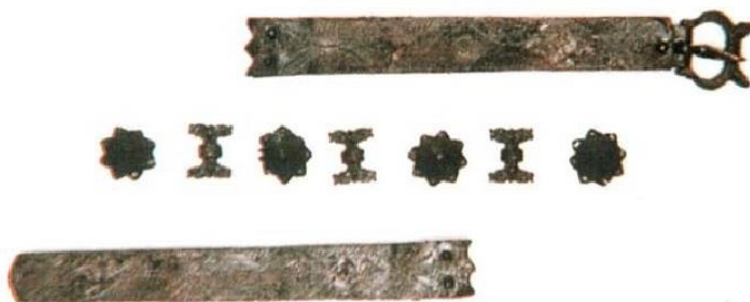
**Fig. 55.** Headdress mounts from Kecskemét



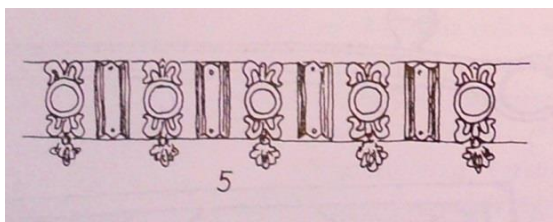
**Fig. 56.** Mounted belt from London



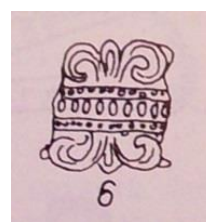
**Fig. 57.** Soldier saint at Vizsoly



**Fig. 58.** Belt from Szentgyörgy



**Fig. 59.** Belt from Zenta-paphalom



**Fig. 60.** Belt mount from Zagypálfalva-Kotyháza



**Fig. 61.** Belt mounts from Cuban

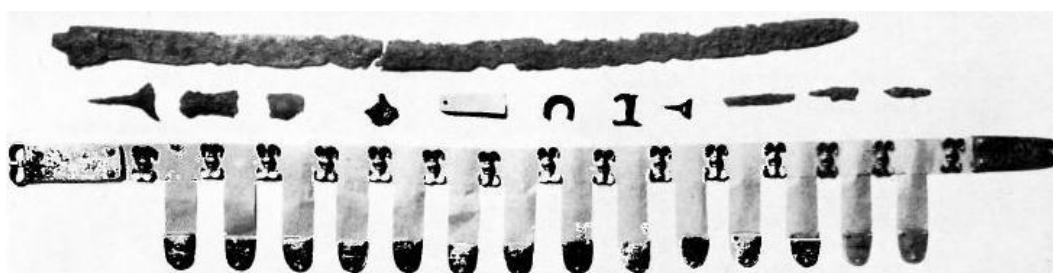


**Fig. 62.** Soldier from Žehra





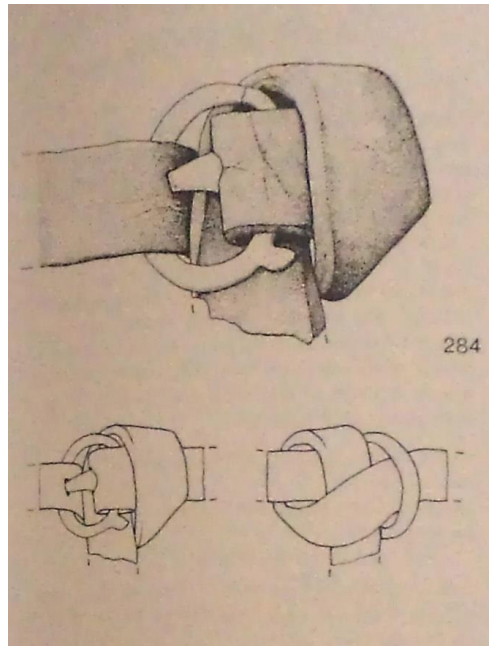
**Fig. 63.** Belt mounts from Felsőszentkirály



**Fig. 64.** Reconstruction of the belt from Felsőszentkirály



**Fig. 65.** Saint Ladislaus at Velemér

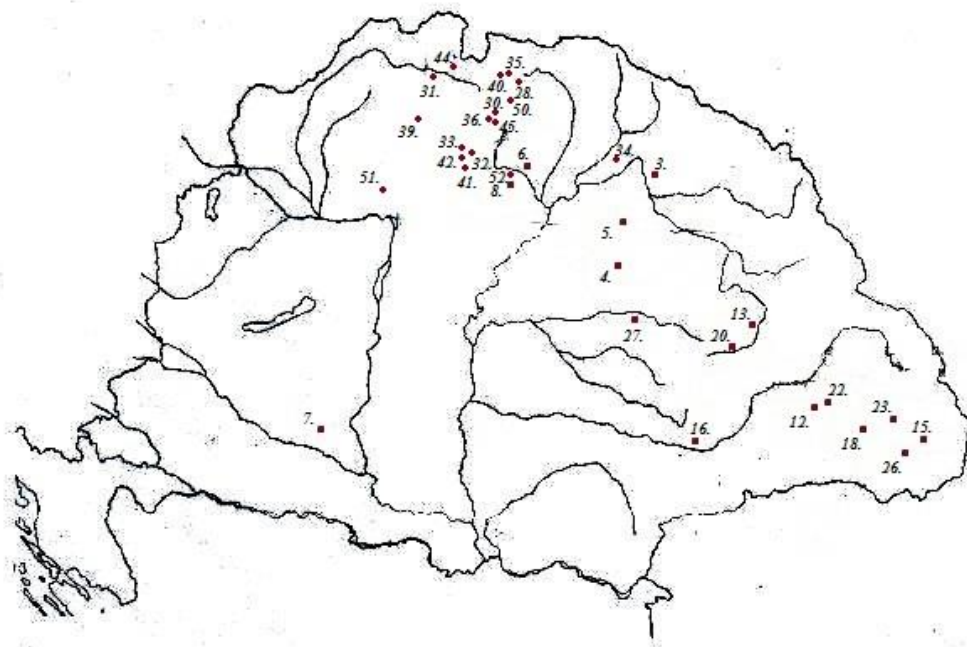


**Fig. 66.** Reconstructions of belt knots



**Fig. 67.** Miniature from the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle





**Fig. 68.** Map of frescos of the Sigismund period depicting belts



**Fig. 69.** Saint George from Alma



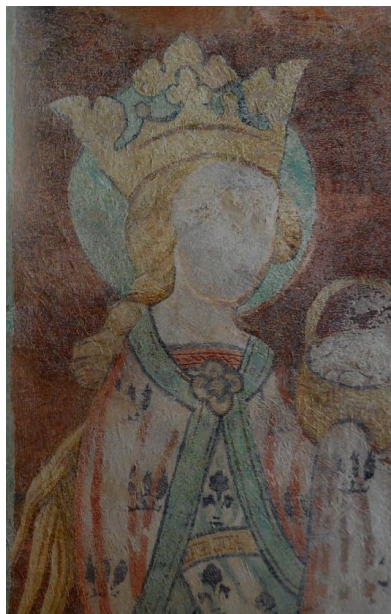
**Fig. 70.** Saint Ladislaus from Siklós



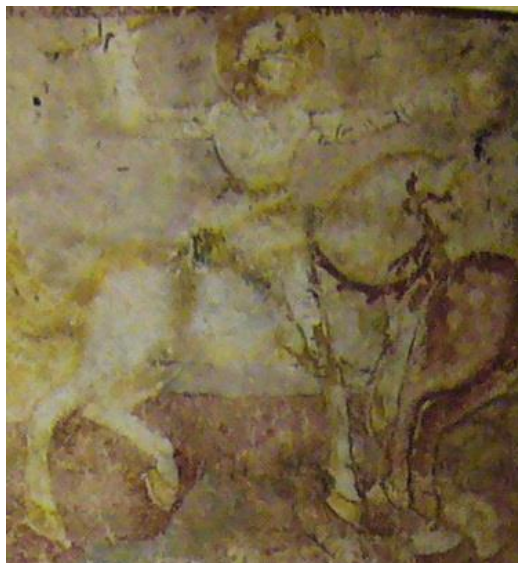
**Fig. 71.** Saint Ladislaus from Dârjiu



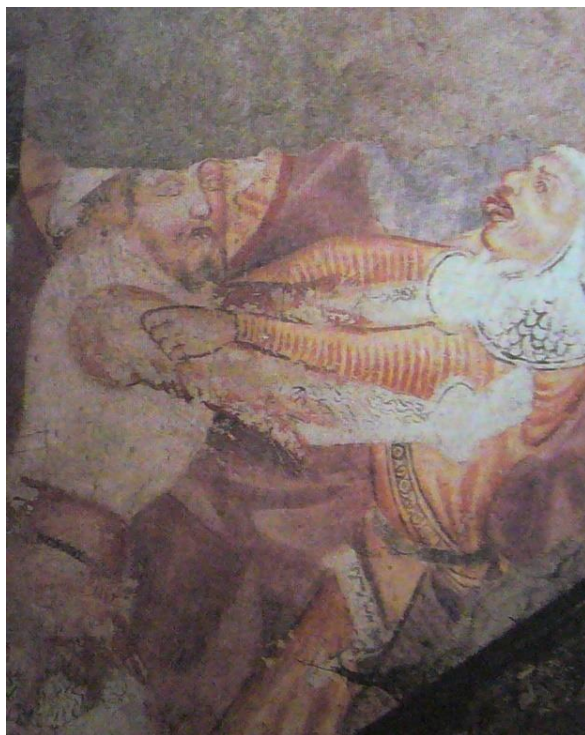
**Fig. 72.** Saint Ladislaus at Chilieni



**Fig. 73.** Saint Catherine at Nyíracsad



**Fig. 74.** Saint Ladislaus at Rákoš



**Fig. 75.** Wrestling scene at Bijacovce





**Fig. 76.** Soldier at Levoča



**Fig. 77.** Beheading scene at Levoča



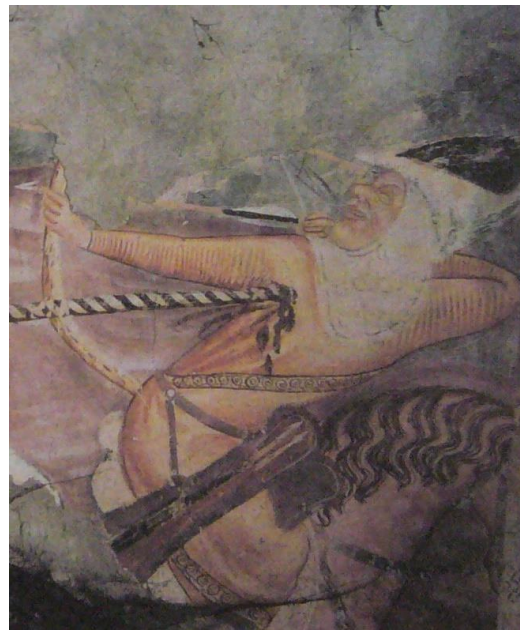
**Fig. 78.** Figure of a wanderer at Levoča



**Fig. 79.** Figure of a merciful man at Levoča



**Fig. 80.** Figure of a merciful man at Levoča

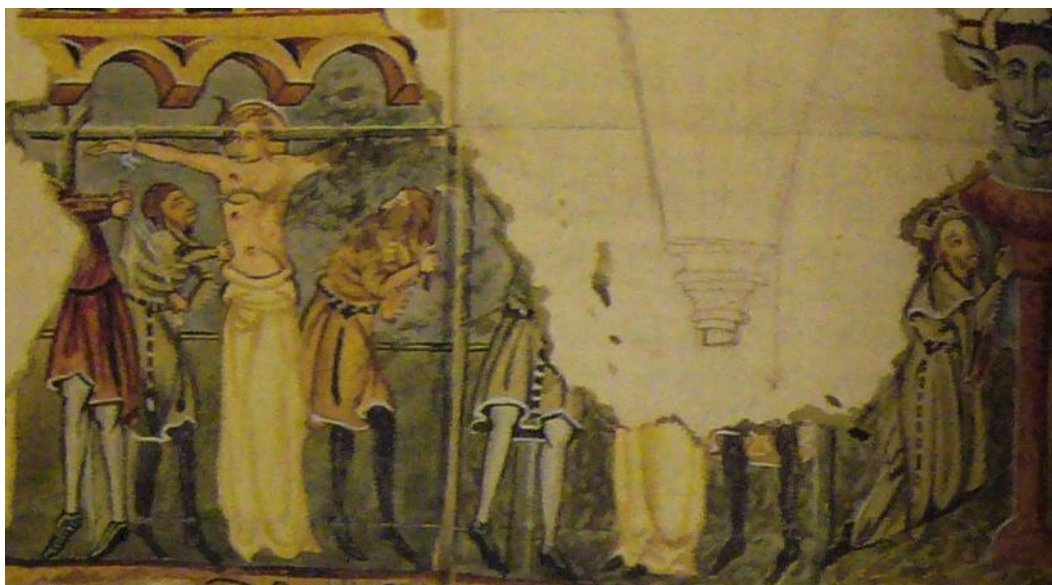


**Fig. 81.** Cuman warrior at Bijacovce



**Fig. 82.** Gluttony scene at Levoča





**Fig. 83.** The martyrdom of Saint Margaret at Mărtiniș



**Fig. 84.** Fragmented figure at Ragály



**Fig. 85.** Saint Catherine at Florești



**Fig. 86.** Wrestling scene at Karaskovo



**Fig. 87.** Figure of Synagoga at Poniky



**Fig. 88.** Figure of Synagoga at Žehra





**Fig. 89.** Sheltering-Cloak Madonna at Liptovské Sliače



**Fig. 90.** Sheltering-Cloak Madonna at Smrečany





**Fig. 91.** Holy Face at Štítník



**Fig. 92.** Flagellating soldiers at Kocel'ovce



**Fig. 93.** Crowning of thorns at Ochtiná



**Fig. 94.** Battle scene at Rimavská Baňa





**Fig. 95.** Saint George at Mălâncrav



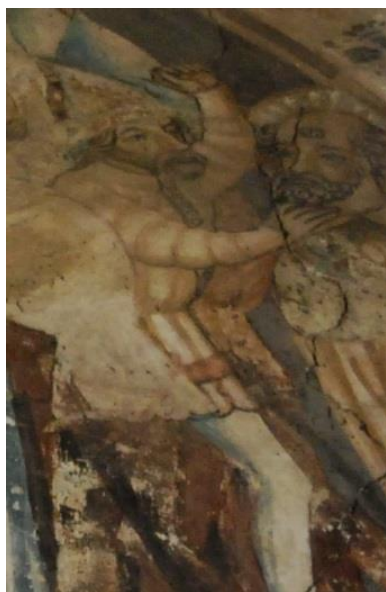
**Fig. 96.** Saint George at Szentsimon



**Fig. 97.** Saint Ladislaus at Siklós



**Fig. 98.** Royal saints at Tileagd



**Fig. 99.** Betrayal scene at Mălâncrav



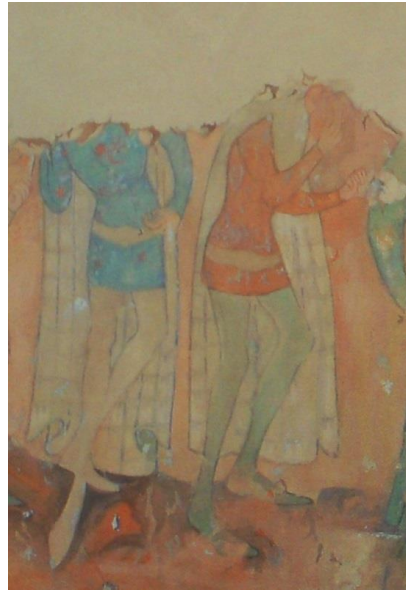
**Fig. 100.** Betrayal scene at Mălâncrav



**Fig. 101.** Beheading scene at Kraskovo



**Fig. 102.** Royal saints at Leles

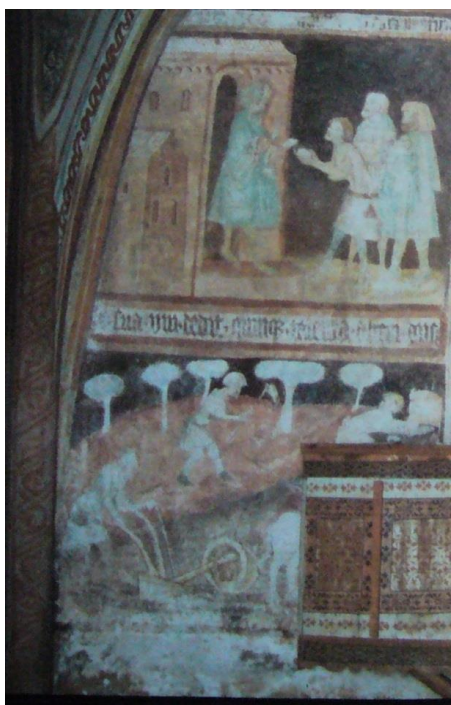


**Fig. 103.** Royal saints at Leles





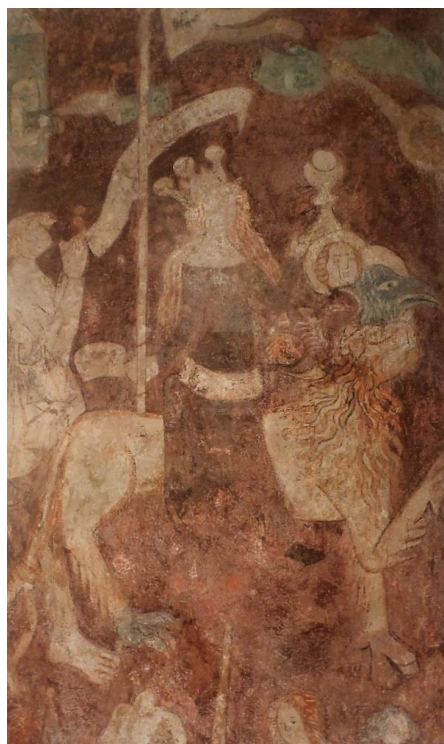
**Fig. 104.** Royal saints at Rákoš



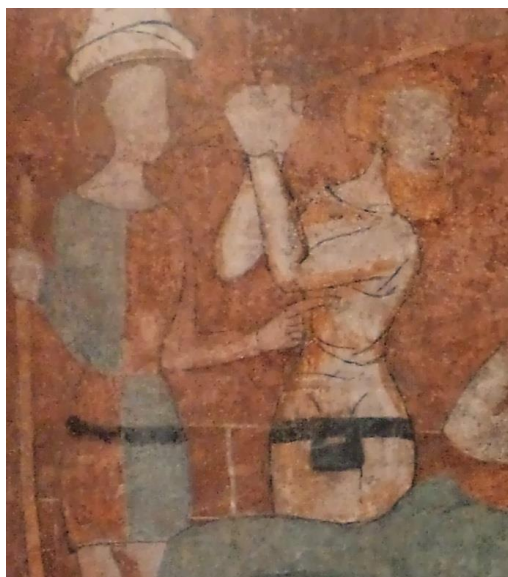
**Fig. 105.** Talent parable at Štítník



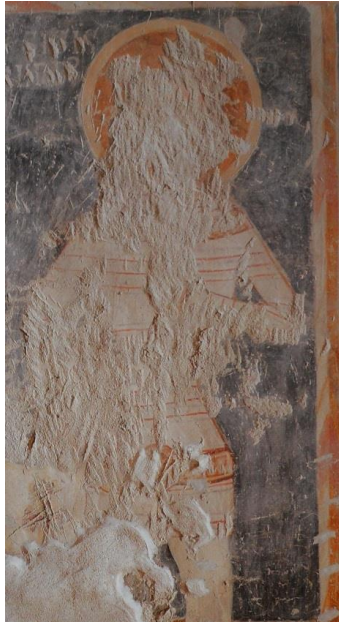
**Fig. 106.** Female saint at Žíp



**Fig. 107.** Figure of Ecclesia at Žehra



**Fig. 108.** Soldiers at Poprad



**Fig. 109.** Saint Sigismund at Bădești



**Fig. 110.** Saint Ladislau at Ragály



**Fig. 111.** Saint Ladislaus at Dărjiu



**Fig. 112.** Royal saint at Mălâncrav





**Fig. 113.** Royal saints at Chimindia



**Fig. 114.** Royal saint at Lónya



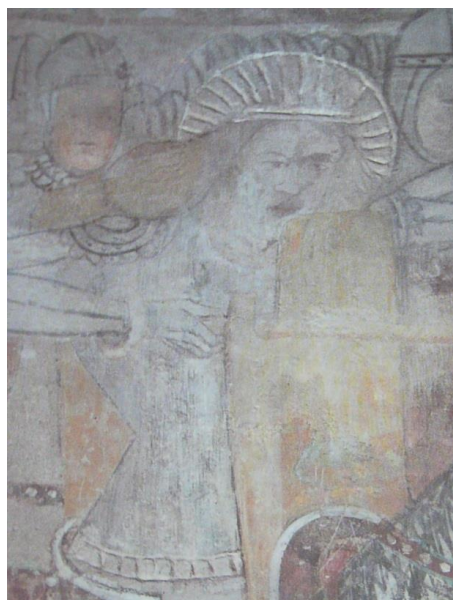
**Fig. 115.** The figure of Melchior at Kraskovo



**Fig. 116.** Saint George at Rimavská Baňa



**Fig. 117.** Wrestling scene at Rimavská Baňa



**Fig. 118.** Saint Ladislaus at Rimavská Baňa





**Fig. 119.** Figure of Balthazar at Kraskovo



**Fig. 120.** Servant figure at Želiezovce



**Fig. 121.** Scene from the Life of Saint Dorothy at Levoča



**Fig. 122.** Figure of the Roman emperor at Levoča



**Fig. 123.** Figure of the emperor at Levoča



**Fig. 124.** Wrath scene at Levoča



**Fig. 125.** Soldiers from the Passion cycle at Liptovské Sliače



**Fig. 126.**  
Soldiers from the  
Passion cycle at  
Liptovské Sliače



**Fig. 127.** Battle scene at Rimavská Baňa





**Fig. 128.** Scene from the Passion cycle at Liptovské Sliache



**Fig. 129.** Engagement scene from Štítnik



**Fig. 130.** Figure of Pilate at Levoča



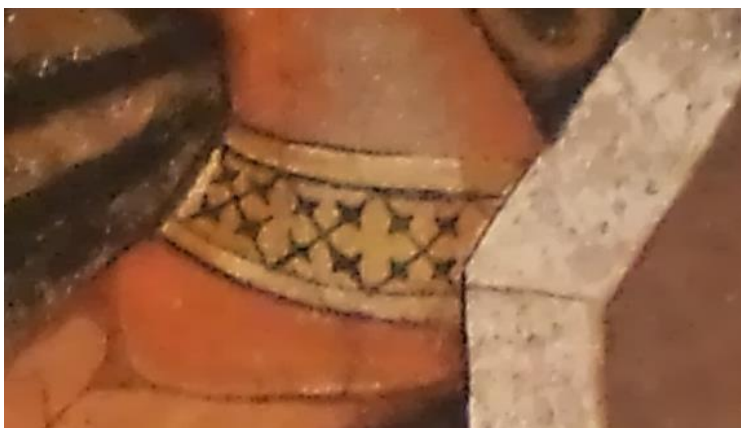
**Fig. 131.** Torturing soldier at Levoča



**Fig. 132.** Last Judgment scene at Sânpetru



**Fig. 133.** Figure of Dorus at Levoča



**Fig. 134.** Detail of the emperor's figure at Levoča

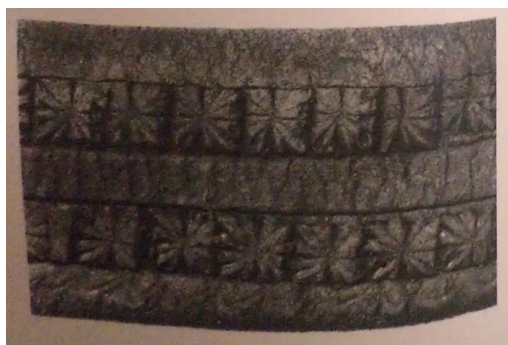


**Fig. 135.** Leather belt from London



**Fig. 136.** Detail from the Wrath scene at Levoča

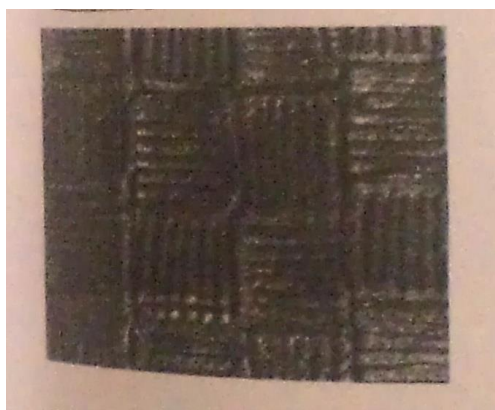




**Fig. 137.** Leather belt from London



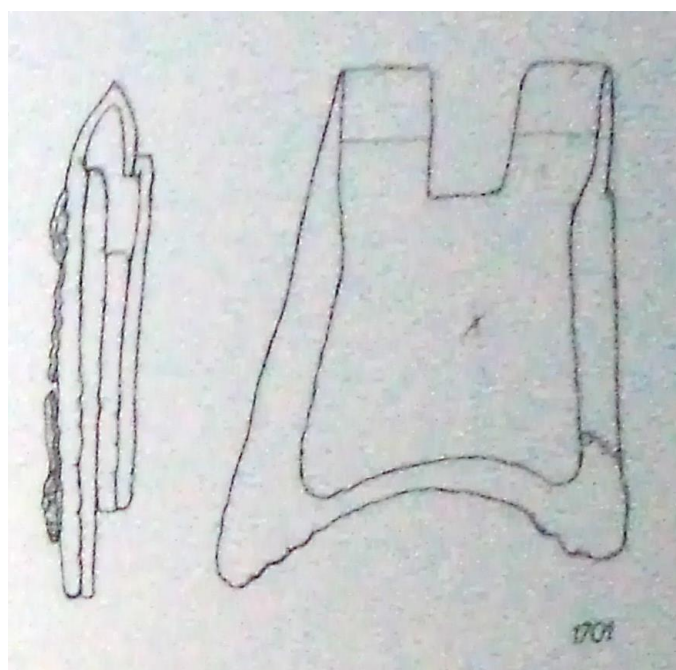
**Fig. 138.** Betrayal scene at Liptovské Sliače



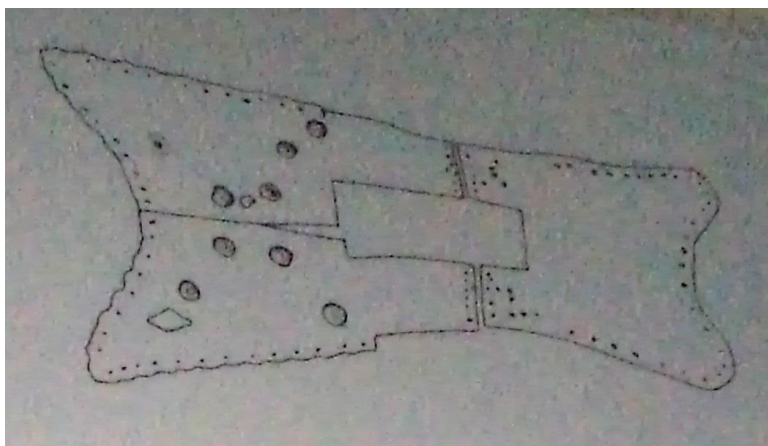
**Fig. 139.** Leather belt from London



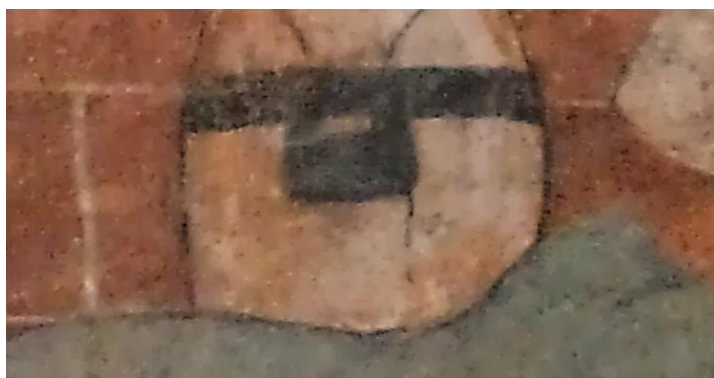
**Fig. 140.** Gluttony scene at Levoča



**Fig. 141.** Purse from London



**Fig. 142.** Reconstruction of a purse from London



**Fig. 143.** Detail of a soldier figure at Poprad



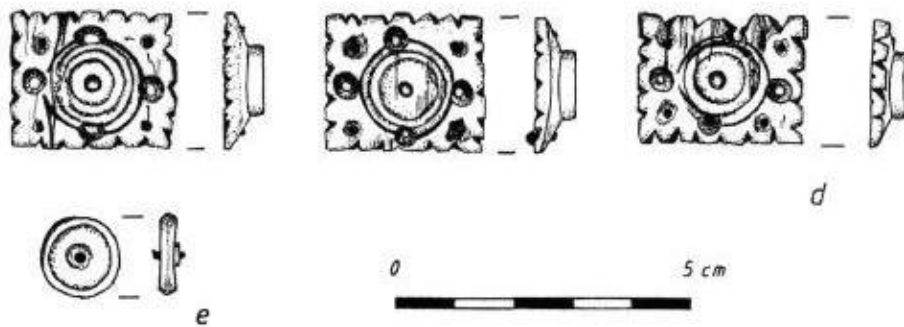
**Fig. 144.** Detail of a servant figure at Štítník



**Fig. 145.** Last Judgment scene at Sânpetru

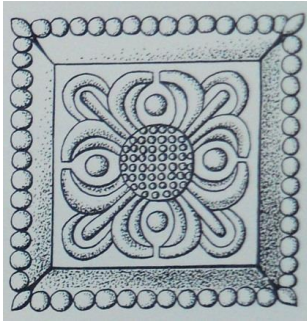


**Fig. 146.** Figure of Dorus at Levoča



**Fig. 147.** Bone-mounted belt from Örménykút





**Fig. 148.** Belt mount from Tiszaörvény



**Fig. 149.** Saint Ladislaus at Dârjiu



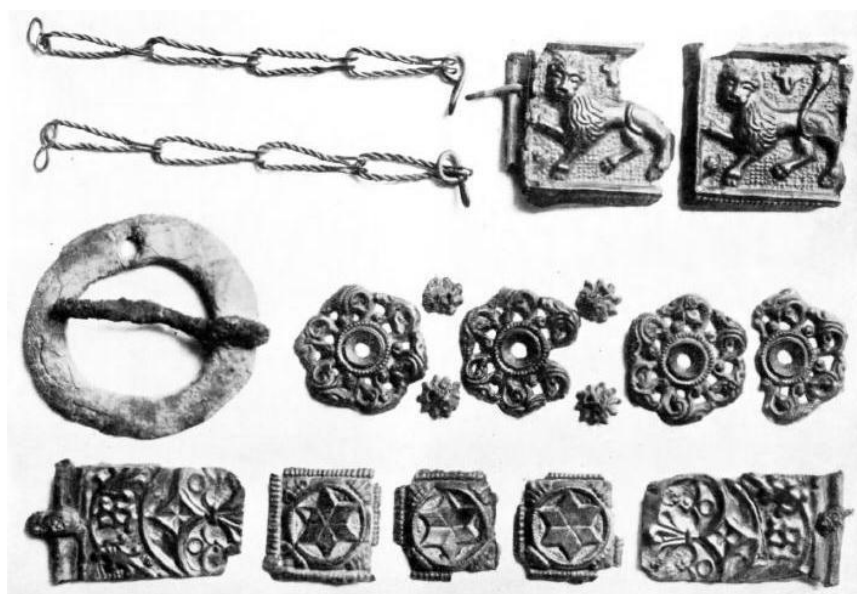
**Fig. 150.** Saint Ladislaus at Dârjiu



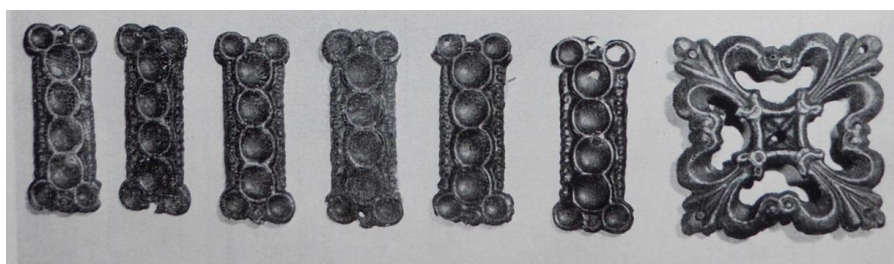
**Fig. 151.** Royal saint at Chimindia



**Fig. 152.** Belt mounts from Sály-Lator



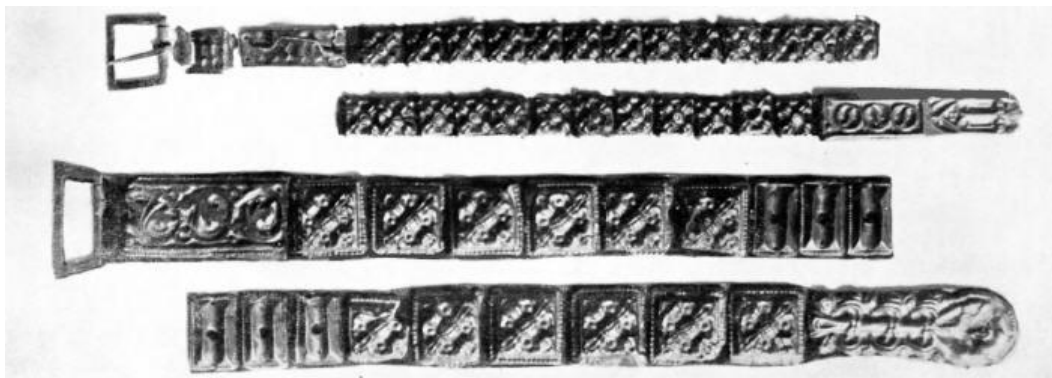
**Fig. 153.** Belt mounts from Bene



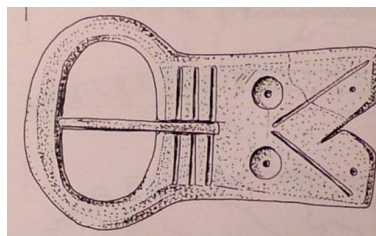
**Fig. 154.** Belt fittings from Csút



**Fig. 155.** Saint Ladislaus at Ragály



**Fig. 156.** Mounted belts from Bene



**Fig. 157.** Belt buckle from Nagytálya



**Fig. 158.** Royal saint at Lónya