Tea Hlača

# THE LIVING CROSS IMAGE IN LINDAR:

# CONTEXTS OF STYLE, ICONOGRAPHY, AND HISTORY

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Central European University

Budapest

June 2017

# THE LIVING CROSS IMAGE IN LINDAR:

## CONTEXTS OF STYLE, ICONOGRAPHY, AND HISTORY

by

Tea Hlača

(Croatia)

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 Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary

Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

_____
Chair, Examination Committee

_____
Thesis Supervisor

_____
Examiner

_____
Examiner

**THE LIVING CROSS IMAGE IN LINDAR:**

**CONTEXTS OF STYLE, ICONOGRAPHY, AND HISTORY**


by

Tea Hlača

(Croatia)


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 Comparative History, with a specialization in

Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.


Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.


_____

External Reader

**THE LIVING CROSS IMAGE IN LINDAR:**

**CONTEXTS OF STYLE, ICONOGRAPHY, AND HISTORY**

by

Tea Hlača

(Croatia)

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 Comparative History, with a specialization in

Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

_____
External Supervisor

Budapest
June 2017

I, the undersigned, **Tea Hlača**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary 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, 19 June 2017

_____
Signature

# Abstract

The year 1409 inscribed on one of the scrolls depicted within the Living Cross wall painting in the Chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar (Croatia) places it at the very beginning of the history of this peculiar late medieval allegory. This thesis is a comprehensive case study of the Lindar image within the medieval tradition of Istrian countryside wall painting as well as reassessment of its position in the light of the new chronological, geographical and iconographic framing of the origins and formative stages of the early Living Cross imagery. The main focus of this thesis will be a comparative iconographic analysis of the image in Lindar with the two Living Cross representations in Germany, wall painting in Bologna and the fairly recently discovered wall paintings in Koprzywnica, Poniky, and Žehra. Taking into account the lack of certain textual or visual sources that would unequivocally determine the location and iconographic source of the Living Cross imagery, the major contribution of this thesis will be the reevaluation of the Lindar image as a single known occurrence on the borderline territory between the North Italian and Central European artistic, cultural and political spheres.

# Acknowledgements

# Table of contents

# List of Illustrations

# Introduction

Croatian art historian Branko Fučić discovered the Living Cross image in the Gothic chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar during his ground breaking field work in the Istrian medieval churches over half a century ago. The year 1409, inscribed on one of the scrolls depicted within the image, places the Lindar Living Cross at the very beginning of the history of this peculiar late medieval allegory.

Since Robert L. Füglister first listed the Lindar fresco in the catalogue of his canonical work on the iconography of the Living Cross imagery, new Living Cross images in the chronological proximity to Lindar have been discovered.[1] These involved the one in the Cistercian abbey church of Koprzywnica in Poland (last quarter of the fourteenth century) and the two Living Cross images in Slovakian parish churches in Poniky (1415) and Žehra (c. 1420). Except for a short essay by Zdenko Balog, no scholarly work on the Living Cross in Lindar has been done in response to these fairly recent discoveries.[2] In order to reassess Lindar's position in the light of the new chronological, geographical, and iconographic framing of the origins and formative stages of the Living Cross imagery, the focus of this thesis will be a comparative analysis of the Lindar image with the group of the early Living Cross images in Koprzywnica, Poniky, Žehra and Bologna.

The scholarship on the relatively small number of the Living Cross images preserved in Europe is not extensive. The only comprehensive study on the subject to this date is Füglister's iconographic and iconological analysis that includes the catalogue with thirty listed examples of the image. Although his hypothesis on the historical origin and the geographic distribution of the Living Cross images is now dated, Füglister's analysis of the iconography

---

[1] Robert Louis Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz: Ikonographisch-ikonologische Untersuchung der Herkunft und Entwicklung einer spätmittelalterlichen Bildidee und ihrer Verwurzelung im Wort* (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1964).
[2] Zdenko Balog, "Živi križ u Lindaru: ikonografsko-ikonološka studija (The Living Cross at Lindar: an iconographic and iconological study)," *Peristil* 51, 1 (2008).

1

of the Living Cross image and his compendium of the potential textual patristic and medieval theological sources for the development of the iconography of the Living Cross still informs studies of the subject.

Rather than focusing on the textual sources, Achim Timmermann investigates the visual development of the iconography of the Living Cross theme, as well as its interrelation with the historical and cultural frameworks of the Western Schism (1378-1417), medieval antisemitism and anti-heretical activity of the Church. Timmermann's comparative overview of the recent discoveries of the Living Cross images is an important source of systematically collected scholarship on the early Living Cross images.[3]

Paolo and Maria Rosa Montiani Bensi's case study of the twinned Living Cross and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil wall paintings in St. Petronius in Bologna contains an insightful framing of the iconography of the images within the artistic, historical, and religious context of late medieval Bologna. Their comparative analysis of the Bologna Living Cross wall painting with the rest of the early occurrences of the image, as well as their updated classification of the development of the Living Cross iconography, is a step forward in the revaluation of Füglister's monograph on the subject and an extension of his all-inclusive catalogue with recent discoveries of the early Living Cross imagery.[4]

An analytical approach that considers the iconography of the Living Cross theme as a historic document of the Western Schism and the Hussite heresy was also adopted by Dušan Buran in his case studies of the early Living Cross representations in Central Europe, namely of the two Slovakian examples in Poniky and Žehra. His hypothesis about the potential Central

---

[3] Achim Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix: Some Observations on the Iconography of the Living Cross," *Gesta* 40, 2 (2001): 141–60; See also Achim Timmermann, "Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut," in *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, ed. Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 183–202; Achim Timmermann, "A View of the Eucharist on the Eve of the Reformation," in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel, vol. 46, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 365–98.
[4] Paolo Bensi and Maria Rosa Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente in ambito emiliano e ferrarese," *Musei ferraresi*, 13/14 (1984): 161–82.

European origin of the Living Cross images paves the way for their further revaluation.[5]

Barbara Dab-Kalinowska's iconographic analysis of the adjacent Last Judgement and the "twin

images" of the Living Cross and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Koprzywnica,

is another important contribution to the study of the richly textured Living Cross allegory that

provides a good example of the eschatological and judicial readings that complement its

emphatic Redemptive and Eucharistic doctrinal message.[6]

Except for an occasional listing, none of the scholars, after Füglister, considers the

Living Cross wall painting in Lindar in their comparative analysis of the early Living Cross

images. Apart for the language barrier, I assume that one of the reasons for such an omission

is the modest body of the Croatian scholarship on the subject. After Fučić discovered the image

in the Chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar, he published a short stylistic and iconographic analysis

of the wall painting and included Lindar in his monograph on the Istrian medieval wall

painting.[7] Another important source for the study of the Lindar image is Fučić's transcription

of the painted Glagolitic inscriptions and the graffiti on the painting, catalogued in his pivotal

study on the Glagolitic literacy and culture in Croatia.[8] After Fučić, the Living Cross image

was only sporadically mentioned as part of a general discourse on the medieval wall painting

in Istria, e.g. in Iva Perčić's inquiry into the Istrian medieval painting in the catalogue of the

same-titled exhibition.[9]

---

[5] Dušan Buran, "Veľká západná schizma, pápežská propaganda a umenie okolo roku 1400: k počiatkom ikonografie tzv. Živého kríža [The Great Western Schizm, papal propaganda and art around 1400: towards the beginning of the iconography of the so-called Living Cross]," *Umenie Slovenska-jeho historicke funkcie*, 1999, 53–59; Dušan Buran, *Studien zur Wandmalerei um 1400 in der Slowakei: die Pfarrkirche St. Jakob in Leutschau und die Pfarrkirche St. Franziskus Seraphicus in Poniky* (Weimar: VDG, 2002).

[6] Barbara Dab-Kalinowska, "XIV-Wieczne Malowidło Koprzywnickie: Misterium Biblijne I Kosmologiczne [The Fourteenth Century Wall Painting in Koprzywnica as a Bibical and Cosmologial Mystery]," *Artium Quaestiones*, no. 1 (1979): 55–79.

[7] Branko Fučić, "Živi Križ u Lindaru [The Living Cross in Lindar]," in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 264–72; Branko Fučić, *Istarske freske* [Istrian wall painting], Umjetnički spomenici Jugoslavije (Zagreb: Zora, 1963).

[8] Branko Fučić, *Glagoljski natpisi* [Glagolitic Inscriptions], Djela Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti /Opera Academiae scientiarum et artium slavorum meridionalium 57 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1982).

[9] Iva Perčić, *Srednjovjekovno zidno slikarstvo Istre: katalog izložbe* [Medieval wall painting in Istria: exhibition catalogue] (Rijeka: Jadranski institut JAZU Rijeka, 1955).

Indicative of Timmermann's and Buran's revival of the interest in the study of the Living Cross imagery, Balog's 2008 essay for the first time revaluates the Living Cross image in Lindar in the context of the new discoveries of the Living Cross wall paintings and the related scholarship. Although his study represents a valuable contribution towards a more extensive iconographic analysis of the image in Lindar, his suggestions on the peculiar inclusion of St Catherine or the angel and the devil pair in the Living Cross iconography in Lindar are inconclusive. Moreover, he implausibly disregards the complexity of the doctrinal and ideological implications of this late medieval allegory and makes an unconvincing attempt to discredit contemporary scholars' contextualisation of the Living Cross imagery within the rampant late medieval Christian-Jewish tensions.

The iconographic method of inquiry I adopt in this thesis is influenced by the theoreticians of the pictorial turn, namely Mieke Bal and W. J. T. Mitchell.[10] I believe that in addition to an understanding of the stylistic nature of a visual image, it is the critical reading of the meaning given to that image that best articulates the way image is perceived. For it is both through an aesthetic response and a rhetorical one that enables us to effectively understand that image, its cultural position and its social function. Accordingly, while in the first two chapters I conduct a comparative analysis of the Living Cross image in Lindar within the contexts of style and iconography, in the third chapter I analyse its pragmatic use and function regarding the agenda of the late medieval Church. Respectively, the thesis reflects on answers to the following three questions: How does the peculiar blend of the Romanesque and Gothic style of the Lindar Living Cross painting relate to the other late medieval Istrian countryside wall painting cycles? How does the iconography of the Lindar image fit within the variated iconography of the early Living Cross imagery? Lastly, if the early Living Cross imagery was

---

[10] Mieke Bal, *Reading Art?* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006); W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

indeed conceived as a piece of anti-schismatic, anti-heretical, and anti-Semitic propaganda distributed by the Church, how can that be related with the occurrence of the Living Cross image in a small Istrian diocese with no historical records of heresy or a Jewish community?

Specific positioning of a wall painting within the church—its iconographic topography—is indicative of the content of that painting, its function within the liturgy and the ways the painting communicates its meaning to the viewer. In chapter one, special attention is given to the carefully conceived structural, aesthetic and iconographic unity between wall and painting. Furthermore, in order to better understand the execution of the novel iconography of the Living Cross in Lindar, I focus particularly on the artistic context of the Pazin County countryside branch of the Istrian wall painting, forged in the geo-political and cultural borderland between the north Italian Venetian and Aquileian cultural circles on one side and Alpine cultural sphere on the other.

In chapter two I inquire into the problem of origin, alleged common source and elementary iconographic pattern of the early Living Cross imagery through a comparative analysis of the early Living Cross wall paintings in Lindar, Koprzywnica, Poniky, Žehra, and Bologna, as well as the Westphalian, Lower Rhenish and Venetian panels. By examining particular examples of the Living Cross images in Lindar and Koprzywnica I demonstrate how the straightforward Eucharistic iconography of the Living cross image is complemented by strong eschatological and judicial undertones. Finally, I consider the theological, cultural and instrumental reasons for the atypical inclusion of the figure of St. Catherine in the Living Cross image in Lindar.

The choice of a particular image from the large inventory of Christian iconography is not arbitrary but conditioned by the theological content and ideological implications that inform the meaning, or a spectrum of meanings, of that image. In order to better understand the function of the Living Cross image, in chapter three I continue the discourse on the turbulent

social and historical climate of late medieval Europe initiated in the second chapter by considering the late medieval antagonism against Jews as the background of the emergence of the Living Cross imagery. Special attention is accorded to the figure of the Pope pictured within the early Living Cross images, its relation to the Great Western Schism and both doctrinal and political reaction it meant to solicit. Since there are no records preserved on the specific commission of the chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar or its fresco cycle, I identify the potential interrelation between the historical evidence available in the historiography on the Bishoprics of Pićan and the execution of the Living Cross image in the parish church in Lindar.

# 1. The Gothic Chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar: Architecture and Wall Painting

"In medieval thought wall paintings "finalize" the architecture."[11]

## 1.1. Placing the Living Cross Image

Nearly one hundred medieval church interiors in Istria display traces or have preserved parts of the wall paintings that once covered their walls. The tradition, strongly integrated into the culture of medieval Istrian villages, lasted for at least eight centuries and was only abandoned at the time of the decisive cultural and historical changes ushered in with the Reformation. The enduring relationship between the painting and the wall it decorated was based on a carefully conceived structural, aesthetic and iconographic unity.

In an iconographic analysis of wall paintings such as the Living Cross image in the Chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar (1409), the place of the image within the architectural and spatial concepts of the building—its iconographic topography—is as important for understanding its meaning and the ways it communicates that meaning as is the content of the image itself. The choice of a particular image from the large inventory of Christian iconography and its specific positioning within the church was not arbitrary but conditioned by the theological implications and doctrinal content of that image. The basic iconographic concept of Istrian Romanesque and early Gothic wall painting analyzed in the following chapters is derived from both Western and Byzantine models. As a focal place of the Christian cult within the church building, the eastern wall was commonly dominated by the glorified Christ in *Deisis* or *Maiestas Domini* representations in the semi-dome of an apse with a row of apostles below

---

[11] *U srednjovjekovnoj misli zidne slikarije 'dovršavaju' arhitekturu*. Branko Fučić, "Slika i arhitektonski prostor u srednjovjekovnome slikarstvu Istre" [Image and architecture in medieval painting in Istria], in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 25.

and saints on the sidewalls enclosing a sanctuary. It created an eschatological and theological tension with the contrasting western wall, which forewarned worshippers of the Last Judgement, the transience of life, and infernal condemnation.  It was a hierarchal model of the world structured according to the doctrines of Christian cosmology and history, deeply rooted in a visual tradition reaching back to the ninth century. The visual projection of this cosmological model on the wall surface of a church flourished into a consistent synergy between the meaning of the Christian religious imagery and the conceptual and hierarchical importance ascribed to different church spaces. In what may be described as an organic unity, the image completed the architecture.[12]

The small Gothic Chapel of St. Catherine was once the parish church of Lindar, located right next to the entrance into the village (Fig. 1).[13] Although the Living Cross image is the only entirely preserved image in the chapel, after the recent discovery of the fresco fragments on its eastern wall, it is safe to say that it was once fully decorated with wall paintings.[14] Its elongated longitudinal ground plan reveals a single nave church type without an apse (Fig. 2).[15]

---

[12] For the holistic approach to medieval wall painting in Istria, see Sanja Grković, "Odnos slike i arhitekture u srednjovjekovnom graditeljstvu Istre" [The relationship between wall painting and architecture in medieval architecture in Istria] (MA thesis, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 1995); Fučić, "Slika i arhitektonski prostor"; Radovan Ivančević, "Gotička arhitektura Istre" [Gothic architecture in Istria] (Ph.D. dissertation, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 1965).

[13] Today's Chapel of St. Catherine served as the parish church until 1860. The first written records of the parish of Lindar date from 1379 when it was mentioned in the context of the Diocese of Pićan. For the history of the Dicese of Pićan, see Elvis Orbanić, *Katedra Svetog Nicefora: Povijesna skica Pićanske biskupije* [The Chair of St. Nicefor: Historical overview of the Diocese of Pićan] (Pazin: Josip Turčinović, 2002). For the history of Lindar see Miroslav Bertoša, "Povijesni fragmenti o Lindaru (od srednjega vijeka do početka XIX. st.)" [Historical records of Lindar (from the Middle Ages until the beginning of the nineteenth century)], *Historijski zbornik*, 49 (1996): 177–92. The following scholarship has relevant references to the history of Lindar in the fifteenth century, Danijela Doblanović, "Crtice o stanovništvu Lindara na kraju 16. i u prvoj polovici 17. stoljeća" [Notes on the inhabitants of Lindar at the end of the sixteenth century and in the first half of the seventeenth century], *Vjesnik istarskog arhiva* 20 (2013): 23–38; Dražen Vlahov, *Matica krštenih župe Lindar (1591. – 1667.): Glagoljski zapisi od 1591. do 1648.* [Birth records of the Parish of Lindar (1591-1667): Glagolitic records from 1591 to 1648], Glagoljski rukopisi 10 (Pazin: Državni arhiv u Pazinu, 2012).

[14] The fragments of the wall painting on the eastern wall of the Chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar were discovered during the restoration work in 2005. I would like to thank Željko Bistrović from the Conservation Department in Rijeka for providing me with the unpublished documentation of this restoration.

[15] There was a strong tradition in medieval church architecture in Istria to build single nave churches with an inscribed apse or with the apse left out altogether. Studies on the typology of early medieval and Romanesque church architecture in Istria revealed that they were the most prevalent type. Furthermore, the Gothic period in Istrian architecture was ushered in the last quarter of the fourteenth century with a groin vaulted inscribed apse (St. Catherine in Svetvinčenat), the groin vault then extends to the nave accentuating even more the unity of church

Its ribbed vault encompasses two bays that separate the chapel into two functionally distinct spaces: the sanctuary and the nave. The small belfry overlays the facade with the protruding enclosed entrance porch (*lopica*) serving as additional space for the congregation and protection from the weather. The three entrances of the porch and the church portal culminate in pointed arches. Although embracing Gothic architectural morphology and decorative elements that finally began to penetrate the Istrian peninsula at the last quarter of the fourteenth century, the unarticulated mass of the wall continues to dominate the enclosed cubical form of the church building. In times when new construction principles of Gothic architecture disintegrated church walls into fanciful glass work and elaborate ornamentation, the Chapel of St. Catherine remained conceptually closer to the Romanesque Chapel of St. Martin (c. fourteenth century) in the cemetery outside the village than it was to the Western European architectural trends that inspired its building (Fig. 3).[16] In fact, it was the wall painting that reached its peak in the fifteenth century in Istria.

The chapel's interior is somewhat more articulated due to the ribbed vaulting, of which protruding vault ribs descend into the six consoles embedded half-way down the walls (Fig. 4). A small rose window above the altar, a narrow window with a pointed arch on the sanctuary's southern wall and a similar smaller one at the cusp of the western wall are the single apertures

---

space (St. Anthony in Žminj). The tendency to incorporate the apse into the nave also generates its complete absence as is the case in the Chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar. The apse "reappears" again in the second half of the fifteenth century, only now strongly differentiated from the nave (St. Nicholas in Pazin, St. George in Lovran). On medieval architecture in Istria see Ante Šonje, *Crkvena arhitektura zapadne Istre: područje Porečke biskupije od IV. do XVI. Stoljeća* [Church architecture of western Istria: The territory of the Bishoprics of Poreč from the fourth to the sixteenth century], Analecta Croatica Christiana, Biblioteka Centra za koncilska istraživanja, dokumentaciju i informacije Kršćanska sadašnjost 13 (Zagreb; Pazin: Kršćanska sadašnjost; IKD 'Juraj Dobrila', 1982); Branko Marušić, "Istarska grupa spomenika sakralne arhitekture s upisanom apsidom" [Group of churches with inscribed apses within Istrian architectural heritage], *Histria Archaeologica* 5 (1974): 7–97; Ivančević, "Gotička arhitektura Istre" [Gothic architecture in Istria]; Andrija Mohorovičić, "Problem tipološke klasifikacije objekata srednjovjekovne arhitekture na području Istre i Kvarnera" [The problem of typological classification of medieval architecture in Istria and Kvarner], *Ljetopis JAZU*, 63 (1955): 486–537.

[16] Ivančević argues that the reason why the Gothic period did not leave a notable mark on Istrian architecture was because of the existence of well-preserved Late Antique and Byzantine basilicas in the Istrian west coast bishoprics of Pula, Poreč, Novigrad, and Kopar. On the other hand, the congregation of the small inland Bishopric of Pićan had neither the need nor the means to afford opulent Gothic designs. See Ivančević, "Gotička arhitektura Istre," 25.

(Fig. 5). Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages in Istria the communication of the church interior with its exterior was reduced to a narrow window or two, and an entrance door. The Living Cross image animates the dark, naval part of the chapel's north wall which, according to Fučić, was always purposefully left without an opening due to the gusts of the harsh northern wind (*bura*).[17] As stated above, wall paintings complemented the architecture and with their loss, as is the case with the rest of the fresco cycle in Lindar, we are deprived of the full experience of the interior. For they not only conceptually and functionally articulated the church space, but aesthetically enriched the dim interiors with radiant colour.[18]

As an integral part of the wall surface, medieval wall paintings adapted to its constructive and spatial vectors. Starting from the late fourteenth century, the new Gothic system of vaulting forged a new relationship between wall and painting in Istria. The previously uninterrupted wall surface framed by the horizontal lines of the floor and the wooden ceiling enabled successive, "comic book" like sequences of square scenes. In Lindar, at least in the upper register, that was no longer possible.

Fully adapted to the architectural construction and its dimensions, the Living Cross fresco rests on the horizontal spatial axis drawn between the consoles that converge towards the eastern wall. But more than that, it emphasises the division between the supporting wall and the Gothic ribbed vault. The new dominant axis is the vertical one which stretches upwards towards the keystone. This decisive change of spatial concept was most probably reflected in the now lost wall painting cycle of the chapel, since the keystone became the second starting point of the iconographic program in Gothic churches or even an exclusive one.[19]

Framed within the triangular perimeter of the two projecting ribs, a roughly symmetrical composition of the Living Cross fits the space perfectly. Fučić compared this

---

[17] Fučić, "Slika i arhitektonski prostor," 21.

[18] Most Istrian medieval churches had subsequent window openings from the seventeenth century onwards. As a result, church interiors are better lit but wall paintings (usually on western walls) are lost.

[19] Fučić, "Slika i arhitektonski prostor," 25.

triangular perimeter with the symmetry of the portal tympanum that preferred the equally axial composition of its sculpted decoration.[20] The single surviving example of the sculpted Living Cross theme from the tympanum at the Church of St. Martin in Landshut (1432) illustrates the point (Fig. 6).[21]

The meticulous design of the Istrian wall painting borders reveals the awareness of the important binding role they play in the integration of an image into architecture. The triangle borders of the Living Cross image visually preserve the integrity of the wall surface by carefully following the architectural axes. The decorative pattern of a spirally rolled ribbon underlines the dynamic verticality of the protruding rib, following it from the console up to the pointy convergence peak. The subdued rhythm of the geometric pattern of a zigzag horizontal ribbon, on the other hand, bears an elegant reference to the thick Romanesque borders.

The border dividing the image of the upper register and the lost image of the lower one is drawn between the two consoles and it is likely to have continued throughout the chapel, thus regulating the layout of the chapel's fresco cycle. This "horizon line," to use the words of Radovan Ivančević, indicated the superiority of the higher register identifying it, maybe not quite with the heavenly register of the vault, yet placing it decisively above the terrestrial plain of the lower register.[22] It was the place of intersection between the heavenly sphere above and the earth below, the same cosmological hierarchy that is replicated in the Living Cross image itself.

---

[20] Ibid., 24.

[21] On the Living Cross in Landshut, see Timmermann, "Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut," 183–202; Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 29–31.

[22] Radovan Ivančević, "Uvod u ikonologiju" [Introduction to iconology], in *Leksikon ikonografije, liturgike i simbolike zapadnog kršćanstva* [Lexicon of the iconography, liturgy, and symbolism of Western Christianity], ed. Anđelko Badurina, 2nd ed. (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990), 35.

## 1.2. The Istrian "Countryside Romanesque" Group

It took time for the Gothic painting style to penetrate the small peninsula on the southeastern fringes of the main cultural and artistic circles of the Western Europe. Tradition was strongly embedded into the social and cultural fibre of a provincial community reluctant to change the customs intrinsic to the perception of self-identity and the old ways of life. While the major artistic currents in neighbouring Italy and Central Europe were steadily moving towards the new stage in the development of visual arts, Istrian masters were deliberately morphing their Romanesque idiom into a local blend of International Gothic style and North Italian *Trecento*. So much so that Gothic wall painting in inland Istria peaked only towards the end of the fifteenth century when local workshops of Vincent from Kastav, Ivan from Kastav or Albert from Constance were flooded with commissions for chapels and churches of the numerous fraternities and village communes. It was the swan song of a sustained medieval practice soon to be made redundant by the Reformation and its decisive changes in aesthetics and the function of church spaces.

The socio-cultural backgrounds that fostered Italian and continental Gothic art were considerably different from those in the north Adriatic province of Istria. Their influence was embraced only to the extent of the local masters' artisanal capability and their particular cultural frames of reference. Thus, positioned at the junction between Romanesque tradition and Gothic novelty, the style and iconography of the late medieval Istrian wall-painting was also forged from its geo-political and cultural borderland standing between the north Italian Venetian and Aquileian cultural circles on one side and Alpine cultural sphere on the other.

A conservative streak of medieval Istria and its wall-painting, which Fučić and subsequent scholarship tagged with a rather clumsy designation, "retarded," is particularly evident in the lingering traditionalism of village churches located deep within the peninsula's inland territory, around the fortress and settlement of Pazin (*castrum Pisinum*) and eventually

Pazin County.[23] It is primarily against the cultural and artistic context of this countryside branch of Istrian wall painting that we must read the Living Cross image in Lindar.

Based on the geographical proximity and style affiliation, Fučić dubbed the earliest occurrence of wall painting in inland Istria as the "countryside Romanesque" group.[24] With a fragmentary state of preservation and the conspicuous simplicity of their rustic idiom, the group presents a considerable problem of dating, with a possible time span of the first occurrence of a local workshop from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth centuries. In his undisputed argument—based on the same style of painting, fresco technique, and mainly iconography of the preserved fragments in the churches of St. Peter in Trviž and SS. Cosmas and Damian in Boljun—Fučić proposed the appearance of such workshop at the turn of the thirteenth century.[25]

Their wall painting was firmly grounded in the Istrian Ottonian pictorial tradition fostered by the local Benedictine cultural circle.[26] In comparison with the preserved fragments

---

[23] Pazin County (ger. Grafschaft Mitterburg, ital. Contea di Pisino) was founded in 1158 when Count Meinhard of Schwarzenburg (Cernigrad), vassal of the marquis of Istria and of the Holy Roman emperor, advocate of the Bishoprics of Poreč, acquired for himself the title of the count of Istria (*comes de Istria*). After his daughter Matilda, married to Count Engelbert III of Gorizia, inherited the title of the countess of Istria in 1183, Pazin County was joined to the House of Gorizia, Aquileian advocates in Istria. Subsequently, after the death of Count Albert IV of Gorizia in 1374 it was transferred in accordance with the succession treaty (1364) to the House of Habsburg. The Habsburg pledged the County first to the Devinski family (1379) and then to the Walsee family (1391) until 1435 when Pazin County reverted to direct Habsburg control exercised through the territorial administration in Carinthia. On the medieval history of Pazin County, see Camillo de Franceschi, *Storia documentata della Contea di Pisino* (Venezia: Societa' Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria, 1964). See also Miroslav Bertoša, "Povijesni fragmenti o Lindaru (od srednjega vijeka do početka XIX. st.)" [Historical records of Lindar (from the Middle Ages until the beginning of the nineteenth century], *Historijski zbornik* 49 (1996): 177–92; Matjaž Bizjak, "Habsburške deželnoknežje posesti v notranjosti Istre v luči obračunov iz leta 1439 [Habsburg possessions in inner Istria in light of audits from 1439]," *Histria* 4 (2014): 13–27.

[24] Branko Fučić, "Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja" [Istrian countryside Romanesque wall painting], in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 91–135.

[25] For analysis of the wall painting and church architecture in Trviž and Boljun, see Branko Fučić, "Sveti Petar u Trvižu" [St. Peter in Trviž], in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 306–17; Fučić, "Sveti Kuzma i Damjan u Boljunu" [SS. Cosmas and Damian in Boljun], 290–300.

[26] On the Istrian pre-Romanesque and Romanesque wall painting, see Nikolina Maraković, "Zidno slikarstvo u Istri od 11. do 13. stoljeća: revalorizacija lokalne umjetničke baštine" [Medieval wall painting in Istria from the eleventh until the thirteenth century: Revalorisation of the local cultural heritage]" (Ph.D. dissertation, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 2009). See also Nikolina Maraković, "The Mural Paintings in St. Fosca's near Peroj (Istria) and Their Specific Place in the Context of European Romanesque," *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 14 (2008): 141–57.

of painting from the former Benedictine abbey Church of St. Michael near Kloštar (Lim Channel), those in the churches in Trviž and Boljun reveal the same reduced, red dominated colour palette contrasted with bold black contouring that renders the morphological characteristics of the painted figure in geometric shapes.[27] Their masters painted as if unaware of both the harsh angular linearity of the Alpine Romanesque and the contemporaneous, Byzantine-influenced colour modelling of the volumes and damp-fold drapery style in north Italian painting (Fig. 7).[28]

The same pictorial conventions and painting technique lingered for another century, when approximately at the turn of the fourteenth century they considerably informed the style of the wall paintings in the churches of St. Eliseus in Draguć and St. Mary Magdalen in Bazgalji. It is only the master in Draguć who executed the volumes of his figures with a slightly softened contouring and rounder draperies, which resulted in a more distinguished substance of the body beneath. It is towards the end of the thirteenth century when the north Italian Romanesque painting inclination towards Byzantine pictorial convention finally made its modest appearance in the wall painting of the Istrian inland.[29]

---

[27] Fučić included two more church localities within the "countryside Romanesque" group: the Church of St. Anthony in Roč and St. Mary of Snow in Maružini, a village in Dvigrad municipality in south Istrian inland at the very border with the Pazin County. New fragments of wall painting discovered in the latter during the restoration and conservation works in 2004-8 confirmed the same "countryside Romanesque" framework of their formation. Together with the fragment of *sedes sapientiae* in Trviž, they present the earliest examples of medieval painting in inland Istria. According to Bistrović, the painting technique in Maružine particularly resembles that of the at least three centuries older Carolingian wall painting in the Church of St. Sophia in Dvigrad. The same was also encountered in two other churches, the Church of All Saints in Gradinje and SS. Primus and Felician in Čirkoti (Završje), the latter revealed in the restoration work in 2008. Based on their style and technique Bistrović dated them to the time of the wall painting in Trviž, which closely affiliates them with the "countryside Romanesque" group since both localities bordered Pazin County. For the analysis of the wall painting and architecture of the Church of St. Mary of Snow in Maružini see Željko Bistrović, "Nove spoznaje o crkvi Sv. Marije 'od Sniga' u Maružinima" [New insights on the Church of St. Mary 'of Snow' in Maružine], *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske*, 31–32 (2011): 193–206; Branko Fučić, "Sveta Marija od Sniga u Marožinima" [St. Mary of Snow in Maružini], in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 301–5.

[28] Fučić, "Sveti Kuzma i Damjan u Boljunu," 299.

[29] A strong Byzantine influence pervaded the northern Adriatic Venetian and Aquileian cultural circles in the twelfth century. The best example of Byzantine influence on the Istrian style of painting is the wall paintings in the church of St. Jerome in Hum. They were an isolated, foreign import most probably commissioned by the Aquileian patriarch who was in possession of the castle and settlement of Hum. Only at the turn of the fourteenth century were the Romanesque linear morphology and two-dimensional layout discretely ebbed away with the hints of realism of the damp-fold drapery style and color modelling of the volumes, e.g. wall painting cycle in the

The considerable preservation of the wall painting cycle in Draguć allowed Fučić a full reconstruction of what stands as a shared iconographic scheme for the whole group.[30] Conceived according to the Western iconographic norm, the focal point of their iconographic program was the *Deisis* image painted in the semi-dome of the apse, framed with the Annunciation scene on the triumphal arch (Fig. 8). The cycle continued with scenes from Christ's life across the two registers of the southern wall (the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi (Fig. 9), the Flight to Egypt), and the Passion of Christ on the northern wall (the Last Supper, the Kiss of Judas, the Flagellation, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, The Three Marys at the Tomb). Individual saints with local cult status were depicted in the eastern corners of the sidewalls. The design of the iconographic scheme of the western wall showed more freedom of choice. In Bazgalji, the single preserved fragment of the image of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stood in strong antithesis with the imagery on the eastern wall—the two end points of the Christian history of humanity were represented by the Original sin on one side and the final judgement passed by Christ as the ultimate consequence of the fall of man on the other. In Draguć three seated figures, one on the right and two on the left side of the entrance door, overlaid the ominous lower register with human figures simmering in Hell's cauldron supervised by two devils (Fig. 10).[31]

Although his painting style belonged to the Istrian countryside Romanesque group, the Draguć master painted with a new Gothic sensibility in mind. Iconographic solutions of the dramatized Adoration of the Magi or the Crucifixion with the agonized Christ depicted just before the moment of his demise, further overstepped his stylistic interrelation with the earlier

---

abbey church in Svetvinčenat. On Romanesque medieval painting in Istria, see Maraković "Zidno slikarstvo u Istri od 11. do 13. stoljeća"; Željko Bistrović, "Predromaničko i romaničko slikarstvo u Istri" [Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque painting in Istria], *Annales: Series Historia et Sociologia* 19 (2009): 21–30; Branko Fučić, *Istarske freske*; Iva Perčić, *Srednjovjekovno zidno slikarstvo Istre*; France Stele, *Umetnost v Primorju* [Art in Slovenian Primorska], Pogledi, 2/3 (Ljubljana: Akademska založba, 1940).

[30] Fučić, "Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja."

[31] Fučić interpreted the three seated figures as the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in what would be an extended representation of the Bosom of Abraham i.e. heaven. See ibid., 110–11.

wall painting in Maružini and Trviž. The Crucifixion in Draguć draws from the late thirteenth-century Italian appropriation of the Western Gothic iconographic model of crucified Christ with his feet crossed and nailed by a single nail above the *suppedaneum,* while maintaining the morphology of the Byzantine S-curve of his body (Fig. 11).[32] This amalgam of Byzantine and Western iconographic models of the Crucifixion first appeared at the turn of the fourteenth century in Italy, with the largest number of preserved examples coming from the northern Adriatic region where the two cultural spheres strongly collided.[33]

Besides the fundamental conservatism of the province, the Istrian countryside exposed here a side that is rarely put forward in the analysis of its medieval wall painting, its openness to the contemporary cultural currents and integration in the wider north Adriatic surroundings. If at times overwhelmingly slow in introducing changes to their style, its masters and commissioners seemed to be much more open to the iconographic novelties. Maybe the most daring example being the Living Cross image that emerged in Lindar a century after the time of the wall painting in Draguć, and yet, curiously enough, extensively referenced to the pictorial and iconographic tradition set by the countryside Romanesque group.

## 1.3. The Istrian "Countryside Gothic" Group: Butoniga and Lindar

The correspondence of style detected by Fučić between the Living Cross painting in Lindar and the wall painting cycle in the small thirteenth-century graveyard Church of the Holy

---

[32] Fragments of the Crucifixion scenes in Boljun and Bazgalji point to the same iconographic model. However, due to their partial state of preservation any such proposition should be made with some reservation.

[33] Fučić analysed a phenomenon of what he called the "hybrid features" in the iconography of the Istrian medieval wall painting in his case study of a selected group of the late medieval images. Furthermore, he contextualised the early appearance of the "hybrid" type of Crucifixion in Istrian painting within the contemporary occurrences of the type in Venezia and Aquileia: the baptistery of St. Mark's in Venice, the Triptych of St. Clare in the Museo civico Sartorio in Trieste, and the wall painting in the Aquileian Basilica, see Fučić, "Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja," 107. See also Branko Fučić, "Hibridno i folklorno u ikonografiji" [The hybrid and folklore features in iconography], in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 82–90.

Cross in Butoniga, a village just north of Lindar, was firmly confirmed with the newly discovered painted fragment on the eastern wall of the chapel in Lindar (Figs. 12 and 13).[34] At the cusp of the Gothic style that was about to flourish in the Istrian countryside in the fifteenth century, a strong Romanesque tradition was resilient in both Butoniga and Lindar wall painting cycles, which I dub the "Gothic countryside" group, just as the "Romanesque countryside" was strongly grounded in the Istrian Ottonian pictorial tradition.[35]

One feature of the pictorial technique plainly contributes to the association between the wall paintings in Butoniga and Lindar.[36] The mechanically stencilled floral pattern applied on St. Catherine's dress in the Living Cross image and on the dress of a female figure from a fragment on the eastern wall in Lindar is recognisable on the two painted fabrics in Butoniga: Christ's robe in the *Maiestas Domini* image in the apse and the cloth hanged as a piece of scenery in the Annunciation scene on the triumphal arch, as well as on the blue skies of the semi-dome outside the Maiestas Domini mandorla (Figs. 14 and 15). Furthermore, the red spiralling plant tendrils that overlay the ochre strip of the ground in the Living Cross image fill the green field behind Christ in the *Maiestas Domini* mandorla.[37]

In a typical manner of the countryside group, the masters in Butoniga and Lindar readjusted the morphology of their Romanesque manner with Gothic decorative elements,

---

[34] See note 6.

[35] In his article Bistrović made a statement that Fučić dated the wall painting in the Church of the Holy Cross in Butoniga to the thirteenth century. I would like to correct this statement, for, although Fučić estimated that the time of the building of the church was in the thirteenth century, he clearly dated its wall painting at the end of the fourteenth century. My correction of Bistrović's proposition is based on Fučić's analysis of the style and iconography of the wall painting cycle in Butoniga, namely, in his article on the subject and his book on Istrian wall painting. For Bistrović's statement see Željko Bistrović, "Gotičko zidno slikarstvo u Istri (novi prilozi jednoj budućoj sintezi)" [Gothic wall painting in Istria (new contributions to a future synthesis)], *Annales: Series Historia et Sociologia*, 2 (2007): 279; For Fučić's dating see Fučić, *Istarske freske*, 19; Branko Fučić, "Butoniga," in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 236, 238, 241.

[36] For a detailed analysis of the wall painting and architecture of the Church of the Holy Cross in Butoniga see Fučić, "Butoniga."

[37] Bistrović pointed at some of these correspondences in Bistrović, "Gotičko zidno slikarstvo u Istri," 279.

without giving much attention to different approach to pictorial space, figure or drapery style of the new pictorial canon.

Under the monumental *Maiestas Domini* in the apse of the church in Butoniga, a row of apostles was depicted in a two-dimensional setting of a colonnade with decorative Gothic arches (Figs. 16 and 17). Draperies of their robes still cling to the bodies evoking the lingering countryside Romanesque tradition of the linear damp-fold style. However, although displayed in a monotonous horizontal stretch in harmony with the Romanesque layout of the church's architecture, figures of the apostles show a restrained tendency to gesticulate with their hands and move their heads towards a three quarter profile angle in an interactive act with their neighbours. Their scarcely coloured heads, as those on the fragments of the wall painting from Lindar, have drawn in schematically rendered facial features that are not devoid of rudimentary emotive quality that the master would imagine accompanied such interactions.

The Adoration of the Magi image permitted a more dramatic expression of life, as was soon evident from the lively extended narratives painted in the full blown Istrian "countryside Gothic" style in the churches of St. Mary in Gologorica and St. Michael in the centre of the diocese Pićan.[38] The suggestion of an elementary pictorial space in the Butoniga painting, still heavily identified with the flat wall surface it was painted on, reveals Mary with child Christ seated on a throne surmounted by a Gothic architectural canopy (Fig. 18). Her red gown is fastened just below the chest with tight, lavishly buttoned sleeves uncovered under the opening of richly decorated cloak with green lining, similar to the one worn by Ct. Catherine in the Living Cross image. The stenciled pattern on Mary's cloak closely resembles the aforementioned one applied on the clothing of several figures in Lindar and Butoniga. One king kneels offering a gift to the playful child, while the other two point to the shooting star in what seems an enthusiastic conversation. Fučić postulates that this conspicuous flare for

---

[38] Fučić, *Istarske freske*, 19–20.

18

dramatization of life and choreographed gesture, ushered into the Istrian countryside's large scale painting with the Gothic period, drew from medieval stage productions and I will further discuss the possibility of that interrelation in the following chapter.[39]

Though not in technical capability but in his effort to create soft contouring, this Istrian rural master absorbed the refinement of Gothic court art and turned it to the best of his abilities into a simplified visual language of his rural province. Although far from the naturalistic type of the figure painting and drapery of the international Gothic style, elegant clothing and hairdos as well as a certain refrainment of body gestures of the painted figures demonstrate that masters of the Istrian province had an open mind for curious novelties blowing in from the dynamic cultural centres of the continent. Whether from his direct visual experience or copying from another visual source, the Butoniga master painted his Magi according to the fourteenth-century French fashion in tight shirts with wide round neck lines and strings of buttons, snug trunks and pointy shoes. Even the row of apostles and Christ in the apse who wear their distinguished antique robes, or the figures on the eastern wall in Lindar, succumbed to the new trends—if not in clothes, then in the modern shape of their beards.[40]

The spatial layout of the two buildings are of two different architectural concepts: the church in Butoniga is a thirteenth-century single nave Romanesque building with a semi-circular apse while the one in Lindar is a single nave type church with rectangular ending and walls articulated with Gothic ribbed vaulting. Such fundamental differences between the architectural disposition of the two churches brought about differences in their iconographic

---

[39] Fucic first identified the appearance of this new iconographic convention in the late medieval Istrian wall painting in the Adoration of the Magi depiction in Draguć (Fig. 9.). From there, it is traceable how the representation of the theme evolved from a somewhat reserved child with simultaneous gesture of blessing and a animated reach towards the gift offered by a half upright king, to the Butoniga Adoration with the child playfully grabbing the gift from the kneeling Magi. See Fučić, "Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja," 98; Fučić, "Butoniga," 240.

[40] With a detailed description of the garments depicted in the Adoration of the Magi image in Butoniga, Fučić also lists several sources that in the course of the fourteenth century documented the spread of Paris fashion trends towards Central Europe. Among the visual sources that first documented the occurrence of the new fashion style are a relief of the Madonna with the child (1401) in Kopar Museum, and a miniature of the Old Testament king in the Draguć Breviary (1407). See Fučić, "Butoniga," 241.

schemes. Nevertheless, in default of other substantially preserved wall painting in Lindar, or any other similar contemporary example of the Gothic architecture with large scale painting in Istria, a closer look at the iconography of the better preserved wall painting cycle in Butoniga is valuable for iconographic contextualisation and thus a better understanding of the Lindar Living Cross image.

Following the basic principle of the Romanesque iconographic layout, the *Maiestas Domini* pictured in the semi-dome of the apse represented a focal point of the iconographic program in Butoniga, with a row of twelve apostles arranged within the arcade depicted underneath (Fig. 16). The scene of the Annunciation on the triumphal arch inaugurated Christ's incarnation and redemptive mission as narrated in the scenes from Christ's life and Passion that run in two superimposed registers along the two sidewalls. The story unfolds uninterruptedly along the upper register of the church walls, starting from the southern wall with fragments of the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi and the Finding in the Temple. It then continues on the western wall with the Massacre of the Innocents and a possible, now lost, scene of the Flight to Egypt. The upper register of the northern wall continues with the Baptism of Jesus, the Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, and the Agony in the Garden. This layout, as opposed to the earlier countryside Romanesque examples like the one in Draguć which had the Life and Passion of Christ separated on the two sidewalls, demanded placing the end of the Passion narrative on the lower register of the southern wall. Accordingly, the Passion continues in the lower east corner of the southern wall with the Kiss of Judas, Christ before Pontius Pilate, Christ carrying the Cross, the Crucifixion and the Deposition. The sequence consludes in the lower register of the western wall with the Resurrection of Jesus and the Harrowing of Hell, just before his ascension to heaven and eternal glory in the *Maiestas Domini* on the opposite wall. The personification of death, usually reserved for the eschatological didactics of the western wall, was pushed to the lower register of the northern wall due to the iconographic layout. An image

20

of Death the Reaper is then followed by the local cult saints: St. Helena of the True Cross, associated with the patron of the church, St. George and the Dragon, and St. Anthony.[41]

The rectangular ending to the sanctuary of the St. Catherine chapel in Lindar led to an entirely different iconographic layout than the one in Butoniga (Figs. 12 and 13). Preserved fragments from the chapel's eastern wall suggest a similar layout of the pictorial composition arranged within the triangular field of the Gothic arch as the one seen in the Living Cross image. Its imagery was symmetrically aligned to the left and to the right from the vertical axis that peaked in the cusp of the gothic arch, as well as in the two superimposed registers differentiated with a horizontal line drawn halfway the height of the arch. The two lines intersected just beneath the rose window, yet another novelty which made it impossible to place a scene like *Maiestas Domini* in its upper half. On the contrary, the rose window was surrounded by what appears to be two decorative squares each filled with a different colour repeated on a smaller scale in its round frame with now undiscernible red, ochre and green design (perhaps painted marble). To the left and right were another two fields with orthogonal border at the adjoining side, while the solution to their ending on the side of the oblique vaulting rib is not preserved. Only the fragment on the left gives a vague hint about the possible iconographic content. In its corner there is a part of what seems to be a dress of a female figure turned away from the rose window (Virgin Mary or St. Catherine ?), which would just about fit with one more potential figure in that depicted field. She is dressed in a fancy white tunic covered with stencilled floral pattern which, as mentioned above, matches the one on St. Catherine's dress in the Living Cross image, as well as a second red tunic worn over the white one. Three heads are preserved from the image directly below. One head with red hair set

---

[41] The earliest personification of death in Istrian wall painting known to me is the skeleton on the western wall of the Church of St. Anthony in Žminj painted in 1381. Another early personification of Death the Reaper in Istria appeared at the beginning of the fifteenth century in the Glagolitic Beram missal, illluminated by Bartol Krbavac, next to the text of Dies irae. See ibid., 240.

against a dark halo leans towards the other of which only part of a halo with an embedded cross is preserved, pointing, therefore, to the Kiss of Judas scene with Judas approaching Christ from the left. Next to him is a dark haired head of a saint with yellow halo, which in this case would represent St. Peter. The other Kiss of Judas images in the countryside Romanesque and Gothic groups, Čirkoti (Fig. 19), Draguć, Bazgalj, Boljun, and Butoniga, which had a reduced Kiss of Judas scene encompassing the kiss and the subsequent arrest of Christ. In contrast, the scene in Lindar was extended with the incorporated third successive event of the Kiss of Judas episode, the row between St. Peter and Malchus.

Though not quite clear from the fragment, a vertical border in line with the main vertical axis separating the Kiss of Judas and a subsequent image is plausible. St. Peter and a soldier—placed just on the right of the axis holding a spear in one hand and pointing towards the opposite direction from St. Peter—are both turned away from each other, suggesting a succession of images.[42] A horizontal strip of a thin twisted ribbon interrupted only with the protruding heads of Jesus and Judas in the first scene and a soldier's helmet in the second, continues otherwise to flow undisturbed below the bold horizontal border between the two superimposed registers, underlining the unity of the closely related scenes at the dramatic peak of the Passion narrative. Indeed, a shape to the right of the soldier's head is discernible enough to reveal a shape of a bird—a cock just about to make his first morning crow after Peter, as predicted by Christ during the Last Supper, denied knowing his teacher for the third time. If that is the case, the first scene probably represents the complete incident of Judas' treachery merged in a single scene: a rare iconographic variety in Istrian medieval painting preserved only in the iconography of the late

---

[42] In accordance with the Western iconography of the Kiss of Judas image, the Istrian wall painting discussed above had Christ surrounded with soldiers in the contemporary Western military gear. Wall painting cycles in Čirkoti, Bazgalji and Draguć have fully preserved Kiss of Judas images which enables detailed historical analysis of the military gear analogous to the one depicted in Lindar. See Dolores Čikić, "Judin poljubac: analiza i datacija vojne opreme" [The Kiss of Judas: An analysis and dating of military gear], in *"Az grišni diak Branko pridivkom Fučić"*: *Međunarodni znanstveni skup o životu i djelu akademika Branka Fučića (1920. – 1999.)* ["I, the errant pupil Branko, surnamed Fučić": International symposium on the life and work of academician Branko Fučić (1920-1999)], ed. Tomislav Galović (Malinska: Općina Malinska-Dubašnica, 2009), 323-36; Fučić, "Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja," 100–2.

22

fifteenth-century wall painting cycles like the one in St. Mary in Škrlinah in Beram. This episode, together with the immediate follow-up of the Denial of Peter scene, is an altogether unique representation of the Passion narrative in medieval wall painting in Istria.

The two scenes did not extend all the way to the ribbed edge. The dimensions and disposition of the painted figures suggest that the scenes were of the same size, with the missing second part of both images extending as far as a small niche for liturgical props on the side of the scene with the soldier allowed. The two remaining fields just next to the ribs of the vault are too narrow for additional representations from the Passion narrative and were depicted either as a decorative framework, or filled with figures of the local cult of saints, as was the case in the above discussed sanctuary in Draguć.

Since the disposition of the architecture at the eastern wall of the chapel was the same with the wall articulation of the rest of the interior, apart from the window opening of the rosette and two more windows on southern and western wall, a question presents itself at this point whether the remaining four arched fields were divided into two registers like the one on the eastern wall or they represented one single large scene like the Living Cross. In the case of the former, the Passion narrative that would have otherwise "jumped over" from the northern to the southern wall (as was the case in Butoniga) in Lindar could had simply continued from the northern to the eastern wall. Likewise, whether the scene with the soldier bringing Christ before Pontius Pilate, Christ carrying the Cross, or the Crucifixion as the final repercussion of Christ's arrest in the Kiss of Judas scene, the sequence is likely to have continued on the southern wall with the Passion or the Deposition and Resurrection scenes.

In the earlier Gothic Church of St. Anthony in nearby Žminj (1381), single scenes were depicted only on the four sidewall recesses, in what was a complete adjustment of the wall painting to the new spatial dynamics and somewhat disintegrated wall mass (Fig. 20). [43]

---

[43] See note 7.

Similarly, a sole Living Cross image in the western bay of the northern wall in Lindar filled the arched wall section, which could also point that more singular scenes occupied some of the remaining arched fields. According to the iconographic programs discussed above, what might have followed in the adjacent eastern bay was the Last Supper or Agony in the Garden scene, just before the Kiss of Judas image on the eastern wall. Furthermore, a continuous decorative strip below the images in Žminj could also mean a decorative, grounding strip below the "horizon line" drawn between the consoles in Lindar, with figural wall painting spreading from the arched sections of the wall upwards across the Gothic vaulting, in complete accordance with the Gothic vertical drive.

## 1.4. The Living Cross Image in Lindar: Pictorial Analysis

The master of the Living Cross wall painting in Lindar conveyed his figures against an abstract background (Fig. 21). The three horizontal strips concisely indicated its elemental scenography consisting of the earth, sky and heaven, completely lacking in realistic spatial construction, setting or depth. The terrestrial sphere of the lower strip was filled with an ochre colour and stencilled with red spiralling plant tendrils indicating the earth's lush vegetation. A strip of dark grey sky separated it from the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem hovering over on a bed of clouds.[44] According to Fučić, the resemblance of the heavenly walls to a flat piece of scenery with a tasselled curtain beneath points toward analogies between the Living Cross image and medieval theatre stage settings that sometimes consisted of two floors with actors in religious plays concurrently performing scenes both in heaven and on earth.[45] Although this might be a far-fetched argument, preserved medieval theatre plays do suggest that pictorial and

---

[44] The colour of grey was used in wall painting as a primer for the finishing coat of blue, however, ultramarine pigment was expensive which was the reason why the skies in Istrian medieval painting often remained leaden grey.

[45] Branko Fučić, "Živi križ u Lindaru [The Living Cross in Lindar]," in *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007), 264.

dramatic arts shared iconography and arrangement of Heaven, Hell, and Middle Earth representations.[46] Indeed, as if they were actors in a play, the emphasis of the Living Cross image is placed on the figures depicted performing a religious drama standing on the very edge of their Christian universe stage setting.

The standard symmetrical disposition of a Living Cross image is somewhat "adjusted" in Lindar. Due to the insertion of the figure of St. Catherine to the right of Ecclesia, the cross itself is dislodged from the central axis and pushed towards the left side of the triangular pictorial field. This forces the hand that grows from the top of the cross's vertical stem to bend towards the gates of Heaven remaining within the central alignment. Likewise, the rather imposing dimension of the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem as well as the fortress of Hell diverge from their modest renderings in all the other early Living Cross imagery discussed in the following chapter. The heavenly structure compressed the height of the cross, which resulted in a Living Cross image wider than it is tall with Hell pushed from its original place underneath the cross next to the figure of Synagogue. By doing so, the Lindar master conformed exactly to the proportions of the wider than taller pictorial field at his disposition. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, wall painting completed the architecture, and rather than replicating the perfect symmetry and proportion of a hypothetical Living Cross source image on the pages of a pattern book or a manuscript, the master skilfully transferred the image from his source media to the designated wall surface.

This analysis of the principles of the pictorial composition of the Living Cross representation in Lindar might bring us closer to understanding the motive behind the unique inclusion of the figure of St. Catherine in the image. Since the wide disposition of the triangular field offered enough adjacent space to the Living Cross image, it might have persuaded the

---

[46] Pamela Sheingorn, "'Who Can Open the Doors of His Face?': The Iconography of Hell Mouth," in *The Iconography of Hell*, ed. Clifford Davidson and Thomas H. Seiler, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 17 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1992), 3.

master and his commissioner to push the Living Cross slightly towards the left in order to include the patron saint of the village and thus make its doctrinal message even more effectively communicated to the congregation. This seems to me a more plausible explanation than the one provided by Zdenko Balog who suggested that the unusual western location for the representation of a patron saint, commonly pictured in the more appropriate place of a sanctuary, may indicate that St. Catherine became the patron saint of the Lindar parish only later.[47]

When modelling had long taken the place of drawing technique in European Gothic art, only a countryside master from a province such as Istria still based his style on line drawing. With swift strikes on a thin layer of wet plaster *(a la prima)* the master schematically outlined heads with generic physiognomies and barely indicated strands of hair. Body contours and simple garments, apart from St. Catherine's dress and Christ's perizoma, completely lacked folding, with the finished effect of plain areas filled with monochrome red and ochre circumscribed by linear patterns. Rudimentary traces of modelling technique appear only in the lightly tinted folds of St. Catherine's tunic and Christ's perizoma, as well as Synagogue's facial features, specifically the nose. Another suggestion of a modelling attempt is discernible in the white highlights applied to the front of the devil's and Christ's bodies.

Although the colour red dominated the reduced colour palette, which brings to mind the aforementioned countryside painting traditions stemming from the pre-Romanesque period, the Gothic period in Istrian painting ushered in a distinctly brighter colour scheme. The complexion of oval faces and hands was now extremely pallid pink or almost completely without colour. The colour of clothing and scenery ranged from bright pink to a transparent white, with occasional hints of the golden yellow of the aureoles and the hovering angel's dress, or the green feathers of his wings and the matching lining of St. Catharine's tunic.

---

[47] Zdenko Balog, "Živi križ u Lindaru," 135.

Fučić interpreted the Lindar master's softer contouring and the tinted, broad V-shaped folds of Christ's perizoma and St. Catherine's dress, as being influenced by a different pattern source. This would suggest that Lindar master consulted two or three different sources for his painting of the Living Cross, one for the Living Cross and the other two for St. Catharine and the Crucifixion.[48] This argument appears valid for the figure of St. Catharine, for she was most certainly not part of the hypothetical blueprint for the Living Cross.

What is puzzling is the different execution of the crucified Christ and the reason behind the master's effort to seek inspiration elsewhere (Fig. 22). It was clearly a Gothic type of the crucifixion image with dead Christ depicted with his eyes closed, head tipped to the right and lifeless body heavily hanging from the cross, supported only by suppedaneum over which his crossed feet were nailed with a single nail. Although expressive in its manner of the meticulously rendered anatomy of the nude, weary body, there is no sign of the Gothic mannerism or the oozing blood typical for the late medieval depictions of the Crucifixion. The Lindar master's Christ is curiously calm.

The Lindar master, furthermore, made a peculiar direct reference to a Crucifixion from the earlier Romanesque period by marking the volume of Christ's cheekbones with red dots in lieu of the tinted shading he used on the perizoma and on Synagogue's nose. The type of the Crucifixion seen in the countryside Romanesque wall painting, a stylistic and iconographic formative context for the Lindar master working a century later, is likely to have served as such reference. The Living Cross image and Crucifixion on the northern wall of the church in Draguć shared the same flat background divided into horizontal strips filled with contrasting ochre, grey and pink strips that gave a simple illusion of depth to the flat disposition of the image and accentuated the figures (Fig. 11). The horizontal zigzag border running beneath with interchanging lighter and darker coloured squares was used to create another simple illusionary

---

[48] Fučić, "Živi križ u Lindaru," 271.

27

effect. A moderate version of the Byzantine-Western Crucifixion "hybrid" in Draguć was replaced by the subdued Gothic Crucifixion type in the Living Cross image in Lindar. It represented an already dead, dignified Christ without the gory bleeding of his wounds. Instead of Mother Mary pleading for the salvation of human kind to the right of the Crucifixion, now Ecclesia was the token of the promise of redemption in the Living Cross. And as St. John the Apostle firmly held his gospel and preached the doctrine of the New Law on the opposite side of the cross, so did the demise of Synagogue mean the end of the old one.

The symmetry of the scene was followed through and through with the two angels holding a cloth towards Christ in a Byzantine gesture of adoration in Draguć, while in the Living Cross an angel and a devil, as argued in the following chapter, pointed even further beyond the aftermath of Christ's death. Since the Living Cross only inherently remained connected with the historical moment of the crucifixion, the naturalistic execution of Christ's death was not essential; on the contrary, the master in Lindar seemed to think he should seek his inspiration in the older representations of the crucified Christ that would infuse his illustration with strong supernatural and symbolic air.

# 2. Lindar and the Early Living Cross Imagery: Iconography

The general scheme of late medieval and Renaissance visual allegory of the Living Cross (*crux brachialis*) transforms the cruciform *arma* of Christ's torture into an agent of four distinct actions.[49] These four direct consequences of Christ's death are literally "handled" by four hands extended from the arms of the crucifix. The hands on the left of the cross's horizontal antenna and at the bottom of the vertical *patibulum* thrust a sword into Synagogue's head and wield a hammer in the direction of Hell or Limbo, respectively. The benevolent hand on Christ's right makes a gesture of blessing toward the Church (Ecclesia), and the one emerging from the top places a key in the gate of Heavenly Jerusalem.

Ecclesia, the representative of the New Law, is crowned and haloed as the Bride of Christ. She rides on the backs of the four evangelists, synthesized in four symbolic animals of the tetramorph. The host and/or blood oozing from Christ's side wound, the two species of the Eucharistic sacrament, fall into the chalice she holds next to his torso.

The highly polemical image follows left-right and above-below visual antitheses; the episodes revolve in a clockwise direction, delineating doctrines of the transition from the Old to the New Testament, from the Fall of Man to Salvation, thematically and pictorially unified by the axes of the Crucifix. The Living Cross image, however, takes the founding narrative of Christian faith one step further. It bestows the agency of Salvation and Judgement on the cross that, accordingly, appropriates both the benevolent nature and the judicial ferocity of its divine burden. The two hands of the anthropomorphic cross assume its original punitive purpose. The *crux brachialis* strikes back, morphing the gruesome image of Christ's ultimate sacrifice into

---

[49] On the iconography of the Living Cross, see Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 141–60; Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente in ambito emiliano e ferrarese," 161–82; Fučić, "Živi križ u Lindaru"; Dab-Kalinowska, "XIV-wieczne malowidło koprzywnickie," 55–79; Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz*.

a triumph of violence over the enemies of the Christian Church and in the name of a new religious doctrine inaugurated at Calvary.

## 2.1. The Problem of Date, Origin and a Common Source

Based on the iconography and the location of the early representations of the Living Cross imagery available at the time of his study, Robert L. Füglister made a distinction between southern and northern groups. The southern group encompassed the Living Cross wall paintings in Lindar (Fig. 21) and in the Basilica of St. Petronius in Bologna painted by Giovanni da Modena (1409-1456) in 1420-21 (Fig. 23). The northern group entailed the Westphalian diptych (ca. 1410) (Fig. 24) and the Lower Rhenish panel (ca. 1395-1420) (Fig. 25). Common typology of the Living Cross imagery of Füglister's southern type is characterised by the personifications of Ecclesia and Synagogue mounted on a tetramorph and an ass (or goat) respectively, and the hands of the cross represented as growing out of the arms of the cross just enough to be able to perform their deeds. The imagery of the northern group, on the other hand, is characterised by a versatile iconography of the contrasting couple but is never accompanied with a mount. Arms attached to their crosses assume only symbolic gestures, without ever engaging in action with the adjacent scenery or characters, except, perhaps, the arm at the bottom of the cross that intimidates a skeleton with a bat. [50]

New examples of the Living Cross imagery were discovered only in the last two decades of the last century in the Church of St. Francis Seraphim in Poniky (1415) (Figs. 26 and 27), the Church of the Holy Ghost in Žehra (1420s) (Fig. 28), and possibly the earliest preserved example of the Living Cross wall paintings in the Cistercian abbey church in Koprzywnica (ca. last quarter of the fourteenth century) (Figs. 29 and 30).[51] All these new

---

[50] Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 119–27.
[51] Another Living Cross image from the first half of the fifteenth century was discovered in the parish church of Tujce in Poland (ca. 1425-50). Since the image was not discussed in the scholarship I have consulted in the making of this thesis and due to the later date of its execution than the early Living Cross imagery in the focus of my

examples of the Living Cross imagery are wall paintings depicted at the early stages of the two-century-long history of the image. According to their iconography, they can all be classified within the "southern" group, which renders Füglister's geographical grouping of the imagery obsolete.[52]

In the light of these new discoveries, different conjectures about the origin and evolution of the early Living Cross imagery emerged. As evident from the high number of preserved images of the Living Cross concentrated today in central European and north Italian territories, the image found its wider acceptance only in these areas, and it is there that the search for its elusive common iconographic source is now focused (Fig. 35).

Dušan Buran accurately notes that the higher quality of a work of art coming from an artistic centre can be misleading if it is immediately associated with a fully developed iconographic scheme, while, following the same line of reasoning, a more modest artistic achievement coming from a provincial master is mistakenly associated with an underdeveloped iconographic design.[53] It seems that Füglister did exactly this, implying that the Living Cross images in Lindar and those from his northern group must have predated the one in Bologna and cannot be placed in the same context, based on the pictorial execution of the former, the iconographic variability of the latter and the provincial provenance of both.[54]

Accepting the approximate dating of the Living Cross in Koprzywnica, which is based exclusively on the analysis of its style, it is justifiable to assume that the iconography of the Living Cross was fully developed already in the last quarter of the fourteenth century.[55] A more confident statement would be to say that the year 1409, generally acknowledged in Croatian

---

study, I have not included it in this work and left it for the subsequent stages of my research. For the listed scholarship on the Living Cross image in Tujce, see Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix" 141.

[52] Timmermann briefly indicates that after the Living Cross image had vanished from the visual arts of the Latin Christianity at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it soon reappeared in Russia where it was used for another century, ibid., 143.

[53] Dušan Buran, "Veľká západná schizma," 54.

[54] Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 112, 119–21.

[55] For the analysis of style, iconography and the problem of dating of the Living Cross image in Koprzywnica see Barbara Dab-Kalinowska, "XIV-wieczne malowidło koprzywnickie," 55–79.

31

scholarship as the year that the Living Cross fresco in Lindar was executed, is indicative of the

fully fledged iconography of the allegory by that time. Figure 1409 was discern by Fučić among

the few legible Glagolitic characters inscribed on the four depicted scrolls whose content once

complemented the image.[56] With the rest of the inscription lost, doubts linger whether 1409

indeed indicates the year of the Lindar painting's execution, or perhaps, a time of some other

event worthy of being commemorated in such manner. In his catalogue entry on the Living

Cross image in Lindar, Füglister reports that at the time France Stele and Iva Perčić expressed

their reservations regarding Fučić's dating.[57] Be that as it may, neither of them published their

doubts and Perčić's assessment of the time of the Lindar wall painting thirty to fifty years prior

to 1409 seems highly improbable. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Gothic architecture

and painting first appeared on the Istrian inland as late as in the last two decades of the

fourteenth century. In addition, the fully established iconography of the Living Cross image in

Lindar was, considering the dating of the rest of the early representations in Europe, unlikely

to appear as early as in the fourteenth century. Due to these factors, dating of the Lindar Living

Cross image and the Chapel of St. Catherine earlier than the turn of the fifteenth century would

make them a rather exceptional case in both Istrian and European artistic contexts. All of this

points to the year 1409, or a year very close to it, as the time of the execution of the Lindar

image.

If not 1409, then certainly 1415 is the *terminus ad quem* for the fully developed

iconography of the Living Cross allegory, since the wall inscription in the parish church in

Poniky reliably attests that that is the year when its wall paintings were executed.[58] At this point

it is reasonable to argue that even if the origins and the motives behind the appearance of the

---

[56] Branko Fučić, *Glagoljski natpisi*, 228–29.

[57] Füglister only approximately dates the Living Cross image in Lindar to the first half of the fifteenth century. Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 24–25. See also Zdenko Balog, "Živi križ u Lindaru," 139.

[58] Buran, "Veľká západná schizma," 54. On the wall painting in the Church of St. Francis Seraphim in Poniky see Buran, *Studien zur Wandmalerei um 1400 in der Slowakei*.

Living Cross image continue to be one of the late medieval mysteries, new discoveries of its earlier manifestations help advance our understanding of this problem. It is now certain that the Living Cross image commissioned and executed in St. Petronius in Bologna in 1420 was not a marker of new development in the Living Cross iconography, as claimed by Füglister, and that Giovanni da Modena drew on the same or a similar template of the freshly contceived iconography of the Living Cross image, as did the master in Lindar or the one in the Central European Koprzywnica. [59] Likewise, the two images in Füglister's northern group are preserved instances of a most likely rare appearance of the Living Cross representation in northern Germany at the time of the first dissemination of the image, and not its prototype.

Paolo and Maria Rosa M. Bensi made a further attempt towards structuring of the early Living Cross imagery by dividing them into three groups. The first one comprises panels from the fourteenth-century Venetian artistic sphere representing an extended Crucifixion theme with the first appearance of the hands attached to one or several ends of the cross, e.g. The Crucifixion (ca. first half of the fourteenth century) painted by the master from the Paolo Veneziano circle (Fig. 31) and The Crucifixion (ca. before 1420) by a master formed in Veneto-Emilia pictorial circle (Fig. 32). They both have Ecclesia and Synagogue standing, the former accompanied or exchanged with a priest consecrating the Eucharist, with, if present, lower hand pulling out the patriarch's from the Limbo while the others rest still in their symbolic presence. The second group, equivalent to Füglister's "southern group" with new additions from Poland and Slovakia, features a full-blown Living Cross iconography with the antithetic pair of the two personified religious institutions mounted on two animals. The third group encompasses images from the second half of the fifteenth century, representing the second stage in the evolution of the image when the original iconography of the Living Cross incorporated the *Mater Misericordiae* and Eve with the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. These could

---

[59] Buran, "Veľká západná schizma," 54.

also have simultaneous representations of Christ descending into Limbo, for example, the Chapel of S. Croce in Mondovi (ca. 1450-60) or the parish church in Thörl (ca. 1475) (Fig. 34). Another general characterisation can be drawn regarding scrolls with Leonine verses similar to those found in medieval religious plays, which are absent only from the first group, i.e. from the formative stages of the iconography.[60]

As stated, close similarities between the early Living Cross imagery propagated through localities ranging from North Italy to Central Europe indicate the existence of the same or a similar common source. It remains speculative that it was a drawing or a woodcut devised by some artist under the supervision of an ecclesiastical authority, disseminated through a pattern book in the possession of an itinerant artist. A more certain hypothesis can be established on the visual sources of such design. Achim Timermann follows the same lead as the Bensi (the first group) suggesting that it was precisely in northern Italy that the common iconographic source for the Living Cross imagery first took shape. Focusing his inquiry onto the "sinister" side of the allegorical cross that administers divine justice by the agency of its two hands— "emblems of eschatological justice"—Timmermann conceived a possible ideological correlation between the allegory of the Living Cross and the *Iustitia distributiva* allegories produced in Tuscany and Veneto in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[61] The earliest known example of *Iustitia distributiva* was painted by Giotto (1266-1337) in his fresco cycle in the Arena Chapel in Padua (1303-1309), where the personified Justice through her agents, the angels, (or in some cases by her own hand) dispenses reward and punishment by crowning or decapitating with a sword (Fig. 33).[62] Given the existence of the above mentioned Venetian panels, it is certainly plausible that in the course of the late fourteenth century northern Italian artists and architects of pictorial iconographic schemes fused the Crucifixion theme. The motif

---

[60] Bensi, and Montiani Bensi, "L'iconografia della Croce Vivente in ambito emiliano e ferrarese," 170.
[61] Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 141.
[62] Ibid., 148–49.

of one hand confidently budding from the top of the cross towards the gates of heaven was merged with the cautionary iconography of the *lustitia distributiva* illustrating the twofold consequences of one's actions in life: a beatific reward for abiding the Law and (capital) punishment for doing otherwise.

Another clue on the early developments of the imagery can be deduced from the comparative analysis by Barbara Dab-Kalinowska between the Living Cross images in Koprzywnica and Bologna, both paired with the representation of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Fig. 23 and 29). The two images mirrored the same principle of clustering contrasting characters on the two opposite sides of a tree. This initial twinning of the images seems to suggest the nature of the distributed common pictorial source for the Living Cross allegory—it was accompanied by the Tree of the Knowledge as a joint iconographic and ideological concept to be depicted together. The unanimous double imagery communicated an unequivocal doctrinal message: in his ultimate sacrifice Christ atoned for the consequences of Original Sin bringing redemption and salvation to humanity that recognised him as God.[63] In the immediate development of the iconography of the Living Cross, the image assimilated its twin allegory extending and building on its right-left contrast and communication of the right and wrong didactics (the third Bensi group).

In the image of the Tree of Knowledge in Bologna a serpent with a woman's head coils around the trunk luring Eve to taste the apple, which she did together with Adam. Both set the tone for the left side of the Tree populated with Moses and Patriarchs from the bygone times of the Old Law. On the right side of the Tree stands the Virgin Mary in the company of a multitude of saints led by St. Peter, and a pope, all representatives of the New Law inaugurated by Christ who appears like a phantasm in the skeletal treetop of the *arbor vitae* that withered

---

[63] Dab-Kalinowska, "XIV-wieczne malowidło koprzywnickie," 73; Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L'iconografia della Croce Vivente," 161.

as soon as the Sin was committed.[64] The representation of the Tree in Koprzywnica, on the other hand, displays Mary as the *Mater misericordiae*, with fervent worshippers congregated under and around her reassuring robe. Their anxiety, aggravated by the Last Judgement represented in the superimposed register, which stands in complex iconographic interrelation with the Living Cross image flanking it. She leans her head on one of her hands in the same gesture of *gravitas* she assumes when represented under the Crucifixion—one dramatic gesture was sufficient to evoke the absent depiction of the crucified Christ that oppresses her mind. In a sombre tone, Mary comforts the faithful from the scroll displayed next to her in Bologna: "I will now open the ether which Eve closed for you, through my son I will save all the sinners."[65] Eve on the other side is engrossed in her apple, for not only the snake but all except one of the barren branches of the Tree lean towards her, in conspiracy of forces far beyond her comprehension. The Tree of Knowledge, it follows, assumes an extended symbolism of the two additional trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death, with Mary harvesting *fructus vitae* from the former and Eve *fructus mortis* from the latter.[66] Indeed, the scroll next to Eve in Bologna reads: "The human race was ruined with the inane fruit, you will die, because I have closed the gate of Heaven."[67] By extension, in the mirroring image of the Living Cross Ecclesia is given spiritual life through Christ's sacrifice, while Synagogue's blindness toward the Messiah condemned her to eternal spiritual death.

If we now consider Lindar in the context of the early Living Cross imagery in Koprzywnica and Bologna, it is plausible to infer that a similar display of the paired images

---

[64] Dab-Kalinowska, "XIV-wieczne malowidło koprzywnickie," 73. The concept of *arbor vitae* was extensively elaborated by St. Bonaventure, see Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[65] *resero nu(nc) (a)et(h)era q(u)e(m)* vobis clauserat eva/per filium meum salvabo quemlibet reum,* Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 162, English translation is mine.

[66] The allegory of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death appeared in literature in the fourteenth century, visual representations became popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Dab-Kalinowska, "XIV-Wieczne Malowidło Koprzywnickie," 67; Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 112-21, 138-39, 168-69.

[67] *per esum vanum destrui(tur) genus humanu(m)/vos moriemini qui(a) clause ianua(m) celi*, Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 162, English translation is mine.

may have been represented in the Chapel of St. Catherine. With either the Tree of Knowledge depicted in the triangular field on the adjacent western wall or on the opposite wall to the Living Cross image, as was the case in Bologna, or a depiction of the Tree of Knowledge with Adam and Eve. The latter representation of the Original Sin was commonly incorporated into the iconography of the western walls of medieval wall painting cycles in Istria for instance, the one preserved example in the countryside Romanesque group in Bazgalji.

Finally, the Westphalian diptych and the wall painting in Žehra suggest a second concept of the Living Cross with the assimilated iconography of the Original Sin, contemporary to the "twin images," and, it seems, inherent to the countries north of Alps for no similar image is preserved in Italy (Fig. 24 and 28). In the Westphalian example, as many as three skulls tell of the Original Sin. Restored by Christ's sacrifice, the *arbor vitae* eagerly propagates four hands and two offshoots of the Trees of Life and Death. That latter tree bears as fruit a large skull with the snake coiling around it and holding an apple in its mouth, displayed in stark antithesis to the architectural manifestation of Ecclesia as a fruit of life on the right side. In a miniature representation of the contrasting pair (or pairs) seen in the mirroring images placed at the top of the cross, Eve offers another skull to Adam, while on the opposite side the Virgin Mary offers communion to a kneeling, supplicant pope. In Žehra, the Progenitors are depicted at the bottom of the cross in two scenes that are happening simultaneously: the consummation of the forbidden apple displayed next to the gaping Mouth of Hell and their banishing from the Garden of Eden by the archangel Michael wielding a sword while the pair leaves the right side of the cross. The hand at the bottom of the Westphalian Living Cross smashes the third skull simultaneously with the act of unlocking the gates of Heaven by the hand at its top. Once again, redemptive sacrifice defeats death that was unleashed upon humanity with the Original Sin. And once again, heaven is promised on one condition: accept the word of the Scriptures proffered by the little *Agnus Dei* depicted at the feet of Ecclesia or perish forever as the

Synagogus (male personification of the Jewish denomination), who was not "written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev 21:27) and is, therefore, depicted on the left side of the cross, under the shadow of the skull hanging from the Tree of Death.

## 2.2. The Avenging Crucifix and the Antithetical Pairs: Eucharistic and Eschatological Allegory

A brief insight into the iconography of the early Living Cross images at the beginning of this chapter attests that the fixed canon or understanding of the richly textured allegory was not the goal of medieval painters and their commissioners. Quite the opposite, only a few familiar themes in the late Middle Ages had so many variations as did the Living Cross imagery.[68]

Characters within the Living Cross image are not actors of the Crucifixion narrative, nor is the Living Cross image to be interpreted as one, or any other Biblical narrative for that matter. Visual representation of the Living Cross allegory is an emblem of the pivotal Christian doctrinal concept of Christ's redemptive sacrifice and its theological implications upon the Christian universe, humankind and supernatural forces that permeate it—forces whose opposition turned that universe into a "bloody arena."[69]

Such a polarized view of the Christian universe communicated an ambivalent message. On the one hand, it offered a comforting assurance that even the foulest of evils was part of God's grand design and, if evil is resisted, a promise of an achievable eternal bliss. On the other, it threatened with a constant earthly persecution by the forces of darkness and eternal damnation in Hell. The cosmos of medieval Christians was, indeed, relentlessly torn between the dichotomies of good and evil, soul and body, the new age and the old age, the Lord and the

---

[68] Buran, "Veľká západná schizma," 54.
[69] "[…] and he [Ignatius of Antioch] viewed the world as a bloody arena in which Christ and his followers are locked in deadly combat with the Devil and his." Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1988), 53.

Prince of this World.[70] In fact, with such an elaborated principle of evil in opposition to the Lord (i.e. the concept of Satan) an essentially monist Christian doctrine tipped the balance in favour of the dualist Mazdaist and Greek Orphic religious views it partially drew upon.[71]

Even though such a course of Christian history may seem random and haphazard, it was viewed by the medieval faithful as purposeful and controlled by God. In an emphatic display of this reassuring belief, God the Father is depicted in the Living Cross image in Lindar leaning over the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem in a direct interference with the affairs of this world (Fig. 21). We are witnessing the moment of his most intimate contact with humanity—his willing sacrifice of the body of the Son of God. The thereupon casting of his tremendous supernatural force animates quite literally the cross with hands growing out of its bars in order to manage the new order within the universe.

The massive walls of his heavenly abode in Lindar resemble the well-defended medieval citadels perched on unapproachable heights that dominated European landscape at the time. Such imposing architecture was a standard medieval iconography of Heaven enthused by John the Apostle's painstaking description of the city of Heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation (Rev 21:1-22:5). It was an eagerly anticipated end destination for all Christians where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes […] for the former things are passed away" (Rev 21:4). Eventually, however, Heaven is reached only by those judged worthy of dwelling there in the trials of the Last Judgement. Effectively epitomised in its numerous visual

---

[70] The term "prince" (*archon*) for the Devil is used in the New Testament as a contrast to the term "lord" (*kyrios*) for Christ. Other than the Prince of this World, this personification of the principle of all evil is called different names in the New Testament, all reflecting its conceptual background in Hellenism and Apocalyptic Judaism: Satan, the Devil, Beelzeboul, Belial, the Enemy, the Tempter, the Accuser, the Evil One, the prince of Demons. See ibid., 43.

[71] Extreme monism asserts the absolute unity and absolute power of the one divine principle, e.g. prophetic and rabbinic Judaism, Islam. The extent to which religions limit the power of one God—by randomness, chaos, matter, free will, or evil—they move away from this pole. Some examples are the monist polytheisms of ancient Egyptian, Greco-Roman, and Indian religions. Extreme dualism, on the other hand, opposes two unequivocally independent principles, e.g. Zoroastrianism, Greek Orphism. Ancient Hebrew and Christian monotheistic religions lie between the two extremes, their positions on the spectrum varying according to the degree to which they allow limitations to God's sovereignty. See Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, 19.

representations with the damned heading in convulsion towards the gates of Hell to the left of Christ the Judge and the blessed peacefully waiting for their transportation to the New Jerusalem to his right (Fig. 29). In a more reassuring image of the Living Cross, the hand that holds a key reaches for the gate of the Heavenly Jerusalem perched on the top of the Living Cross *patibulum,* bolstering the weary on a haphazard road to "the great and high mountain" with the city that had "a wall great and high," with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels (Rev 21:10-13). Out of the twelve angels the Lindar master displays two with hands joined in prayer, gazing into God's orchestration of the proceedings on the Earth below. The walls are rendered in gold and pink hues evoking John the Apostle's vision of the city made of pure gold and precious stones with the restorative fruit bearing trees of life pictured growing within its inner garden.

For a possible parallel to the iconography of Heaven illustrated in Lindar we must look outside the group of the early Living Cross images to those depicted in the second half of the fifteenth century. The one most resembling such a concept of the city of the Heavenly Jerusalem with God and angels depicted on its walls is executed on the wall painting in Alpine Mondovi in Italian Piedmont (Fig. 35). Both the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Thörl and the similar tassel-like cloud line that runs beneath the most elaborated representation of the City among all of the Living Cross images (with nine added angelic hierarchies of Heaven), further resemble the cloud line, morphology and colour of the walls depicted in Lindar.[72] The rest of the early Living Cross imagery, on the contrary, exhibit a small model of a building to the right of the cross*,* with the arm at the top of the cross pictured bent at the right angle to the *patibulum,* reaching for the keyhole of its gate. This deviation in the illustration of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Lindar from the rest of the early Living Cross images is indicative of a possible

---

[72] Similarities between the representations of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Lindar and the one in the Living Cross image in Mondovi, as well as between the comparable depiction of the line of clouds underneath it in Lindar and Thörl, were first pointed out by Balog. See Balog, "Živi križ u Lindaru," 136, 139.

different influence on its iconography in accordance with its stylistic interrelation to the International Gothic style of the Alpine pictorial circle.

Polarised view of the Christian universe, its history and the continuing battle between its guiding forces are at the heart of the Living Cross image. It invokes the whole history of Christianity in a microcosmic representation of an ancient, macrocosmic battle between God and Satan. The hand wielding a hammer over the representation of Hell at the bottom end of the cross in Lindar can therefore be interpreted as an instrument of an angry God in his ongoing *bellum justum* against a universal conspiracy of Satan who perpetually deploys his armies of evil, both spiritual and human, against God, his Church on Earth and the faithful.

There are two distinct words in the Septuagint translation of the New Testament that will merge into the Early Christianity notion of Hell—*hades* and *geenna*. *Hades* was a translation of the Hebrew word *Sheol,* which was an underworld abode for the dead until the time of their resurrection, while the transgressors were tortured in the eternal fires of *geenna*.[73] Other than that, unlike the Heavenly Jerusalem, the structure and appearance of Hell was not made clear in the New Testament. The iconography of its visual representation varied according to the historical period pictorial style consistent, however, in few essential points. It was illustrated as a place lit with fires where the damned were tortured by demons and usually displayed as part of the Last Judgement narrative. This association of Hell with the end of the world was indicated in the chapter of the Book of Revelation prior to the description of the City of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 20), where it was described as a "sealed bottomless pit" holding the Devil bound to its chains as a direct consequence of Christ's redeeming act, waiting to be unleashed for the concluding showdown between the two contrasting forces at Christ's second coming.[74]

---

[73] Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, 47.

[74] Since the New Testament admits a wide range of interpretations on the question of the ruin of Satan, this is only one of several different interpretations put forward whether on nature, location or time of his fall. On detailed analysis of the fall of Satan see Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, 43–55. For iconography of Hell in pictorial and

A generic reference to the "bottomless pit" is illustrated at the base of the early representations of the Living Cross in the form of a sealed cave (Bologna) or the gaping mouth of Leviathan (Poniky, Žehra).[75] A hand wielding a hammer over it stands as a symbol of Christ's defeat over death, most evident in the northern German Living Cross images (Fig. 24 and 25 ) where the armed hand threatens a skull (or skeleton) in a direct reference to the death of Adam and the Original Sin. Since Satan as the ruler of both the world and the underworld had the "power of death" (Heb 2:14), the arm with a hammer also stands for his defeat or, more likely, for the ongoing cosmic battle against Satan and a menacing announcement of his future annihilation in the forthcoming Last Judgement. The placing of the Heavenly Jerusalem and Hell as polar opposites above and below the Living Cross is a visual exegesis of the Christian cosmological hierarchy indicative of the medieval polarised understanding of the world.

A circular stronghold reminiscent of a giant wooden vat represents Hell in Lindar, with incarcerated souls defended by three devils, one aiming with a bow and arrow at the hand wielding a hammer towards their tightly locked gates. In the panel from the Veneto-Emilia pictorial circle (Fig. 32) contemporary to the Lindar image, the hand at the bottom end of the cross is pulling out the Patriarchs from Limbo, evoking the episode of the Harrowing of Hell. The narrative and iconography of Christ's descent into Limbo and leading of the Patriarchs to Heaven evolved from the Biblical apocrypha and was widely accepted in medieval theology as an episode that will occur prior to Christ's Resurrection. The connotations of the drama unfolding around the souls captured in the infernal tower represented at the bottom of the Living Cross in Lindar certainly allow an extensive reading as the Harrowing of Hell episode.

---

dramatic arts see Clifford Davidson and Thomas H. Seiler, eds., *The Iconography of Hell*, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 17 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1992).
[75] The fragment with a depiction of Hell at the bottom of the Living Cross wall painting in Koprzywnica is lost. The huge gaping mouth of the Leviathan, however, in the illustration of the Last Judgement, represented just above the Living Cross image. Leviathan was a sea monster first introduced in the Hebrew Bible and demonized by Jews in the first century CE. In Christian demonology, it became the keeper of the gates of Hell and a visual representation of the mouth of Hell, see Brian Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 53.

Fučić made a distinction between the stylistically corresponding wall painting in Lindar and Butoniga based on different sources of their iconography; namely, he attributed the Lindar Living Cross image to the alleged Italian origin and the iconography of the fresco cycle in Butoniga to a clearly continental influence.[76] As discussed in the previous chapter, after the discovery of a cluster of the early Living Cross images in Central Europe, the exclusively Italian credit for the origin and dissemination of the image became questionable. In the light of the now confirmed stylistic interrelation and a strong possibility of the same workshop commissioned to decorate the churches in Lindar and Butoniga, it is safe to conjecture the same continental provenance of the Lindar Living Cross iconography. While the barrel-like tower of Hell is not unseen in Istrian wall painting (e.g. the Last Judgement in St. Vincent in Svetvinčenat), this vivid representation of the underground fortress defended by Satan's minions echoes the same fanciful Alpine Gothic influence seen in the Harrowing of Hell image on the western wall in Butoniga. Here a colourfully illustrated figure of Satan and Jesus are in negotiation over a figure Satan firmly holds at his chest (Fig. 36). Indeed, during the course of the fifteenth century, and especially in complex Austrian and Bavarian Living Cross representations, the Hell segment of the image will turn into an extensive combat against Satan, death, and evil. In Thörl, for example, in a simultaneous representation an armed hand smashes the gates of Hell, St. Michael fights demonic forces at its gate and Christ walks into Limbo and leads out Adam, Eve and the Patriarchs.[77]

Weather Limbo or Hell is depicted, they are not a peripheral symbol to the fundamental message of the Living Cross, since the saving mission of Christ can be fully comprehended only in terms of opposition to Satan. Christ's very incarnation and death depended on Satan, for he needed to be born and to be sacrificed in order for God to reconcile with humanity.

---

[76] Branko Fučić, "Butoniga," 239.
[77] Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 146.

Though referring to this historic event, the Living Cross image is not part of the Passion narrative. It is an intricately-textured allegory that foremost illustrates the doctrine of Christ's redemptive sacrifice, extended in a dialectic of manually administered reward and punishment, salvation and damnation of humanity.

We find Christ's gory, skeletal body at the epicentre of all the Living Cross images. In Lindar, however, his rendering is not in complete accordance with this Gothic type of suffering Christ, *Imago pietatis*, his open wounds are not on display (see Chapter 1.4.). This makes Lindar a case in point of the inherent eschatological and judicial readings to the Living Cross imagery, complementing an otherwise Redemptive and Eucharistic iconography of the metahistorical Crucifixion.

The Living Cross wall painting in Lindar is placed in the west corner of the north wall of the Chapel of St. Catherine (see Chapter 1.1.), in a position which—within a rigorously ordered iconographic program and differentiated functions of a church space—immediately assigns it an eschatological overtone. In Butoniga, for example, there is an illustration of death personified in the lower register of the north-western corner of the church and the adjacent Harrowing of Hell image on the western wall (Fig. 36). Placement of the other Living Cross wall paintings discussed in this study in a chancel area or in its proximity (e.g. Koprzywnica, Poniky, or Žehra) employed the image in the Eucharistic liturgy. The open wounds displayed on the *corpus Christi* of these Living Cross images functioned as a scenographic backdrop for the *transubstantiatio* mystery celebrated in a Christian mass. An effective example of the engagement of the Living Cross wall painting in the Eucharistic liturgy is in Thörl, where together with the painted Passion, Resurrection and a sacrament house, it forms an illustrated scenery for the staging of the Christian drama of the Eucharist.[78]

---

[78] Ibid. See also Timmermann, "A View of the Eucharist on the Eve of the Reformation," 365–98.

The angel and the demon floating above the *antenna* are a unique feature that appeared only in the iconography of the Living Cross image in Lindar. The green-winged angelic figure clad in an adorned golden tunic is visually contrasted with the dark bat-winged fiend covered with spikes and a peculiar headpiece illustrated between his two red horns. Fučić discerned under the lifted tail of the demon a now faded detail of medieval folk verismo—a depiction of a fart.[79] While the iconography of angels continued relatively unvaried throughout the Middle Ages, medieval artists seemed more inclined to embed the evolving values, fears, and prejudice of the era into the equally shifting representations of demons.[80] Association of the demon with a foul odour was an expression of contempt and judgement towards both personified forces of evil and people associated with them, in accordance with the common medieval belief in fragrant saintly creatures and the stench of evil spirits. Since the demon is hovering right above Synagogue in the Lindar Living Cross image, she becomes stigmatised by the offensive odour. Whether or not the Lindar master was aware of the common medieval prejudice of the *foetor judaicus,* the illustration of a stinky demon on the side of Synagoga calls to mind the medieval Christian consideration of smell as one of the distinctive signs of the "demonic" Jew, and colours the Lindar image with anti-Semitic undertones inherent in the overall iconography of the Living Cross.[81]

Above Christ's right arm the angel plays an instrument resembling a portative organ, while the hovering representative of the infernal forces blows a double horn above his left arm.[82] Demon's reed instrument resembles a medieval shawm or a comparable zurla instrument

---

[79] Fučić, "Živi križ u Lindaru," 268.

[80] Barbara P. Palmer, "The Inhabitants of Hell: Devils," in *The Iconography of Hell*, ed. Clifford Davidson and Thomas H. Seiler, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 17 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1992), 20.

[81] In a commonly expressed medieval belief, a Jew loses their "fetor" only after he is baptized: "We have direct testimony that 'the water of baptism carried off the Jews' odor," leaving them with a fragrance 'sweeter than that of ambrosia floating upon the heads touched by the sanctified oil.'"Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 47-48.

[82] Koraljka Kos, "Muzički instrumenti u srednjovjekovnoj likovnoj umjetnosti Hrvatske [Musical instruments in medieval visual arts in Croatia]," *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 2 (1969): 177–78.

played at the time in the Middle East and Balkans, a direct antecedent of the contemporary Istrian folk instrument *sopile* or *roženice*.[83] The sound of the portative organ was considered "heavenly" in the Middle Ages, while the buzzing noise produced by the horn was associated with the "devilish" popular dances and folk feast.[84] Their iconographic connotations further underlining the order and calm reigning on the side of the righteous and a state of utter chaos among their diabolic counterparts.

The angel and the devil pair in Lindar are an adaptation of the eschatological iconography of the Last Judgement. Instead of the two angels on each side of Christ the Judge, blowing into the horn in an announcement of the moment of the Final Judgement to the dead (Mat 24:31, Cor 15:52), the demon fills the left side of the cross with sinister sounds where all hope of a better outcome is lost, and on the right side the angel announces with sweet notes the opening of the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem to the blessed followers of Ecclesia. They are the pair seen at the weighing of the souls in visual representations of the Last Judgement theme, performing a similar role of the gatherers of the souls as they do in the extended Crucifixion scenes where an angel collects the soul of the penitent thief and a devil appropriates the one of the impenitent.

The right-left opposition of the doctrinal and iconographic concept of the Last Judgement is repeated two more times in the images of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Living Cross in the lower register of the wall painting in Koprzywnica (see Chapter 2.1.). The conceptual association between the Living Cross and the Last Judgement is apparent here and further confirms the Living Cross as an image of equally eschatological and Eucharistic significance. The blessed and the damned meet their eternal destinies to the right

---

[83] Branko Perica, ed., *Knjiga o Istri* [A book about Istria] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968), 92.

[84] The same reed instrument is depicted blown by skeletons in their triumphant dance of death procession in the Church of St. Mary at Škrlinah in Beram (1474). On medieval instruments in Istrian wall painting see Koraljka Kos, *Musikinstrumente im mittelalterlichen Kroatien: Beitrag zur allgemeinen Organographie der Musikinstrumente und zur mittelalterlichen Musikgeschichte* (Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1972).

and left of the Christ the Judge's mandorla, where medieval eschatological anxieties are visually expressed in the form of Satan pulling the chained crowd towards his throne located inside the gape open jaws of the huge Leviathan. The manic event is accompanied by the sound provided by a trumpet even longer than the devil's zurle in Lindar, blown by the angel to the left of Christ.

The road to the heights of Heaven is unequivocally paved on the right side of the Living Cross, and passes right "through" Ecclesia. It is, therefore, an odd and unique placement of the Heaven in Koprzywnica on the far left side of the cross, resulting in morphing of the upper hand into a huge key that elongates towards the farfetched door. Although she did not mention the odd left disposition, Kalinowska argues that the marginalised illustration of Heaven displayed in the left corner of the superimposed Last Judgement register stands in close iconographic and conceptual connection with the Heavenly Jerusalem represented prominently in the Living Cross image in the opposite corner of the lower register.[85] The visualised warning of a potentially terrible verdict of "he who would judge the quick and the dead" was much more effective if enlarged at the expense of the dimensions of the illustrated Heaven and the blessed about to inhabit its premises. On the contrary, the redemptive sacrifice of the crucified Christ in the Living Cross image atoned for the Original Sin and promised Heaven, which consequently restored the appropriate dimensions of the City and reduced Hell to a mere symbolic presence at the bottom of the cross. The end result was that the Hell of the Last Judgement theme and the Heavenly Jerusalem of the Living Cross image were effectively placed one over the other as the ultimate two end destinations of humanity. As discussed in the example of the Lindar Living Cross, the pattern of the hypothesised common source was readily adapted by the masters to the particular iconographic and pictorial demands of the designated wall surface.

---

[85] Dab-Kalinowska, "XIV-wieczne malowidło koprzywnickie," 72.

## 2.3. Ecclesia, Synagogue and the Jewish Controversy

A Christian understanding of the world considered the birth of Christ as the central event of the history of humanity, thereafter divided between the time before and the time after Christ. Individual experience of each Christian was embedded within a grander narrative of a history which had a specific beginning (Creation), a salvific central narrative (Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection), and a pending end of the world (Last Judgment). For a community instilled with the Christian sense of history, these were powerfully evocative images which gave present justification in previous events and provided a future with purpose.[86]

The Living Cross image is an ultimate late medieval emblem of this dualistic view of history: it looks back at the beginnings as well as forward to its apocalyptic end, but mainly it concentrates on the differentiation between the two pacts God made with humankind – the old one struck with the Jews on Mount Sinai (the Old Law) and the new one sealed with Crucifixion on Calvary (the New Law). The differentiation that was associated with the ethical dualism of good and evil even before the canon of the New Testament was finally established at the end of the fourth century; the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ca. 118), for example, talks of the new elected people faithful to Christ and the "two roads" of light and darkness.[87] Likewise, the body of Christ on Earth in the Living Cross image walks on the road of light under the triumphant banner of Ecclesia, and the body of Satan united under the broken banner of Synagogue marches furiously on the dark road of doom.

---

[86] Christianity engaged early into systematizing and understanding of its history, dividing it into meaningful periods and epochs, for example, St. Paul's differentiation between the period of the natural law (the Fall of Man), written law (the Law given to Moses on Sinai) and grace (the Incarnation). Medieval Christianity made a distinction between the time before and the time after Christ and used numerical patterns found in the Scriptures to organize history, for example, six days of creation and the theory of the six ages of men. See Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), 11–33.

[87] Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, 54.

Koprzywnica and Lindar are the first examples of the Living Cross wall painting, and first examples of Ecclesia and Synagogue pair riding a tetramorph and ass respectively. The broken staff of a robust personification of Synagogue in Lindar seems to explode at the very moment of its depiction, while in Koprzywnica the impossibly slim perishing female figure in a stylised, almost choreographed courtly gesture resembles a wilted flower. They evoke two very different artistic and cultural contexts. The one in Lindar is a product of the master originating in a robust, peasant sub-Alpine community and in Koprzywnica the painting echoes an intellectual and spiritual atmosphere of the brotherhood of the Cistercian monks. In both they hold a severed goat's head in their left hands. It is not clear if she wears a crown in the faded painting in Koprzywnica, but in Lindar a trace of golden ochre to the right of her head suggests one falling off of her stabbed head.

The figure of Ecclesia in Koprzywnica is preserved only in fragments, one crucially distinguishing her from the Ecclesia in Lindar. She elevates a chalice to collect Christ's blood oozing from his side wound in a direct Eucharist association that is excluded in Lindar (see Chapter 2.2.). They both hold a cross-staff and in Lindar Ecclesia with her free right hand simply points to Christ.

Rather than riding, Ecclesia in Lindar kneels on the backs of the four symbolic representations of the evangelists, synthesized in the form of a tetramorph. The apostles spread the good news of Christ's coming (*evangelion*) and authored what became the basic textual foundation of Christ's Church on Earth. As such they were in the medieval Christian theology associated with the four fantastic creatures—resembling a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle— that flank the enthroned Christ in the Apocalypse (Rv 4:6-9). Just as they are visually

49

represented "supporting" the enthroned Christ's mandorla in the *Maiestas Domini* so too are they illustrated in the Living Cross allegory carrying the personified institution of the Church.[88]

In the early Living Cross imagery, a tetramorph is illustrated as a creature with a lion's body and head, a symbolic representation of the first evangelist overlapping the row of the unseen other three that stand beside him. They are only hinted at in the four disparate legs of the creature—the paw of the lion (St. Mark), the claw of an eagle (St. John), the hoof of an ox (St. Luke) and the human foot (St. Matthew). In Koprzywnica only a fragment of the creatures behind with a lion's leg and tail is preserved, and only hints of the four different legs that point to the possible similar pictorial solution of the motive to the other examples from this group.

The Lindar image, however, displays yet another deviation from the early Living Cross images group in what appears as an odd amalgam of the three different animals and a human body with four protruding heads. The intricate composite symbol of the four evangelists clearly surpassed the artistic abilities of the Lindar master. We can find four distinct heads depicted in the Living Cross imagery only later in Žehra, and, indicative of the discussed Lindar's painting pertaining to the Alpine pictorial circle, the illustration of the entirely separate four creatures in Thörl.

The visual appearance and attributes of the Ecclesia and Synagogue pair endorse the ideological construction of their identities. Her noble attire and crowned head honours Ecclesia as the head of the most important institution of Christian society that dethroned the former rule of Synagogue, symbolised with the crown falling down from her head. In all the early Living Cross wall paintings (except in Žehra), Ecclesia is dressed in a bridal white gown and holds a cross-staff with a triumphant red cross banner, while her blindfolded antinome Synagogue wears a red (or orange) gown, somewhat stripped of the marks of the highest social rank but

---

[88] In late medieval art the Ecclesia and Synagogue pair sometimes accompanied the Last Judgement theme as one of its allegoric extensions that further emphasized the final passing of the divine judgement. For visual representation and iconography of Ecclesia and Synagogue, see Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History* (New York: Continuum, 1996).

still a gown of a noble woman.[89] She clutches the shattered staff with an ominous black scorpion banner, a mark of evil specifically associated with Juda's treason and often illustrated on the shields of the soldiers taking part in the Crucifixion.[90]

With her left hand Synagogue holds the head of a sacrificial goat (also represented on her banner in Poniky and Žehra), a symbol of the blood sacrifice made by Moses at the inauguration of the new covenant with God on Mount Sinai (Heb 9:18-22). This sacrificial practice of the Old Testament became not only obsolete with the initiation of the new covenant mediated with the blood of Christ, but also a deceiving diabolic ritual. As the inscription on the scroll held by Synagogue in Bologna states: "The blood of the goats has deceived me like the serpent/Alas, I am blind and separated from God's reign."[91] The only legitimate sacrifice in medieval Christian Europe was that of the Eucharist, and the billy goat was transformed by Christianity into a symbol of lust and satanic materialization. In fact, according to medieval popular belief, the goat was created by Satan himself and as such was a favourite riding animal of finds, sorcerers, witches, and, in Bologna, of Synagogue.[92]

The third animal accompanying Synagogue is the ass which she rides blindfolded, with folds and hair (in Bologna) trailing in the wind behind her as if she is a loose, mad woman galloping on a foolish animal—the symbol of stubbornness—that met the same cruel fate. Christianity ascribed the gift of sight that enables the vision of supernatural finds to saintly and virtuous figures and, to all humankind, a capacity of spiritual sight (*oculus mentis*) that can see through the deceptive illusions casted by demons. We find evil associated with a demon's

---

[89] The Bensi associated the dark yellow and orange color of Synagogue's dress in Bologna with the color of the clothes of those marked and forsaken by medieval society. It was a color medieval Jewry was required to wear as a distinctive sign of their social segregation. Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 161.

[90] Medieval Christian demonology assigned a number of animals to the forces of evil: locusts, scorpions, leopards, lions, and bears. The Devil himself has direct associations only with the serpent, the dragon, and rarely with the lion. Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, 49; Palmer, "The Inhabitants of Hell," 24.

[91] *hirco(rum) sanguis me decepit velut anguis/he(um) su(m) cecata et a regno dei separate,* Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 162. Translation in Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 146.

[92] Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 47.

51

manipulation of human vision and inflicted spiritual or physical blindness already in patristic literature (Origen, Augustine of Hippo, Irenaeus of Lyons) and St. Paul the Apostle's *Epistle to the Romans* (Rom 11:8-10) or his *Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* where he talks about the hardened Jews unable to see the truth because of a "veil" that covers their minds and hearts and will be removed only if they convert (2 Cor 3:15-17).[93] Antagonism towards Jews represented in the Ecclesia and Synagogue pair or staged in the late medieval religious plays reflected this long tradition of Christian belief that held Judaism's failure to recognise the New Messiah as a sign of Satan's direct intervention.[94] The visual rhetoric of unprecedented violence in the displayed treatment of Synagogue in the Living Cross image seems synchronised with the progressively fatal consequences of this misconception for medieval Jewry.[95]

On the red border below Synagogue in the Lindar Living Cross a carved Glagolitic graffiti revels a line from a psalm: "I said in my excess: Every man is a liar." (Ps 116:11). This confession is made at a point in the psalm when a Christian in their moment of despair fails to see anything but evil in people.[96] Indeed, Synagogue's alliance with the Devil in Lindar—shown by the demon's visual proximity—emits a strong didactic message of a women blinded by the Devil and finally cast into Hell, or in the language of Helmut Hundsbichler, her "calculating proximity" ended in "undesirable proximity."[97] Ecclesia in Bologna holds a scroll

---

[93] Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 162; Alexander E. Makhov, "... *In diversas figuras nequitiae*: The Devil's Image from the Viewpoint of Rhetoric," in Angels, Devils: The Supernatural and Its Visual Representation, ed. Gerhard Jaritz (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 44–45. For a detailed analysis of the literary sources for the Ecclesia and Synagogue iconography, see Füglister, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 167–83.

[94] For the medieval mystery plays, miracle plays, and legends that associated the Jews with Satan, see Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 22–25.

[95] Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 162. See also Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix"; Timmermann, "A View of the Eucharist on the Eve of the Reformation"; Timmermann, "Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut".

[96] *VS(A)KI Č(OVI)K LAŽ*, Fučić, *Glagoljski natpisi*, 232.

[97] Hundsbichler distinguished several categories of human interaction with the Devil in visual art, among which "calculating proximity" symbolized the represented figure's pact with the Devil and "undesirable proximity" symbolized the end consequence of such pact - the loss of salvation and condemnation to Hell. Helmut Hundsbichler, "Devils in Visual Proximity," in *Angels, Devils: The Supernatural and Its Visual Representation*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 70.

announcing: "Born from the blood, I am called the Bride of Christ/He who confesses his sins to me will rise to heaven."[98] Synagogue's existence not only became redundant and obsolete with the new bride, but she was also condemned as a devil's accomplice.[99]

The Gothic flare for dramatization and performativity animates the setting of the Living Cross whose arms seem to extend in front of our eyes. And it is precisely with movement and gesture that the meaning of the Living Cross image is explained. Hands displayed at the ends of the horizontal beam in the Early Living Cross imagery have sleeves tight around their wrists with only the ones in Lindar ending in wide sleeve openings with differently coloured lining. Each of the two hands carries a different symbolic meaning of either making a gesture of blessing (or crowning in Bologna) over Ecclesia or thrusting a sword in Synagogue's head, thus, building on a dramatic tension between the contrasting figures.

The Bensi associate the ontological battle between Ecclesia and Synagogue with the popular medieval literary form of altercation (*contrasto*) dialogue between the two opponents that subsequently filtered into the liturgy, theatre, and visual arts. For example, the *De Altercatione Ecclesiae et Synagogae* text that starting from the twelfth century reached a wide audience through performative and visual arts.[100] These theological discussions gradually turned into violent disputes and the visual rhetoric of the contrasting Ecclesia and Synagogue pair became more offensive, both reflecting the general anxieties and tolerance issues of the late medieval "persecuting society."[101]

---

[98] *sanguine doctata su(m) xri (Christi sponsa vocata / ad coelu(m) scandit q(ui) mi hi selera pandit,* Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 161. Translation in Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 146.

[99] The association between the Devil and the Jews had its basis in the Scriptures (Jn 8: 42–44). The phrase "synagogue of Satan", which was often used in the Middle Ages, came from the Book of Revelations 2:9 and 3:9. By the seventh century, the idea of a diabolic pact and Jews as skilled sorcerers merged in the Byzantine legend of the apostate priest Theophilus who sought help from a Jewish magician in order to approach Satan. Robert I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*, 2 edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 33; Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 20-21.

[100] Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 162.

[101] Jews, heretics, and lepers were victims of a zeal for persecution that seized European society in the High and Late Middle Ages. Jews were thought to resemble heretics and lepers in filth, sexual perversion, and their conspirative activity against Christian society. A comprehensive apparatus for their persecution was worked out

The Living Cross image iconography correlated significantly with a form of medieval religious theatre of *Dramma ciclico,* cyclical productions performed from the second half of the fifteenth century. Among the characters of the religious drama there was the Old Testament, the Virgin Mary and the Church riding a horse surrounded by the four Evangelists. Their lines were similar to those inscribed on the scrolls in the Living Cross wall painting in Bologna and later Living Cross imagery (Thörl).[102] The *Dramma* attests that the iconography of the Living Cross was already codified by that time, and even though it is only a matter of speculation whether theatre influenced its making or vice versa, it is certain that the two media shared some of their visual rhetoric.[103]

Besides the explicit religious ideology, the Living Cross allegory is indicative of medieval gender ideology and gender relations. From the perspective of social constructions of age, social status, ethnicity and gender, Ecclesia and Synagogue are late medieval visual commentaries resting on the normative idea about women. Their representation is framed as a devotional and pedagogical sacred marriage image (*hieros gamos*). Its bridal mysticism stemmed from the celibacy ritual for nuns who pledge their virginity to the church as Brides of Christ. Christ's head distinctively leans over his right shoulder: he is facing Ecclesia because only those who enter into the contract with him are offered salvation.[104] The strong nuptial connotation of this marriage trope was an effective communicative tool aimed at a viewer's personal experience and subsequent internalising of the message.

---

towards the end of the twelfth century, codified by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). The formation of the stereotype of the Jews as a blaspheming and sacrilegious enemy of Christian faith, specialized in the business of money lending and usury, as well as their particular juridical status as the serfs of the king, led to the rising medieval hostility towards the Jewish community. See Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*.

[102] The Old Testament character was accompanied by Jews with two angels holding a veil preceding the group. His dialogue lines were: *Oime dolente! Io son stato ingannato/da quel malign e perfido serpente (…) e la chiusa e son private d'ogni ben ponito/del Paradiso ch'io son sta sbandito.* Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 165.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Margaret Schaus and Gerhard Jaritz, eds., *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 94; Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), 19.

The Living Cross image is primarily didactic. Its social role was to "elicit public display of loyalty or disloyalty."[105] Achim Timmermann argues that the "deliberately unsubtle visual rhetoric" of the annihilation of Synagogue by the agency of the armed hand is an act of the Christian anti-Semitic propaganda, visual profession of Christian faith as a polemical answer to the contemporary narratives of the alleged Jewish Holy Host desecration and ritual infanticide.[106]

Most of the stories of Jewish abuse originated in Jewish communities living in the same areas of the Central Europe where images of the Living Cross are found.[107] Timmermann advances his argument on this interrelation of particular historical events and the Living Cross images on the example of the Living Cross relief executed on the portal of the Church of St. Martin in Landshut (Fig. 6), which he interrelates with the contemporary expulsion of the Jews from the city due to alleged desecration of the Host and ritual infanticide accusations.[108] The Bensi made a similar effort towards contextualizing the Living Cross image in the historical context of the fifteenth century Bologna Jewish community and its relations with their Christian neighbors. It was an apparently peaceful coexistence disrupted at about the same time as the Living Cross painting was executed by the anti-Jewish activity of bishop Nicolo Albergati. He campaigned against Jewish bankers and usury, prohibited contact between the Jewish and Christian communities and enforced the Jew's visual differentiation by a yellow marking on

---

[105] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1.

[106] Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 149–52; Timmermann, "Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut," 183. For accusation of ritual murder, see also Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); R. Po-chia Hsia, *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*; Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*.

[107] "Of ninety-seven cases of alleged ritual murder documented between the twelfth and the sixteenth century, sixty-eight are reported to have taken place in the Holy Roman Empire and Poland, with numbers increasing dramatically from the fourteenth century onward. Another seven accusations are known from the northern Italian provinces, six of them recorded in the fifteenth century alone." Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 149.

[108] Timmermann, "Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut," 191.

clothes.[109] Whether he influenced the commission made by the Fraternity of the Basilica to Giovanni da Modena remains a matter of conjecture.[110]

A male personification of the Jewish faith Synagogus is accompanied by his followers in the rare example of the male dominated Living Cross image illustrated in the Lower Rhenish panel (Fig. 25). A fierce battle is fought on a supernatural level around the crucified Christ, with demons under the Synagogue's broken staff trying to put it back together and angels above fighting them in their mission. A separated set of Christ's angelic armies collects his blood dripping from the wounds on both sides of the cross, as if invigorating the righteous fight that corners the enemy to the right angle of the panel. Although not executed like his female equivalent, Synagogus is also represented as a blinded and equally impotent figure with the Torah falling from his hands and broken staff with a crescent moon at the top. The yellow oriental clothes of Synagogus and those of his entourage gathered under the Ottoman staff represents the Jews as conspirators with Turks plotting the downfall of Christians united in their resistance under the leadership of the Pope and the Emperor.[111]

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) required Jews, among other things, to distinguish themselves from Christians in their oriental form of dress. This was reflected in visual arts from the thirteenth century on in the representations of Jews as a distinctive social group in oriental garments, a yellow (or white) Jewish ring attached on their clothes, and a pointed conical head-dress (*pileus cornutus*). Together with a long, hooked nose and a number of negative visual associations they blended fantasy with reality, both reflecting and contributing to a coherently malevolent medieval stereotype of 'the Jew.'[112]

---

[109] Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente," 164.
[110] At the time of writing this thesis, I have not come across any data on the existence of a Jewish community in Istria in the Late Middle Ages. A historical survey of the medieval history of the Jews in a wider regional context of the North Adriatic was beyond the feasible scope of this study.
[111] Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix: Some Observations on the Iconography of the Living Cross," 154.
[112] For representation of the Jews in medieval art, see Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*.

## 2.4. A Bride of Christ: St. Catherine of Alexandria

"And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as

a bride adorned for her husband." (Rv 21:2)

As John the Apostle saw the architectural manifestation of Ecclesia descending in his vision, so we see the bridal personification approaching Christ in the Living Cross image. In Lindar, a second bride to be follows close behind her: Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the patron of the church. It is a single known example of a saint figure incorporated into the standard array of the Living Cross characters.

The feminised vision of the Church as the Bride of Christ gained considerable popularity in European literature and visual arts between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The common biblical metaphor of a chaste bride is used extensively in the Book of Revelation (e.g. Rv 21:9–10; Rv 19:7; 2) and glorified in the love story portrayed in the Song of Songs, referred to by medieval exegetes as a celebration of love between Christ and Ecclesia.[113] Her possession of a chalice filling with Christ's blood in a majority of the Living Cross images translates the visual rhetoric of this nuptial trope into an image evocative of the intimate act of taking communion, thus adding a devotional potential to the overall didactic function of the allegory.

Another manifestation of medieval bridal imagery was the recurrent representation of the coronation of the Virgin Mary (*Regina Coeli*) as Heavenly Bride. The figure of Mary will appear to the right of Ecclesia in the Living Cross imagery in the second half of the fifteenth century. Among the early examples of the image, Mary is present only if there is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil twin image represented next to the Living Cross, as discussed in the examples in Koprzywnica and Bologna (see Chapter 2.1.). It is clear that the iconographic

---

[113] Schaus and Jaritz, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, 138.

scheme of the Living Cross at the time of its painting in Lindar did not yet incorporate the Virgin Mary in the image. If there was a character represented next to Ecclesia at the time it was the Pope, as evident from the images in Poniky, Žehra, Westphalian diptych, or Venetian panels. It therefore follows that the Lindar master and his iconographic adviser either decided to add Saint Catherine of Alexandria to their Living Cross wall painting or exchange her for the Pope, depending on whether the alleged common source image they used included the Pope or not. This deviation from the common pattern needed to have sound theological grounds to justify the inclusion of the saint in the Living Cross image.

After the Virgin Mary, Catherine of Alexandria was the most popular female saintly figure in medieval Europe, a regularly invoked intermediary for the cause of her devotees and patron of numerous churches.[114] Such popularity stemmed from the detailed account of the life and martyrdom of a chaste sovereign queen who used her erudition to defend Christian dogma.[115] Her main iconographic attribute is the spiked wheel that was, according to legend, conceived as a device of her torture by Emperor Maxentius and destroyed during Catherine's stoic endurance of the torment in an angelic intervention.[116] In the course of the fourteenth century, her mystical marriage to Christ became a widespread form of visual representation of St. Catherine, codified into two elaborate iconographic types of images: the Continental version in which she weds the Christ Child, and the Anglo-Saxon version in which she marries the

---

[114] On the cult of St. Catherine of Alexandria in the Middle Ages, see Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis, eds., *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe*, Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts 8 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003); Christine Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe*, Church, Faith, and Culture in the Medieval West (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

[115] The two most influential versions of the Life of Saint Catherine are in the *Vulgate* (mid-eleventh century) and *Legenda aurea* (1298) by Jacobus of Voragine. St. Catherine of Alexandria is believed to have been martyred in the fourth century. With the earliest known references to her life coming from the ninth century, and the first version of her life dating only from the tenth century, the existence of St. Catharine of Alexandria as a historical person is highly questionable. Schaus and Jaritz, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, 115.

[116] The starting point for the dissemination of the legend and cult of St. Catherine in medieval Europe was the shrine containing her beheaded head at Mount Sinai, where the relic is still preserved in the Monastery of Saint Catherine. In the 1030s a St. Catherine relic was brought from Sinai to the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Rouen, from there the cult of the saint spread across western Europe. Ibid.

adult Christ in a genuine wedding ceremony.[117] An example of the former type in a medieval wall painting in Istria is the illustration of the Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine on the southern wall of the Chapel of St. Catherine in Svetvinčenat. The image illustrates St. Catherine offering her hand to the child Christ who is sitting on the knees of the enthroned Virgin Mary. The Chapel was built approximately at the same time as the one in Lindar and has its wall painting cycle dedicated to the scenes from the life and martyrdom of the saint.[118] Absence of any records on the potential earlier materialisation of the cult of St. Catherine in Istria, as well as building of the two churches dedicated to the same saint at the turn of the fifteenth century, suggest the dissemination and considerable veneration of the cult of St. Catherine only in the late medieval Istria, Venetian and the House of Habsburg territories alike. Written historical sources from the seventeenth century report that among the relics kept in the treasury of the Bishoprics of Pićan there was also one belonging to St. Catherine—an ampulla containing milk that, as accounted in the legend, issued from her neck after she was decapitated.[119] The acquisition of the saint's relic from the part of the Bishoprics points to an encouragement of the veneration of the cult from the highest ecclesiastical authority in Istria.[120]

Particular elements in her life could explain the wide ranging appeal of St. Catherine to people of all social backgrounds and of both sexes within medieval society. Her status as a queen made her relatable to the aristocracy; among her fervent devotees were the royal heads of Charles IV or king Richard III of England. Her erudition, on the other hand, made her an appropriate patron for clerics and universities. It appears that a particular connection existed between women and Catherine whose exemplary story of committed religious devotion to

---

[117] Ibid.

[118] See note 6. See also Iva Perčić, *Srednjovjekovno zidno slikarstvo Istre,* catalogue entry number 24.

[119] Orbanić, *Katedra Svetog Nicefora*, 7.

[120] The Parish of Svetvinčenat formed part of the Diocese of Poreč. Both the dioceses of Poreč and Pićan dioceses were under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Aquileia. Further research of the cult of St. Catherine of Alexandria in Istria and Northern Adriatic might lead to some clues on the reasons and commissioners that stood behind the building of the Church of St. Catherine in Lindar and its iconographic program.

Christianity and virginity made her an obvious role model for medieval Christian women.[121] Accordingly, the entries in the first Glagolitic baptismal register of the Parish of Lindar (1591-1648) reveal that Catherine was the most common name for girls in Lindar—every sixth one was given the name of the patron saint.[122] Although made on the basis of the charter two centuries younger than the painting of the Living Cross image, the statistics is still indicative of a cult deeply embedded in the life of Lindar's community and its women in particular.

Presuming themselves to be under the protective aegis of their patron saint, Lindarians might have contributed to the representation of St. Catherine as the second mystical bride of Christ in the Living Cross depicted in their parish church. She is a sort of *Mater misericordiae* we saw displayed in the twin image next to the Living Cross in Koprzywnica. If in the Middle Ages images were "surrogates" for what they represent, then the figure of St. Catherine illustrated within the Living Cross signified for the Lindarians an immediate access of their saintly advocate to Christ, and, thus, a more effective plea for salvation on their behalf.[123] Through her illustration Lindarians became part of the image; like the sculpted faithful in the Living Cross relief in Landshut, they merged with the purgatorial dead in a mixed congregation of anxious, salvation-seeking *corpus mysticum*.[124] One of the Glagolitic graffiti engraved on the border between St. Catherine and Crucifixion implores: "Help me God!"[125]

Besides the theological frame of reference, wide acceptance of bridal imagery was due to strong secular connotations of marriage that levelled Christian religious ideals with personal life experience. It was Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1154) and the Cistercian cultural circle that significantly elaborated these psycho-spiritual aspects of bridal symbolism.[126] Beguine mystics

---

[121] Schaus and Jaritz, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, 115.
[122] Doblanović, "Crtice o stanovništvu Lindara," 31.
[123] Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 1.
[124] Timmermann, "Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut," 196.
[125] *POMOZI BOŽE*, Fučić, *Glagoljski natpisi*, 232.
[126] Bernard of Clairvaux's writings expound on three manifestations of bridal imagery: Ecclesia, the Virgin Mary, and the human soul. Schaus and Jaritz, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, 94–95.

such as Mechthild of Magdeburg and Hadewijch of Antwerp embraced the bridal metaphor of spiritual union of a noble woman that is transformed through love into divinity, at times adapting courtly love comparisons.[127] Bridal (affective or love) mysticism could have also been experienced through a vision of a marriage ceremony with Christ, as in the famous case of St. Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) who, allegedly, received stigmata in the form of a wedding ring.[128]

From a feminist perspective, medieval bridal imagery may be framed as a paradoxical and dualist metaphor, which concurrently fortified celibacy and aroused romantic or erotic fantasy.[129] Nuptial trope of virgin bridal was a continuation of the patriarchal societal norms medieval society inherited from antiquity that applied a double standard to female social and sexual roles. Theological sermons and treatises problematizing a female intellectual, behavioural, and physical being, from St. Paul and St. Augustine onwards, propagated this dualism of virginity and chastity versus carnality and female sexuality.[130]

Indeed, from its biblical origins, bridal imagery was circumscribed by its polar opposite, the prostitute (Hos 1:2). The rhetoric of this binary opposition was tendentiously extended to the Ecclesia and Synagogue pair.[131] The former was idealized as a single chance of salvation through virginity and acceptance of Christ, fortified in Lindar with the follow-up of a champion of faith St. Catherine. The latter was demonised by Christian religious doctrine, underlining the condemnation of the Jewish perverse belief (*perfidia*) and transgression when joined with Eve in the progressively heightened rhetoric of the Living Cross images.

---

[127] Schaus and Jaritz, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, 95.

[128] It is pointed out within the same volume that other than embracing the bridal image, some of the medieval female mystics wanted to avoid it altogether: "Hildegard of Bingen and the very Catherine of Siena went out of their way to avoid referring to themselves as "Brides of Christ," or using the Song of Songs in any self-referential way, although their male confessors, spiritual directors, and biographers had no qualms about remembering them this way." Ibid., 139.

[129] Ibid., 95.

[130] Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture*, 15.

[131] Schaus and Jaritz, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, 95.

# 3. The Living Cross Image: Ideology for the People

"Holy images were never the affair of religion alone, but also always of society, which

expressed itself in and through religion."[132]

Theological framing is only one possible approach in an interpretation of a religious image. Besides being involved with Christian religious practice, medieval imagery also mirrors the particular ideological contexts of its creation. In the Living Cross image represented in the Westphalian diptych, the Pope receives communion from Mary in a strong visual association between the Pope and the Eucharist sacrament. The displayed Communion stands as a symbol of both theological and political affirmation of the Chair of St. Peter as directly appointed by Christ to rule his body on Earth and those who deny that sacred right are fatally deceived, just like Adam pictured receiving the skull of death from Eve on the opposite side of the cross.

The early Living Cross allegories show conspicuous variations of the basic iconographic pattern (see Chapter 2.1.). Still, apart from the images in Lindar and Koprzywnica, they all had one common denominator—the figure of the Pope. The figure becomes particularly indicative if we take into consideration the shared time context of the images with the Western Schism (1378-1417), their spatial concentration in Central Europe and the northern Adriatic, and their complete absence in parts of Western Europe that endorsed the Avignon popes.[133]

The figure of the Pope was replaced in later Living Cross images with a more generic and politically neutral figure of a priest celebrating a mass. Sometimes that priest was illustrated as St. Gregory in the Mass of St. Gregory theme developed in Italy concurrently with the Living Cross imagery, and by the end of the fifteenth century incorporated into the

---

[132] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 3.

[133] On the history of Western Schism, see Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M. Izbicki, eds., *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

patchwork of the Living Cross iconography.[134] The reason the Pope became obsolete in the

later Living Cross imagery seems to be related to the passing of the schismatic crisis in 1417.[135]

The reunited Church was thereafter focused on making the elusive yet cardinal Christian dogma

of Eucharistic transubstantiation perceptible and intelligible to the congregation. New

categories of liturgical props—monstrance and sacrament house—together with the didactic

and allegorical representations of Christ as the iconic Man of Sorrows—the Mass of St.

Gregory or the Living Cross images—were all employed to sustain Christ's real presence in

the Eucharistic mystery.[136]

The figure of the Pope in the Living Cross image is not a representation of any particular

historical character, but a figure symbolic of a forty-year long desire for a single papal

authority.[137] Since the religious authority of the pope was claimed by two pretending pontiffs

(and at the height of the schism crisis in 1410s by three) the ecclesiastical hierarchy under the

vacant throne of St. Peter started to crumble from within, as confidence in the laity stated to

crumble from without. At the same time, insistent reform movements questioning the

prominence of the clergy over the parish laity gained momentum with the Hussite heresy in

Bohemia. In this context, the Living Cross could have been conceived as part of a counter

discourse of the Church—the instrumentalisation of art employed in a coordinated effort to

strengthen the shaken authority over its parishes. That is, designed to demonstrate the might of

the Church over evil of all kinds, the Living Cross was most probably actively appropriated by

the preaching clergy to serve their doctrinal and ideological needs.

The peak years of the schism crisis, between the Council of Pisa in 1409 and the Council

of Constance in 1415, is also the time when the Living Cross paintings in Lindar and Poniky

---

[134] The first display of the Mass of St. Gregory image was around 1385 in the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem in Rome. Timmermann, "A View of the Eucharist on the Eve of the Reformation," 378.
[135] Dušan Buran, "Veľká Západná Schizma," 56.
[136] On the representation of the Eucharist mystery in the visual arts of the post-schismatic period, see Timmermann, "A View of the Eucharist on the Eve of the Reformation."
[137] Buran, "Veľká Západná Schizma," 56.

were executed. Carlo Ginzburg, in his inquiry into late medieval and early modern witchcraft, popular belief, related trial records and ecclesiastical tracts in Northern Italy, included an example related to 1409 that I find relevant for the framing of the puzzling occurrence of the newly coined iconography of the Living Cross in a secluded Istrian countryside area.[138] Namely, when the council gathered in Pisa and selected the Franciscan Archbishop of Milan as Pope Alexander V, the new pontiff issued a Bull addressed to the Franciscan Inquisitor Ponce Fougeyron. The Inquisitor supervised a wide area of the Alpine dioceses in north-west Italy and Switzerland and, according to the Bull, found groups of Christians joined by Jews that "had established and clandestinely spread new sects and forbidden rituals."[139] The Bull concluded that more attention and means should be given to perform further inquisition in the area. One Living Cross image is preserved precisely in that area, in the Chapel of the Holy Cross in Mondovi (Fig. 35).

It follows from the Ginzburgian example that a dissonance between the novel iconography of the Living Cross allegory and otherwise slowly paced changes of pictorial style and iconography of the provincial area might not be such a surprising occurrence if we perceive the eternal triumph of Ecclesia and the ultimate demise of her enemies in the allegory as an expression of the fear of losing institutional power. The schism-ridden Church struggled to restore control amidst their own disordered ranks as well as in the most distant parish church and community. Ginzburg's account is a case in point of how particularly difficult and crucial for the Church it was to establish control and discipline over the devotional practices of the parishes in isolated rural areas like the Alpine and North Adriatic sub-Alpine regions, with a high potential for clandestine and rebellious behaviour that could have passed unnoticed before the anxious and conflict-ridden wandering eye of the Church.

---

[138] Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (London: Penguin Books, 1992).
[139] Ibid., 68.

The medieval parish of Lindar formed part of the small rural Bishoprics of Pićan, within the Patriarchate of Aquileia (Fig. 36).[140] According to the historical sources, from the second half of the fourteenth century the Glagolitic clergy, noble families and parishioners within the Pićan bishopric were considerably dismayed by the abrupt replacement of several of the Pićan bishops by the Avignon and Roman Popes. Namely, when the Avignon Pope Innocent VI transferred Bishop Demetrio Matafari (b. 1345-1354) to Nin, he also issued a Bull addressed to the clergy and parishioners of the Bishopric of Pićan, the Aquileian Patriarch, and Count Albert of Gorizia, which reiterated the right of the papal authority to exchange a bishop without being contested by any of the stated parties. The versatile papal practice was once again contested several decades later, and this time the protest came from the House of Habsburg to the Chair of St. Peter in Rome. In 1396 Pope Boniface IX transferred Bishop Heinrich of Wildenstein (b. 1396-ca.1409) from the Bishoprics of Trieste to Pićan due to some controversial selling of the Trieste bishopric's land to the Augustinian order. The bishop, originating from Carinthia, had a supporter in Duke William (d. 1386-1406), who protested to the Pope at such a transfer of a cleric which he labeled as not "being customary in Austrian lands."[141] The extent of this animosity between the papal chair and the Christian community of the Bishoprics of Pićan or the role of Bishop Wildenstein as the possible influences on the omission of the figure of the Pope in the Lindar Living Cross image are at this point open to speculation.

After Bishop Heinrich of Wildenstein died, no major dissatisfaction is reported regarding the appointment of the new bishop that happened at the very time of the painting of the Living Cross in Lindar. On 23 August 1409, Pope Gregory XII selected the Franciscan Pavao from Noster (b. 1409-1416).[142] If we now take into consideration Timmermann's and

---

[140] For historiography on the history of the Dicese of Pićan see note 4.
[141] Franceschi, *Storia Documentata Della Contea Di Pisino*, 325.
[142] Ibid.

Buran's framing of the Living Cross wall paintings in Slovakian Poniky and Žehra with the fervent anti-heretical activity of the monasteries of Franciscan friars in the region, could we then interrelate the dissemination of the Living Cross images in Central Europe and Istria with the ministry of the Franciscan order? [143] Furthermore, could the year 1409 inscribed on the Living Cross scroll be connected with the appointment of the new bishop? And could he have been the iconographic adviser for the wall painting repertoire in the Chapel of St. Catherine? I deem worthwhile bearing these possibilities in mind in further studies of the early Living Cross imagery, and the Lindar image in particular.[144]

The Living Cross image in Poniky was executed only a few years later than Lindar: in 1415, the year of the Council in Constance and execution of the leader of the Hussite heresy. There the Pope is depicted holding the same cross-staff as Ecclesia in front of him, gazing with devotion towards the Crucifixion. Timmermann argues that the pair could be considered as a gloss on the event when the Church of Rome regained its unity under one pope, monopolized the Eucharistic sacrament and struck a heavy blow to the Hussite heresy.[145]

Indeed, the broader context of the Western Schism and reform movements strongly suggests that the represented universal religious order in the Living Cross image is a polemical attempt towards a greater uniformity and centralization within the Church. Read against this

---

[143] Achim Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix," 153. See also Buran, *Studien zur Wandmalerei um 1400 in der Slowakei*.

[144] Pazin County (ger. Grafschaft Mitterburg, ital. Contea di Pisino) was founded in 1158 when Count Meinhard of Schwarzenburg (Cernigrad), vassal of the marquess of Istria and of the Holy Roman emperor, and advocate of the Bishoprics of Poreč, acquired for himself the title of the count of Istria (*comes de Istria*). After his daughter Matilda, married to Count Engelbert III of Gorizia, inherited the title of the countess of Istria in 1183, Pazin County was joined to the House of Gorizia, Aquileian advocates in Istria. Subsequently, after the death of Count Albert IV of Gorizia in 1374 it was transferred in accordance with the succession treaty (1364) to the House of Habsburg. The Habsburg pledged the County first to the Devinski family (1379) and then to the Walsee family (1391) until 1435 when Pazin County reverted to direct Habsburg control exercised through the territorial administration in Carinthia. On the medieval history of Pazin County, see Camillo de Franceschi, *Storia documentata della Contea di Pisino* (Venezia: Societa' Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria, 1964). See also Miroslav Bertoša, "Povijesni Fragmenti O Lindaru (Od Srednjega Vijeka Do Početka XIX. St.)" [Historical Records of Lindar (from the Middle Ages until the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century], *Historijski Zbornik*, 49 (1996): 177–92; Matjaž Bizjak, "Habsburške deželnoknežje posesti v notranjosti Istre v luči obračunov iz leta 1439 [Habsburg possessions in inner Istria in light of audits from 1439]," *Histria* 4 (2014): 13–27.

[145] Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix: Some Observations on the Iconography of the Living Cross," 153.

background, the early Living Cross images take on an added significance: they represent a perpetual triumph of ecclesiastical power and authority over religious dissent, strategically employed and disseminated in remote rural parishes as soon as they was created.

The Living Cross in the Lower-Rhenish panel displays the boldest and most straightforward ideological and political message. In lieu of Ecclesia, the Pope and the Emperor join forces in holding a single cross staff, backed by the entourage of cardinals and priests. Their weakened opponents are the orientally bedecked Jews who serve as an emblem of not only all evil and heresy, but also as the looming threat of the Ottoman crescent-staff.

The highly ordered microcosm of the Living Cross imagery is meant to demonstrate the triumph of order over Late Medieval political and religious havoc. It was a lesson to the faithful and the unruly about proper hierarchy and subordination—the way the Church believed the ideally ordered world ought to be, in contrast to how disordered it was in reality.

# Conclusion

The aim of this study has been threefold: to produce a stylistic analysis of the Living Cross image depicted in the Chapel of St. Catherine in Lindar in order to firmly position it within the Istrian medieval countryside wall painting; to establish connections between the iconographies of the Lindar Living Cross and the early European occurrences of the image; and to inquire into the historical contexts that informed the making of the Living Cross image and relate them with the occurrence of the Living Cross image in the Parish of Lindar.

In the first chapter I demonstrated how the Lindar master emerged from the Istrian hinterland wall painting tradition that Fučić, based on the geographical proximity and style affiliation, named the "countryside Romanesque" group. In the light of the newly discovered fragments of the wall painting on the eastern wall of the Chapel of St. Catherine, I revaluated the correspondence of style detected by Fučić between the painting in Lindar and the wall painting cycle in the small thirteenth century graveyard Church of the Holy Cross in Butoniga, and confirmed the stylistic interrelation between the two wall painting cycles. The masters of the two cycles could have belonged to the same workshop due to the same mechanically stencilled floral pattern applied on St. Catherine's dress in the Living Cross image and on the dress of a female figure from the fragment on the eastern wall in Lindar as well as on the two painted fabrics in Butoniga. Measuring of the stencilled pattern is needed in order to firmly confirm the potential commission of the same Istrian hinterland workshop to decorate the churches in Lindar and Butoniga. Due to the corresponding style characterized as a blend of the Alpine Gothic and the north Italian Trecento painting morphed into a simplified and rustic idiom, I dubbed the pair as the "Gothic countryside" group. Further analysis of the Istrian hinterland fresco cycles from the first half of the fifteenth century, e.g. in the nearby Pićan and

Gračišće, will enable forming of the new pictorial and iconographic affiliations with the Gothic countryside group.

Taking into account the lack of certain textual or visual sources that would unequivocally determine the origin and iconography of the alleged common source of the early Living Cross imagery, in the second chapter I reassessed the proposed geographical and chronological systemising of the early Living Cross images both before and after the discoveries in Central Europe. Similarities between the early Living Cross imagery propagated through localities ranging from North Italy to Central Europe indicate the existence of the same or a similar basic common source. The variations of the basic iconographic scheme—e.g. the "twin images" in Koprzywnica and Bologna or the assimilation of the Original Sin iconography in the Westphalian diptych and Žehra—point to a certain freedom in the early application of the motive throughout the territory of its dissemination, as if the hypothesised original model was taken, or suggested to be taken, only as a general outline. On account of the iconographic and stylistic features of the Living Cross image in Lindar, I demonstrated that its iconographic variations do not affiliate the Lindar image with the early Living Cross images in northern Italy or Central Europe. Considering the stylistic and iconographic interrelation of the Istrian countryside Gothic group with the International Gothic style of the Alpine pictorial circle, I hypothesised that the iconography of the Lindar Living Cross (the Heavenly Jerusalem and Hell in particular) is indicative of a possible Alpine provenance of its iconographic source, or of an "adjustment" of the alleged common source to the fanciful Alpine Gothic pictorial circle.

In chapter two I demonstrated how the Romanesque referencing in the rendering of the crucified Christ in Lindar, and especially the omission of his wounds that would bleed into Ecclesia's chalice, is not in complete accordance with this Gothic crucifixion type of other early Living Cross images that represent Christ in his mortal agony. Moreover, the Living Cross wall painting in Lindar is placed in the west corner of the north wall of the Chapel of St.

Catherine, in a position which—within a rigorously ordered iconographic program and differentiated liturgical functions of a church space—immediately gives it eschatological overtones. The two propositions make Lindar a case in point of the inherent eschatological and judicial readings of the Living Cross imagery, complementing an otherwise Redemptive and Eucharistic iconography of the metahistorical Crucifixion that usually functioned as a scenographic backdrop for the *transubstantiatio* mystery celebrated in a Christian mass (Koprzywnica, Poniky, Thörl). Lastly, I argued that the unique representations of the angel and the devil pair in Lindar points to the appropriation of the right-left opposition of the iconographic concept of the Last Judgement and represents further evidence for a singularly conceived eschatological reading of the Lindar Living Cross image.

The standard symmetrical disposition of a Living Cross image is somewhat "adjusted" in Lindar. Due to the insertion of the figure of St. Catherine to the right of Ecclesia, the cross itself is dislodged from the central axis and pushed towards the left side of the triangular pictorial field. While examining the principles of this particular pictorial composition of the Living Cross representation in Lindar, I argued that the possible motive for the unique inclusion of the figure of St. Catherine in the image might be the width of the pictorial field allotted to the Living Cross image that left sufficient empty space to include the patron saint. Considering the cultural and religious context of the local worship of the cult of St. Catherine, I hypothesized that the master and his commissioner took advantage of this additional space and decided to make the image more approachable to the parishioners and enhance the communicative potential of its doctrine by including the figure of St. Catherine.

There is little evidence on the precise historical context of the emergence of the Living Cross image at the turn of the fifteenth century, but it occurred within a restricted timespan and over a broad area. In chapter two, I discussed the possibility that the late medieval narratives of Jewish abuse had a decisive influence on the lurid visual rhetoric in the displayed treatment

of Synagogue in the Living Cross image and in its dissemination. I continued with further historical contextualization of the early Living Cross iconography in chapter three where I explored the hypothesis that the depiction of the figure of the Pope in most of the early Living Cross images might be associated with the challenges of the Great Western Schism and the anticlerical preaching of heretic movements which forced the Church to deploy doctrinal instruments that would inspire through visual representation a greater ecclesiastical uniformity and centralized hierarchy.

I took into consideration Timmermann's and Buran's framing of the Living Cross wall paintings in Slovakian Poniky and Žehra with the fervent anti-heretical activity of the monasteries of Franciscan friars in the region, and interrelated them with the papal appointment of the Franciscan Pavao from Noster as bishop of Pićan in 1409. I also traced back to the fourteenth century a continuing discontent of the clergy and parishioners of the Bishoprics of Pićan with the versatile papal practice of naming new bishops that culminated in 1396 with the written protest of Duke William of Habsburg at the transfer of bishop Heinrich of Wildenstein from the bishoprics of Trieste to Pićan. Given the state of the available historiography on the history of the Bishorics of Pićan, I was at this point only able to raise questions on the connection of the two appointed bishops, Heinrich of Wildenstein and Pavao from Noster, and their potential advising role in the design of the iconographic repertoire for the parish Church of St. Catherine. I believe my hypothesis about the involvement of the Franciscan order in the dissemination of the Living Cross imagery should be explored on further in the studies of the early Living Cross imagery in general and in historical contextualisation of the Lindar image in particular.

My ambitions in writing this thesis have been limited by my still narrow knowledge of both pictorial and historical contexts of the late medieval wall painting in Istria. It is my hope, however, that the suggested conclusions will provide further avenues of research for the

legitimate placing of pictorial-iconographic features of the Living Cross image in Lindar into

its particular socio-historical context.

# Bibliography

Bal, Mieke. *Reading Art?* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Balog, Zdenko. "Živi križ u Lindaru: ikonografsko-ikonološka studija" (The Living Cross at Lindar: an iconographic and iconological study). *Peristil* 51, 1 (2008).

Belting, Hans. *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Bensi, Paolo, and Maria Rosa Montiani Bensi. "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente in ambito emiliano e ferrarese." *Musei ferraresi*, 13/14 (1984): 161–82.

Bertoša, Miroslav. "Povijesni fragmenti o Lindaru (Od srednjega vijeka do početka XIX. st.)" [Historical records of Lindar (from the Middle Ages until the beginning of the Nineteenth century]. *Historijski zbornik*, 49 (1996): 177–92.

Bistrović, Željko. "Gotičko zidno slikarstvo u Istri (novi prilozi jednoj budućoj sintezi)" [Gothic wall painting in Istria (new contributions to a future synthesis)]. *Annales, Series historia et sociologia*, 2 (2007): 277–90.

———. "Nove spoznaje o crkvi Sv. Marije 'od Sniga' u Maružinima" [New insights on the Church of St. Mary 'of Snow' in Maružine]. *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske*, 31–32 (2011): 193–206.

Bizjak, Matjaž. "Habsburške deželnoknežje posesti v notranjosti Istre v luči obračunov iz leta 1439" [Habsburg possessions in inner Istria in light of audits from 1439]. *Histria* 4 (2014): 13–27.

Buran, Dušan. *Studien zur Wandmalerei um 1400 in der Slowakei: die Pfarrkirche St. Jakob in Leutschau und die Pfarrkirche St. Franziskus Seraphicus in Poniky*. Weimar: VDG, 2002.

———. "Veľká západná schizma, pápežská propaganda a umenie okolo roku 1400: k počiatkom ikonografie tzv. Živého kríža" [The Great Western Schizm, papal propaganda and art around 1400: towards the beginning of the iconography of the so-called Living Cross]. *Umenie Slovenska-Jeho Historicke Funkcie*, 1999, 53–59.

Čikić, Dolores. "Judin poljubac: analiza i datacija vojne opreme" [The Kiss of Judas: an analysis and dating of military gear]. edited by Tomislav Galović. Malinska: Općina Malinska-Dubašnica, 2009.

Cullen, Christopher M. *Bonaventure*. Great Medieval Thinkers. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Dab-Kalinowska, Barbara. "XIV-wieczne malowidło koprzywnickie: misterium biblijne i kosmologiczne" [The Fourteenth century wall painting in Koprzywnica as a bibical and cosmolgial mystery]. *Artium Quaestiones*, 1 (1979): 55–79.

Davidson, Clifford, and Thomas H. Seiler, eds. *The Iconography of Hell*. Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 17. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1992.

Doblanović, Danijela. "Crtice o stanovništvu Lindara na kraju 16. i u prvoj polovici 17. stoljeća" [Notes on the inhabitants of Lindar at the end of the sixteenth century and in the first half of the seventeenth century]. *Vjesnik Istarskog Arhiva* 20 (2013): 23–38.

Emmerson, Richard Kenneth. *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984.

Franceschi, Camillo, de. *Storia documentata della Contea di Pisino*. Venezia: Societa' Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria, 1964.

Fučić, Branko. "Butoniga." In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], 234–42. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

————. *Glagoljski natpisi* [Glagolitic Inscriptions]. Djela Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti /Opera Academiae scientiarum et artium slavorum meridionalium 57. Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1982.

————. "Hibridno i folklorno u ikonografiji" [The hybrid and folklore features in iconography]. In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], 82–90. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

————. *Istarske freske* [Istrian wall painting]. Umjetnički spomenici Jugoslavije. Zagreb: Zora, 1963.

————. "Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja" [Istrian countryside Romanesque wall painting]. In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], 91–135. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

————. "Slika i arhitektonski prostor u srednjovjekovnome slikarstvu Istre" [Image and architecture in medieval painting in Istria]. In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], 11–30. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

————. "Sveta Marija od Sniga u Marožinima" [St. Mary of Snow in Maružine]. In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian Cultural Heritage 2], 301–5. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

————. "Sveti Kuzma i Damjan u Boljunu" [SS. Cosmas and Damian in Boljun]. In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], 290–300. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

————. "Sveti Petar u Trvižu" [St. Peter in Trviž]. In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], 306–17. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

————. "Živi križ u Lindaru" [The Living Cross in Lindar]. In *Iz istarske spomeničke baštine 2* [Istrian cultural heritage 2], 264–72. Redovita izdanja za članstvo 13. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2007.

Füglister, Robert Louis. *Das Lebende Kreuz: Ikonographisch-ikonologische Untersuchung der Herkunft und Entwicklung einer spätmittelalterlichen Bildidee und ihrer Verwurzelung im Wort*. Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1964.

Gilchrist, Roberta. *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*. London: Penguin Books, 1992.

Grković, Sanja. "Odnos slike i arhitekture u srednjovjekovnom graditeljstvu Istre" [Relationship between wall painting and architecture in medieval architecture in Istria]. MA thesis, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 1995.

Hundsbichler, Helmut. "Devils in Visual Proximity." In *Angels, Devils: The Supernatural and Its Visual Representation*, edited by Gerhard Jaritz, 51–73. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011.

Ivančević, Radovan. "Gotička arhitektura Istre" [Gothic architecture in Istria]. Ph.D. dissertation, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 1965.

————. "Uvod u ikonologiju" [Introduction to iconology]. In *Leksikon ikonografije, liturgike i simbolike zapadnog kršćanstva* [Lexicon of the iconography, liturgy, and symbolism of Western Christianity], edited by Anđelko Badurina, 2nd ed., 13–82. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990.

Jenkins, Jacqueline, and Katherine J. Lewis, eds. *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe*. Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts 8. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003.

Kos, Koraljka. *Musikinstrumente im mittelalterlichen Kroatien: Beitrag zur allgemeinen Organographie der Musikinstrumente und zur mittelalterlichen Musikgeschichte.* Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1972.

———. "Muzički instrumenti u srednjovjekovnoj likovnoj umjetnosti Hrvatske" [Musical instruments in medieval visual arts in Croatia]." *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 2 (1969): 167–270.

Levack, Brian. *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Maraković, Nikolina. "The Mural Paintings in St.Fosca's near Peroj (Istria) and Their Specific Place in the Context of European Romanesque." *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 14 (2008): 141–57.

———. "Zidno slikarstvo u Istri od 11. do 13. stoljeća: revalorizacija lokalne umjetničke baštine" [Medieval wall painting in Istria from the Eleventh until the Thirteenth century: revalorisation of the local cultural heritage]. Ph.D. dissertation, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 2009.

Mitchell, W. J. Thomas. Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Mohorovičić, Andrija. "Problem tipološke klasifikacije objekata srednjovjekovne arhitekture na području Istre i Kvarnera" [Problem of typological classification of medieval architecture in Istria and Kvarner]. *Ljetopis JAZU*, 63 (1955): 486–537.

Moore, Robert I. *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250.* 2 edition. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007.

Orbanić, Elvis. *Katedra Svetog Nicefora: povijesna skica Pićanske Biskupije* [The Chair of St. Nicefor: historical overview of the Diocese of Pićan]. Pazin: Josip Turčinović, 2002.

Palmer, Barbara P. "The Inhabitants of Hell: Devils." In *The Iconography of Hell*, edited by Clifford Davidson and Thomas H. Seiler, 20–40. Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 17. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1992.

Perčić, Iva. *Srednjovjekovno zidno slikarstvo Istre: katalog izložb*e [Medieval wall painting in Istria: exhibition catalogue]. Rijeka: Jadranski institut JAZU Rijeka, 1955.

Perica, Branko, ed. *Knjiga o Istri* [A Book about Istria]. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968.

Rollo-Koster, Joëlle, and Thomas M. Izbicki, eds. *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417).* Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History.* Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Schaus, Margaret, and Gerhard Jaritz, eds. *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

Schreckenberg, Heinz. *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History.* New York: Continuum, 1996.

Sheingorn, Pamela. "'Who Can Open the Doors of His Face?': The Iconography of Hell Mouth." In *The Iconography of Hell*, edited by Clifford Davidson and Thomas H. Seiler, 1–19. Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 17. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1992.

Stele, France. *Umetnost v Primorju* [Art in Slovenian Primorska]. Pogledi, 2/3. Ljubljana: Akademska založba, 1940.

Timmermann, Achim. "A View of the Eucharist on the Eve of the Reformation." In *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, edited by Lee Palmer Wandel, 46:365–98. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013.

———. "Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut." In *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, edited by Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg, 183–202. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

———. "The Avenging Crucifix: Some Observations on the Iconography of the Living Cross." *Gesta* 40, no. 2 (2001): 141–60.

Trachtenberg, Joshua. *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993.

Vlahov, Dražen. *Matica krštenih Župe Lindar (1591. – 1667.): Glagoljski zapisi od 1591. do 1648.* [Birth Records of the Parish of Lindar (1591-1667): Glagolitic records from 1591 to 1648]. Glagoljski rukopisi 10. Pazin: Državni arhiv u Pazinu, 2012.

Walsh, Christine. *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe*. Church, Faith, and Culture in the Medieval West. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

# Illustrations



*Figure. 1.* Chapel of St. Catherine, Lindar, turn of the 15th century. Photo in the public domain. Source: Central Istria Tourist board. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.central-istria.com/en.
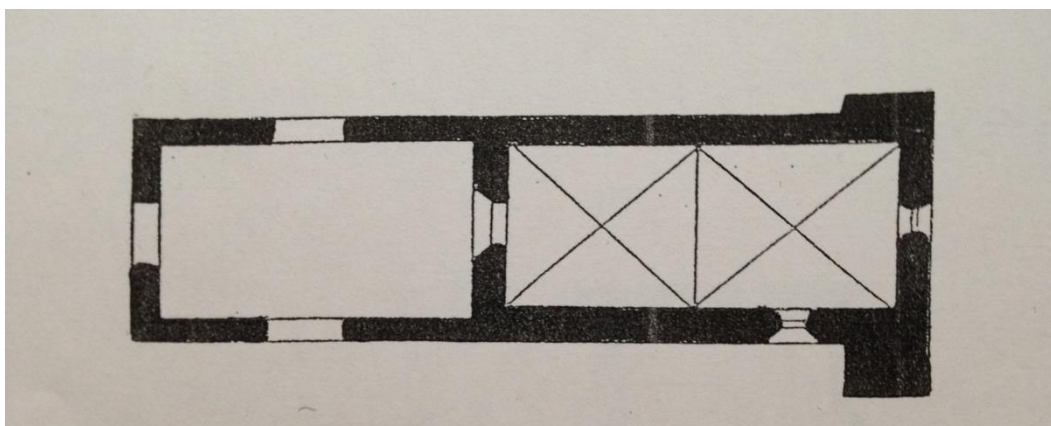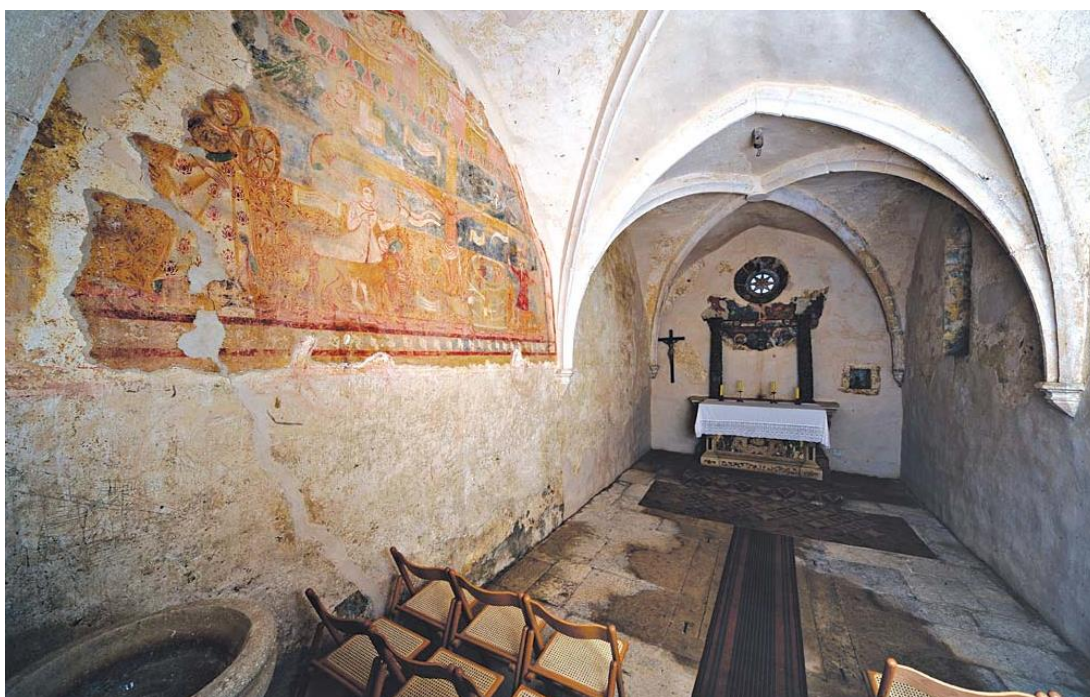


*Figure. 2.* Plan of the Chapel of St. Catherine. Image reproduced from Grković, *Odnos slike i arhitekture u srednjovjekovnom graditeljstvu Istre*, 82.

*Figure. 3.* Church of St. Martin, Lindar, 14<sup>th</sup> century. Photo in the public domain. Source: Central Istria Tourist Board. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.central-istria.com/en.

*Figure. 4.* Interior of the Chapel of St. Catherine. Photo in the public domain. Source: REVITAS. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.revitas.org.

*Figure. 5.* Western wall, Chapel of St. Catherine, Lindar. Photo: Tea Hlača, 2017.
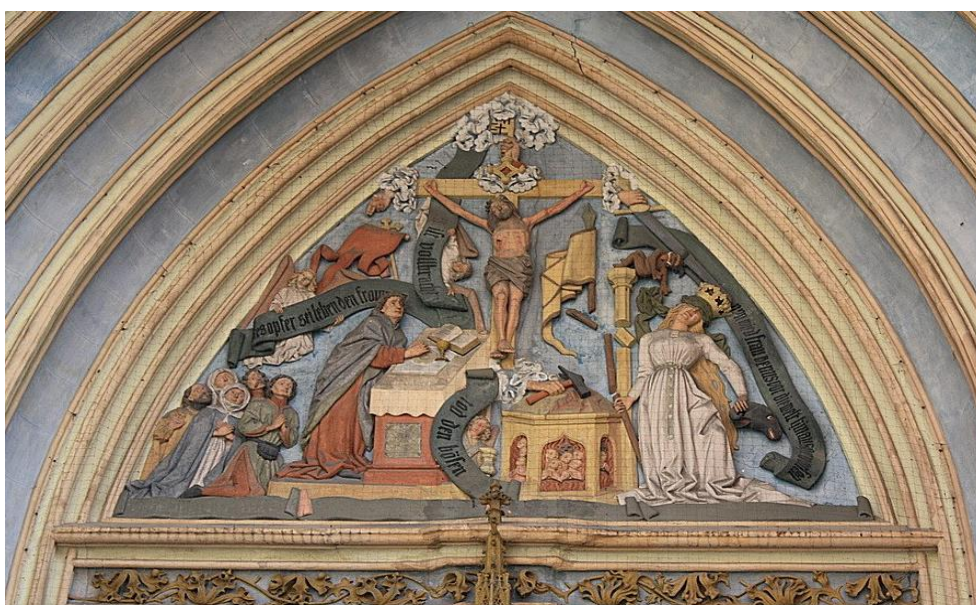


*Figure. 6.* The Living Cross, 1432, relief, west portal tympanum, St. Martin, Landshut. Photo in the public domain. Source: Fotocommunity. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.fotocommunity.de.

*Figure. 7.* Lost fragment of a wall painting, turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, SS. Cosmas and Damian , Boljun. Image reproduced from Bistrović, *Predromaničko i romaničko slikarstvo u Istri*, 27.

*Figure. 8.* Interior, turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Church of St. Eliseus, Draguć. Photo in the public domain. Source: REVITAS. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.revitas.org.

*Figure. 9.* Adoration of the Magi, fresco, southern wall, Church of St. Eliseus, Draguć. Image reproduced from Fučić, *Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja*, 94.

*Figure. 10.* The three patriarchs (?) and Hell, fresco, western wall, Church of St. Eliseus, Draguć. Image reproduced from Fučić, *Romaničko zidno slikarstvo istarskoga ladanja*, 95.

*Figure. 11.* Crucifixion, fresco, northern wall, Church of St. Eliseus, Draguć. Photo in the public domain. Source: REVITAS. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.revitas.org.

*Figure. 12*. The Kiss of Judas and the Denial of Peter, turn of the 15ᵗʰ century, fresco, eastern wall, Chapel of St. Catherine, Lindar. Photo: Tea Hlača, 2017.

*Figure. 13.* Detail of Figure 12. Photo: Tea Hlača, 2017.

*Figure. 14.* Female figure and St. Catherine. Details of Fig. 12 and 21.

*Figure. 15*. Christ, scenery in the Annunciation and the *Maiestas Domini* images. Details of Figure 16.

*Figure. 16.* The Annunciation, the *Maiestas Domini* and the row of apostles, end of the 14th century, fresco, triumphal arch and apse, Church of the Holy Cross, Butoniga. Image courtesy of Željko Bistrović.

87

*Figure. 17.* Detail of Figure 16.



*Figure. 18.* The Adoration of the Magi, fresco, southern wall, Church of the Holy Cross, Butoniga. Photo in the public domain. Source: REVITAS. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.revitas.org.

*Figure. 19.* The Kiss of Judas, turn of the 13th century, fresco, northern wall, SS. Primus and Felician, Čirkoti. Photo in the public domain. Source: REVITAS. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.revitas.org.



*Figure. 20.* Interior, 1381, St. Anthony, Žminj. Photo in the public domain. Source: REVITAS. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.revitas.org.

89

*Figure. 21.* The Living Cross, 1409, fresco, northern wall, St. Catherine, Lindar. Photo in the public domain. Source: REVITAS. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.revitas.org.

90
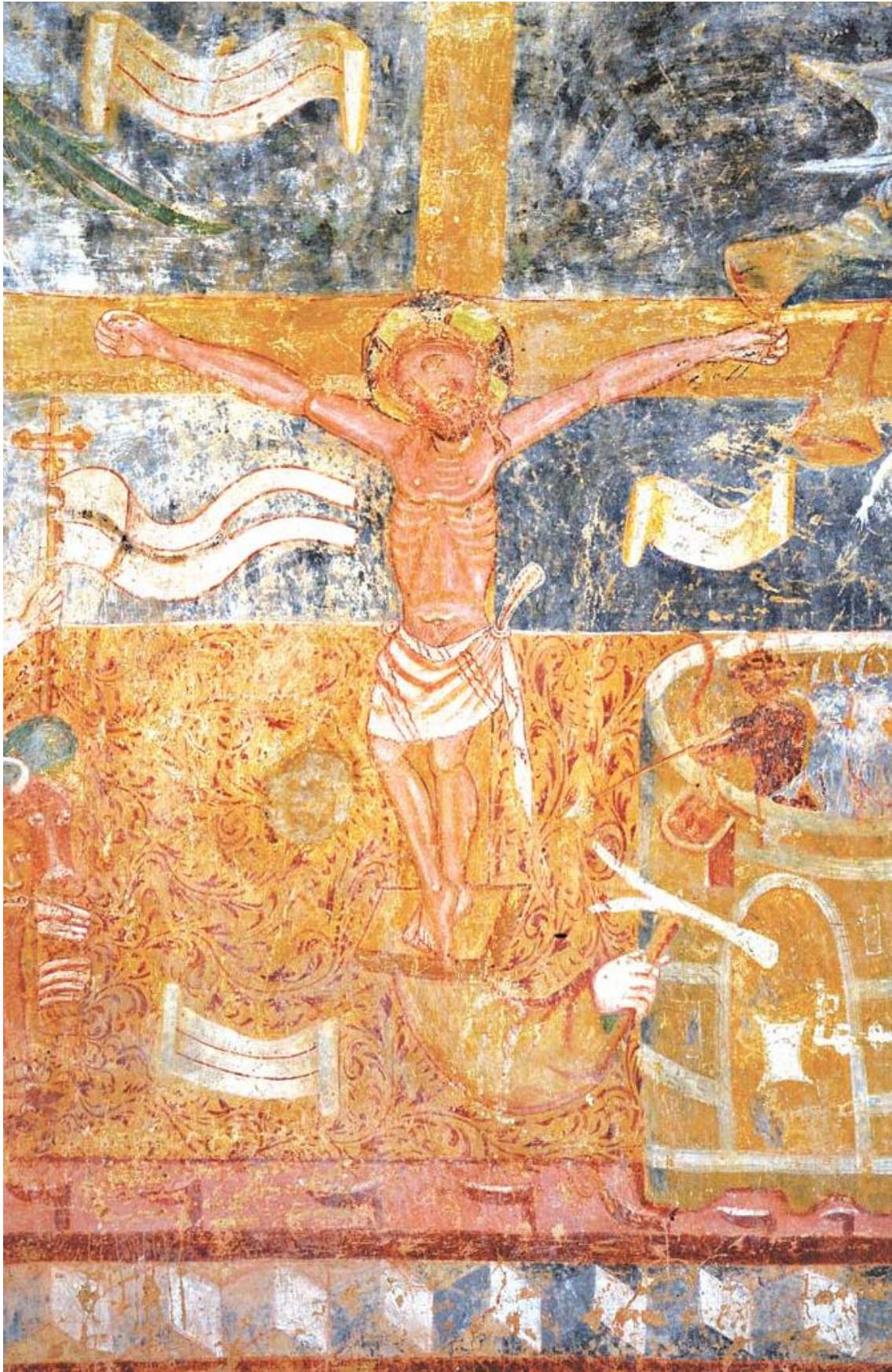
*Figure. 22.* The Living Cross, detail of Figure 21.

91
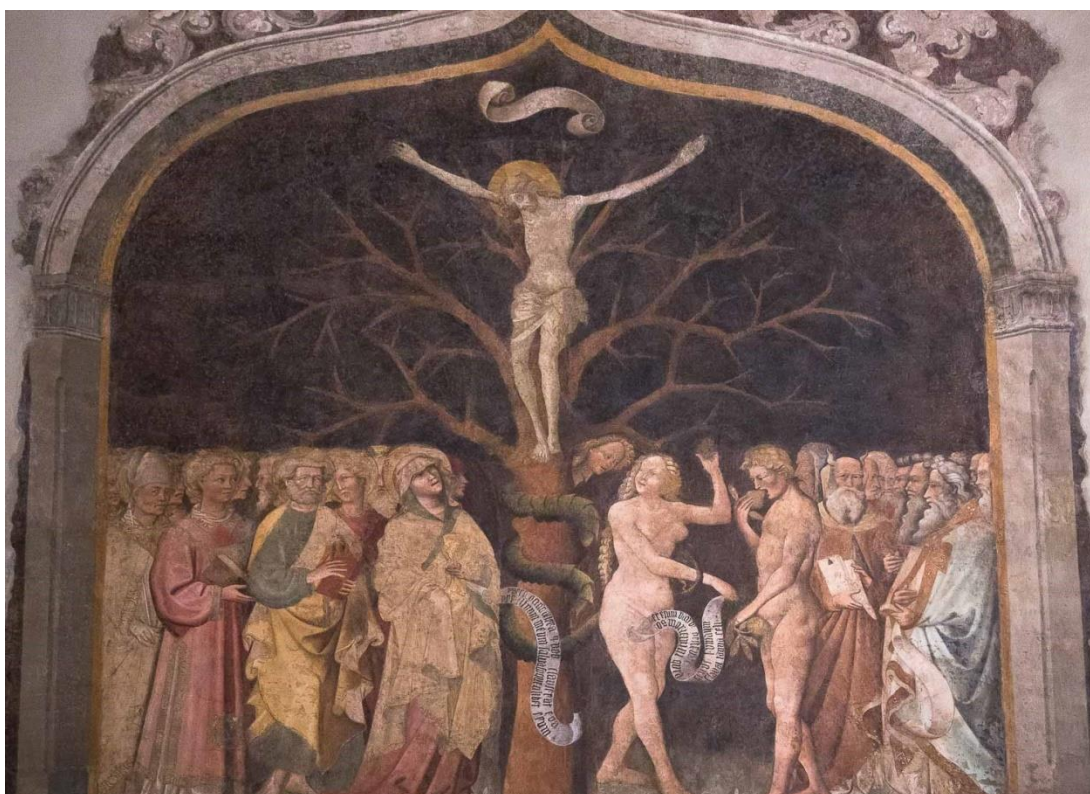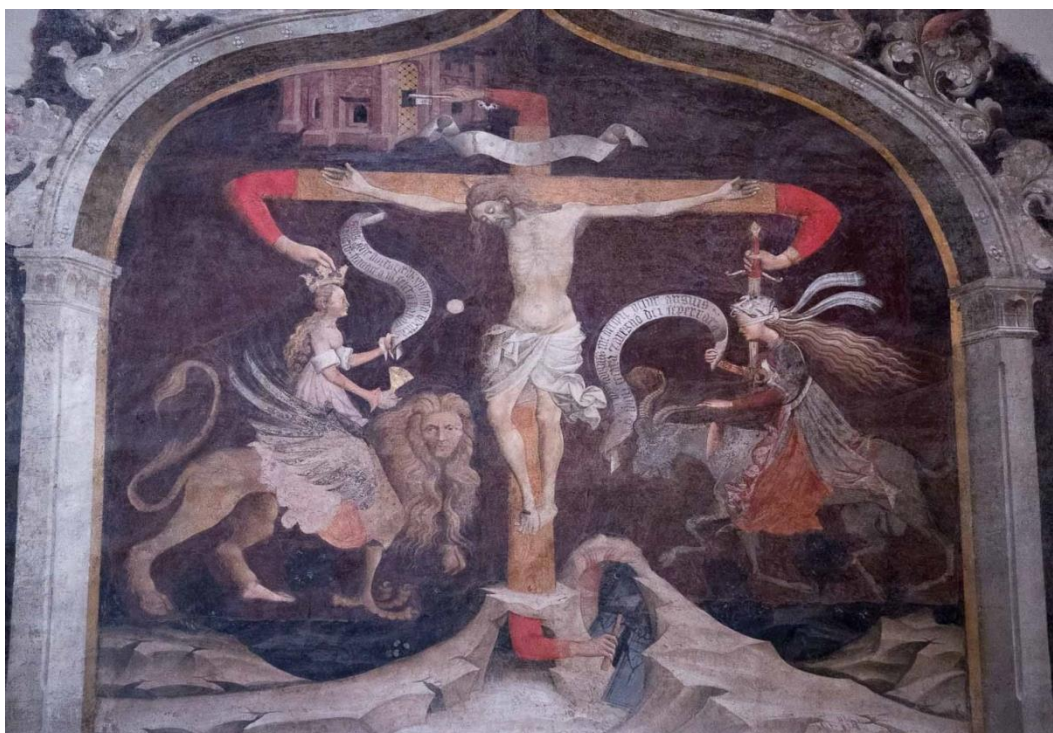
*Figure. 23.* The Living Cross and The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Giovanni da Modena, 1420-21, fresco, Chapel of St. Abundius, Church of St. Petronius, Bologna. Photo in the public domain. Source: Guido Barbi blog. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.guidobarbi.it.
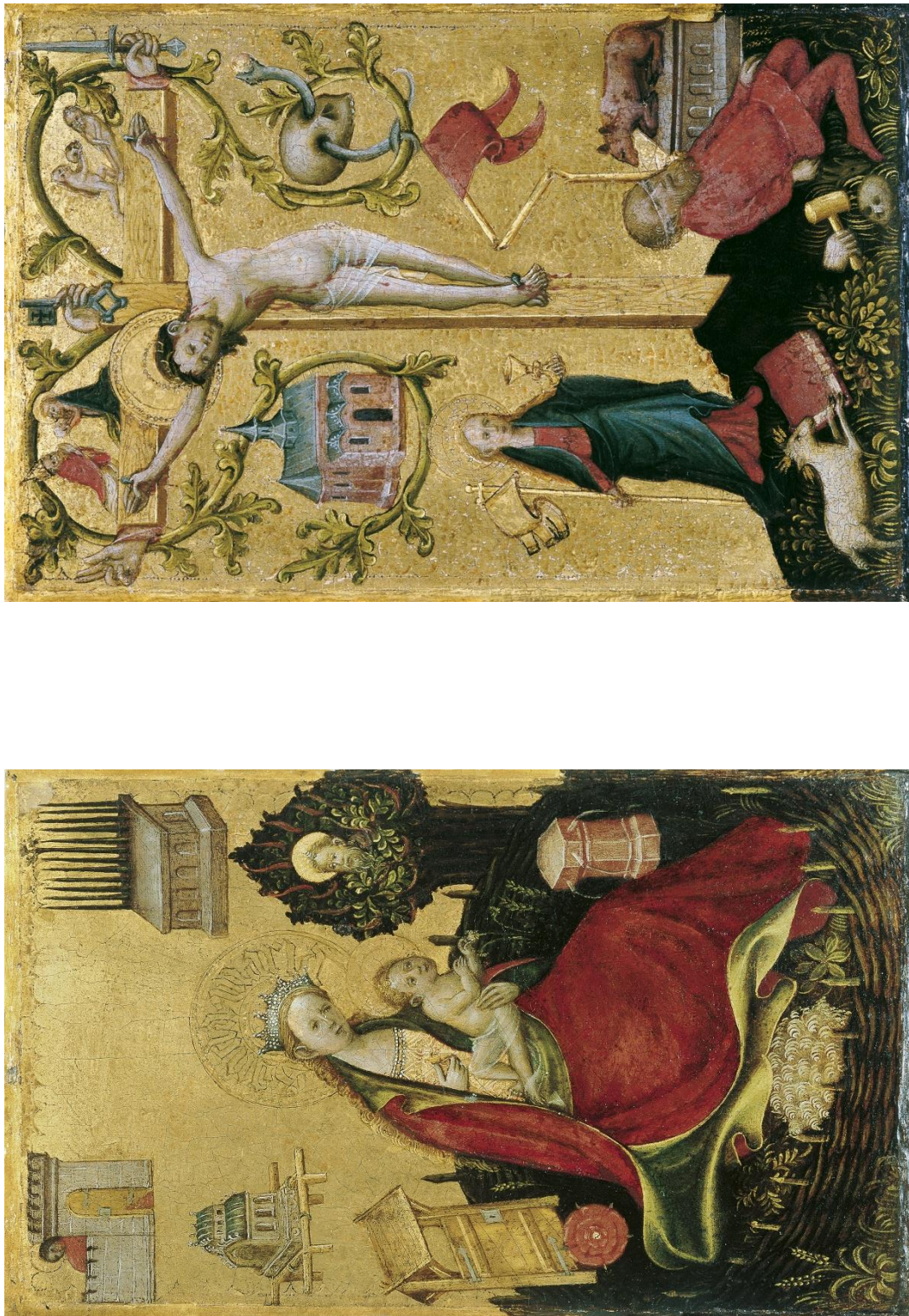
*Figure. 24.* Virgin and Child and The Living Cross, Anonymous German artist active in Westphalia, ca. 1410, diptych, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. Photo in the public domain. Source: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.museothyssen.org/en/homesite-thyssen-en.

93

*Figure. 25.* The Living Cross, Follower of the Master of Saint Veronica active in Cologne, ca. 1395-1420, oil on panel, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. Photo in the public domain. Source: The Art Institute of Chicago. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://www.artic.edu.

*Figure. 26.* Triumphal arch and apse, 1415, St. Francis Seraphim, Poniky. Photo in the public domain. Photo: Marton Kurutz. Source: Panoramio. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://panoramio.com.



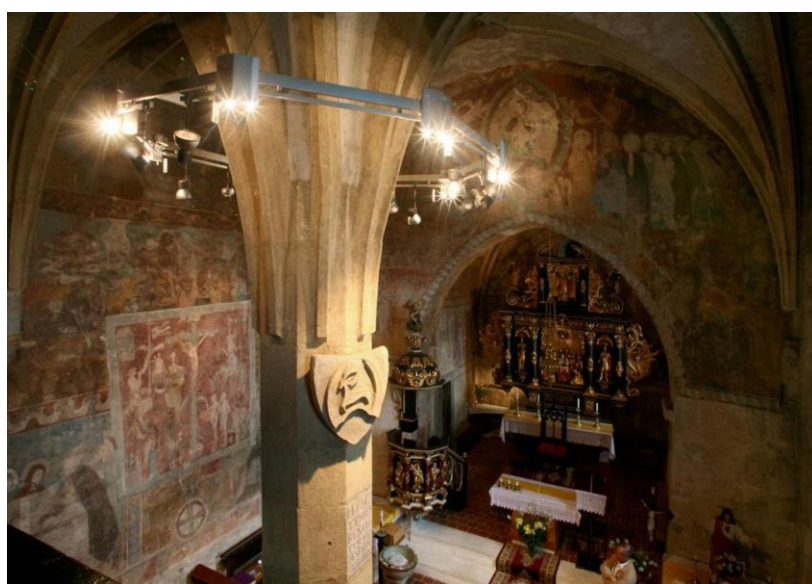*Figure. 27.* The Living Cross, fresco, detail of Figure 27.
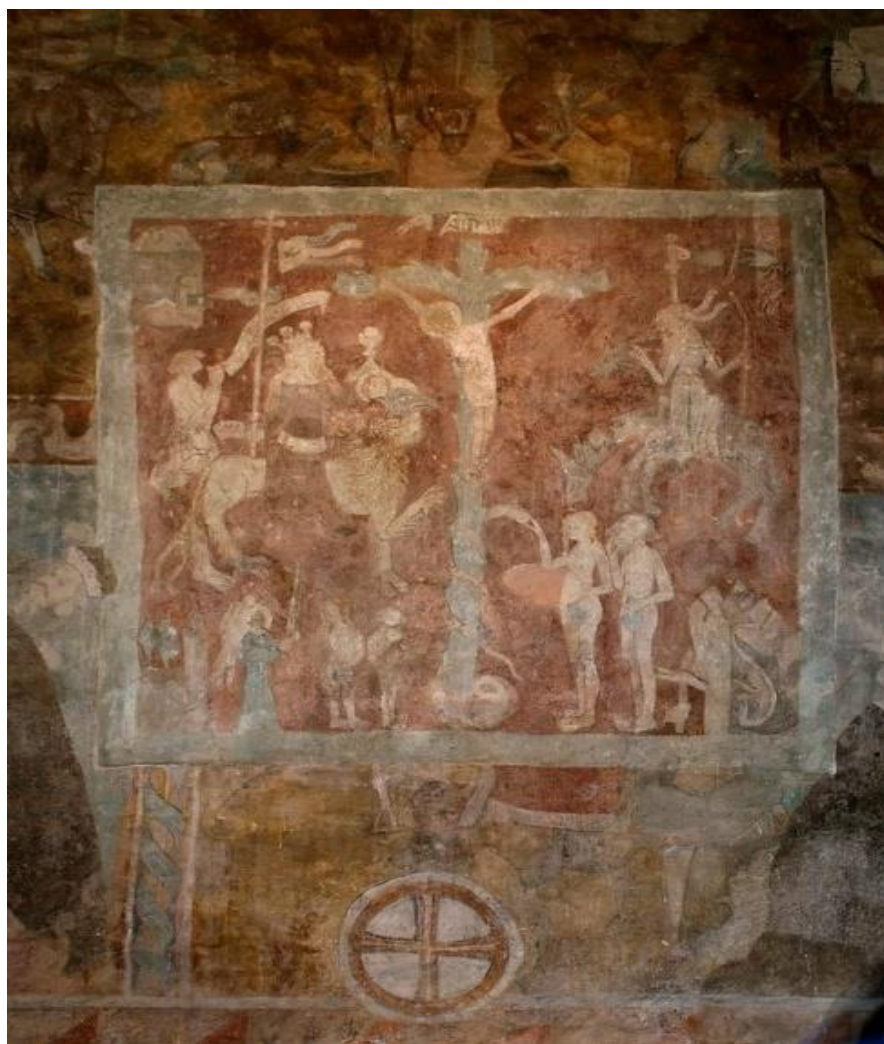
95

*Figure.* 28. The Living Cross, 1420s, fresco, northern wall, Church of the Holy Ghost, Žehra. Photo in the public domain. Source: Travel in Slovakia. Accessed February 23, 2017, http://slovakia.travel/en.

96

*Figure. 29.* The Last Judgement, The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and The Living Cross, fresco, last quarter of the 14th century, southern wall, Cistercian abbey church, Koprzywnica. Photo in the public domain. Source: JEZ. Last accessed February 23, 2017, https://paskonikstronik.blogspot.hu.



*Figure. 30.* The Living Cross, detail of Figure 29.

*Figure. 31.* The Crucifixion, Follower of Paolo Veneziano, first half of the 14th century, oil on panel, The Ringling Museum, Sarsota. Photo in the public domain. Source: The Ringling Museum, Sarsota. Last accessed February 23, 2017, https://www.ringling.org.

*Figure. 32.* The Crucifixion, before 1420, oil on panel, Museo Correr, Venezia. Image reproduced from Bensi and Montiani Bensi, "L' iconografia della Croce Vivente in ambito emiliano e ferrarese," 180.

*Figure. 33. Iustitiia distributive*, Giotto, 1303-09, fresco, Arena Chapel, Padua. Photo in the public domain. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Last accessed February 23, 2017, https://commons.wikimedia.org.

*Figure. 34.* The Living Cross, Thomas von Villach, ca. 1475, fresco, north wall, St. Andrew, Thörl. Photo in the public domain. Photo: Johann Jaritz. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Last accessed February 23, 2017, https://commons.wikimedia.org.
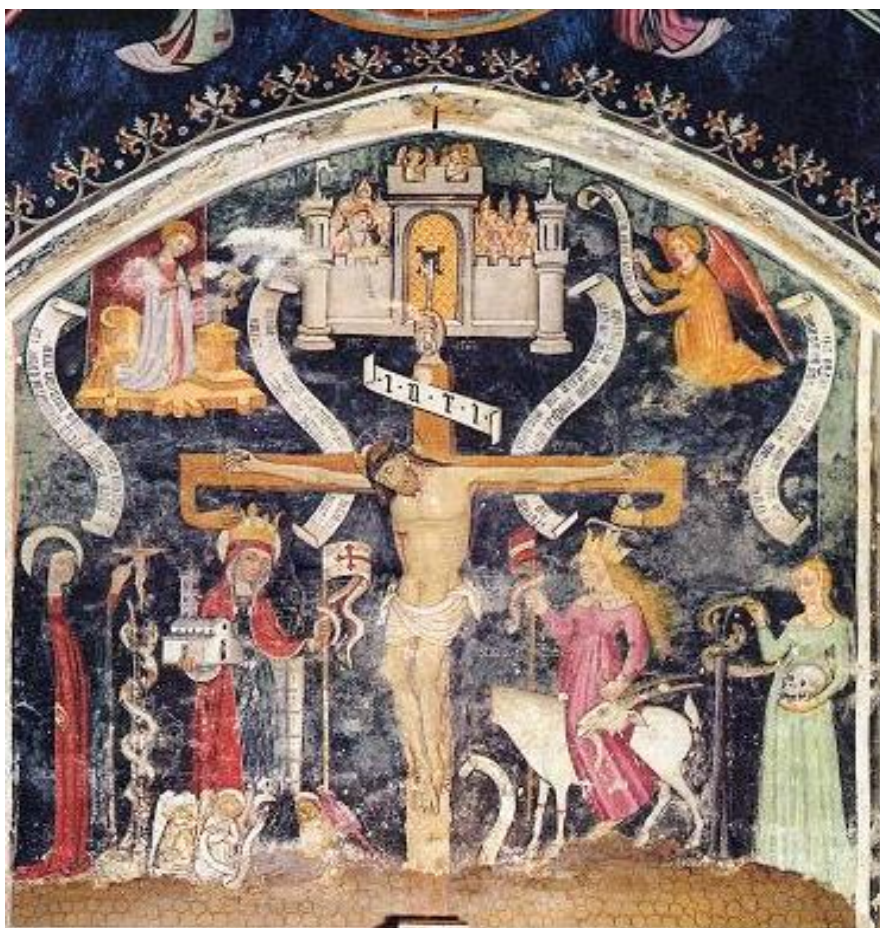
100

*Figure. 35*. The Living Cross, ca. 1450-60, wall painting, Chapel of S. Croce, Mondovi



*Figure. 36*. The Harrowing of Hell and the Personification of Death, fresco, western and northern walls, Church of the Holy Cross, Butoniga. Image courtesy of Željko Bistrović.

*Figure. 37.* Map with the marked locations of the preserved Living Cross images. Image reproduced from Balog, "Živi križ u Lindaru: ikonografsko-ikonološka studija," 144.

102

*Figure. 38.* Map of the Bishoprics of Pićan marked within the Pazin County. Image reproduced from Orbanić, *Katedra Svetog Nicefora*, 65.