# museIKON

A Journal of Religious Art and Culture | **Revue d'art et de culture religieuse**

**1** / 2017

Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia

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Mother of God surrounded by Apostles,
Joachim and Anna. Icon, first half of the 16th century,
from the Greek-Catholic church in Terło (Ukraine),
nowadays in the National Museum in Cracow /

Mère de Dieu entourée des Apôtres, de Joachim et
d'Anne. Icône de la première moitié du XVIe siècle,
autrefois dans l'église gréco-catholique de Terło
(Ukraine), aujourd'hui dans les collections
du Musée national de Cracovie (Pologne).

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English translation by Ileana Sasu

Dear reader, everything has been said – and has been for a long time – about the conditions that lead to the creation of a new journal. Everything we have to say on the matter would be but a replication, but this is by no means a reason why we should bow out of talking to you.

Why a new journal when the scientific world has become oversaturated with publications of this kind? We will not hide the fact that, first and foremost, we wanted to provide scientific emphasis to a newly created museum.

Because the museum in Alba Iulia is a museum dedicated to icons, it is naturally expected that its journal be built around icons: hence a journal bearing the same name. You are however aware, dear reader, that icons are too peripheral a research topic to be able to fuel an entire journal. Such a journal, focusing on local, Romanian aspects, would not have been the best choice. We needed another approach.

In order to open this journal to a broader range of research topics, we thought it seemed appropriate to focus on the main research theme of the museum. Since the icon itself is the link between art and religious text, a window on the sacred, it cannot be denied that it was born somewhere between the realm of the word and the realm of the vision. It has written sources, it follows mural paintings.

Most icons are related to hymnody, and therefore belong to a lyrical art of sorts. Historiated icons however are more akin to the epic genre of hagiography. Others are closer to illuminations, to sermons, to the Scripture, to exegesis or to the history of the church. Mural paintings or embroideries are all icons as well. The relationship with the *Biblia pauperum* is evident as well. Finally, the icon may be considered from an anthropological perspective. There is therefore ample reason to look towards a larger convergence of research fields towards a global vision of the history of religious culture, with the icon as a starting point.

However, it is worth mentioning that Romania has never had a journal covering all the fields of ancient cultures – if we are to follow this logic. In Romania, art history is generally linked to history or archaeology, but not with literature. It so happens that as far as religious studies are concerned, the relationship between images and sacred texts is infinitely more important that factual history, albeit social or economic. To this is added the isolation of Romanian philology, although other means of communication between disciplines do exist, but they remain largely unexplored. With this in mind, it is quite fortunate that the museum in Alba Iulia hosts – among others – a collection of ancient books. We have thus made the following choice for the *Museikon* journal: make it so that

Tout est dit, cher lecteur, et depuis fort longtemps, sur les conditions qui mènent à la création de nouvelles revues. Tout ce que nous pourrons vous dire à cet égard ne serait qu'une répétition, mais nous n'avons pas pour cela renoncé à causer un moment avec vous.

À quoi bon une nouvelle revue dans un paysage scientifique devenu de plus en plus saturé de publications de ce type ? Nous ne vous cachons pas qu'il s'agit premièrement d'apporter du poids scientifique à un musée nouveau-né.

Puisque ce musée d'Alba Iulia est un Musée de l'Icône, il est tout à fait attendu que sa revue soit constituée autour des icônes – une revue portant le même nom. Néanmoins, vous savez aussi que les icônes composent un thème trop périphérique pour pouvoir alimenter une revue entière. Une revue hyper spécialisée, concentrée sur les aspects locaux, roumains, n'était donc pas le meilleur choix à faire. Il fallait une autre sorte de revue.

Pour ouvrir cette revue à une thématique plus large, il nous est paru convenable de regarder l'objet principal de recherche du Musée. L'Icône même étant un reliant de l'art et du texte religieux, une fenêtre vers le Sacré, nul ne peut nier qu'elle est construite à la limite entre la parole et la vision. Elle a ses sources écrites, elle suit les peintures murales.

La plupart des icônes se manifestent en rapport avec l'hymnodie, elles appartiennent à une sorte d'art lyrique. Cependant les icônes historiées ont des rapports avec un genre épique, l'hagiographie. D'autres se rapprochent des enluminures, des sermons, de l'Écriture Sainte, de l'exégèse ou de l'histoire de l'Église. Les peintures murales ou les broderies constituent tout autant des icones. Quant aux rapports avec la *Biblia pauperum*, ils sont également indiscutables. Enfin, l'Icône peut être regardée sous l'angle de l'anthropologie. Il y a donc de quoi chercher dans la direction d'un rapprochement plus large de domaines, dans la direction d'une vision globale de l'histoire de la culture religieuse, en partant d'un point de vue de l'Icône.

En revanche, et dans cette même logique, on peut noter que la Roumanie n'a jamais eu de revue qui englobe toutes les catégories de la culture ancienne. Dans ce pays, l'histoire de l'art communique traditionnellement avec l'histoire ou avec l'archéologie, mais non pas avec la littérature. Or, il arrive que dans le domaine des études religieuses, le rapport des images avec les textes sacrés soit infiniment plus important qu'avec l'histoire événementielle, sociale ou économique. S'ajoute l'isolement de la philologie roumaine, bien que des moyens de communication avec d'autres disciplines existent, quoiqu'ils n'aient pas été explorés. Il est alors heureux que le musée d'Alba Iulia possède aussi une collection de livres anciens. Nous avons donc opéré un choix pour la revue *Museikon* : faire en sorte

art history, open to the historical and universal dimensions, will restore the value of philology in a larger consideration of the culture of ancient times.

On the other hand, nothing prevents us from probing the social and political dimension of the artistic fact and therefore publishing studies linking factual history to the history of literature. It is not our intention to exclude history, *magista vitae*, even though we stress the fact that social history is not the central theme of approach encouraged by this journal, especially when this history ignores the cultural implications of the religious one.

We think it useful to create an ideal environment, putting forward a dialogue between disciplines that remained marginal to Romanian scholarship until today. The purpose of *Museikon* is to reinforce the autonomy of these fields of research compared to the study of history until a different, common methodology is found.

This is the reason why we have created a journal that tackles the cultural aspects of a religious past. It is also the reason why we chose to deal both with the issues of the Middle Ages, as well as those of the Modern Age. It was the only choice to make: on the one hand, because a Romanian medieval literature does not exist; there is a modern literature (there is often talk of “popular books”) that draws on Balkan or Western European medieval subjects; on the other hand, because *Byzantium after Byzantium* too does not reflect a different take on the artistic fact compared to the take on medieval times.

It is therefore difficult to follow an unduly strict periodization or to impose – as you will undoubtedly see, dear reader – an artificial periodization where such a process is not warranted.

The issue of the Middle Ages in Romanian historiography – inappropriately prolonged until the 19th century – is that it the heir of a Marxist-Leninist approach to history that reached its peak in the second half of the 20th century. Out of convenience, these spurious modern Romanian Middle Ages were recently justified through Jacques Le Goff’s theory on the “Long Middle Ages” (spanning from the end of the 2nd century until the 19th). Nonetheless, when this star of the *Annales* School rendered his theory popular, he put forth a similar yet different type of argument: given the living standards, nothing had changed with the Renaissance. He thought that the studies on the arts and literature bore little importance, as they did not, according to him, define by themselves any given society.

However, the Renaissance is a cultural phenomenon linking the Modern Age to the Middle Ages, beginning in the Italy of the medieval communes and ending in Eastern Europe with the birth of Enlightenment. Let us accept then that this shifting state existed in Eastern – as well as Western Europe, although the criteria to be considered for both are different. Then why arbitrate between two historical periods? Periodization comes in many shapes and sizes; it is useless and impossible to take every single one into account.

To all this are added two fundamental issues of art history and literary history – that of cultural centre and periphery and that of the relationship between the culture of ruling class and that of the largely popular culture. What is the boundary between the two, and what are the confines of these four categories? Is there a boundary at all? It is certain that the popular forms are the heirs and are still on the receiving end of the official, mainstream culture of bygone times. Yet again, this is why it would not be prudent to favour only one type of periodization. And

que l’histoire de l’art, ouverte à la dimension historique et universelle, puisse remettre en valeur la philologie, dans une vision plus large de la culture des temps anciens.

D’un autre côté, rien n’empêche de sonder la dimension sociopolitique du fait artistique, de publier des études qui relient l’histoire événementielle et celle de la littérature. Nous n’avons pas l’intention d’exclure l’histoire même, *magistra vitae*, même si nous soulignons le fait que l’histoire sociale ne constitue pas le thème central de l’approche encouragée par la présente revue, surtout lorsque cette histoire ignore les implications culturelles de l’histoire religieuse.

Nous jugeons utile de créer un cadre idéal qui mette en avant un dialogue entre des disciplines jusqu’ici périphériques dans les études roumaines. *Museikon* aura pour objectif de renforcer l’autonomie de ces disciplines par rapport à l’étude de l’histoire, jusqu’à ce que l’on puisse trouver une méthodologie commune, différente.

C’est pourquoi nous avons conçu une revue qui s’intéresse aux problèmes culturels d’un passé religieux. D’où également le choix de traiter ensemble le Moyen Âge et la Modernité. Ce choix était obligé : d’un côté, parce que la littéra-ure roumaine médiévale n’existe pas ; une littérature moderne – on parle souvent de ‘livres populaires’ – reprend les sujets médiévaux des Balkans aussi bien que ceux de l’Europe occidentale. De l’autre côté, parce que le *Byzance après Byzance* ne témoigne pas non plus d’une conception différente du fait artistique par rapport à celle des temps médiévaux. Il est donc difficile de suivre une périodisation trop stricte ou d’imposer, comme vous le verrez, cher lecteur, une périodisation artificielle là où elle ne se justifie pas.

Le problème du Moyen Âge dans l’historiographie roumaine, improprement prolongé jusqu’au XIXe siècle, est qu’il hérite d’une conception marxiste-léniniste de l’histoire qui a connu son apogée dans la seconde moitié du XXe siècle. Par souci de commodité, ce faux Moyen Âge-moderne roumain a été habillé et justifié en partant de la thèse du ‘Long Moyen Âge’ de Jacques Le Goff (de la fin du IIe siècle jusqu’à la révolution industrielle du XIXe). Lorsqu’il a dû vulgariser sa théorie, l’étoile des *Annales* a avancé un argument assez simple : du point de vue des conditions de vie, presque rien n’avait changé au moment de la Renaissance. Il jugeait utile de ne pas traiter les lettres et les arts, qui ne pouvaient pas selon lui définir à eux seuls une société.

Cependant la Renaissance est un phénomène culturel qui se trouve à cheval entre le Moyen Âge et la Modernité, avec ses débuts dans l’Italie des communes médiévales et sa fin tardive dans l’Europe de l’est au siècle des Lumières. Acceptons alors que cet état fluide existe en terre occidentale de même qu’en Europe orientale, bien que les critères dont on doit tenir compte soient différents. Pourquoi donc trancher entre deux périodes historiques ? Des périodisations, il y en a de toutes sortes. Inutile et impossible de tenir compte de toutes les périodisations.

S’ajoute enfin le problème – fondamental pour l’histoire de l’art, mais également pour l’histoire de la littérature – celui du centre et de la périphérie culturelle. Il est doublé par celui des rapports entre la culture des classes dominantes et la culture largement populaire. Quelle est la limite qui sépare les deux ? ou les quatre ? Y-a-t-il une limite ? Ce qui est certain, c’est que les formes populaires ont hérité et continuent d’hériter de la culture officielle des temps passés. Voilà encore une fois pourquoi il est imprudent de favoriser une seule périodisation. Mais voilà également pourquoi il est impératif de ne pas sous-estimer

yet again, it is important to refrain from underestimating Christian folklore. It does belong to a type of lower culture which draws its roots from the culture of past centuries.

This journal must, after all, consider the entire tradition – including the late solutions to the challenges of modernising projects. The slow creation of an identity (be it ethnic, linguistic, and later national – during Romanticism) marked the end for this traditional culture. Once in the spotlight, the peasant became a founding myth of sorts – at least as far as modern Romanian culture is concerned. The projection of such a fantasy, however, has greatly damaged historical and anthropological research. Folklore is not necessarily derived from the impoverished classes – as Menocchio's lectures from *The Cheese and the Worms* are also wont to warn.

*Museikon* therefore proposes to examine the ancient origins of popular culture and its relationship with the dominant culture of those times. The slow creation of a modern identity was determined by the existence of a shared culture – both literary and artistic – that resulted in the emergence of what is commonly called "textual communities". The translation of the Bible into vernacular languages played a key role in the osmosis that led to this shared identity: it created the literary languages of the East and the West. Then, why not consider that the various cultural categories formed textual or image-focused communities, whose overlap led to the creation of modern communities? This hypothesis should not be excluded. The weight of the Scriptures' translations may also support the claim that it is fundamental to research Christianity, to thoroughly probe the polygenesis of tradition that contemporary identities claim. We would not manipulate Christian heritage in order to offer it as a solution to the stalemate of the contemporary world, nor would we resort to an alleged tradition now, when one fears mondialisation might erase local, regional or national identities. Quite the contrary. We must focus on the universal dimension of Christianity in order to explore the genesis of a protean tradition.

The journal will not publish only studies that might fall under the category of "Romanian tradition". From a historical point of view, such a tradition never existed before the modern Romanian state. This tradition was a part of a *Kulturkreise* cluster and was related to the cultural fashions of the old Byzantium Commonwealth. The Transylvanian icons – the main subject of the Icon Museum – are artistically Oriental and at the same time, they are influenced by the Baroque; they are, after all, evidence of these pan-European shifts.

At the same time, as far as early religious texts are concerned, Romanian literature was heavily influenced by Protestant works. Then, it is only natural to consider that this religious tradition was born when and where these worlds met. We must seek its origins locally and through reflections that consider the cultural life of a much larger space. Since the global dimension is inherent to the Christian world, *Museikon* will probe the source of this (or these) tradition(s).

The journal will thus focus on Christianity under all its cultural aspects; the study of tradition or the choice of such a tradition do not represent a denial of contemporaneity. The contemporary world is not much different – not really – from the world of times past. So it should not come as a surprise that our journal embraces art, literature, anthropology, and religious history of those past times. It is perfectly normal that it should not seek to impose precise timelines. It is fundamental that it pay as much attention to the centre as to the periphery of all

le folklore chrétien. Le folklore fait partie de cette culture basse qui hérite des siècles précédents.

Or la revue doit, en fin de compte, embrasser toute la tradition, y compris les réponses tardives aux défis posés par les projets modernisateurs. La création lente d'une identité (ethnique, linguistique, plus tard nationale – à l'âge du Romantisme) a mis fin à cette culture traditionnelle. Une fois mis en exergue, le paysan est devenu, du moins dans le cas de la culture roumaine moderne, un mythe fondateur. Cependant la projection de ce fantasme a fait beaucoup de mal à la recherche historique et anthropologique. Le folklore n'est pas issu de la culture des classes paupérisées. Les lectures de Menocchio, protagoniste du *Fromage et les vers*, mettent en garde à propos de cette situation.

*Museikon* propose alors de scruter les origines anciennes de la culture populaire et ses rapports avec la culture dominante d'autrefois. La création lente d'une identité moderne a été déterminée par l'existence d'une culture partagée – littéraire aussi bien qu'artistique –, une culture qui a fini par créer ce que l'on appelle des 'communautés textuelles'. La traduction de la Bible en langue vernaculaire a joué un rôle fondamental dans l'osmose qui a donné lieu à cette identité commune : elle a créé les langues littéraires, en Orient aussi bien qu'en Occident. Pourquoi ne pas alors considérer que les différentes catégories de la culture ont constitué des communautés (textuelles, imagières) dont la superposition a mené à la création des communautés modernes ? Cette hypothèse ne doit pas être exclue. Le poids des traductions du Texte sacré montre aussi pourquoi il est fondamental de s'intéresser au Christianisme, de sonder minutieusement la polygenèse de la tradition dont se réclament les identités contemporaines. Il ne s'agit pas de manipuler l'héritage du Christianisme pour en faire une solution à l'impasse où se trouve le monde contemporain, de recourir à une prétendue tradition lorsqu'on craint que la globalisation soit en quête d'effacer les identités nationales, régionales ou locales. C'est bien le contraire. Il faut s'intéresser à la dimension universelle du Christianisme, afin d'explorer la genèse d'une tradition protéiforme.

La revue ne publiera pas uniquement des études touchant ce que l'on pourrait définir comme 'tradition roumaine'. Historiquement, une telle tradition n'a pas existé avant la création de l'état roumain moderne. Cette tradition faisait partie d'un faisceau de *Kulturkreise*. Elle était reliée aux modes culturelles venues de l'ancien Commonwealth byzantin aussi bien que de l'Europe occidentale. Les icônes de Transylvanie, objet principal du Musée de l'Icône – artistiquement orientales, mais également influencées par le Baroque – constituent d'ailleurs les témoins de ces mouvances pan-européennes. De la même manière, dans le domaine des premiers textes religieux, la li térature roumaine a été influencée par les livres protestants. Il est alors naturel d'imaginer la constitution de cette tradition religieuse à la croisée des mondes. Il faut chercher ses origines sur un plan local et dans des réflexions qui portent sur la vie culturelle d'un espace plus grand. La dimension globalisante étant inhérente au monde chrétien, *Museikon* sondera la source commune de cette (ou de ces) tradition(s).

La revue étudiera alors le Christianisme sous tous ses aspects culturels. L'étude de la tradition et le choix d'une telle tradition ne constituent pas un refus de la contemporanéité. Le monde contemporain n'est pas, en réalité, si différent du monde des temps révolus. Ce n'est pas étonnant que notre revue enlace l'art, la littérature, l'anthropologie et l'histoire religieuse des temps anciens. Il est tout à fait normal qu'elle ne cherche pas à imposer des chronologies précises. Il est fondamental qu'elle accorde

these cultural shifts, because *Museikon* is, above all else, a journal bearing the name of the Icon Museum. And as far as icons are concerned, they are the very synthesis of tradition.

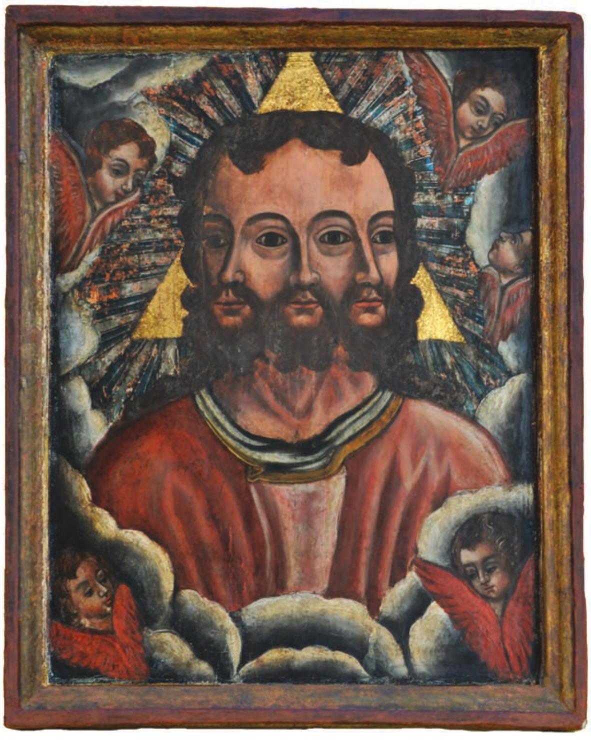
If one were to put a face to this endeavour, aiming to tackle all of the above-mentioned fields, one object from the collection of the Museum would be it. A very curious icon of the Saviour is heir to a venerable and millennial, pre-Christian tradition, whose choice of representation is all but fantastic. The image was used all throughout the Middle Ages, but it ended in ridicule during the Protestant reformation and ultimately forbidden by the Catholic Church during the Counter-Reformation. Needless to say the *trifacies* Saviour was a roaring success in the East later on. This theme was very often represented in the Romanian Orthodox milieus, especially during the 18th and 19th centuries. Its peculiar appearance raises many questions with today's clergy and worshippers, who consider it all a heretical choice. Yet a similar expression is found in the first Romanian exegesis on the Trinity. In this text, Anthim the Iberian – Metropolitan Bishop of Wallachia in the beginning of the 18th century – made a translation choice that considerably reduces the semantic thickness, creating a confusion of sorts in the process: he does not use the formula "in three persons" ("*întreit în persoane*"), he chose to write "in three faces" ("*întreit în fețe*"). The choice of the word "faces" seems to stem from the endless search for models that is a core feature of the Romanian cultural milieu: a new translation language looking for words and a peripheral post-Byzantine art that recovers a theme obsolete to the Western world.

Thus, an almost heretical set of eyes suggests that an all-seeing God is examining all aspects of the human being. The image is – in all fairness – not without oddity: to us, it is a programmatic emblem. *Museikon* must strive to look in all directions and associate all fields. The journal must be organised around the Icon – that of the Saviour – the first icon among all.

la même importance au centre et à la périphérie de toutes ces mouvances culturelles. Car *Museikon* est avant tout une revue qui porte le nom d'un Musée de l'Icône. Quant aux icônes, elles représentent la synthèse de la tradition.

S'il fallait donner un visage à cette démarche visant à approcher tous les domaines comptés, c'est la collection du Musée qui offrirait la meilleure illustration. Une curieuse icône du Sauveur hérite d'une vénérable et millénaire tradition préchrétienne, dont le choix de représentation frise le fantastique. L'image a été utilisée en Occident tout au long du Moyen Âge, mais elle a fini par être tournée en ridicule lors de la Réforme protestante, puis interdite par l'Église catholique au temps de la Contreréforme. N'empêche que le Sauveur *trifacies* a fait carrière plus tard en Orient. Le thème a été peint maintes fois dans le milieu de l'Orthodoxie roumaine, le plus souvent aux xviiie et xixe siècles. Sa physionomie insolite soulève de très sérieuses réserves aux yeux du clergé et des fidèles d'aujourd'hui, qui la considèrent comme un choix hérétique. Mais une expression similaire fait surface dans la première exégèse en roumain sur la Trinité. Dans ce texte, saint Antim l'Ivirite, métropolitain de la Valachie au début du xviiie siècle, a fait un choix de traduction qui a pour effet d'en réduire considérablement l'épaisseur sémantique, un choix qui peut même créer une certaine confusion : il n'a pas utilisé la formule « en trois personnes » (« *întreit în persoane* »), mais a choisi d'écrire « en trois visages » (« *întreit în fețe* »). Le choix du mot 'visage' semble être dicté par cette recherche incessante de modèles qui caractérise le milieu culturel roumain : une langue nouvelle de traduction, en quête de ses mots ; et un art post-byzantin périphérique qui récupère un thème caduc dans le monde occidental.

Ainsi, les yeux quasi hérétiques suggèrent qu'un Dieu omnivoyant examine tous les aspects du cosmos et de l'être humain. L'image suggère une certaine étrangeté. Pour nous, elle joue un rôle de devise programmatique. *Museikon* doit regarder dans toutes ces directions, elle doit associer nombre de domaines. La revue doit les réorganiser autour de l'Icône, celle du Sauveur, la première icône de toutes les icônes.

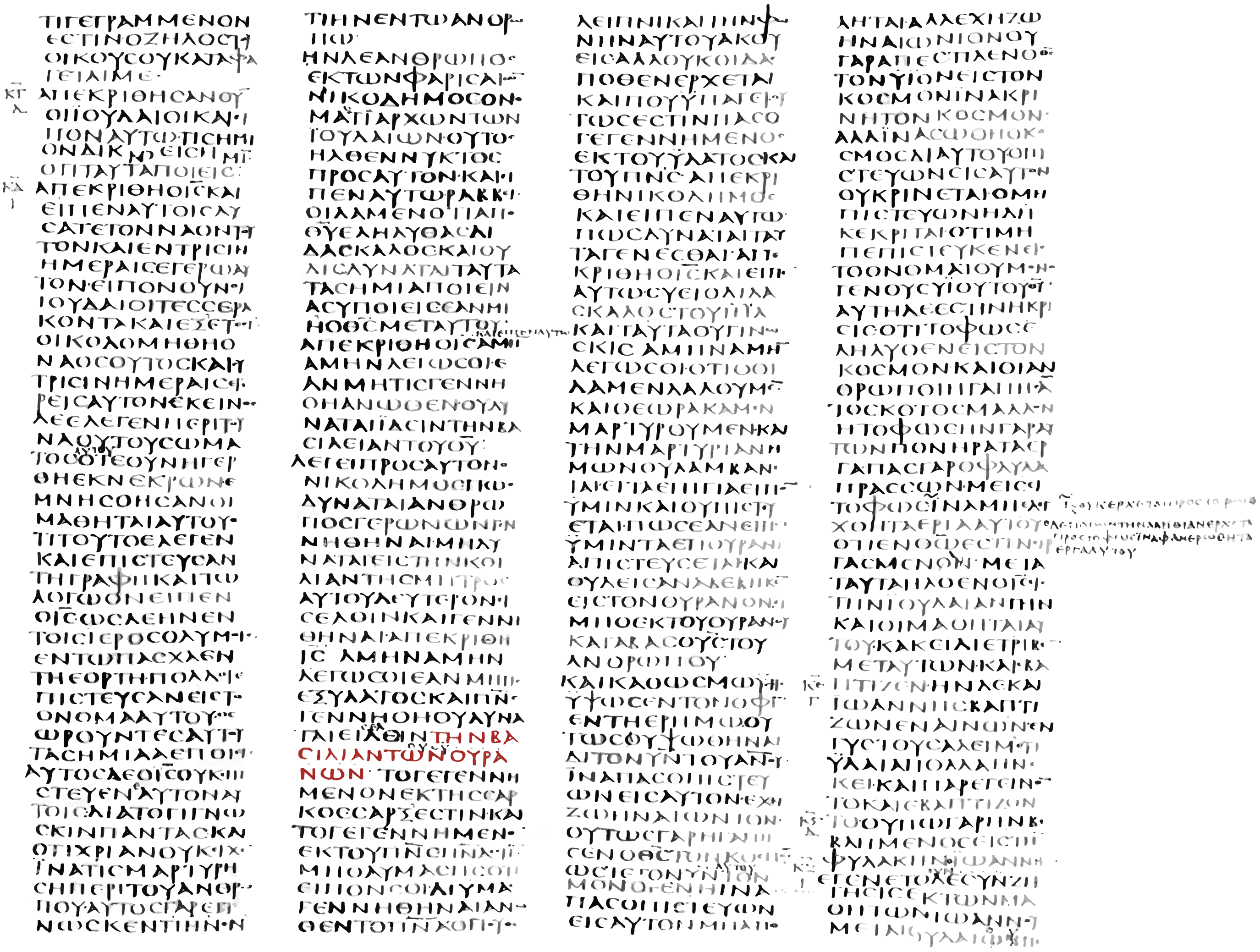


*Trifacies Saviour icon in the collections of Museikon, 18th century.* Credits: Ana Dumitran.

*Icône du Sauveur trifacies dans les collections de Museikon, xviiie siècle.* Cliché : Ana Dumitran.

# studies

# études



*Facsimile of the folio 2r in the quire 80 of the Codex Sinaiticus with the* βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν *variant reading drawn in red.*
Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Anca Crișan, after an online image in the Codex Sinaiticus (http://codexsinaiticus.org).

# *The* τῶν οὐρανῶν *Variant Reading*
## *in John 3:5*

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RÉSUMÉ: Certains manuscrits grecs anciens de l'Évangile de Jean témoignent d'une leçon *βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* à la fin du verset 3:5, à la place d'une *βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ*, plus connue. Les éditions modernes modernes du Nouveau Testament ont graduellement simplifié la description de cette varia lectio dans l'appareil critique, malgré le fait que *βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* apparaît non seulement dans quelques manuscrits tardifs, mais aussi dans quelques citations littéraires patristiques, ainsi que dans un manuscrit très important, le Codex Sinaiticus. Cet article traite du verset 3:5 du Codex Sinaiticus et de la véracité de cette variante dans son contexte.

MOTS-CLÉS: critique textuelle, manuscrits grecs anciens, Nouveau Testament, philologie, *varia lectio.*

REZUMAT: Pentru *βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ* din finalul versetului 3.5 al Evangheliei după Ioan avem in unele manuscrise grecești varianta textuală *βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν*. Edițiile critice moderne ale Noului Testament au simplificat treptat descrierea acesteia în aparatul critic, în ciuda faptului că *βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* nu apare doar în cîteva manuscrise tîrzii, ci și în citate ioanine din literatura patristică, precum și într-un manuscris important, Codex Sinaiticus. Acest articol discută versetul 3.5 în Codex Sinaiticus și verosimilitatea acestei variante in context.

CUVINTE CHEIE: critică de text, manuscrise grecești, Noul Testament, filologie, *varia lectio.*

This essay offers a discussion of the *τῶν οὐρανῶν* variant for *τοῦ θεοῦ* at the end of John 3:5: *ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ* (NA28). Instead of arguing that *τῶν οὐρανῶν* should be preferred for the initial text, the aim is simply to draw attention to a relatively wide spread and persisting variant. The scholarly context is on the one hand the ongoing discussion concerning the notion of a 'living text of the gospels' in New Testament textual criticism,[1] and on the other the burgeoning literature on material philology.[2]

### *The* τῶν οὐρανῶν *Variant in Modern Editions.*

At a first glance, it seems that this variant has passed and still passes as insignificant. The fact that it did not make it in Schnackenburg's list of potentially significant textual variants included in his commentary on John is symptomatic for the attitude toward the variant,[3] and is mirrored for instance in the apparatus of NA28 which only lists in its support 01* e, i.e. the first hand in Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Palatinus Vetus Latina. However, a brief survey of a handful of editions of the New Testament offers a more complex picture for the variant reading *τῶν οὐρανῶν* of John 3:5 than the apparatus of NA28 might suggest.

Tischendorf's edition (1869),[4] is singular in that it prints *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in what we would call today the initial text. The amount of evidence adduced is impressive, to the extent that the apparatus seems to be a case built around the central witness – Codex Sinaiticus – and built up mainly with the authority of various patristic authors. The interesting entry of the apparatus goes as follows:

> των ουρανων cum 01* c$^{\text{scr}}$ 26$^{\text{ev}}$ al pauc e m Iust$^{\text{apol 1, 61}}$ (vide ad v. 3) Docet $^{267}$ Homil$^{\text{clem 11, 26}}$ et $^{\text{epitom 18}}$ Ir (ex cat, cf Harv $^{498}$) Or$^{\text{int 3, 948}}$ et $^{4, 483}$ Const $^{6, 15, 3}$ Eus$^{\text{esa 368}}$ Tert$^{\text{bapt 13}}$ Chr $^{8, 165\ \text{bis}}$ et $^{168}$. Cf et. Nonn $^{3,30}$ ου δυναται – νοησαι ουρανιην αιωνοσ ατερμονοσ ηλικα τιμην ... ς Ln Ti του θεου (: : ex versu 3) cum 01$^{\text{c}}$ABLΓΔΛΠ unc rell al pler it$^{\text{pler}}$ vg cop syr$^{\text{utr}}$ et $^{\text{hr}}$ rell Or$^{\text{int 2, 144}}$ et $^{4, 484.\ 561}$ Cyp $^{128.\ 136.\ 279.\ 314}$ Nyss $^{2, 801}$ Chr $^{8, 164}$ et $^{165\ \text{semel}}$ et $^{171}$ Cyr $^{4, 146}$ et $^{147}$. Cf igitur Iust$^{\text{apol 1, 61}}$ (vide ad v. 3) Docet $^{267}$ λεγει ο σωτηρ· εαν μη τισ γεννηθη εξ υδατοσ και πνευματοσ, ουκ εισελευσεται εισ την βασιλ. των ουρανων· οτι το γεγεννημενον εκ τησ σαρκοσ σαρξ εστιν. Homil$^{\text{clem 11,26}}$ ουτωσ γαρ ημιν ωμοσεν ο προφητησ ειπων· αμην υμιν λεγω, εαν μη αναγεννηθητε υδατι ζωντι εισ ονομα πατροσ υιου αγιου πνευματοσ, ου μη εισελθητε εισ την βασιλ. των ουρανων. Clem$^{\text{epit 18}}$ ουτω γαρ ο – θεοσ λογοσ ειπεν ημιν· αμην λεγω υμιν, εαν μη αναγεννεθητε δι υδατοσ και πνευματοσ (epit. altera add εισ το ονομα του πατροσ και του υιου και του αγι. πνευμ.), ου μη εισελθητε εισ την βασιλ. των ουρανων. Ir (ex cat. in libb. Regg. ap Harvey$^{498}$) καθωσ και ο κυριοσ εφη· εαν με τισ αναγεννηθη δι υδατοσ και πνευματοσ, ου μη εισελευσεται εισ τ. βασ. των ουρ. Const $^{6, 15, 3}$ λεγει γαρ ο κυριοσ· εαν μη τισ βαπτισθη εξ υδατοσ και πνευματοσ, ου μη εισελθη εισ τ. βασ. τ. ουρ.

Admittedly, this entry is perhaps not the easiest to read. I would note, however, that c$^{\text{scr}}$ – as in cum *sive* auctoritate Scrivener – is rather strange, since Scrivener offers *τοῦ θεοῦ*. Also, the (Pseudo-) Clementine homilies are now dated considerably later than in Tischendorf's time.[5] Tischendorf's only follower in preferring this reading among other editors is Lagrange, albeit admittedly on different grounds.[6]

From Tischendorf, attention to this variant reading only decreases. For instance, Tregelles (1857-1879) lists the following in support of *τοῦ θεοῦ*: *Orig. Int.* ii. iv 484$^{c}$. 561$^{a}$. *Conc.Cart. bis. Cypr. quater*, whereas as supporting *τῶν οὐρανῶν* he lists: (vid. *Just.* Apol. i. 61. Clem. 69.) *Hipp.* Philos. *Orig. Int.* iii. 948$^{f}$. iv. 483$^{b}$. *Eus.* in Es. *Tert.* de Bapt.[7] His reconstructed text has *τοῦ θεοῦ*. Again, the Clement witness he mentions comes from the pseudo-Clementine corpus, dated now much later than it was thought at that time.

Von Soden (1913) also prefers *τοῦ θεοῦ*, and the variant reading has the following description in the apparatus: των ουρανων l του θῡ $H^{\delta 2*}$ $I^{al}$ af Iου Ir Tert.[8] Using his own sigla system, he mentions the first hand of Sinaiticus and manuscripts ascribed to his I-type text – “*der in Cäsarea um 300 von Pamphilus hergestellte Text*.” He also adds to the evidence the variant of *der alte afrikanische Text*, and as Patristic witnesses, Justin the Martyr and the Latin Irenaeus.

For his part, Vogels (1922) opts for *τοῦ θεοῦ* and offers the following description in the apparatus: τ. θεου] των ουρανων 01* 472 e.[9] The e *siglum* designates the Palatinus Vetus Latina manuscript.

Merk, (1933, $^{11}$1992),[10] also prefers *τοῦ θεοῦ*. In the apparatus then he adds a number of manuscripts containing the *τῶν οὐρανῶν* variant reading: τ. θυ] τ. ουρανων S* 245s 472 0141 e Iust Iρ Tert Eus.

Swanson’s parallel arrangement connects *τῶν οὐρανῶν* only to the first hand of Sinaiticus and enumerates the following witness list for *τοῦ θεοῦ* : B $P^{66.\,75}$ uwτ rell A Θ Π 2 33,[11] where the *u* stands for the UBS text, *w* for the Westcott text and the τ for ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ, Reproduced by photographic offset at the Univ. of Chicago Press from Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ (Oxford, 1873).

Finally, NA27, where the initial text is *τοῦ θεοῦ*, mentions the variant reading in 3:5 in the following apparatus entry: τῶν οὐρανῶν : 01* 0141 *pc.* e, which, as we have seen, in NA28 is simplified to 01* e.

Indeed *τοῦ θεοῦ* at the end on John 3:5 is found in the majority of the oldest and most reliable witnesses: $P^{66}$ $P^{75}$ B A. The list of the manuscripts containing *τῶν οὐρανῶν*, compiled from the above editors and completed with the manuscripts mentioned for this variant in the textual commentaries of Metzger[12] and Willker,[13] remains limited and includes: 01* (4th century), 0141 (10th century),[14] 245 (12th century), 291 (13th century), 472 (13th century), 1009 (13th century), and 821 (16th century).

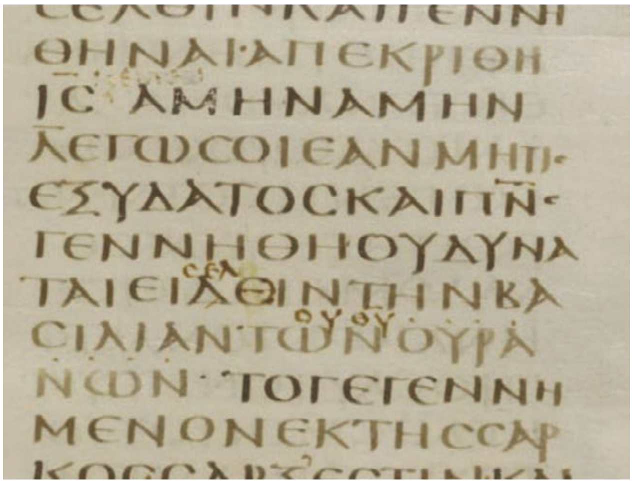
## *John 3:5 in Codex Sinaiticus.*

The oldest witness and the most spectacular one for the *τῶν οὐρανῶν* variant is therefore Codex Sinaticus, of the fourth century. It is regularly described as a *prima manus* variant (‘S*’), which shouldn’t be taken to imply that it was a mistake subsequently corrected (expectedly, to *τοῦ θεοῦ*).

It must be stressed, moreover, the fact that this is a ‘ca’ correction, which is listed among the late corrections from between the fifth and the seventh century, and not a ‘S1’ correction which, in turn, would have indicated that the scribe himself, or one of the other scribes of the same scriptorium, has corrected the variant reading *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in the writing process.[15] As it were, *τῶν οὐρανῶν* is *the* reading of Codex Sinaiticus, and not a undisputedly yet-to-be-corrected mistake in its earliest production layer.

To be exact, there are three corrections in John 3:5, as illustrated in the facsimile on this page.

Scribe A of Codex Sinaiticus wrote this verse as follows: *ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι ἐὰν μή τις ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πν*(εύματο)*ς γεννηθῇ οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν*. The three corrections are all considered ‘ca’ corrections: the supra-linear addition of *κ*(αὶ) *εἶπεν* before the saying (scrapped off by an even later hand), *εἰσελθεῖν* for *ἰδεῖν* (the horizontal dash of *δ* is cut with a small dash to make it *λ*, the last *ε* is overwritten as *θ*, and the other letters added inter-linearly), and *τοῦ θ*(εο)*ῦ* for *τῶν οὐρανῶν*. In the latter case, all letters except *τ* are marked as deleted by dots above them (obelized), and the replacement letters are added superscript. Overall, the ‘ca’ corrections fit nicely with what Royse describes when he notes that “in fact, such corrections should be treated simply as another manuscript,”[16] in this case one which is several centuries later than (the first hand of) Codex Sinaiticus.



*Detail of the folio 2r in the quire 80 of the Codex Sinaiticus with the* βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν *variant reading.*
Source : Codex Sinaiticus (http://codexsinaiticus.org).

If we leave aside the ‘ca’ manuscript, we are still left with the question pertaining to the status of the *τῶν οὐρανῶν* reading in Codex Sinaiticus’ text as it left the scriptorium. The fact that on the same side (the 2nd recto of the 80th quire) there are four ‘S1’ corrections (first hand corrections, of which two are in the same column with verse 3:5) suggests that we have here a scriptorium verified text, and the possibility that *τῶν οὐρανῶν* might have been in scribe A’s exemplar as well. If the variant *ἰδεῖν* in 3:5 can be explained as the repetition of the same verb from close proximity (it appears in 3:3), the assimilation to the *βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* which appears only in Matthew is less likely.

Overall, Codex Sinaiticus is a singular manuscript from its time in that it contains *τῶν οὐρανῶν* instead of *τοῦ θεοῦ*, since all other mentioned Greek manuscripts we have today with this variant reading are at least five hundred years younger. It is important, however, to keep in mind that *τῶν οὐρανῶν* is the reading preserved by this codex, and it cannot be explained away in any obvious mechanical way. The possibility of harmonisation to Matthean material will be discussed below.

## *A Persistent Variant.*

Even though among the early Greek manuscripts Codex Sinaiticus stands alone in displaying *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in 3:5, this reading proves rather persistent, as it resurfaces for instance a century later than Codex Sinaiticus in the Vetus Latina text of the Palatinus manuscript (5th century).

An interesting group of witnesses for *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in John 3:5 comes from early Patristic works. The importance of Greek patristic citations in New Testament textual criticism has often been stressed in recent research.[17] Of course, patristic evidence is not uniformly relevant for textual purposes as the testimonies can be grouped on different levels of importance according to various methodological limitations. For instance, in his analysis of the text of John in Augustine's commentary on the fourth gospel, H. Houghton distinguishes between primary and secondary citations, noting that "although the latter also include interesting forms, these cannot be ascribed to biblical manuscripts with the same degree of confidence,"[18] and considering that "the initial citation of each verse, most likely to have been drawn from a codex, has been taken as the definitive form of each verse."[19] In any event, even if *τῶν οὐρανῶν* could be shown to be a corrupted or derivative variant, its persistence and wide presence is remarkable, as Tischendorf's apparatus entry suggests, with early authors geographically spread from Lyon to Caesarea and North Africa. It clearly appears in Augustine's *Commentary on John*, where "the majority of Augustine's citations have *in regnum caelorum* rather than *in regnum dei*," as reported by Houghton.[20] The full study of all occurrences of *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in patristic quotations of John 3:5 is still to be done.

It seems unlikely that all such occurrences are due to the same kind of scribal mistake, independently, not least because *τῶν οὐρανῶν* can to a certain extent be considered a more difficult reading than *τοῦ θεοῦ* in John 3:5. Admittedly *τῶν οὐρανῶν* is certainly not the most discrepant variant possible for *τοῦ θεοῦ* present in most editions, since both variants point largely in the same direction. This may explain why the *τῶν οὐρανῶν* variant reading did not benefit of much discussion in most Johannine commentaries.[21] Metzger mentions that a possible case can be made for *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in which "*τοῦ θεοῦ* was introduced in order to make the passage harmonize with ver. 3."[22] This is indeed also Tischendorf's argument with regard to internal evidence, and was assumed rather singularly by Lagrange.[23]

Yet with Bultmann, the variant *τῶν οὐρανῶν* is generally understood to most likely "go back to the influence Mt. 18.3,"[24] interpretation taken up by R. E. Brown as well.[25] It is thus regarded as a harmonisation introduced by copyists "in imitation of the frequently recurring expression in Matthew (*εἰσέρχεσθαι* [εἰσελθεῖν] *εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* occurs in Mt. 5.20, 7.21, 18.3, 19.23)."[26] So also Willker: "*βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* appears only(!) in Mt. It is possible that scribes simply remembered the familiar term."[27] There are, in Metzger textual commentary, nine verses presented where a minor reading is construed as a possible scribal) harmonization to Matthew: 6:69, 10:11, 12:8, 13:26, 19:16, 19:29, 21:15.16.17.[28] As some of these recall synoptic material, it seems that there is a minimal rate of harmonization to specifically Matthean material in John. This is not unexpected in view of the notion that a harmonization is more likely to occur to a close rather than a distant reading.[29] But even so, *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* occurs in Matthew as well (6:33, 12:28, 19:24, 21:31), and in 19:23-24, for instance, both expressions occur with forms of the same verb *εἰσέρχομαι*. Since they are interchangeable in Matthew as well, one might question the basis for seeing here a harmonization to only one of them.

On the other hand, Willker notes that since "the terms appear only here (verse 3 and 5) in John… it would be strange for John to use different terms."[30] However, John *does* use different terms in the similar expressions, namely the verbs of 3:3 and 3:5: *οὐ δύναται* ἰδεῖν *τὴν βασιλείαν* and respectively *οὐ δύναται* εἰσελθεῖν *εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν.* One might argue that the exact repetition would be equally strange, since it seems rather redundant in the short distance of only two verses. More importantly, given that the structure of the saying in verse 5 parallels that of verse 3, if *ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος* of verse 5 can be taken as an elaboration on *ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν* in verse 3 (which is normally the case), then so *εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* in verse 5 can be regarded as an elaboration on *ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ* of verse 3.

## *Concluding remarks.*

On balance, *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in John 3:5 is a more important variant than the apparatuses of recent critical editions might suggest. It has one important witness on its side (Codex Sinaiticus) and several patristic testimonies, and would certainly work well in its Johannine context. It only lacks papyrus support for a claim that it is the 'original' reading at the end of verse 5 with some chance of success, should one wish to make that argument. Until then, we are dealing with a persistent variant with a history of its own, illustrating a particular case of the notion of the "living text of the gospels." It is likely that the rather high plausibility of the *τῶν οὐρανῶν* in the text of John that made possible a remarkable career among the wide range of patristic authors, as an early variant that circulated widely and authoritatively for a considerably long period of time. And, until we have the Editio Critica Maior of John, this case serves as a reminder that for the purpose of NT textual criticism older editions should always be taken into account.

## Notes :

1 See, for a starting point, Parker 1997.

2 See, for starting points, Cerquiglini 1989 and Nichols 1997.

3 Schnackenburg 1968, p. 182-187.

4 Tischendorf 1869, p. 763.

5 A description of Tischendorf's Patristic abbreviations can be found in Gregory 1894.

6 Lagrange 1936, p. 76.

7 Tregelles 1857-1879, p. 386.

8 Von Soden 1913, p. 187.

9 Vogels 1922, p. 247.

10 Merk 1992, p. 313.

11 Swanson 1995, p. 28.

12 Metzger 1994, p. 174.

13 Willker 2015, TVU 29.

14 This manuscript is not included in the IGNPT majuscules volume "since it is a minuscule commentary manuscript whose lemmata are written in majuscule," Schmid Elliott Parker 2007, p. 225.

15 See http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/project/transcription_detailed.aspx

16 Royse 2008, p. 77.

17 Fee 1993, pp. 344-359. Osburn 2005, p. 313-343. For a critique of the unconditional acceptance of the papyri, mainly on the basis

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that they survived only in Egypt and thus represent a rather small geographical area, see Ehrman 2006.

18 Houghton 2009, p. 78.

19 Houghton 2009, p. 108.

20 Houghton 2009, p. 206.

21 None of the following authors discusses the *τῶν οὐρανῶν* variant of 3:5 in their commentaries on John: Schnackenburg, Barrett, Haenchen. A number of those who do take this variant into count are presented in the following.

22 Metzger 1994, p. 174.

23 Lagrange 1936, p. 76: *Avec T*[ischendorf] *nous préférons* τῶν οὐρανῶν *soutenu par les Pères anciens à* τοῦ θεοῦ *(HSV), qui doit être une harmonisation avec le v.3.*

24 Bultmann 1971, p. 138, n. 2.

25 Brown 1971, p. 131.

26 Metzger 1994, p. 174.

27 Willker 2015, TVU 29.

28 At the other end, for an account of an anterior (editorial) influence of the synoptic gospels on John 3:3.5 see Lindars 1980-1981, p. 287-294.

29 Royse 2008, p. 197.

30 Willker 2015, TVU 29.

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# *Parcelles de mots et de lieux saints*
## *La croix-reliquaire de Brageac*

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SUMMARY: This study focuses on the unusual character of an inscription decorating a reliquary cross, preserved in the treasury of the Brageac church (Cantal department, France, dating to the late twelfth or to the early thirteenth century). The expression designating one of the relics - the stones of the Sepulchre – has been disseminated in five different places on the object itself, corresponding to five parts of the reliquary. This raises the question of what was intended by the fragmentation and scattering of these words. The most reasonable interpretation should take into account the size and shape of the object, but another interpretation is equally plausible: when bearing in mind the works of Cynthia Hahn, such a voluntary fragmentation may also prove to be a metaphor relating to the very nature of the relic, as a *pars pro toto*, The words may also be interpreted as parts of the relic, such as it is implied by Thiofrid of Echternach's medieval text. As for the exceptional way in which this fragmentation has been staged, it creates a particular graphic setting. Its temporary opacity favours a displacement of meaning, and the use of this unusual divisibility recalls a certain unity in its wording.

KEYWORDS: relics, cross, inscription, epigraphy, metaphor.

REZUMAT: Studiul tratează caracterul unic al unei inscripții de pe o cruce-relicvar conservată în biserica de la Brageac (în departamentul Cantal, Franța), datând de la sfârșitul secolului al doisprezecelea sau de la începutul secolului următor. Literele care desemnează una dintre relicve – pietre de la Sf. Mormânt – au fost despărțite și răspândite în cinci locuri diferite pe obiect, corespunzând unor părți ale relicvarului. Care este motivul pentru care s-a operat această fragmentare? Explicația cea mai simplă trebuie să aibă în vedere dimensiunea și forma obiectului, dar există și alte explicații plauzibile: ținând cont de ipotezele propuse de Cynthia Hahn, această fragmentare intenționată poate juca rolul unei metafore care să sugereze natura compozită a relicvei, o *pars pro toto*, Cuvintele pot fi și ele interpretate ca făcând parte din relicvă, așa cum poate fi presupus din textul medieval al lui Thiofrid din Echternach. Cât privește modul surprinzător în care a fost dusă la capăt această fragmentare, ea sugerează o anumită atmosferă grafică. Dificultatea de moment a inscripției favorizează o deplasare de sens, iar fragmentarea surprinzătoare a literelor sugerează la rândul ei unitatea părților componente ale relicvei.

CUVINTE CHEIE: relicve, cruce, inscripţie, epigrafie, metaforă.

Cinq reliques liées au Christ, aux lieux de sa naissance et de sa Passion, sont mentionnées sur une croix-reliquaire de la fin du XIIe ou du début XIIIe siècle conservée dans le trésor de l'église de Brageac (au nord-ouest du Cantal, non loin de la Corrèze). L'expression nominale servant à désigner l'une de ces reliques répartie en cinq endroits de l'objet a été découpée en cinq morceaux. C'est sur cette mise en scène épigraphique originale que cette brève étude portera l'attention. Que signifie la fragmentation de ces mots ? Peut-on y voir la métaphore de la nature même de la relique, *pars pro toto* ? Que nous apprend cette sécabilité de l'unité graphique dans le rapport entretenu entre la relique et son nom, et plus largement sur la pensée linguistique médiévale ? Les quelques réponses apportées ici font partie d'un projet de recherche plus vaste sur l'« incarnation du langage » à travers les inscriptions du Moyen Âge.[1]

Commençons par décrire l'objet en question (Fig. 1 et Fig. 2). La croix à double traverse de Brageac est formée d'une âme de bois sur laquelle sont clouées de fines plaques d'argent partiellement dorées, et dont les arêtes sont bordées d'un motif perlé sur le devant. Elle n'a pas de pied. Des ornements estampés décorent l'avers (rinceaux en forme de x) et le revers (rinceaux végétaux). Sur la face principale se trouvent des loupes de cristal serties en bâtes, comme des cabochons, sous lesquelles sont les reliques ; aux intersections des deux traverses sont placées des logettes en forme de croix grecque. La première, située à l'intersection de la croisée supérieure, abrite des reliques de la Croix et la seconde, à la croisée inférieure, des reliques de la crèche. Sur la partie verticale inférieure de la croix se trouvent des reliques des vêtements et de Gethsémani. Aux cinq extrémités (en haut de la croix et sur les quatre branches) ont été réparties les pierres du sépulcre. Les mots *lapides sepulcri*, *sancta crux*, *presepe*, *vestim*(*ento*) et *Gesema*(*ni*)[2] ont été incisés sur de très fines lamelles de métal – rappelant certains authentiques de reliques – puis placés au-dessus de ce qu'ils désignent. La croix n'a pas été restaurée, de même que les fragments de texte, qui sont bien à leur place. L'écriture est fine et montre des lettres onciales (fermeture du M de *vestimento* et des E, présence de crochets aux extrémités des déliés).[3] La datation habituellement donnée est très vague et englobe tout le XIIIe siècle, cependant l'analyse paléographique et la ressemblance avec d'autres croix-reliquaires, comme celle du Musée du Berry à Bourges (Fig. 3), celle – aujourd'hui disparue – de l'ancienne abbaye d'Aubazine et celle conservée au Metropolitan Museum of Art de New York, invitent à la situer plus précisément entre le quatrième quart du XIIe siècle et le début du XIIIe siècle.[3] Elle serait peut-être, comme celles

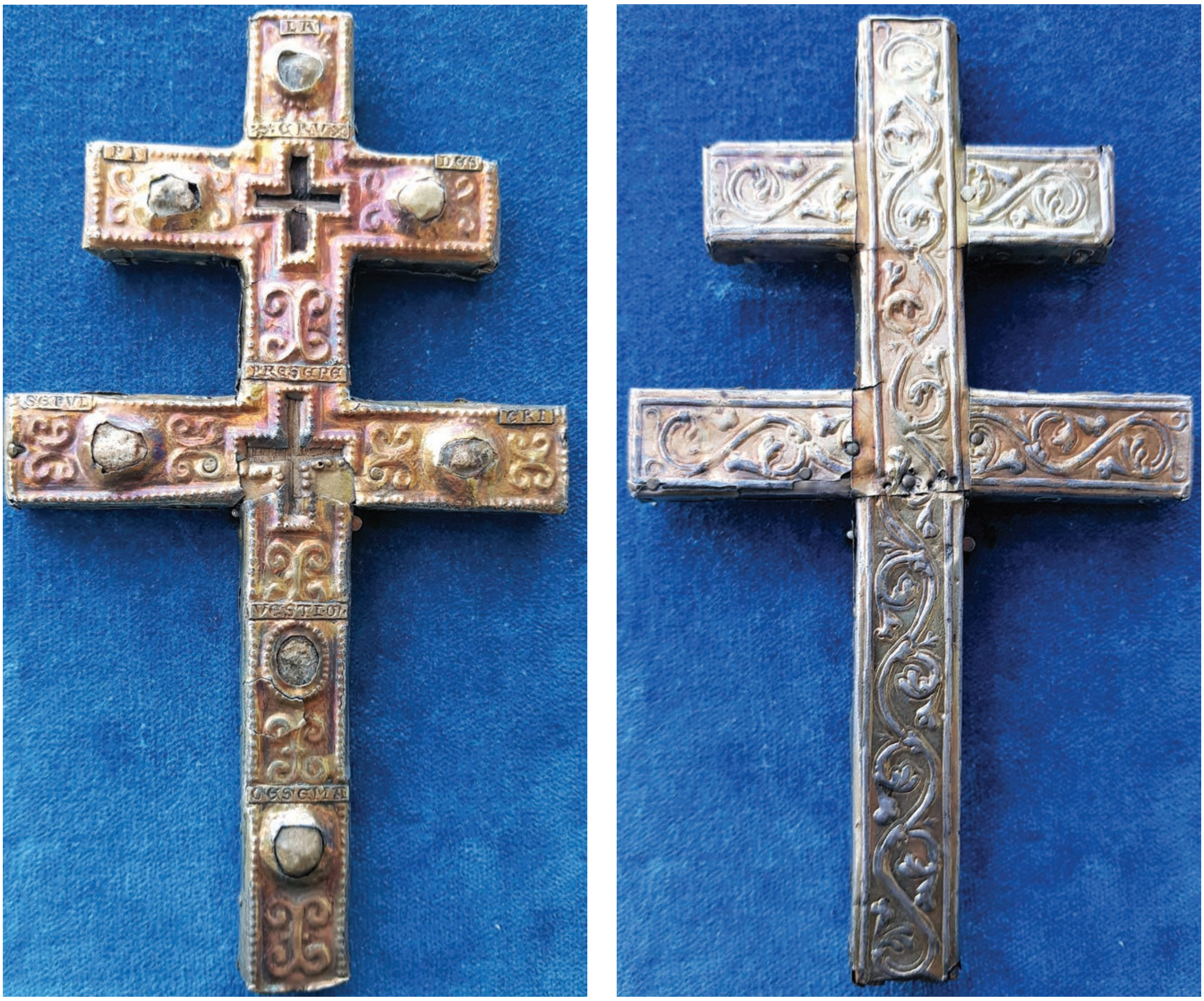


Fig. 1 et 2 : *Croix-reliquaire de Brageac. Avers et revers.* Clichés : Bruno Gibaru

citées précédemment, de provenance limousine.[5] Elle est faussement attribuée à saint Til,[6] fondateur d'un premier monastère à Brageac au VIIe siècle.[7] La petite abbaye de bénédictines aurait été bâtie dans les premières années du XIIe siècle à la demande de Guy et Raoul de Scorailles, à leur retour de croisade, avec l'intention d'y mettre leur sœur au titre d'abbesse. Ils rapportèrent les chefs de saint Côme et saint Damien à l'abbaye.

Les reliques présentes dans la croix de Brageac ne sont pas des restes corporels de saints, mais des traces concrètes de la vie terrestre du Christ provenant de Terre Sainte, appelées *eulogia* ou *benedictiones*, qu'il s'agisse de bois, de pierre, de terre ou de textile. La crèche est l'endroit de la naissance de Jésus à Bethléem ; Gethsémani est le nom du lieu où se rendit Jésus après le dernier repas, selon les évangélistes Marc et Matthieu ; la croix est l'instrument de son supplice ; le sépulcre est le tombeau où il a été déposé à sa mort ; la relique vestimentaire, dans ce contexte lié à la Passion, est sans doute la tunique du Christ. Bien que différentes des reliques d'un corps, celles de Terre Sainte partagent les mêmes attributs : plus que des souvenirs, elles représentent l'ensemble du lieu, évoquent la mémoire de l'événement associé au site, gardent dans leur matière fragmentaire et modeste les vertus et miracles de l'endroit, et portent l'espoir du Salut.[8]

Pour identifier les cinq *lapides sepulcri*, l'orfèvre n'a pas fait le choix de la répétition, procédé utilisé sur d'autres reliquaires contemporains, à l'instar du reliquaire d'Orval dans le Cher (Fig. 4) où la relique du lait de la Vierge est écrite quatre fois.[9] Il a préféré la fragmentation, le démembrement des mots. L'expression a été découpée par syllabes (ou exceptionnellement par groupe de deux syllabes) et répartie topographiquement, là où se situaient les reliques : LA/PI/DES SEPUL/CRI. Plusieurs hypothèses peuvent être formulées pour expliquer ce choix. La première pourrait être d'ordre matériel : la croix est de petite dimension (15,2 cm de hauteur, 6,2 cm de largeur pour la première traverse, et 8,8 cm pour la seconde) et la taille des lettres est très réduite (le L de *lapides* mesure 0,2 cm). On a peut-être considéré qu'il y avait trop peu de place pour répéter cinq fois cette expression, qui plus est, longue (six syllabes). Trois mots ont d'ailleurs été abrégés : *sancta* par un S barré selon l'habitude, *vestimento* et *Gesemani* par élision de la finale. Pourtant, sur les branches de la croix, l'artiste aurait pu trouver l'espace nécessaire pour inscrire *lapides* ou *lapis sepulcri*. La croix-reliquaire conservée au palais archiépiscopal de Sens, datant du XIIIe siècle (Fig. 5 et Fig. 6), présente une mise en page économique qui aurait pu être utilisée : chaque inscription encercle ou encadre l'opercule dans lequel se trouve la relique.[10] On pourrait aussi penser qu'une seule lamelle de métal avait été prévue pour porter le nom de chaque relique et que l'artiste a été contraint de sectionner celle des pierres du sépulcre qui, au lieu d'être regroupées, se trouvaient disséminées sur les branches de la croix. L'examen des lamelles permet cependant d'écarter cette deuxième hypothèse matérielle : en mettant bout à bout les lames on s'aperçoit que les syllabes n'ont pas été tracées à la suite comme si elles faisaient partie d'un seul mot, sinon l'espace qui les sépare serait moins important.

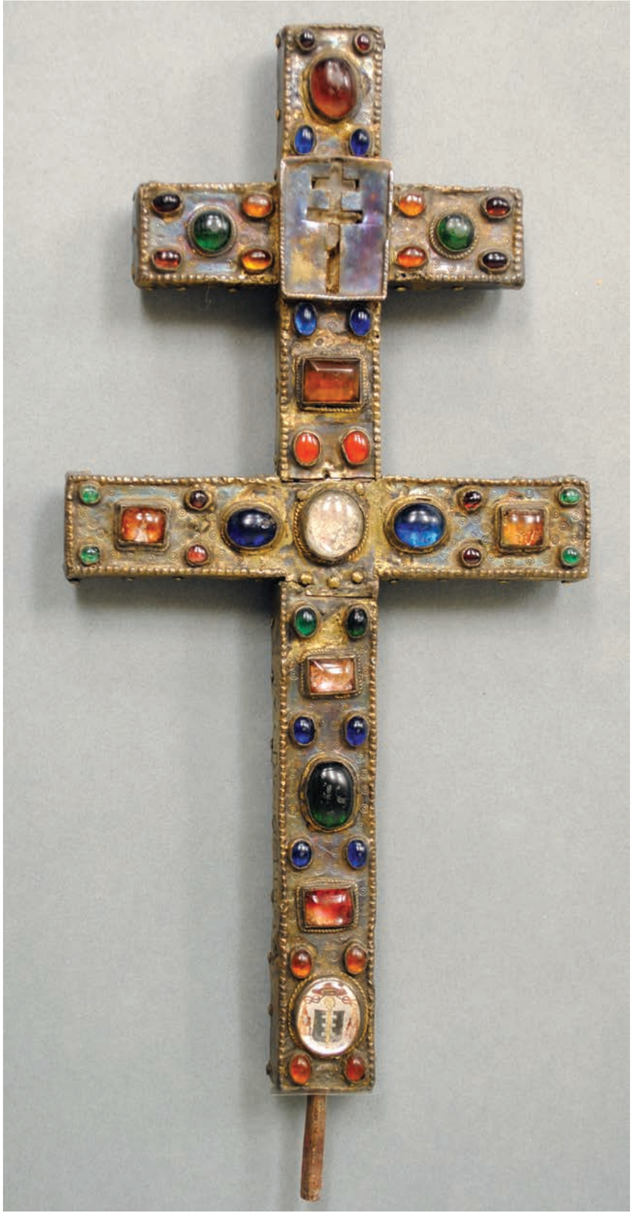
Une troisième explication pourrait être celle d'un choix tout à fait délibéré, celui du jeu, d'un puzzle, charge au lecteur de recoller les pièces et l'ensemble de la croix pour comprendre de quoi il s'agit. Cette recherche tant ludique qu'esthétique rejoint celle des enclavements, entrelacements et conjonctions de deux ou trois caractères, si présents dans l'écriture capitale sur pierre, sur verre, sur métal, mais aussi sur parchemin.[11] Par ces jeux graphiques, l'appréhension immédiate du mot et de la phrase est retardée tant que le labyrinthe de lettres n'est pas déchiffré. Dans le cas des manuscrits bibliques et liturgiques, comme l'ont fait remarquer Marc Smith et Patricia Stirnemann, « la lisibilité du mot est subordonnée à la sacralisation, manifestée dans la transformation de son essence visuelle ».[12] Une telle obscurité transitoire, cherchant à émerveiller l'œil et renouveler le regard, n'est pas sans rappeler certaines techniques des arts de la mémoire, telle la *scinderatio phonorum*, « sciage de mot », exposée par Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, grammairien du VIIᵉ siècle.[13] Une des techniques de ce sciage consiste en une modification de l'ordre des lettres et des syllabes d'un mot, afin de créer une sorte d'énigme et retarder l'accès à la signification : par exemple la phrase *spes Romanorum periit* était écrite *rr. ss. pp. mm. nt. ee. oo. av. ii.* Cette mise à l'épreuve et herméneutique à toute petite échelle créent une connivence avec le lecteur pleinement acteur.

Si c'est bien cette atmosphère graphique, jouant sur l'unité spatiale par le resserrement ou le démembrement, qui peut expliquer la mise en scène des pierres du sépulcre sur la croix de Brageac, nous voudrions insister sur une quatrième hypothèse. Le mot a été fragmenté comme on fragmente ce qu'il désigne : une relique. La relique comme son nom l'indique est un reste, un fragment, une parcelle, chaque fragment du corps saint garde néanmoins toute la *virtus* du corps intégral. Ce principe fut énoncé très tôt en Orient, en s'appuyant sur les écrits théologiques, comme ceux de Grégoire de Naziance. Malgré son histoire controversée en Occident, on reconnut sa capacité à augmenter l'action et le pouvoir des saints dans le monde. À l'instar de la relique, l'expression nominale n'aurait pas besoin d'être gravée en entier à chaque fois, chaque syllabe pouvant donner l'ensemble de l'expression, dans un rapport synecdotique de la partie pour le tout. A-t-on voulu, sur la croix de Brageac, reporter sur le mot la nature et le fonctionnement de la relique? C'est bien possible, ce qui n'annule pas les premières hypothèses explorées, mais les situe au second plan : les contraintes matérielles et spatiales, si elles ont existé, ont été dépassées ; l'enjeu ludique trouve une nouvelle justification.

Les travaux de Cynthia Hahn sur les reliquaires, leurs qualités métaphoriques, rhétoriques et référentielles, permettent d'approfondir cette analyse.[14] Ayant démontré que les reliquaires de forme anatomique, particulièrement fréquents aux XIIIᵉ- XIVᵉ siècles, ne contenaient généralement pas la relique suggérée par l'objet, elle explique que la relation entre contenant et contenu fonctionne en réalité de manière métaphorique et qu'un glissement de sens se fait entre les deux, et enfin que les reliquaires en forme de membre s'appuient sur la fragmentation pour désigner un tout plus grand. La chercheuse reprend les définitions de la métaphore proposées par Max Black et Paul Ricoeur ; celles-ci s'opposent à une conception figurative ou substitutive et montrent que le rapport entre l'énoncé et sa référence, qui présente une opacité, dépasse l'aspect cognitif pour créer par le langage un nouveau sens. De façon similaire, visuelle et verbale, la croix de Brageac insiste sur la parcellisation en fragmentant les mots qui doivent révéler l'identité de la relique. Si ce découpage rend d'abord obscure la signification des mots incisés, il éclaire cependant le fonctionnement de la relique ; il déplace ainsi le sens. Nous retrouvons alors ce procédé d'opacité, employé au profit d'un déplacement et d'un enrichissement de la signification.[15]

Une dernière question doit être abordée. Quel rapport unit le mot écrit à la chose, dans le cas des reliques, pour que la nature de l'une puisse se reporter sur l'autre, si ce n'est réellement, du moins par métaphore ? La typologie des

Fig. 3 : *Croix-reliquaire de Bourges.*
Cliché : Vincent Debiais CIFM/CÉSCM.



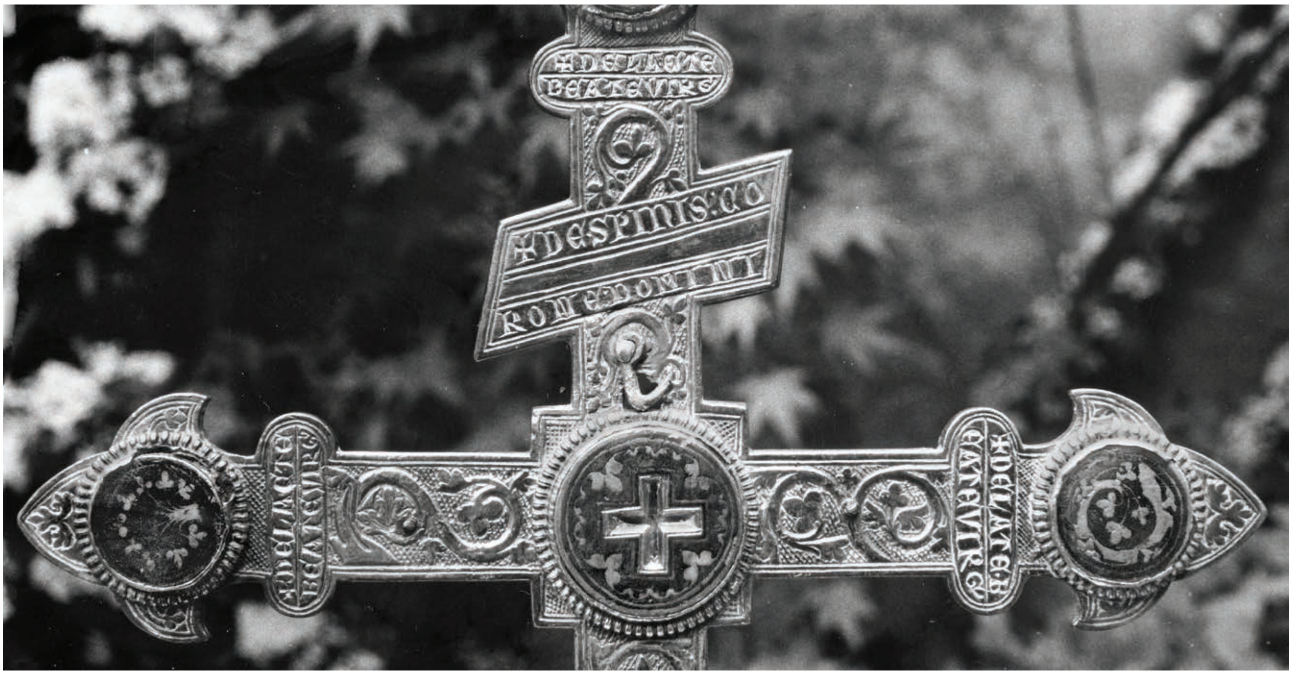


Fig. 4 : *Croix-reliquaire d'Orval. Détail.*
Cliché : Jean Michaud CIFM/CÉSCM.

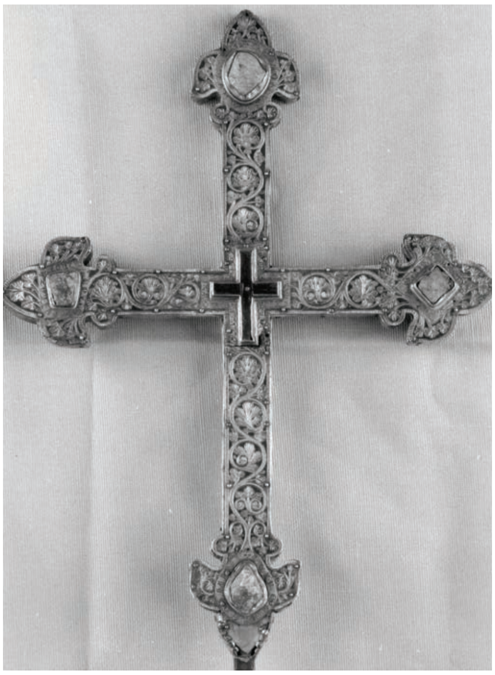
Fig. 5 et 6 : *Croix-reliquaire de Sens. Ensemble et détail. de l'inscription 'De monte Calvario'.*
Cliché : Jean Michaud CIFM/CÉSCM.

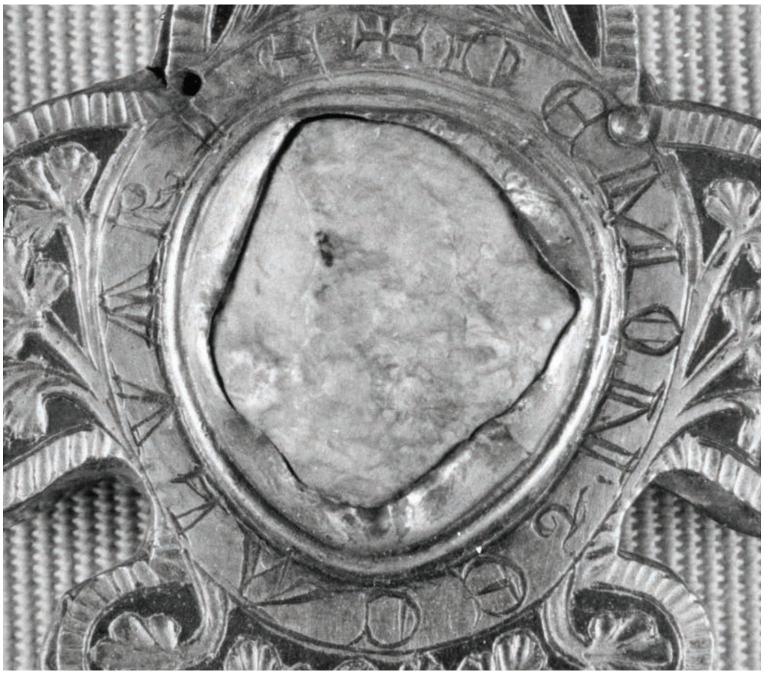
formes de reliques qu'élabore Thiofrid d'Echternach au tournant des XIe-XIIe siècles dans son traité des *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, littéralement les « fleurs éparpillées sur le tombeau des saints », apporte un éclairage.[16] S'appuyant sur les qualités sensibles des reliques et non sur la hiérarchie des saints au paradis ou d'autres types de catégories, l'abbé d'Echternach aborde la question du saint mort, de ses reliques corporelles et de son tombeau dans les deux premiers livres ; les deux suivants traitent des « appendices extérieurs », en d'autres termes les restes non corporels mais qui ont été en contact avec le corps saint (comme les baguettes, les vêtements, les boîtes, l'huile, ou encore, de manière négative les instruments du supplice), ainsi que les ombres et les noms. Dans la pensée développée par Thiofrid, la relique, « substrat, défini par rapport aux perceptions sensorielles, à travers lequel s'exerce la puissance divine sous forme de miracle »,[17] n'est donc pas seulement un objet en trois dimensions. Les noms de saints, d'ailleurs placés en tête du troisième livre, sont les premiers signes des choses ; qui plus est, ils sont dotés d'un pouvoir supérieur aux autres reliques, car ils sont absolus, c'est-à-dire libres d'empêchements locaux, ils peuvent être prononcés ou écrits partout.[18] Ils sont également dits intransitivement transitifs, comme l'est le Verbe de Dieu : ils sont éternels mais transitent dans la bouche des fidèles.[19]

Quels rapprochements peut-on faire entre l'élaboration théorique de l'abbé d'Echternach[20] et la conception de la croix de Brageac un siècle plus tard ? Ce traité permet de constater que le nom est complètement intégré au répertoire des formes de reliques. Même s'il établit une claire distinction entre les *lemmata* (les restes) et les *appendicia*, et si, dans sa pensée, il est question de nom de saints, donc de personnes, et non de noms de choses ou de lieux, le glissement est facile à opérer. Le transfert fait à Brageac de la nature parcellaire des reliques d'un lieu à son nom se fait par l'élément qui leur est commun : la matière. L'écriture passe par la matière et la spatialité, l'analogie peut être faite entre le nom et le corps. Cette pensée du mot graphique est à rapprocher de l'évolution de l'écriture tant dans la documentation épigraphique que manuscrite. Le passage de la *scriptio continua* à l'écriture aérée, puis régulièrement séparée par des espacements ou – dans le cas des inscriptions – grâce à une interponctuation (un, deux, trois points verticaux), permet d'isoler les éléments de la chaîne d'écriture. Le mot devient une unité distincte, sa sécabilité est donc d'autant plus signifiante. Cette sécabilité et cet éclatement peuvent enfin rappeler la répartition de certains mots, ou plutôt abréviations, dans l'art byzantin, comme les quatre paires de lettres IC XC NI KA ('Jésus Christ vainc') inscrites aux quatre coins d'une croix, ou autour d'une croix.[21] Dans ce cas, il n'est pas question de légende de relique mais d'une affirmation de foi, et la balance esthétique vient amplifier le sémantisme de l'expression : la victoire du Christ aux quatre coins du monde.

Cette rapide investigation a cherché à explorer les différentes hypothèses pouvant expliquer le découpage de l'inscription des pierres du sépulcre. Les raisons matérielles et spatiales qui pourraient être évoquées de prime abord doivent être écartées pour saisir toutes les implications sémantiques de cette mise en scène liées aux reliques.[22] La volonté d'insister sur la fragmentation est aussi visible dans l'emploi du pluriel, *lapides*. On parle habituellement de la pierre du sépulcre et le pluriel utilisé ici semble augmenter la fragmentation – parcelles de parcelles –, éclatement rendu par l'éparpillement aux extrémités de la croix. L'expression nominale devient à son tour corps morcelé mais valant pour le tout. Faut-il y voir une sorte de topographie du sacré, autour de la crèche et de la croix, la naissance et la mort, en vue du Salut, ou encore une narration de la vie du Christ ? Nombre d'interrogations sur la croix-reliquaire de Brageac restent en suspens.

Un tel cas d'étude est exceptionnel et nous ne connaissons pas d'autres exemples de découpage de mots sur reliquaire. Son existence suffit cependant à illustrer la capacité des médiévaux à considérer l'écriture, dans certains cas, comme élément relevant de la visualisation et de la présentification du sacré, en un mot, de participer pleinement à la théologie de l'Incarnation.





## Notes :

1 Sur cette thématique, nous renvoyons plus particulièrement le lecteur à notre article : Ingrand-Varenne *s.p.*

2 Le nominatif a été utilisé (d'après les mots dont la finale n'est pas abrégée), alors que le cas génitif ou la préposition *de* suivis de l'ablatif sont plus courants pour introduire les reliques.

3 Sur ce reliquaire voir : Rupin 1887 ; Rupin 1890, vol. II, p. 299-300 ; Frolow 1961, no. 639 ; CIFM, vol. 18, Cantal 3, p. 41-42, pl. XXI, fig. 53.

4 Voir *Trésors de vermeil* 2003, p. 36-37 ; CIFM, vol. 26, 104, p. 130-132.

5 Ernest Rupin en fait déjà l'hypothèse dans son article de 1887 (Rupin 1887, p. 618) ; c'est pourquoi il l'intègre à son ouvrage sur l'*Œuvre de Limoges* (Rupin 1890).

6 Ce personnage est connu grâce à la vie de saint Éloi, datée du VIIe siècle (*Vita Eligii Episcopi Noviomagensis* Lib. I, in MGH SS Rer. M., vol. 4, p. 676) et deux autres vitae (*Vita S. Tillone Paulo monacho in Gallia*, in AASS, 7 janvier, p. 376-380 ; *Vita S. Tillonis monachis Sollemniacensis in Lemovicibus*, in AASS OSB, vol. 2, p. 994-1001). D'origine saxonne, il est l'un des apprentis-orfèvres du saint. Alors qu'il était moine à l'abbaye de Solignac en Limousin depuis la mort d'Éloi, il décida de devenir ermite et, remontant la vallée de l'Auze, s'installa près de Brageac. Les habitants lui demandèrent de fonder un monastère, ce qu'il accepta, avant de retourner à Solignac où il mourut.

7 Une autre relique du trésor de Brageac est attribuée à saint Til : il s'agit d'une bourse datant du XVe siècle.

8 Voir Bartal, Bodner, Kühnel 2017.

9 CIFM, vol. 26, 156, p. 174-175.

10 CIFM, vol. 21, 161, p. 178-179, pl. XLV- XLVII, fig. 93-98. Les reliques contenues au croisement et aux extrémités des bras sont celles du bois de la croix, du mont Calvaire, du sépulcre de saint Lazare, du sépulcre du Seigneur et de la crèche.

11 Voir Ingrand-Varenne 2013.

12 Stirnemann, Smith 2007, particulièrement p. 70.

13 Doležalová 2009, p. 27-28. La *scinderatio fonorum* renvoie à diverses pratiques concernant des niveaux différents : des changements d'ordre des vers, des mots, des lettres. L'ensemble des œuvres du grammairien a été édité par Löfstedt 2003.

14 Voir Hahn 1997 ; Hahn 2005 ; Hahn 2012.

15 Voir aussi Ziolkowski 1966 ; Obscurity 2013.

16 Camillo Ferrari 1996. Ce traité, écrit entre 1098 et 1104/1105 et dédié à l'archevêque Bruno de Trêves, est un hommage aux saints en général et aux reliques en particulier, s'appuyant sur des extraits de la Bible mais aussi des Pères. L'ouvrage, composé de quatre livres de sept chapitres chacun, propose une réflexion poussée sur la nature de la présence divine dans les reliques des saints, sur les rapports entre Dieu et la matière, et la sanctification de celle-ci. Thiofrid compare même cette présence avec la présence réelle dans l'Eucharistie. Trois manuscrits subsistent de ce traité, tous trois du XIIe siècle, dont l'un (Trêves, Stadtbibliothek 1378/103) est le modèle des deux autres.

17 Définition synthétique proposée par Camillo Ferrari 1995, p. 220.

18 Si Thiofrid parle surtout des invocations et de la voix, il prend la peine de préciser que le mot écrit garde le même pouvoir que celui prononcé oralement : « *Per verba illorum absentium non voce prolata sed in scedulis digesta (ut veridica testantur scripta) diversarum egritudinum curantur incommoda, et quasi litteras intellegant elementa prima rerum semina sic ad sacros eorum apices in se missos cataclysmum minantia licet tanquam ad intransmeabilem obicem indignantia, verbis tamen potentibus obedientia in alveos suos resiliunt et residunt flumina.* »

19 « *Sacrosanctis intransitive transitivis nominibus* […] *Nomina quippe eorum vivunt in secula, et per Verbum in principio Deum apud Deum qui tuba intonat evangelica, celum et terra transibunt verba autem mea non transient, per Verbum – inquam – eterni Patris sapientiam (cuius sermo cui non transeundo transit sine mutabilitate permanentes exprimit sententias) licet suapte natura sint transitiva participatione tamen et communione immutabilis et intransitive nature in ipsa naturali transitione sua sunt intransitiva, et non manendo permanentia.* […] *Immutabili sempiterne providentie decreto dum per ora in fide invocantium transeunt...* » Voir l'analyse de Henriet 2006, plus particulièrement les p. 237-238.

[20] Précisons que l'on ne sait quelle fut la portée de ce traité (les deux copies isolées tendent à prouver qu'il n'a pas eu d'influence), cependant il reste « un baromètre révélateur de l'opinion concernant les reliques au XI$^{e}$ siècle », comme l'ont souligné Cynthia Hahn et Holger Klein ; Thiofrid dit lui-même qu'il ne fait que rapporter les réflexions de Réginbert, l'abbé qui l'avait précédé. Voir Hahn, Klein 2015, p. 1 de l'introduction.

[21] Pour d'autres analyses de la mise en scène des inscriptions sur les reliquaires, voir les travaux de Brad Hostetler (Hostetler 2011; Hostetler 2012 ; Hostetler s.p.) et l'article de Pallottini *s.p.*

[22] Sur ce sujet, voir l'étude de Rhoby 2013. Pour d'autres exemples, voir Rhoby 2010, Nr. Me79, p. 248-251, et Nr. Me106, p. 295-296).

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# *New Information on the Dating of the Murals of St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa*

## *A Hypothesis*[1]

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RÉSUMÉ: Bien que la restauration de l'église de Ribiţa (région de Hunedoara) eût démarré aux années 1994-1995 et qu'elle soit encore inachevée, les travaux de décapage des peintures murales ont mis en lumière un certain nombre de nouvelles données permettant à formuler certaines hypothèses sur la datation des peintures murales. Poussée par le désir de corriger la lecture erronée – prise comme telle par les historiens de l'art – d'une inscription récemment découverte, l'étude est devenue un examen critique des informations données par les textes slavons conservés dans l'église : de l'inscription de la peinture votive, des inscriptions de nature votive de l'au-dessus et du voisinage immédiat de l'image de Saint Jean-Baptiste (toutes les trois dans le registre inférieur de la paroi sud du naos) et d'une inscription récemment découverte (dans la partie nord de la voûte de l'autel, entre les représentations de deux évangélistes assis). Le caractère fragmentaire de ces inscriptions et l'examen critique de leur contenu ne permettent que de formuler des hypothèses au sujet de la datation de l'ensemble des peintures murales : que ces hypothèses soient confirmées ou non, nous allons le savoir lors de l'achèvement des travaux de décapage, de nettoyage et de restauration des fresques. Le détail de la peinture votive avec l'indication de la date chronologique lue par Silviu Dragomir comme l'année 6925 (=1417) ne figure pas dans la photo d'avant 1930 qui accompagne son étude. L'historien roumain s'est probablement basé sur la transcription de l'inscription faite en 1869-1870 par le prêtre de Ribiţa, juste un an avant la publication par Ödön Nemes des informations à propos des fondateurs de l'église et des inscriptions indiquant l'année 1404. L'année de l'inscription fragmentaire de l'autel n'a pas été conservée, mais des informations qui existent encore semblent indiquer l'année 1393 étant la date à laquelle on a réalisé au moins la décoration murale de l'autel, sinon toute la peinture de l'église (seule la fin de la restauration des fresques peut apporter des preuves claires et concluantes pour avancer une formule plus précise au sujet des étapes de la décoration). L'examen épigraphique et paléographique des peintures et des textes de l'église ont indiqué l'existence d'au moins deux « mains » individuelles: l'inscription votive et les inscriptions avoisinées aux images des saints rois hongrois se distinguent à la fois entre elles et par rapport aux autres inscriptions de l'église. Les informations fournies par les quatre inscriptions au caractère votif ont conduit à l'hypothèse selon laquelle l'ensemble des peintures murales a été matérialisé par la volonté de plusieurs donateurs qui ont contribué financièrement (à hauteurs différentes !) simultanément ou consécutivement : ce qui imprime un caractère cumulatif à l'acte fondateur – chose loin d'être isolée dans les cas des Pays du Criş et du Haţeg.

MOTS-CLÉS: peinture murale, slavon d'église, épigraphie, paléographie, donateur.

REZUMAT: Deşi restaurarea a fost începută în 1994-1995 şi este încă neîncheiată, lucrările de decapare a picturilor murale ale bisericii Sf. Nicolae din Ribiţa (jud. Hunedoara) întreprinse în decursul a 20 de ani au adus la lumină o serie de informaţii noi care permit formularea unor ipoteze în legătură cu datarea ansamblului mural. Determinată de dorinţa de a corecta lectura eronată şi preluată ca atare de către istoricii de artă a unei inscripţii noi, studiul este o reexaminare critică a informaţiilor oferite de inscripţiile în slavonă păstrate în biserică: pisania din tabloul votiv, inscripţiile cu caracter votiv de deasupra şi de lângă reprezentarea Sf. Ioan Botezătorul (toate trei în registrul inferior al peretelui sudic al navei) şi inscripţia nouă din altar (partea nordică a bolţii, între reprezentările a doi Evanghelişti aşezaţi). Caracterul fragmentar al acestor inscripţii şi examinarea critică a conţinutului lor nu permit decât formularea unor ipoteze legate de datarea ansamblului mural care vor fi sau nu confirmate în momentul încheierii lucrărilor de decapare, curăţare şi restaurare a frescelor medievale. Detaliul anului conţinut odinioară de pisania din tabloul votiv şi citit drept 6925 (1417) de către Silviu Dragomir nu apare în fotografia de dinainte de 1930 care îi însoţeşte studiul, istoricul bazându-şi lectura pe transcrierea textului pisaniei făcută în 1869-1870 de către preotul din Ribiţa, cu doar un an după publicarea de către Ödön Nemes a unor informaţii despre ctitori şi inscripţii care precizează anul 1404. Anul oferit de inscripţia fragmentară din altar nu se mai păstrează, însă informaţia încă existentă pare să indice anul 1393 drept data la care a fost realizată decoraţia murală cel puţin a altarului, dacă nu a întregii biserici (numai finalizarea lucrărilor de restaurare a frescelor poate aduce probe certe pentru conturarea unei mai ferme definiri a etapelor de decorare). Examenul epigrafic şi paleografic parţial al materialului din biserică a indicat existenţa a cel puţin două „mâini" unice, inscripţiile din pisanie şi de lângă regii sfinţi ai Ungariei distingându-se atât între ele, cât şi în raport cu celelalte inscripţii din biserică. Informaţiile oferite de cele patru inscripţii cu caracter votiv au condus la avansarea ipotezei că ansamblul mural a fost realizat din voinţa mai multor donatori care au participat financiar în măsuri diferite, fie simultan, fie în perioade distincte, fapt care conferă actului ctitoricesc caracter cumulativ, un lucru deloc izolat în Ţările Crişurilor şi Haţegului.

CUVINTE CHEIE: pictură murală, slavonă bisericească, epigrafie, paleografie, donator.

The village of Ribiţa (Hung. *Ribice*)[2] is currently situated in the County of Hunedoara (Romania), but during the Middle Ages it belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary. The settlement was part of the County of Zaránd, an administrative unit that had Şiria (Hung. *Világos*) as its center.[3] The church in the village of Ribiţa keeps to this day its medieval dedication to St. Nicholas and represents an important religious monument datable to the late-fourteenth – early-fifteenth century.[4] Even though only some stone carvings attest today to the medieval origin of the monument, which was conceived according to a typology often encountered in the region's religious (both Catholic and Orthodox) architecture (single-nave church with rectangular, vaulted sanctuary and tall, western tower, Fig. 1),[5] the church in Ribiţa is home to a rich medieval ensemble of indoor frescoes. The research on the Ribiţa church increased considerably during the last two decades, since the restoration of the monument was initiated. Begun in 1994-1995 with the consolidation of the building and the removal of the architectural alterations to which the church was subjected in 1869-1870,[6] the restoration extended later to the mural paintings. The latter works were initiated in 1994 by painter-restorer Dan Căceu[7] and were later carried on by restorer Silviu Petrescu between 1995-1999 and 2009-2011, respectively.[8]

Despite the fact that the restauration of the frescoes is currently interrupted and "the conclusions of the undertaken works and research are not yet published, due to their incomplete character",[9] the mural ensemble in Ribiţa is now greatly uncovered from under the numerous layers of paint which had covered the walls throughout time (Fig. 2).[10] Subsequently, one can safely state that the church's sanctuary is decorated in its axis with a representation of the *Melismos*, flanked by deacon-archangels, and is supplemented by figures of hierarchs on the lateral walls. The transition to the very deteriorated image of the vault (probably Christ in Glory) is made through cherubs placed above the archangels and through Evangelists (represented seating and probably writing), placed above the Church Fathers. The nave of the church is decorated in its upper register with scenes taken from the Life and Passion of Christ. The Last Judgment is rendered through the randomly disposed scenes of the Sinners' Torments in Hell (southern wall of the room below the western tower), the Bosom of Abraham (the lower register of the southern wall), and the *Anastasis* combined with the image of the Sinners in the Mouth of the Leviathan (the upper register of the northern wall). The lower register is supplemented by figures of military saints on horseback, the Holy Kings of Hungary, St. Helena, St. Nicholas, St. John the Baptist, St. Panteleimon, pillar and martyr saints, etc. The partially-preserved image of the votive composition depicts the kneeling ktetors (i.e., brothers Vladislavu and Miclăuşu with their wives, Stana and Sora, and Ana, the daughter of the former) who offer the model of the church to its patron, St. Nicholas (Fig. 3).[11] The iconographic, stylistic, epigraphic, and paleographical evidence currently visible inside the church allows art historians to form opinions on some aspects in the history of the monument. These opinions, however, have a provisional character and only the completion of the much-postponed restoration can provide for new evidence that will support or not the validity of such hypotheses.[12]

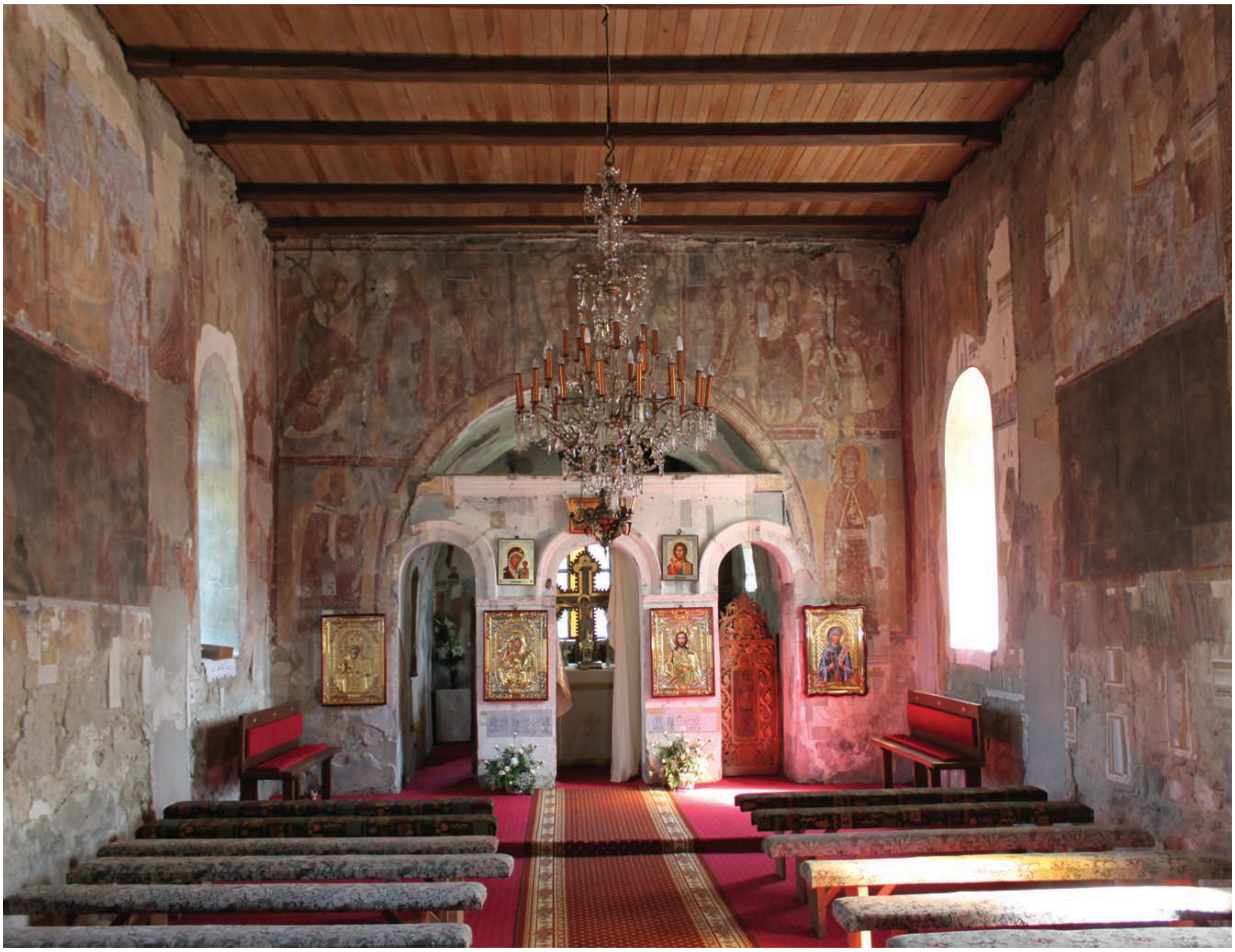
The dating of the mural decoration of the church in Ribiţa represented the concern (either direct or indirect) of previous scholars. However, the fragmentary character of the information offered by the Old Church Slavonic inscriptions present in the Ribiţa church led to various hypotheses placing the murals at different moments during the first two decades of the fifteenth century. The first to express an opinion in this regard was Ödön Nemes who, in 1868, conveyed the information that the church's frescoes had been painted in 1404.[13] He relied on the church's inscriptions in *old Serbian* (i.e., Old Church Slavonic), which were still unaltered by the architectural transformations that were to take place one year later. Writing twice on the church in Ribiţa, its frescoes and ktetors, Silviu Dragomir stated first, in his 1917 study, that the frescoes had been painted in 1414/5.[14] Later on, however, in his extensive study dedicated to the paintings and ktetors of the churches in

Crişcior (Hung. *Kristyor*) and Ribiţa, published in 1930, he assigned the execution date of the murals in Ribiţa to 1417.[15] After he critically examined the information conveyed by his two predecessors, Adrian Andrei Rusu proposed in 1991 "as new and correct dating of the complex of mural painting in Ribiţa, the year 1414".[16] This interpretation became doubtful four years later when, following the murals' uncovering by D. Căceu, a new inscription was brought to light on the northern wall of the sanctuary. Erroneously and without any other explanation, Irina Popa indicated in 1995 that the partially preserved inscription in the altar contained the year 1407.[17]

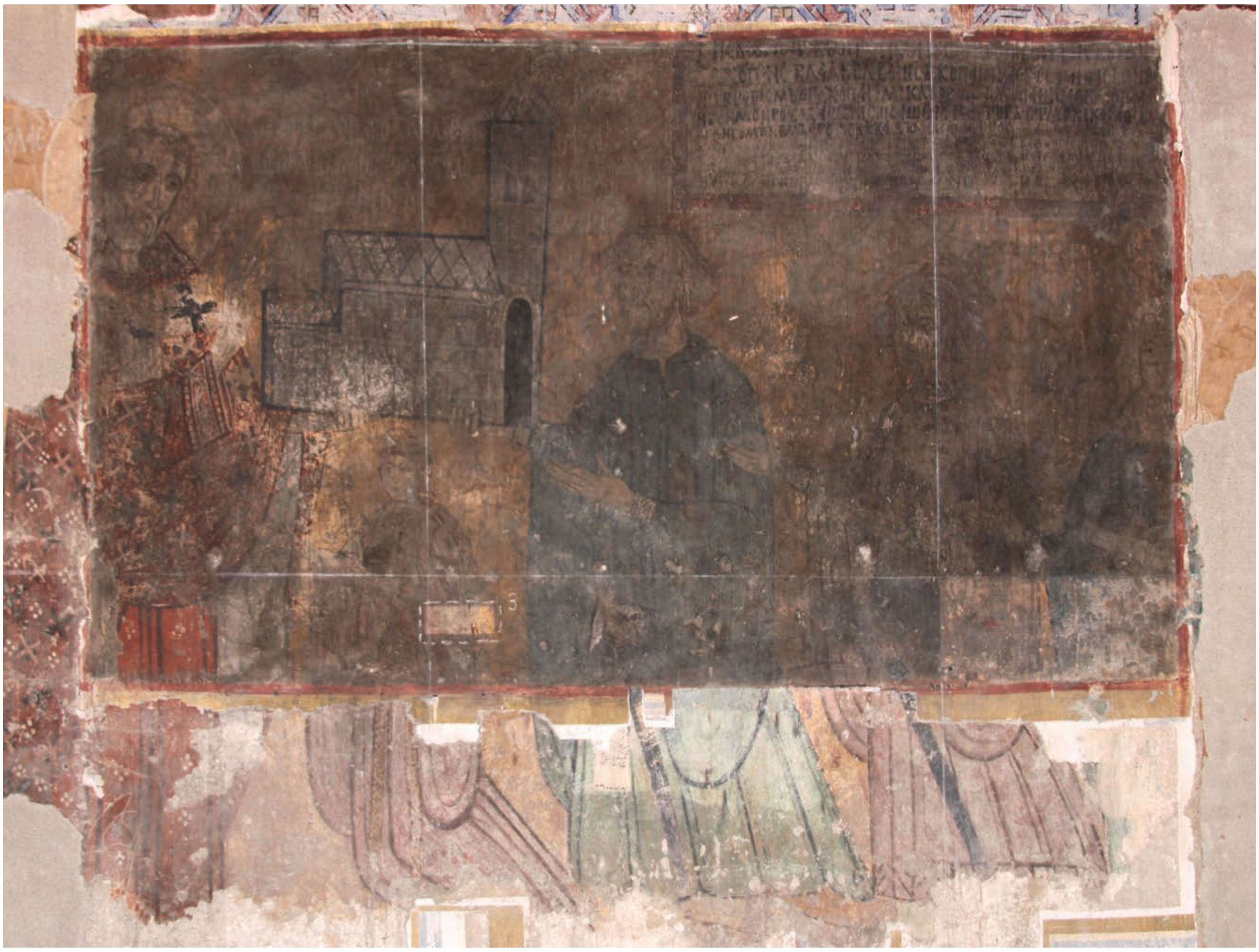
Because this false information seems to have been unreservedly adopted by recent art-historical scholarship as the execution date of the frescoes of the church in Ribiţa,[18] its rectification is more than reasonable. Not claiming to categorically and definitively solve the problem of dating the mural ensemble in Ribiţa, we shall henceforward make several observations which have as their starting point either old (the dedicatory inscription in the votive composition) or new information (the inscriptions uncovered during the restoration of the past twenty years). In doing so, we hope to supplement the existing knowledge on St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa with new data, which will allow a better and more nuanced understanding of the monument's history - whenever the restoration of the murals will be completed.

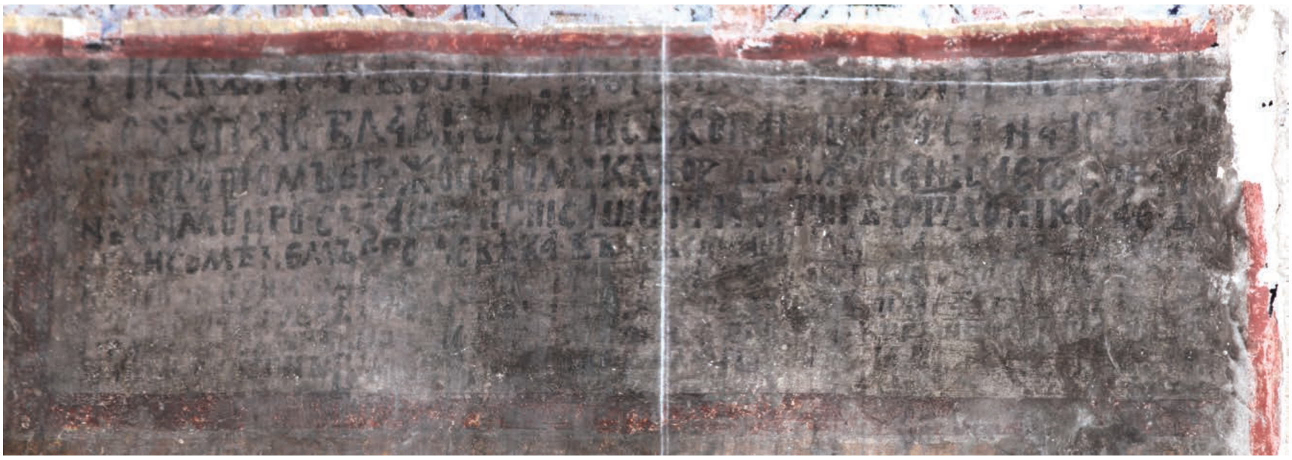
Currently, the church's main dedicatory inscription, which was included in the votive composition, is only fragmentarily preserved (Fig. 3). A significant portion of its text was destroyed by one of the pillars attached to the walls of the nave in 1869-1870 in order to support the new vault *a vela* which replaced the church's original ceiling.[19] Moreover, due to the thick layer of soot on its surface, the final four lines of the inscription are now impossible to read (Fig. 4). This coincided with the conservation state of the dedicatory inscription prior to 1985, when Liana Tugearu wrote her study on the murals that were visible at that point in the church.[20] She supplemented the reading that was possible at that time[21] with that offered in 1930 by S. Dragomir, who reproduced "line by line" a transcription made by the priest in Ribiţa on the occasion of the church's renovation in 1869-1870.[22] The priest's copy is in great extent faithful to the actual text of the dedicatory inscription, as it can be recovered either through its direct examination or through the photographs in S. Dragomir's article, which reflect the inscription's conservation state before 1930 (Fig. 5).[23] According to these three sources – the actual inscription (Fig. 3-4), the photographs made prior to 1930 (Fig. 5), and the transcription by S. Dragomir of the priest's copy of 1869-1870 (Fig. 6), respectively –, the dedicatory inscription conveys the following information:[24]

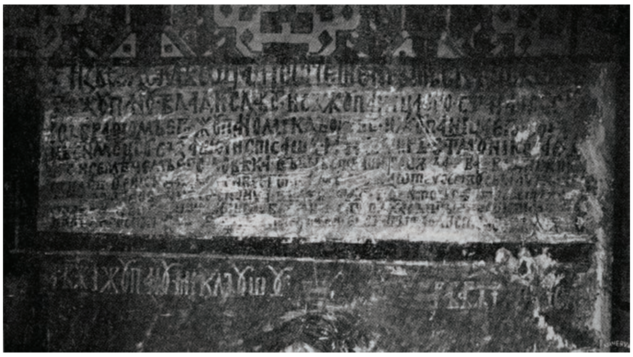
◣ Fig. 1 : *St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa. Exterior view from the south-east.* Credits: Anca Crişan.

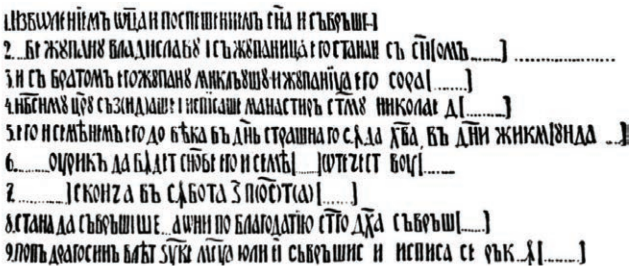


▼ Fig. 2 : *St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa. Interior view of the nave from the west.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.









1.ИЗВОЛЕНІЕМЪ ѠЦА И ПОСПѢШЕНІЕМЪ СНА И СЪВРЪШЕ[
2. ...БЕ ЖѸПАНѸ ВЛАДИСЛАВѸ І СЪ ЖѸПАНИЦА ЕГО СТАНАЕ СЪ СН[ОМЪ.....] ..................
3.И СЪ БРАТОМЪ ЕГО ЖѸПАНѸ МИКЛЪѸШѸ И ЖѸПАНІЦА ЕГО СОРА[......]
4.НБСНМѸ ЦРѸ СЪЗ(ИД)АШЕ І ИСПІСАШЕ МАНАСТИРЪ СТМѸ НИКОЛАЕ Д[.......]
5.ЕГО И СЕМѢНЕМЪ ЕГО ДО ВѢКА ВЪ ДНЬ СТРАШНАГО СѪДА ХВА, ВЪ ДНИ ЖИКМ[ѸНДА ...]
6.......ОУРИКЪ ДА БѪДЕТ СНОВЕ ЕГО И СЕМѢ[.....]ѠТЕЧЕСТ ВОУ[.....
7..........]ЕКОНЧА ВЪ СѪБОТА З П(ОС)Т(А)[......]
8.СТАНА ДА СЪВРЪШІШЕ...АѠНИ ПО БЛАГОДАТІЮ СТГО ДХА СЪВРЪШ[......]
9.ПОПЪ ДРАГОСИНЪ ВЛѢТ ЅѰКЕ МЦА ЮЛИ ЕІ СЪВРЪШИЕ И ИСПИСА СЕ РЪК..Д[.......]

(1) † извѡле[ни]мъ ѡца і поспеше[ни]емъ с(ы)на и сьвръше[ниемъ с(вѧ)таго д(оѵ)ха...]
(2) ...]ре жꙋпанꙋ владиславꙋ и сь жꙋпаница его стана и съ с(ы)н[омъ его...]
(3) і сь братомъ его жꙋпанꙋ миклъоѵшꙋ и жꙋпаница его сора и [...]
(4) н(е)б(е)сн(о)мꙋ ц(а)рꙋ създашꙋ и спісаше манастиръ с(вѧ)т(о)мꙋ николае д[...]
(5) ...и семѣнемъ его до вѣка въ д<ь>нь ст[ра]шн[а]го съда х(ристо)ва въ дни ж(и)к[моѵн(д)а кралѣ...]
(6) зн[ата]го ꙋрикъ да бѫдет с(ы)н(о)ве его и семѣ[немъ его и] ѡтечествꙋ его [...]
(7) [...]скончa въ сѫбота ѕ҃ п(ос)та [...]
(8) [...]стана да съвръшіше а ѡни по бл(а)годатію с(вѧ)таго д(оѵ)ха съвръш[...]
(9) попъ драгосинъ в<ъ> лѣт(о) ѕц҃ке м(ѣ)с(ѧ)ца юли і҃е съвръши с<е> и исписа се рък[о]ѫ [...]

(1) † *By the will of the Father, and the help of the Son, and the accomplish*[*ment of the Holy Ghost*...]
(2) [...] *jupan Vladislavu, and with his jupaniţa Stana, and with* [*his*] *so*[*n*...]
(3) *and with his brother jupan Miclăuşu, and his jupaniţa Sora, and* [...]
(4) *to the Heavenly Emperor, have built and have painted the monastery to Saint Nicholas* [...]
(5) ... *to his offspring in eternity, in the day of the terrible judgment of Christ, in the days of* [*King*] *J*(*i*)*c*[*mund*...]
(6) [...] *of* [...]*known,*[25] *to be charter to his sons, and* [*to his*] *offspr*[*ing, and*] *to his patrimony* [...]
(7) [...] *finished in the sixth Saturday of fasting* [...]
(8) [...]*stana*[26] *to finish, and they, with the benediction of the Holy Ghost, have finished* [...]
(9) *priest Dragosin, in the year 6925 in the month of July* 15, *it was finished and it was painted by the hand* [...]

The information present in lines 7-9 is in great extent non-verifiable and the year, assumed by S. Dragomir to be 6925 (1417), was already lost when the photograph of the dedicatory inscription was made, i.e., prior to 1930 (Fig. 5). Even though he relied on a single source (i.e., the transcription made by the priest in Ribiţa in 1869-1870, which he examined only once in 1911),[27] S. Dragomir gave two different readings on the two occasions he referred to the dating of the church's murals. First, in his 1917 study, when he mentioned that the church had been built by *Voivode* Vasile (!) and his brothers (!), he indicated the year 1414/5.[28] Later on, in his 1930 study, he transcribed instead the year 6925 (1417).[29] The disparity between S. Dragomir's two readings proves that the detail of the year was unclear in the priest's 1869-1870 copy itself, a transcription which was examined by the historian either directly or through a mediator. Moreover, the transcription of the year 6925 published by S. Dragomir is itself incorrect, its author having replaced the letter **Ц** with numerical value 900 with the letter **Ѵ** with numerical value 400 (Fig. 6). This fact was not caused by the typographical limitations of the time, as the letter **ц** features several times in the text of the dedicatory inscription, e.g., in the words **ѡца** (line 1), **жꙋпаница** (line 2), and **ц(а)рꙋ** (line 4), where it is correctly transcribed. This inconsistency is found also in the transcription of the word **м(ѣ)с(ѧ)ца** which follows the year (line 9), where the letter **ѵ** replaces again the letter **ц** – **мс҃ѵа**; the same mistake is found once again in the transcription of the word **жꙋпанїца** (line 3), which is instead written **жꙋпанїѵа**. One can also add to these fluctuations the incorrect transcriptions **миклъꙋшꙋ** instead of **миклъоѵшꙋ** (line 3) and **ѡтечест воѵ** instead of **ѡтечествꙋ** (line 6), as well as the lack of the word **зн[ата]го** in the transcription which is visible in the photograph taken prior to 1930 (line 6, Fig. 5). All these disparities between the transcription published by S. Dragomir (Fig. 6) and the dedicatory inscription in its ante-1930 state (Fig. 5) point out to the fact that the historian did not confront the two sources, nor did he subject them to a close and critical examination.[30] Even though Dragomir states that the transcription of the priest had been sent to the Consistory in Sibiu "on the occasion of the 1869-70 repairs",[31] the transcription does not contain in lines 2-6 any supplementary information besides that which is currently preserved. This means that the transcription that was available to the historian had been in fact made after the dedicatory inscription's partial covering (and subsequent destruction) by the pillar meant to support the new vault of the nave, that is, after 1870.

There is, however, an account on the church in Ribiţa, its inscriptions and founders made before the destruction of the western side of the dedicatory inscription. In 1868 (that is, several years prior to the priest's copy), Ö. Nemes, probably the descendant of one of the lines of the noble family in Ribiţa,[32] published a short note on the monument of his native village. He illustrated it with a north-western view of the church which lacks the large windows created several years after.[33] Ö. Nemes drew attention to the age of the church in his native village which he dated to the year 1404 on the basis of two inscriptions in *old Serbian* (i.e., Old Church Slavonic) which existed at that point, one on the northern side and the other on the southern side (of the nave most likely). The author offered a summary of their content in Hungarian.[34] According to these inscriptions, the church had been built in 1404 under the shepherding of Pope Gregory and Anastasius by brothers Matia, Vladislav (ɪɪ), Nicolae de Ribice, and daughters Ana and Ioanca as a sign of gratitude that King Sigismund returned to them the properties lost by the founders' father Vladislav (ɪ). Ö. Nemes also noted that the latter had been previously punished (at an unspecified time by the informant)[35] by King Sigismund, who confiscated his estates due to a *nota infidelitatis* towards the Hungarian ruler. The sons of this Vladislav (ɪ) received them back *nova donatione mediante* in 1404 from the same King Sigismund.

Fig. 3 : *Votive composition. Lower register of the southern wall of the nave.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

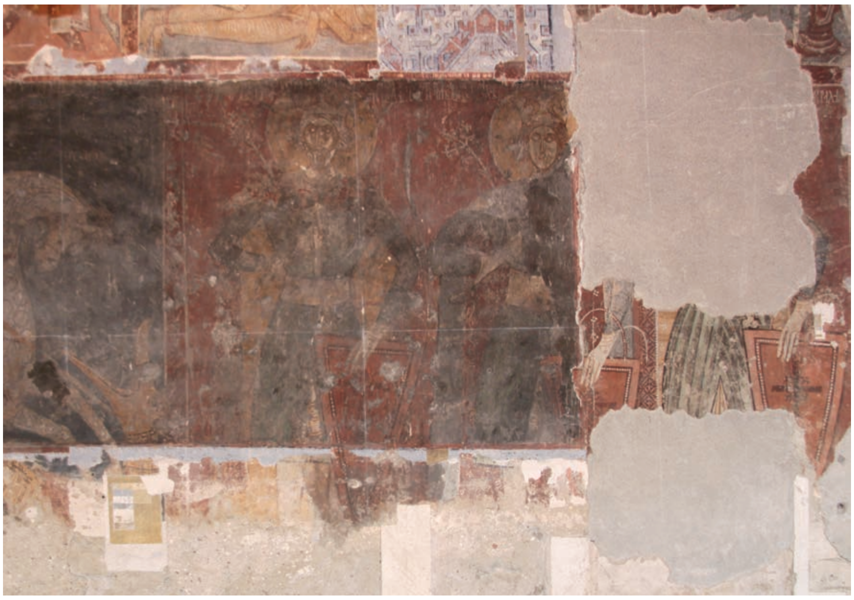
Fig. 4: *Detail of the dedicatory inscription in its current state.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

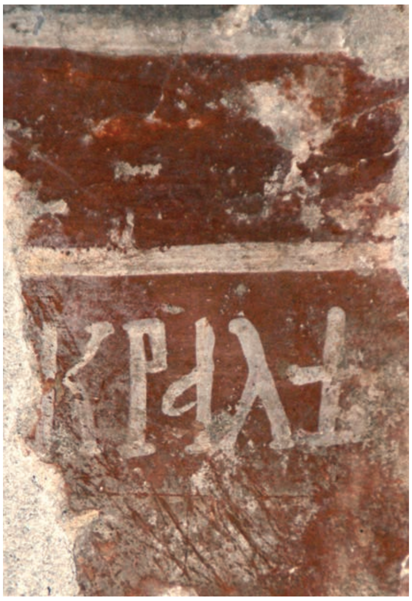
Fig. 5: *Photo of the main dedicatory inscription showing its state before 1930.* Source: Dragomir 1930, fig. 12.

Fig. 6: *Transcription of the main dedicatory inscription, made by the priest in Ribiţa sometime after 1870.*
Source: Dragomir 1930, p. 253.

Even though it is not attested by written sources,[36] the confiscation of the properties followed by their recovery in 1404 is highly possible. This even more so as it follows the period when a series of Transylvanian noblemen, in their quality of *familiares* of *voivodes* Nicholas Csáki and Nicholas Marcali (1402-1403), rebelled against King Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437) and supported the claims to the Hungarian crown of King Ladislas of Naples.[37] In his attempt at gaining them on his side during the conflict, King Sigismund generously rewarded the townsmen and lower noblemen, including a number of Romanian Orthodox noblemen in the area.[38] Between August and September 1404, these noblemen received charters confirming their land possessions, putting them in possession, or exempting them from taxes as a reward for their loyalty and services brought to the king.[39] Having managed to overcome all adversity by the Spring of 1404 and having been certain of his victory, King Sigismund also forgave those who had been against him during the conflict and who had laid down their weapons within the required interval.[40] To this category of noblemen (who had their properties returned and their previous state restored) could also belong the brothers in Ribiţa, whose recovered properties had been previously lost by their father Vladislav (I). Such a hypothesis is also supported by the information conveyed by the now-fragmentary dedicatory inscription, but which Ö. Nemes knew before its irreparable damage. First, by using a formula which is often encountered in church inscriptions, the text mentions an event which happened "in the days of [King] J(i)c[mund]" (i.e., Sigismund of Luxemburg, line 5).[41] One line below, the dedicatory inscription records a charter for someone's sons, offspring, and patrimony (line 6). This information can be interpreted as a reference to the presumed royal donation that had been customarily granted through a charter (**ꙋрикъ**) issued by King Sigismund. Further on, the inscription also records the accomplishment of a certain thing "in the sixth Saturday of fasting" (line 7). It is impossible that this thing/event coincided with the completion of the church's construction and painting – which is ostentatiously mentioned (four times) towards the end (lines 8-9) and which had happened on July 15 (line 9) –, because this latter date does not correspond to the sixth Saturday of any period of Summer fasting (line 7), that is, neither to the fasting of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (finished on June 29), nor to that of the Dormition of the Holy Mother of God (started on August 1). Subsequently, it is possible that the dedicatory inscription, before its partial destruction in 1869-1870, originally mentioned two distinct events happening at different moments of time:[42] first, the properties' recovery by the noblemen of Ribiţa, most likely in 1404 (lines 5-7), and second, the completion of the church's construction and painting (lines 8-9) at a certain date (now unknown). This date was very likely partially preserved in 1868, when Ö. Nemes could only read the first year, assigning to it the construction and painting of the church.[43] Being an event with major significance in the existence of the Ribiţa noble family, it is possible that the charter's acquirement in 1404 was mentioned in the dedicatory inscription as a sign of remembering the royal generosity. This mention was equally understood as the two brothers' way of showing their gratitude towards the king, of remembering how they overcame a difficult moment in their family's existence, and of making sure that their possessions will not be at risk again.[44] Moreover, on a closer look, one can easily notice that the partially-preserved dedicatory inscription reveals a striking difference between its upper half with tall, elegant letters (lines 1-5) and its lower half with small, crowded, and almost cursive letters (lines 5-9, Fig. 3-4). This disparity can be indicative of the fact that the dedicatory inscription was remade or only updated in 1404 (or shortly after), so that it reflected the change of social and legal status of the noblemen of Ribiţa, who had regained the king's favor and recovered their family's lost properties.[45]

As shown by A. A. Rusu,[46] besides brother *Mátyás* (Matia), the other names mentioned by Ö. Nemes find their confirmation, on the one hand, among the lay characters depicted in the votive composition and, on the other hand, among the names recorded by the dedicatory inscription or by the inscriptions next to the ktetors' heads.[47] These are brothers *Vratisláv* (Vladislavu) and *Miklós de Ribice* (Miclăuşu), and daughters *Anna* (Ana, Vladislavu's daughter) and *Johanka* (probably Stana/Stanca, in fact Vladislavu's wife) Thinking that there was enough space for Matia's name to appear before Vladislavu's (thus, accepting implicitly the names' order as indicated by Ö. Nemes) and noticing that S. Dragomir's first version of 1917 referred to a *Voivode* Vasile (!) and his *brothers*,[48] A. A. Rusu accepted Matia's role of brother to the two noblemen of Ribiţa, but overlooked his absence from the votive composition.[49] This judgment, however, cannot be reconciled with the information conveyed by the votive composition which is not a random depiction, but rather one which is meant to accurately communicate by means of both image and text the reality of the religious foundation act. Votive compositions, therefore, faithfully record the hierarchical relationships between actors, as well as each ktetor's degree of effective participation in the actual religious foundation.[50] Judging by the lay characters' hierarchical perspective in the votive composition – St. Nicholas' stature is bigger than the laymen's and laywomen's, who decrease in size according to their importance –,[51] as well as by the fact that only Vladislavu touches the model of the church and is the only one called ktetor by the accompanying inscriptions,[52] it is Vladislavu who played the main role in his family's religious foundation (Fig. 3, 20). Moreover, this situation probably also reflects the hierarchical relationship between the two brothers. Even though they were equal heirs of their father's property, it was only Vladislavu, as the older brother, who enjoyed the status of new head of the family after 1404, when the two brothers recovered the properties which were previously lost by their father for this infidelity towards the king.[53] Vladislavu is followed by his younger and smaller-in-size brother Miclăuşu, whereas their wives (Stana and Sora, respectively) and the former man's daughter (Ana) piously and passively witness the act of offering the church to its patron saint (Fig. 3, 20-22). The three female characters therefore play a secondary role, being depicted in the votive composition as a consequence of their kinship with the two men, and not as a consequence of their effective involvement in the religious foundation. Because the relationships between lay characters have not been faithfully conveyed in the 1868 account (only Ana is Vladislavu's daughter, but not Stana, who is his wife, whereas Sora is not mentioned at all), it is very likely that Ö. Nemes did not strictly observe the order of recording these characters in inscriptions either. He offered in fact „a summary of the actual dedicatory inscription, thus eliminating the stereotypes and religious formulae".[54] Following the inner logic of the text and of the image, it is impossible that Matia were mentioned in the dedicatory inscription before Vladislavu, that is, before the one who is represented in the votive composition as the main ktetor of the church. Matia's quality of brother to the two noblemen of Ribiţa





▲ Fig. 7: *Holy Kings of Hungary (Sts Stephen, Emeric, and Ladislas). Lower register of the northern wall of the nave.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

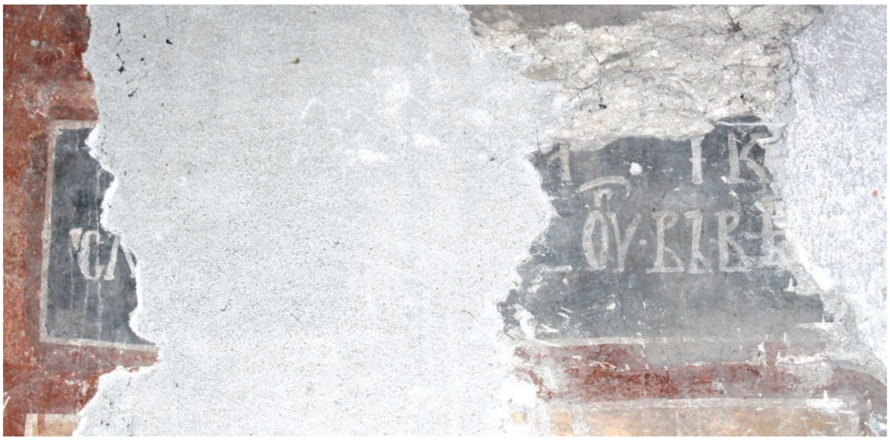
◥ Fig. 8: *Word* кралѣ *('king') accompanying the fragmentary representation of St. Ladislas. Lower register of the northern wall of the nave.* Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

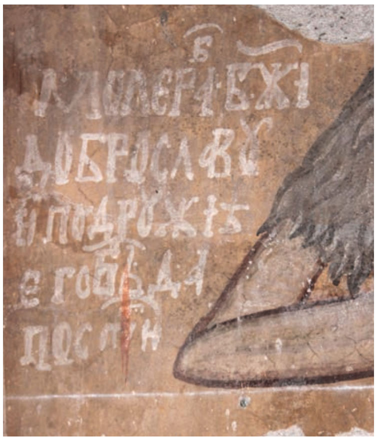
▼ Fig. 9: *Fragmentary inscription above the representation of St. John the Baptist. Eastern side of the southern wall of the nave.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

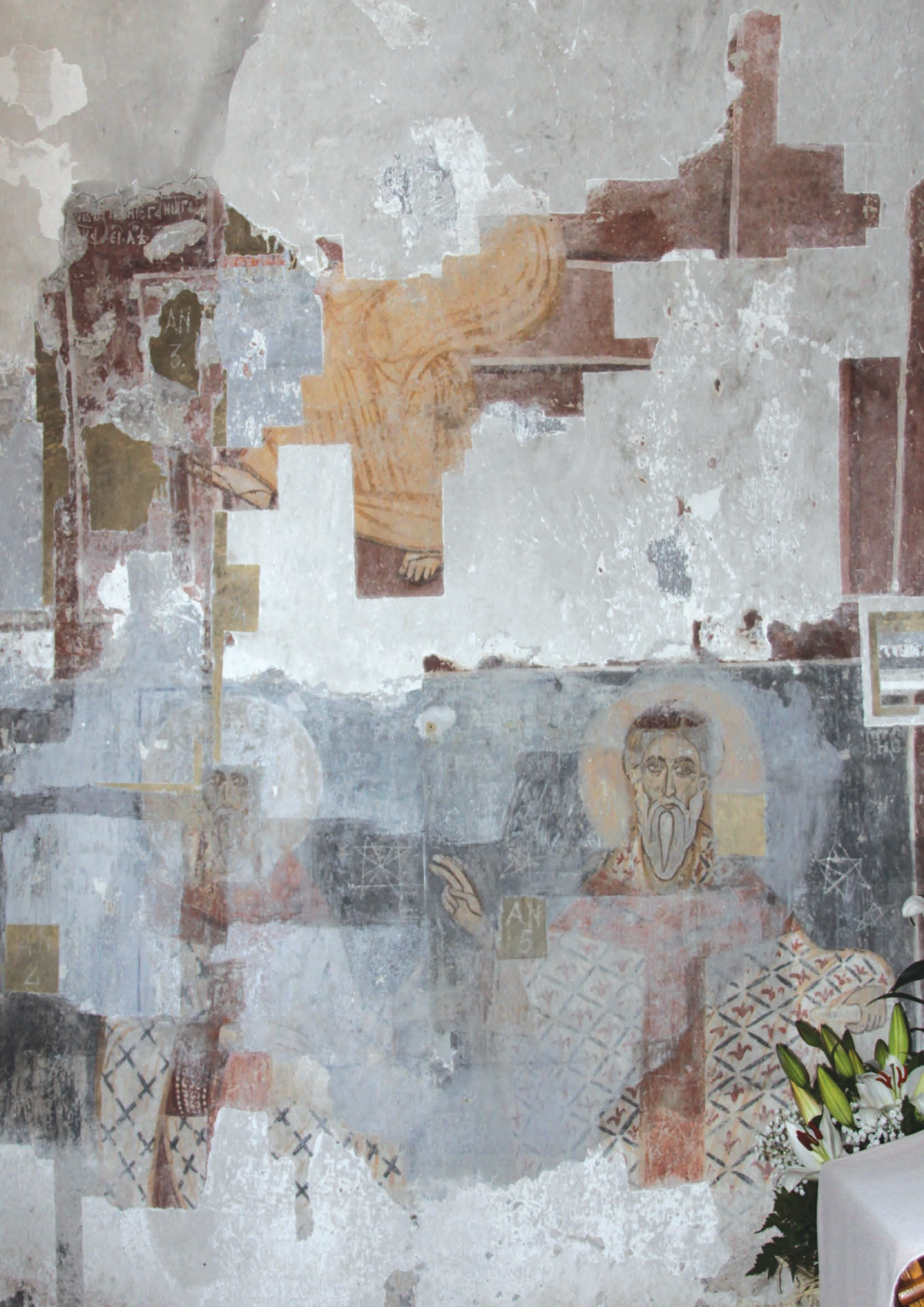
◢ Fig. 10: *Supplicatory inscription next to the representation of St. John the Baptist. Eastern side of the southern wall of the nave.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

should be equally dismissed, because the only place where he could have been represented within the votive composition was the western side of the image, which was destroyed in 1869-1870 by the creation of the south-western window of the nave. Provided that Matia was indeed included in the votive composition, his possible quality was that of son of one of the two noblemen, most likely of Vladislavu and Stana, whose son with unpreserved name is mentioned in the dedicatory inscription (line 2).[55]

Another important information conveyed by Ö. Nemes is that, on the northern wall (of the nave, most likely in the proximity of the representations of the holy kings of Hungary and the military saints on horseback), at that time there was another inscription mentioning the fact that the church had been built in 1404 under the shepherding of Pope Gregory and Anastasius.[56] This double occurrence has been previously interpreted as "the display of the a knowledgement of two religious hierarchies and authorities, one western, and the other one eastern".[57] The mentioning of an ecclesiastical authority in the context of church inscriptions is sometimes encountered in the Byzantine and Byzantine-Slavic world, but the recording of a political authority is far more frequent.[58] Similarly, the two authorities mentioned in church inscriptions serve as the ktetor's acknowledging of the legitimizing political and ecclesiastical structures, and play the role of validating the ktetor's religious foundation by the effective political and ecclesiastical structures.[59] However, the mention of two hierarchs, one Catholic and the other one Orthodox, together in an Orthodox-rite church is a unique occurrence (if true).[60] Basing his judgment on the scholarship available to the archaeologist in the early-1990s, A. A. Rusu has incorrectly shown that the chronological framework within which the religious monument can be placed is formed, on the one hand, by 1387-1412 (i.e., the period during which a hierarch Athanasius/Anastasius occurs successively as Metropolitan of Severin, Argeş, and Metilene, respectively), and on the other hand, by 1406-1415 (i.e., the period of Pope Gregory XII's pontificate).[61] However, according to recent research, it is uncertain whether Athanasius was later on the Metropolitan of Metilene (until 1412),[62] because the hierarch had completely disappeared from public life after December






AN 3.
AN 5
AN 4

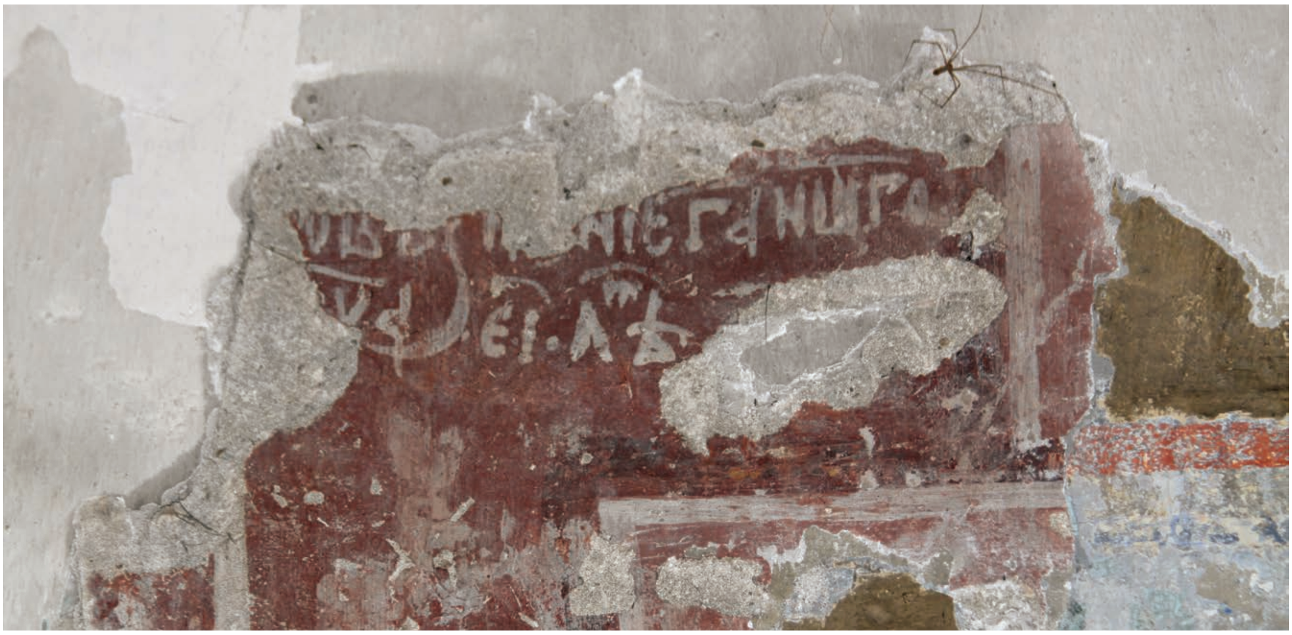
1403 or August 1405, most likely as a consequence of his and other metropolitans' failure to depose the Patriarch of Constantinople, Matthew I (1397-1410).[63] Accordingly, the shepherding years of the two hierarchs (1387-1403/5 and 1406-1415, respectively) no longer coincide. This fact, together with the unprecedented, joint mentioning of the Orthodox and Catholic hierarchs in an Eastern-rite church, makes the authenticity of the information conveyed by Ö. Nemes doubtful in what the northern-wall inscription is concerned. Additionally, this information presents a series of new challenges for the dating of the mural ensemble in Ribiţa.

After having examined the fluctuating reading of the year offered by S. Dragomir in 1917 and 1930, respectively, the graphical features of the year's transcription published in the 1930 study, as well as the information previously conveyed by Ö. Nemes in 1868, A. A. Rusu offered the year 1414 "as new and correct dating" of the mural ensemble in Ribiţa.[64] In reality, however, this matter can no longer be categorically decided. As it can be seen in the ante-1930 photograph (Fig. 5), the year contained by the dedicatory inscription was lost at that point. After he consulted the same source in 1911, namely, the inscription's transcription made shortly after 1870 by the priest in Ribiţa, S. Dragomir achieved two diverging readings: 1414/5 (6922/3, i.e., **ѕц҃кв** or **ѕц҃кг**) and 1417 (6925, i.e., **ѕц҃кє**),[65] respectively. Only several years earlier (1868), when the dedicatory inscription's conservation state should not have been much different on its eastern side,[66] Ö. Nemes had offered a first, but different reading: 1404 (6912, i.e., **ѕц҃ві** for January-August).[67] Subsequently, one can assume that, between 1868 and 1870, the conservation state of the year in the final line of the inscription was rather precarious. This fact led to ambiguous readings/transcriptions, the equivoque being perceivable in S. Dragomir's publishing of the transcription itself (Fig. 6). Setting aside the first letter which cannot be other than **ѕ** with a numerical value of 6 or 6000, and the second one which, even though wrongly transcribed (**ү** with a numerical value of 400) cannot be other than **ц** with the numerical value of 900, the other letters designating the year's tens and units pose a number of problems. If the passing of the time has led to the blurring or fading of some of the signs' outlines, then the third letter could be either **к** (tens' digit with a numerical value of 20, as it appears in the transcription) or **в** (units' digit with a numerical value of 2, as Ö. Nemes seems to have read it). The outlines of the two letters are indeed similar and one could easily pass as the other in a badly-preserved inscription. As it can be seen in the transcription, the fourth fragmentary letter preserved with certainty only its vertical line, being thus interpreted by Ö. Nemes as **і** (10), and by S. Dragomir first as **в** (2) or **г** (3) and later as **є** (5). Subsequently, confronted with incomplete information, both Ö. Nemes and S. Dragomir – the latter relying at different moments on the same transcription by the priest in Ribiţa – tried to reconstruct the missing or unclear Cyrillic letters of the year. According to each of the readers' skill, one can explain all three different readings emerging from the uncertain character of the preserved information: 1404 (6912, i.e., **ѕц҃ві** for January-August); 1414/5 (6922/3, i.e., **ѕц҃кв** or **ѕц҃кг**); and 1417 (6925, i.e., **ѕц҃кє** for January-August), respectively.[68]

The year's detail in the final line of the dedicatory inscription has not survived and, therefore, one can no longer examine it critically in order to accurately establish the date of the church's building or painting. However, other inscriptions uncovered during the restoration of the past twenty years seem to suggest the possibility of distinct stages of decoration, as well as that of donors of mural painting other than those indicated by the votive composition. Near the triumphal arch and above the representation of St. John the Baptist on the southern wall of the nave, there is a severely damaged inscription, isolated by a red frame. It currently reads only: [...]**а ік**[...] / **сл**[**ава** ... **бо**]**гоү въ вѣ**[**це**...], that is, [...] / *gl*[ory ...] *to* [G]*od in eter*[nity...]. This inscription probably recorded another important event in the history of the church in Ribiţa (Fig. 9).[69] Near the right arm of the same St. John, there is another inscription invoking the forgiveness of sins for a certain Dobroslavu (unattested by written sources) and of his unnamed wife: **моле** (!) **раб(ь) б(о)ж(и)і** / **доброславоү** /

◀ Fig. 11: *Inscription next to an Evangelist (upper register) and two Church Fathers (lower register). Eastern side of the northern wall of the sanctuary.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

▼ Fig. 12: *Detail of the inscription. Northern wall of the sanctuary.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.



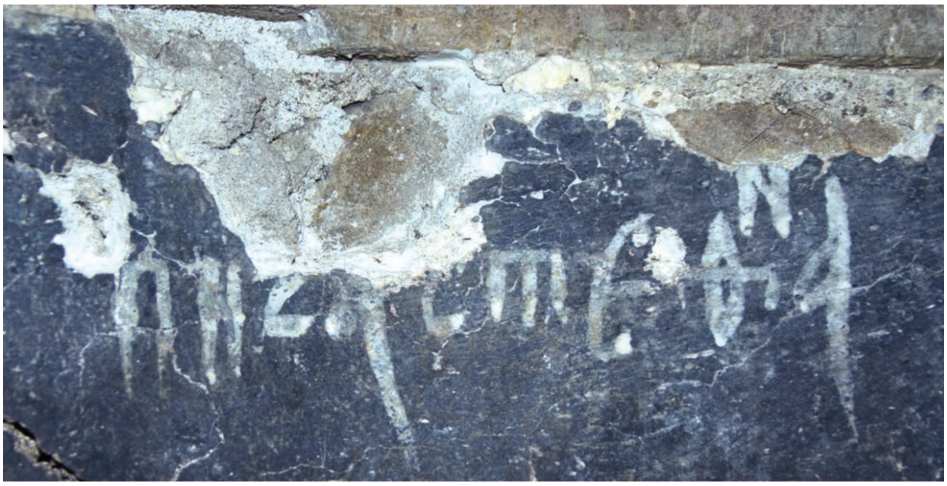


Fig. 13: *St. Nicholas Church in Densuş. Detail of the painter's signature.* Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

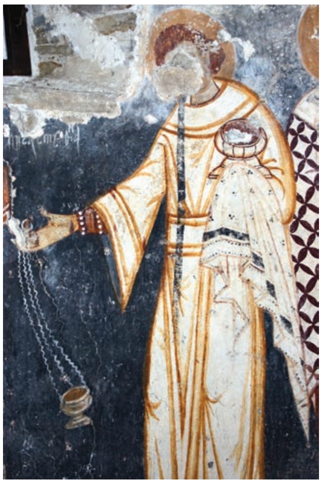


Fig. 14: *St. Nicholas Church in Densuş. Painter Ştefan's signature next to a serving deacon on the eastern side of the lower register of the sanctuary.* Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

**и подроужіѣ** / **єго б(ог)ь да** / **п<р>остит(ъ)**, that is, *the servant of God Dobroslavu and his wife asks* (!) *to God to forgive* (Fig. 10). This supplicatory inscription attests the involvement of another character in the church's decoration, someone other than those appearing in the votive composition. By means of his material contribution sponsoring the execution of this votive image, Dobroslavu entrusted his and his wife's spiritual salvation to the intercession of the depicted St. John the Baptist. Another inscription, it too fragmentarily preserved and located on the northern wall of the altar, within the frame between the sitting figures of two Evangelists (Fig. 11),[70] was first noted in 1995 by I. Popa, the restorer specifying only that the inscription contained the year 1407.[71] However, this fragmentary inscription lacks precisely the year which has been irreparably lost; the remaining text reads: [...**с(вѧ)т(аг)]о вьꙁн(єсєн)іє г(оспод)а н(а)ш(є)го** / [**ін(соу)са**] **х(рист)а .є҃і. лѣт(а)** [**ѕ҃ц**...], that is, ... *Ascension of our* [Hol]*y God* / [Jesus] *Christ 15 the year* [69...] (Fig. 12).

The number **.є҃і.** (15) in this inscription cannot refer to the year's tens and units, as it has been probably assumed (6915 – 5508 = 1407), on account of the following reasons: (a) the number is clearly isolated by two dots, which makes it to be understood as an entity; (b) the letter **а** preceding it cannot represent the hundreds, its numerical value being either 1 or 1000; (c) usually, the letters with numerical value forming the year follow the word **лѣта** (years) and do not precede it; and finally (d) on the damaged area above the word **лѣт(а)**, one can still see the traces of the titla which is rendered as a straight, horizontal line, similar to those above **н(а)ш(є)го** or **х(рист)а**, this fact indicating that the year expressed in letters with numerical value followed the word **лѣт(а)**. Subsequently, the number **.є҃і.** (15) cannot be connected with the word **лѣт(а)**, and it does not show the units and tens of a year, that is, of a bigger number composed of hundreds and thousands. The white line surrounding the partially-preserved inscription suggests that the text ended on its eastern side with the word **н(а)ш(є)го** (line 1) and the year (now destroyed, line 2). The straight angle formed by this line on its western, lower side indicates that the inscription continued in this area, but probably not for long, as the figure of another sitting Evangelist formed the pendant of the one visible towards east only in its lower half (Fig. 11). The inscription is, therefore, fragmentarily preserved in its two final lines and it most likely ended with the lost year coming after the word **лѣт(а)**. Judging by the loss of the paint layer in the upper side, which has been previously covered by multiple layers of paint and whitewash, the information contained by the inscription's upper lines seems now to have been irretrievably lost. Considering the fact that the inscription could not extend too much on its western side and that the number **.є҃і.** (15) is not connected with the word **лѣт(а)**, it is then possible for this number to be connected with **вьꙁн(єсєн)іє** (Ascension). This suggests, in turn, that the feast of the Ascension of the Lord happened on a day of 15.[72] This date was important enough for the history of the church in Ribiţa, being worthy of recording on the altar's northern wall during the execution of the mural decoration of this space. The inscription was painted on the same paint layer and was included from the very beginning in the altar's decorative program. Because the inscription of the votive composition played the role of the church's main dedicatory inscription, the altar inscription had, therefore, only a secondary function. Judging by its placing in-between the figures of two Evangelists who are depicted sitting and writing (currently, only one of them is partially visible) and considering that the text recorded a date, it is not excluded that the inscription also contained initially, in the area either destroyed or found still under modern paint,[73] the name/signature of the painter who executed the altar's mural decoration. Such a hypothesis is suggested by the often encountered practice in Byzantine manuscript painting, according to which the colophon – containing the copyist's or miniaturist's signature, as well as the date of that work's completion – is sometimes associated with representations of writing Evangelists.[74] Even though their iconographic context is different and the formula they use varies, there are many analogies of painters' inscriptions in the Transylvanian Orthodox milieu: the undated signature of painter Ştefan in the altar space of St. Nicholas Church in Densuş (Hung. *Demsus*, before 1443, Fig. 13-14) or the autograph inscription accompanied by date of painter Mihul of Crişul Alb (Hung. *Fehér-Körös*) on St. Gregory the Great's image in the narthex of the Monastery of Râmeţ (Hung. *Remete*, probably 1377, Fig. 15-16).[75]

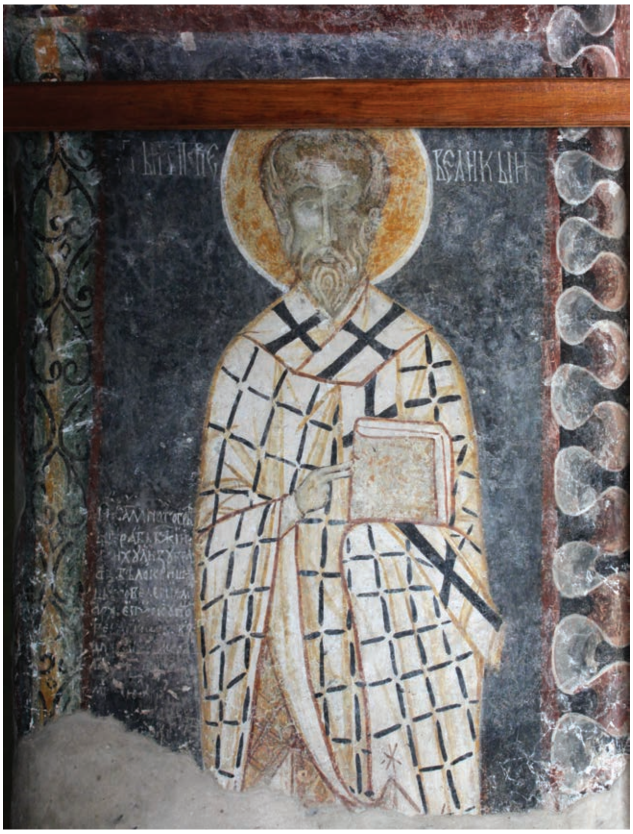
As shown by Sophia Kalopissi-Verti in her typological approach on church inscriptions containing names or signatures of painters, these make use of diversified formulae, but also often record the date of the painter's completion of his work.[76] Even though atypical for Byzantine and

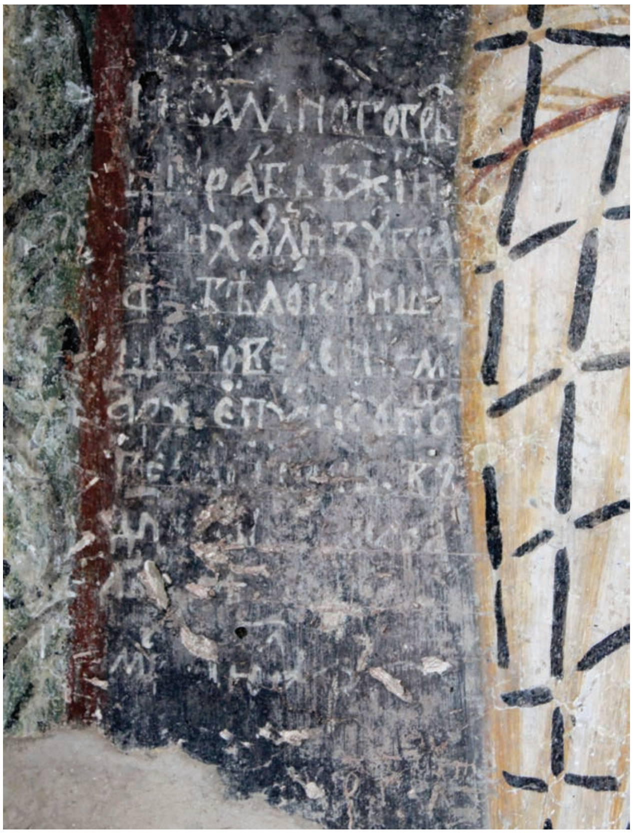
Byzantine-Slavic world, the inclusion of the day and month together with the year represents in fact a formula which is frequently employed by Slavonic church inscriptions in late-medieval Transylvania. Illustrative in this respect are the examples in Râmeţ (painter Mihul's autograph inscription, Fig. 15-16), Streisângeorgiu (the 1408 dedicatory inscription), Densuş (the 1443 supplicatory inscription), Sălaşu de Sus (Hung. *Felsőszálláspatok*, the dedicatory inscription carved in stone between 1519 and 1536), and, of course, the main dedicatory inscription in Ribiţa itself.[77] Less common in the Byzantine and Byzantine-Slavic world, dating an event by means of a formula containing together the day, month, year, as well as a religious feast is sometimes encountered in medieval Slavic diplomatics or chronicle-writing.[78] This practice, in turn, is a specific feature of Latin diplomatics on the territory of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, Latin scribes usually establishing a close connection between a charter's issuing date and a religious event which happened around the moment recorded in the charter's text. It is not excluded, therefore, that the atypical dating formula found in the sanctuary in Ribiţa to have been influenced by the Latin diplomatic pattern which Romanian Orthodox noblemen in Transylvania came directly into contact with as a consequence of the royal charters granted to them.[79] Being documents with great authority which confirmed their status and privileges, these charters were cherished enough by their beneficiaries that their meaningful acquiring could be sometimes recorded in the dedicatory inscriptions of their religious foundations, as it probably happened with the main dedicatory inscription in Ribiţa.

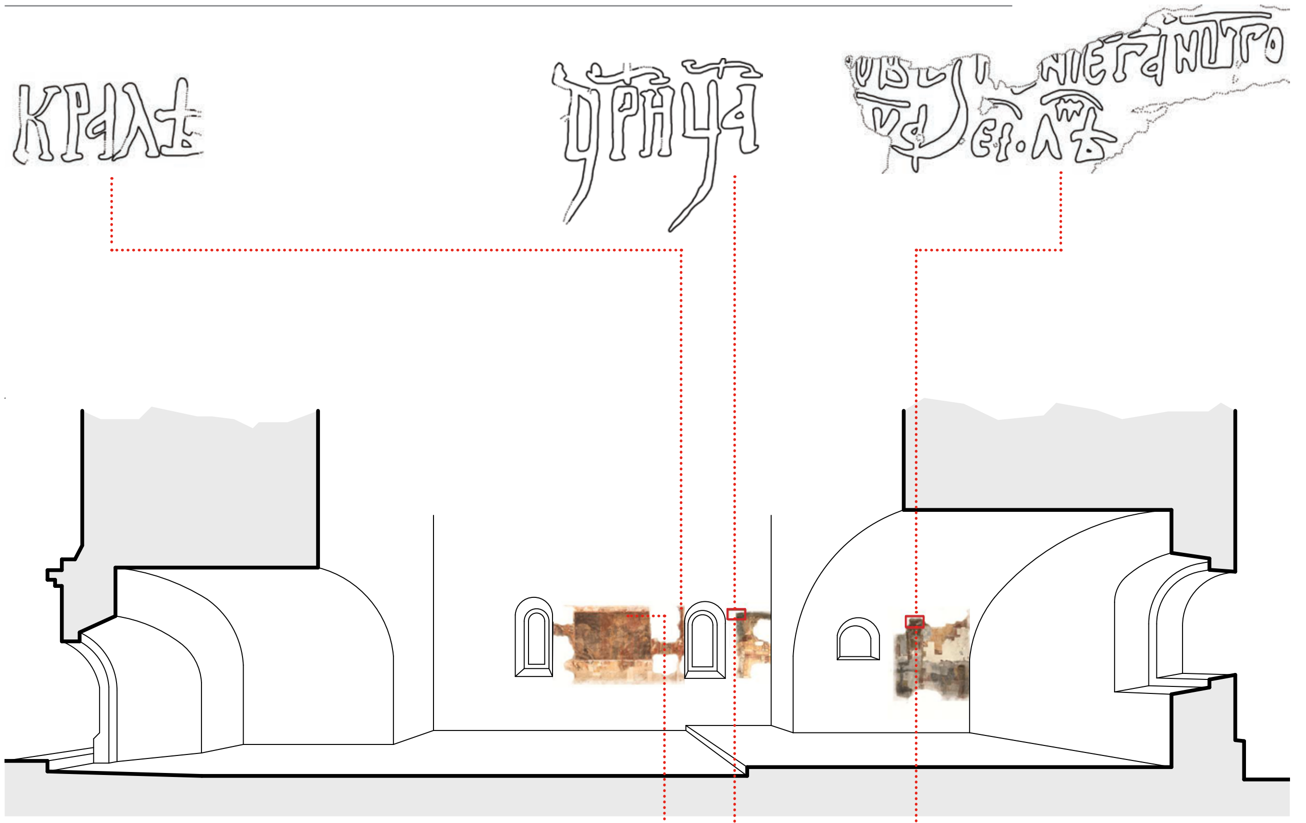
Taking into account that the Ascension of the Lord is celebrated 40 days after Easter and that this important feast coincided for both Orthodox and Catholics until 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII introduced a new calendar reform, the only cases when the Ascension happened on a day of 15 (of May) were those when the Easter was celebrated on April 6. This occurred during the fourteenth and fifteenth century only in 1371, 1382, 1393, 1455, 1466, 1477, and 1488.[80] Given that the church's mural decoration can be dated on stylistic grounds to the period between the late-fourteenth century and the first decades of the following century,[81] the only year which the inscription on the sanctuary's northern wall could contain seems to be 1393.[82] From a paleographical and epigraphic point of view, this date is fully acceptable.[83] Certainly, one should any time consider the possibility of a miscalculation made by the author of the inscription on the northern wall of the sanctuary. However, in this case, the chances are considerably reduced for this thing to have happened. The inscription was not randomly added at a later time than the mural decoration, but was made on the same painting layer with the remaining frescoes in the altar, both of them (the inscription and mural decoration, respectively) being therefore coeval. The inscription is painted and surrounded by a frame (now partially preserved) which isolates it from the remaining figurative representations in the altar, the painter having destined it a distinct space within the decorative program's economy from the very beginning. Subsequently, having been made simultaneously with the entire mural decoration of the altar and having allotted to it a precise place in-between the figures of the two writing Evangelists, the date initially contained by the inscription should have referred to an event with special significance either for its author, the frescoes' commissioner(s), or the church's recent history. Given this meaningfulness of the inscription, it is

▼ Fig. 15: *St. Gregory the Great and the inscription of painter Mihul of Crişul Alb on the southern side of the door separating the nave from the narthex.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

◢ Fig. 16: *Monastery Church in Râmeţ. Detail of the inscription.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.







very unlikely for a calculation mistake to have occurred.

The epigraphic material of the monument is simultaneously rich and scarce. On the one hand, it provides for a diversity of hands, which is surprising for the church's modest size, and on the other hand, the number of inscriptions belonging to each hand is quantitatively reduced. These facts make the analysis of the material very difficult.[84] Moreover, there is no instance when all the signs of the alphabet are included in the writing of a single master and, therefore, our observations have only a preliminary and partial character. Noteworthy is the fact that none of the scribes was a Slavic speaker, nor were they proficient in the grammar of Old Church Slavonic. All inscriptions are characterized by misspellings, omitted letters, case disagreements and quite exotic abbreviations which are atypical for Slavonic titla.

Following the paleographical exam and comparison of handwritings, it was noticed that some letters have unique features (Fig. 17).[85] The letter ʌ in the inscription of the holy kings of Hungary has its long, upper part resembling the Greek λ, a feature which is missing in all other handwritings (Fig. 7-8, 17).

Several manners of writing have been noted for the letter ȣ. Some letters are composed of two curves crossing twice, both in their upper and lower parts (the lay characters' inscriptions in the votive composition of the nave, Fig. 17, or the scene of St. Nicholas with Arius in the sanctuary, Fig. 17-18), whereas others are composed of a single, continuous line written from left to right with a downward loop. ȣ in the main dedicatory inscription is again composed of a single, continuous line, but is written in opposite direction (i.e., from right to left) and has the left curve more fallen (Fig. 4-5, 17).

ѣ has distinctive features: the letters in the Hungarian holy kings' inscriptions have a tall, vertical line and another wavy, horizontal line (Fig. 7-8, 17); ѣ in the dedicatory in-

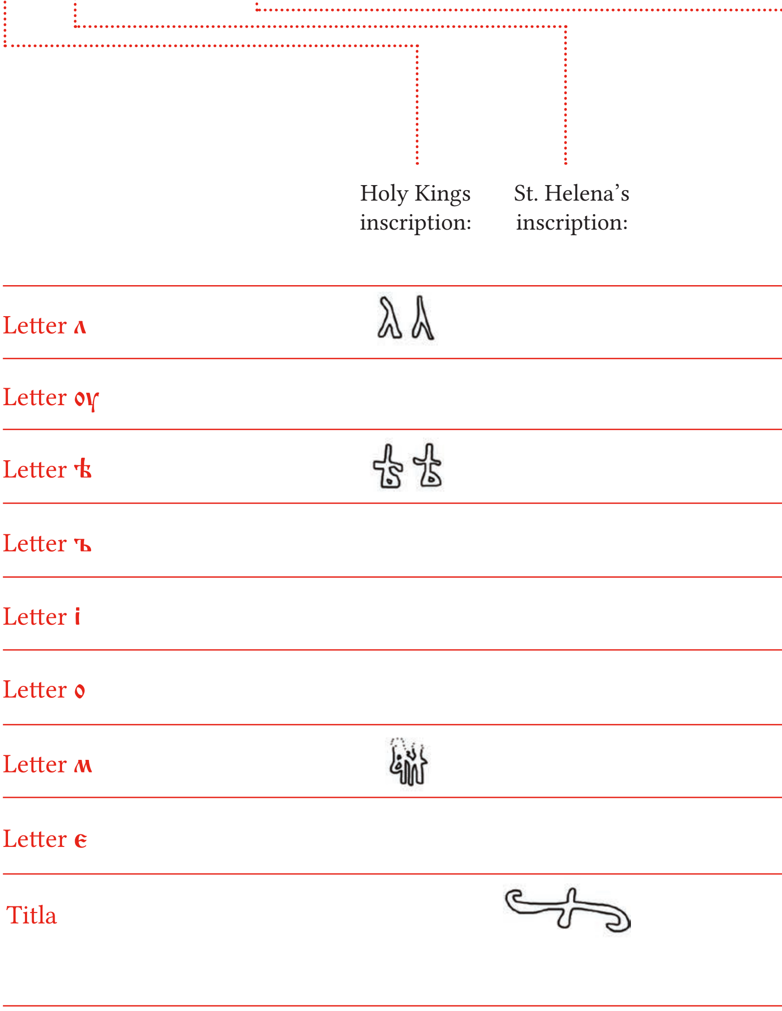
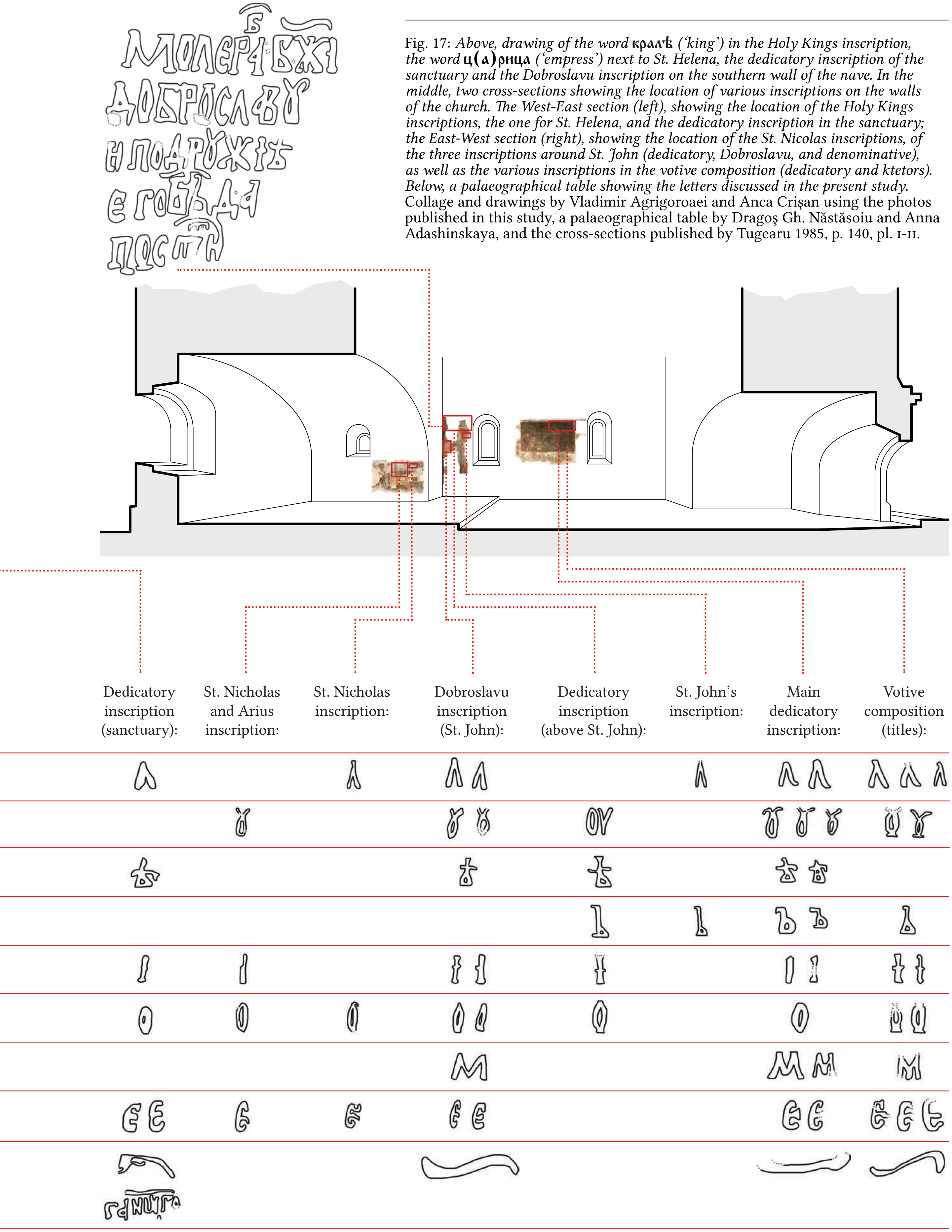


Fig. 17: *Above, drawing of the word* **кралѣ** *('king') in the Holy Kings inscription, the word* **ц(а)рица** *('empress') next to St. Helena, the dedicatory inscription of the sanctuary and the Dobroslavu inscription on the southern wall of the nave. In the middle, two cross-sections showing the location of various inscriptions on the walls of the church. The West-East section (left), showing the location of the Holy Kings inscriptions, the one for St. Helena, and the dedicatory inscription in the sanctuary; the East-West section (right), showing the location of the St. Nicolas inscriptions, of the three inscriptions around St. John (dedicatory, Dobroslavu, and denominative), as well as the various inscriptions in the votive composition (dedicatory and ktetors). Below, a palaeographical table showing the letters discussed in the present study.* Collage and drawings by Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Anca Crişan using the photos published in this study, a palaeographical table by Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu and Anna Adashinskaya, and the cross-sections published by Tugearu 1985, p. 140, pl. I-II.


Dedicatory inscription (sanctuary):
St. Nicholas and Arius inscription:
St. Nicholas inscription:
Dobroslavu inscription (St. John):
Dedicatory inscription (above St. John):
St. John's inscription:
Main dedicatory inscription:
Votive composition (titles):

scription is very short and its hooked, horizontal line is placed very closely to the triangle's vertex (Fig. 4-5, 17).

The way of writing letter ъ in the main dedicatory inscription differs from all other manners, its lower loop being rounded and not triangular in shape (Fig. 4-5, 17).

All letters і have a round-shaped ornament either in the lower, upper, or middle part of their vertical line, but only і in the dedicatory inscription has none of these rounded, decorative elements (Fig. 17).

The letter о is written either as two curves (St. John the Baptist's name, St. Panteleimon's name, St. Nicholas' name in the apse, or the inscriptions of the lay characters in the votive composition) or as a loop written from right to left (the dedicatory inscription in the sanctuary, Fig. 12, or the scene of St. Nicholas with Arius, Fig. 18). о in the main dedicatory inscription has no distinctive loop crossing, but is written from left to right (Fig. 4-5); by comparison with the sanctuary's dedicatory inscription, it is thinner and its thicker sides are mirrored (Fig. 4-5, 12, 17).

м is written in a very elegant, Gothicizing manner only next to the holy kings of Hungary, where it has an elongated, y-shaped middle part (Fig. 7).

The letter є is distinctively inclined towards the left in the handwriting of the main dedicatory inscription, but it is inclined towards right in all remaining instances (Fig. 4-5, 17).

The analysis of the epigraphic material in Ribiţa led to some preliminary conclusions, which may clarify the division of work among scribes/painters. Both in the altar and nave, one can notice at least two hands. First, St. Panteleimon's name, the votive inscription above St. John (Fig. 9), St. Helena's name (Fig. 19), and St. Nicholas' name in the nave are characterized by elongated elements and pointed letters. The corresponding images are grouped in the eastern side of the nave, equally on the southern and northern walls, and on the triumphal arch (Fig. 17). Second, the letters in the scene of St. Nicholas with Arius in the altar (Fig. 18), the votive inscription next to St. John in the nave (Fig. 10), and the Church Fathers in the sanctuary are more rounded and display less decorative elements. One can equally notice unique manners of writing: the dedicatory inscription on the altar's northern wall is cursive and differs from the remaining inscriptions (Fig. 12, 17); however, taking into consideration the change of register (*polustav*/*ustav*), this could have been written by the second hand. The main dedicatory inscription (Fig. 4-5) differs in many respects from the remaining inscriptions: it has stumpy letters, almost no decorative elements, a slight inclination towards the left, and rounded shapes which are found nowhere else. For the time being, due to the compact layer of soot situated on its final lines, the main dedicatory inscription's paleographical particularities are impossible to analyze in this area, but a significant difference seems to occur between the upper (lines 1-5) and lower (lines 5-9) halves. Finally, the short inscriptions next to the holy kings of Hungary (Fig. 7-8, 17) are quite expressive, having very elongated and Gothicizing letters with many decorative elements which are not encountered elsewhere inside the church: supplementary strokes and lines on the verges of the letters' units, wavy lines, as well as separation of words through four superposed dots arranged vertically.

To conclude these observations on the mural paintings of St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa, one can safely state that the ensemble has been decorated by the will and financial means of several donors. This fact is clearly indicated by two of the four partially-preserved inscriptions: the main dedicatory inscription in the votive composition records the main ktetors of the church, namely, brothers Vladislavu and Miclăuşu together with members of their families (Fig. 3-5), whereas the prayer-inscription on St. John the Baptist's votive image evokes Dobroslavu and his unnamed wife (Fig. 10). As Dobroslavu is unattested by written sources, his relationship with the other founders remains unknown. The contributions of these multiple commissioners/donors of the mural painting could have been made either simultaneously or at different moments in time. The latter variant is suggested by the votive inscriptions' hypothetical chronology. The sanctuary inscription seems to offer the earliest date for the church's mural decoration (probably the year 1393); however, judging by its resemblance with others inscriptions inside the church (St. John the Baptist, Fig. 10, or St. Nicholas with Arius, Fig. 18), one can assume that at least part of the nave's frescoes were executed during the same stage. Analyzed from the perspective of its content, the surviving text of the main dedicatory inscription included in the votive

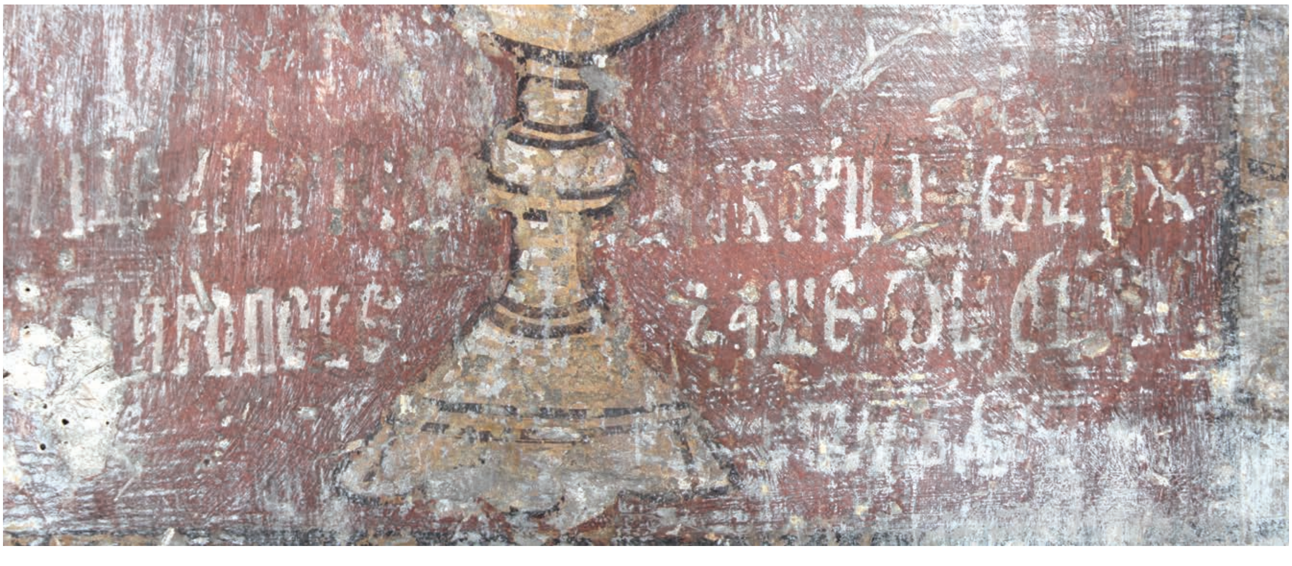


Fig. 18: *Detail of the inscription flanking the Holy Chalice in the scene of St. Nicholas and Arius. Lower register of the southern wall of the sanctuary.*
Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

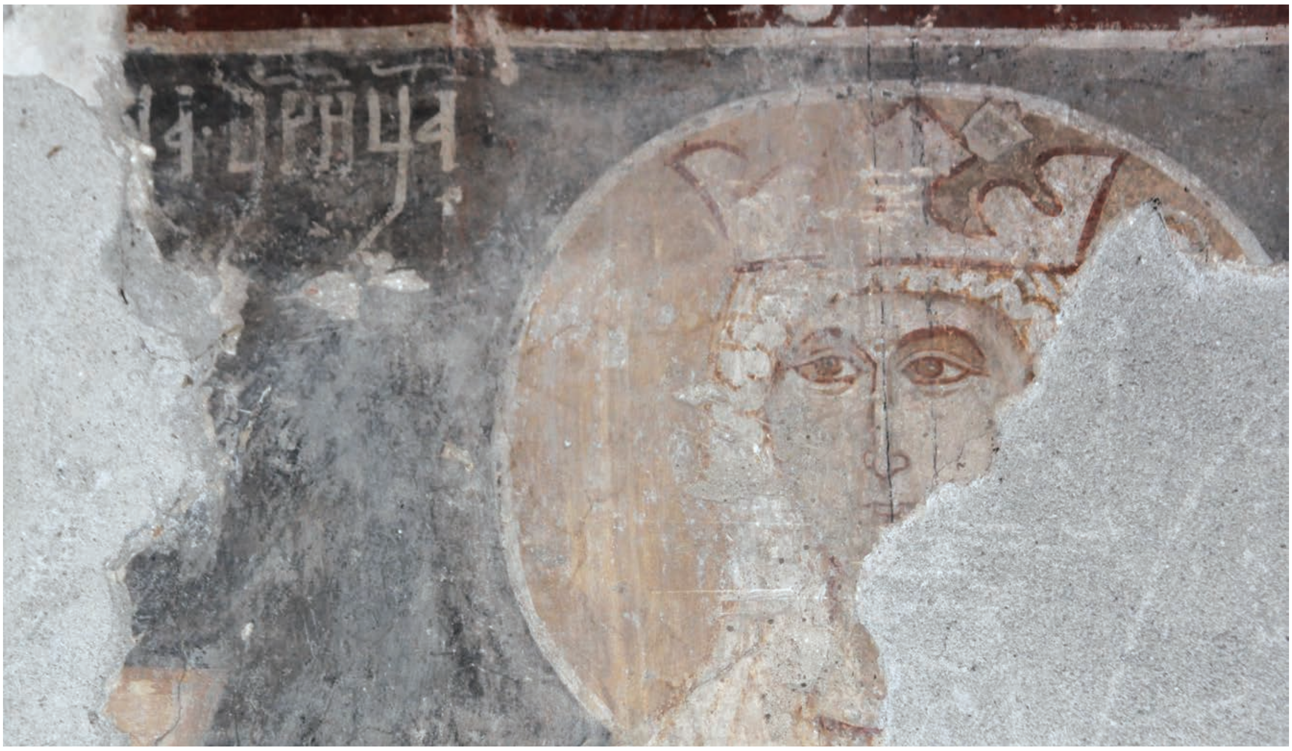
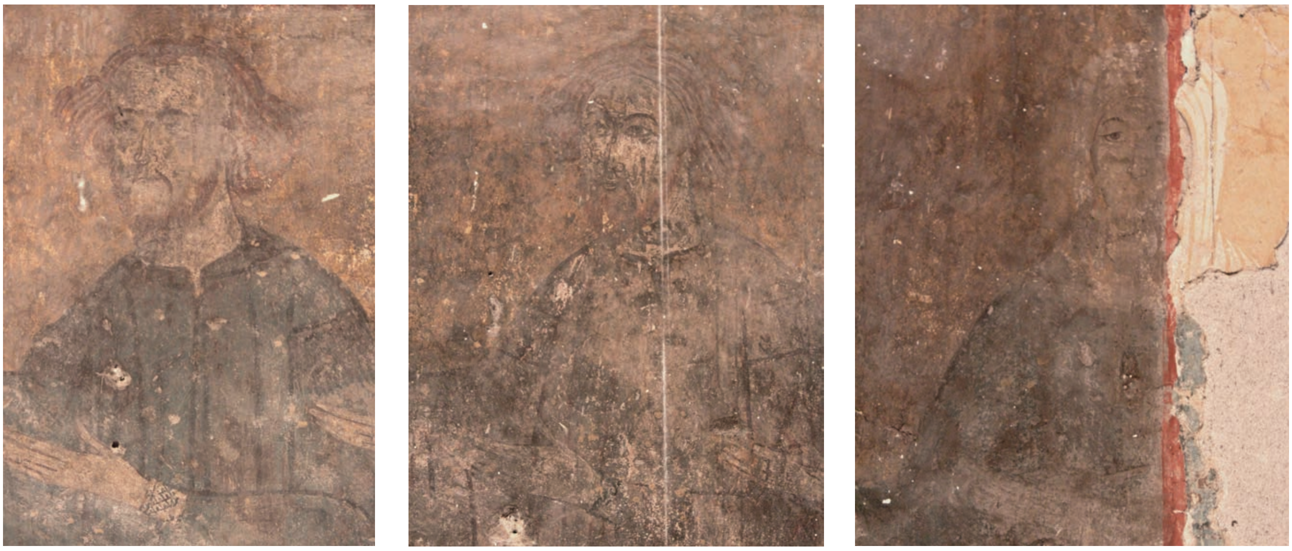


Fig. 19: *Word* **ц(а)рица** (‘empress’) *accompanying the representation of St. Helena. Lower register of the northern wall of the nave.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.

composition could have contained two dates. One of them recorded probably the recovering in 1404 of the properties that were previously lost by the noble family in Ribiţa, the dedicatory inscription playing thus the role of documenting the royal donation. The other, later date referred either to the completion of the church’s decoration with murals, or to the supplementing or partial restoration of the existing mural ensemble.[86] The epigraphic and paleographical evidence points out to the existence of two unique hands which can be distinguished against the background of the other inscriptions in the church: the scribe which had written the main dedicatory inscription (Fig. 4-5) and the author of the inscriptions next to the figures of the holy kings of Hungary (Fig. 7-8, 17), respectively. The dedicatory inscription included in the votive composition is not distinguishable only when compared to the other inscriptions, but reveals also a series of internal contradictions (i.e., differently-sized letters, overlapping and crowded lines, or the absence of spaces in-

Fig. 20, 21 and 22: *Details of the founders (Vladislavu, Miclăuşu, and Stana). Lower register of the southern wall of the nave.* Credits: Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu.



between the lines, Fig. 4-5). This might indicate the partial replacing of an earlier dedicatory inscription, which was made *a secco* and at a time following the presupposed royal donation towards the noblemen of Ribiţa (after 1404). Such hypothetical updating of the inscription was probably intended to reflect the noblemen's change of status,[87] the same statement being valid also for the representation of the holy kings of Hungary that might have been added after the reconciliation with the Hungarian sovereign.[88]

The murals' restoration not being completed and its results not being yet published, what one can currently state about the dating of the mural paintings of St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa is the fact that these should not be regarded as an ensemble which was created in a single stage by a unique ktetor. They are rather the result of the gradual participation of several donors, who are attested by the votive inscriptions located in various places inside the church. Brothers Vladislavu and Miclăuşu played the main role in the decoration of the church; however, besides them, other secondary, ktetorial instances should be kept in view. For St. John the Baptist's votive image and accompanying, supplicatory inscription to appear, Dobroslavu and his wife had to play the role of commissioners/donors of the mural painting; they thus supported financially, but to a lower extent, the church's decoration with frescoes. The mural ensemble in Ribiţa was probably subjected to several transformations and additions, some of them having been prompted by the time's political context. The years once recorded (probably 1393 and 1404, respectively) were probably present in the church as composing parts of different votive inscriptions; they referred not only to the execution of a part of mural decoration, but also to significant events in the life of those closely connected to the religious building. Certainly, for the time being, these conclusions only have a hypothetical character, the completion of the restoration works of the murals of St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa – whenever this will happen – being the only one able to confirm them or not. At any rate, the associative and cumulative character of the ktetorial act/gesture in Ribiţa is a reality that should be kept in mind by future research. Seemingly, this model of religious foundation functioned with predilection among Orthodox Romanians in the Lands of Zaránd and Hátszeg during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[89]

## Notes :

1 The first version of this paper entitled "*Despre datarea picturilor murale ale bisericii Sf. Nicolae din Ribiţa în lumina unor informaţii noi*" was read at the conference "*Date noi în cercetarea artei medievale din România. Ediţia a unsprezecea*", Institute of Art History "G. Oprescu" of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, December 11-12, 2014. We are very grateful to Vladimir Agrigoroaei for his insightful comments and suggestions that helped us develop the thoughts expressed in that paper. For a slightly different version in Romanian of this study, see Năstăsoiu and Adashinskaya 2017.

2 Current place names (Romanian) are used throughout the text, the first mentioning of a place being accompanied also by its Hungarian variant that is not repeated afterwards. This does not apply to names of medieval administrative units, for which the historical name (Hungarian) was used instead.

3 Prodan 1960; Bulboacă 2013, p. 24, 31-32.

4 Tugearu 1985, p. 129-130.

5 For the church's ground plan and medieval stone carvings, see: Tugearu 1985, p. 129-130; Rusu 1991, p. 5, 9.

6 For the alterations of the church's medieval architecture happening after 1868, see: Tugearu 1985, p. 130; Rusu 1991, p. 5, 9.

7 The results of this short, but insightful campaign undertaken by D. Căceu are not published; however, significant observations were subsequently made in Popa 1995, p. 21-36, 56-61, 65-75, 86-88, 94-98.

8 The results of the latter campaigns for conserving and uncovering the murals are not yet published; we are grateful to restorer Silviu Petrescu for his courtesy in answering our questions and to Corina Popa for having facilitated this dialogue. According to S. Petrescu (correspondence with the authors on November 23, 2014), the works which he undertook are the following: 1995 – emergency interventions for protecting the murals during the consolidation of the building; 1996-1999 – emergency interventions for the conservation of the murals, which consisted of treatments stopping the biological attack and consolidating the support-layer; 2009-2011 – extensive research of stratigraphy in all of the church's interior divisions for the purpose of determining the order of interventions on the building and its mural decoration.

9 S. Petrescu, correspondence with the authors, November 23, 2014.

10 Only on the sanctuary's eastern wall did the examination of stratigraphy distinguish 12 layers of paint that overlap the frescoes, Rauca 2014b, p. 218-229, esp. p. 225, fig. 17-8. Observations concerning the frescoes' technique, materials, and methodology of execution, as well as the causes and effects of the murals' degradation were also recently made in Rauca 2014a, p. 55-62, 70, 83, 91, 95, 97, 100-101, 103, 106-107, 109-111, 113, 116, 127, 130, 138, 147-149, 151, 153-154, 159-161, 165, 167, 170, 172; we are grateful to the author for having made available to us several chapters of his PhD dissertation.

11 For descriptions and partial interpretations of the church's iconographic program, see: Tugearu 1985; Cincheza-Buculei 1995, with some corrections and additions to be made; Prioteasa 2011, p. 3-4, 35-39, 55-59, 64-65, 67-68, 77-90, 112, 122-125, 150-151, 159, 161-162, 166-167, 169-181, 193-196, 230-236; Prioteasa 2016, p. 30-34, 54-80, 102-104, 114-125, 168-173.

12 In 2012, local authorities took further steps for acquiring the funding needed for the continuation of the murals' conservation and restoration, but these efforts were fruitless until now – information communicated by S. Petrescu, correspondence with the authors on November 23, 2014.

13 Nemes 1868, p. 63-64.

14 Dragomir 1917, p. 18, 25.

15 Dragomir 1930, p. 244-258; ignoring the historian's fluctuating dating, the latter year was also used in Tugearu 1985, p. 138, 147.

16 Rusu 1991, p. 8.

17 Popa 1995, p. 24, fig. 6.

18 This date was accepted with uncritical enthusiasm in: Trifescu 2007, p. 167; Trifescu 2010, p. 39-40. The year 1407 is accepted hypothetically in: Rusu 2003-2004; Agrigoroaei 2012, p. 109 (n. 16), 111, 118.

19 Tugearu 1985, p. 130. According to S. Petrescu, correspondence with the authors on November 23, 2014, the pillars attached to the nave's walls were removed between 1994 and 1996.

20 Tugearu 1985.

21 Tugearu 1985, p. 132-133.

22 Dragomir 1930, p. 251-253.

23 Dragomir 1930, fig. 9-10, 12.

24 The parts in red are found only in the 1869-1870 transcription and therefore have an uncertain character. These parts are not visible in the dedicatory inscription, as it is preserved now, nor in the photographs made prior to 1930. We offer here the inscription's transcription and English translation as it has been published in Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 238-240.

25 Either "known" as such or a compound word.

26 Either the female name "Stana" appearing in line 2 or another word ending in -стана.

27 In his 1930 study, the historian mentions that he examined personally in 1911 the copy of the dedicatory inscription, which was then found in the archives of the Consistory in Sibiu (Germ. *Hermannstadt*, Hung. *Nagyszeben*), but that the document was lost ever since, Dragomir 1930, 252-253, n. 1. Although he gathered from the very same document the information published in his 1917 study, the author then mentioned, contrarily, that the copy had been communicated to him by Virgil Nistor, Dragomir 1917, p. 18, n. 3.

28 Dragomir 1917, p. 18, 25.

29 Dragomir 1930, p. 253.

30 The historian's inability to operate with unclear or incomplete information in Old Church Slavonic is indicated also by his elementary mistakes occurring in the transcribing of the inscriptions of the votive composition in Crişcior, Dragomir 1930, p. 242; for these errors, see Năstasoiu 2016, p. 234.

31 Dragomir 1930, p. 252, n. 1.

32 Rusu 1991, p. 7.

33 Nemes 1868, p. 63-64. It is the merit of Rusu 1991, p. 7-8, for reappraising this information that was available also to Dragomir 1930, p. 246, but who chose instead to ignore it.

34 Nemes 1868, p. 64. Southern wall: „*Hálául az istennek emeltük ezen templomot, mert Zsigmond király, az atyánk Vratisláv által elvesztett jószágot ismét visszaadta. Mátyás, Vratisláv, Miklós de Ribice, Anna és Johanka leányukkal építették 1404-ben.*" ('Being grateful to God, we erected this church because King Sigismund returned the goods lost by our father Vladislav. Matia, Vladislav, Nicolae de Ribice, and daughters Anna and Ioanca built it in 1404'). Northern wall: „*Építtetett Gergely pápa és Anastazius lelkészsége alatt 1404.*" ('It was built under the shepherding of Pope Gregory and Anastasius, 1404'.).

35 Not necessarily in 1404, as noted by Rusu 1991, p. 7, but probably around that year, judging by the political context described henceforward.

36 The members of the noble family in Ribiţa appear in written sources only around mid-fifteenth century; for these documents, see Rusu 1991, p. 7, who assumes that Ö. Nemes had used in his account other documents (now lost) kept in his family's archive. According to Nemes 1868, p. 64, the ktetors' grandfather, *Nexa Theodor* (Neacşa Teodor), had received in 1369 from King Louis I the Great the confirmation of his ownership over the villages of Ribiţa, Mesteacănu de Jos (*Alsó-Mesztáka*), Mesteacănu de Sus (*Felső-Mesztáka*), Brad (*Brád*), and probably Ţebea (*Tértfalva*), that is, the five villages that his son, Vladislav (I), had later lost.

37 For the events' chronology and development, see Engel 2001, p. 206-208.

38 Gündisch 1976; Gündisch 1977.

39 Among these, one can count other church founders too, such as the noblemen of Streisângeorgiu (Hung. *Sztrigyszentgyörgy*) and Crişcior, Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 219; for these documents, see Rusu 1989, p. 40-51.

40 This also happened to Nicholas Apafi, the commissioner of the frescoes in the sanctuary of his family church in Mălâncrav (Hung. *Almakerék*, Germ. *Malmkrog*), who was forgiven in December 1403 for having participated in the rebellion against the king; for this document, see doc. no. 1495 in Zimmermann 1902, p. 301-302.

41 The formula **въ дьни** + name + **кралѣ** (or any other title) is most often than not accompanied by the year, but this can be absent, too, in those cases when the dedicatory inscription records multiple events. For the formula's significance, see Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 215-216, where others examples (from both Transylvania and the Byzantine-Slavic world) are discussed; see also Agrigoroaei 2012, p. 114-115.

42 For Byzantine-Slavic analogies of dedicatory inscriptions which record other significant events in addition to a church's building and mural decoration, see: the dedicatory inscription above the western door of St. George Church in Staro Nagoričane (1312/3), which records the victory over the Turks of the ktetor, King Stefan Uroš II Milutin; the main inscription of St. Andrew Monastery in Treska (1389), which mentions in detail the land possessions which the ktetor endowed his foundation with, including the chrysobull where these had been previously recorded; or the inscription above the southern entrance of the Transfiguration Church of the monastery in Zrze (ca 1400), which mentions the various changes of rulership experienced throughout a long period of time by the territory where that religious foundation was located in. For these inscriptions' text, see Stojanović 1902, p. 19, 53-54, 63.

43 In the case of those dedicatory inscriptions recording multiple events, it is only the year of the completion of the church's building or painting which is explicitly mentioned, whereas the other events are referred to generally through the formula **въ дьни** + name and title. Because the year 1404 is mentioned for both inscriptions which he summarized in Hungarian, it is not excluded that Ö. Nemes extrapolated the date existing in the northern-wall inscription to that on the southern wall as well. Although we have no knowledge of dedicatory inscriptions mentioning distinct years, it cannot be excluded that the inscription in Ribiţa recorded indeed both the year of the church's building and painting and the year of the charter's acquirement by the local noblemen. This is especially so because the formula **въ дьни** + name and title is often accompanied by the year an event happened in. See in this respect the examples discussed in Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 215-216. As it will be shown later, it is possible, however, that Ö. Nemes interpreted as 1404 the year that was partially preserved in the dedicatory inscription's final line.

44 For recording the text or content of notarial documents in Byzantine church inscriptions, see Kalopissi-Verti 2003.

45 Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 218-219; certainly, until the votive composition is cleaned and restored, this statement retains its hypothetical character. It is not excluded either that this disparity was caused by the scribe's or commissioners' wish to convey an extensive information in a rather limited space. For examples of updated dedicatory inscriptions, see below (n. 87).

46 Rusu 1991, p. 7.

47 For these inscriptions, see Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 239-240.

48 Dragomir 1917, p. 18, 25.

49 Rusu 1991, p. 7.

50 See in this respect: Tomeković-Reggiani 1979-1981; Stylianou

1982; Cvetković 2013; Năstăsoiu 2016.

51 Tugearu 1985, p. 133.

52 Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 209-210, 239-240.

53 Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 209-210.

54 Rusu 1991, p. 7.

55 Had the alleged Matia been the two noblemen's brother, then he should have been represented in front of the two wives.

56 Nemes 1868, p. 64.

57 Rusu 1991, p. 7.

58 See the examples discussed in Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 216-217.

59 Ibid.

60 The mentioning together of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, of the King of Jerusalem Amalric I, and of the Latin Bishop of Jerusalem Raoul in the bilingual dedicatory inscription of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem is the closest example we could find. However, this case is not analogous to Ribiţa, because the recorded secular and religious authorities have been directly involved in sponsoring the church's complete redecoration (1167-1169). For this case, see: Folda 1997, p. 389; Kühnel 2001, p. 359; Bacci 2015.

61 Rusu 1991, p. 7-8.

62 Suggestion made by Laurent 1945, p. 177-9.

63 For this episode, see: Dennis 1967; Kapsalis 1994, p. 52-93; Leonte 2012, p. 30-37. For the Metropolitan of Severin Athanasius, see: Şerbănescu 1970, p. 1212-5; Păcurariu 1980, p. 255; Trapp 2001, no. 389; Preiser-Kapeller 2008, p. 345, 481.

64 Despite the fact that, according to the chronological limits given by the two hierarchs' shepherding and accepted by the archaeologist, this thing could happen only during the 1406-1412 interval, Rusu 1991, p. 7-8.

65 Judging by the fact that the dedicatory inscription records the completion on July 15 of the church's building and painting, the variant **ѕц҃кѕ** (6926) for September-December was probably excluded as unnecessary.

66 That is, in the area where the year was found, because the inscription's western side had been covered (and consequently destroyed) in 1869-1870 by one of the pillars supporting the nave's new vault.

67 The same reasoning considering the date of July 15 had led probably to the exclusion of the variant **ѕц҃гі** (6913) for September-December.

68 If one accepts that the third letter was **к** (20), and the fourth one was composed of a vertical line on its left side, then the possible readings of the year are the following: **ѕц҃кв** (6922, i.e., 1413/4), **ѕц҃кг** (6923, i.e., 1414/5), **ѕц҃кє** (6925, i.e., 1416/7), or **ѕц҃кн** (6928, i.e., 1419/20). If the year's third letter was **в** (2), then the fourth letter could be only **і** (10), that is, **ѕц҃ві** (6912, i.e., 1403/4), or the fourth letter could be absent altogether: **ѕц҃в** (6902, i.e., 1393/4). For the last variant, see below (n. 82).

69 The inscriptions discussed henceforward have been published in Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 240.

70 Currently, the fresco's western side is either damaged or whitewashed, and only the eastern figure of an Evangelist is visible; on the lower, southern side of the vault, the uncovered fresco fragments attest to the other two Evangelists' existence.

71 Popa 1995, p. 24, fig. 6.

72 It cannot be the date of July 15 recorded by the dedicatory inscription (line 9), because this hypothesis would imply that the Easter had been celebrated that year in early July, a fact completely impossible.

73 It is possible, too, that this area's mural decoration (currently whitewashed) was damaged before its covering.

74 For such an example, see fols. 93v-94r of a Gospels book (Cod. 2, currently kept in the Iviron Monastery, but coming from the Holy Trinity Monastery in Esoptron, Chalke, ca 1075-1150), cat. no. 45 in Evans 1997, p. 92, with bibliography.

75 For these inscriptions' text, translation, analysis, and bibliography, see Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 215-216, 230, 236-238.

76 Kalopissi-Verti 1994.

77 For these inscriptions' text, translation, analysis, and bibliography, see Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 235, 237-239, 241, 243.

78 For examples of charters, see: ... **вь лѣто ѕѾ҃нд. мѣсеца априль •ді• дьнь в велики и много-свѣтли и радостны праздникь Вьскрьсеніа Христова**... (1346 charter of King Stefan Dušan); **Законь Благовѣрнаго Цара Стефана вь лѣто ѕѾ҃нз индиктиона •в• въ празникь Възнесеніа Господніа мѣсеца маіа •ка• дьнь** (King Stefan Dušan's Law of 1349), Novaković 1898, p. 4, 6. For chronicles, see the following example: **В лѣто 6556. Священа бысть святая София в Новѣгородѣ на Возвдвижение честнаго креста повелѣнием великаго князя Ярослава.**, Kloss 2007, p. 26.

79 See, for instance, a series of formulae appearing in Hungarian Latin charters which have as beneficiaries precisely Transylvanian Orthodox noblemen in the area: *Datum in Wywar, die dominico proximo post festum Assumptionis virginis gloriose, anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo quarto*; *Datum Tirnavie, secunda die festi beati Bartholomei apostoli, anno domini* M$^{mo}$ CCCC$^{mo}$ *quarto*; or *Datum in festo beati Michaelis archangeli, anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo quarto...*, Rusu 1989, p. 41, 43, 46, 49.

80 See in this respect Segui 2013.

81 For the mural painting's bibliography up to 1998, see Porumb 1998, p. 336; for studies published afterwards, see: Agrigoroaei 2012; Prioteasa 2011; Năstăsoiu 2016; Prioteasa 2016. The authors reserve their right to be selective, referring here only to those scholars who, after 1998, brought a real contribution to the knowledge of the mural ensemble, expressing their thoughts within the limits presupposed by the academic discourse.

82 According to the reasoning expressed when examining critically the year's transcription by S. Dragomir (n. 68), the year **ѕц҃в** (6902, i.e., 1393 for September-December or 1394 for January-August) is one of the possible readings for the date in the main dedicatory inscription. However, according to the information contained by the altar inscription, this refers to a feast happening probably in May; subsequently, for the January-August period, the year's spelling is **ѕц҃а** (6901, i.e., 1393), a variant which, from the point of view of its graphical particularities, is difficult, but not impossible to be accepted for the vanished year in the main dedicatory inscription. Compare in this respect the paleographical features of letter **а** in the dedicatory and altar inscriptions (Fig. 4-5, 12); this letter is composed indeed of a vertical line, but on its right, not left side.

83 According to Christo Andreev (PhD, specialist în Slavonic paleography, Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia), whom we consulted in this respect. We are equally grateful to Christo Andreev for expressing his opinion on the altar inscription and to Emmanuel Moutafov for facilitating this consultation. We should mention, too, that Chr. Andreev made a read-

ing which is identical with ours, the latter not having been communicated previously to him.

84 In the current stage of research, only the inscriptions on the lower register of the three divisions of the inner space (sanctuary, nave, and room below the western tower, respectively) have been examined; the inscriptions of the upper-register, narrative scenes in the nave have been left out due to the accessibility problems they pose. For the time being, our observations concern only the inscriptions of certain scenes; however, we intend to publish in the future the complete epigraphic and paleographical analysis.

85 Even though the paleographical features have been examined for all alphabet signs, we present on this occasion only a selection of the most representative elements.

86 One should note that the years hypothetically contained by the two original dedicatory inscriptions in the sanctuary (i.e., probably 1393 and post-1404, respectively) coincide with the different shepherding years of Metropolitan of Severin Athanasius/Anastasius and Pope Gregory XII (i.e., 1387-1403/5 and 1406-1415, respectively). Such situation rules out the contradiction in the information communicated by Ö. Nemes, and supports the hypothesis that the church in Ribiţa has been decorated with frescoes in different stages.

87 The hypothetical updating of the main dedicatory inscription in Ribiţa would not be an unique case, direct analogies being encountered in several Cretan churches: names of donors have been gradually added in the free space after the completion of the inscriptions of St. George Church in Anydroi (Selino, Chania, 1323), and Sts Constantine and Helena Church in Voutas (Selino, Chania, first half of the fourteenth century), whereas in the case of the dedicatory inscription of the Panagia Church in Beilitika near Kakodiki (Selino, Chania, 1331-1332), an empty space was deliberately left in the middle of the inscription, so that it could be filled in later. For these examples, see: Lymberopoulou 2010, p. 170, fig. 6-7, and Tsamakda 2016, 230-231, fig. 17-18; the inscriptions are published in Gerola 1932, no. 5, 15, 41, p. 433, 443-444, 462.

88 According to Popa 1995, p. 68, the malachite green pigment has been used only for several scenes in the nave's lower register, namely, the ktetors' votive composition, the Holy Kings of Hungary, and St. George fighting the dragon. One can assume that the three scenes are the work of a single workshop, which created these representations during a single decoration campaign. It is not excluded either that the painters used preferentially this expensive pigment for the most representative and status-conveying depictions in the church.

89 For multiple donors of mural painting in Transylvanian Orthodox churches, see the examples in Densuş, Hălmagiu (Hung. *Halmágy*), Leşnic (Hung. *Lesnyek*, *Lesnek*), Sălaşu de Sus, Strei (Hung. *Zeykfalva*), and Streisângeorgiu, Năstăsoiu 2016, where an analysis of the model of Orthodox patronage in late-medieval Transylvania is offered.

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# *La Mère de Dieu, allégorie de la nourriture spirituelle :*
## *À propos d'une inscription de l'église Saint-Georges de Hârlău*

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SUMMARY: In the apse of the church of St. George in Hârlău, the image of the Mother of God is accompanied by a peculiar inscription displayed along the springing of the conch. Its text, taken from a troparion for the thanksgiving after the supper, exalts the Eucharistic connotations of the image and employs the metaphor of spiritual nourishment in relation with the Virgin. The present study concisely examines the insertion of the Marian iconography in the apsidal program, the theological underpinnings for connecting the Incarnation with the Eucharist and the use of the metaphor of spiritual nourishment in the Byzantine homiletics and hymnography dedicated to the Theotokos..

KEYWORDS: Marian iconography, epigraphy, apsidal programs, homiletics, hymnography.

REZUMAT: În absida bisericii Sf. Gheorghe din Hârlău, imaginea Maicii Domnului cu Pruncul din conca absidei altarului este însoțită de o neașteptată inscripție care bordează nașterea bolții. Textul, preluat dintr-un tropar la rugăciunile de mulțumire după masa de seară, accentuează sensurile euharistice ale reprezentării și vehiculează metafora hranei spirituale cu referire la Fecioară. Cercetarea de față urmărește succint stabilizarea iconografiei mariale a concii, fundamentele teologice ale asocierii Întrupării cu Euharistia și utilizarea metaforei hranei spirituale în omiletica și în imnografia bizantină dedicată Maicii Domnului..

CUVINTE CHEIE: Iconografia Maicii Domnului, epigrafie, iconografia absidei, omiletică, imnografie.

Dans le sanctuaire de l'église Saint-Georges de Hârlău (1530?),[1] la représentation habituelle de la Mère de Dieu adorée par quatre archanges (un trait commun de l'iconographie moldave, qui amplifie la présence angélique autour du trône de Marie) est accompagnée d'une inscription placée sur une bande située au point de naissance de la voûte en cul-de-four (Fig. 1). Cette option iconographique constitue un détail tout à fait remarquable, d'autant plus que la seule situation similaire dans l'iconographie absidale moldave du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle est celle que l'on rencontre dans l'église de Dobrovăţ (1529-1530?)[2] (Fig. 2). Dans cet autre monument de la Moldavie, l'inscription cite l'hymne de gloire consacré à la Mère de Dieu dans la liturgie de saint Jean Chrysostome, après l'*epiklesis*, autrement dit après la 'Consécration des dons' :

> ДО[СТО]ИННО Є҃ ꙖКО ВЪ ИСТИНѪ · БЛАЖЕМТИ ТѦ · БЦ҃Е · ПРИСНОБЛАЖЕНАА · И ПРѢНЕПОРОУНАА · МТ҃РЕ Б҃А НАШЕГО ЧЕ҃СНЕШАѪ · ХЕРО[Ѵ]ВИМЬ · И СЛАВНѢИШАѪ · БЕЗ РАСЪЖЕНА СЪРАФ[И]М · БЕЗ ИСЛѢНА Б҃А СЛОВО РОЖ[Д]ЕШАѪ · СЪЩАѪ БЦ҃Е ТЕБѢ · ВЕЛИЧАЕМЬ :

Cette particularité témoigne de la manière dont l'iconographie de Dobrovăţ suit une pratique bien connue dans la peinture byzantine tardive, comme à Curtea de Argeş,[3] où le même texte, en grec, a été transcrit à la naissance de la conque :

> АꙀИОН ЕСТИН ОС АЛИѲОС МАКАРИꙀІН СЕ ТИН ѲЕОТОКОН, ТІН АИМАКАРІСТОН КЕ ПАНАМОМИТОН КЕ МИТЕРАН ТОѴ Ѳ҃Ѵ ИМОН ТИН ТИМІОТЕРАН [Т]ОН ХЕРОѴВІМ КЕ ЕНДОꙀОТЕРАН АСІНКРІТОС [...]ИМ [...]ИН ОНТОС [...]КОН СЕ МЕ[...].[4]

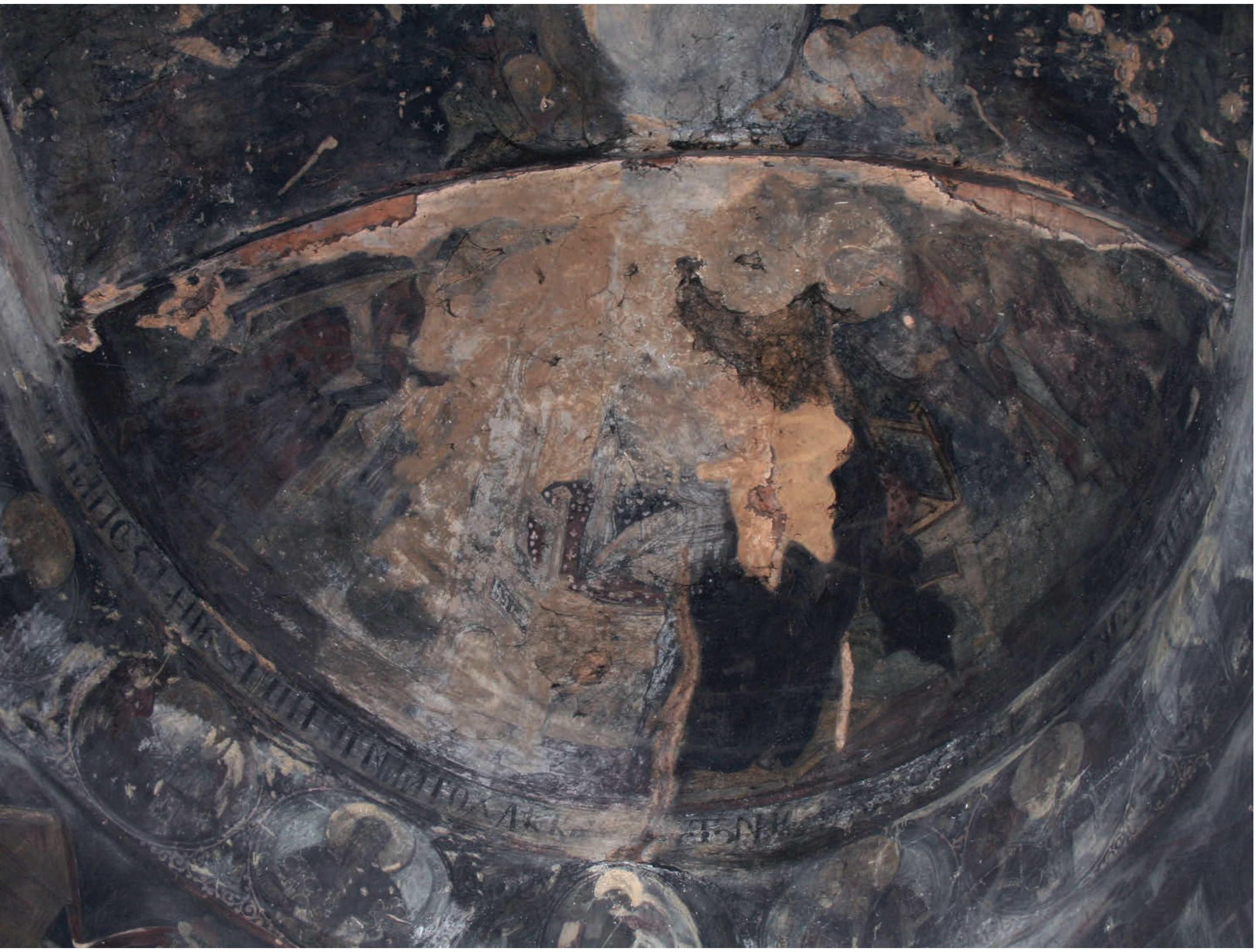
Voici la traduction française de ce texte : « Il est digne, en vérité, de te proclamer bienheureuse, Mère de Dieu, toujours bienheureuse et tout-irréprochable, et Mère de notre Dieu. Plus vénérable que les chérubins et incomparablement plus glorieuse que les séraphins, toi qui sans corruption as enfanté Dieu le Verbe, toi qui es vraiment Mère de Dieu, nous te magnifions ».[5]

Ce contexte épigraphique confère un caractère exceptionnel à la situation de Hârlău, où l'inscription proclame :

> БЫ[С]ТЬ ЧРѢВО ТВОѤ С҃ТАА ТРАПЕꙀА ИМꙋЩЇИ Н҃ГНААГО (sic) ХЛѢБА ХРИСТА БОГА НАШЕГО Ѿ НѤГОЖЕ ВСѢКЬ ꙖДИ НЕ ꙋМРАѤ[ТЬ] ꙖКОЖЕ РЕ[ЧЕ] ВСѢХЬ БЦ҃Е ПИТАТЕЛЬ.[6]

La traduction française de cette prière accompagnant le repas du soir serait : « Ton sein est devenu la table sainte sur laquelle a reposé le Pain céleste, le Christ notre Dieu, dont celui qui en mange ne mourra pas, comme l'a promis, ô Mère de Dieu, Celui qui rassasie tout l'univers ».[7] Quant à l'option adoptée par le concepteur du programme iconographique de Hârlău (lequel serait bien évidemment le promoteur du choix des inscriptions), elle invite à réfléchir sur les ressorts culturels qui pourraient justifier l'association de la Mère de Dieu avec la métaphore de la nourriture spirituelle.

Les pages suivantes seront consacrées à une double exploration des raisons de l'intégration de l'image de la Théo-



▲ Fig. 1: *L'inscription de l'église de Saint-Georges à Hârlău.*
Cliché : Vlad Bedros.

◥ Fig. 2: *L'inscription de l'église de Dobrovăţ.*
Cliché : Vlad Bedros.

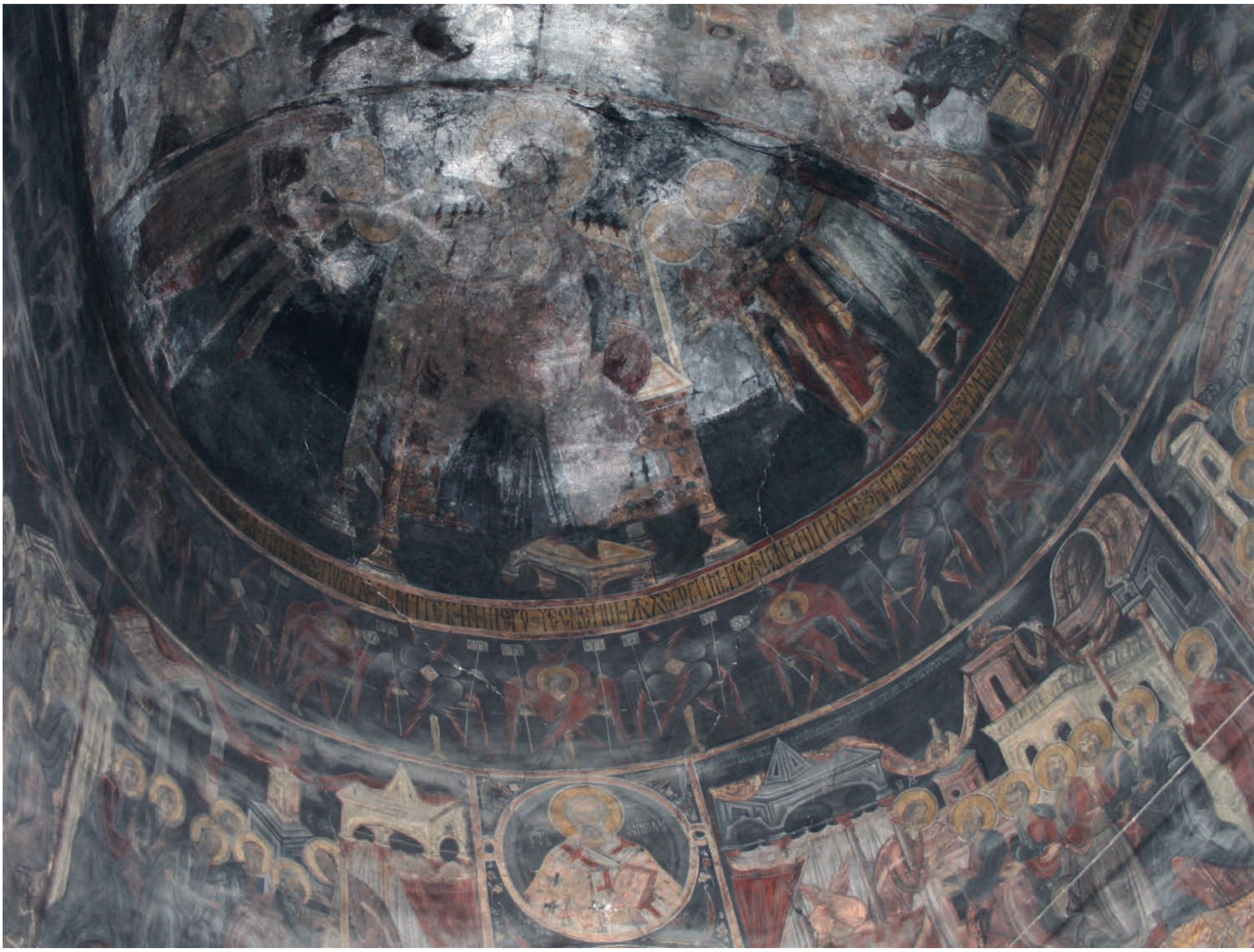
tokos dans l'iconographie du sanctuaire et de la pertinence des pratiques de la *lex orandi* qui visent l'utilisation de la métaphore alimentaire en référence à la Vierge, et dans l'homilétique en particulier.

* * *

La manière dont la représentation emblématique de la Mère de Dieu a été introduite dans le répertoire actuel de l'iconographie absidale constitue un problème en soi. Beat Brenk soulignait dans une étude récente[8] que le culte marial ne semble être illustré, durant la période paléochrétienne, que par un cas isolé qui a pour contexte l'iconographie des sarcophages. Il s'agit des scènes représentées sur le couvercle du sarcophage d'Adelphia[9] et les sources de ces représentations longtemps débattues n'ont pas beaucoup à voir avec les Évangiles. Elles pointent plutôt dans la direction des premières versions des textes qui deviendront par la suite l'apocryphe du Pseudo-Matthieu et du Proto-Jacob, voire dans la direction d'une tradition orale qui venait sans doute en partie du milieu de ces deux textes non-canoniques. Les images en question devaient être liées à une dévotion privée. Le statut de Marie serait alors celui d'une *domina* assise sur un trône, les pieds posés sur un *suppedaneum*, ou rentrant chez elle en compagnie de deux autres femmes. Ce rituel est attesté dans l'imagerie de l'élite sociale du temps, comme dans les mosaïques pavimentaires de Piazza Armerina.[10]

Il convient aussi de préciser que l'Église a longtemps hésité à suivre cette tendance populaire.[11] Un cas particulier qui illustre magistralement cette dévotion particulière est celui des toiles qui se trouvaient à l'origine dans le toit de la basilique de Santa Maria Maggiore à Rome.[12] Datées de 432 et de 440, elles portent le chrisme et l'abréviation χμγ, que l'on peut interpréter comme « *Χριστὸν Μαρὶα γεννά* »[13] et non pas comme « *Χρήστος, Μιχαὴλ καὶ Γαβριήλ* »,[14] mais aussi le nom grec *Κασσίου* (au génitif). Les pièces ont été produites à Rome, très probablement dans l'atelier d'un artisan grec portant le nom de Kassios, ce qui explique l'absence du latin dans les inscriptions. Ce Grec voulait peut-être exprimer sa dévotion personnelle à Marie. Un argument dans ce sens est fourni par l'emplacement des inscriptions : dans le toit de l'église. Cette inaccessibilité les rend difficilement interprétables comme constituant la preuve d'un culte public.

L'émergence du culte public de la Mère de Dieu[15] est indissolublement liée aux mosaïques de l'arc de triomphe dans la nef de la basilique de Santa Maria Maggiore (432-440).[16] Ce programme constitue le premier cycle consacré à l'enfance de Jésus et à certains épisodes de la vie de sa



Mère. Qui plus est, il apparaît dans la plus ancienne église dédiée à la Mère de Dieu. Le pape Sixte III voulait ainsi rendre manifeste le résultat des débats théologiques du Concile d'Éphèse, en 431.

Le transfert d'un thème comme celui-ci, inspiré des controverses théologiques et traduit dans la conception des images, devait être un processus laborieux. L'on peut alors soupçonner que le concepteur de ces images, responsable de l'articulation du cycle iconographique, a dû recourir à une conceptualisation complexe et personnelle qui ne se basait pas exclusivement sur des prémisses théologiques. Plusieurs particularités des images en question ont fait d'ailleurs l'objet de discussions à ce propos. Ainsi, dans le cycle de l'enfance du Christ, ce qui surprend, c'est l'absence de la Nativité, mais il faut également noter un détail curieux : Marie porte une *trabea* (tunique faite de fils d'or). Or, ce détail la dépeint en tant que membre de la haute aristocratie. De plus, Marie est accompagnée par les anges, le Christ enfant porte une tunique et une chlamyde, et deux des scènes font référence à un texte apocryphe – l'Évangile du Pseudo-Matthieu.[17]

Ce cycle inédit reflète pour la première fois la position officielle de l'Église et la dévotion populaire à la Mère de Dieu, mais il n'a connu aucun rayonnement de nature iconographique ou stylistique. À l'exception de quelques éléments mineurs, ces images sont restées isolées, sans aucune conséquence majeure dans le développement de l'iconographie mariale.

Quant à l'installation d'une représentation de la Mère de Dieu dans l'abside, le parallélisme avec la scène de l'Adoration des Mages dont témoignent les images des catacombes et des ampoules de pèlerinage a permis de comprendre que cette iconographie a été sans doute introduite dans les absides à peu près à la même époque.[18] Sachant que ces milieux culturels sont humbles, l'hypothèse de travail demeure une simple conjecture, car elle ne peut être étayée par aucun autre type de preuve. La plus ancienne représentation de la Mère de Dieu dans une abside est celle de Santa Maria Capua Vetere, sur une mosaïque qui a été détruite au XVIII$^{e}$ siècle, mais bien connue à partir des anciennes descriptions. Cette basilique a été construite et décorée par l'évêque Symmaque. La conque de l'abside présentait une image de la Mère de Dieu avec l'Enfant, assise sur un trône de petite taille – pas sur une *cathedra* –, le reste de l'espace étant rempli de tiges d'acanthe. Sur l'arc triomphal, deux prophètes étaient associés à l'image de Marie.[19]

L'isolement iconique de Marie, sans aucun contexte néotestamentaire, a permis à cette représentation à caractère manifestement dévotionnel de se substituer à l'image du Christ parmi les apôtres. Cette dernière avait déjà une valeur ecclésiastique grâce à sa référence aux apôtres en tant que modèle de l'assemblée des clercs, réunis dans l'abside. L'image de Marie met un accent fort sur la nature humaine du Christ, et le fait de choisir cette image peut avoir pour origine un culte individuel. Autrement dit, il se peut que la représentation de Santa Maria Capua Vetere n'apporte aucun renseignement sur le culte marial, mais plutôt sur la dévotion personnelle de l'évêque Symmaque, qui témoigne ainsi de sa qualité de donateur dans l'inscription transcrite à la base de la conque : *Sanctae Mariae Symmachus Episcopus.*

Brenk imagine également la possibilité d'une intensification de la dévotion envers la Mère de Dieu à partir du premier quart du IV^e^ siècle. Le parcours de cette intensification irait petit à petit de la dévotion d'ordre personnel, dont l'expression originaire se trouverait sur les sarcophages et sur des objets appartenant à la sphère privée, vers les rangs de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique. Au V^e^ siècle, les mosaïques de Santa Maria Maggiore témoignent d'un statut presque institutionnalisé de la dévotion mariale, bien que le thème essentiel de l'iconographie exceptionnelle qui occupe l'arc triomphal de ce monument demeure l'affirmation de la nature divine du Christ. Les attributs princiers de Marie (les perles, le collier de pierres précieuses et la *trabea*) sont destinés à lui conférer un statut social privilégié, lequel touche également la condition de l'Enfant. Cela veut dire que l'absence de tout indice concernant son culte spécifique exclut l'hypothèse de l'établissement d'un culte marial officiel à partir de cette époque.

La représentation de Santa Maria Capua Vetere constitue le premier exemple indubitable de l'iconographie absidale consacrée à Marie, mais l'image ne témoigne pas d'un culte. Il s'agit, selon Beat Brenk, d'une « dévotion par images ». Cette approche prudente repose sur la constatation que le prêtre officiant n'a dû prononcer les prières adressées directement à Marie qu'à partir du VII^e^ siècle.[20] En effet, le thème théologique de l'intercession mariale s'est constitué à la fin du VI^e^ siècle, après une période où les représentations absidales de la Mère de Dieu à l'Enfant se sont multipliées tant dans l'ancienne préfecture de l'Occident que dans celle de l'Orient: dans la Basilique euphrasienne de Poreč[21] aussi bien que dans les églises chypriotes de Lythankomi et Kiti,[22] dans le voisinage de Larnaca.

Le fait de considérer que l'iconographie de Santa Maria Capua Vetere constitue un signe de dévotion mariale comporte le risque d'une lecture médiévale de l'image paléochrétienne. La transformation du culte de la Mère de Dieu à partir d'un culte basé sur la vénération des reliques vers un autre, centré plutôt sur son image, représente une transformation qui a eu lieu seulement après le moment iconoclaste.[23] La propagation par l'entremise de l'image d'une dévotion personnelle de plus en plus représentée a été le point de départ du culte marial sanctionné en tant que tel par l'Église. Pour ce qui est de l'iconographie absidale, la conséquence ultime de la légitimation du nouveau culte a été l'ancrage de l'image de la Mère de Dieu à l'Enfant dans la conque, uniquement à partir de la période post-iconoclaste.[24]

En effet, dès la fin du IX^e^ siècle, la Mère de Dieu à l'Enfant occupe la conque absidale,[25] un choix iconographique qui se préserve à la fois en Occident[26] et dans la tradition byzantine pendant les siècles suivants, y compris dans la période post-byzantine, à laquelle appartiennent les fresques de Dobrovăţ et Hârlau, point de départ de notre analyse. Ce choix comporte de multiples enjeux dévotionnels. Certains d'entre eux surpassent la simple jonction rituel-image. La richesse de ces scènes s'épanouit toutefois pendant l'ère méso-byzantine et le Bas-empire byzantin, moyennant cependant des sources puisées dans des siècles plus reculés.

* * *

Cette option iconographique porte également une empreinte liturgique évidente. La représentation de la Mère de Dieu dans cet endroit précis de l'église rappelle certains thèmes de la méditation sur l'Eucharistie, fréquents dans la littérature orientale d'édification spirituelle durant la période patristique,[27] où la Mère de Dieu peut avoir plusieurs relations avec la liturgie eucharistique. Même en ce qui concerne le mystère de la Communion, une tradition orientale (notamment syrienne,[28] dans les milieux hérétiques tout comme dans les orthodoxes, mais qui se continue aussi en grec ou en latin)[29] interprète l'acceptation du Saint-Esprit par la Mère de Dieu pendant l'Annonciation comme antitype de l'épiclèse liturgique. Le parallélisme réside dans le fait que l'Eucharistie établit et matérialise une relation réelle entre le monde sensible et le monde céleste, tout comme l'Incarnation.

La transformation eucharistique, un paradigme de la sanctification du monde par l'œuvre du Saint-Esprit, se révèle aux yeux de la foi (un don divin lui-même), de sorte que l'état du croyant qui participe au mystère du service est un état de réceptivité, d'acceptation de l'œuvre de l'Esprit, état parfaitement illustré par la Mère de Dieu au moment de l'Annonciation. La complémentarité est évidente : la Mère de Dieu a répondu à un appel, tandis que dans la messe, le prêtre est celui qui invoque le Saint-Esprit. Dans le cadre de chaque Eucharistie, le croyant est invité à imiter la réponse de la Mère de Dieu, modèle de sa propre ouverture à l'œuvre divine.

Qui plus est, la Mère de Dieu peut constituer un lieu de rencontre entre Dieu et les hommes, à travers l'Incarnation. Elle représente un antitype du sacrifice liturgique grâce auquel l'union du divin et de l'humain a été réactualisée. Les dons sacrés contiennent l'œuvre de l'Esprit. Or, si la réponse de la foi s'ouvre à cette œuvre, selon le modèle de la réponse donnée par la Mère de Dieu à l'archange Gabriel, l'Esprit peut « faire naître le Christ » dans le cœur de celui qui prend la communion, ainsi que l'affirme audacieusement et avec lyrisme saint Syméon le Nouveau Théologien.[30] La Mère de Dieu devient alors un symbole de l'Église. Les Sacrements sont accomplis à travers la Mère de Dieu, ce qui la transforme en un modèle de l'acceptation du Saint-Esprit par tous les croyants. Son rôle est tout autant historique qu'eschatologique, puisqu'elle a donné naissance à Dieu dans l'Histoire, mais elle représente également la nature humaine rétablie dans son rapport naturel avec Dieu, de manière proleptique.[31]

Cette lecture eucharistique de la représentation de la Mère de Dieu a été agréée par André Grabar, qui considérait que l'image de Marie à l'Enfant constitue en réalité une représentation synthétique de la première Parousie (l'Incarnation), voire qu'elle suit une logique eucharistique dès sa première inclusion dans le programme absidal, à Baouît, en vertu d'une évidence banale : le sacrement de la communion est conditionné par le mystère de la naissance à partir de la Vierge.[32] En conséquence, selon Grabar, compte tenu de l'orientation principale de l'hymnographie mariologique, l'iconographie de la Mère de Dieu à Byzance peut être lue comme une thématisation jamais épuisée de l'avènement de Dieu dans le monde. Elle établit une relation de réciprocité entre l'iconographie de la parousie et celle mariale.

Ce type de rapport remonte en toute probabilité à la fin de l'antiquité. Il reste subordonné à l'iconographie mariale, même dans l'absence de détails iconographiques ou d'inscriptions qui expliqueraient l'intention de l'iconographe d'accentuer cette valence des représentations de la Mère de Dieu.[33] Notons cependant que l'une des principales innovations du IVe siècle dans la perception eucharistique, et qui a des échos dans la spiritualité byzantine ultérieure, est précisément cet accent mis sur l'aspect théophanique de la liturgie, lequel interprète l'Eucharistie comme épiphanie du Dieu incarné.[34]

Nous voici enfin arrivés à un autre niveau de lecture de la représentation absidale de la Mère de Dieu, celui qui nous intéresse le plus, puisqu'il explique les inscriptions de Hârlău et de Dobrovăţ. Ce niveau découle directement de l'utilisation de la métaphore de l'alimentation, telle qu'elle a été appliquée dans la littérature théologique consacrée à la Vierge Marie.

Les métaphores concernant la nourriture et la boisson se retrouvent souvent dans les Évangiles, surtout dans celui de Jean. Le Christ peut être à la fois le pain de vie (Jean 6 : 35), la vigne véritable (Jean 15 : 1) et l'eau jaillissant pour la vie éternelle (Jean 4 : 14). Ce sont les échos de différents passages vétérotestamentaires, notamment de celui de la manne, nourriture envoyée par Dieu (Exode 16 : 4 et suiv.), et de l'eau qui sort du rocher frappé par Moïse (Exode 17 : 1-6). La métaphore de la nourriture est assez fréquente et nuancée dans l'homilétique byzantine. À la différence des exemples bibliques cités ci-dessus, l'accent y est mis sur la « faim » et la « soif » de l'âme et de l'esprit. Par-delà le topos rhétorique du festin spirituel, la dure réalité quotidienne de l'incessante pénurie alimentaire, aussi réelle que possible dans l'Antiquité tardive et pendant le Moyen Âge, explique par ailleurs la fréquence des allégories de la nourriture et de la boisson dans la littérature théologique et spirituelle à Byzance.[35]

Le contexte homilétique et hymnographique de la représentation de la Mère de Dieu en tant que source de nourriture spirituelle n'est pas trop différent de celui que je viens de rappeler.[36] Dans la mesure où le Christ lui-même est le « pain céleste », sa Mère devient celle qui nourrit à son tour l'Enfant – inspirant subséquemment l'iconographie de type *Galaktotrophousa*[37] – ou une nourriture et une boisson spirituelle, simplement en raison de sa relation directe avec la Parole incarnée.[38] Ses qualités de Mère de Dieu gagnent en importance dans les textes et les images de la fin de la période iconoclaste.[39]

Les références typologiquement vétérotestamentaires citées par les hymnographes et les prédicateurs des VIIIe et XIe siècles insistent d'ailleurs sur le fait qu'elle représente un lien entre l'humanité et le divin.[40] Parmi elles, les références qui sont favorables au développement de la métaphore de la nourriture sont le vase rempli d'un gomor de manne (Exode 16 : 33) et le four pour l'oblation de pâte cuite (Lévitique 2 : 4).

Cette perspective typologique peut être déjà remarquée à partir du IIe siècle, mais elle se concrétise pour la première fois dans des textes du début du Ve siècle, les sermons de saint Proclus, patriarche de Constantinople.[41] Elle s'est rapidement accentuée au fil des siècles suivants, jusqu'au début du VIIIe siècle.[42]

L'une des principales contributions est celle de l'*Hymne Acathiste*, œuvre hymnographique anonyme et difficile à dater – sa datation varie, selon les hypothèses, du Ve siècle (selon une proposition récente)[43] au VIIe siècle. Il est sans doute utile de citer la cinquième et la onzième strophe de cet hymne. Elles abondent en métaphores qui font référence au thème de la nourriture spirituelle :

*Χαῖρε, βλαστοῦ ἀμαράντου κλῆμα·*
*χαῖρε, καρποῦ ἀθανάτου κτῆμα·*
*χαῖρε, γεωργὸν γεωργοῦσα φιλάνθρωπον·*
*χαῖρε, φυτουργὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν φύουσα·*
*χαῖρε, ἄρουρα βλαστάνουσα εὐφορίαν οἰκτιρμῶν·*
*χαῖρε, τράπεζα βαστάζουσα εὐθηνίαν ἱλασμῶν·*

[…]

*Χαῖρε, τροφὴ τοῦ μάννα διάδοχε·*
*χαῖρε, τρυφῆς ἁγίας διάκονε·*
*χαῖρε, ἡ γῆ ἡ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας·*
*χαῖρε, ἐξ ἧς ῥέει μέλι καὶ γάλα.*[44]

C'est-à-dire : « Réjouis-toi, Jeune Pousse au Bourgeon Immortel ; | réjouis-toi, Jardin au Fruit qui donne Vie ; | réjouis-toi, en qui a germé le Seigneur notre Ami ; | réjouis-toi, tu as conçu le Semeur de notre vie ; | réjouis-toi, Champ où germe la Miséricorde en abondance ; | réjouis-toi, Table qui offre la Réconciliation en plénitude ; | […] Réjouis-toi, tu portes le vrai Pain du ciel qui remplace la manne ; | réjouis-toi, Servante du Festin où nous avons part aux réalités du ciel ; | réjouis-toi, Belle terre de la foi où s'accomplit la Promesse ; | réjouis-toi, Pays ruisselant de lait et de miel… ».[45]

La Mère de Dieu apparaît donc à la fois comme nourrissante (terre, repas, terre promise) et comme nourriture. Ce thème est réitéré dans une homélie de saint André de Crète sur la Dormition de la Vierge, où le thème du banquet est traité en référence au festin de la Sagesse que l'on trouve dans le livre des Proverbes 9 : 1-5. Dans l'homélie, l'orateur met l'accent sur le fait que la Sagesse du texte vétérotestamentaire n'est que l'hôte du festin, tandis que la Mère de Dieu s'offre « comme une table céleste et secrète » sur laquelle se trouve « le pain vivant qui est la vie éternelle, le protecteur de toute la création, qui s'est fait pain de la pâte d'Adam ».

La pertinence eucharistique de ce passage est évidente,[46] mais il faut aussi y observer une signification de nature secondaire : la nourriture reçue lors de la célébration n'est pas seulement eucharistique, mais aussi contemplative, spirituelle. Les représentations de la Mère de Dieu sont chargées d'une symbolique sacramentelle inhérente, en particulier par référence à l'Eucharistie. Ses qualités de Mère de la Parole incarnée permettent le transfert de la métaphore du « pain céleste » de manière poétique, mais en s'appuyant aussi sur l'exégèse typologique.

Tel est le contexte dans lequel l'inscription surprenante de Hârlău doit être placée : « Ton sein est devenu la table sainte sur laquelle a reposé le Pain céleste, le Christ notre Dieu, dont celui qui en mange ne mourra pas, comme l'a promis, ô Mère de Dieu, Celui qui rassasie tout l'univers ». Le texte peint à Hârlău, la reprise d'une prière du soir que l'on a adaptée à la signification habituelle de l'iconographie absidale, prouve la présence en terre moldave d'un milieu théologique familier avec la grande tradition de la pensée byzantine. Mais ce n'est pas seulement aux simples répétitions d'un paradigme bien établi que le rôle de ce milieu intellectuel doit être réduit.

L'entourage culturel responsable de la conception et de la mise en œuvre de l'inscription moldave était aussi capable de l'élaborer à partir de la tradition byzantine qu'il connaissait bien. Le cas de Hârlău témoigne des heureux efforts d'émuler la tradition des anciens programmes iconographiques.

## Notes :

1 Cf. Ullea 1984, p. 286 și 299, qui fonde sa datation sur une analyse stylistique. S. Ullea considérait que les peintures de Hârlău étaient postérieures à celles de Dobrovăț, mais aussi qu'elles précédaient les peintures de Probota (deux ensembles de peintures murales dont il avait déjà établi la datation). Il n'existe pas d'autres hypothèses concernant la datation des fresques de Hârlău.

2 S. Ullea a daté les fresques de Dobrovăț de 1529, sur la base d'une conjecture : le voïvode Pierre Rareș aurait été veuf, car il n'est pas suivi par une épouse dans le tableau votif. Cet indice de nature historique correspond à l'intervalle chronologique 1527-1531, mais il a été calculé en fonction du début du règne de Rareș et de la date incomplète mentionnée par l'inscription de fondation, laquelle ne contient malheureusement pas le chiffre des unités ; Ullea 1961, p. 483-485. Constanța Costea observe pourtant que Pierre Rareș était encore veuf pendant la première moitié de l'année 1530, ce qui permet de dater l'ensemble mural dans l'intervalle 1529-1530 ; Costea 1991, p. 10 și n. 1. Il est cependant utile de mentionner que l'absence d'une représentation de l'épouse du voïvode en question peut être due à l'intention légitimatrice du tableau votif. Cette intention se manifeste dans la stéréotypie des portraits des trois voïvodes qui y sont représentés : Étienne le Grand, Bogdan le Borgne et Pierre Rareș. La présence des épouses des deux prédécesseurs aurait perturbé la composition de cette chronologie idéalisée. Cela permet de comprendre que le portrait ne reflète pas du tout une réalité d'ordre familial (le veuvage du voïvode) ; il ne sert qu'à mettre en exergue la légitimité du nouveau souverain. Cette interprétation, proposée par Vasile Drăguț, ne met pourtant pas en doute la datation de l'ensemble en 1529 ; Drăguț 1984, p. 7-8.

3 La datation des fresques de Curtea de Argeș (achevées probablement en 1375) a fait l'objet d'une autre controverse. Pour la chronologie de cette dispute et pour la toute dernière interprétation, voir Simić Lazar 2011. La critique s'accorde pourtant sur le fait que cet ensemble de peintures murales occupe une place privilégiée dans l'art tardo-byzantine, plus particulièrement pour ce qui concerne le transfert des modèles iconographiques issus du monastère de Chora.

4 Cf. Panaitescu 1923, p. 161, p. 199/ fig. 202. Cet auteur cite également le texte en orthographe correcte : *Ἄξιόν ἐστιν ὡς ἀληθῶς μακαρίζειν σε τὴν Θεοτόκον, τὴν ἀειμακάριστον καὶ παναμώμητον καὶ Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν· τὴν τιμιωτέραν τῶν Χερουβεὶμ καὶ ἐνδοξοτέραν ἀσυγκρίτως τῶν Σεραφεὶμ, τὴν ἀδιαφθόρως Θεὸν Λόγον τεκοῦσαν, τὴν ὄντως Θεοτόκον, σὲ μεγαλύνομεν*.

5 *La Divine Liturgie* 2009, p. 64. Voir également la traduction proposée dans *Encyclopédie* 1968, p. 6 : « Il est digne en vérité de te célébrer, ô Mère de Dieu, | bienheureuse à jamais et très pure et Mère de notre Dieu. | Toi plus vénérable que les chérubins | et incomparablement plus glorieuse que les séraphins, | qui sans tache enfantas Dieu le Verbe, | toi, véritablement Mère de Dieu, nous t'exaltons ».

6 L'inscription est encore inédite. Je remercie Mme le Prof. Ruxandra Lambru, qui a eu l'amabilité de me transmettre la rédaction de cette inscription et sa source (le troparion aux prières qui accompagnent le repas du soir, après les vêpres). La graphie *н<е>г<е>снаго* représente un *lapsus calami*. La forme correcte est : *н<е>б<е>снаго*.

7 Cf. Quenot 1999, p. 85. L'interpolation *б<огороди>це* (« ô, Mère de Dieu ») n'apparaît pas dans le texte-source utilisé par Quenot.

8 Brenk 2010.

9 Agnello 1956, p. 60-68.

10 Carandini, Ricci, de Vos 1982, p. 89, fig. 29; Gentilli 1999, vol. 3, p. 29-33.

11 Cameron 1991, p. 165-188; Cameron 2000; Osborne 2003.

12 Crostarossa 1896.

13 Tjäder 1970.

14 Dölger 1922-1943, vol. 1, p. 298-317.

15 Benko 1993; Cameron 2000; Mango 2000; Wortley 2005.

16 Sande 2008, avec une bibliographie récente.

17 Brodsky 1966; Spain 1979; Marini Clarelli 1996.

18 Ainalov 1961, p. 226-244; Grabar 1958, p. 47; Ihm 1960, p. 54.

19 Korol 1994, fig. 5.

20 Bardy 1938.

21 Terry, Maguire 2007, p. 4-5, 164-166.

22 Megaw, Hawkins 1977; Ihm 1960, p. 189-190, pl. XVIII / 2.

23 Pentcheva 2006, p. 48.

24 Papadopoulos 1966, pp. 26-30; Haderamnn-Misguich 1975, p. 55-67.

25 Voir à ce propos Walter 1974, p. 83 și n. 15-16.

26 Première occurrence occidentale à Volturno ; voir Russo, 1996.

27 Brock 1979, no. 2, p. 50-59, *passim*.

28 Denys Bar Salibi, auteur d'un commentaire de la liturgie au XIIe siècle, interprète l'invocation de l'Esprit par le prêtre comme étant un symbole de l'Annonciation. Au Xe siècle, Moshé Bar Kopha s'exprime de manière encore plus claire : « Tout comme le Saint-Esprit est descendu sur le sein de Marie [...], il descend aussi sur le pain et sur le vin de l'autel, et la Parole incarnée dans la Vierge les transforme en Corps et Sang de Dieu ». Voir à ce propos Brock 1979, p. 51, notes 2 et 3 ; la traduction nous appartient.

29 Le pape Gélase, *De duabus naturis*, 14, dans Thiel 1868, p. 541-542. Voir aussi Angheben 2012.

30 *Ethika*, I, 9-10, in SC, vol. 122, p. 249-257.

31 Brock 1979, p. 58-59.

32 Grabar 1968, p. 547.

33 Grabar 1968, p. 575.

34 Hellemo 1989, pp. 144-145.

35 Peter Brown insiste sur le fait que l'approvisionnement alimentaire posait un problème épineux dans les temps anciens ; Brown 1990, p. 221. La relation entre la rareté des ressources alimentaires et la spiritualité médiévale est aussi analysée par d'autres études : Bynum 1987; Heinisch 1976.

36 Cunningham 2007.

37 Cutler 1987; Millet 1916, p. 627; Lazarev 1938.

38 Graef 1987, p. 101-161; Pelikan 1996, p. 55-65.

39 Kalavrezou 1990; Kalavrezou 2000, p. 41-45.

40 Cunningham 2004, p. 62-62.

41 Constas 1995; Barkhuizen 2001.

42 M. B. Cunningham a eu l'intention de constituer une base de données pour les épithètes de la Mère de Dieu, lesquelles étaient utilisées dans l'homilétique et dans l'hymnographie byzantine du VIIIe siècle. De nos jours, l'état de l'art de la recherche permet d'observer que nombre de références typologiques ont été en réalité ajoutées par les auteurs plus tardifs au corpus que l'on devinait déjà

dans les sermons de Proclus. Cunningham 2007, p. 240, n. 29.

43 Une série d'arguments de nature philologique et théologique permettent d'argumenter que le texte en question a été composé entre les conciles œcuméniques d'Éphèse (431) et de Chalcédoine (451). Voir à ce propos Toniolo 2007, qui contredit un point de vue plus ancien, selon lequel la rédaction du texte datait du VIe siècle ou du siècle suivant. Cf. à ce propos Wellesz 1956. Puis Peltomaa 2001, pour une reprise des arguments de Toniolo 2007.

44 Trypanis 1968.

45 Je cite la traduction publiée par Ambrogi, Le Tourneau 2015, p. 29-30.

46 Les types vétérotestamentaires d'Eucharistie ont été largement commentés par Daniélou 1956.

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# *The* Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται *in Dionysius's* Hermeneia, *a source for the iconography of the Mother of God surrounded by prophets?* [1]

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RÉSUMÉ: L'article propose un examen des sources littéraires concernant la représentation de la Mère de Dieu entourée de prophètes dans l'art orthodoxe. Le débat concerne, d'une part, la description du thème dans l'*Herminia* de Denys de Fourna, que la critique cite depuis une étude où W. Podlacha a décrit les fresques de Bucovine (1912) ; d'autre part, sur une longue tradition hymnographique et homilétique qui traite des préfigurations bibliques de la Mère de Dieu. Cette tradition, témoin de la concordance entre l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament, concerne l'Acte de l'Incarnation, comme soutenu par N. Kondakov (1915) et J. Myslivec (1969). D. Mouriki (1971), B. Милановић (1991) et O. Etingoff (2000) ont également souligné que le titre de l'hymne décrit dans l'*Herminia* peut être attribué au troparion *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται*, conservé dans un *Triodion* du XIe siècle du monastère de Sinaï (Sinait, gr. 736, fol. 71), lequel a été inclus dans le *Canon des Prophètes* lu pendant le premier dimanche du Carême et attribué au patriarche Germain I de Constantinople. Certains chercheurs ont identifié l'auteur de l'hymne liturgique avec Jean Coucouzèle de la Grande Lavra du Mont Athos (c. 1280-c. 1360) ou avec Jean Kladas de Sainte-Sophie à Constantinople (la fin du XIVe-début du XVe siècle), mais il semblerait que Jean Coucouzèle n'a ajouté que la composante musicale au *Canon of Prophètes*, un texte qui été déjà mis en rapport avec Saint Germain, comme supposé par Jean Gouillard (1967). Il faut savoir ensuite que les icônes les plus anciennes de ce type iconographique sont conservées au Mont Athos et au Mont Sinaï, voire qu'elles remontent au XIe-XIIIe siècles. En même temps, cette manifestation de la *Concordia veteris et novi testamenti* a gagné en popularité dans l'art du XIIe siècle, à la fois en Occident et en Orient. De toute évidence, l'hymne *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται* et l'hymne *Akathistos* ne sont pas les seuls écrits que l'on peut citer dans la discussion des sources. Nul ne peut négliger l'importance des textes patristiques. Or, parmi les sources littéraires du thème peuvent se retrouver la *Quatrième homélie sur la Nativité de la très sainte Mère de Dieu* par saint André de Crète (PG, vol. 97, col. 862-882) ; le *Sermon I: sur la Dormition de sainte Marie* par Jean Damascène (SC 80, 80-121) ; la *Première homélie sur la Présentation de la sainte Mère de Dieu* par St. Germain I, patriarche de Constantinople (PG, vol. 98, col. 291-310) ; l'*Homélie sur la présentation de Marie au Temple* par saint Taraise (PG, vol. 98, col. 1491-1494) ; et l'*Encomium sur la Dormition de notre sainte Dame* par saint Théodore le Stoudite (PG, vol. 99, col. 719-729). Le fait d'inclure dans l'assemblée qui entoure la Vierge Marie les représentations des défenseurs du culte de la Mère de Dieu et du culte des icônes – saint Joseph l'hymnographe, saint Théophane, saint Côme de Maïouma et saint Jean Damascène – permet d'entendre que ce type de représentation a certainement été élaboré après la crise iconoclaste, le moment où le choix de ces quatre poètes principaux a été établi.

MOTS-CLÉS: icônes, peintures murales, *Herminia*, hymnographie, homélies.

REZUMAT: Articolul își propune să examineze sursele literare care privesc reprezentarea Maicii Domnului înconjurată de profeți în arta ortodoxă. Discuția are în vedere, pe de o parte, descrierea acestei teme în *Erminia* lui Dionisie din Furna, evocată în lucrările de specialitate începând cu un studiu al lui W. Podlacha care descria picturile murale din Bucovina (1912); pe de alta, lunga tradiție imnografică și omiletică ce tratează prefigurările biblice ale Maicii Domnului. Această tradiție bazată pe concordanța dintre Vechiul și Noul Testament privește în primul rând actul Întrupării, așa cum au susținut N. Kondakov (1915) și J. Myslivec (1969). D. Mouriki (1971), B. Милановић (1991) și O. Etingoff (2000) au subliniat că indicația privind imnul în *Erminie* poate să se refere la troparul *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται*, așa cum este conservat în *Triodul* din secolul al XI-lea de la mănăstirea din Sinai (Sinait, gr. 736, fol. 71), un text atribuit patriarhului Gherman I al Constantinopolei, fiind inclus în *Canonul Profeţilor* şi citit în prima duminică din postul Paştelui. Unii cercetători l-au identificat pe autorul imnului liturgic cu Ioan Cucuzel de la Marea Lavră a Muntelui Athos (c. 1280-c. 1360) sau cu Ioan Kladas de la Sfânta Sofia de la Constantinopole (sfârşitul secolului al XIV-lea-începutul celui următor). Se pare însă că Ioan Cucuzel nu a adăugat decât partea muzicală la *Canonul Profeţilor*, textul fiind deja pus în legătură cu Sfântul Gherman, aşa cum propune Jean Gouillard (1967). Icoanele cele mai vechi care prezintă această iconografie sunt însă conservate la Muntele Athos şi la Muntele Sinai; ele datează din secolele XI-XIII. Totodată, această manifestare de *Concordia veteris et novi testamenti* a devenit din ce în ce mai populară în arta secolului al XII-lea, atât în

Occident cât şi în Orient. În orice caz, imnul *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται* şi *Imnul Acatist* nu sunt singurele scrieri care pot fi citate într-o dezbatere a surselor. O importanţă egală trebuie acordată textelor patristice. Or, printre sursele literare ale temei care ne interesează pot fi citate cea de a *Patra omilie la Naşterea Preasfintei Maici a Domnului* de Sfântul Andrei Criteanul (PG, vol. 97, col. 862-882); *Predica i: despre Adormirea Maicii Domnului* de Ioan Damaschinul (SC 80, 80-121); *Prima omilie la Prezentarea Maicii Domnului în Biserică* de Sfântul Gherman, patriarh al Constantinopolei (PG, vol. 98, col. 291-310); *Omilia la Prezentarea Maicii Domnului în Biserică* de Sfântul Tarasie (PG, vol. 98, col. 1491-1494) şi *Encomionul la Adormirea Maicii Domnului* de Sfântul Teodor Studitul (PG, vol. 99, col. 719-729). Felul în care au fost incluse o serie de reprezentări ale apărătorilor cultului Maicii Domnului şi ai cultului icoanelor – Sfântul Iosif Imnograful, Sfântul Teofan, Sfântul Cosma al Maiumei şi Sfântul Ioan Damaschinul – în acest sobor care o înconjoară pe Fecioara Maria lasă să se întrevadă posibilitatea ca tipul de reprezentare tratat în articolul de faţă să fi fost elaborat după criza iconoclastă, atunci când avusese deja loc alegerea celor patru poeţi principali.

CUVINTE CHEIE: icoane, picturi murale, Ermineia, imnografie, omilii.

Władysław Podlacha recognized and characterised the subject Mother of God surrounded by prophets in 1912. His work was based on a series of Moldavian (then called Bukovinian) frescoes, as an illustration of the hymn *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται*, a theme also displayed in Athonite iconography.[2] He emphasised that it was a well-established practice to paint the prophets on the walls of a narthex, as is the case in Humor (Fig. 1) and Moldoviţa (Fig. 2), and the hymnographers on the pendentives of a dome filled with the bust of the Mother of God belonging to the Blacherniotissa type. This is one of the reasons why Podlacha called this part of the temple the 'Shrine of the Mother of God' ("*Przybytek Bogurodzicy*" in Polish). He also considered that the literary source of the composition might be the *Hymns of the Prophets* (*Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται* in Greek; literally meaning "The prophets, from high above | in the beginning, [proclaimed thee]"). The text appears in the *Hermeneia* traditionally attributed to Dionysius of Fourna. Among the oldest examples belonging to this type of representation are an icon preserved in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai[3] (Fig. 3), and another icon, taken from Mount Athos by Petr Ivanovich Sevastianov in the 19th century, now in the collections of the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg[4] (Fig. 4).

According to Gordana Babić, the subject was extremely popular in the early 14th century. Its Paleologian popularity resulted from a mixture between a symbolic and rhetoric content with its various descriptive elements.[5] In another publication, G. Babić stated that this type of representation of the Mother of God surrounded by prophets might have been introduced during the Comnenian era. Her opinion was that it gained a lot of popularity in the early 14th century, and again in the 16th and 17th centuries, in Serbian works of art.[6] However, the notion *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται* appears in works of art of a relatively late date. It may be observed on a few panagiaria dated to the 17th and the early 18th centuries, where prophets with Marian attributes are represented.[7] An issue to be taken into consideration is the unusual frequency of this representation in the icons painted in the Rus' lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 15thand 16th centuries. One remarkable example is the icon of the Mother of God from Rudki (Рудки, Ukraine), a work of art which was unfortunately lost in 1992.[8]

It is worth noticing that the iconographic program in which the prophets surround the Mother of God is well documented in the Middle Byzantine Period, but it was not drawn from any other previous iconographic formulas. Nikolai Kondakov (e.g. 1915) noticed a series of typological references to the Theotokos in the several early Byzantine ecclesiastic works attributed to Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem (560-638; patriarch of Jerusalem from 634), Saint Andrew of Crete (ca. 650-726, or 740), and Saint John of Damascus (ca. 675 / 676-749).[9] Svetozar Radojcić also noted that the prophets already represented in the so-called 'purple codices' were often introduced into monumental paintings starting with the 13th and 14th centuries, in order to express the concordance of both Testaments. The representations of two prophets in the corners above the scene of the Assumption of Mary in Staro Nagoričino (1317)[10] had to serve this particular purpose. Sotirios Kissas agreed with Radojcić, but considered that the source for this representation of the prophets with Marian symbols in the Dormition of the Mother of God might have been inspired by the homilies of Saint John of Damascus. He also linked this peculiarity to the remarks regarding the iconography of the above mentioned hymn included in Konstantinos Kalokyris's 1972 study.[11] The term used in the *Hermeneia* ('The Prophets from above')[12] was adapted in subsequent literature, for example in Manolis Chatzidakis' monograph devoted to the Venetian icons (1962),[13] or in Sirarpie der Nersessian's study of the frescoes in the Parreclesion of the Monastery of Our Saviour in Constantinople (now Kariye Camii) (1975).[14] The most comprehensive study devoted to the subject was published by Doula Mouriki in 1971, dealing with the late Paleologan paintings from Peribleptos in Mistra.[15] In this study, the author followed – to a certain degree – the notion that the origin of this subject may be identified in the Dionysius *Manual* and in the homiletic and hymnographic tradition of the Eastern Church.[16] She indicated that the troparion *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται* was not only the name of the subject in the *Painters' Manual*, but an old liturgical hymn as well, one already known from the 12th century onwards.[17]

The conclusions drawn by Babić and Mouriki were reappraised and complemented by Vesna Milanović (1991),[18] and mentioned by Ludmila Popović[19] (1991) when they referred to the wall-paintings in Peć (14th century). A similar iconographic program appeared in several Serbian Orthodox churches, like Our Lady of Ljeviš church (*Богородица Љевишка* in Serbian), located in Prizren and dated to 1307-1308.[20] In Serbian studies, this subject was described as 'The Prophets have announced thee' (Serb. *Пророци су те наговестили*). According to Milanović, the prophets were already depicted with such attributes in manuscripts produced in the 6th-8th centuries, even though they were not directly connected with the mission of Mary at that time.[21]

Milanović followed Mouriki and admitted that several older illustrations of the prophets with Marian symbols

Fig. 1 : *Mother of God Nikopoia surrounded by Archangels, Prophets and Hymnographers. Wall painting, Humor, cupola of the narthex, 1535.* Credits: Vlad Bedros.

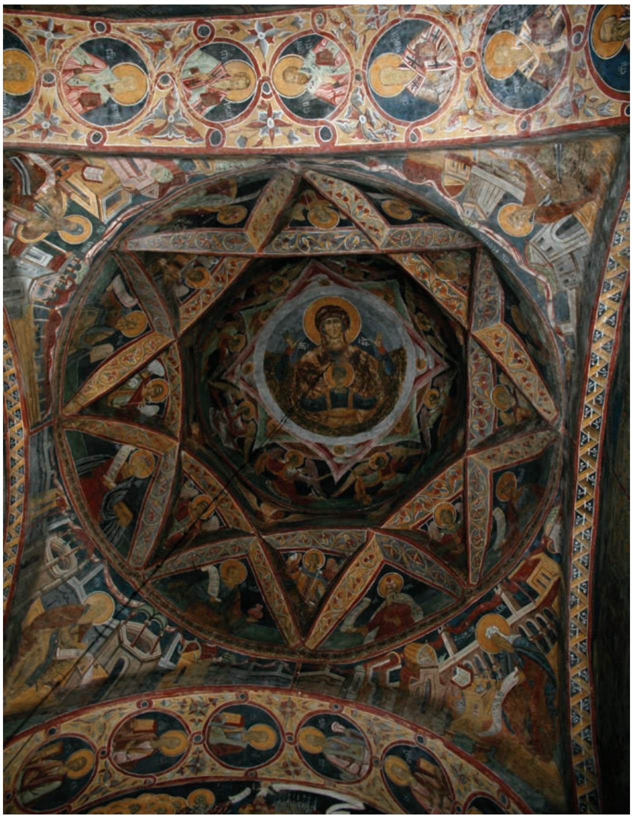
are to be found in the miniatures of Jacob Kokkinobaphos's *Sermons*, as well as in Kosmas Indikopleustes' *Christian Topography*.[22] Milanović also emphasised, like Mouriki, that the description in the *Hermeneia* precedes all other monuments to which it refers. And last but not least, a Bulgarian scholar, Stefan Smjadovski (1998), indicated both the *Akathist* and the above-mentioned hymn as a possible source for the hymnographic inscription (Num 17, 8 [23]) written on Aaron's scroll on the 14th century paintings of Zemen.[23]

However, other authors expressed slightly different opinions. Eugeniusz Iwanoyko (1956) believed for example that the source of the depiction was none other than the *Akathist Hymn*, the most venerable hymn of the Eastern Orthodox Church,[24] while Josef Myslivec (1969)[25] emphasized the relevance of the sermons of the Fathers of the Church in the study he dedicated to the Slovak icons. Vira Svjencic'ka (1983)[26] and Romuald Biskupski (1985)[27] briefly stated that the icons belonging to this type should be understood as an apotheosis of the Mother of God. In Russian[28] and Ukrainian studies,[29] the subject was portrayed as "*Pohvala Bogomateri*" ("*Похвала Богоматери*"; "*Богородиця з дитям і похвалою*").

It is worth underlining that the Hodegetria Virgin accompanied by prophets (and often by hymnographers) became especially popular in the Ruthenian icon painting of the 15th and 16th centuries (Fig. 5-6, 8-9). Only a few icons represent a slightly different variant of the Hodegetria surrounded by the apostles (Fig. 7).[30]

This other possibility of representation proved to be quite unusual for the pair of royal icons in the iconostases from Bulgaria, Serbia, Wallachia, and Moldavia, in which the icon of the Mother of God was enhanced by adding a group of prophets. Likewise, the other royal icon of the iconostasis bore a depiction of Christ as Pantokrator, surrounded by apostles. Such an arrangement expressed harmony in the theological sense, as well as in the sense of the formal composition of the iconostasis and of its icons.

Fig. 2 : *Mother of God Nikopoia surrounded by Archangels, Prophets and Hymnographers. Wall painting, Moldovița, cupola of the narthex, 1537.* Credits: Vlad Bedros.



A few autonomous studies and commentaries of this subject were announced in 2000. For example, Volodymir Aleksandrovych returned to the idea of linking it with the *Akathist* hymn,[31] while Maria Vassiliaki, who studied the reception of the Marian hymns in the art of the 16th-18th centuries, envisaged the possibility of linking once more the iconography of the Mother of God surrounded by prophets with the *Hymns of the Prophets* in one of the recent catalogues of the exhibitions devoted to Byzantine art.[32] In another exhibition catalogue, Yuri Piatnitsky analysed the specific case of the icon of the *Mother of God surrounded by prophets* in the Hermitage collection, and reminded its only analogy – the icon kept in the Saint Catherine monastery at Mount Sinai. He described both types of Marian images as *Kykkotissa*, thus indicating that the subject of the two icons had to be that of tender intimacy. Such a subject kept the pace with the changes in the liturgy of the 11th and 12th centuries, which lead, among others – as Hans Belting notices –, to a modified experience of the Passion of the Christ.[33] Referring to the same icon type, Olga Etingoff (2000) emphasized its Biblical patristic context, the texts of Saint Andrew of Crete in particular, and indicated that the demonstration of a tender relationship between the Mother of God and Jesus constituted in fact an innovation during the reigns of the Comneni emperors. Nevertheless, the merger of this depiction with that of prophets could not be accidental in the period of the theological disputes of the 12th century.[34]

Furthermore, Olga Etingoff noticed that the troparion *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται* preserved in the 11th century *Triodion* from the Sinai Monastery (Sinait, gr. 736, fol. 71) is included in the *Canon of Prophets* read during the first Sunday of Lent, the one attributed to patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople. Etingoff also indicated the importance of the *Akathist Hymn*. In addition to that, she noticed that the perception of Marian symbols was linked to the arguments of the iconodules and with the heritage of Byzantine poetry, which focused on the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the icons[35].

In my opinion, stated in my MA dissertation in 1992[36] (published in 1995) [37] and elaborated in my Ph.D. dissertation in 1999[38] (published in 2000),[39] apart from the justified indication of the great meaning of the troparion attributed sometimes to John Papadopoulos Koukouzeles of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos (also called *Kukuzeles*; Kukuzel, ca. 1280-ca. 1360) or to John Kladas of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (late 14th-early 15th centuries),[40] the significance of the patristic texts as a literary source for the discussed subject should not be omitted. The visions of the prophets are linked to the parallels regarding the central role of the Virgin Mary, the ones which are drawn between the Old Testament and the New. They represent a commonplace in the writings of Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296-373; bishop of Alexandria from 328), Saint Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306-373), Saint Cyril of Alexandria (375-444; patriarch of Alexandria from 412), Saint Germanus I, patriarch of Constantinople (ca. 650-after 730; patriarch from 715), and Saint Theodore the Studite (759-826).

In the late Middle Ages, they appear once again in the homily of Saint Daniel II, a Serbian archbishop and a

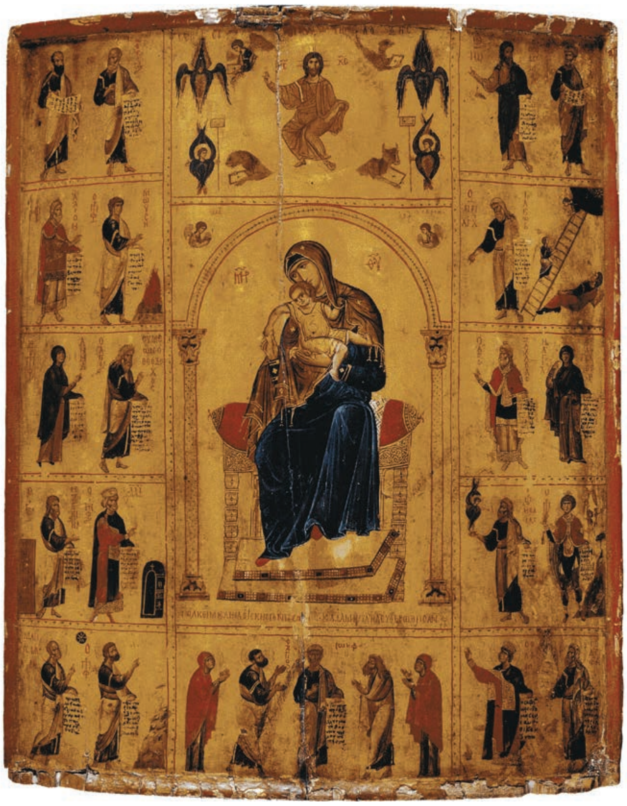


Fig. 3 : *Enthroned Mother of God surrounded by Prophets and Saints. Icon, 11th-12th centuries, Mount Sinai.*
Source: Carr 1997, fig. 244.

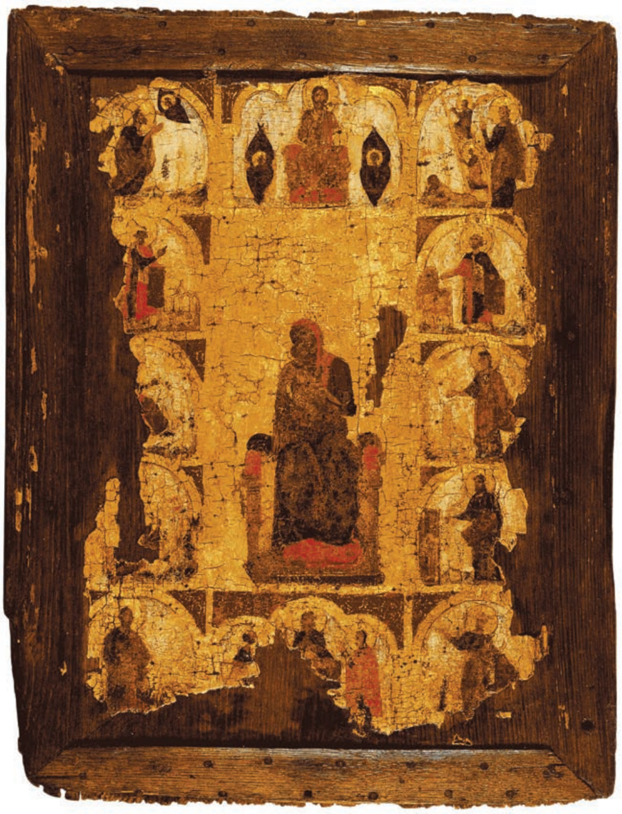


Fig. 4 : *Enthroned Mother of God surrounded by Prophets. Icon, 12th-13th centuries, from Mount Athos, nowadays in Saint Petersburg, at the Hermitage.*
Source: Piatnitsky 2000, fig. B-90.

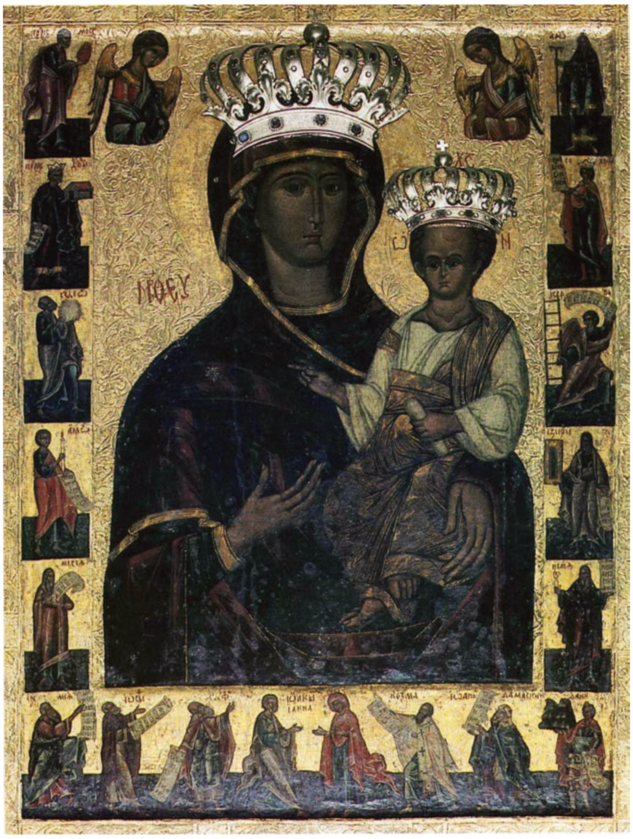


Fig. 5 : *Mother of God surrounded by Prophets Joachim and Anna, and Hymnographers. Icon, first half of the 16th century, from the Roman-Catholic Church in Rudki (Ukraine), stolen from the Roman-Catholic Church in Jasień, near Ustrzyki Dolne (Poland), in 1992.* Source: Biskupski 1990.

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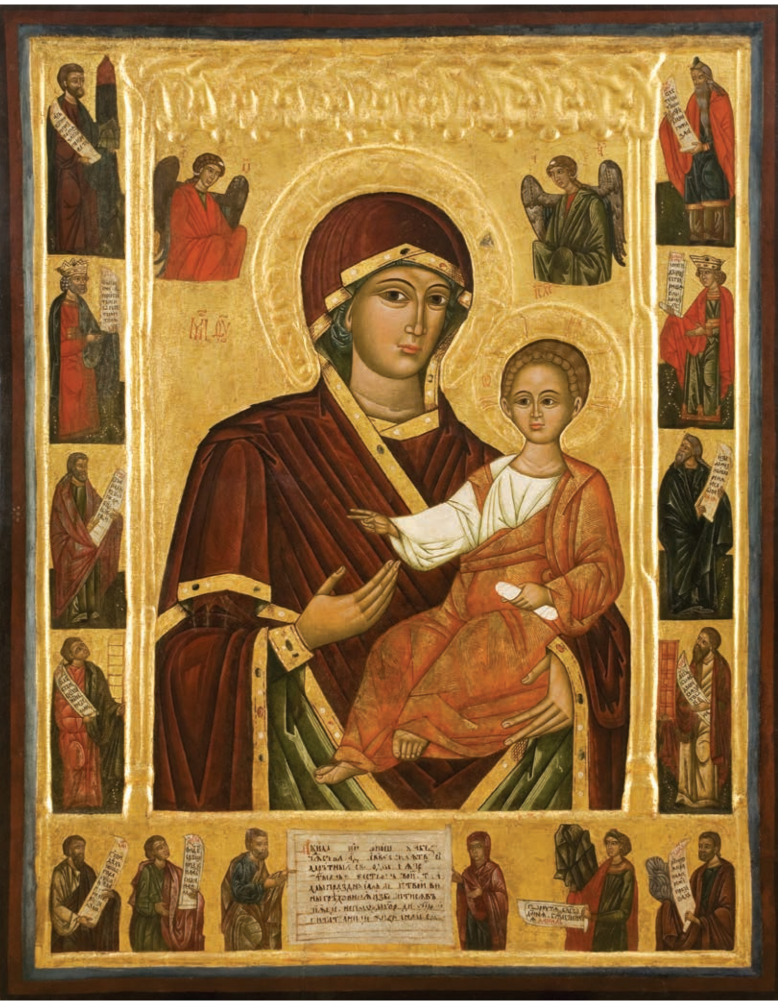
ktetor of the Orthodox church in Peć (ca. 1270-1337; archbishop of Peć from 1324). The Serbian saint kept quoting Old Testament prophecies and sought after analogies with the New Testament.[41] Last but not least, let us not forget that the vision was common to the homiletic tradition of both Churches, Eastern and Western. In the case of wall paintings, this idea was expressed simultaneously in paintings – by associating specific attributes upon the representations of individual prophets, and in the verbal layer – by placing them on the open prediction scrolls grasped by the prophets, the same ones reiterated in the sermons of the Fathers of the Church.

In *The Song of the Most Holy Virgin Mary* (CSCO, vol. 186, p. 191-199), Saint Ephrem the Syrian compared Mary to the fleece "on which Father came down like rain".[42] Similarly, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315-386; bishop of Jerusalem from ca. 350) reflected on the prophecies in his *XIIth Lecture: On the words Incarnate, and made man* (Isa 7:10-14) (PG, vol. 33, col. 725-770):

> Afterwards Solomon hearing his father David speak these things [...] said in astonishment, Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? (1 Kgs 8:27)
>
> David answers in the Psalm inscribed for Solomon:
>
> He shall come down like rain into a fleece (Ps 72:6): rain, because of His heavenly nature, and into a fleece, because of His humanity.[43]

And Saint Cyril of Jerusalem indicated that Micah foretold the place of the coming of the Lord, and Habakkuk



foretold the region round Jerusalem from which He would come:

> God shall come from Teman [nowadays interpreted as 'South'] and the Holy One from Mount Paran shady, woody (Ha 3:3).[44]

The iconophile activity of apologists and defenders of icon veneration exerted as much influence on the final shaping of this iconography as the hymnographers did. The latter, soon after their canonization, were placed near the Mother of God, together with the rows of prophets on the icons and frescoes. A salient figure in this category is Saint John of Damascus, who combined the apologetic passion with the production of Marian homiletics based on the heritage of the Fathers of the Church and of that of the Holy Scripture.[45]

Outstanding theologians created many works dealing with Marian homiletics in the two centuries – 8th and 9th – when the most renowned hymnographers were active, that is to say Saint John of Damascus and Saint Cosmas of Maiuma (Melodus, ca. 675-ca. 751). Some of these theologians described themselves as "servants" of Saint Mary, as if referring in this way to the epithet "a Servant of Christ", inscribed on the coins struck by Justinian II. Among them one should count Saint Germanus I (ca. 634-733; patriarch between 715-730), or pope John VII (ca. 650-707; pope from 705), of Greek origin. Around that time, Saint Germanus I expressed his support for the idea of the bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary, an idea already rooted in the Western theology, whereas the Orthodox Church approach was more cautious.[46]

Another great theologian showed the same support: patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople, the uncle of Photios I (ca. 730-806; patriarch: 784-806), as did Saint John of Damascus and Photios I (ca. 810-ca. 893; patriarch of Constantinople (858-867; 877-886). Saint Germanus I had been a priest at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, then a bishop in Cyzikus and later on a patriarch of Constantinople. He actively participated in the Sixth General Council that condemned monothelitism.[47] This is an example which confirms the vivid reception of Saint Germanus the Ist's writings in the liturgy and arts. The quote of an excerpt from his liturgical writings has been inscribed in the frescoes of the Saint Sozomenos church in Galata, Cyprus.[48] It is from the *First Homily on the Presentation of Mary at the Temple* (PG, vol. 98, col. 291-310), where Saint Germanus I of Constantinople said that:[49]

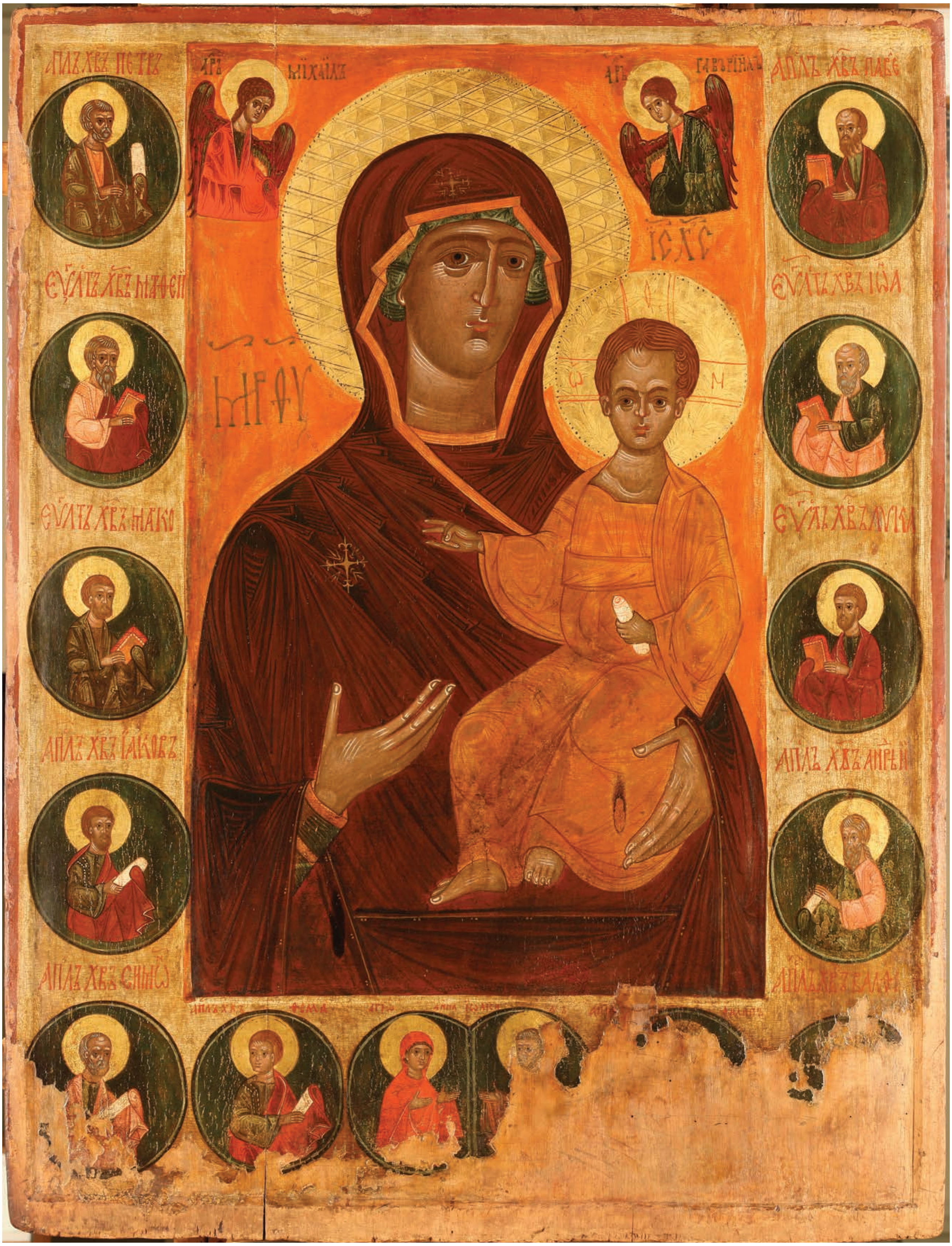
> Today Anna too [...] makes it known to the ends of the earth that she has received the fruit. Today the open gate of the Lord's temple receives the ascending gate of Immanuel, closed and looking towards the east (Ez 44:1-3) [...]. Today we are bid by Mary to pay Her homage although none can bring together all the praise.
>
> Hail, O rich and shady Mountain of God (Ps 68:17) whereon pastured the True Lamb, Who hath taken away our sins and infirmities, mountain, whence hath been cut without hands that Stone (Dan 2:34) which hath smitten the altars of the idols, and become the head-stone of the corner, marvellous in our eyes. (Ps 118:22, 23).

Saint Andrew of Crete also indicated in the *Fourth Homily on the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God* (PG, vol. 97, col. 862-882) that:

> It is you that Isaiah of the prophetic vision called <prophetess and virgin >, (Isa 7:14) [...] <sealed>! [...] It is you that Ezekiel called <the east side> and <the closed gate>, that the Lord is to pass through and which therefore will be closed (Ezek 44:1-3) [...]. It is you that Daniel saw as a mountain (Dan 2:45), and that wondrous Habakkuk as <the high shaded hill God desireth to dwell in>, he prophetically sang of. (Hab 3:3) [...]. It is you that Zechariah most discerning in divine matters saw as <a candlestick all of gold with seven lamps thereon> (Zech 4:2), lighted by seven charismata of the Holy Spirit. [...] Blessed be the fruit that made the barren and bitter waters good for drinking and fruitful by having Elisha cast salt into them (2 Kgs 2:19-22). Blessed who in the untouched shoot of a virgin womb flowered as a ripe grape. [...].[50]

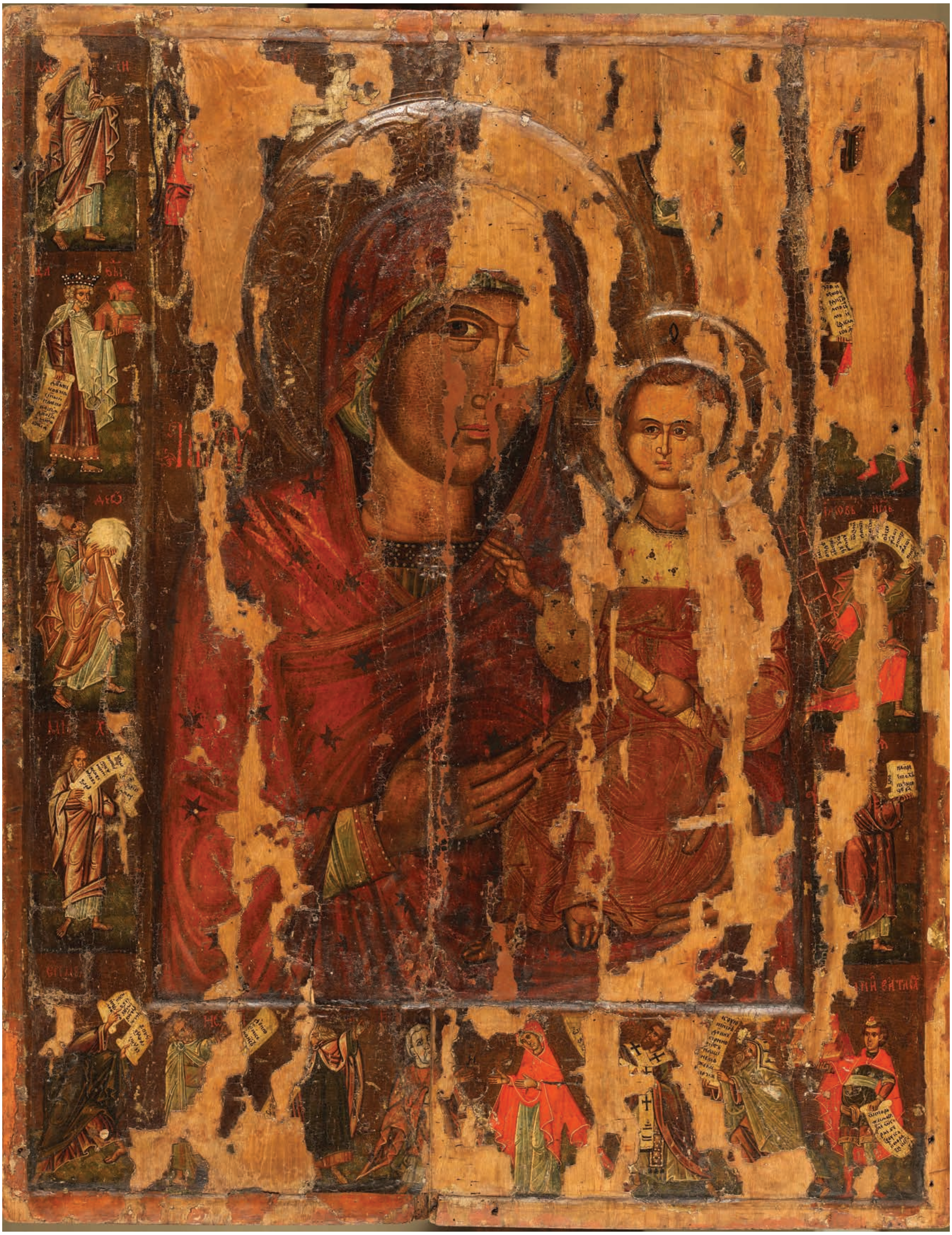
It should be noted that three out of the nine homilies attributed to Saint Germanus are entitled *De dormitione Beatae Mariae Virginis*, and that they are similar to the *Three Sermons on the Dormition* by Saint Cosmas of Maiuma (PG, vol. 96, col. 699-762), to the *Three Homilies on the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady* by Saint Andrew of Crete, or to the *Three Sermons on the Dormition of Our Lady* by Saint John of Damascus (PG, vol. 96, col. 699-782). Another piece of evidence that this subject was intensely discussed are the *Four Homilies on the Dormition of Mary* by Cosmas Vestitor (ca. 730-ca. 850). Parts of them have been borrowed literally from the works of Saint Germanus of Constantinople.[51]

In his *Encomium on the Dormition* (PG, vol. 99, 719-729), Saint Theodore the Studite also quoted various terms used in the Greek Patristics: "Dormition" (*κοίμησις*), "Exodus" (*ἔξοδος*, bearing a similar meaning – "going into foreign



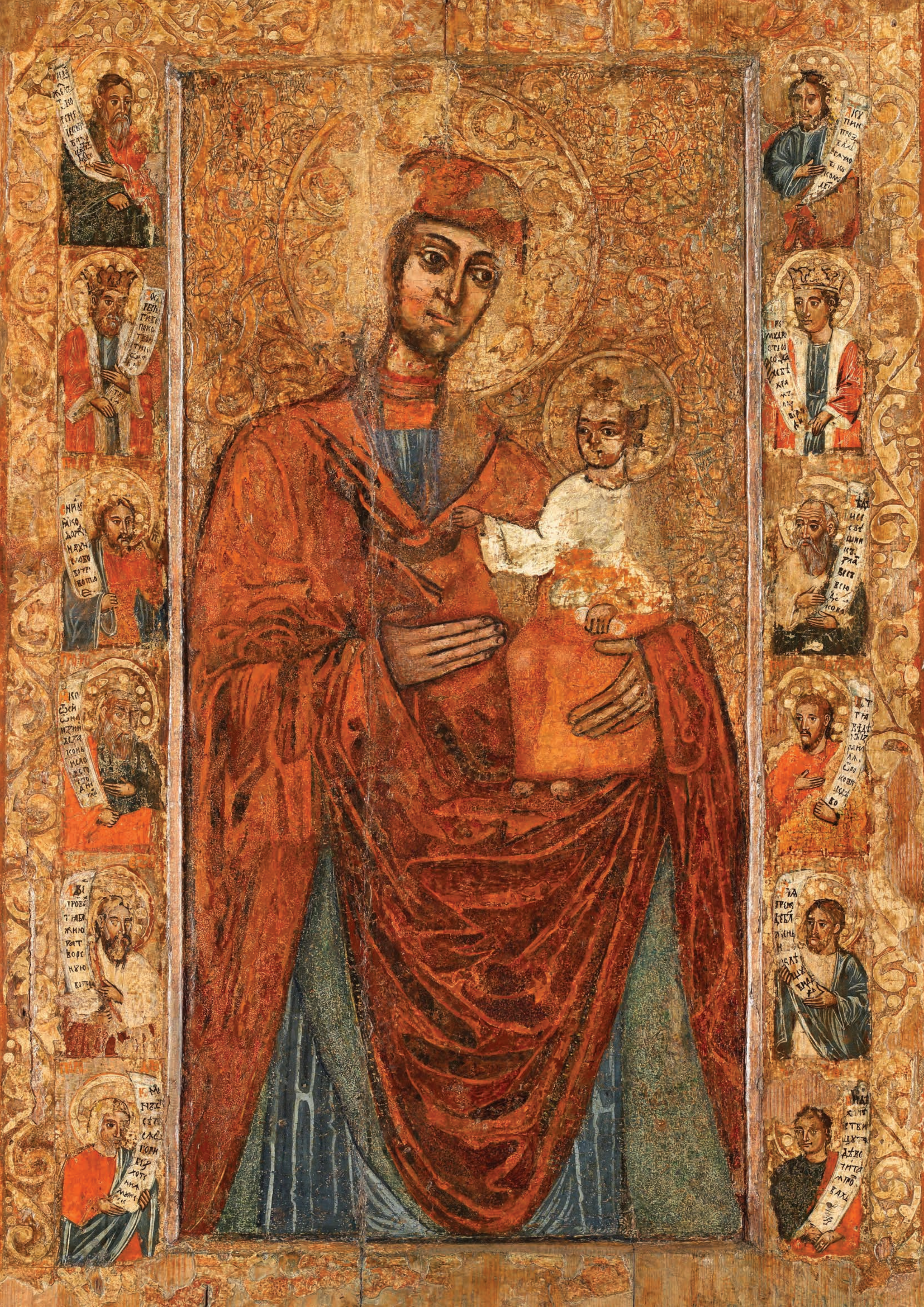
◤ Fig. 6 : *Mother of God surrounded by Prophets, Joachim and Anna. Icon, first half of the 16th century, from the Greek-Catholic church in Terło (Ukraine), nowadays in the National Museum in Cracow.*
Credits: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie.

▲ Fig. 7 : *Mother of God surrounded by Apostles, Joachim and Anna. Icon, first half of the 16th century, from the Greek-Catholic church in Terło (Ukraine), nowadays in the National Museum in Cracow.*
Credits: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie.



▲ Fig. 8: *Mother of God surrounded by Prophets, Joachim and Anna, and Hymnographers. Icon, second quarter of the 16th century, acquired shortly after 1900, of unknown origin, nowadays in the National Museum in Cracow.*
Credits: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie.

◥ Fig. 9: *Mother of God surrounded by Prophets Joachim and Anna. Icon, middle of the 17th century, gift of Helena Dąbczańska in 1916, of unknown origin, nowadays in the National Museum in Cracow.*
Credits: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie.



lands" –, that is to emigrate, cf. *ἐκδεμία*), "passing into another kind of existence" (*μετάστασις*), and "passing into another place" (*μετάβασις*). Finally, Saint Theodore wrote about the "life giving Dormition" (*ζωηφορός κοίμησις*).[52]

Typically, theological disputes lasted long in Byzantium. The emperors also used to have something to say about the subject. Andronicus II Paleologus (1259-1328; emperor from 1282) suggested that the feast of the Dormition of Saint Mary should not be called "the Dormition of Mary" (*κοίμησις*), but her "Ascension to Heaven" (*μετάστασις*), in conformity with the term used by Saint Joseph the Hymnographer (ca. 810-886) in his 5th ode of the 3rd canon (PG, vol. 105, col. 1001A); or rather her "exit" (*ἐκδεμία*). Radojcić believed that the depictions of this subject in two paintings dating back to the period discussed here – the Saint Nicetas Orthodox church and the Staro Nagoričane one – are evidence that such controversies influenced the works of art. The two representations might have been executed in such a way so as their interpretation would comply with both interpretations.[53] One must also note that the Dormition of Mary belongs to one of the most privileged subjects depicted in the Paleologan period.[54]

In the context of the stylistic devices used (parallels, allegories, symbols etc.), it is less important whether they were introduced in hymns or homilies. Such devices were quite commonly used. Photios I of Constantinople (ca. 820-891; patriarch in 858-867, 877-886) delivered a homily in the presence of Michael III (840-867; emperor from 842) for the consecration of a new church in the imperial palace. The church was dedicated to Saint Mary, and he compared it to Moses' tabernacle and to Solomon's temple.[55] Differences between hymns and homilies were extremely unclear; the situation is confirmed by the fact that the same writers were also hymnographers, and these differences were consciously minimized by the way in which they introduced hymnographic quotes in their homilies. For example, both Saint Andrew of Crete in his *Fourth Homily on the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God* (PG, vol. 97, col. 862-882) and Saint John of Damascus in his homilies used a variety of synonyms for Mary: the "closed Gate", but also the "Gate of light", or the "Gate of God". Saint Germanus, John Thekaras the Monk, and John Mauropos wrote simply about "the Gate". On the Eve of the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God was sung a piece by Sergius the Hagiopolite, entitled *The Gate Facing East*. It paraphrased the text from Ezekiel 44:1-2. Babić indicated the presence of such references in liturgical songs, much like the ones in the *Theotokion of the Fourth Ode of Matins for the Nativity of the Mother of God*, where "prophets called you the tabernacle, gate, spiritual mountain, bush". The same elements are also present in the seventh ode of the *Matins*: the "Mountain", the "Gate of Heaven", the "Spiritual Ladder",[56] or in the Ninth Ode for the feast of the Annunciation, attributed to Jacob the Monk: "Daniel called you the Holy Mountain, Isaiah – the Mother of God, Gideon saw you as a fleece, and David called you the Temple, and the other – the Gate".[57]

Therefore, Mary's attributes were constantly repeated in liturgical poetry. The excerpts read during the liturgy also referred to them. The Ezekiel vision was reminded regularly on the Eve of the most important Marian feasts: the Nativity, the Presentation at the Temple, the Dormition, and the Annunciation.[58] In addition to that, entire sermons occasionally took the form and character of an ode, as is the case of Roman Melodos. The base of all these comparisons was the text of the Holy Scripture, in particular the Old Testament attributes associated with the prophets or the songs belonging to the Old Testament canon – the odes read having implicit that the Marian symbols referred to the mystery of the Incarnation. It was not by accident that two particularly renowned hymnographers (Saint John of Damascus and Saint Cosmas of Maiuma) accompanied the prophets in the depiction of *The Dormition of Saint Mary,* It was already stated here that many outstanding homilies abundant with Marian typology were dedicated to this scene. Other than the references mentioned before, similar references to the prophetic symbols from the *Old Testament* were included in the *Homily on the Dormition* by Saint Clement of Ohrid. One may quote the "Burning Bush", the "New Ark", or the "Cloud". One should also take note of the Bulgarian apocryphal prayer entitled the "Names of the Mother of God" ("*Имена Богородични*").[59]

The character of the narration of John of Damascus' *1st Sermon: On the Dormition of Saint Mary* (*SC*, vol. 80, p. 80-121) may be read as a series of instructions regarding the creation of an icon composition:

> Joachim and Anna were the parents of Mary. [...] Anna [...] gave birth to a child, whose equal had never been created and never can be. The end of barrenness proved clearly that the world's sterility would cease. [...] In the fullness of time [...], the angel Gabriel was sent to this true child of God, and saluted her in the words, [...] Thou art the royal throne which angels surround, seeing upon it their very King and Lord. [...] The ark foreshadowed thee who hast kept the seed of the new world. [...] The burning bush was a figure of thee, and the tablets of the law, and the ark of the testament. The golden urn and candelabra, the table and the flowering rod of Aaron were significant types of thee. From thee arose the splendour of the Godhead, the eternal Word of the Father, the most sweet and heavenly Manna [...], the Light which was from the beginning. The heavenly Bread of Life, the Fruit without seed, took flesh of thee. Did not that flame foreshadow thee with its burning fire an image of the divine fire within thee? (Dan 3:49-50) [...] I had nearly forgotten Jacob's ladder (Gen 28:12). Is it not evident to everyone that it prefigured thee, and is not the type easily recognised? Just as Jacob saw the ladder bringing together heaven and earth [...] so art thou placed between us, and art become the ladder of God's intercourse with us, of Him who took upon Himself our weakness, uniting us to Himself, and enabling man to see God (Gen 32:31) [...] How shall I understand the prediction of prophets? Shall I not refer them to thee, as we can prove them to be true? What is the fleece of David which receives the Son of the Almighty God, co-eternal and co-equal with His Father, as rain falls upon the soil? [...] Who is the virgin foretold by Isaiah [...] What is Daniel's mountain from which arose Christ, the Corner-Stone [...] Let the inspired Ezekiel come forth and show us the closed gate, sealed by the Lord, and not yielding. [...] Let him point to its fulfilment in thee [...] The prophets, then, foretell thee. Angels and apostles minister to thee, O Mother of God, ever Virgin, and John the virgin apostle.[60]

Some representations of prophets in the Ruthenian icons (Jeremiah, for example) are remarkable in that their poses are unusual – their torsos and arms are twisted in the opposite direction to their feet (Fig. 5). Such "twisted" figures correspond to the pose of Miriam depicted during the performance of the mystic dance in front of the Ark of the Lord. This analogy has its explanation in the *First Homily on the Presentation of the Holy Mother of God*

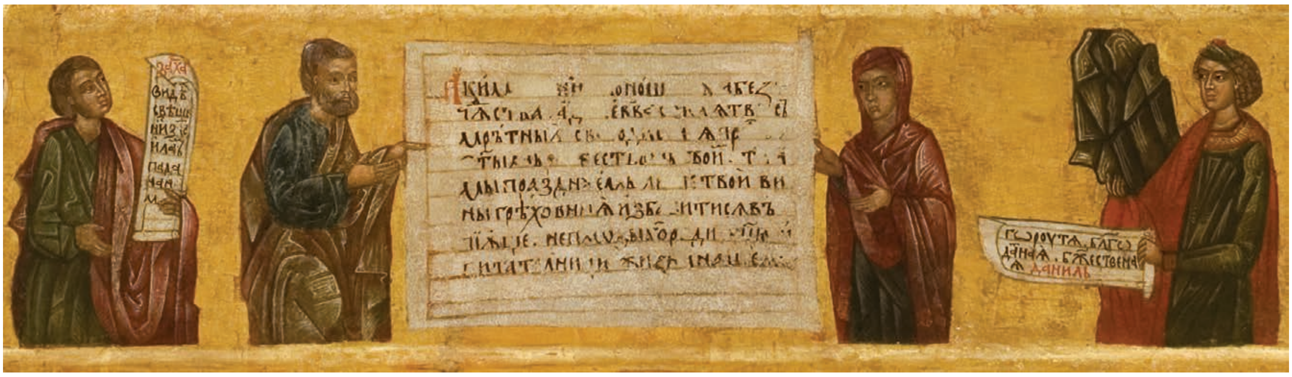


Fig. 10 : *Detail of the icon from Terło* (cf. Fig. 6).
Credits: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie.

(PG, vol. 98, col. 291–310),[61] written by Saint Germanus I, patriarch of Constantinople:

> And the heretofore barren Anna […] exclaimed: ˂come rejoice with me even more […]. For now the fruit and the gift of my womb, shining with God's brilliance and sanctified, I give to God […]. Come, the first choirs, and rejoicing with a host of maidens singing and playing the timbrels, not before Mary, sister of Moses, but before the daughter born of me, playing, sing a new song! […]. And you David […] with inspired lips utter a sound more pleasing than the lute […]. Come the high spoken Ezekiel, holding the Spirit enlivening scroll given of God, sing praise of this eastward-looking gate, which, while sealed, gives passage to the Lord. Let others from among the first in the holy procession or other hosts of onlookers raise their voices in joy looking at the approaching end of your prophecies. What then? Will you not, the first parents, freed from damnation, about to regain your place of delight of old, from which you had been banished, extol her that brings us salvation? Is it not you before all others who should raise your voices and, with me and with all creation, joyously sing Her praise?˃.

The last verses are a plea of sorts, a call to rejoice, as follows:

> From the purple mantle of the Virgin the altar has become purple of hue. Zechariah exults, honoured by the welcome of the Mother of God, Joachim rejoices […]. Happy is Anna […] happy the first parents fleeing the condemnation passed against them, the prophets rejoice and with them the hosts.

This joy is expressed in a similar way in the *Hymn on the Nativity of the Mother of God* attributed to Romanus Melodus, the first verse of which was written at the bottom of the icon from Mount Sinai[62]:

> ΙΩΑΚΕΙΜ Κ'[ΑΙ] ΑΝΝΑ ΕΤΕΚΝΟΓΟΝΗCΑΝ
> ΚΑΙ ΑDΑΜ Κ'[ΑΙ] ΕVΑ ΗΛΕVΘΕΡΩΘΗCΑΝ
>
> *Joachim and Anna conceived,*
> *and Adam and Eve were saved.*

On the icon, Saint Joseph stands below and points at the scroll he is holding. It bears the text of the same hymn – expressing the faith in the purity of Saint Mary. Moreover, Joachim with Anna and Adam with Eve stand at his sides. A paraphrase of that hymn, written in Old Church Slavonic, may be read on the lower frames of several Ruthenian icons, like the icon of the *Mother of God Hodegetria* from Terło (Терло n. Хирів, Ukraine, Fig. 6). Joachim and Anna, two figures who stand in for those of Adam and Eve, hold the scroll. The text asserts that humanity rejoices in Saint Mary, thus referring to the text of the Eucharistic liturgy according to Saint Basil, and constituting a verse of the above-mentioned *Hymn* (Fig. 10)[63]:

> ·ЇАКИМ [И] [АННА] [П]ОНОШ[ЕНИѦ] БЄЗ
> ЧѦ$^{д}$СТВ$^{и}$А А[ДАМ] [И] ЄВВ[А] КЛѦТВ[И] СЪ
> МРЪТNЫ[Ѧ] СВ[ОБ]ОДИСТ[АС]Ѧ ПР[ЄЧИ$^{С}$ТИѦ]
> СТ҃ЫМЬ [РО]Ж[Д]ЄСТ[СТВОМ]Ь [Т]ВОИ$^{М}$. Т[О] [И]
> МЫ ПРАЗДN[И]ЄМЬ Λ[ЮДИЄ] ТВОИ ВИ
> NЫ ГРѢХОВNИѦ ИЗБ[АВ]ИТИСѦ ВЪ
> ПЇѪЩЄ. NЄПЛѠДЫ БО Р[О]ДИ [Б҃]ЦЮ [И]
> ПИТАТ[Є]Λ[И]NИЦИ ЖИЗNІ NАШЄѦ,
>
> And in translation:
>
> *Joachim and Anna, from the shame of sterility,*
> *Adam and Eve, from the darkness of death*
> *were freed by your birth, oh the Immaculate*
> *Today it is celebrated by Your people, freed from damnation*
> *for their sins exclaiming: she who was Barren*
> *has borne the Mother of God*
> *and the Nurturer of our life.*

Such a call to express the joy through dancing was furthermore included by Saint John of Damascus in his *Second Homily on the Dormition of Virgin Mary* (SC, vol. 80, p. 122-176).[64] In this text, Mary was described as "the living Ark of the Lord":

> With Mary, the prophetess, O youthful souls, let us sound our musical instruments (Ex 15:20) mortifying our members on earth (Col 3:5), for this is spiritual music. Let our souls rejoice in the Ark of God, and the walls of Jericho will yield. […] Let us dance in spirit with David – today the Ark of God is at rest.

Saint John of Damascus used Marian figures in his *Third Homily on the Dormition of Virgin Mary* (SC, vol. 80, p. 178-196)[65] as well, in which he called Her "the spiritual and living ladder"… "through whom the Most High descended and was seen on earth […] and was assumed into heaven by death, as the heavenly table, who contained the bread of life, the fire of the Godhead, without knowing man, as a hollowed out cavern, the mountain from which the stone cut without hands filled the whole earth".

In addition to the various stylistic elements, it is worth mentioning the many adjectives referring to the virtues of Saint Mary. In the *Encomium on the Dormition of Our Holy Lady* (PG, vol. 99, col. 719-729), Saint Theodore the

Studite (759-826), a famous theologian and monastic reformer, defined her as the “queen and mistress of the world”, “gracious” (*φιλάγαθος*), the “Mother of the Lord” (*κυριοτόκος*), the “most holy” (*παναγία*), or “the root of Jesse who bore the flower Christ, the rod of Aaron with its sacred bud [...], exalted cherubim-throne of the universal king [...]”.[66] It brings to mind an analogy to many such terms endorsed by the painter’s manual from Mount Athos. In addition to the instructive character of the manual, it can be assumed that Dionysius of Fourna’s *Hermeneia* includes a series of iconographic guidelines, which sanctioned the already well-established painting tradition. It is precisely in reference to the Holy Mother of God that the *Hermeneia* allowed many epithets accompanying her representation. The ones recommended were: “Showing Mercy” (*Ἐλεούσα*); “She who shows the Way” (*Ὁδηγήτρια*); “more spacious than heaven” (*Πλατυτέρα τῶν Οὐρανῶν*); “Life-giving Fountain” (*Ζωοδόχος Πηγή*); “Loving-kindness” (*Γλυκοφιλούσα*); “Narrow Gate” (*Ἡ Στενή Πύλη*), but the most important epithet was included in a hierogram permanently connected with Her images – “the Mother of God” (*Θεοτόκος*).[67]

***

As a consequence, the figures painted around Mary represent an assembly of saints known as the witnesses of the Good News, the ones praising the role played by the daughter of Joachim and Anna in their prophecies, homilies and hymns. They were grouped together in order to highlight the timeless glory of the Mother of God, and that of Jesus born of Her. The ideological grounds of the composition of Mary with Jesus surrounded by prophets are summarised in two homilies written at the same time as the hymns quoted above, at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries. Thus, in the *Homily on the Presentation of Mary at the Temple* (PG, vol. 98, col. 1491-1494), Saint Tarasius[68] has prophet Zacharias praise the Mother of God in the following words:

> Thou art the ladder that Jacob saw going up to heaven and the most noble of all his children throughout the twelve tribes of Israel. [...]; Thou art the book of Moses the Lawgiver whereon the new covenant is written [...]; Thou art Aaron’s rod that budded. Thou art David’s daughter; Thou art the gold bed of Solomon [...]; Thou art the safety of Jonas in the belly of the great fish, the conversion of the people of Nineveh,
>
> Thou art the vision of the Prophets and the fulfilment of those things which they foretold; Thou art the gate whereof Ezekiel spake when he prophesied and said, This gate shall be shut and no man shall enter in by it, because the Lord [...] hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut (Ezek 44:1-2). Thou art the Rod of Jesse, whereof Isaiah spake, even that Rod whose Flower is Christ [...]; Thou art the Covenant foretold by Jeremiah when he said, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah not according to the covenant made with their fathers (Jer 43:31–32) [...]; Thou art the great mountain spoken of by Daniel, the man greatly beloved (Dan 10:11) wherefrom is cut without man’s hands the cornerstone, that is Christ, which hath smitten in pieces the parti-coloured image of the old serpent (Dan 2:34-35). Thanks to thou the Three Young Men of Babylon awaiting Your Son passed unscathed through the fiery furnace and danced joyously amidst the fire as in a chamber.

In the same vein, Saint Theodore the Studite, in his *Encomium on the Dormition of Our Holy Lady* (PG, vol. 99, col. 719-729),[69] wrote the following, drawing on Saint Cyril of Alexandria:

> But this is what the blessed Apostles answered to her, either speaking on their own or quoting the words of the prophets:
>
> <”Hail”, one said, ladder set up from earth to heaven, on which the Lord came down to us and returned to heaven again, as in the vision of the great patriarch Jacob.
>
> Hail, miraculous bush where the angel of the Lord appeared in flames of fire, where the flame burned without consuming as Moses realized, who alone saw God face to face.
>
> Hail, fleece moistened by God, from which a basinful of heavenly dew flowed forth, according to Gideon, than worker of wonder.
>
> Hail, city of the great king, which all the admiring sovereigns praised according to David the psalmist.
>
> Hail, spiritual Bethlehem, house of Ephrata, from whom the glorious king came forth who was to become ruler of Israel and whose goings-forth were from the beginning, from eternal days, according to the divine Micah.
>
> Hail, shady mountain of virgins, from which the holy one of Israel appeared, according to Habakkuk, whose proclamation was divine.
>
> Hail, shining golden lamp radiating light, from which the inaccessible light of God has shone out on those in darkness and the shadow of death, according to the inspired Zechariah.
>
> Hail, altar of purification for all mortal creatures, through which ‘the Lord’s name is glorified among the pagans from the rising of the sun to its setting’, and where ‘a sacrifice is offered to his name in every place’, according to the holy Malachi.
>
> Hail, ‘light cloud where the Lord dwells,’ according to Isaiah, who spoke the most sacred things.
>
> Hail, holy book of the Lord’s commands, newly-written law of love, through which we can know what pleases God, according to the mournful Jeremiah.
>
> Hail, locked gate, through which the Lord God of Israel comes in and out, according to Ezekiel, who gazed on God.
>
> Hail, unquarried mountain-peak [...] from which that rock was cut which became the corner-stone, according to Daniel, the great teacher about God>.

Moreover, Saint Theodore the Studite also wrote that: “Mary has flown to her home above yet she does not cease to protect those below; departing from her body, she is with us in spirit; gathered up to heaven, she banishes demons by her intercession with the Lord”.

The connection between the Ruthenian icons – including the *Hodegetria* icon in Rudki (Fig. 5) – and the 9th century homiletics may be strongly emphasised in light of Saint Tarasius’ homily, where he lists the attributes commonly held by prophets depicted in these icons. He also quotes the precise verse, customarily inscribed on the scroll of Jeremiah, since this prophet has no attribute assigned to him. This homily may be even regarded as a type of “ekphrasis”, a literary genre quite often present in Byzantine literature, being the description of a work of art seen in such a way that one cannot be certain to what extent the author of the description has based his text on direct observation. It may well be a product of his imagination, based on his recollections. Another interesting matter is the context in which the row of hymnographers surrounding Joachim and Anna appeared on the lower frames of the Ruthenian icons, painted within the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[70] What is interesting in this case is the fact that Saint Stephanes (probably the Sabbait monk and hymnographer) replaces Saint Theophanes in the row of hymnographers. Stephanes appears alongside Saint Joseph the Hymnographer, Saint Cosma of Majuma, and Saint John of Damascus.

In conclusion, this subject ought to be understood in light of, and as a result of the growing popularity of Byzantine hymnography. This scene brought forth the poetic expression of the text inscribed on the Sinai icon and became most popular during the Paleologan era, among other depictions of different liturgical hymns.[71] The role of hymnography turned out to be crucial during the reigns of the Paleologan emperors, and some hymns became richly and largely illustrated cycles, among which the *Akathist* was central. It was also the time of the final flourishing in Byzantine music. "Rich coloraturas breaking the previous balance between music and words"[72] also grew to be very popular, as did the three Johns who represented that era: Glykus, Lampadarios and Papadopoulos Koukouzeles. It seems that the last period of Byzantine hymnography development is poorly understood. Such an example may be that of the works of John Papadopoulos, an extremely popular hymnographer, whose songs were copied in almost all of the Greek manuscripts dating to the period from the early 14th to the early 19th century, especially in codices coming from libraries of Mount Sinai and Mount Athos monasteries, as well as from those in Bulgaria; his works are however still overlooked or poorly studied.[73] Another popular poet and music theorist active in the second half of the 14th century and in the early 15th century was John Klades (called Lampadarios).[74] He was first choir singer and performed the office of "lamp bearer" in Hagia Sophia, in the capital of the Empire. His compositions, Cherubikon songs, kontakia, and troparia, were greatly admired in the 15th century, as were the hymns of Philoteos Kokkinos, author of the 14th century.[75]

The troparion *Ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται*, a possible source or paradigm for the icons described herein, as stated by certain researchers, was sung straight before the liturgy. It was attributed to one of the Paleologan hymnographers: John Koukouzeles Papadopoulos from the Great Lavra monastery on Mount Athos, but it could also have been the work of John Kladas from Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.[76] Their names accompany the troparion in a manuscript dating back to 1425, and preserved in the Georgian monastery on Mount Athos (ms. Iviron 985). However, one should not exclude the possibility that the text of the troparion could also be linked with the much older canon of Saint Germanus of Constantinople, in particular the attributes of the Virgin Mary included in it.[77] Jean Gouillard believed that John Koukuozeles could have used one of the prophetic canons of Saint Germanus, sung during the liturgy on the first Sunday of Lent (preserved in a *Triodion* from 1028 – the ms. Sinait, gr. 736, fol. 71). Should this be the case, Koukuozeles could have only added the melodic component to a pre-existing text. This would explain why the troparion was believed to be his work since that time.[78]

As an example, the *Hymn to the Mother of God* written by Saint Germanus (PG, vol. 98, col. 454) used such epithets regarding Saint Mary as "the golden candlestick, the shining cloud higher than Cherubs, the living Ark, the great throne of the Lord, the vessel full of manna",[79] but they belonged to a category of typical Marian prefigurations to which many other writers, living before and after Saint Germanus, referred to. It is hard therefore to ascertain who are the authors of the songs referring to these epithets, as they slightly paraphrase Old Testament verses. To a certain extent, they were a common reference used in different times by different hymnographers. When creating their liturgical works, each one of these authors came up with a different variation of the same quote. Thus, in the Orthodox Church, during Matins on November the 21st, a hymn sung after the third song of a canon describes Saint Mary as an incense burner (*λυχνία χρίσε*): "You were foretold by the prophets [...] as a golden incense burner and a candlestick".[80]

Perhaps this was the reason why Manolis Chatzidakis (1962)[81] or Ioan D. Ştefănescu earlier (1929)[82] also regarded this depiction as an illustration of sorts of the Hymn *All the creation rejoices in thee / Tu fais la joie de toute la creation.* Its triumphant implications – the Triumph of Orthodoxy – are clearly visible in the depictions: *Vierge en Gloire / Glory of the Virgin / Похвала Богоматери.* The conclusion of Annemarie W. Carr referring to the Sinai icon deserves to be quoted in this context, as it is our conclusion as well:

> The image is striking for the learning and diversity of its biblical, poetic and liturgical inscriptions. It links the Old Testament vision to the New Testament revelation and the Incarnation to the Second Coming; it moves from Child to Mother and back again, from Mary's son to her husband, to her father, to her father in heaven who is her son and from feast of the Marian year. The viewer is drawn even deeper into the endless layers of Marian meaning. Many scholars have taken on the challenge of explicating this image, but none has begun to exhaust the associative meanings that the image evokes. This is what icons are for: they open up the meaning of their subjects; they do not tie it down.[83]

## Notes :

1 The article represents an augmented version of a paper presented at the Conference: *Text and Image in the Romanian Painting of the 16th Century*, October 10th-11th, 2013, at the Institute of Art History "Gorge Oprescu" of the Romanian Academy, in Bucharest. See also: http://www.medieval.istoria-artei.ro/resources/Miroslav%20Kruk%20Anothen%20hoi%20profettai%2027.02.2014.pdf.

2 Podlacha 1912, p. 35; Cf. Kruk 1995, p. 25-46; Kruk 2000, p. 77-193; Kruk 2001a, p. 393; Kruk 2001 b, p. 237-246; Kruk 2004, p. 129-154, fig. 1-4; Kruk 2007, p. 287-298; Kruk 2009, p. 215-248; Kruk 2013, p. 16-28.

3 *The Virgin and Child enthroned surrounded by saints*, icon, first half of 12th century, 48,5 x 41,2 cm, Sinai, Saint Catherine Monastery – Carr 1997, cat. and fig. 244 – dated to 1080-1130; Kruk 2000, Cat. III.2. Previously, I mistakenly identified Saint John the Evangelist instead of Saint Simeon the Prophet in the figure standing next to Saint Anna.

4 *The Mother of God Eleousa enthroned, surrounded by prophets*, icon, late 12th century-early 13th century, 48,5 x 37,0 x 2,7 cm, from Mount Athos, nowadays in Saint Petersburg, at the Hermitage – *Афонские Древности* 1992, Fig. III; Kruk 2000, cat. III. 3; Piatnitsky 2000, cat. and fig. B-90: late 12th c., 48,5 x 36,8 x 3,1 cm.

5 Babić 1968, p. 150.

6 Babić, Chatzidakis 1982, p. 306.

7 Милановић, 1991, p. 414-415.

8 Kruk 1995, p. 25-46; Kruk 2000, cat. 14.

9 Кондаков 1915, p. 385-386.

10 Radojčić 1958, p. 121.

11 Καλοκύρης 1972; Kissas, 1984-1985, p. 267.

12 Dionysius of Fourna 1974, p. 51.

13 Chatzidakis, 1962, p. 10.

14 Der Nersessian, 1975, p. 313.

15 Μουρικι 1970, p. 217-251.

16 *Ibidem*, p. 222-223.

17 *Ibidem*, p. 241.

18 Милановић 1991, p. 412.

19 Поповић 1991, p. 448.

20 Милановић 1991, p. 418.

21 *Ibidem*, p. 419.

22 *Ibidem*, p. 420. See also: Linardou 2011, p. 133-152.

23 Смядовски 1998, item 110.

24 Iwanoyko 1956, p. 118.

25 Myslivec 1969, p. 410.

26 Свєнцицька 1983, p. 18.

27 Biskupski 1985, p. 158.

28 Орлова 1980, p. 307; Дувакина 1985, p. 194; Саликова 1998, p. 69-80; Шамардина 1998, p. 81-91, p. 81-91.

29 Гелитович 2005, p. 6.

30 Cf.: Kruk 2001 a, p. 393.

31 Ałeksandrowycz 2000, p. 69.

32 Vassiliaki 2000, p. 134-137: The icons of originating in Wallachia, Moldavia, or from the Rus territories of the former Polish Commonweatlh were omitted. See Kruk 2000, p. 186-194.

33 Piatnitsky 2000, p. 110: "The appearance of icons with the Virgin surrounded by Prophets is also linked in the same trend, and this subject subsequently attained wide currency in Byzantine and post-Byzantine art".

34 Этингоф 2000, p. 71.

35 Этингоф 2000, p. 15, 42.

36 Kruk 1992.

37 Kruk 1995, p. 25-46.

38 Kruk 1999.

39 Kruk 2000; Kruk 2001a, p. 393; Kruk 2001b, p. 237-246; Kruk 2004, p. 129-154; Kruk 2007, p. 287-298; Kruk 2009, p. 215-248.

40 Милановић 1991, p. 415; Этингоф 2000, p. 71. See Kruk 2000, p. 167.

41 Поповић 1991, p. 463.

42 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 34.

43 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 84-85.

44 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 90. S. Cyrilli Hierosolymitani Archiepiscopi, *De Christo Incarnato* (PG, vol. 33, col. 725-733).

45 Kruk 2000, p. 381.

46 Cormack 1985, p. 170. See also Daley 2001, p. 71-72.

47 *Св. Герман Константынопольский* 1995, p. 11.

48 Stylianou 1982, p. 528.

49 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 155-164. *Sancti Patris nostri Germani archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, in ingressum sanctissimae Deiparae sermo. I.*

50 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 149. S. Andreae Cretensis, *Oratio IV. In Sanctam Nativitatem praesanctae Dominae nostrae Dei Genitricis, semperque virginis Mariae.*

51 Altaner, Stuiber 1990, p. 674.

52 Nikolau 1994, p. 384.

53 Radojčić 1958, p. 121.

54 Stern 1966, p. 147.

55 Grabar 1968, p. 68.

56 Babić 1968, p. 148.

57 The same song is attributed to Saint John of Damascus (PG, vol. 96, 853A).

58 Babić 1968, p. 148.

59 Петканова 1992, p. 64.

60 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 231-240; Saint John Damascene 1898.

61 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 155-164: *Sancti Patris nostri Germani, archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, in ingressum sanctissimae Deiparae sermo. I.*

62 Carr 1997, cat. and fig. 244, p. 372.

63 *Nauka* 1938, p. 64; Kłosińska 1973, p. 169; Gumińska 2008, p. 36; Kruk 2009, p. 235; Крук 2013 p. 16-28.

64 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 243-258; Saint John Damascene 1898.

65 *Ojcowie Kościoła* 1981, p. 259-264; Saint John Damascene 1898.

66 Nikolau 1994, p. 384. S. Theodori Studitae, *Laudatio in dormitionem sanctae Dominae nostrae Deiparae.*

67 Dionysius of Fourna 1974, p. 487. The Mother of God should be depicted as a middle-aged woman, with a bit lowered noble head, properly formed eyebrows, beautiful eyes and nose, auburn hair, curled on a forehead, and long fingers – Dionysius of Fourna 1974, p. 483. The *Hermeneia* also paid special attention to the arrangement of the fingers of a blessing hand of Christ. According to its recommendations, they should be crossed in the way of making the outline of His hierogram. The straighten index corresponds to the letter I, and the bent middle finger – to the letter C. The crossed thumb and the ring finger correspond to the letters XC. The sigla HWN written within the nimbus means the pre-existing Logos.

68 Tarasii Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, *Oratio in ss. Dei Matrem in Templum Deductam* (PG, vol. 98, col. 1491-1494); *Ojcowie wspólnej wiary* 1986, p. 32-42 (here ref. to: PG, vol. 98, col. 460-465).

69 *Ojcowie wspólnej wiary* 1986, p. 51-56. S. Theodori Studitae, *Laudatio in dormitionem sanctae Dominae nostrae Deiparae.* This *passus* based on the repetition of *hairetismoi* resembles the *Fourth Ephesian Homily* of Saint Cyril archbishop of Alexandria (PG, vol. 77, col. 992-996), in which he used the term "*Θεοτόκου Μαρίας*" (PG, vol. 77, col. 992), as well as the structure of the *Akathistos Hymn*. W. Kania noticed that this rhetorical figure was borrowed by Saint Cyril from Saint Ephrem the Syrian's *Hymn on the Birth of Jesus* (he probably meant the *Fifteenth-Eighteenth* ones, with the repetition of *Blessed*) – Kania 1990, p. 194.

70 Kruk 2004; Kruk 2007.

71 See Милановић 1991, p. 420.

72 *Encyklopedia muzyki* 1995, p. 106.

73 *Koukouzeles, John*, [in:] Kazhdan 1991, p. 1155; K. Morawska, *Jan Papadopulos*, [in:] *Encyklopedia muzyczna* 1993, p. 407. He probably was of a Bulgarian origin, born in ca. 1280 in Dyrrhachium (Durazzo, Albania), he died ca. 1380 on Mount Athos. In the early 14th century, he was a singer at the imperial court in Constantinople. For one of the recent characteristics of his works – Герцман 1999, p. 104-116.

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75 Кожухаров 1992, p. 215.

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77 About „Kanon": Harris 2004, p. 175-197.

78 Gouillard 1967, p. 134, 175 – after Милановиħ 1991, p. 415.

79 *Ojcowie wspólnej wiary* 1986, p. 17.

80 Ευστρατιάδης 1930, p. 43-44.

81 Chatzidakis 1962, p. 10.

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83 Carr 1997, cat. and fig. 244, p. 372.

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# *André Lecomte du Noüy and the frescoes of the Curtea de Argeş Monastery*[1]

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RÉSUMÉ: Dès sa consécration en 1517, l'église du monastère Curtea de Argeş a été considérée comme l'une des plus belles fondations de l'Est de l'Europe. Même si au fil du temps d'autres monuments de cette partie du Commonwealth byzantin lui firent concurrence, elle a toujours gardé une valeur emblématique pour la culture locale. C'est la raison pour laquelle cette église a fait l'objet du premier projet de restauration scientifique déroulé en Roumanie, dans la seconde moitié du XIX$^e$ siècle. Plusieurs restaurateurs célèbres de l'époque y ont participé. Sous la direction de l'architecte français André Lecomte du Noüy, ils ont redonné au monument son éclat architectural d'origine. Les autorités roumaines ont demandé le remplacement des fresques commandées par le fondateur de l'église, le prince Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521), avec une nouvelle peinture exécutée à l'huile. Lecomte du Noüy a fait une documentation complète de l'ensemble, afin de préserver la mémoire des merveilleuses fresques. Il a réalisé des relevés de plan, des dessins et des copies, grandeur nature. Il a également sauvé 35 fragments de fresque, qui ont été soigneusement enlevés, suivant les méthodes de l'époque (29 fragments sont conservés au Musée national d'Art de Roumanie). Ce sont les seules sources qui permettent à présent la reconstitution de ce programme iconographique et d'évaluer la qualité exceptionnelle de sa mise en œuvre par le plus ancien et le plus prestigieux atelier local de peinture de Valachie, dont le maître était le peintre qui signe du nom de Dobromir. Le fragment de fresque qui fait l'objet du présent article contient une représentation du saint Phanourios, un saint très vénéré en Crète aux XV$^e$-XVI$^e$ siècles. Sa présence dans la « galerie » des saints représentés à Curtea de Argeş pourrait contribuer à l'identification de l'appartenance ethnique des membres de l'équipe de Dobromir, voire à l'identification de leur formation artistique.

MOTS-CLÉS: peinture murale, restauration, iconographie post-byzantine, peintres, saints.

REZUMAT: Biserica Mănăstirii Argeşului a fost considerată, încă de la sfinţirea sa de acum 500 de ani, cea mai frumoasă ctitorie din spaţiul răsăritean. Chiar dacă faima sa în spaţiul ex-bizantin a fost concurată de-a lungul timpului de alte monumente, biserica Mănăstirii de la Curtea de Argeş şi-a păstrat un statut emblematic pentru cultura română. Din acest motiv i-a fost dedicat şi primul proiect de restaurare ştiinţifică de la noi, derulat în cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XIX cu concursul celor mai importanţi restauratori ai vremii. Arhitectul francez André Lecomte du Noüy, însărcinat cu această misiune, a readus monumentul la frumuseţea din vremea întâiului ctitor, fiind însă obligat de oficialii români ai timpului să înlocuiască frescele comandate de Neagoe Basarab cu o pictură nouă, în ulei. În ciuda reproşurilor care i-au fost adresate, Lecomte du Noüy se străduieşte şi, în cele din urmă, reuşeşte să salveze o parte din pictura originară a monumentului, păstrată astăzi, majoritar, la Muzeul Naţional de Artă al României. Totodată, grija acestuia s-a concentrat asupra documentării complete a ansamblului artistic argeşean, din care au rezultat numeroase relevee, desene şi cópii la scară după pictura originară, singurele documente ce ne permit astăzi reconstituirea iconografică şi evaluarea estetică a picturii de început de secol XVI de la Curtea de Argeş. Fragmentele de frescă salvate de André Lecomte du Noüy, alături de toate aceste documente iconografice pe care i le datorăm, ne permit să apreciem astăzi trăsăturile stilistice ale celui mai vechi şi prestigios atelier local de pictură din Ţara Românească. Unul dintre fragmentele de frescă îl înfăţişează, cel mai probabil, pe Sfântul Fanurie, un sfânt care se bucura de o veneraţie intensă în Creta în acea perioadă. Acesta poate constitui un indiciu important în identificarea componenţei etnice şi a formaţiei artistice a membrilor atelierului condus de Dobromir pe plaiurile argeşene cu cinci veacuri în urmă.

CUVINTE CHEIE: pictură murală, restaurare, iconografie post-bizantină, pictori, sfinţi.

The inscription recorded on the 10th of September 1526 by the master painter Dobromir on the eastern wall of the Argeş Monastery narthex is, according to experts, the main source documenting the date and, most importantly, the painters that performed here. The text allows us to identify the master Dobromir, the most famous painter at the Court of early 16th-century Wallachia, as one of the artists involved in the Curtea de Argeş, possibly even the chief painter of the team. Moreover, the inscription implies that, although the works were completed in 1526, they had already started while St. Prince Neagoe Basarab was still alive, which may mean that in 1517, when the monastery was consecrated, many of the scenes painted by Dobromir's team had already enlivened the interior of the church walls.

Thus, Dobromir's epigraph provides a first set of information about the dating and authors of the frescoes, but also about the mastermind of the ornamental concept applied at Curtea de Argeş Monastery. Unfortunately, the artistic project initiated by Prince Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521) and finalised by his son-in law, Radu V of Afumaţi (1522-1523, 1524-1525, 1525-1529), is hard to analyse today, since most of the original painting is gone. It was removed to make

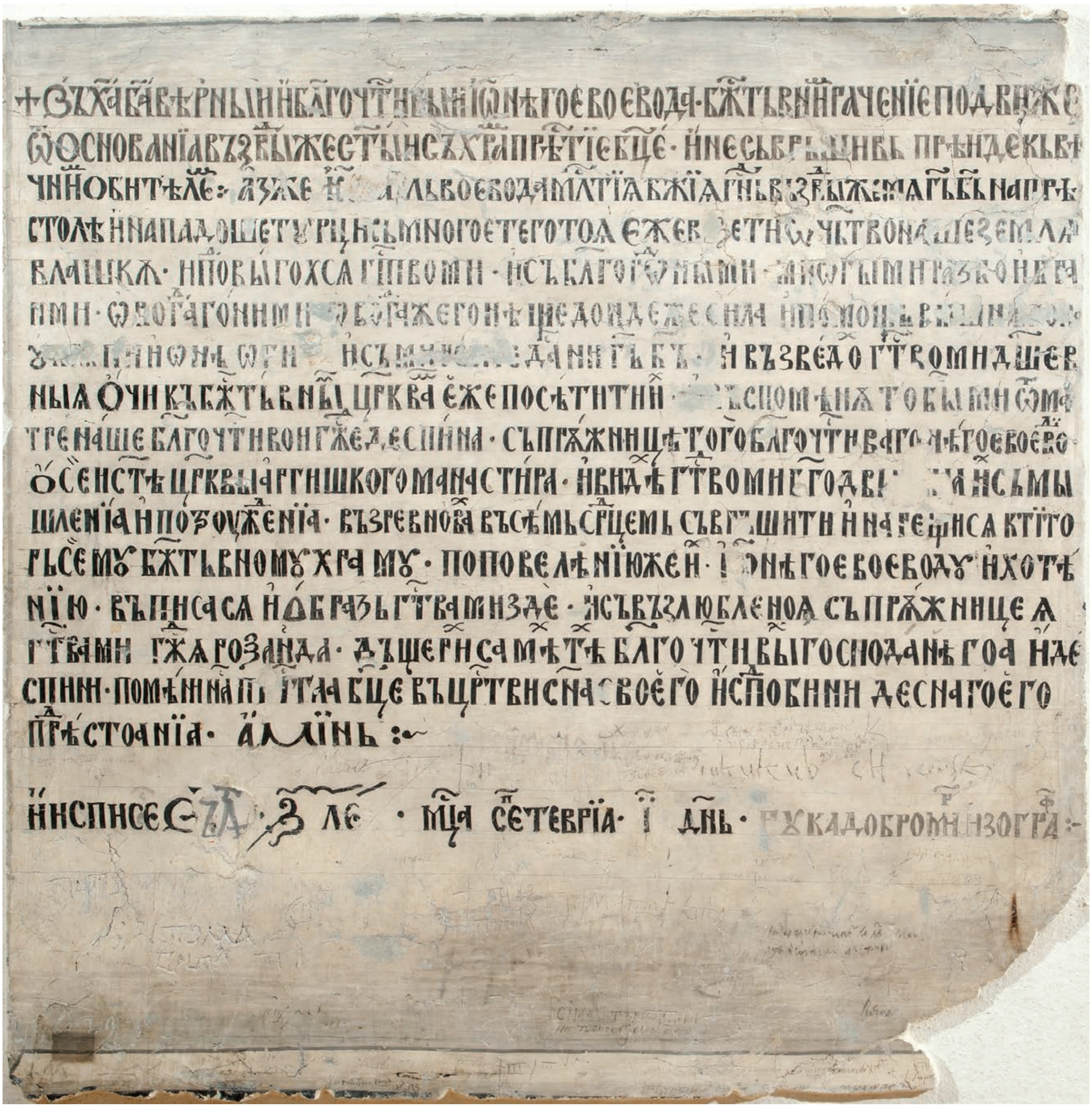
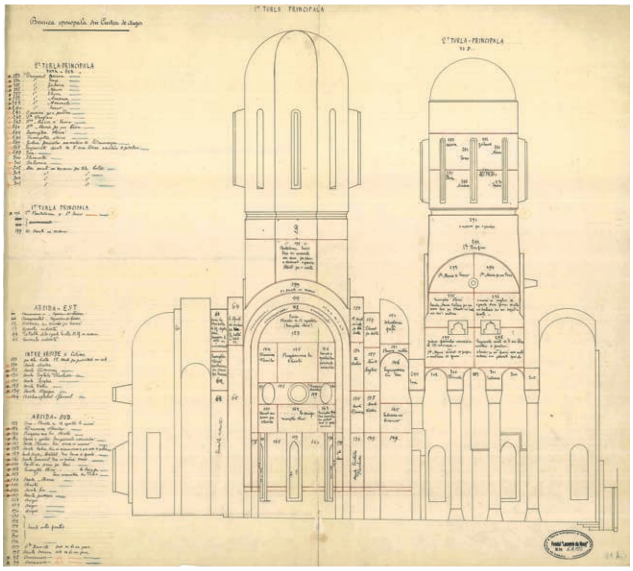


Fig. 1: *Inscription, fresco panel fragment from the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeş, the master painter Dobromir, 10 September 1526.* Credits: Collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania.

room for further oil painting commissioned by King Carol the I$^{st}$ of Romania (1881-1914), and only a small part of the frescoes painted by Dobromir's team were saved around 1882, in order to be deposited at the National Museum of Antiquities, recently founded at that time. Most of the fragments are now preserved at the National Museum of Art of Romania, as well as in the Collection of the Archdiocese of Argeş and Muscel, while yet another fresco fragment from Argeş may have survived, as I have found out, in a private collection in Bucharest.[2]

Although impressive, the 35 fresco fragments left of the old mural adornment of the Curtea de Argeş Monastery make up for less than 5% of the painting works which Prince Neagoe Basarab commissioned 500 years ago to decorate his most beloved foundation. The fragments do, however, represent the most valuable artistic output from one of the first painting workshops operating on Romanian territory. Determining the stylistic features specific to that workshop has been and will be one of the most challenging tasks for specialists, who need to explore even the most apparently insignificant details in the surviving Curtea de Argeş frescoes or to connect the remaining painting fragments to the most unexpected documents that recall the lost paintings.

Paradoxically, when putting together the pieces about the original appearance of the Curtea de Argeş Monastery, highly revealing information comes from one of the most contested personalities who have ever crossed paths with that masterpiece: the architect Emile André Lecomte du Nouÿ, who, between 1875 and 1887, was in charge of the rehabilitation of this monument, doing the first scientific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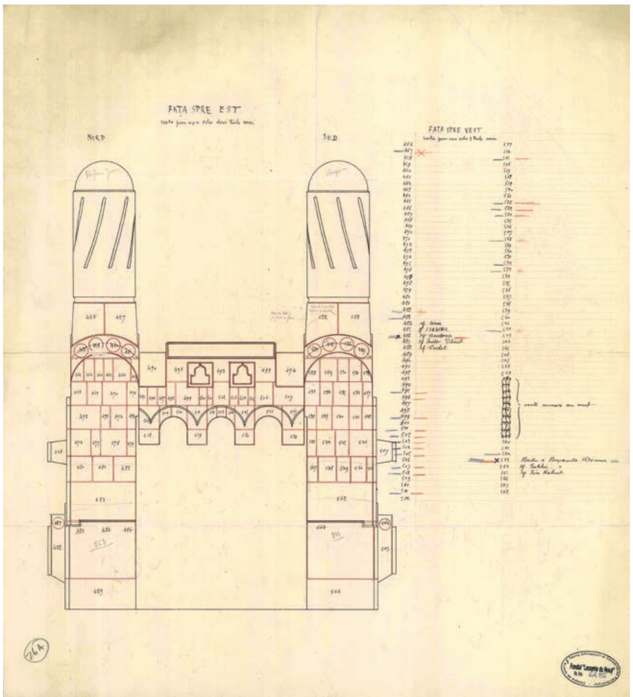
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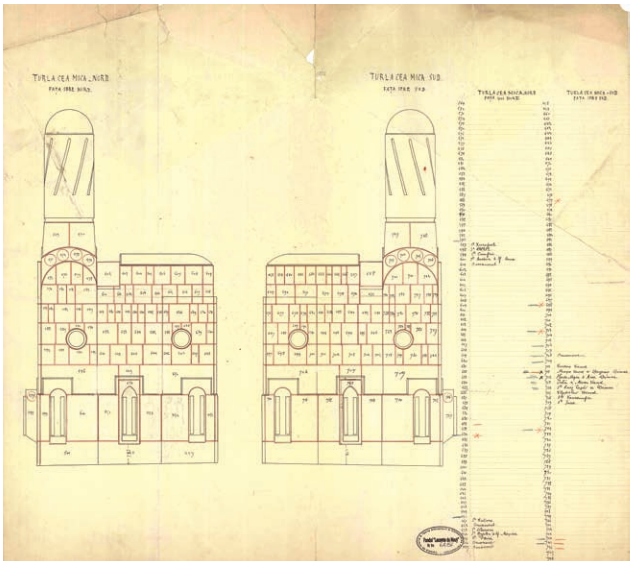
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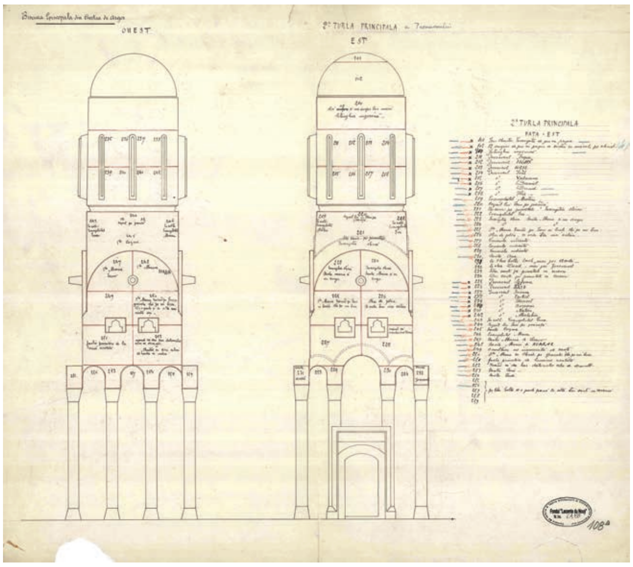
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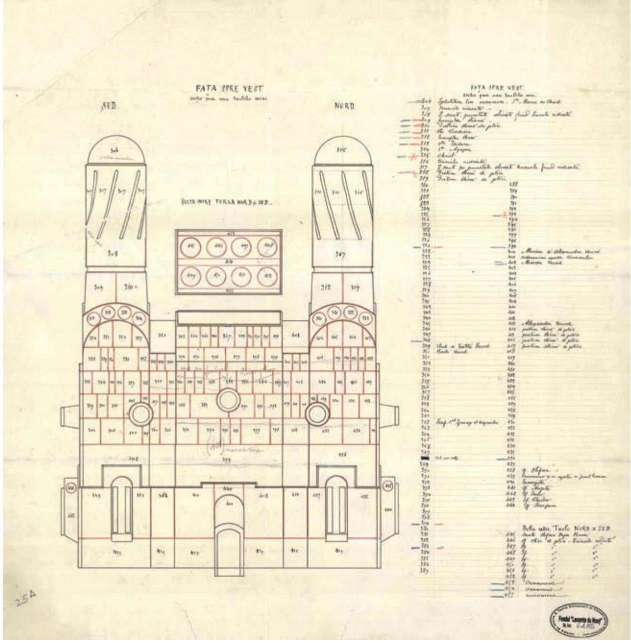
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◤ Fig. 2: *Iconographic plan of the southern wall of the nave in the Curtea de Argeş Episcopal Church [1875-1879]*, ink on paper.

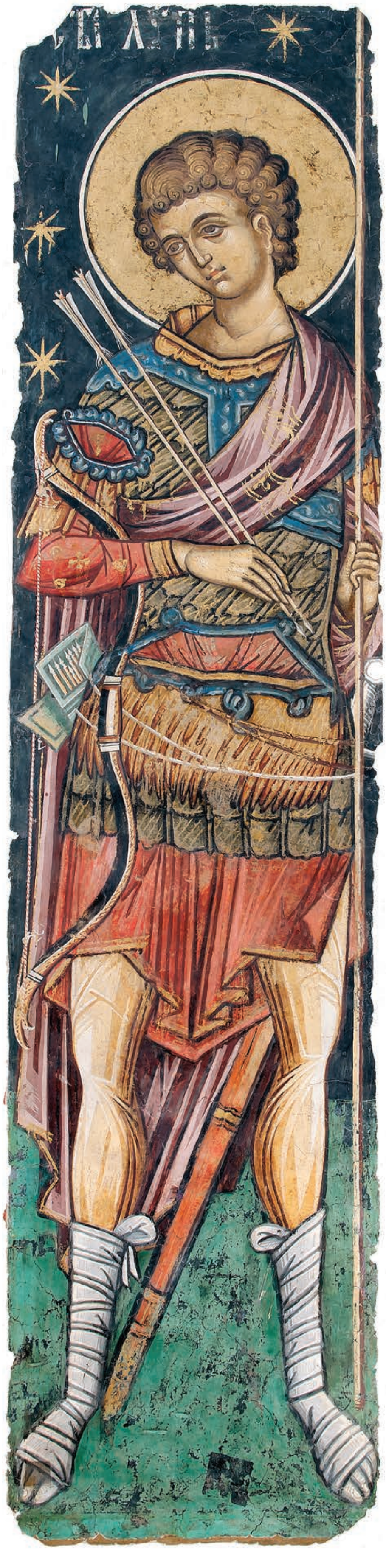
▲ Fig. 3: *Iconographic plan of the eastern wall of the narthex in the Curtea de Argeş Episcopal Church [1875-1879]*, ink on paper.

◤ Fig. 4: *Iconographic plans of the southern and northern walls of the narthex in the Curtea de Argeş Episcopal Church - through the small towers, [1875-1879]*, ink on paper.

▲ Fig. 5: *Iconographic plans of the eastern and western walls of the narthex in the Curtea de Argeş Episcopal Church - through the large tower, [1875-1879]*, ink on paper.

◀ Fig. 6: *Iconographic plans of the western wall of the narthex in the Curtea de Argeş Episcopal Church [1875-1879]*, ink on paper.

All five images are credited to the Collection of the “Ion Mincu” University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest.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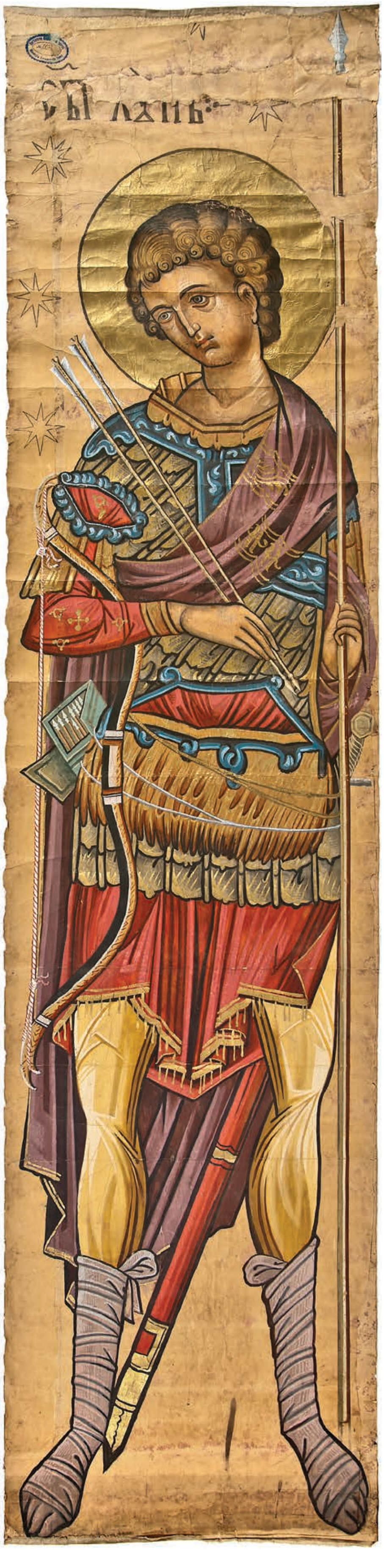
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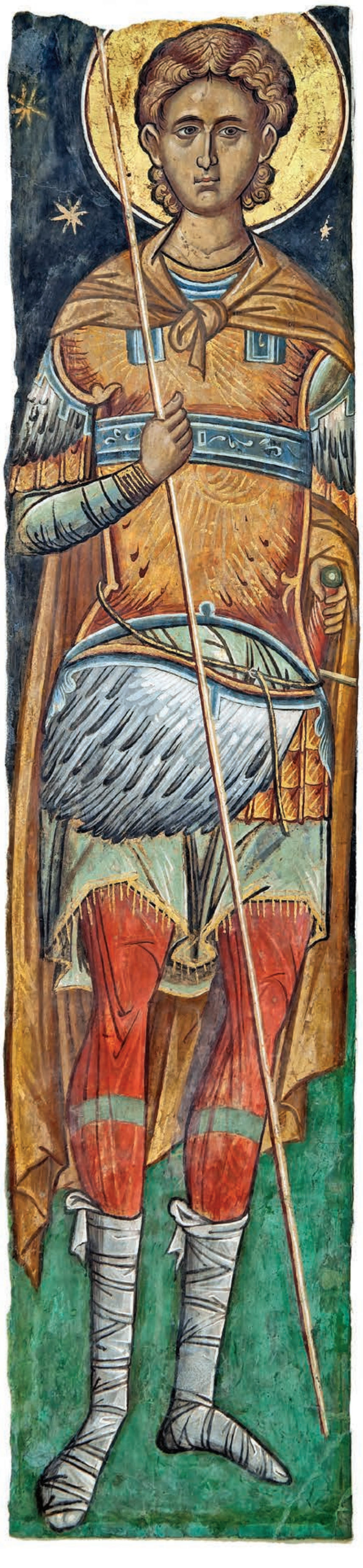


restoration of a monument in Romania.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to reopen a discussion of the qualities or deficiencies of that restoration. Let us instead reemphasise[3] that the documents issued throughout the complex restoration process thanks to the French architect's team are very important. Regrettably, the decision to efface the old painting at Curtea de Argeş and replace it with a new one was brutal, and it was wrongly attributed to André Lecomte du Nouÿ. Consulting the official and technical documents of the restoration[4] we can ascertain that the architect did everything in his power to save any piece of information about the original painting, as the iconographic plans of the monumental compound testify more than anything else. As already shown elsewhere,[5] those documents "witnessed" the old mural decoration of the church and thus have enabled a first reconstitution of the iconographic program of the Curtea de Argeş Monastery, while their full potential for further illustration is yet to be tapped into.

Lecomte du Noüy's consideration for the old painting of the church also becomes apparent in his final decision to replicate the original scenes in the new mural decoration project for the monument. As shown in the confessions of random tourists recorded by the press of that time,[6] the team of restorers made full-scale copies of all of the church painting. On an inspection of the monument in 1881, a companion of V. A. Urechia's captures just such a scene, and this is how the visitor describes the conditions in which the restorers were saving Dobromir's old frescoes: "In the right hemicycle, up on the scaffolding, a draftsman was copying a fresco at flickering candlelight."[7] Criticisms regarding the French restorer's work were widespread at the time, matched by some site observers who voiced hostility about the obvious effort of the restoration workers; according to them the painters produced "distorted copies"[8] which had nothing to do with the originals. Had we not been lucky enough to get hold of one of those copies, we may have had to regard the comments of the French architect's contemporaries as justified. As it happens, that one copy replicates one of the very few fragments of frescoes removed from Curtea de Argeş and kept at the National Museum of Art of Romania - a coincidence which allows us to assess objectively the copy as a valuable artefact and document. It is the representation of St. Lupus placed on the northern side of the nave,[9] in the iconographic suite of the church, in the proximity of St. Demetrius.

Comparing the drawing made by the team of restorers to the original fresco fragment allows us to notice the genuine eagerness of Lecomte de Noüy's painters to thoroughly record every single chromatic and compositional quality in Dobromir's frescoes. The existence of the copy proves once more that the French restorer's procedure met high scientific standards, despite the acid comments of young Romanian architects who, at the time, held him directly responsible for the destruction of Dobromir's frescoes.

Lecomte du Noüy's supporters, though, maintain that the decision to remove the Curtea de Argeş Monastery original painting cannot be imputed to him: "faced with the plan given to him by the Ministry [...], should he not be, on the contrary, commended for having done his duty by picking up with the utmost care the precious remnants of that saintly iconography after he had taken precautions to replicate them? Should we not congratulate ourselves for seeing them hosted in the rooms of the museum in Bucharest?"[10]

Fig. 7: *St. Lupus, fresco panel fragment from the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeş, [the master painter Dobromir], pre-1526.*

Fig. 8: *St. Lupus, gouache and gold on thin paper, c. 1881-1884.*

Fig. 9: *Fresco panel fragment from the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeş, [the master painter Dobromir], pre-1526.*

All three images are credited to the Collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania.

Admired by a significant part of the Romanian experts of that time while contested by others, André Lecomte du Noüy is still the man who managed to restore the Argeş Monastery to its bygone beauty and glory. His personal attachment to the monuments and cultural soul of Argeş county eventually made him "lay his cross"[11] in the light beside the window of the Monastery's old infirmary-church. Thus, his commitment to the restoration of Neagoe Basarab's church must be understood as an authentic calling, as he himself confessed: "This restoration work, I faithfully hope, will build up my repute before severe criticism; besides that, however, it is all the more demanding to me as I will be allowed to inscribe my restorer name on the monument which is so linked with a whole nation's glorious memories."[12]

* * *

Attempts to define the stylistic qualities of the Curtea de Argeş Monastery painting have fluctuated over time between attributing that work either to the local schools active in Serbia, northern Greece and Crete at that time, or to itinerant post-Byzantine workshops influenced by Western painting,[13] each of which has been hypothetically associated with the Argeş-based monument. Careful analysis of the frescoes fragments preserved from Curtea de Argeş allows for the identification of an iconographic detail that can attest to the artistic itinerary of the master painters who worked on the Argeş site 500 years ago.

The information comes from the only fragment that, out of the 35 remaining from the Curtea de Argeş Episcopal Church, lost the identification tag of the character painted when it was removed, so that the literature of the past 100 years has referred to it as "the Unknown Saint." It is a warrior saint frontally painted, carrying in his right hand a lance whose upper head cannot be seen because the fresco fragment is missing. His left hand, unnaturally bent because of the narrow space allocated to the painting, rests on the hilt of a sword hidden behind the character.

Represented, by and large, in the same type of military gear as the other warrior saints pictured at Curtea de Argeş and exhibiting no particular feature that might help us identify him, the unknown saint stands out through the delicacy and slight melancholy of his face. His portrait is to some extent comparable to those of the other saints, beardless and very young, pictured at Argeş - St. Procopius, St. Nestor, St. Agapius and St. Lupus - but having distinctive physiognomies. The "Unknown Saint" from Argeş is a young man with fine thin nose, high bare forehead whose middle-parted hair and long curls behind the ears make him stand out.

A very similar portrait[14] stands on the northern wall of the main church's nave at Stavronikita Monastery on Mount Athos, made in 1545-1546[15] by painter Theophanes the Cretan and his son, Simeon. There, too, decay wrought by time on the painting prevents us from learning the saint's name. Chatzidakis suggests, obviously and tentatively, his identification as St. Procopius. Numerous similarities, such as the one mentioned above, between Theophanes's Stavronikita painting and Dobromir's at Curtea de Argeş entitle us to believe that, if St. Procopius

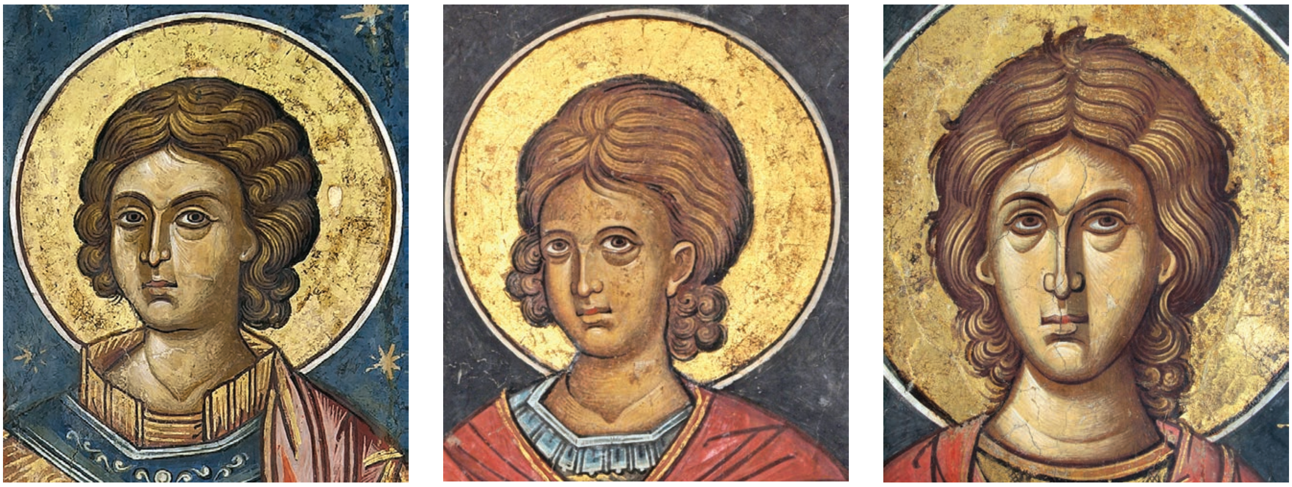
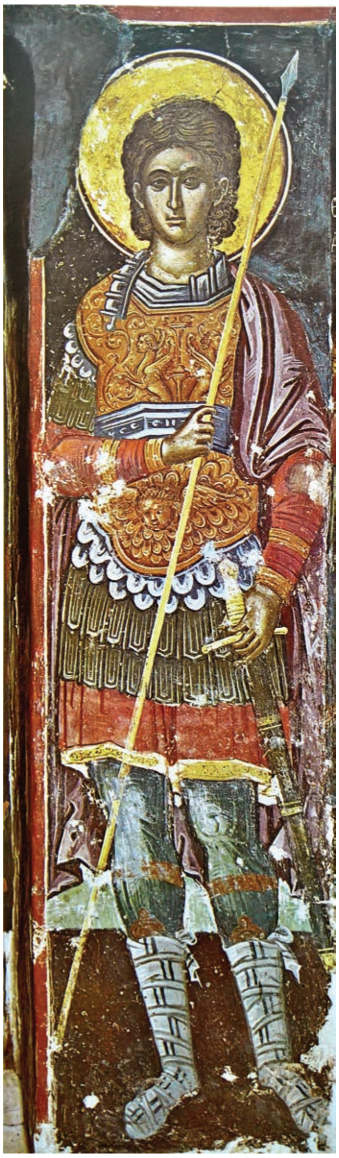


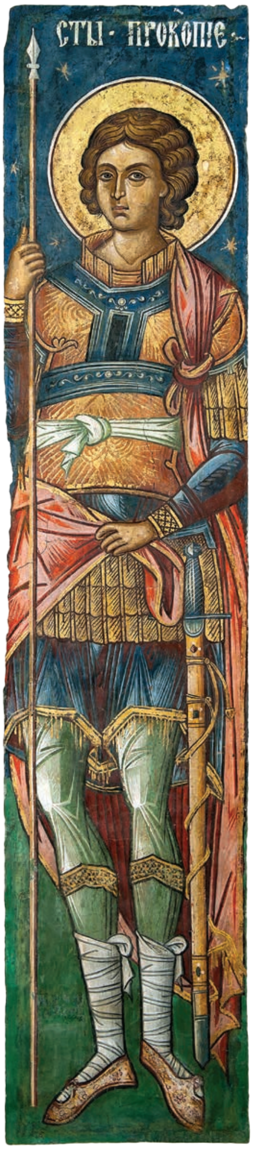
Fig. 10, 11, and 12: *St. Procopius, St. Agapius, and St. Nestor - details, fresco panel fragments from the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeş, [the master painter Dobromir], pre-1526.*

All three images are credited to the Collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania.

Fig. 13: *St. Procopius (?), Stavronikita - Athos, 1525-1546, Theophanes the Cretan.* Source: Chatzidakis 1986, fig. 163.

Fig. 14: *St. Procopius, fresco panel fragment from the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeş, [the master painter Dobromir], pre-1526.* Credits: Collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania.



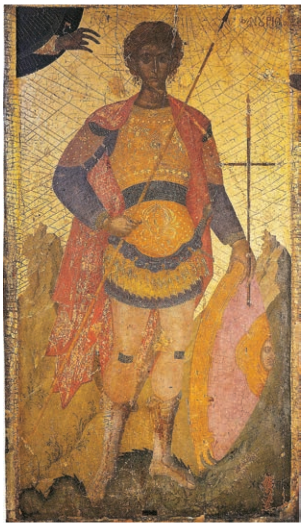


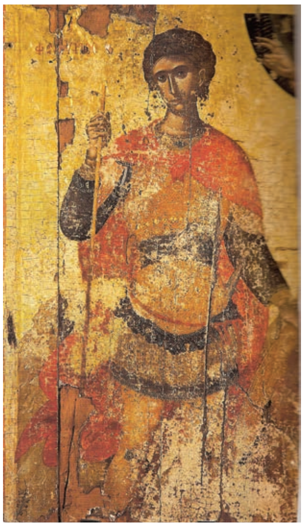
had been pictured at Stavronikita, he would have looked like the one painted in Argeş.

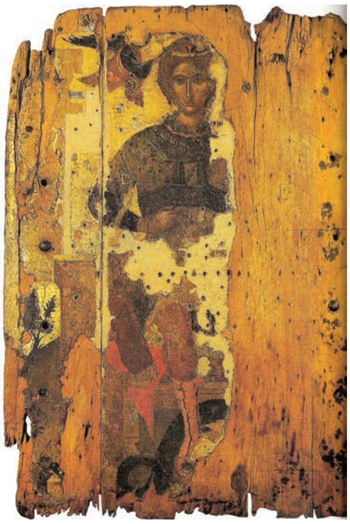
Given the rigorous conservation of saints' physiognomies[16] postulated by any Byzantine painting manual, we find the portrait of the unknown Saint at Argeş mirrored in a series of mid-15th century icons attributed mostly to the Cretan painter Angelos Akotantos. There is one such icon in Patmos,[17] another one in the collection of St. Catherine Monastery in Crete,[18] two others on the same island at Valsamonero Monastery,[19] and a last one in a private collection in Athens,[20] all of which show with minimal variations in the saint's clothes and weapons the same character as the one painted by Dobromir and his team at Curtea de Argeş. The inscriptions of all those icons identify the figure portrayed as St. Phanourios,[21] celebrated on 27 August by the Orthodox Church. Having found possible iconographic models and having traced the migration of the saint's image in the time when master Dobromir carried out his work, we feel entitled to ascribe the name Phanourios to the only saint with unknown identity in the Curtea de Argeş painting.

The cult of St. Phanourios had a rather unusual course in the post-Byzantine world. Two distinct traditions can be traced regarding his veneration in Greece: the iconographic and hagiologic one, at its apex in 15th-century Crete and centred around the saint's warrior image and features; and the folk one, which emerged in Athens and the big Greek cities at the beginning of the 20th century, and focused the cult on *φανουρόπιτα* ('fanouropita', the bread made in memory of St. Phanourios's mother).[23]

It is generally accepted that Phanourios is not a saint based on a historical person;[24] rather, his life was invented by hagiographers based on the partial and erroneous reading of the inscription of an icon discovered in the 14th century in the ruins of a church on the island of Rhodes.[25] Thanks to the miraculous intercession of the saint painted on that icon, three young Cretan priests that had lost their way *en route* to the bishop who was to ordain them were found and freed from Muslim hands. Following their rescue and return home, Crete became, starting from the 15th century, the generating centre of the cult of St. Phanourios in the whole of Greece and further on in the Eastern Orthodox world.







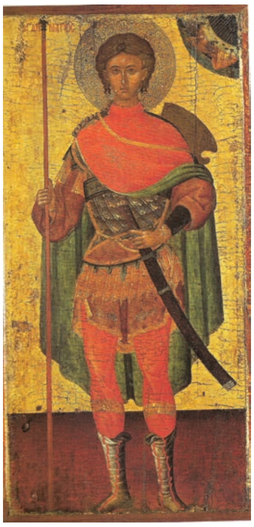


Fig. 15: *St. Phanourios, Angelos Akotantos, mid-15th century, Megali Panagia church - Patmos, Greece.*
Source: Βοκοτόπουλος 1995, no. 153, p. 172.

Fig. 16: *St. Phanourios, Angelos Akotantos, mid-15th century, St. Catherine church - Crete, Greece.*
Source: http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com.

Fig. 17: *St. Phanourios, Angelos Akotantos, mid-15th century, Valsamonero church – Crete, Greece.*
Source: Borboudakis 1993, cat. 123.

Fig. 18: *St. Phanourios (see note 22), Angelos Akotantos, mid-15th century, Rena Andreatis collection. The denominative inscription of the saint depicted in this icon was changed on restoration, hence the identification as St. Demetrius.*
Source: Drandaki 2002, no. 5, p. 37.

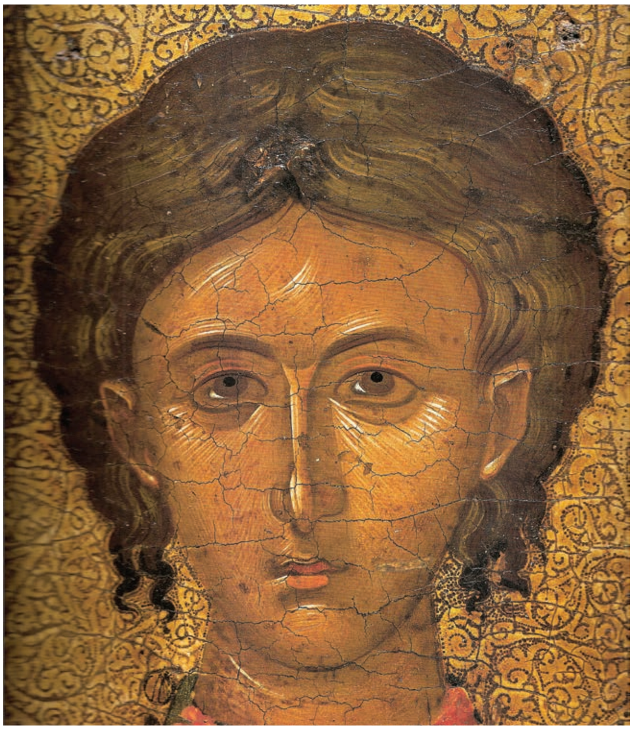
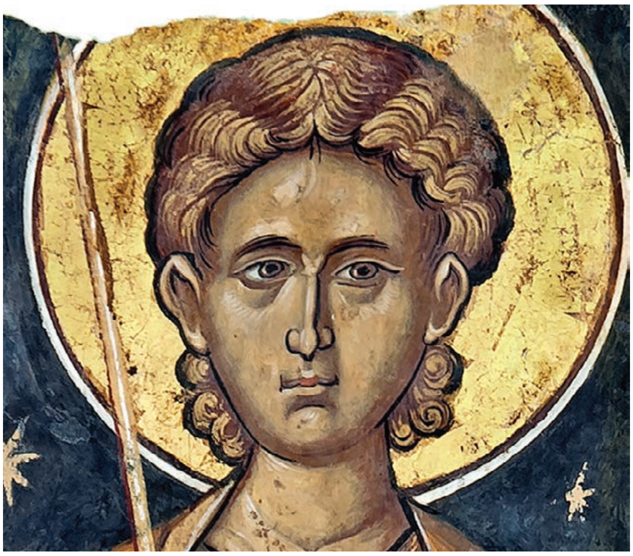


Fig. 19: *St. Phanourios - detail, Angelos Akotantos, mid-15th century, Rena Andreatis collection.*
Source: Drandaki 2002, no. 5, p. 37.

Fig. 20: *St. Phanourios (?) - detail, fresco panel fragment from the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeş, [the master painter Dobromir], pre-1526.* Credits: Collection of the National Museum of Art of Romania.



Against the background of the Christian - Muslim ideological clash of that historical age, St. Phanourios dons, by necessity, military attire. The earliest representations of the saint picture him armed with a lance, a sword and, occasionally, a shield. His distinctive feature is a cross the vertical arm of which ends with a lit candle, sometimes fitted onto the head of the lance. The association with the lit candle stems from the saint's name origin: Greek *φανερωτής* ('phanerotis'), meaning "the one who brings to light, shows or reveals").[26]

Unfortunately, it is hard to ascertain today how popular St. Phanourios was in Wallachian arts at the time, but the presence at Curtea de Argeş in the early 16th century of a saint that had just debuted in post-Byzantine iconography, glorified through the craft of Cretan icon painters, can be a milestone in defining the personality and artistic path of the painters in Dobromir's team. Perhaps, just as his name suggests, St. Phanourios will succeed in *bringing to light* the real stories of the Argeş painters, obscured under the many layers of colour settled in over 500 years of history.

## Notes :

1 This paper is partly based on the conclusions of the research about the original painting of the Curtea de Argeş Episcopal Church, which were presented at *Testimonies. The Frescoes of the Argeş Monastery*, an exhibition held at the National Art Museum of Romania (6 December 2012-31 August 2013).

2 A fact signalled by Ms Ana Dobjanschi, who, to my knowledge, is preparing a presentation on the topic.

3 Following the presentation given at *Testimonies. The Frescoes of the Argeş Monastery* (see footnote 1 above), where the iconographic plans were shown for the very first time along with numerous other graphic documents sketched by du Noüy's restoration team. The exhibition catalogue also occasioned the first publication of the extremely precious documents that we owe to the French architect, as well as to the late Professor Grigore Ionescu, thanks to whom they reached us.

4 See *Restaurarea* 1890. Cf. also the numerous files kept in the National Archive of Romania.

5 See Cernea, Pătrășcanu 2012.

6 Ciocârlan 1891, p. 83-84.

7 Ciocârlan 1891, p. 83-84.

8 Ciocârlan 1891, p. 83-84.

9 Cernea, Pătrășcanu 2012, cat. 35, p. 144-145.

10 Report drafted at Sinaia/20 July 1890; Révoil 1890, p. 246.

11 Phrase borrowed from André Lecomte du Noüy's tombstone in the little graveyard of the Flămânzești church: "The restorer of the great Episcopal Church laid his cross here in the year of redemption - 1914."

12 National Archive of Romania (NAR), Depository MCIP, File 8/1879, p. 103-108.

13 Dumitrescu 1978, p. 71.

14 Chatzidakis 1986, fig. 165.

15 Chatzidakis 1970.

16 Byzantine artists' main duty was to preclude any doubts regarding the identity of the saints portrayed, which generated a much subtler understanding of physiognomic differentiation; the major concern of Byzantine art was to convey essentially and unambiguously the features of the prototype in the image painted, whereas hagiographic literature provided numerous accounts either of miraculous appearances of some saints or of painters' dreams, which guaranteed accurate "capturing" of physiognomies. See Grotowski 2010.

17 Βοκοτόπουλος 1995, cat. 153.

18 *Icons* 1995, cat. 95.

19 *Icons* 1995, cat. 122, 123.

20 Drandaki 2002, fig. 23. The author maintains that the denominative inscription of this icon, which identifies the character as, surprisingly, St. Demetrius, and not St. Phanourios, is a later addition dating from an 18th-century restoration.

21 *Lexikon* 1994, vol. 8, p. 195.

22 Kaplanoglou 2006.

23 Walter 2003, pp. 206-211.

24 Vassilakes-Mavrakakes 1981.

25 Vassilakes-Mavrakakes 1981, p. 237; Kaplanoglou 2006, p. 54.

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# *Pour un corpus des inscriptions grecques*
## *de l'église Saint-Sauveur de Berestovo*

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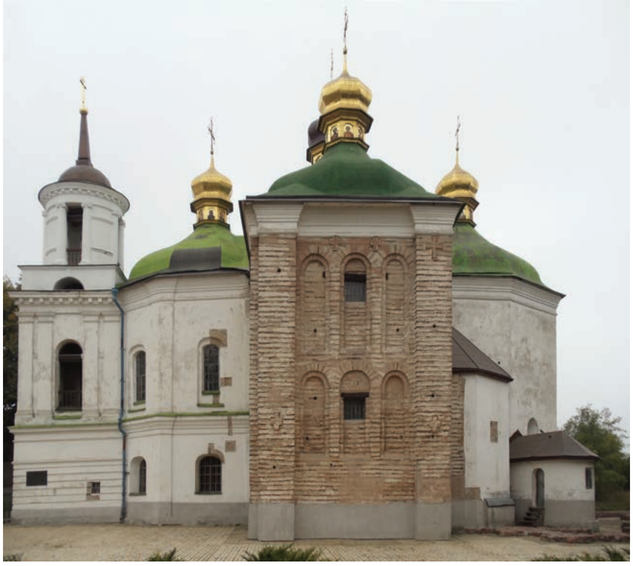
SUMMARY: The murals in the Berestovo church of the Saviour represent a unique testimony of post-byzantine art, introduced in Ukraine directly from the Balkans. The church was renovated in the beginning of the 1640s by Peter Movilă, the Metropolitan of Kiev, who invited Greek painters to decorate the newly restored building. The names of the artists were identified in a letter, dated July 25th, 1655, and addressed to Patriarch Nikon of Moscow. The letter is written on behalf of two Greek brothers, John and George, and enumerates several churches embellished by these artists. Among "many others", the painters decorated the monasteries of Căldăruşani, Brebu, Strehaia, Cornăţel, Plumbuita, and Plătăreşti (in Walachia), as well as a church in "Vrancea", probably to be identified with Soveja (in Moldavia). The only monument outside the Romanian principalities decorated by the two brothers was a certain "Church of St. Vladimir" in Kyiv, that is, the church of the Saviour in Berestovo. The 17th c. murals of this church are relatively well preserved, with only partial restoration, albeit covered in many places by 19th c. paintings. These original frescoes bear numerous Greek inscriptions. The author suggests new interpretations of the dedicatory inscription comparing the church restored by Peter Movilă to Solomon's Temple, and offering parallels with biblical episodes or verses. Taken together, and through the symbolic language they unfold, the Greek and Slavonic inscriptions reveal the ambitious renovation project of the "Temple of the Lord" envisioned by the Metropolitan of Kyiv. Both Slavonic and Greek dedicatory inscriptions display the consecration date of the church in both Western and Eastern style, but with a strange chronological discrepancy whose explanation leads the author to propose that the decoration sponsored by Movilă was completed by the Greek painters during the fall of 1643, the consecration of the church following in November of the same year. The reading of the various Greek *tituli* on the frescoes allows for new identifications of the depicted saints and scenes, as well as their comparison with the fragmentary conserved murals in Romanian churches decorated by the same artists.

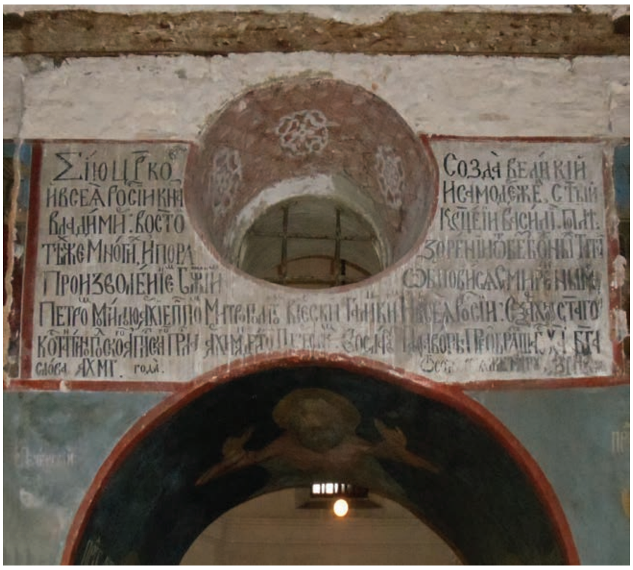
KEYWORDS: epigraphy, Post-Byzantine iconography, Greek, church foundation and patronage, mural paintings.

REZUMAT: Picturile murale din Biserica Mântuitorului din Berestovo constituie o mărturie unică a artei post-bizantine, introdusă în Ucraina direct din Balcani. Biserica a fost renovată la începutul anilor 1640 de către mitropolitul de la Kiev, Petru Movilă, care a invitat pictori greci să decoreze clădirea recent restaurată. Numele artiştilor au fost identificate într-o scrisoare adresată patriarhului Moscovei, Nikon, şi datată în 25 iulie 1655. Scrisoarea, redactată în numele a doi fraţi greci, Ioan şi Gheorghe, enumeră câteva biserici împodobite de aceşti artişti. Printre "multe altele", pictorii au decorat mănăstirile Căldăruşani, Brebu, Strehaia, Cornăţel, Plumbuita şi Plătăreşti (în Ţara Românească), precum şi o biserică din Vrancea, de identificat probabil cu Soveja (în Moldova). Singurul monument decorat de cei doi fraţi în afara Ţărilor Române a fost o anumită "biserică a Sf. Vladimir" din Kiev, adică biserica Mântuitorului, la Berestovo. Picturile murale de secol XVII ale acestei biserici sunt relativ bine conservate, parţial restaurate, deşi acoperite în multe locuri de către o serie de picturi din secolul al XIX-lea. Aceste fresce originale poartă numeroase inscripţii greceşti. Autoarea sugerează noi interpretări ale inscripţiei votive care compară biserica restaurată de Petru Movilă cu Templul lui Solomon şi oferă paralele cu episoade sau versete biblice. Prin limbajul simbolic pe care îl dezvăluie, inscripţiile greceşti şi slavone mărturisesc proiectul ambiţios de renovare a „Templului Domnului" de către mitropolitul Kievului. Atât inscripţiile votive slavone cât şi cele greceşti afişează data sfinţirii bisericii în stil occidental şi oriental, dar cu o discrepanţă cronologică ciudată, a cărei explicaţie o determină pe autoare să ia în calcul posibilitatea ca decorarea sponsorizată de Movilă să fi fost completată de pictorii greci în toamna anului 1643, în vreme ce consacrarea bisericii să fi avut loc după luna noiembrie a aceluiaşi an. Citirea diferitelor inscripţii denominative greceşti de pe fresce permite noi identificări ale sfinţilor şi scenelor descrise, precum şi compararea lor cu picturile fragmentare conservate în bisericile româneşti decorate de către aceiaşi artişti.

CUVINTE CHEIE: epigrafie, iconografie post-bizantină, limba greacă, ctitorire şi patronaj, picturi murale.

Confirmée par les autorités laïques polonaises, l'élection de Pierre Movilă en 1633 à la chaire de métropolite orthodoxe de Kiev marqua le début d'une époque nouvelle pour la communauté orthodoxe ruthène. Soucieux de consolider son contrôle, le nouveau roi de Pologne-Lituanie, Władysław IV (1632-1648), déploya une politique plus tolérante envers les Orthodoxes, symbolisée par l'autorisation de rétablir leur hiérarchie ecclésiastique dans la métropole de Kiev et





◤ Fig. 1: *Église du Saint-Sauveur à Berestovo.* Cliché : Vera Tchentsova.

▲ Fig. 2: *Église Saint-Sauveur. Inscription de fondation de Pierre Movilă.* Cliché : Réserve culturelle et historique nationale 'La Laure des Grottes de Kiev'.

le droit de récupérer les édifices cultuels qui leur avaient jadis appartenu. Pierre Movilă (1596/1597–1647) appartenait à l'élite roumaine : son père était un prince valaque, puis moldave, son oncle un métropolite de Suceava. La famille Movilă était aussi liée à la *Rzeczpospolita Polska* et la cousine de Pierre Movilă épousa Michel Wiśniowiecki, l'un des plus influents magnats de l'État polono-lithuanien, devenant ainsi la future grand-mère d'un roi polonais. Les liens du nouveau métropolite avec l'élite polonaise et ses efforts en faveur du consensus permirent les importantes réalisations qui demeurent attachées à son nom.

C'est Pierre Movilă qui posa les fondations d'un enseignement supérieur théologique et « humaniste » dans les terres polono-lituaniennes à destination des Ruthènes ou Ukrainiens de langue ruthène ou encore « Rusyns ».[1] Il œuvra également à l'édition de livres en slavon, en polonais et en langue ruthène vernaculaire. Une tentative d'unification de la foi est également à mettre au crédit du hiérarque kiévien : le texte de la « Confession orthodoxe » qu'il rédigea reçut l'approbation d'un concile et fut adopté par toute l'Église Orientale.[2] Plusieurs églises célèbres, édifiées au temps des anciens princes de Kiev et qui avaient souffert des incursions tatares, furent soustraites au contrôle des Uniates pour revenir au clergé orthodoxe. Le métropolite entreprit de manifester cette renaissance par le biais d'un ambitieux programme de restauration, mettant en exergue le passé glorieux de la Rus'. L'un de ces éléments constitutifs résidait dans le prestige de l'héritage byzantin et l'on œuvra donc à renforcer les liens avec le Patriarcat de Constantinople, ainsi qu'à accroître la présence de l'élément grec à Kiev.

## 1. La restauration de l'église Saint-Sauveur à l'époque de Pierre Movilă.

Abordant dans son article la présence des Grecs dans les multiples « mondes de Pierre Movilă »,[3] Ihor Ševčenko posa la question de la connaissance de la langue grecque à Kiev à l'époque du métropolite. Il ne s'intéressait pas seulement aux liens de Pierre Movilă lui-même avec le clergé grec du Patriarcat de Constantinople, ou à la traduction de sa 'Confession orthodoxe' par le célèbre théologien constantinopolitain et didascale de la Grande Église Mélèce Syrigos, mais également à la présence du « monde grec » à Kiev, à travers la maîtrise de la langue grecque dans l'entourage du hiérarque kiévien. Ihor Ševčenko évoque également dans ce même article l'un des plus intéressants monuments de Kiev, l'ancienne église de la Transfiguration-du-Sauveur près de la Laure des Grottes, plus connue sous le vocable d'église du Sauveur de Berestovo (Fig. 1).[4] Fondé selon la légende par le grand prince Vladimir (vers 960-1015), premier prince chrétien de la Rus', ce sanctuaire fut en réalité édifié sous le règne du prince Vladimir Monomaque (1053-1125)[5] et bénéficia de travaux de restauration ordonnés par Pierre Movilă.[6] En témoigne expressément une inscription conservée à l'intérieur de l'édifice (Fig. 2) :

> Сію це̅р̅ко̅вь̅ || созда велнкіћ || н все Ро̅сспн кнꙗзь̅ || н
> самоде̅р̅же̅ц̅ свꙗ̅т̅ыћ || Владнмн̅р̅, во свꙗ̅то̅м̅ || кре̅ще·:·н.ін
> Васнлп̅ћ̅, по лѣ||тѣ̅х̅ же многн̅х̅ н по разоренпн ѿ бе̅з̅бо̅ж̅
> ны̅х̅ тата̅р̅ || пронзволенпе̅м̅ божпн̅м̅ || ѡбновнс смнре̅нн̅ым
> || Петро̅м̅ Могнлою, а̅рхпепн̅скопо̅м̅, мнтрополнто̅м̅ Кпе̅в̅
> скн̅м̅, Галнцкн̅м̅ н все Ро̅сспн, еѯа̅рхо̅м̅ свꙗ̅таго || Конста̅н̅
> тннопо̅льско̅го̅ архнепіска̅пско̅го̅ пре̅сто̅ла, а̅рхнма̅ндрнто̅м̅
> Пече̅р̅скн̅м̅ во славꙋ на Ѳаворѣ Преобра̅зшаго̅сꙗ Хрнст̅
> а Бо̅га || Слова. АХМГ҃ ꙋлі̆ю года, || от сотворенн же мнрꙋ
> ꙁРНА.[7]
>
> Cette église fut construite par le grand prince et autocrate de toute la Russie saint Vladimir, Basile dans le saint baptême, après beaucoup d'années et après sa destruction par d'impies Tatars, selon la volonté de Dieu, elle a été renouvelée par l'humble Pierre Movilă, archevêque, métropolite de Kiev, de Galicie et de toute la Russie, exarque de la sainte chaire archiépiscopale de Constantinople, archimandrite du monastère des Grottes [dédié] à la gloire du Christ, Verbe Dieu, qui fut transfiguré sur le Thabor. L'an 1643, de la création du monde 7151.

La restauration de l'église comprit la réalisation d'un décor de fresques, dont une grande partie s'est conservée jusqu'à nos jours. Pierre Movilă lui-même s'y trouve représenté agenouillé devant le Christ trônant en Grand Prêtre et offrant au Sauveur l'église restaurée (Fig. 3). Cette image, connue sous le nom de 'Donation de Pierre Movilă', a depuis longtemps attiré l'attention des spécialistes tant d'histoire que d'histoire de l'art, offrant l'une des rares images du hiérarque kiévien réalisées de son vivant.[8] On soulignera pourtant la ressemblance avec le portrait du métropolite Georges Movilă, oncle de Pierre, conservé au monastère de Sucevița ;[9] celle-ci oblige en effet à envisager que l'image kiévienne puisse moins nous transmettre l'apparence physique spécifique de Pierre Movilă que reproduire un modèle quelque peu stéréotypé du hiérarque.[10]

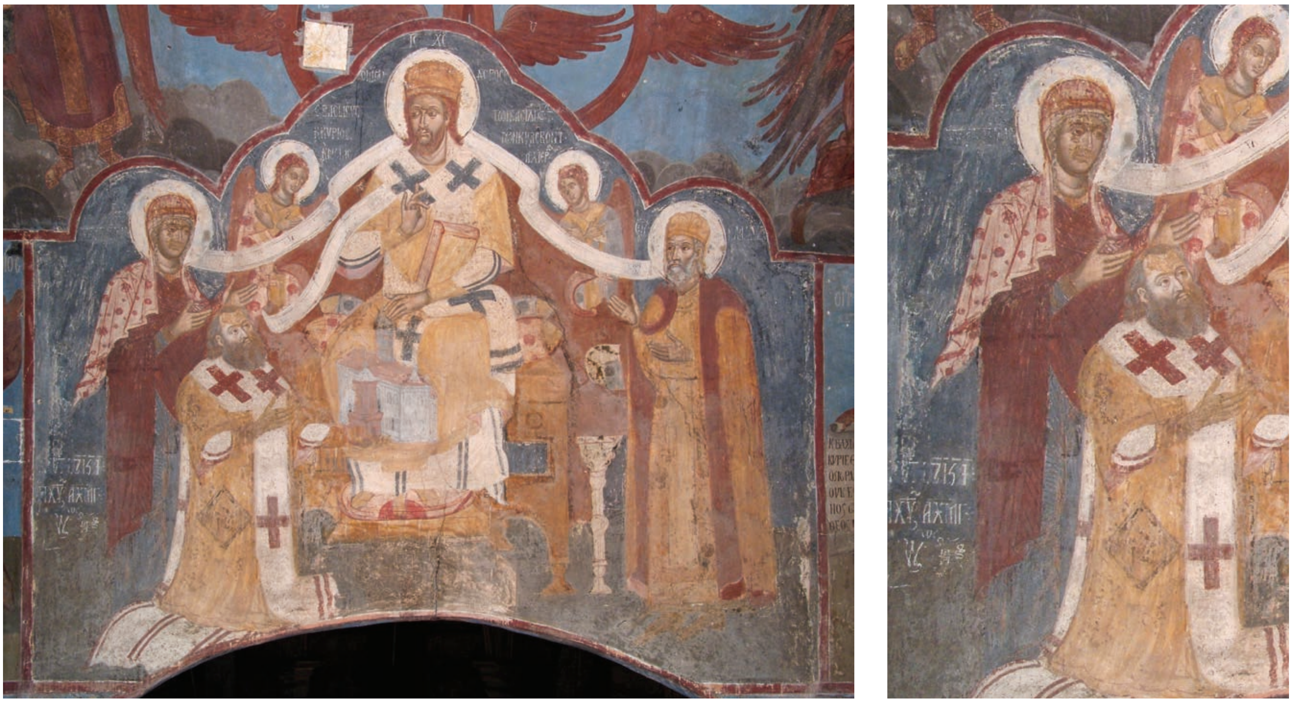
Actuellement l'église de Berestovo est fermée, n'accueillant ni liturgie, ni visites. Des travaux de restauration de l'intérieur ont été entamés dans les années 2000, mais ont dû être interrompus en raison de la difficulté et du coût considérable de la conservation des phases successives du décor peint.[11] L'église Saint-Sauveur, l'une des plus anciennes à Kiev, nous transmet en effet des fragments d'œuvres du xii$^{e}$ siècle, recouvertes par le décor réalisé à l'époque de Pierre Movilă. À son tour, celui-ci fut renouvelé au xix$^{e}$ siècle et les fresques masquées sous des peintures à l'huile.[12] L'étude d'un tel monument où se mêlent formes architecturales et ornementales d'époques très diverses, de celles de l'Ancien Rus' aux derniers temps de l'Empire, demande de réunir les compétences d'un large cercle de spécialistes.

## II. Les fresques de l'église Saint-Sauveur au miroir d'une lettre de deux peintres grecs.

L'église Saint-Sauveur de Berestovo a retenu particulièrement l'attention des historiens d'art post-byzantin en raison de son architecture, de son décor, unique pour cette région, des fresques post-byzantines, ainsi que pour les nombreuses inscriptions grecques. L'inscription de fondation en grec indique clairement que le bâtiment avait été décoré par des peintres grecs : « Pierre Movilă, l'*archiéreus* de Dieu, a construit cette église au Seigneur Dieu [...] en la décorant [par l'entremise] des doigts des Grecs... ». Le sens général des inscriptions qui accompagnent les diverses compositions iconographiques apparaissait clairement aux spécialistes dès le xix$^{e}$ siècle, lorsque le monument fut étudié par N. I. Petrov, N. M. Sementovsky ou encore l'évêque Porphyre Uspensky.[13] Pourtant, dans le détail, ces mêmes textes demeuraient bien souvent des plus obscurs, comme le souligna Ihor Ševčenko, notamment à propos de l'inscription figurant sur le rouleau tenu par le prophète Sophonie. Il la présente dans son article comme un exemple type du charabia des inscriptions grecques de l'église de Berestovo : « *Except for the first two words, this is gibberish* ».[14] Décrivant l'état de conservation des inscriptions grecques, N. I. Petrov indiquait pour sa part que si les noms des saints avaient pu être rétablis pendant la restauration de manière compréhensible (bien que non exempte d'erreurs), les textes plus compliqués, y compris ceux des rouleaux tenus par les figures saintes, avaient été soit omis complètement, soit laissés en l'état, incompréhensibles à force de déformation.[15] En raison des difficultés de lecture inhérentes aux textes de ce type, personne n'a jusqu'à maintenant tenté d'offrir un corpus complet des inscriptions présentes sur les fresques de l'église Saint-Sauveur. Il semble pourtant possible de s'appuyer sur les modèles proposés dans les *hermèneiai*, manuels d'iconographie ecclésiastique à destination des peintres du temps, ainsi que sur les parallèles conservés dans les nombreux édifices de cette époque encore debout. Cette dernière approche parait particulièrement prometteuse car, au-delà la formulation des textes eux-mêmes, les particularités orthographiques et les spécificités paléographiques constituent autant d'éléments importants pour établir le texte des inscriptions de l'église de Berestovo et rapprocher son décor de celui d'autres monuments de la même aire culturelle.

D'importants progrès dans l'étude des fresques de l'église du Sauveur ont été consentis par l'analyse d'une lettre adressée en 1655 par deux peintres grecs, Jean et Georges, au patriarche de Moscou Nikon. L'original en était conservé au sein de la collection des actes et rouleaux du département de manuscrits du Musée historique d'État à Moscou (Synod. gram. 2289). La recherche paléographique sur l'écriture de cette lettre permit d'établir que « les deux frères par la chair, Jean et Georges » (« *Ἰωάννης καὶ Γεώριος, ἀδελφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα γνήσιοι* »), avaient eu recours aux services du célèbre théologien grec, Mélèce Syrigos, pour rédiger leur lettre à Nikon, car le texte et la signature des deux frères s'avéraient être de la main de ce grand intellectuel.[16] Le texte de cette curieuse lettre au nom de Jean

Fig. 3-4: *Église Saint-Sauveur. 'Donation de Pierre Movilă'.* Clichés : Réserve culturelle et historique nationale 'La Laure des Grottes de Kiev'.



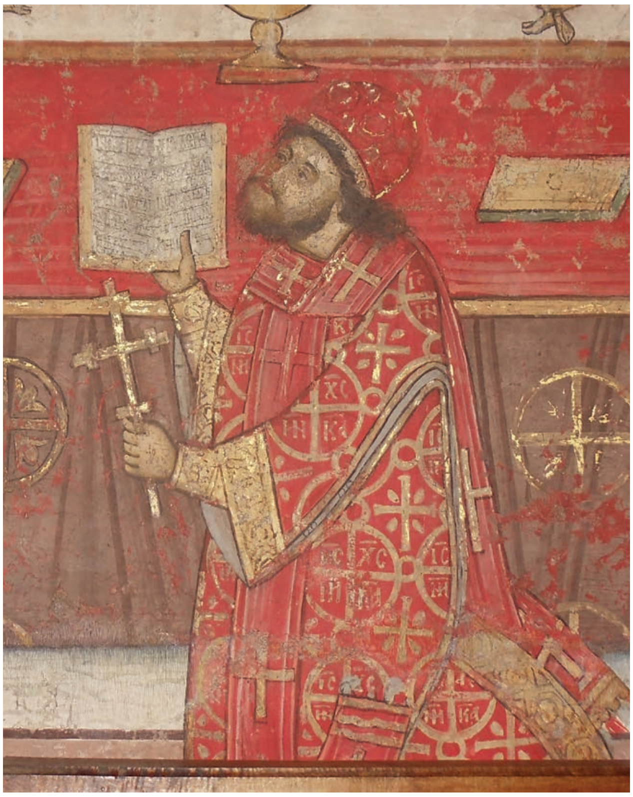


Fig. 5: *Sucevița. 'L'Eucharistie'. Détail (Métropolite Georges Movilă).* Cliché : Vera Tchentsova.

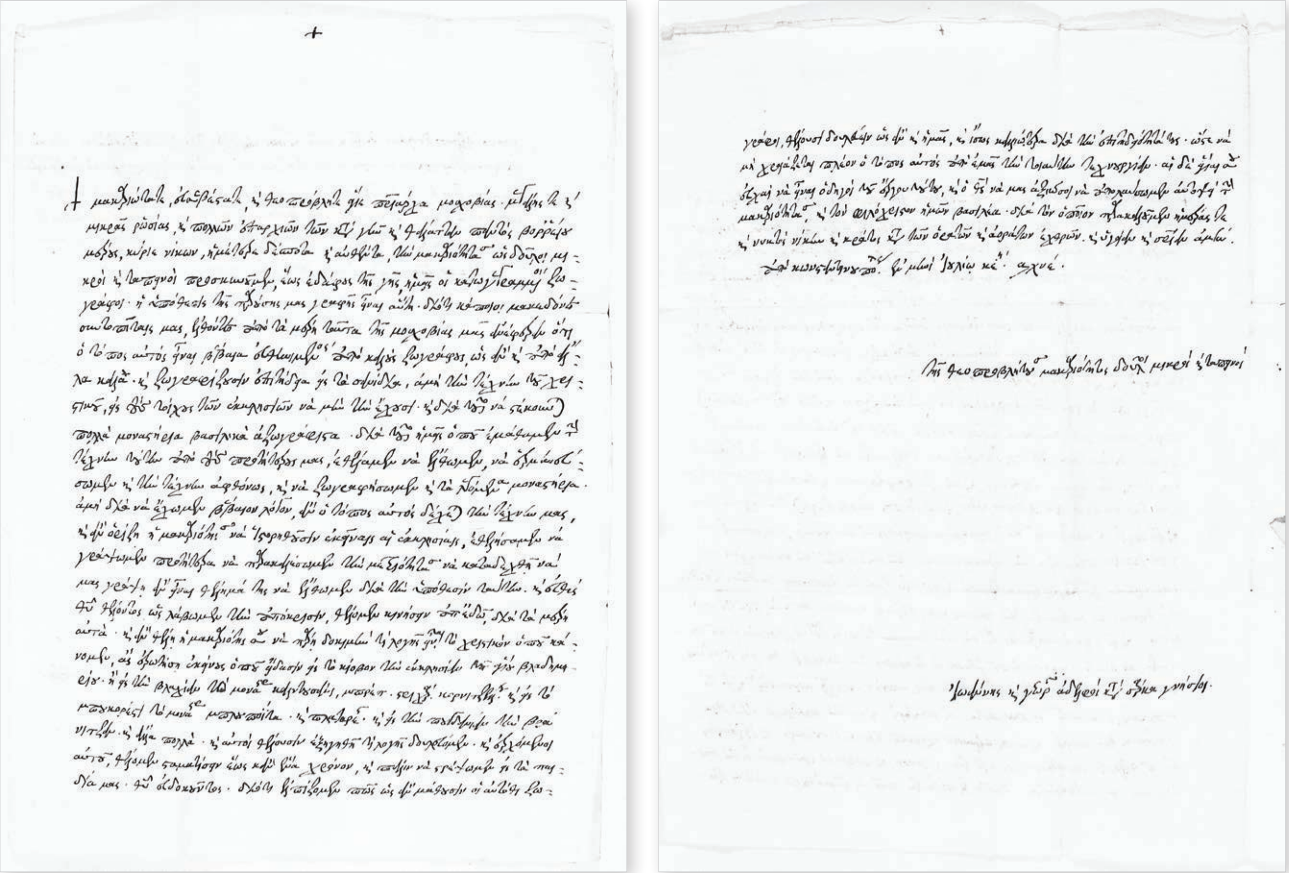
Fig. 6-7: *Musée historique d'État. Synod. gram. 2289, fol.1r et v.* Clichés : Musée historique d'État, Moscou.

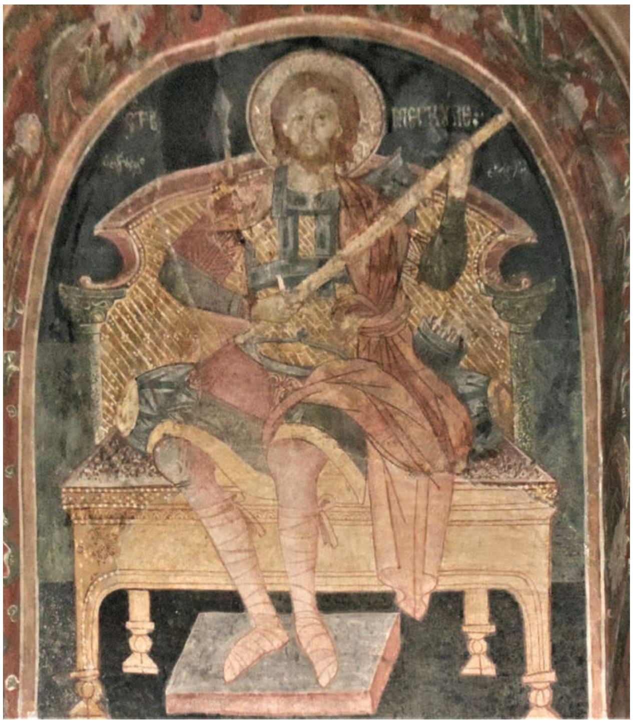
et Georges, dont la calligraphie révèle l'intervention de Mélèce Syrigos, raconte que les deux peintres avaient entendu dire de leurs compatriotes, des « Macédoniens », que « dans les contrées de Moscovie » bon nombre d'églises et de monastères demeurent dépourvus d'ornements. Ils se déclarent donc prêts non seulement à travailler durant un an pour embellir les bâtiments de fresques, mais également à enseigner leur art aux peintres locaux.[17] Les Grecs appuyaient leur proposition au patriarche de Moscou de références à leurs réalisations antérieures, fournissant une liste de décorations murales réalisées en différents lieux. La liste de monuments commence précisément avec une église kiévienne dite « église de Saint-Vladimir » et continue par les églises situées dans les Pays roumains. Elle se présente ainsi comme une sorte de *curriculum vitae* des deux artistes: « Si Ta Béatitude [*i. e.* le patriarche Nikon] désirait connaître quelques exemples du genre de peintures que nous réalisons, qu'elle s'en enquiert auprès de ceux qui ont vu à Kiev l'église de Saint-Vladimir ou, en Valachie, le monastère de *Calntusani* [Căldăruşani], *Brep* [Brebu], *Strihar* [Strehaia], *Kornitzellou* [Cornăţel], et à Bucarest, le monastère de *Blouboïta* [Plumbuita] et celui de *Platarest* [Plătăreşti], et en Bogdanie [*i. e.* Moldavie], *Vraniža* [Vrancea, *i. e.* Soveja] et plusieurs autres, et ce sont eux qui expliqueront la nature de notre travail ».[18]

## III. Les peintures murales des églises roumaines et de l'église kiévienne 'de Saint-Vladimir'.

Quelle église kiévienne doit-on identifier derrière le vocable de « Saint-Vladimir » mentionné par la lettre ?

Il n'est pas exclu qu'il s'agisse de l'église dite *Desjatinnaja* ou Notre-Dame-de-la-Dîme, puisque celle-ci fut construite par le prince Vladimir après le baptême de la Rus' et qu'elle accueillit sa dépouille. Sur les ruines de cette église, Pierre





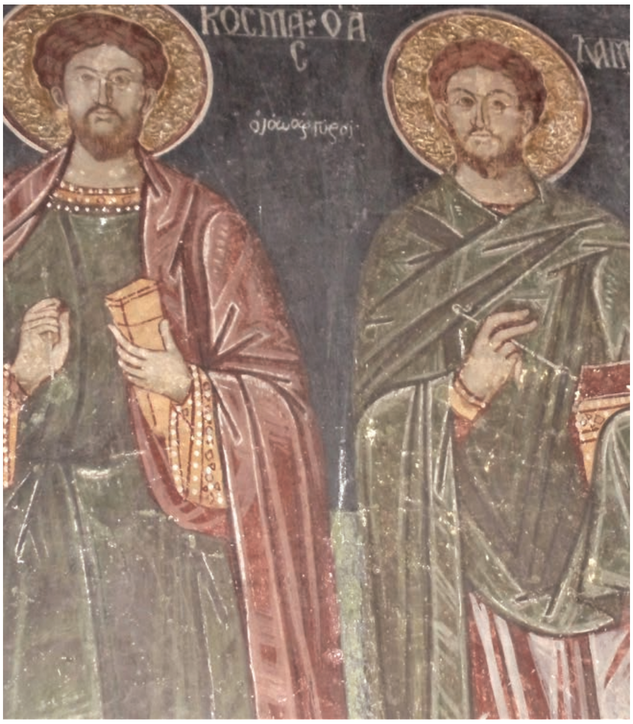


Fig. 8: *Plătăreşti. Saint Mercure. Détail.*
Cliché : Vera Tchentsova.

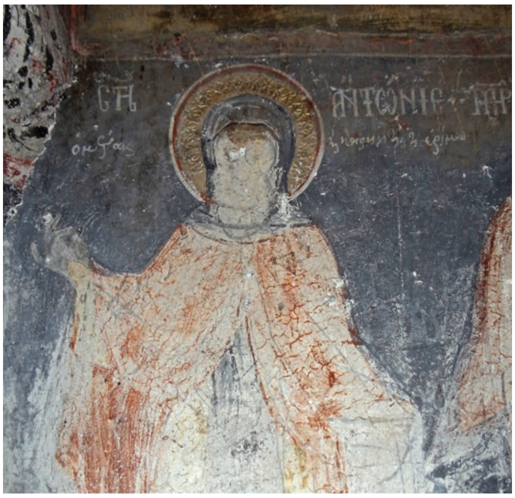
Fig. 9: *Plătăreşti. Saints Côme et Damien. Détail.*
Clichés : Musée historique d'État, Moscou.

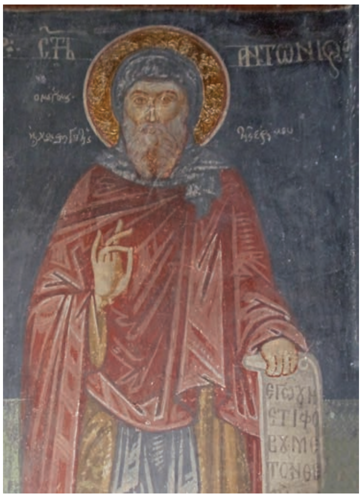
Movilă commença d'ailleurs à ériger un petit sanctuaire, sans néanmoins porter ce projet à terme. On ne sait rien à propos de la décoration de cette église, pas plus qu'au sujet de celle de l'église des Trois-Saints-Hiérarques, ou de Saint-Basile, autre objet des attentions et des largesses du métropolite. Mais, une fois écartée Notre-Dame-de-la-Dîme, le vocable « Saint-Vladimir » semble nous orienter vers l'église de la Transfiguration ou du Sauveur à Berestovo. Le métropolite Pierre Movilă lui-même la croyait être « l'église de saint Vladimir », fondée, selon la légende, par le prince qui conduisit la Rus' à la Vraie Foi.[19] Ce choix trouve confirmation dans les paroles initiales de l'inscription slavonne de l'église, datée de 1643 : « *Сію церковь созда великій и всея Росїи князь и самодержец, святый Владимир, во святом крещении Василій* » (« Cette église fut construite par le grand prince et autocrate de toute la Russie saint Vladimir, Basile dans le saint baptême »). De même, sur la fresque votive de l'église Saint-Sauveur, Pierre Movilă, agenouillé, offre l'église restaurée au Seigneur dont le trône est flanqué, à droite, de la Vierge, et, à gauche du saint patron, le prince Vladimir.[20]

Ce lien entre l'église de Berestovo et le prince Vladimir, sur lequel Pierre Movilă insiste tant, permet de supposer, avec quelque raison, que c'est bien de cette église que parlent les deux peintres lorsqu'ils mentionnent « l'église de Saint Vladimir » dans la lettre au patriarche de Moscou. Que cette missive ait été rédigée par Mélèce Syrigos permet de penser que ce dernier ait joué un rôle plus ou moins important dans l'invitation de Jean et Georges à Kiev. On peut également évoquer en ce sens ses tentatives ultérieures de recruter les mêmes artistes pour le compte des églises moscovites. Le théologien grec arriva en 1643 à Kiev où il s'établit au monastère des Grottes. Ici, après l'approbation par l'Église orientale de sa rédaction et traduction grecque de la « Confession orthodoxe », Mélèce Syrigos commença la composition de l'office connu comme « Stichères et canon de prière pour les vénérables pères des Grottes de Kiev et pour tous les saints qui ont brillé en Petite Russie ». Cette œuvre devait ultérieurement être éditée à Kiev en traduction slavonne au sein des *Akathistes* (1663, 1677, 1693) sortis de la typographie de la Laure des Grottes.[21] Il semble que la préparation de ce texte ait été entreprise en vue de la canonisation des saints du monastère des Grottes. La présence de Mélèce Syrigos dans l'entourage de Pierre Movilă en 1643 coïncide en outre avec la nouvelle consécration de l'église de la Transfiguration à Berestovo après sa restauration.

En raison de l'identification des peintres impliqués dans la réalisation du décor peint de l'église Saint-Sauveur de Berestovo, la prochaine étape de la recherche sur celui-ci doit être menée de concert avec l'étude des fresques préservées dans les églises peintes sous le prince Mathieu Basarab dans les Pays roumains, où la même équipe de peintres avait œuvré, comme l'indique explicitement le texte de la lettre.[22] Malheureusement presque toutes les églises mentionnées dans ce texte ont perdu leurs décorations du xvii$^{e}$ siècle ou furent repeintes, les fresques de Jean et Georges étant à présent couvertes d'un décor plus tardif. Toutes enfin ont un besoin impérieux de restauration. Dans ce panorama quelque peu sombre, les perspectives d'approche iconographique comparative les plus fécondes sont offertes par les fresques du *pronaos* de l'église de Saint-Mercure-Martyr à Plătăreşti près de Bucarest, lesquelles sont presqu'entièrement conservées.[23]

Une certaine parenté est observable dans le choix des compositions de l'église Saint-Sauveur et de l'église de Plumbuita, en dépit du fait que dans ce dernier édifice les couches plus tardives couvrent complètement les strates de l'époque de Mathieu Basarab. Certains détails iconographiques relevés sur les fragments conservés de la décoration réalisée par Jean et Georges dans l'église du monastère Strehaia, permettent d'envisager l'utilisation des mêmes modèles que ceux mis en œuvre à Kiev. Jean et Georges passèrent donc du service de Pierre Movilă à celui de Mathieu Basarab, réalisant le décor de l'église édifiée par ce dernier





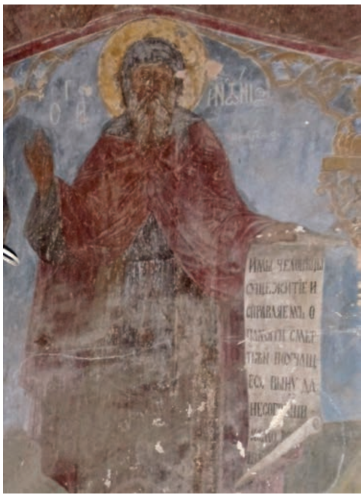
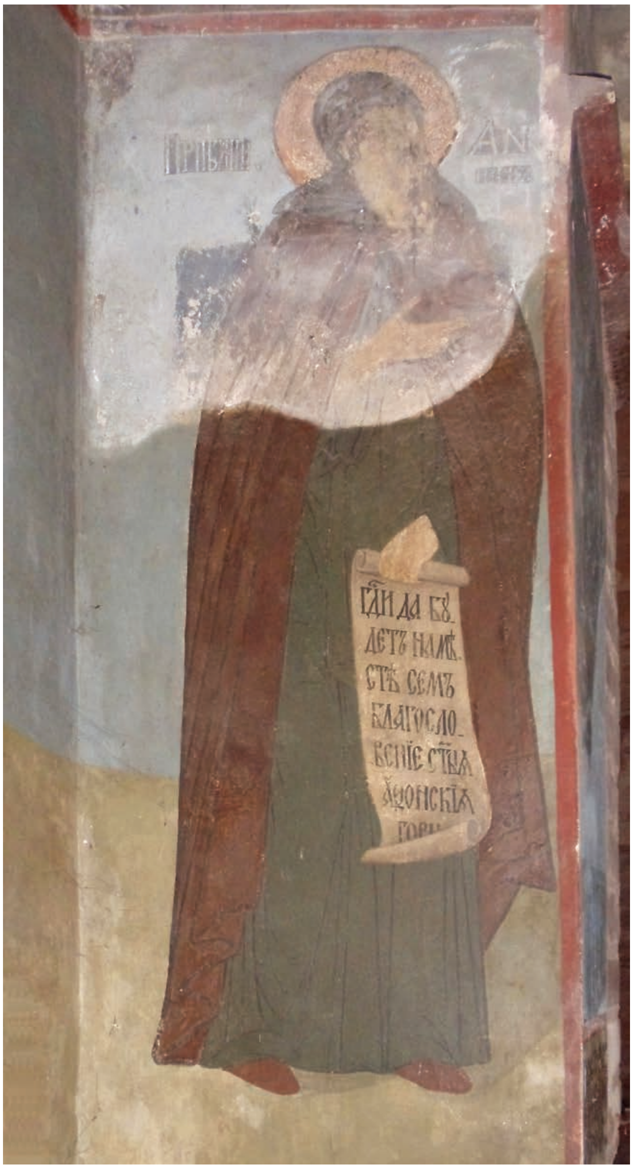


Fig. 10 : *Strehaia. Saint Antoine. Détail.*
Fig. 11 : *Plătăreşti. Saint Antoine. Détail.*
Fig. 12 : *Église Saint-Sauveur. Saint Antoine. Détail.*
Fig. 13 : *Église Saint-Sauveur. Saint Antoine des Grottes.*
Clichés : Vera Tchentsova.

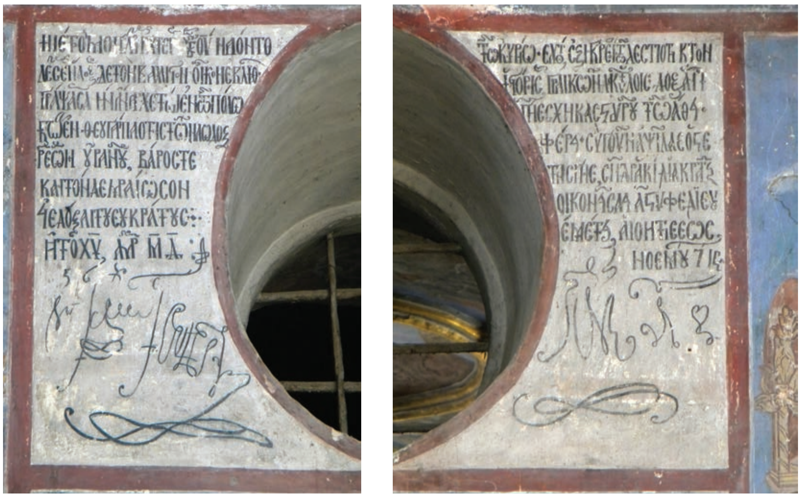


à Strehaia en 1645.[24] Par ailleurs, l'analyse iconographique confirme la parenté des décors de Strehaia et Plătăreşti, notamment pour la représentation de saint Antoine. Bien que des couches de peinture plus tardives gênent la comparaison, le modèle iconographique semble bien à nouveau identique à celui de Kiev. Il serait éminemment souhaitable que la restauration de l'église kiévienne soit menée en coordination avec les travaux similaires projetés à Strehaia, non seulement pour mieux étudier les fresques existantes, mais également afin que le travail des restaurateurs puisse s'appuyer, lorsqu'une fresque est particulièrement dégradée, sur le parallèle offert par l'autre édifice.

Les recherches futures permettront sans doute d'enrichir la liste des églises roumaines décorées dans les années 1640 par les peintres grecs de la « Lettre de Jean et Georges » grâce au mécénat du prince valaque Mathieu Basarab. Le canon iconographique observable à Kiev fut par ailleurs mis en œuvre par des artistes issus d'une même tradition que Jean et Georges dans un autre monastère de la Valachie, Clocociov, fondé en 1645.[25] Rien n'interdit de penser que Jean et Georges, ayant, semble-t-il, échoué à se faire engager par Moscou, aient poursuivi leur travail en terre roumaine. On peut citer à ce titre l'église Saint-Jean-Prodrome de Topolniţa. En 1673, ce sanctuaire fut décoré de fresques par des artistes dont l'un portait le nom de Georges le Grec. Bien que le prénom soit des plus communs, il est tentant de l'identifier avec l'un de nos deux artistes.[26] W. Deluga et, à sa suite, la chercheuse kiévienne Alina Kondratuk ont cerné certains traits caractéristiques mettant en exergue la parenté stylistique des décors, toujours fragmentaires, des églises Saint-Sauveur et du monastère Golia à Iaşi, métoque du monastère athonite de Vatopedi, ce dernier décor ayant été exécuté à l'époque du prince moldave Vasile Lupu.[27] Il n'est donc pas exclu que les églises des régions septentrionales de Roumanie, c'est-à-dire de la région historique de Moldavie, puissent dans l'avenir apporter un matériel important à l'étude comparative de fresques kiéviennes de l'époque de Movilă.

## IV. L'inscription votive grecque et la fresque de la 'Donation de Pierre Movilă'.

L'inscription votive en langue grecque que l'on peut lire sur les parois de l'église Saint-Sauveur s'écarte résolument des canons du genre (Fig. 14-15). Son texte a depuis longtemps attiré l'attention des chercheurs, mais ceux-ci se sont trouvés confrontés à des difficultés de lecture considérables. La raison en est que certains termes de l'inscription ont subi des déformations conséquentes et ceci, selon toute probabilité, dès leur reproduction sur la fresque par un ar-



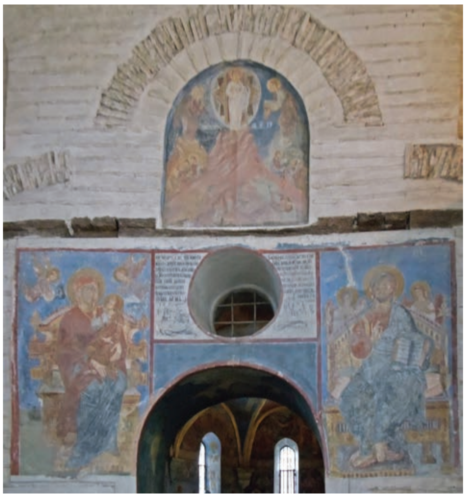
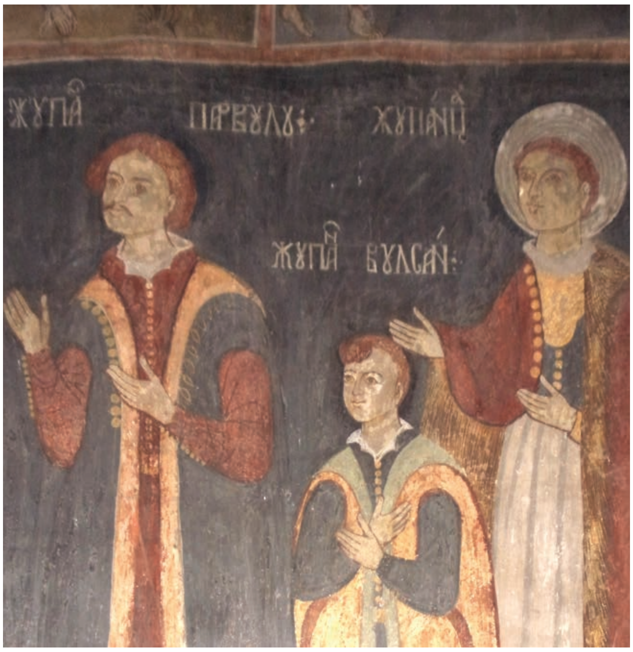


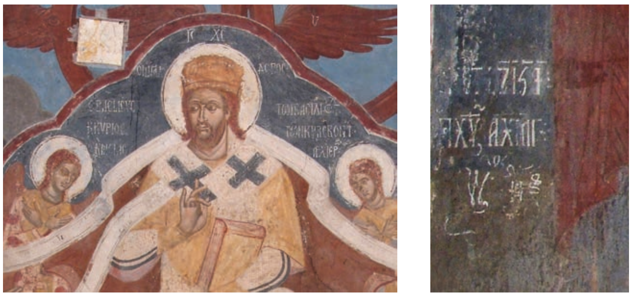
Fig. 14-15: *Église Saint-Sauveur. Inscription de fondation grecque. Partie gauche et partie droite.* Clichés: Réserve culturelle et historique nationale 'La Laure des Grottes de Kiev'.

Fig. 16: *Église Saint-Sauveur. Inscription de fondation grecque.* Cliché: Vera Tchentsova.

Fig. 17: *Plătăreşti. Donateurs. Détail.* Cliché: Vera Tchentsova.

Fig. 18-19: *Église Saint-Sauveur. 'Donation de Pierre Movilă'. Détails.* Clichés: Réserve culturelle et historique nationale 'La Laure des Grottes de Kiev'.





tiste qui ne maîtrisait pas pleinement la graphie du modèle qui lui avait été fourni. C'est cela même qui a amené Ihor Ševčenko à caractériser ces inscriptions de « *gibberish* ». Il convient donc en préalable à toute analyse du contenu, de rétablir, autant que faire se peut, certains fragments du texte.

Jean et Georges étaient originaires de « Macédoine », c'est-à-dire du Nord de l'espace hellénophone balkanique. Il n'est donc sans doute pas fortuit que le tracé des lettres de l'inscription votive grecque de l'église Saint-Sauveur rappelle celui des inscriptions visibles dans d'autres monuments du xvi$^{e}$- xvii$^{e}$ siècle des régions de la Grèce du Nord, de Kastoria à l'Epire.[28] Au-delà des graphies, ces inscriptions mettent en évidence des mélanges similaires de formes onciales et cursives, l'utilisation de signatures rédigées en écriture cursive, voire des *menologemata* qui assimilent les inscriptions à des documents. On trouvera ainsi un tracé de l'indiction, et plus généralement de certaines lettres, très proche de celui de Kiev dans l'inscription de fondation de la cathédrale du monastère athonite de Dionysiou.[29] De même, une autre inscription, de l'église des Saints-Archanges (Taxiarques) à Kastoria, décorée par les peintres Jean et Élie en 1622, offre de caractéristiques paléographiques et présente un aspect général particulièrement proche des inscriptions grecques de l'église Saint-Sauveur.[30] On ne saurait toutefois trop faire fond sur ces rapprochements car bien d'autres inscriptions de fondation et votives réalisées entre le xiii$^{e}$ et le xvii$^{e}$ siècle présentent également des particularités paléographiques proches, l'adéquation à la tradition étant, ici comme ailleurs, un gage de solennité et d'orthodoxie.[31]

Les fresques réalisées par Jean et Georges dans les églises roumaines incluent également des inscriptions grecques. La représentation de saint Antoine à Strehaia, déjà évoquée, s'accompagne d'une inscription d'origine « *С*(вя)*ТЬ*(Ия) *Ἀντώνι*(ο)*ς* || *ὁ μέγας κ*(αὶ) *καθηγητὴς τῆς ἐρίμου* » (sic). Les caractéristiques épigraphiques sont en tous points semblables à celles de l'inscription flanquant le même saint dans l'église de Plătăreşti. À nouveau, malgré la prudence qu'impose l'écran des couches de peinture tardives, la parenté avec l'inscription équivalente dans l'église de Kiev semble claire. La même remarque vaut pour les inscriptions qui accompagnent les représentations du *menologion* ou de divers martyrs dans les églises de Plătăreşti et du Sauveur à Berestovo. Il est intéressant de noter que la même observation peut être faite au sujet des inscriptions slavonnes de Plătăreşti : près des images des *ktètores* de l'église, *joupan* et *joupanita*, des signes évoquent un alpha et la ligature omicron/upsilon d'une façon qui rappellent fortement le lettrage de l'église Saint-Sauveur (Fig. 17).

L'inscription de fondation de l'église Saint-Sauveur est éditée ici dans l'état où elle est conservée, avec en parallèle l'addition d'une variante reflétant autant que faire se peut le projet initial du commanditaire, et ce, afin d'en faciliter la compréhension :

*Transcription du texte :*

||[1] † Ι ΙέΤΡΟ/ς/ ΜΟΓίΛ/ας/ ΑΡΧΤΕΡ/εὺς/ ΤΟΥ Θ(εο)ύ, ΝΑόΝ ΤΟ || Τῶ ΚΥΡίΩ ΕΑΥΤόΝ'CΞΗΚΡΕί/σ(ε)/ Τῶ ΛΕΣΤΙΟΤΗ Κ(αὶ) ΤΟΝ

||[2] /τε/ΛΕΣΕΝ ΑΟΞΔΕΤΟΝ ΒΑΜΗΣΤΟΝ ΟἶΚΟΝ ΕΒ ΛΪΘ(ων) || ἱΣΤόΡΙΣ/ε/ ΓΡΑΙΚῶΝ ΔΑΚΤύΛΟΙΣ ΔΟΞΑΙΙ

||[3] ΓΡάΨΑΣΑ ήΝἄΝΑΡΧΕ ΤήΝ ἐΝ Τῶ ΠόΛΩ || ΓΗ/ς/ ΕΣΧΗΚΑΣ ΣΤΑΥΡΟῦ Τῶ άΘΕΙ

||[4] Κ(αὶ) ὡ/ς/ ἐΝ ΘΕΟΥ ΓάΡ ΠΑΟ ΤΙΣ Τῶ ΝΑΩ ΔΟΞ || ΦΕΡΕΙ Σὺ ΓΟῦΝ ἀΨῖΛΑΕ ὁ ΣΤΕ

||[5] ΡΕῶΗ ΟὐΡΑΝΟῦ ΒάΡΟΣ ΤΕ || ΤΗΣ ΓήΕ CΗ ΔΡἀΚί ΔἱΑΚΡΑΤ/ω/Σ

||[6] ΚΑΙ ΤόΝΔΕ ΜΡΑἱΩΣΟΝ || ΟΙΚΟΝ ΕἰΣΑΕΙ ἀΣΤΥΦΕΔϊΕΟΥ

||[7] ΕἰΕ ΔόΞΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΕΟΥ ΚΡάΤΟΥΣ || ΈΜ ΈΤΕΙ ἀΙΟ ΝΤΙΕΕΩΣ

||[8] Ἠ ΤΌ Χ(ριστο)ῦ ΑΜΡ Μ Δ † || ΝΟΕΜΟΥ 7Ις

||[9] Ἐν μηνὶ † [Νοε]μβρίου, || ἰν(δικτιῶν)ος ιβ'.

Tentative d'établissement du texte initial :

/|[1] † ΠέΤΡΟ/ς/ ΜΟΓίΛ/ας/, ΑΡΧΙΕΡ/εὺς/ ΤΟΥ Θ(εο)ύ, ΝΑόΝ ΤΟ || Τῶ ΚΥΡίΩ ΕΑΥΤόΝ ἐΞΗΔΡΕί/σ(ε)/ Τῶ ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗ Κ(αὶ) ΤΟΝ

||[2] /τε/ΛΕΣΕΝ ΔΟΞΑΣΤΟΝ Κ(αὶ) ΑΙΜ<ν>ΗΣΤΟΝ ΟἶΚΟΝ ΕΚ ΛΪΘ(ων), || ἱΣΤόΡΙΣ/ε/ ΓΡΑΙΚῶΝ ΔΑΚΤύΛΟΙΣ, ΔΟΞΑΝ

||[3] ΓΡάΨΑΣ ΣήΝἄΝΑΡΧΕ, ΤήΝ ἐΝ Τῶ ΠόΛΩ || ΓΗ/ς/ ΕΣΧΗΚΑΣ ΣΤΑΥΡΟῦ Τῶ <π>άΘΕΙ

||[4] Κ(αὶ) ὡ/ς/ ἐΝ ΘΕΟΥ ΓάΡ ΠΑΣ ΤΙΣ Τῶ ΝΑΩ ΔΟΞ<αν> || ΦΕΡΕΙ. Σὺ ΓΟῦΝ ἀΨῖΔΑΣ ὁ ΣΤΕ

||[5] ΡΕῶΝ ΟὐΡΑΝΟῦ, ΒάΡΟΣ ΤΕ || ΤΗΣ ΓήΣ ἐΝ ΔΡἀΚί ΔἱΑΚΡΑΤ/ω/Ν

||[6] ΚΑΙ ΤόΝΔΕ ΕΔΡΑἱΩΣΟΝ || ΟΙΚΟΝ ΕἰΣΑΕΙ ἀΣΤΥΦΕΛϊ<κτον> {ΣΟΥ}

||[7] ΕἰΣ ΔόΞΑΝ ΤΟΥ ΣΟΥ ΚΡάΤΟΥΣ. || ΈΝ ΈΤΕΙ ἀΠΟ ΚΤΙΣΕΩΣ (||[8/2]) ΚΟΣΜΟΥ 715<2>,

||[8] Ἠ ΤΟ<ῦ> Χ(ριστο)ῦ Α<χ>{ΜΡ} Μ Δ † ||

||[9] Ἐν μηνὶ {†} [Νοε]μβρίου, || ἰν(δικτιῶν)ος ιβ'.

||[1] † Πέτρος Μογίλας, ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ναὸν τὸ(ν) || τῷ Κυρίῳ ἑαυτὸν ἐξίδρεισε τῷ Δεσπότῃ καὶ τὸν ||[2] τέλεσεν δοξαστὸν καὶ ἀείμνηστον οἶκον ἐκ λίθων, || ἱστόρισε γραικῶν δακτύλοις, δόξαν ||[3] γράψας Συνάναρχε, τὴν ἐν τῷ πόλῳ || γῆς ἔσχηκας σταυροῦ τῷ πάθει ||[4] καὶ ὡς ἐν Θεοῦ γὰρ πᾶς τις τῷ ναῷ δόξαν || φέρει. Σὺ γοῦν ἀψῖδας ὁ στε||[5]ρεῶν οὐρανοῦ,[32] βάρος τε || τῆς γῆς ἐν δρακὶ διακρατῶν ||[6] καὶ τόνδε ἑδραίωσον || οἶκον εἰσαεὶ ἀστυφέλικτον ||[7] εἰς δόξαν τοῦ σοῦ κράτους. || Ἐν ἔτει ἀπὸ κτίσεως (||[8/2]) κόσμου 7152, ||[8] ἢ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ͵αχμδ'. † ||[9] Ἐν μηνὶ Νοεμβρίου, || ἰνδικτιῶνος ιβ'.

*Traduction :*

||[1] † Pierre Movilă, le grand-prêtre de Dieu, a construit cette église à Dieu le Seigneur et,

||[2] en faisant[33] cette glorieuse et mémorable maison en pierre [et] en l'ornant[34] par des doigts de Grecs, il a manifesté[35] la gloire

||[3] que Toi, qui existe sans début, [tu] as acquis dans la Terre entière par ta souffrance sur la croix,

||[4] car chaque être apporte la gloire dans l'église de Dieu. Toi, qui tiens

||[5] la coupole des cieux et le poids de la terre dans la paume,

||[6] consolide aussi cette maison indestructible pour l'éternité

||[7] à la gloire de ton pouvoir. Dans l'année de la création du monde 7152,[36]

||[8] soit du Christ 1644 †.

||[9] Mois de novembre, indiction [12].

Cette inscription est la plus sophistiquée de toutes les inscriptions votives que l'on rencontre dans les églises grecques et roumaines de cette époque. Son auteur (qui peut être le métropolite Pierre Movilă lui-même ou l'un des hellénophones de son entourage) tenta probablement de l'orner d'une allusion à un passage du Livre d'Isaïe sur la grandeur du Seigneur (Is. 40.12) : « Qui a mesuré les eaux dans le creux de sa main, pris les dimensions des cieux avec la paume et ramassé la poussière de la terre dans un tiers de mesure » (littéralement 'dans la paume' : « *καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν σπιθαμῇ καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν δρακί…* »).

En outre, le texte grec semble être conçu comme un prolongement de l'inscription en vieux slavon censée exprimer la déclaration des personnages de la fresque la 'Donation de Pierre Movilă', tandis que les inscriptions de fondation sont illustrées par le portrait du métropolite offrant l'église au Christ. Les textes figurant sur les phylactères, dont l'un s'échappe de la bouche même de Pierre Movilă et deux autres de celles de la Vierge et de saint Vladimir, ne nous sont pas parvenus et ne sont connus que par les relevés de N. I. Petrov. Selon les textes que publia ce savant, leurs contenus étaient les suivants : « *Призри, Господь, на церковь сию, юже создах недостойный во имя Твое, и аще кто верою узрел, просвети светом лица Твоего. Да будут очи Твои выну на храм сей* » – « *Се призираю нань, зане… волю Твою* » (« Mon Dieu, soit attentif à cette église, que moi, indigne, je t'ai bâtie, et si un croyant [la ?] voit, qu'il soit éclairé par la lumière de ton visage. Que tes yeux soient toujours ouverts sur cette maison » – « Je suis toujours attentif à… ta volonté ».[37]

Ces paroles permettent d'établir le sens symbolique de l'inscription de fondation dès lors que l'on y reconnait une paraphrase d'un verset du Troisième Livre des Rois (3 Rois 8 : 13 et 27-29, cf. 2 Paralip. 6 : 20 ; 7 : 12-16) qui identifie l'église Saint-Sauveur restaurée au Temple du roi Salomon:

> …Аз же *создах дом имени твоему* свят тебе… Аще небо и небо небесе не довлеют ти, кольми паче *храм сей, его же создах имени твоему*? *И да призриши* на молитву мою, Господи Боже Израилев, послушати молитвы, ею же молится раб твой пред тобой к тебе днесь, *да будут очи твои отверсты на храм сей день и нощь.*
>
> *J'ai bâti une maison* qui sera ta demeure, un lieu où tu résideras éternellement ! Voici, les cieux et les cieux des cieux ne peuvent te contenir : combien moins cette maison *que je t'ai bâtie* ! Toutefois, Eternel, *mon Dieu, sois attentif* à la prière de ton serviteur et à sa supplication ; écoute le cri et la prière que t'adresse aujourd'hui ton serviteur. *Que tes yeux soient nuit et jour ouverts sur cette maison.*

On peut déceler ici une allusion au Livre des Nombres

(6 : 25a) qui nous transmet les paroles d'une prière que Dieu enseigna à Moise, « Que le Seigneur fasse pour toi rayonner son visage et te fasse grâce ». Ainsi elle établit sans doute un parallèle entre le métropolite Pierre Movilă et le prophète, libérateur du peuple d'Israël.

Au-dessus de l'image de Christ Grand Prêtre se trouve une inscription (Fig. 18) qui renvoie à son tour au Livre du Prophète Daniel :

> ||[1] Ι(ησοῦ)Σ Χ(ριστό)Σ
> ||[2] Ο Μ/ε/ΓΑΛ(ος) (?) Δε<σ>ΠΟ<τη>Σ (?)
> ||[3] Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕ<υ>Ο<ν>Τ(ων)
> ||[4] Κ(αὶ) ΚύΡΙΟΣ Τῶ̃Ν ΚΥΡΙΕΒΟΝΤ(ων)
> ||[5] Κ(αὶ) ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΡ(εύς)
>
> « Jésus Christ le Grand Souverain, le Roi des rois et Seigneur des seigneurs et Grand Prêtre » (cf. : Dan. 2. 47).[38]

Malgré l'originalité des allusions bibliques contenues dans l'inscription de fondation par rapport aux inscriptions votives ordinaires de l'époque et l'utilisation par son auteur d'un lexique assez recherché, ce dernier respecte certaines règles bien établies comme la mention explicite du nom du donateur ayant restauré l'église et l'évocation des peintures réalisées.[39] L'allusion aux travaux du roi Salomon, qui a « fini ce qui n'a pas été fini » par le Roi David en édifiant le Temple de Jérusalem, visait sans doute à rapprocher les travaux de restauration de l'église de Berestovo de la construction de la cathédrale Sainte-Sophie de Kiev sous le grand prince Iaroslav le Sage, autre entreprise comparée au grand œuvre de Salomon, notamment dans le « Sermon sur la loi et la grâce » de saint Hilarion, métropolite de Kiev et contemporain d'Iaroslav. Si saint Hilarion, qui prêcha dans l'église des Saints-Apôtres à Berestovo, identifiait le prince Vladimir au Roi David, qui érigea le Temple, et son « bon assistant » (« *доброго послуха* », témoin), le prince Georges-Iaroslav le Sage, au roi Salomon, qui présida à l'achèvement de l'ouvrage,[40] dans l'inscription de l'église Saint-Sauveur Pierre Movilă apparaît implicitement comme continuateur de l'œuvre de Vladimir.[41]

La transcription des indications chronologiques, année de l'Incarnation et an du monde, demande de lourdes corrections pour que l'inscription soit intelligible. La date jusqu'ici retenue a été le 16 novembre 1644.[42] Néanmoins, elle ne correspond pas aux autres dates indiquées dans l'église : à côté de la représentation du métropolite agenouillé devant le Seigneur, la fresque de la « Donation de Pierre Movilă » offre en effet une autre inscription grecque, longue de trois lignes, dont une partie est effacée (Fig. 19), mais dans laquelle les indications de l'année de l'Incarnation, 1643, et de l'indiction (sans doute la 11e) sont visibles : ΕΝ ΕΤΕΙ (?) 7151 || ἈΠΟ Χ(ριστο)Υ ΑΧΜΓ, || Ιν(δικτιῶν)ος ια (?) †. La première ligne de ce texte offrait l'année, indiquée cette fois selon l'an du monde. La même date se retrouve sur l'inscription de fondation slavonne peinte sur la partie intérieure du mur ouest du narthex. Elle correspond à l'année de la consécration de l'église restaurée par Pierre Movilă, 1643, « de la création du monde 7151 ».

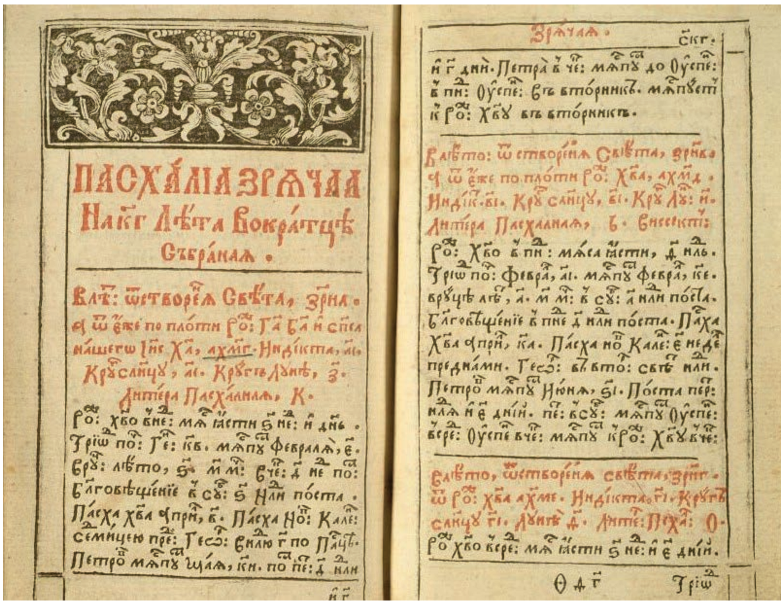
Dans l'inscription de fondation en langue grecque, seuls les deux premiers chiffres de la date de la création du monde sont bien lisibles.[43] Il est possible de supposer que les derniers chiffres devaient correspondre à ceux indiqués sur la fresque de la Donation, soit 7152 (1643-1644, indiction 12), soit 7151 (1642-1643, indiction 11). Pourtant le mois indiqué dans le *menologema* de signature semble être « novembre », et donc, dans ce cas l'année de la naissance du Christ doit être 1643, comme sur la fresque de Donation, et non 1644. Ainsi, soit l'inscription a été peinte un an après toutes les autres décorations, y compris son pendant slavon, auquel cas il convient de lire l'année de la création du monde 7153, indiction 13 (avec inversion des lettres), soit l'année de l'Incarnation est erronée.

L'hypothèse la plus probable pour rendre compte de cette contradiction chronologique est une tentative de la part de celui qui rédigea le texte de passer à la « nouvelle année » simultanément dans les deux systèmes de datation. Dans l'inscription de la fresque sont indiquées les dates 7151 – 1643, indiction 11, plaçant sa réalisation entre janvier et août de l'année 1643, tandis que la date de l'inscription de fondation grecque reflète, probablement, une adaptation maladroite par le rédacteur au changement d'année en septembre : ainsi l'année de la création du monde devient 7152, indiction 12, et entraîne fautivement à sa suite l'année de l'Incarnation. Une telle erreur expliquerait la date erronée de 1644. Il en découlerait que les travaux de décoration de l'église du Sauveur se conclurent vers l'automne 1643.

On retrouve la même erreur de calcul et de synchronisation des deux systèmes de l'année du monde et de l'année de l'Incarnation dans une autre réalisation de l'Église de Kiev du temps de Pierre Movilă. Dans le comput ecclésiastique, publié dans le Psautier imprimé par la Laure des Grottes en 1643, on retrouve un synchronisme parfait de l'an du monde et de l'indiction, d'une part, et de l'Incarnation de l'autre. Dans l'un et l'autre cas, deux groupes de coordonnées se succèdent directement : l'an du monde 7151, d'une part, année de l'Incarnation 1643, indiction 11 ; d'autre part, l'an du monde 7152, année de l'Incarnation 1644 et indiction 12.[44]

Elena Lopukhina a étudié les dates indiquées sur les offrandes de Pierre Movilă à l'ancien trésor de l'église de Berestovo (une croix en argent, un évangile et un calice, ce dernier uniquement connu d'après une description), et a attiré l'attention sur le fait que ces donations se sont étalées dans le temps entre 1640 et 1642, mais qu'elles ont toujours été offertes le même jour, à savoir le 1er novembre.[45] La chercheuse suggère donc que ces dons étalés sur trois ans du métropolite de Kiev aient commémoré un événement significatif pour l'Orthodoxie kiévienne, le 1er novembre 1632. Ce jour-là, le roi Władysław IV, au lendemain de

Fig. 20 : *Psautier, Kiev, 1643, p. 122-123.*
Cliché : Vera Tchentsova.



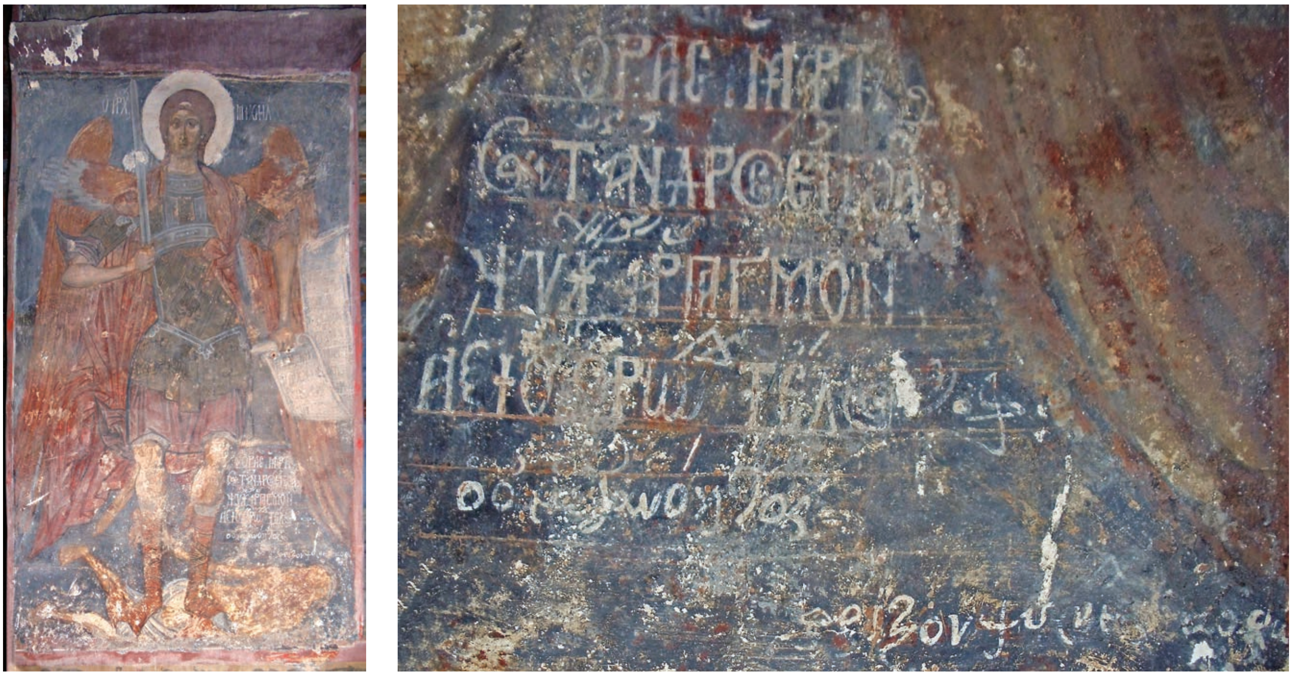


Fig. 21, 22 : *Église Saint-Sauveur. L'archange Michel.* Clichés : Vera Tchentsova.

son accession au trône de Rzeczpospolita, garantit par un acte solennel le libre exercice du culte orthodoxe et le rétablissement de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique, autorisant également la restauration des édifices ecclésiastiques : « …libre comme jadis la confession de la foi et l'octroi des sacrements, la réparation des églises et la construction de nouvelles en accord avec sa royale majesté ».[46] L'indication du mois de novembre (donc, de l'année 1643) dans l'inscription de fondation grecque n'était donc pas fortuite et renvoyait possiblement à une date d'achèvement idéale des travaux correspondant à la commémoration de l'acte royal.

## v. Sur la transcription et les perspectives d'étude des inscriptions grecques de l'église Saint-Sauveur.

La recherche future sur les peintures de l'église Saint-Sauveur de Berestovo devra se fonder sur une transcription nouvelle de toutes les inscriptions grecques et slavonnes encore conservées, y compris celles, tardives, qui n'apparaissent que sur les couches reflétant l'activité des restaurateurs du xix$^{e}$ siècle. La comparaison de ces inscriptions avec celles conservées dans d'autres églises peintes par Jean et Georges et, au-delà, dans l'ensemble des édifices de culte orthodoxes qui conservent un décor du xvii$^{e}$ siècle, est riche de perspectives. Déjà, N. I. Petrov avait souligné la nécessité d'étudier dans quelle mesure les inscriptions de l'église Saint-Sauveur correspondent à des modèles prescrits par les différentes *hermèneiai* grecques auxquelles avaient recours les artistes, une démarche du plus haut intérêt.[47]

En l'attente d'une telle étude approfondie, nous n'avons pu offrir ici que quelques remarques préliminaires concernant la transcription des textes accessibles. La lecture intégrale des inscriptions grecques de l'église Saint-Sauveur ne peut être tentée que lorsque leur état de conservation et leur localisation dans l'édifice le consentent. Tout approfondissement demeure lié à un travail de restauration doublé d'une campagne de documentation photographique de qualité.

*1. Les archanges Michel et Gabriel.*

Parmi les inscriptions de l'église Saint-Sauveur, certaines frappent par leur originalité comme, par exemple, celle qui accompagne l'image du saint archistratège Michel, représenté brandissant une épée (Fig. 21-22). Selon la lecture faite par N. I. Petrov, son texte était le suivant : « *Ὁρᾷς ἁμάρτημα ἑκάστου, ἀνορθώσεις τὰς ψυχάς, ἁρμόζεις ἀξίους, θρύπτεις τέλσον* » (« Tu vois le péché de chacun, tu corriges les âmes, tu réunis les dignes, tu brises l'orgueil »).[48] Ce savant supposait que sous les pieds de l'Archange la fresque offrait une représentation de Lucifer déchu Toutefois, l'archange est représenté dans l'église Saint-Sauveur selon le canon iconographique du *psychopompe* (« *ψυχοπομπός* »), à savoir qu'il piétine un riche pécheur.[49] Cette iconographie s'inspire de la parabole évangélique de l'homme riche qui accumule des trésors, oublieux de sa fin prochaine (Luc 12 : 16-21). Une source homilétique met également en scène l'archange venant au secours d'un jeune pauvre que son riche voisin s'ingénie à faire périr pour que ce dernier n'hérite pas de ses biens.[50] Tous les efforts du riche se révèlent inutiles et le jeune homme, protégé par Saint Michel, survit pour épouser finalement la fille de l'homme riche, héritant ainsi de la fortune de celui-ci après sa mort. Sur la fresque de l'église Saint-Sauveur, l'archistratège piétine le corps du riche, mais en lieu et place de l'image habituelle d'un enfant, symbolisant l'âme, il tient en main gauche un rouleau, porteur d'un texte perdu.

Les inscriptions sur la fresque peuvent recevoir des lectures alternatives à celles proposées par N. I. Petrov. Au-dessus de l'Archange :[51]

*Ὁ ἈΡΧ(ων) ΜΙΧΑΗΛ΄*

*Traduction : l'Archonte Michel.*

Au-dessous, à droite :

ὉΡΑΣ ἉΜΑΡΤΗ||ΣΑΝΤ/ος/ ἈΝΔΡΟΣ ΕΠΙΘΑ[/νοῦς/] (?) || ΨΥΧ(ῆς) ἉΡΠΑΓΜΟΝ ||

Ἄ̓ΞΙΟΝ ΟΡΩΝ /δε/ (?) ΤΕ̆ΛΩΣ † ||

ὁ ὀμετανόητος ||

φρϊξον ψυ[χὴ] μ(ου) [τ]α ορ[ώμενα].

*Traduction :* Tu vois le ravissement de l'âme d'un pécheur, homme riche,

voyant la fin [dont est] digne

l'impénitent.

À cette vue, tremble, ô mon âme.

Sur le rouleau, N. I. Petrov a lu un extrait d'un tropaire : « *Τῶν οὐρανίων στρατιῶν Ἀρχιστράτηγοι, δυσωποῦμεν ὑμᾶς, ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀνάξιοι, ἵνα ταῖς ὑμῶν δεήσεσι, [τειχίσητε ἡμᾶς σκέπῃ τῶν πτερύγων...]* » (« Archistratèges des milices célestes, nous vous supplions, nous qui sommes indignes, afin que nous nous protégiez par vos prières à l'ombre de vos ailes... »).[52] L'état actuel de la peinture ne permet pas de contredire cette leçon directement, mais l'on peut néanmoins noter que sur la fresque de l'archange dans l'église de Plumbuita, complètement restaurée, le rouleau présente un texte différent issu du canon en l'honneur de la Vierge : « *Τῇ Ἀειπαρθένῳ καὶ Μητρὶ τοῦ Βασιλέως τῶν ἄνω Δυνάμεων, ἐκ καθαρωτάτης καρδίας...* » (« À la Toujours Vierge et Mère du Roi des Puissances d'en-haut, [nous, les fidèles], de notre cœur très pure [crions en esprit : réjouis-Toi, ô Mère de Dieu, Vierge, Epouse inépousée... »]). Les inscriptions sur le rouleau tenu par l'Archange variaient donc et seules de nouvelles recherches fondées sur un travail de restauration approfondi permettront d'établir les textes originaux conservés dans les églises Saint-Sauveur et de Plumbuita et leur éventuelle parenté.[53]

La présence de cette inscription grecque sur la punition du riche pécheur dans une autre église, voire sur une icône, permettrait sans doute d'établir une parenté entre les monuments. Pour l'instant, il a été possible d'identifier un fragment de cette formule sur une icône provenant de Corfou, réalisée par le peintre Georges Kortezas, actif dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle : ΦΡΙΞΟΝ || ΨΥΧΗ || ΜΟΥ ΤΑ Ο||ΡΟΜΕΝΑ.[54] L'église de Strehaia offre de son côté un fragment relativement bien conservé de la fresque d'origine montrant un saint piétinant un personnage, mais l'iconographie s'avère différente. Il n'est pas assuré qu'il s'agisse ici de l'archange, mais plutôt d'une représentation de saint Démétrius brandissant une lance conformément à l'iconographie de la scène hagiographique connue comme « le miracle de la destruction du tsar Kaloyan » (un parallèle, hélas complètement repeint, se trouve dans l'église de Plumbuita). En revanche, une image très proche peut à nouveau être signalée à Corfou, cette fois dans l'église de la Sainte Trinité à Palies Sinies.[55]

Le texte du rouleau tenu par l'archange Gabriel, qui fait face à saint Michel, est tout aussi original (Fig. 23-24). La fresque a subi d'importantes interventions, mais le texte d'origine a, semble-t-il, été conservé, seule la forme des lettres ayant été altérée :

Ὁ ἈΡΧ(ων) ΓΑΒΡΙ͂ΗΛ

*Traduction :* l'Archonte Gabriel.

Ο ἐΝ Οὐ||ΡΑΝΟῖΣ || ΚΑΘΟΡ||ῶΝ ΘΕΟῦ || Τ(ὴν) ΔόΞΑΝ || (καὶ) Τ(ὴν) ἐΠὶ || ΓῆΣ ΔΕ ὑ||ΨΟΥΣ ΠΑ||ΡέΧΩΝ || ΧάΡΙΝ

Ὁ ἐν οὐρανοῖς καθορῶν Θεοῦ τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ γῆς δὲ ὕψους παρέχων χάριν.

*Traduction :* Celui qui contemple dans les cieux la gloire de Dieu et fait descendre sur terre la grâce d'en-haut.

Selon toute vraisemblance, l'inscription fait allusion à la doxologie angélique devant les bergers de l'Évangile de saint Luc (2. 14) : « *Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία* » (« Gloire soit à Dieu dans les lieux très-hauts, que la paix soit sur la terre et la bonne volonté dans les hommes »). Pour le moment, il ne m'a pas été possible de trouver un texte identique, que ce soit dans les *hermèneiai* ou sur les autres représentations de l'Archange.[56]

*2. Vision de Saint Pierre d'Alexandrie.*

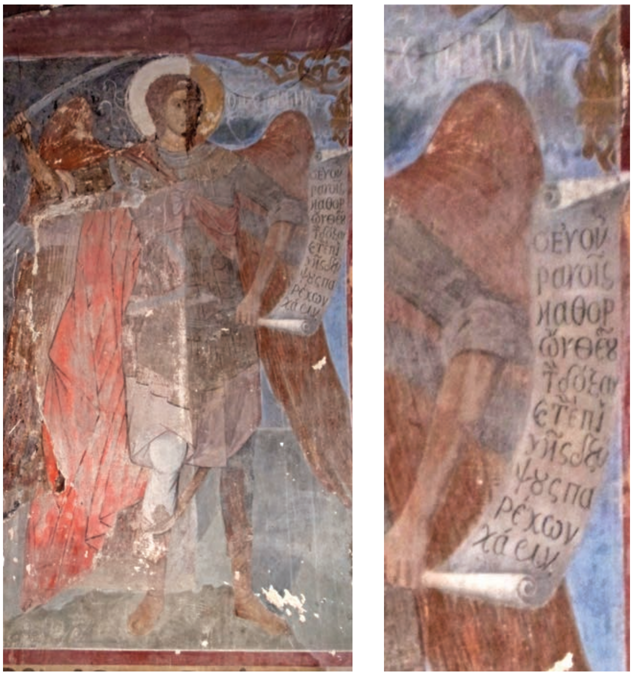


Fig. 23, 24 : *Église Saint-Sauveur. L'archange Gabriel.* Clichés : Vera Tchentsova.

Bien visible, l'inscription suivante flanque un thème iconographique assez recherché, bien qu'assez fréquent dans le décor des sanctuaires balkaniques du XVIe- XVIIe siècle, la Vision de Saint Pierre d'Alexandrie (Fig. 25-26). L'évêque, recevant une vision du Christ, les vêtements déchirés, demande « Seigneur, qui t'a déchiré ta tunique ? » ; et le Christ lui répond par les termes d'un stichère « Arius haïssant de voir la lumière »[57] (sur la fresque, la réponse précède la question). Les figures sont également accompagnées de leur vocable :

Ὁ Ἅγ(ιος) ΠΈΤΡΟΣ

Ι(ησοῦ)Σ Χ(ριστό)Σ

*Traduction* : saint Pierre / Jésus Christ.

Le texte du dialogue est largement fautif, mais les fautes n'hypothèquent pas la compréhension et l'établissement du texte :

ΑΡΑΟΣ Ὁ ΜΥΣΑΣ ΤΟ ΦΩΣ ΜΗ ΒΛΕΠΗΝ

Τ(ί)Σ ΣΟΥ ΤῸΝ Χ(ι)Τ(ώ)ΙΠ ΙΣ(ώτ)ΕΡ ΛΗ(εί)ΛΕΝ

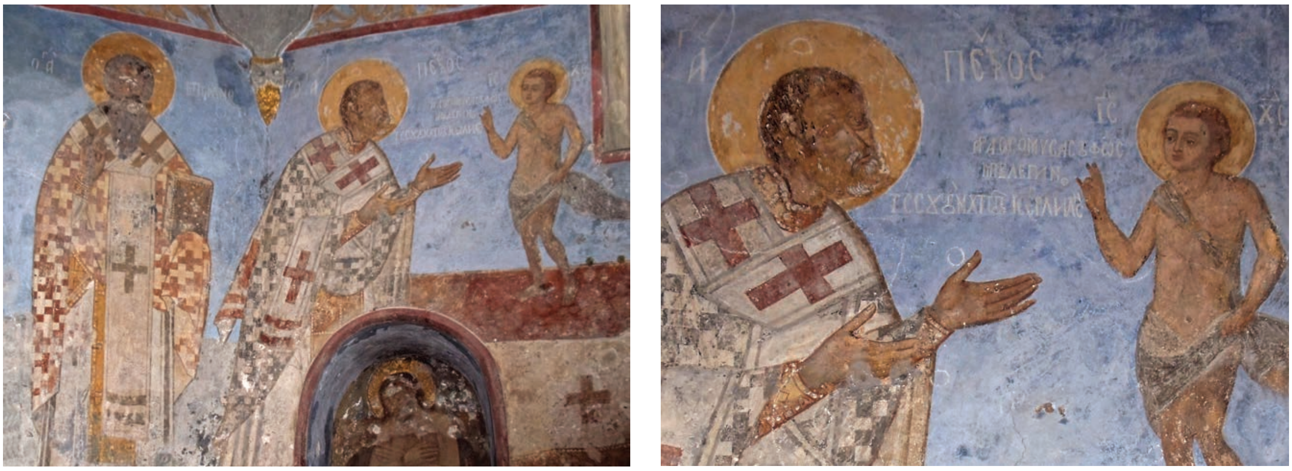
Ἄρειος ὁ μυσᾶς τὸ φῶς μὴ βλέπειν.

Τίς σου τὸν χιτῶνα, Σῶτερ, διεῖλεν ;

L'inscription offre à nouveau ce « *gibberish* » cher à Ihor Ševčenko, qui reflète selon toute probabilité l'incapacité du peintre à reproduire le texte reçu en modèle : ce n'est pas un hasard, par exemple, si dans le mot *διείλεν* un lambda ait remplacé le delta, très proche d'un point de vue paléographique. Néanmoins, il faut prendre en compte que la fresque a été rénovée et que les déformations des lettres peuvent refléter ces interventions. À nouveau l'étude de l'iconographie et des particularités paléographiques et linguistiques est suspendue à un processus de restauration et à une étude attentive spéciale de la stratigraphie des couches de peinture.[58]

*3. Prophète Jonas.*

Les personnages représentés sur les fresques tiennent fréquemment entre leurs mains des rouleaux arborant des textes assez longs, mais les tentatives de lecture se heur-



tent toujours à une orthographe si fautive qu'elle en compromet la compréhension. L'image du prophète Jonas en fournit un bon exemple et illustre également l'impact négatif des restaurations anciennes (Fig. 27-28) :[59]

Ὁ ΠΡΟΦ(ή)Τ(ης) Ἰ̓ΩΝΑΣ

*Traduction* : le prophète Jonas

ΑΠΕΡΡΙ||ΨΑΣ ΜΕ || ΕΙΣ ΒΑΘΗ || ΛΑΡΔΙΑ||Σ ΦΑΛΑΣΣΗΣ, ΚΑ||Ι ΠΟΤΑΜ||ΟΙ

Ἀπέρριψάς με εἰς βάθη καρδίας θαλάσσης, καὶ ποταμοὶ [ἐκύκλοσάν με...]

*Traduction :* Tu m'as jeté dans l'abîme, dans le cœur de la mer, et les courants d'eau [m'ont environné...] (Jonas 2 : 4).

*4. Le prophète Michée.*

Semblable restauration a subi également la représentation du prophète Michée. On distingue sur le rouleau une partie des lettres de la couche inférieure, lettres fort différentes de celles du texte que l'on lit actuellement (Fig. 29-30) :[60]

Ὁ ΠΡΟΦ(ή)Τ(ης) ΜΗΧΑίΑΣ

*Traduction :* le prophète Michée

ΚΑΙ ΣΤΗΣΕΠ || ΚΑὶ ὄΨΕΤΑ[ι] || ΚΑῚ ΗΟΙΜ||(αν)ΟῚ Τὸ ΠόΣ

(sous la couche de peinture de la restauration, quelques lettres sont visibles : ΙΜΝΙΟΥ) Ν || ΣΙΟὐ ὠΝ || Ν ΙΣΧΥΗΣ † (sous la peinture, on voit le mot : Κ(ύριο)Σ).

Καὶ στήσεται καὶ ὄψεται καὶ ποιμανεῖ τὸ ποίμνιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἰσχΰϊ Κύριος...

*Traduction :* Le Seigneur s'affermira et il verra, et il conduira son troupeau avec puissance... (Michée 5 : 3).

*5. Le prophète Ézéchiel.*

Le rouleau présente ici (Fig. 31) un texte qui ne correspond sans doute pas à celui d'origine, sans que l'on puisse déterminer si les erreurs remontent au travail de l'artiste originel ou si elles sont imputables à un restaurateur. Actuellement au-dessus de l'image du prophète et sur le rouleau on lit le texte suivant :

Ὁ ΠΡΟΦ(ή)Τ(ης) Ἰ̓ΕΖΕΚΙ(ήλ)

*Traduction :* le prophète Ézéchiel.

ΤάΔΕ ΛΕΗ || Κ(ύριο)Σ ΕΓὼ || ΔώΣΩ || ΕἰΣ Τὰ ΔΕ||ΞΙΑ

*Traduction :* Ainsi parle le Seigneur : Moi, je donnerai à droite...

Sur les rouleaux tenus par le prophète Ézéchiel, on peut trouver des citations fort différentes. Souvent on y lit les mots (Éz. 36 : 26) : « *Καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν καρδίαν καινὴν καὶ πνεῦμα καινὸν δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν* » (« Et je vous donnerai un cœur nouveau, je mettrai en vous un esprit nouveau ».). Denys de Fourna dicte l'utilisation d'une autre citation du Livre du prophète (Éz. 34 : 11) : « *Διότι τάδε λέγει κύριος Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐκζητήσω τὰ πρόβατά μου* [*καὶ ἐπισκέψομαι αὐτά.*] » (« Car ainsi parle le Seigneur : Voici que j'aurai soin moi-même de mon troupeau et je m'en occuperai »).[61] Il n'est pas impossible que sur la fresque de l'église Saint-Sauveur le texte ait été composé de deux citations différentes, mal reportées sur la fresque.

*6. Le prophète Daniel.*

Au-dessous de l'effigie de Daniel et sur son rouleau on lit le nom du prophète et une citation du Livre de Daniel (Dan. 2 : 2) :[62]

Ὁ ΠΡ(ο)Φ(ή)Τ(ης) ΔΑΝΙΗΑ

*Traduction :* le prophète Daniel.

ΕΙΗ ΤΟ || (ὄ)ΝΟΜΑ Τ||ΟΥ ΘΕ||ΟΥ ΕΥ||ΛΟΓ||ΗΜ(ένον)

Εἴη τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ εὐλογημένον (ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος...).

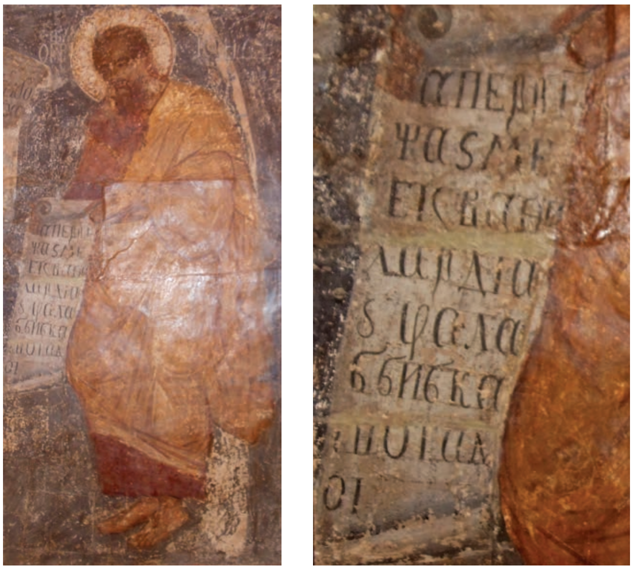
*Traduction :* Béni soit le nom de Dieu, (d'éternité en éternité...).

*7. Le prophète Élie.*

Au-dessous de l'effigie du prophète Élie[63] et sur son rou-

▲ Fig. 25, 26: *Église Saint-Sauveur. La vision de saint Pierre d'Alexandrie.* Clichés: Vera Tchentsova

▼ Fig. 27, 28: *Église Saint-Sauveur. Le prophète Jonas.* Clichés: Vera Tchentsova



leau on lit le nom du prophète et une citation du Livre des Rois (3 Rois 18 : 36) :

Ὁ ΠΡ(ο)Φ(ή)Τ(ης) ΗΛΙΑΣ

*Traduction :* le prophète Élie.

ΚΙΡΙΕ Ο Θ||ΕΟΣ ΑΒΡΑ||ΑΜ ΚΑΙ || ΙΣΑΑΚ ΚΑΙ || ΙΣΡΑΗΛ ΣΗ||ΜΕΡΟΝ

Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰσραήλ (ἐπάκουσόν μου, Κύριε, ἐπάκουσόν μου) σήμερον (ἐν πυρί)...[64]

*Traduction* : Seigneur Dieu d'Abraham, d'Isaac et d'Israël ! (Faites voir) aujourd'hui...

### *8. Le prophète Élisée.*

Au-dessous de l'effigie du prophète Élisée[65] et sur son rouleau, on lit le nom du prophète (orthographe erronée peut-être du fait des restaurations) et une citation du Livre des Rois (3 Rois 19 : 20) :

Ὁ ΠΡ(ο)Φ(ή)Τ(η)ς ἘΛΙΕΑΊΟΣ

*Traduction :* le prophète Élisée.

ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤ||ΕΛΙΠΕΝ || ΕΛΙΩΑ||ΙΕ ΤΑΣ Β||ΟΑΣ ΚΑΙ || ΕΠΕΔΡΑΜΕΝ

Καὶ κατέλιπεν Ἑλισαιὲ τὰς βόας καὶ ἐπέδραμεν (ὀπίσω Ἠλιοὺ...).

*Traduction :* Et Élisée abandonna ses bœufs ; il suivit (Élie...).

### *9. Saint Jean Climaque.*

Le texte sur le rouleau de saint Jean Climaque est relativement bien conservé, tandis que la peinture a été gravement endommagée tant à droite qu'à gauche de la figure et que le nom du saint a été effacé (Fig. 32). Le texte est une citation de *L'Échelle du Paradis* (15. 70 [71]) :

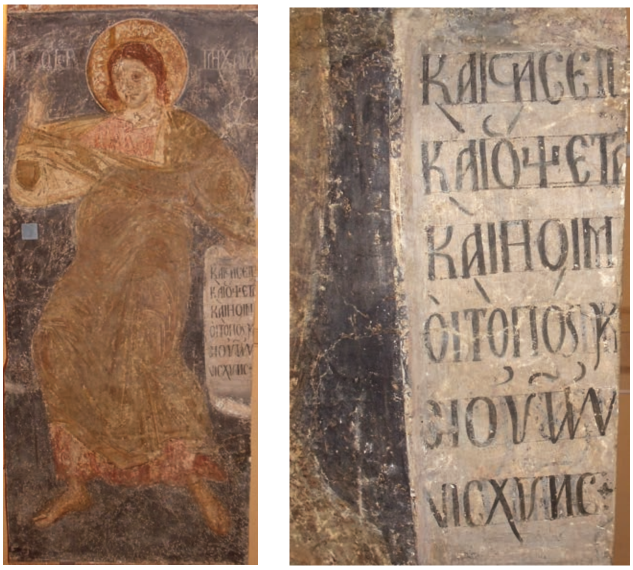
ὪΣΤίΣ /Σ/ώ||ΜΑ ἐΝίΚΗΣ/εν/ || ΟὐΤ/ος/ ΦύΣΙΣ ἐ||ΝίΚΗΣ(ας) Ὅ ΔΕ || Τ(ὴν) ΦΰΣΙΝ ΝΙΚΗ||ΣΑΣ ΠάΝΤΑΣ || ὑΠΕΡ ΦύΣΙΝ ἐΓέΝΕ[το].

Ὅστις σῶμα ἐνίκησεν, οὗτος φύσιν ἐνίκησεν· ὁ δὲ τὴν φύσιν νικήσας, πάντως ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἐγένετο.

*Traduction :* Celui qui a triomphé de sa propre chair, a triomphé de la nature même ; mais celui qui a triomphé de la nature, est au-dessus de la nature [; mais celui qui est au-dessus de la nature, est presque aussi parfait que les anges.].

### *10. Saint Euthyme.*

Fig. 29, 30: *Église Saint-Sauveur. Le prophète Michée.* Clichés: Vera Tchentsova



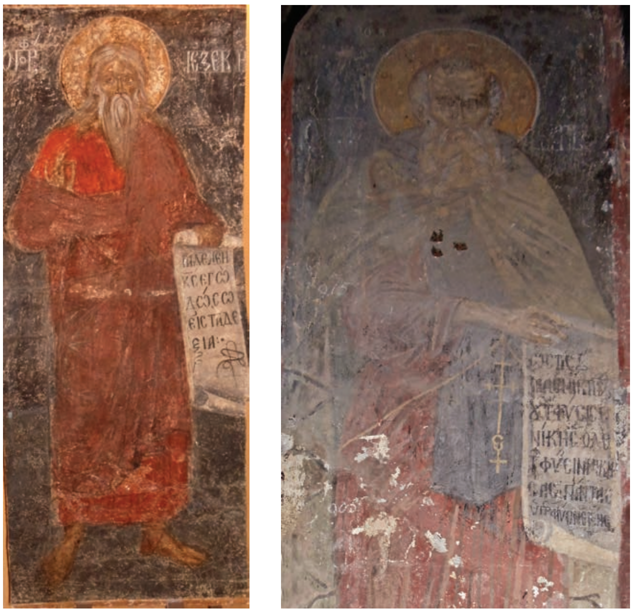


Fig. 31, 32: *Église Saint-Sauveur. Le prophète Ézéchiel et saint Jean Climaque.* Clichés: Vera Tchentsova

La comparaison entre les inscriptions sur les rouleaux avec celles conservés dans d'autres églises jadis décorées par Jean et Georges se révèle ici fructueuse. À Kiev, à côté de l'image et sur le rouleau de la représentation de Saint Euthyme (Fig. 33-34), on lit :

Ὁ Ἅ/γ(ιος)/ ΕὐΘΥΜΙΟΣ

*Traduction :* saint Euthyme.

ἈΔΕΛΦΟΙ Τ/α/ || ὍΠΛΑ ΤΟῦ || Χ(ριστο)ῦ, Ἡ ΜΕΛΈ||ΤΗ ἘΣΤῚΝ Ἠ ΔΙ||άΚΡΙΣΙΣ Ἠ ΤΑΠΕΙ||ΝΟΦΡΟΣήΝΗ || Κ(αὶ) Ἠ ΚΑΤΑ Θ(εὸ)Ν ὙΠΕΙ||ΚΟΝ

Ἀδελφοί, τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ μελέτη ἐστίν, ἡ διάκρισις, ἡ ταπεινοφροσύνη καὶ ἡ κατὰ Θεὸν ὑπείκων.

*Traduction :* Frères, l'arme de Christ est le soin, le raisonnement, l'humilité et l'obéissance dans le Dieu.

Le narthex de l'église de Plătăreşti conserve également une image de saint Euthyme, fortement marquée par les restaurations. Le rouleau porte une inscription plus courte (Fig. 35) :[66] ΑΔΕΛΦ||ΟΊ ΤΑ Ὼ||ΠΛΑ ΤΟῦ || Χ(ριστο)ῦ Η Μ||ΕΛΕΤΗ ἘΣΤΙΝ, Η ΔΙΑ||ΚΡΙΣΙΣ.

### *11. Les puissances célestes.*

Sur une voûte du narthex, on observe une composition représentant les puissances célestes[67] flanquées d'une citation très corrompue des hymnes triadiques.

*Transcription du texte :*

ΑΣ ΑΝΩ Δω(να)ΜΗΣ ἐΞΙΕΑΜ/ενα/ (?) ΦΟΒΩ ἀΝΟ ΕΡ(ου)ΣΟΥΛ(ημ) ΤΟΥΣ Κ[αὶ] (?) ||

ΣΟΥΚΟΝΙΖΑΝ ΤΟΛΜ(ῶν)ΤΕΣ, ΛΕΓΟΝ<εν> ΑΓΙος, ΑΓΙΟς, ΑΓΙος [εἶ] Ο ΘΕΟΣ

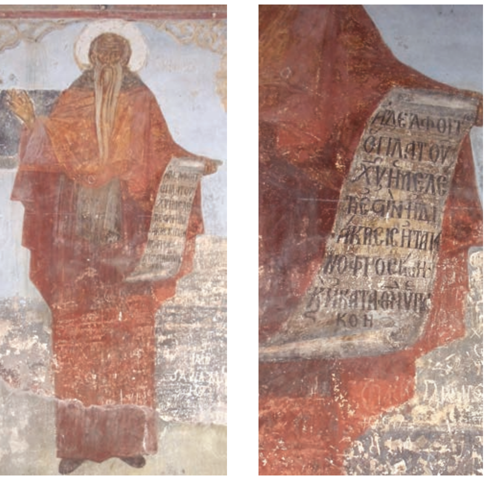
*Tentative d'établissement du texte initial :*

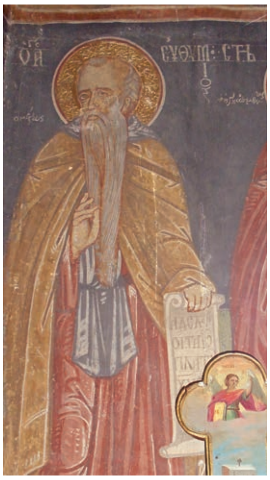
<Τ>ΑΣ ΑΝΩ ΔΥ(να)ΜΕΙΣ ἐΞΙΣ<τ>ΑΜ/(έ)νοι/ ΦΟΒΩ ἀΝΟ <Ἱ>ΕΡ(ου)ΣΑ{Υ}Λ(ήμ) ΤΟΥΣ Κ[αὶ] (?)

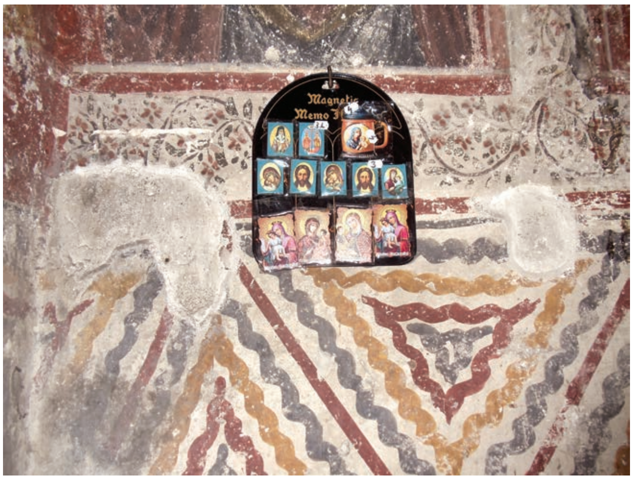
|| ΕἰΚΟΝΙΖΕΙΝ ΤΟΛΜ(ῶν)ΤΕ/ς/, ΛΕΓΟΜ(εν) ΑΓΙος, ΑΓΙΟς, ΑΓΙος [εἶ] Ο ΘΕΟΣ

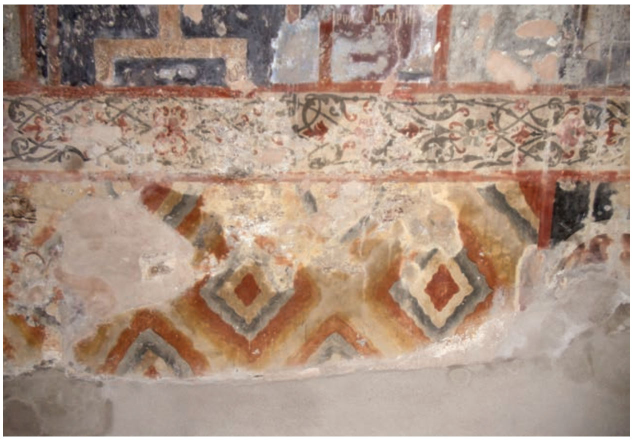
Τὰς ἄνω Δυνάμεις ἐξισταμένοι φόβῳ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ τους κ[αὶ] (?)

|| εἰκονίζειν τολμῶντες, λέγομεν ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος εἶ ὁ Θεός.









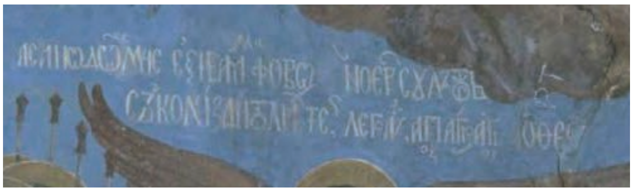


Fig. 33-34: *Église Saint-Sauveur. Saint Euthyme.*
Clichés : Vera Tchentsova.

Fig. 35: *Plătăreşti. Saint Euthyme. Détail.*
Cliché : Vera Tchentsova.

Fig. 36 : *Église Saint-Sauveur. Motifs décoratifs.*
Cliché : Vera Tchentsova.

Fig. 37 : *Strehaia. Motifs décoratifs.*
Cliché : Vera Tchentsova.

Fig. 38 : *Église Saint-Sauveur. Inscription accompagnant la représentation des puissances célestes.*
Source : Кондратюк 2008, ill. 3.

> *Traduction :* Les puissances célestes qui se prosternent avec crainte devant la Jérusalem d'en-haut || ayant l'audace de dépeindre, nous disons Saint, saint, saint est le Seigneur.

* * *

Bien qu'encore préliminaires, l'étude et la transcription d'un échantillon d'inscriptions de l'église Saint-Sauveur que nous avons entreprises permettent de compléter et de corriger certaines lectures proposées par N. I. Petrov. Ce savant fonda également son travail sur des copies des textes, réalisées par le prêtre kiévien, Joseph Zheltonozhsky.[68] À l'occasion de la restauration de l'église Saint-Sauveur au XIXᵉ siècle, ce prêtre exécuta un album de copies à l'aquarelle des fresques et inscriptions, fixant du mieux qu'il le pouvait leur apparence avant que la restauration n'y apporte son lot de changements. Bien qu'il ait ignoré le grec, le père Zheltonozhsky fournit à N. I. Petrov une base de travail inestimable. L'album, conservé un temps dans la collection du Musée d'archéologie religieuse, au sein de l'Académie théologique de Kiev, a malheureusement été perdu.[69] On ne peut que souhaiter qu'il soit un jour retrouvé dans les fonds de quelque archive ou bibliothèque, afin que son té-moignage puisse servir à renouveler nos connaissances sur les fresques de l'église Saint-Sauveur.

Certaines inscriptions qui accompagnent les représentations, flanquant les figures ou figurant sur des rouleaux et phylactères, ont été effacées partiellement ou entièrement remplacées par des textes en slavon ecclésiastique. Dans d'autres inscriptions, la lecture de certaines lettres, voire de mots entiers, s'avère difficile en raison d'altérations survenues dès l'exécution originelle des fresques. Ce n'est pas seulement l'étude de l'iconographie, de ses particularités et de ses ornements, mais aussi l'analyse des particularités orthographiques et paléographiques des textes et leur compilation en un corpus complet qui permettra dans le futur de mettre en lumière les liens entre l'église kiévienne et d'autres monuments ayant bénéficié de l'art des mêmes artistes grecs ou de disciples reproduisant leurs modèles. En premier lieu, évidemment, il faut entreprendre la comparaison avec les peintures, plus ou moins fragmentaires, conservées dans les églises décorées par Jean et Georges dans les Pays roumains et dont la liste se trouve dans la lettre au patriarche Nikon. Les recherches futures permettront peut-être d'identifier d'autres monuments d'Épire et des Îles Ioniennes dont le décor présentera des similitudes avec celui de Berestovo. On mettra ainsi en lumière la circulation de compositions iconographiques de « Macédoine », pays d'origine de peintres Jean et Georges, directement liées, semble-t-il, avec certains modèles athonites de Manuel Pansélinos.[70] L'enquête doit toutefois s'étendre le plus largement possible pour prendre en considération d'autres monuments en Roumanie comme en Grèce, qui s'en rapprochent par leur date et leur style.

## Notes :

1 Plokhy 2006, p. 193-199.

2 Olar 2014. Cf. l'édition : Malvy, Viller 1927 ; Ὀρθόδοξος ὁμολογία. Mărturisirea Ortodoxă 2001.

3 « The Many Worlds of Peter Moghila » (Ševčenko 1984).

4 Шевченко 2014, p. 175, 219, 284-286.

5 Sur les discussions concernant les problèmes de datation de l'église et les fouilles archéologiques cf. : Корниенко 2012 ; Котляренко, Черевко 2014 [2016] ; Кабанець 2014 [2016].

6 Sur la reconstruction de l'église du Sauveur de Berestovo et les influences gothiques sur son architecture : Krasny 2000, p. 337-361. Il n'est pas impossible que ces influences aient été transmises via l'architecture de Moldavie : Georgescu 1928, p. 40-44.

7 Петров 1908, p. 267-268.

8 Bibliographie et commentaires : Лопухина, Питателева, Ченцова 2015, p. 182-183, 197-201 ; Ченцова, Пітателєва, Лопухіна 2014 [2016], p. 182-201.

9 Isar 2003, p. 437, 440-443, 457 ; Brătulescu 2006, p. 243-245, 250, fig. 1, 5.

10 Пітателева, Лопухіна 2015.

11 Sur les projets de restauration et les problèmes qui se sont posés cf. : http://gpu.com.ua/en/content/award-finds-it-hero-or-he-does [consulté le 30.09.2017] ; Кулик, Петров 2008, p. 6-13 ; Котляренко, Черевко 2014 [2016], p. 224-231. À propos du programme de restauration actuel, tout juste entamé : http://www.abcnews.com.ua/ru/education/v-kiievie-riestavriruiut-tsierkov-spasa-na-bieriestovie-foto [consulté le 30.09.2017]

12 Sur les restaurations du XIX$^{e}$ et du XX$^{e}$ siècle, cf. : Петров 1908, p. 270-279 ; Вздорнов 1986, p. 33 ; Кулик, Петров 2008, p. 12-13 ; Корнієнко 2013, p. 7, 11-12 ; Шиденко 2014 [2016], p. 95-123.

13 Édition de l'inscription et commentaire : Петров 1908, p. 268-270. Avant N. I. Petrov, une traduction de l'inscription votive a été offerte par l'évêque Porphyre Uspensky : Сементовский 1877, p. 16-17, II (référence 31), V (appendice : la tracée de l'inscription). Ces dernières années, les inscriptions de l'église Saint-Sauveur ont été étudiées par E. P. Kabanets, mais ses plus importantes recherches sur l'identification des thèmes iconographiques et la transcription des inscriptions demeurent inédites : Кондратюк 2008, p. 47 ; Кабанець 2014 [2016], p. 154-177.

14 Ševčenko 1991, p. 662. Les inscriptions sur les fresques n'ont pas bénéficié d'un corpus complet, à la différence des graffiti de l'église Saint-Sauveur, publiés dans : Корнієнко 2013.

15 Петров 1908, p. 279.

16 La comparaison de l'écriture du texte de la lettre des deux peintres avec celles du manuscrit de la « Confession de foi » du métropolite Pierre Movilă (Bibliothèque nationale de France : *Paris. gr.* 1265, fol. 144v et fol. 145v-146), de la réponse du patriarche Païsios de Constantinople aux questions du patriarche de Moscou Nikon (Bibliothèque nationale de la Russie à Saint-Pétersbourg : *Soph. 1547*, fol. 82r-111r ou fol. 89r-118r d'après l'ancienne numérotation), dont le texte a été préparé par Mélèce Syrigos, et d'autres autographes du théologien grec ont permis l'identification de l'écriture. Cf. pour plus de détails : Tchentsova 2007, p. 311-345.

17 Tchentsova 2007, p. 329-331 ; Лопухина, Питателева, Ченцова 2015, p. 207-208.

18 « *Κ(αὶ) ἂν θέλῃ ἡ μακαριότης σ(ου) νὰ πάρῃ δοκιμήν, τὶ λογῆς εἶναι τὸ χριστικόν, ὁποῦ κά||[19]νομεν, ἂς ἐρωτήσῃ ἐκείν(ου)ς, ὁπ(οῦ) εἴδασίν εἰς τὸ Κίοβον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Βλαδημη||[20]ρί(ου) ἢ εἰς τὴν Βλαχίαν τὸ μονα(στήριον) Καλντουσάνι, Μπρέπ, Στριχάρ, Κορνιτζέλλ(ου), κ(αὶ) εἰς ||[21] τὸ Μπουκορέστι τὸ μονα(στήριον) Μπλουποΐτα κ(αὶ) Πλαταρέ/στ/, κ(αὶ) εἰς τὴν Πουγδανίαν τὴν Βρά||[22]νιτζαν κ(αὶ) ἄλλα πολλά, κ(αὶ) αὐτοὶ θέλουσιν ἐξηγηθῆ, τὶ λογῆς δουλεύομεν…* » (Tchentsova 2007, p. 330; Лопухина, Питателева, Ченцова 2015, p. 207).

19 Затилюк 2015, p. 174.

20 Cette fresque a pu être réalisée après que l'église a accueilli le crâne de saint Vladimir : ce n'est pas par hasard qu'elle donne l'impression d'avoir été intégrée a posteriori à une composition déjà achevée. Cf., par exemple, la représentation des chœurs célestes découpés de manière asymétrique pour insérer la « Donation ». L'église princière Saint-Nicolas de Curtea de Argeş conserve la représentation d'un donateur agenouillé devant le Christ flanqué de la Vierge et de Saint Nicolas. Patron de l'église, ce dernier remplace ici Saint Jean-Baptiste, figure habituelle des Déisis. La même logique est à l'œuvre dans l'église Saint-Sauveur où le Prodrome a cédé sa place à Saint Vladimir.

21 Pargoire 1908, p. 280 ; Макарий (Булгаков) 1996, p. 561-562 ; Панченко 2004, p. 453-458 ; Хведченя, Кабанець 2004, p. 131. Les représentations actuellement existantes des saints pères de la Laure des Grottes Antoine, Nestor l'Annaliste, Nicolas le Puritain, Jean le Souffrant, Isaac datent du XIX$^{e}$ siècle (Fig. 13).

22 Des recherches ont d'ores et déjà été entreprises en collaboration avec les conservatrices de la Réserve nationale « La Laure des Grottes de Kiev » Elena Lopukhina et Elena Pitateleva pour permettre une comparaison préliminaire entre les données de la lettre de Jean et Georges et les monuments encore existants, afin d'identifier d'éventuelles parentés entre les caractéristiques artistiques des fresques de l'église Saint-Sauveur et celles des peintures murales fragmentaires du XVII$^{e}$ siècle des églises roumaines. Ce travail a permis d'offrir les premiers arguments confirmant l'hypothèse de l'intervention d'un même groupe d'artistes dans la décoration de plusieurs églises. Cf. : Лопухина, Питателева, Ченцова 2015, p. 179-220 ; Ченцова, Пітателєва, Лопухіна 2014 [2016].

23 Pillat 1971, p. 95-110 ; Pillat 1980, p. 21-23. Ainsi, par exemple, même un examen préliminaire des peintures de l'église de Plătăreşti permet de corriger l'hypothèse selon laquelle sur la fresque « La donation de Pierre Movilă », le saint prince Vladimir aurait été représenté devant une colonne conformément au canon iconographique pour les destructeurs d'idoles (Лопухина, Питателева, Ченцова 2015, p. 198, 218). Toutefois, la comparaison avec l'image de saint Mercure à Plătăreşti amène à reconnaître dans la colonne apparemment placée devant saint Vladimir un élément de l'architecture du trône sur lequel siège le Christ, celui de saint Mercure étant presque identique, ne différant que par leurs couleurs, verte à Plătăreşti et blanche dans l'église Saint-Sauveur.

24 Georgescu 1927, p. 22 ; Puşcaşu 1970, p. 27-36 ; Protopopescu 2005, p. 87 ; Coravu 2007, p. 31-32, 53-55, 85, 88.

25 Negrău, Bedros 2014, p. 162-165. Je remercie Elisabeta Negrău (Bucarest) pour m'avoir indiqué ce monument important et pour les images fournies avec bienveillance. L'un des parallèles iconographiques les plus clairs entre la décoration de l'église Saint-Sauveur et celle de l'église du monastère de Clocociov est offert par la représentation de la Cène.

26 Pillat 1973, p. 273-295 ; Pillat 1980, p. 23-26, fig. 92-106 ; Δεληγιάννης 1996, p. 182, πίν. 6-9 ; Negrău, Bedros 2014, p. 178-181.

27 Делуга 1996 ; Кондратюк 2008, p. 42-46 ; Кондратюк 2015. Cf. la publication de quelques images des fresques de l'église de Golia : Dobjanschi, Simion 1979, fig. 23-25. En 1653, Paul d'Alep qui avait visité avec son père Macaire d'Antioche le monastère, décrivait avec

admiration la magnifique peinture murale de l'église de Golia : Павел Алеппский 2005, p. 52.

28 Δρακοπούλου 1997, p. 136-150 ; Drakopoulou 2005, p. 5-40 ; Παϊσίδου 2002, p. 39-58.

29 Ἱερὰ μονὴ Ἁγίου Διονυσίου 2003, p. 27. Cette inscription mentionne le nom du prince moldave Pierre IV Rareş.

30 Drakopoulou 2005, p. 27-28, fig. 16.

31 Ченцова 2016. Cf. : Weyl Carr, Kalopissi-Verti 2012, p. 371-385.

32 Cf. Osée 13. 4 : « *ἐγὼ δὲ Κύριος ὁ Θεός σου ὁ στερεῶν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ κτίζων γῆν* » / « Moi, le Seigneur ton Dieu, qui ai affermi le ciel ; Moi, le Créateur de la terre ».

33 Littéralement « il finit », « il accomplit ».

34 Littéralement : « il décora ».

35 Littéralement : « écrit ».

36 Je remercie E. P. Kabanets (Kiev) pour des suggestions précieuses relatives à la lecture de la date de la création du monde. La transcription des inscriptions a été ici considérablement modifiée par rapport à leur précédente publication : Ченцова 2016, p. 111-117 ; Ченцова 2014 [2016].

37 Петров 1908, p. 287.

38 Петров 1908, p. 286.

39 Cf. les exemples de tels textes dans le corpus des inscriptions de l'Athos : Τούτος, Φουστέρης 2010.

40 « *Иже недоконьчаная твоя наконьча, акы Соломонъ Давыдова, иже дом Божии великыи святыи его Премудрости създа* » : http://lib.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4868#_edn1 [consulté le 7/9/2016].

41 Il faut toutefois noter que l'hypothèse des spécialistes selon laquelle l'inscription votive fut rédigée en dodécasyllabes (à l'instar de quelques autres inscriptions de fondation et votives peintes dans les églises de la Grèce du Nord, cf. : Δρακοπούλου 1997, p. 141-142) ne trouve pas confirmation dans l'examen de la fresque. Cf. : Петров 1908, p. 269 ; Ševčenko 1984, p. 20, not. 13.

42 Петров 1908, p. 269.

43 Telle était apparemment la lecture retenue par l'évêque Porphyre (Uspensky) qui proposa l'an du monde 7152, indiction 12 : Петров 1908, p. 268. Sur la lecture de cette partie de l'inscription cf. aussi : Кабанець 2014 [2016], p. 169-170. Récemment E. P. Kabanets a également proposé de lire l'an du monde 7152.

44 Псалтирь 1643, p. скв-скг (122-123).

45 Лопухина 2015, p. 277-280 ; Лопухина 2014 [2016], p. 178-181. Cf. : Лебединцев 2014 [2016], p. 27.

46 Уния 1997, p. 200-203.

47 Петров 1908, p. 294.

48 Петров 1908, p. 282.

49 Meinardus 1978, p. 166-170, tabl. 20-21 ; Χατζηδάκη, Κατερίνη 2005, p. 243-248 ; Κουκιάρης 2006, p. 145-147, 243-246 ; Leontakianakou 2009, p. 145-158 ; Бенчев 2005, p. 98-99. Une représentation lourdement restaurée de l'archange Michel dans le monastère Curtea de Argeş offre une iconographie similaire et permet d'envisager une influence de cet ancien sanctuaire des princes roumains sur les compositions iconographiques de l'église Saint-Sauveur. Dans l'église de Plumbuita, on peut admettre que l'image actuelle de l'archange piétinant le pécheur, produit d'une restauration, perpétue le souvenir de la composition iconographique d'origine. L'iconographie de la fresque kiévienne peut être également rapprochée d'une icône de l'archange du XVII$^e$ siècle conservée au Museum Onufri à Berat et provenant de l'église Saint-Nicolas Perondi (je remercie C. A. Panchenko pour cette information).

50 Еланская 1962, p. 43-66 ; Изречения 2001, p. 255-261 (Indiqué par O. N. Afinogenova).

51 Je remercie pour leurs précieux avis sur la lecture de cette inscription Georges Kiourtzian et Anna Lampadaridi (Paris), Nikolaos Mertzimekis (Thessalonique).

52 Cf. : Сементовский 1877, fig. 5. Cette inscription rapproche l'image de l'homélie sur l'intercession de l'archange en faveur d'un jeune pauvre, qui offre aussi une description du Jugement dernier dans laquelle l'archange intercède pour les pécheurs : « Alors Michel se réjouira et étendra ses grandes ailes (...) et d'un coup il remplira ses ailes claires et prendra [les âmes] auprès de ceux qui sont à droite du Père gracieux (...) et ne laissera une seule âme... » (Изречения 2001, p. 259).

53 Cf., par exemple, les variantes des inscriptions proposées par les *hermèneiai* : Διονύσιος 1909, p. 217, 219, 231 ; Hetherington 1981, p. 84-85, 89-90 ; Книга о живописном искусстве 1867, p. 477. Diverses inscriptions accompagnent aussi l'iconographie de l'Archange-psychopompe dans les gravures grecques des XVIII$^e$-XIX$^e$ siècles : Παπαστράτου 1986, p. 192-197, nº 194-201. Une iconographie proche de l'archange Michel est observable dans l'eglise Saint-Nicolas de Curtea d'Argeş en Roumanie.

54 Βοκοτόπουλος 1990, p. 87-88, nº 58, fig. 44, 196, 198 ; Χατζηδάκη, Κατερίνη 2005, p. 247 ; Ζώη 2015, p. 70-71. Cf. : Felicetti-Liebenfels 1956, nº 98A.

55 Ζώη 2015, p. 194.

56 Sur l'iconographie des archistratèges Michel et Gabriel et les inscriptions qui accompagnent leurs représentations, cf. aussi : Габелић 2004 ; Габелић 2008, p. 173-189.

57 Cf. : Петров 1908, p. 281. On constate que N. I. Petrov fournit parfois des références ou même des leçons inexactes, sans doute parce qu'il fonde son information sur les copies compilées dans l'album préparé avant les restaurations du XIX$^e$ siècle par un savant kiévien, le Père Joseph Zheltonozhsky. Cf. une variante de l'inscription : Διονύσιος 1909, p. 154-155 ; Hetherington 1981, p. 54 ; Ерминия 1868, p. 432-433.

58 On a déjà évoqué la proximité paléographique de certaines inscriptions de l'église Saint-Sauveur et du monastère Dionysiou sur le Mont Athos. Or, l'iconographie de la « Vision de Saint Pierre » est également proche dans les deux sanctuaires : Ἱερὰ μονὴ Ἁγίου Διονυσίου 2003, fig. 170. Sur les ressemblances des modèles iconographiques des fresques du monastère Dionysiou et de l'église Saint-Sauveur, voir : Лопухина, Питателева, Ченцова 2015, p. 196–197. Encore plus proche de la composition de l'église Saint-Sauveur apparaît la représentation du même thème dans l'église roumaine de Saint-Jean Prodrome de Topolniţa : Pillat 1973, p. 274, fig. 2.

59 Петров 1908, p. 283.

60 Петров 1908, p. 284.

61 Διονύσιος 1909, p. 78; Hetherington 1981, p. 28.

62 On pourra en consulter une photographie dans Кондратюк 2013, p. 66.

63 Кондратюк 2013, fig. 5.

64 Διονύσιος 1909, p. 67, nº 90.

65 Кондратюк 2013, fig. 5.

66 Cf.: Петров 1908, p. 286 ; Ерминия 1868, p. 371.

67 Кондратюк 2008, fig. 3.

68 Le père Joseph Zheltonozhsky compta au nombre des prêtres qui accompagnèrent à Kiev le cercueil de Taras Chevtchenko lors-

qu'il fut déposé à l'église de la Nativité, le 7 mai 1861 : Лазаревский 1894, p. 314-317.

69 Петров 1908, p. 271-272, 277-279.

70 L'utilisation de modèles de Pansélinos est surtout visible au sein de l'église Saint-Sauveur dans l'image de Saint Mercure : Лопухина, Питателева, Ченцова 2015, p. 194-195, 211-212.

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# *Reconstructing the Image of the Old Altar Screen*
## *of the Orthodox Church in 'Maierii Sibiului'*

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RÉSUMÉ: Les informations concernant la construction de l'ancienne église orthodoxe dédiée à saint Luc dans les Maierii Sibiului sont rares. La série de modifications apportées au monument au fil du temps, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'aspect de son intérieur, et le peu d'éléments originaires encore préservés font que ce vieux lieu de culte roumain a considérablement réduit son potentiel en tant que source évocatrice du passé. L'ignorance des paroissiens et des prêtres locaux a sacrifié l'authenticité de l'église en échange des renouvellements qui n'ont pas eu la qualité de l'enrichir de quelque manière que ce soit. En compensation de ces pertes, le présent article souhaite restaurer, au moins par une reconstitution imaginaire, l'ancienne image architecturale de l'église, avec l'iconostase et les autres dotations artistiques d'il y a deux cents ans. Une telle reconstitution a été possible par l'identification de plusieurs images photographiques qui témoignent de l'aspect extérieur et intérieur de l'église avant que les changements radicaux du XX^e^ siècle aient eu lieu.

MOTS-CLÉS: iconostase, église orthodoxe, photographie, peintures murales, repeint.

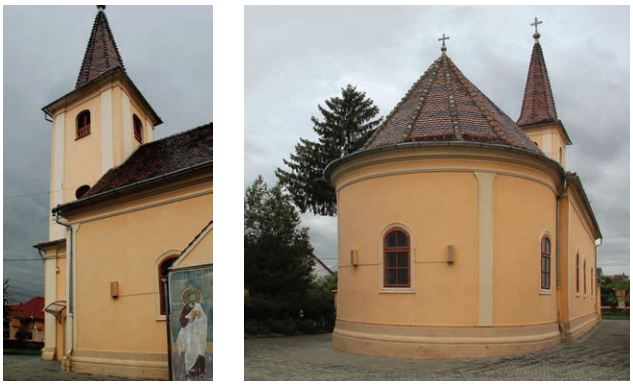
REZUMAT: Caracterul sumar al informaţiilor despre edificarea vechii biserici ortodoxe cu hramul „Sf. Luca" din Maierii Sibiului, precum şi seria de modificări pe care le-a suferit de-a lungul vremii monumentul, îndeosebi în ceea ce priveşte aspectul său interior, care nu mai păstrează decât puţine elemente de originalitate, au făcut ca acest vechi lăcaş de cult românesc să-şi diminueze semnificativ potenţialul de sursă evocatoare a trecutului. Ca o compensaţie faţă de aceste pierderi rezultate din nesocotinţa preoţilor şi a credincioşilor acestei parohii, prea grăbiţi să sacrifice caracterul de autenticitate al bisericii în schimbul unor înnoiri care nu au avut totuşi darul să o înnobileze în vreun fel, autorul îşi propune să restituie, dacă nu în realitate, măcar printr-o reconstituire imaginară, înfăţişarea de odinioară a edificiului, cu aspectul arhitectural, cu tâmpla şi celelalte înzestrări artistice de acum două sute de ani. O atare reconstituire a fost posibilă prin identificarea câtorva imagini fotografice, care redau aspecte de la exteriorul şi din interiorul bisericii „Sf. Luca", surprinse într-o perioadă anterioară radicalelor modificări intervenite în cursul secolului al XX-lea.

CUVINTE CHEIE: iconostas, biserică ortodoxă, fotografie, pictură murală, repictare.

In 1791, a decade after the promulgation of the *Patent of Religious Tolerance* (November 8th, 1781) and of the *Rescript on Conviviality* (March 22nd, 1781) by Joseph II, an Orthodox church dedicated to Holy Evangelist Luke was built in Măierimea Sibiului, in the vicinity of the Tower Gate in Sibiu. At the time, it was the second Romanian church in that part of the city's outskirts, outside the walls of the town.[1] The other church in Maieri was a Greek-Catholic one, known as the *Church between the Fir Trees.* This other church was built in front of the same Tower Gate, between 1778 (the year when the first stone was laid) and 1783 (the date of its consecration).[2] The bell tower was erected later, in 1788. But there was also a third church that may interest us in Sibiu. It was an Orthodox one and it predated the church dedicated to Holy Evangelist Luke in Măierimea Sibiului. This *Church in the Pit* was built by Stana, the widow of Hagi Petru Luca – a member of the Greek merchant company in the city – only two years before, in 1789, and it was located the Josephine suburb. Significantly affected after the two earthquakes of April 5th and December 8th 1793,[3] this earlier Orthodox place of worship had to be demolished and then rebuilt from the ground, as seen today, between 1802-1804, by Stana's son-in-law, the merchant Hagi Constantin Popp. These were the places of worship available to the Romanian community in Sibiu at the turn of the 18th century.

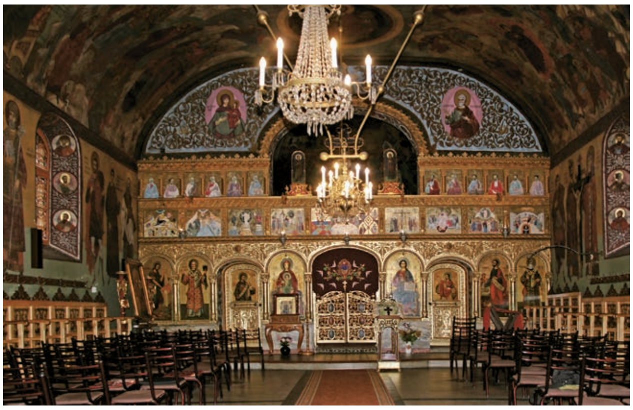
The main source of information for the church in Maieri used to be the archive of the Episcopal residence in Sibiu. It recorded the most significant events in the parish life of the Romanians in Sibiu during the second half of the 18th century. Unfortunately, this collection of documents was destroyed when the building was devastated during the 1848 revolution, and then burned in March 1849 amid the confrontations between the Hungarian revolutionaries and the imperial army, thus making it impossible to completely reconstruct the history as recorded in the acts destroyed by the fire.[4] This also explains why historian Nicolae Iorga, who visited the Romanian churches of Sibiu at the beginning of the 20th century and wrote about several inscriptions, documents or notes in ritual books, did not talk about the Orthodox church in Maieri. Historian Ioan Lupaş wrote a brief historical note in relation to this church, included in a study dedicated to the life of the Romanians in Sibiu. He was the first historian to cite the text of the existing inscription on the balustrade of the trelliswork mast.[5]

The historical circumstances in which the worship place of the Orthodox parishioners in Maieri came to be founded were investigated by Teodor Bodogae, a professor of Theo-



▲ Fig. 1, 2: *"Saint Luke" Orthodox Church, Sibiu (current view).* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.

▼ Fig. 3: *The iconostasis of "Saint Luke" Orthodox Church (current view).* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.



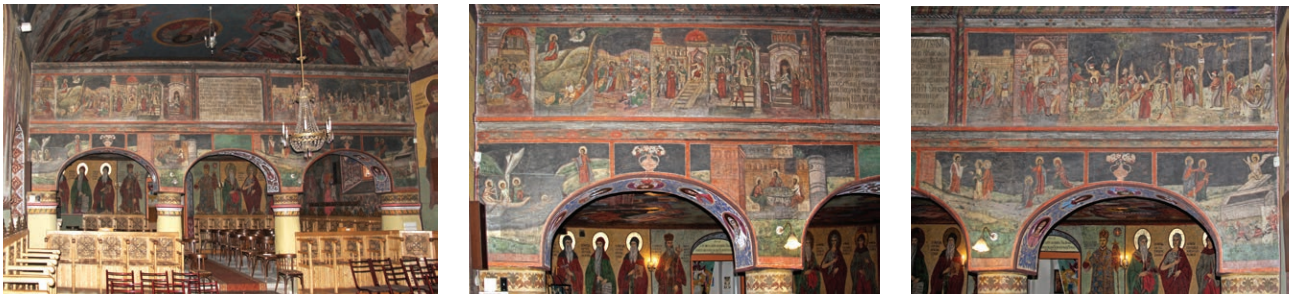
logy from Sibiu. He drafted a first monographic outline dedicated to the church, based on scarce pieces of information about the Romanian inhabitants, disseminated throughout the Saxon chronicles of same city.[6] A monograph of the parish[7] was published in 1993 by priest Ioan Chioaru, minister at the altar of "St. Luke's" church during 1937-1988. However, his monograph did not include any new data, at least not related to the oldest stage in the church's history.

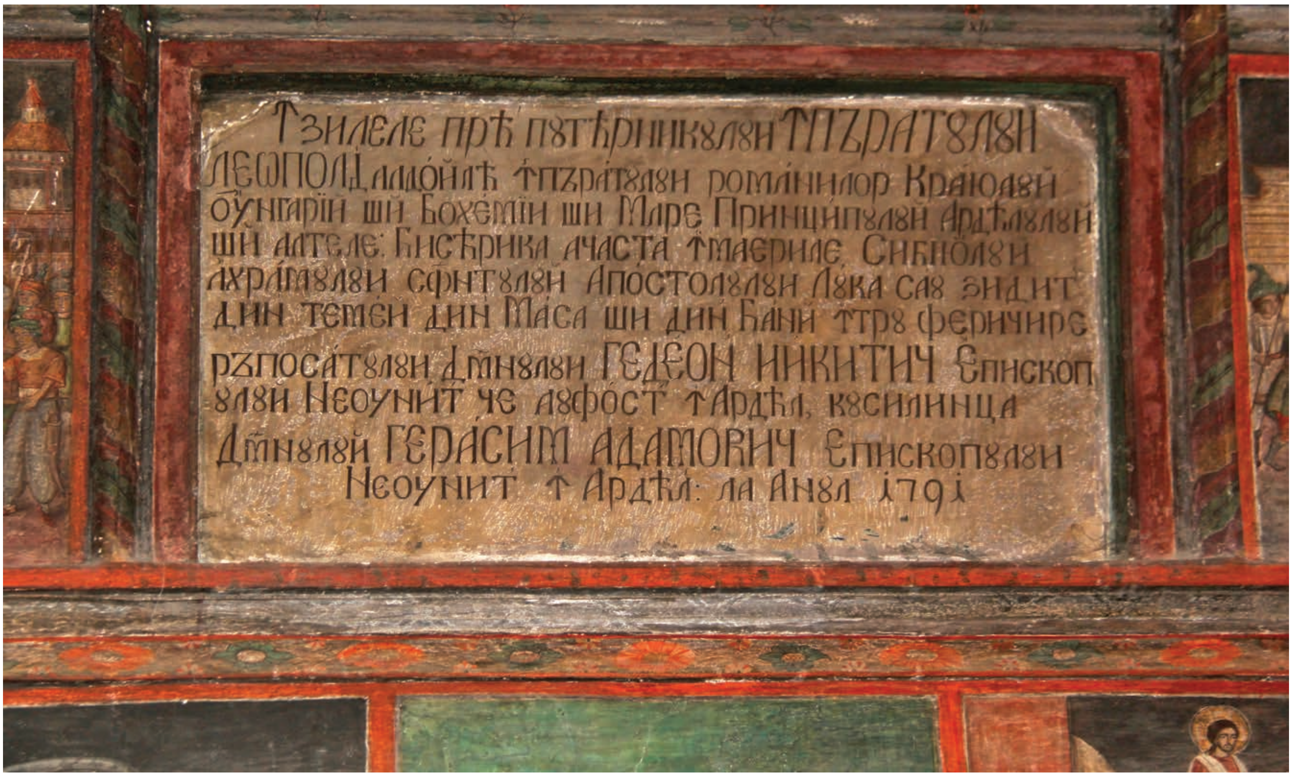
The historical research mentioned above highlighted the precarious socio-economic condition of the Romanians living in the *Măierime*, as well as their difficulties in affirming their ethnic and religious identities, regardless of the confession they belonged to, and despite the fact that they had always constituted the active presence in this place (they worked the gardens and orchards scattered among the many ponds beyond the southern boundary of the fortress).[8] As noted in Teodor Bodogae's study, "during the 15th and 16th centuries, although they were forbidden to buy houses" in the "Lower City" (the urban area located under the fortification walls and extending beyond the Cibin River), they counted several hundred souls. Even before the settlement became a district in 1721, a number of 211 families were mentioned, mainly Romanians, from whom the authorities perceived a land tax amounting to 1180 florins[9].

As long as the Romanians in Măierime were not recognized as "permanent residents", they were only allowed to maintain a rudimentary form of public and religious organization. The liturgical cult was carried out in a chapel (Bethaus) arranged in a most modest manner, "without a bell and without a tower"[10]. This resulted from a complaint made by the Romanians in Măierime to the Saxon magistrate in Sibiu on March 31st, 1762, illustrating how inappropriate the chapel in which they prayed had become, and asking the magistrate to allow them to arrange a space that would at least accommodate the large number of attendants to the religious service. A few months later, in August 1762, the Orthodox worshippers from Maieri reached an agreement with a certain G. Fronius concerning the liturgical use of a large-surfaced room that he had accepted to provide in his household. But the fact that the edifice was only 175 steps away from the Greek-Catholic Church "and that the cemetery was common to the two Romanian parishes" raised the suspicions of the Habsburg authorities, at a time when throughout Transylvania massive returns of the Greek-Catholics to Orthodoxy were taking place.[11]

It was obvious that the Romanian Orthodox community on the other side of the Cibin sought to overcome the provisional situation they had been in for too long and to convince the authorities to allow them to build their own place of worship. They did not wait for too long in anticipation of their response, but instead took concrete actions, building a brick storehouse in 1766. The authorities could still not be persuaded, not only regarding the church project, but also with allowing the Romanians from Măierime to arrange the space of the improvised chapel in a way that would clearly express its liturgical destination. At the orders of the Governor of Transylvania, the magistrate of Sibiu began an investigation, on account of which the Orthodox were informed that their initiative to build a church was contrary to "royal ordinances". Moreover, as noted in Reverend Teodor Bodogae's study, "in the meeting of August 11th, 1766, at the report of Kessler, the city's villic [local judiciary in charge of the city's economy and responsible for maintaining public order, *author's note*], it was decided to ask G. Fronius to install a stove in the room [where the Orthodox chapel had been arranged, *a.n.*] as well as a chimney on the rooftop, to avoid giving the impression that there would actually be a church where [the Orthodox, *a.n.*] would attract Greek-Catholic worshippers. Governor Hadik's order formally implied that if a Romanian church were to be given approval, it

▼ Fig. 4, 5, 6: *The original mural decoration on the balustrade of the trellis-work mast in "St. Luke" Orthodox Church.* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.





Ꙟзилеле прѣ пȣтѣрникȣлȣи Ꙟпъратȣлȣи
Леѡполд алдойлѣ Ꙟпъратȣлȣи ромáнилор Краюлȣи
Ѹнгарїи ши Бохемїи ши Маре Принципȣлȣи Ардѣлȣлȣи
ши алтеле: Бисѣрика ачаста Ꙟмаериле Сибїолȣи
ахрáмȣлȣи сфнтȣлȣи Апостолȣлȣи Лȣка саȣ зидит
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рѫпосáтȣлȣи Дмнȣлȣи ГЕДЕОН НИКИТИЧ Єпископ
ȣлȣи Неоунит че аȣфост Ꙟ Ардѣл, кȣсилинца
Дмнȣлȣи ГЕРАСИМ АДАМОВИЧ Єпископȣлȣи
Неоунит Ꙟ Ардѣл: ла Анȣл 1791

▲ Fig. 7: *"Saint Luke" Orthodox Church, Inscription.* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.

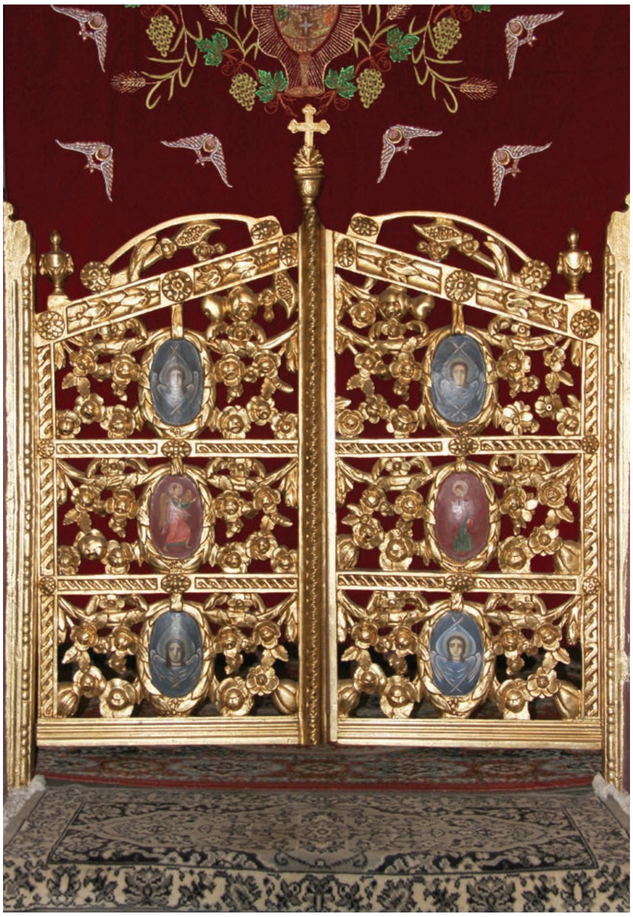
could only happen (*indulgeri posset*) within another of the city's neighbourhoods".[12]

The conditions for fulfilling the project of building an Orthodox church in Măierime, as mentioned at the beginning of this study, only became favourable after the promulgation of the Imperial Patent and Edict of Religious Tolerance, and then through the installation in Transylvania of Orthodox Bishop Ghedeon Nichitici (1784-1788). Most certainly, it was only the archbishop's insistence that persuaded the Transylvanian government to favourably resolve in 1787 the demand of the Romanians from Măierimea Sibiului to build an Orthodox church in the "Long Street", on the land they had acquired in 1782 from the same G. Fronius. It was the same place where, for 20 years, they had prayed in the shelter of the modest chapel. Bishop Ghedeon also had the merit of collecting the necessary money in order to begin the construction of the monument, the church's foundation stone having been laid in 1787.[13]

The construction could not be accomplished immediately due to the unexpected death of Ghedeon on November 20th, 1788. It was only after the appointment of Gherasim Adamovici as successor (1789-1796) in the Orthodox Bishop's seat for the Transylvanian Romanians when, using the sum raised by the late archbishop and the money gathered through a new collection, that the building plan could be completed and the new church consecrated in 1791.[14] The circumstances were also mentioned in the votive inscription, as seen on the balustrade of the nave's trellis-work mast: "In the days of emperor Leopold II, Emperor of the Romanians, King of Hungary, Bohemia and the Great Principality of Transylvania and others, this church from Măierimea Sibiului, having Holy Apostle Luke as patron saint, was built from the mass and the money of late Master Ghedeon Nichitici, non-Uniate bishop from Transylvania, and with the endeavour of Master Gherasim Adamovich, non-Uniate bishop from Transylvania, in 1791".

The first priest to serve at the altar of the new church, pa-

▼ Fig. 8: *"Saint Luke" Orthodox Church. Royal doors.* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.



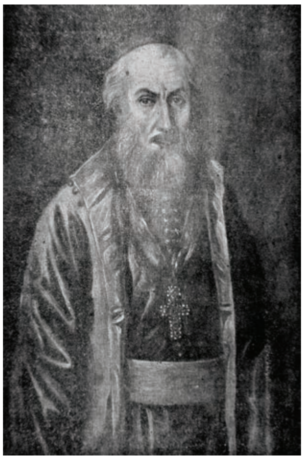


Fig. 9: *Portrait of Bishop Gherasim Adamovici (1789-1796).* (lithography after an anonymous artist).

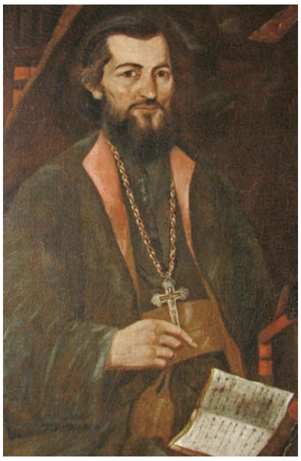


Fig. 10: *Bishop Gherasim Adamovici (portrait by an anonymous painter). It belonged to the museum-house from Răşinari that used to be the residence of Serbian Orthodox bishops of the Transylvanian Romanians during the second half of the 18th century.*

rishioner Ilie Popovici, would soon become the Orthodox archpriest of Sibiu, and the worship place in Măierime would serve for some time as an episcopal cathedral, until this rank was given to the Church in the Pit[15]. Bishop Gherasim Adamovici would prepare his burial site there. The crypt where his earthly remains were deposited after he passed on to the Lord on Palm Sunday in 1796 is located in the church nave, right in front of the royal doors of the iconostasis.

The name of the architect who designed St. Luke's church is no longer known. He could have been Austrian, probably the same as the designer whom the congregation of the Reformed (Protestant) parish in Sibiu hired in 1786 to conceive the plan of the church built on the current Metropolis Street; and the same as the architect whom Hagi Constantin Popp chose when building the Church in the Pit. These three worship buildings of Sibiu demonstrate architectural similarity, in the style of the baroque of Viennese influence, characteristic of Joseph II's era.

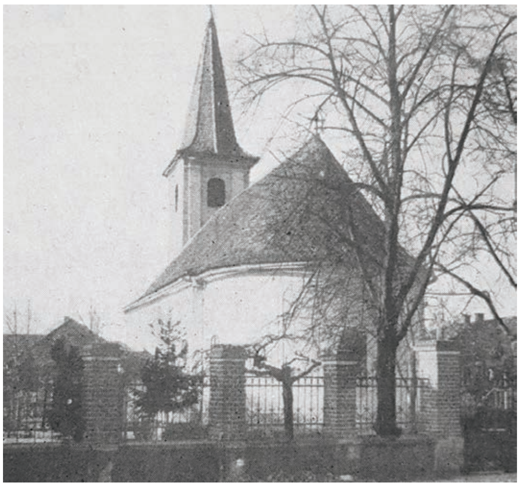
The Orthodox edifice in Maieri is a hall church with a semicircular apse of the sanctuary, non-recessed, with a prismatic bell tower attached to the western side of the building, and finished with a high pyramid helmet. The compartment of the apse was separated from the nave by an iconostasis built up to the limit of the vault. In the plan where the iconostasis of the church unfolds, which divides vertically the flattened vault of the nave in its side from the apse, the centre presents an opening in the form of a wide window describing, the same as the vault, the contour of a flattened arc. The trelliswork mast hanging over the narthex is supported, on the east side, by four robust pylons of masonry, between which flattened arcades extend.

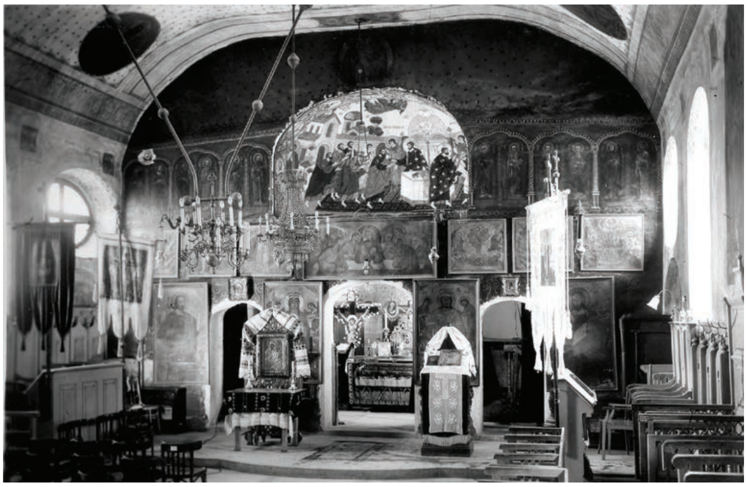
Originally, the mural decoration was found on the masonry surface of the altar screen, at least on its side from the nave, and, as already mentioned, on the balustrade of the nave's trelliswork mast, where figurative compositions can still be seen enclosing the inscription placed in the centre. Other compositions are distributed in a second register, immediately below the first one and above the arcades. The scenes from the trelliswork mast illustrate Evangelical episodes of the iconographic Cycle of the Passion and Resurrection of the Saviour, as follows: in the first register, "The Washing of the Feet of the Disciples", "The Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane", "The Treason of Judas", "Jesus at Annas'", "Jesus at Caiaphas", and "Jesus before Pilate". The sequence of images is interrupted by the placement of the inscription and continues with: "The Derision of Christ", "The Saviour brought in front of Herod", "Jesus being tortured", "The Bearing of the Cross", "The Crucifixion of the Lord", and "The Descent from the Cross". The second register is dedicated to Jesus' appearances after His Resurrection: "The appearance at the Sea of Galilee", "Supper of Emmaus", "Jesus on the Road to Emmaus", "Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene", "Jesus appearing to the Myrrhbearers in the tomb garden".

The figurative mural decoration that had existed on the altarpiece deteriorated in the course of time, just like the one in the area of the trelliswork mast, over which a layer of plaster and lime was applied at a certain point. Interventions that aimed at the renewal of the mural painting or at the painting of the entire church interior were accomplished in several stages. The oldest documented intervention took place in 1923, at the initiative of parish priest Romulus Bucşa. The original painting of the iconostasis was restored by Sibiu artist Dimitrie Kabadaief (1877-1934).[16] Kabadaief was highly appreciated by Nicolae Bălan, who had commissioned him to teach drawing, first at the Orthodox Normal School and then at the 'Andreian' Theological Academy (*Academia Teologică Andreiană*), all the while encouraging him to approach the field of church painting.

One may identify the details of this redecoration due to an image kept in the parish archives: a photograph taken in 1965, when the iconographic compositions were still preserved on the altarpiece of the church on the Long Street, in the manner conceived by Kabadaief four decades earlier. The photograph shows that the original mural painting was restored only in the higher area of the altarpiece, on the tympanum and on the upper register, corresponding to the apostles' frieze, while on the intermediary register, on the feast icons' register and on the lower register reserved to the royal icons, the wall was covered in canvas or cardboard-painted images, each iconographic subject having a distinct panel.

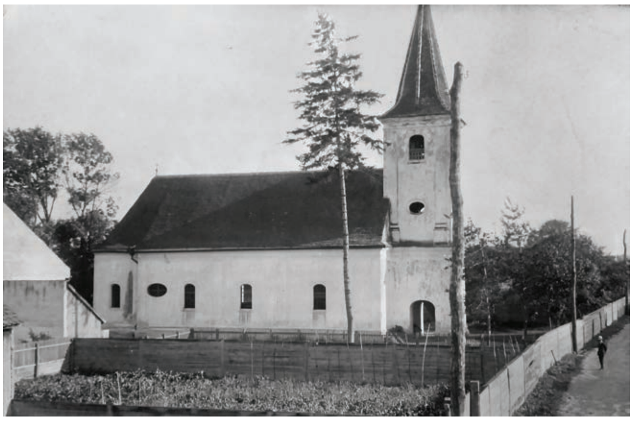
The iconographic programme began with the representation of the "Holy Trinity", the circular framed scene occupying the central position on the surface of the tympanum. The unfolding of the apostle frieze from the upper register was interrupted in an area where an arched window was opened in the temple wall. The images of the feasts, executed in the manner of portable icons, occupied an intermediate register on the wall. Three such smaller paintings framed a central panel, painted on a wider surface and dedicated to the representation of the "Last Supper". As for the subjects of the feast icons, to the extent to which one may still be able to observe them (due to the obstacles that block, within the picture, the image of the altarpiece), they depicted, in the northern flank: "The Nativity", "The Presentation of the Lord", "The Baptism of the Lord"; and in the southern flank: "The Transfiguration", "The Ascension of the Lord" (covered almost entirely by a church banner mounted right in front of the altarpiece), and "The Descent of the Holy Spirit". Interrupted by the openings of the three iconostasis doors, the lower register contained the series of royal icons painted on large panels: "St. John the Baptist", "The Mother of God with Child Jesus, among the Archangels",





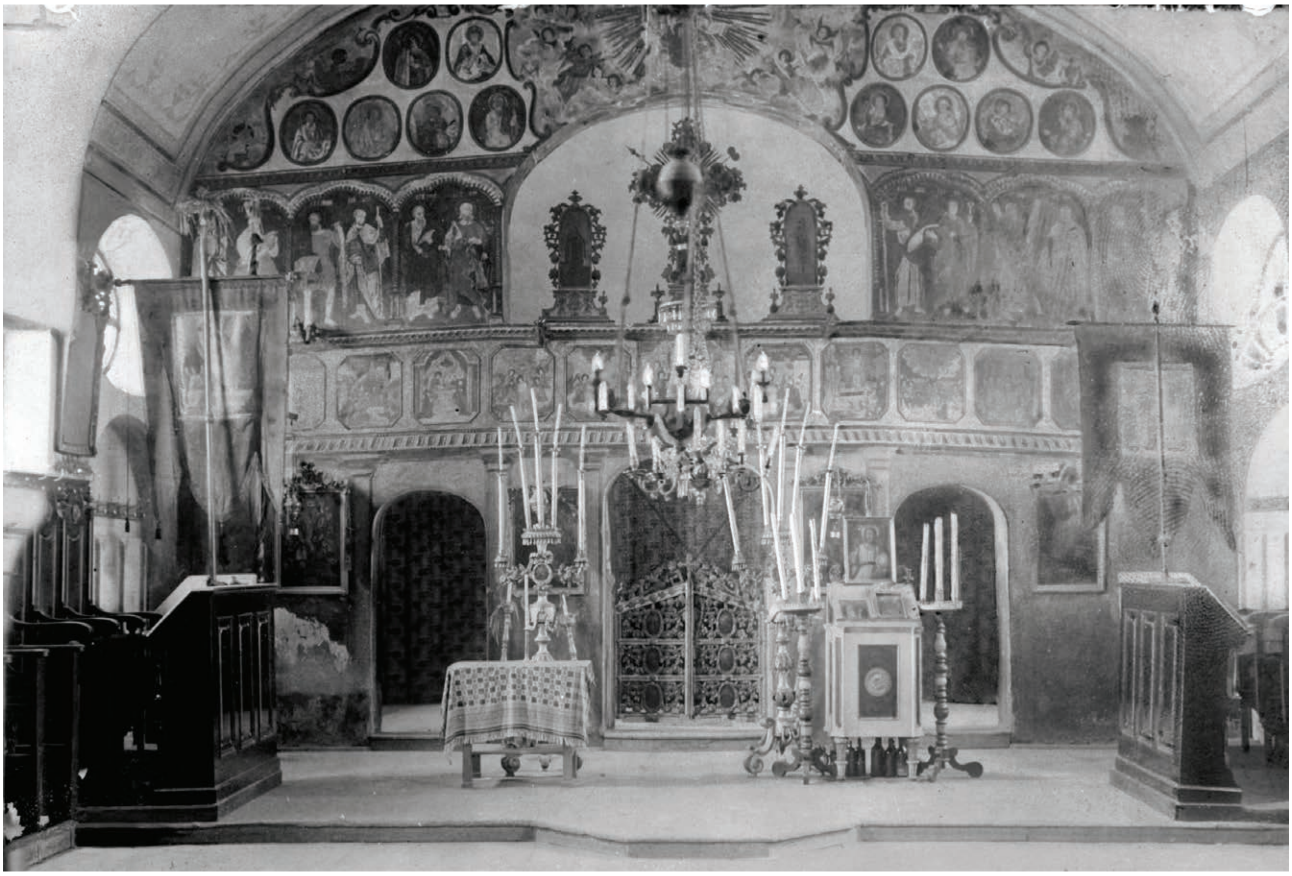
▲ Fig. 11: *"St. Luke" Church, photograph taken in mid 20th century (anonymous artist).*

◥ Fig. 12: *The altar screen of the "Long Street" Church, redecorated by painter Dimitrie Kabadaief (1877-1934). A fragment of Nicolae Stoica's mural decoration in the sanctuary's apse is still visible through the arcade in the altar screen wall. Photo taken in 1965 (anonymous).*



▶ Fig. 13: *The "Long Street" "St. Luke" Church in a photo taken by an anonymous photographer, during the first or the second decade of the previous century.*

▼ Fig. 14: *The altar screen of the "St. Luke" Church in a photo taken during the first or the second decade of the previous century (anonymous photographer).*



"Deisis", and the icon of the church's patron: "Saint Luke the Evangelist". Last but not least, the same photo shows a carved and gilded wooden artophorion placed on the Altar Table, seen through the opening of the royal doors in the iconostasis. The recently restored liturgical object is one of the few pieces representing the oldest endowments of the church. What is worth noting among the details provided by this photographic document, are the two elliptical windows that used to pierce the walls of the north and south of the nave, right past the iconostasis.

Another intervention was made in 1938, immediately after the installation of priest Ioan Chioaru in the parish. The reparation of the interior walls then caused the discovery of the original fresco fragments applied to the balustrade of the trellisworks mast, from under the lime underneath which they had been hidden for a long time. The ensembles of images, as well as the inscription of the Orthodox Church in Maieri were not reconditioned until much later, in 1970, by painter Arutin Avachian.[17]

We have so far been unable to identify anything from the documentation done by the restoration painter, documentation required for the authorization of such an intervention on a heritage monument, which would have spoken of the state of the images' preservation after the removal of the plaster covering them. However, one may notice that the manner in which the artist acted upon the old paintings implied obvious and extensive interventions of reintegration and reprocessing, which makes it even more problematic to identify the author of this part of the 18th century mural decoration, a completely unique one, if we relate to the Romanian churches of the city. Until the restoration of the fresco section of the trellisworks mast (1965-1970), the entire painting of the church interior was undertaken and entrusted to church painter Nicolae Stoica. Regarding this new stage in the process of adornment of the church, it is appropriate to point out some circumstances that might prove significant to the objective that we have set out for this study, namely to recover any detail that could serve to a faithful reconstruction of the former aspect of the church from Maieri.

First of all, church painter Nicolae Stoica refused the request made by priest Ioan Chioaru and the parish council to execute a new painting on the iconostasis of the church, which, being built-in, was due to receive a mural decoration. Since they did not succeed in convincing Nicolae Stoica, the parishioners were content to entrust the painting of the iconostasis to Ioan Căzilă, a local painter, though much more modest in terms of artistic endowment than Nicolae Stoica. The second detail that attracted our attention, following the events of that time, as they later appear in the parochial chronicle, refers to the fact that Stoica painted the vault of the altar apse in tempera and not in the fresco technique that he applied to the rest of the church. These aspects that might suggest that Nicolae Stoica had still found traces of the original wall painting on the iconostasis and perhaps even on the vault of the altar, which he had considered worth preserving. The murals made in the 1960s radically altered the interior layout of the Maieri church. The only part maintained from the original decoration apparently concerns the images preserved on the choir-loft parapet, also affected by the above-mentioned restoration.

During the last decade, through the insistence of the present-day parish priest, theology professor Irimie Marga, other traces testifying to the past state of the "Long Street" Church were also recovered. Among the objects forgotten in the attic of the church, there were several pieces of original liturgical furniture, such as the royal doors which were replaced in the mid-1960s, two candlesticks dating back to the turn of the 19th century, and an icon of "Our Lady with Infant Jesus"[18], one of the oldest endowments of the church. All of these patrimony objects resumed their place in the church after being properly restored and researched.

An essential support in reconstituting the authentic image of the church from Maieri came as a result of the discovery of two novel photographic documents in the Archives of the Faculty of Theology from Sibiu. Both the inside and the outside look of the "Long Street" Church were recorded in these photos. The images were taken before 1923, when the first modifications that altered and dissolved the original appearance of the old monument were mentioned. The two snapshots had been placed in a file with various documents belonging to Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, along with other reproductions of ecclesiastical monuments in Transylvania. One may thus assume that they were made by Professor I. D. Ştefănescu, a passionate photographer of monuments and religious paintings he documented during his doctoral research. Ştefănescu defended and published his doctoral thesis in several volumes, starting with 1928.[19] It is known that, during the decade following the 1918 Union Day in Alba Iulia, I. D. Ştefănescu researched the churches that were historical monuments throughout Transylvania. As a historian of old Romanian religious art, he also visited Sibiu. The close relationship of respect and friendship, as well as the long collaboration between I. D. Ştefănescu and Metropolitan Nicolae are also public knowledge. Testimonies of such a relationship are still found in the above-mentioned archive: epistolary documents and reproductions from the snapshots taken by Professor I. D. Ştefănescu.

Returning to the two photos of the church from Maieri, the most important one in terms of documentary value is the one showing the interior of the nave. It immortalizes an overview of the iconostasis. The wall altarpiece, as it was captured at the time of the shooting, was covered entirely with a painted decoration. The iconographic compositions were arranged on several registers. Only in the spaces between the opening of the royal and diaconal doors, portative icons enclosed in sumptuous frames adorned with carved motifs were mounted in the intervals between the apses and the diaconal doors, in the same manner in which the crucifix with the prayers was decorated. The royal doors and the two candlesticks that can be seen in the picture were proved to be the recently recovered and restored pieces, as mentioned earlier.

The iconographic program of mural paintings composes, on superimposed registers, the series of feast icons, the apostle frieze with the apostles in pairs, grouped under trilobite arches, the images of the prophets on the tympanum, framed in two-row oval medallions, and ending in flanks with representations of the symbols of the Evangelists. The ensemble culminates, in the highest area of the altarpiece, with the apotheotic representation of the "Coronation of the Holy Virgin". The accuracy of the photographic reproduction allowed us to distinguish the features of a characteristic and particularly unmistakable pictorial style, due in particular to the representations of the twelve apostles, whose figures of large dimensions offer more accurate details. It is the same artistic manner we have noted in the paintings that decorate the walls of certain churches in the counties of Sibiu and Brașov, dating back to the same historical period in which one may assume that the mural on the iconostasis of Maieri was made, but which remained preserved in a better condition during the course of time, unlike the case we are discussing.

Examining these painting ensembles in which we noticed a similar style, we note that the one closest to the Sibiu decoration (in terms of vicinity) is found in the Orthodox "Palm Sunday" Church in the town of Avrig (Sibiu county). It consists of the series of icons occupying the upper registry of the iconostasis, plus the deacon doors. An inscription at the bottom of the "Last Supper" icon recalls the names of the authors: "This holy altarpiece was painted and carved in wood, with the help of God, by us, Teodor the painter and sin ego Sava in 1807 February Ten". The artistic itinerary covered by this family of Transylvanian painters was mostly reconstructed by priest and professor Valeriu Literat from Făgăraș, who identified, in 1929 and 1930, the churches painted by them in Olt county, thus establishing their area of origin as well.[20]

In the altar of the Orthodox "Assumption of the Virgin Mary" Church from the village of Veneţia de Jos (com. Părău, Braşov county), the following note can be deciphered next to the table of oblation, making known the name of the second son and disciple of painter Teodor: "They were grounded, they were vaulted and painted with the help of God ... this holy and divine altar. ... the year 1801 (pray for) Gospodu Teo(do)r painter and sin ego Io(an) and sin Ego (Sa)vu".[21] The father associated with his sons for the execution of the mural decoration inside the church and on the outer facades of the eastern apse. Moreover, in the Orthodox church of Şercăiţa (Şinca village, Braşov county), the original wall decoration was compromised by its gross repainting performed almost ten years ago. The inscription from the narthex, whose text was first published by Nicolae Iorga, recalls, among other things, that "... the painting ... was done by me Theodoru the painter, in 1811".[22]

Valeriu Literat also attributed to the same artist – rightfully, in our opinion - the mural decoration (similar to the one in Şercăiţa) from the old church of Ohaba (com. Şinca, Braşov county), a village near Şercăiţa.[23] The images of the nave and altar were extremely erased at the time of Valeriu Literat's research, as they are now. They have not yet been restored, as the place of worship was abandoned after the construction of a new church in the first decade of the 20th century. Valeriu Literat also identified the towns from Făgăraş region that have churches painted by Sava from Făgăraş, noticeably displaying the painting style that Sava had acquired from his father. Sava had the merit of completing the paintings of the churches in Beclean (1808-1811), Calbor (1813), Sâmbăta de Jos (1814), Mândra (1821), Făgăraş ("The Church of the Greeks", 1832), Caţa (1845), and Breaza (1846)[24].

Similarities to the manner of painting on the altarpiece of the "Long Street" Church may be identified especially in Calbor (com. Beclean, Braşov county). In the imposing building of this other Orthodox church, one can still find large areas from the original wall painting, despite its structural deterioration. On the built-in altarpiece, scenes composed in a similar manner to those in Sibiu unfold in the feasts register or on the one reserved for the apostles' frieze. As with his father and master's painting, the technique of Sava from Făgăraș is remarkable in its Baroque aspect. It determines the characteristic manner of representing the figures – draped in attitudes that are as natural as possible. Both Teodor and Sava intended to avoid the austere style that the iconographic canon imposed for the representation of the twelve apostles. He sought to confer the expressiveness of authentic portraits to these highly individualized figures. The most spectacular effect, however, stems from the stylish, even sophisticated outfit of the twelve men, dressed in tunics and richly draped cloaks, where many different chromatic nuances alternate.

This hypothetical attribution of the mural paintings on the wall of the Maieri church in Sibiu to painter Teodor from Făgăraș (who was probably helped by at least one of his sons), as well as the dating of the iconographic ensemble around 1791, clarifies only one aspect in a matter where other questions still persist. It remains to be seen, for example, what was the fate of the four royal icons, as well as the fate of the other icons still visible in the frame, even if faded. The difficulty of the investigation lies mainly in the fact that the photographer who took the image of the altarpiece placed the apparatus in an angle from which three of the royal icons are impossible to be observed: two of them are masked by the candlesticks placed in front of them, and the third, that of the titular saint, is placed in a blind spot caused by the light flowing from the window onto the adjoining wall. The only royal icon mounted on the left side of the altarpiece allows the eye to perceive the contour of some shapes, though also quite vague.

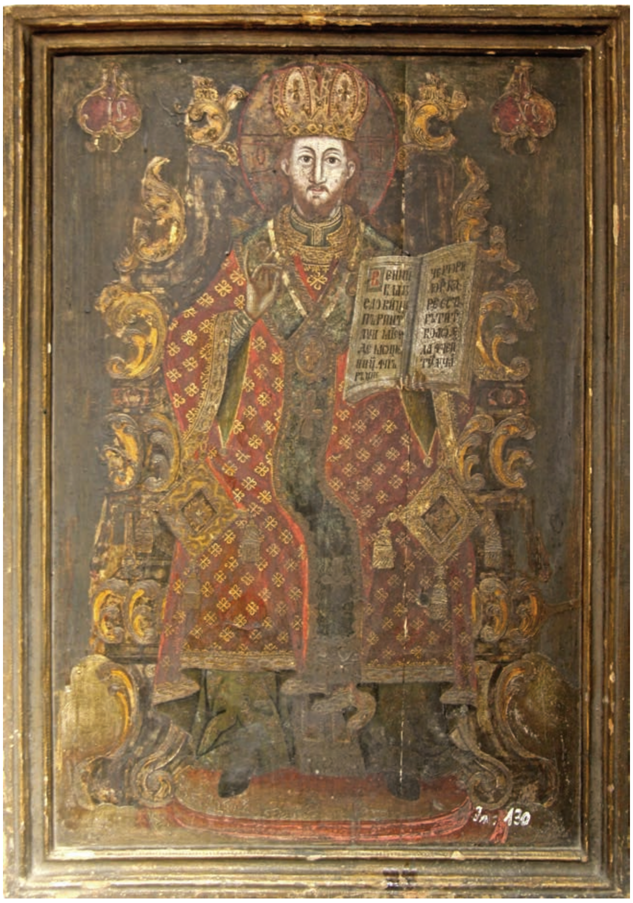
Looking at the pages of an old inventory of objects owned by the church in Maieri, we also found four royal icons registered there: "Jesus Christ the Great Hierarch", "The Mother of God with the Child", "Saint Hierarch Nicholas", and "Saint Luke the Evangelist", all having the same dimensions as the wood panels on which they were painted (86 × 61cm). This final mention, and especially the extreme rarity of the situations in which a titular saint icon represents Saint Luke, encouraged us to explore the Church Art Collection of the Metropolitan Centre in Sibiu. Starting with its founding in 1897,[25] this Art Collection came to be the depositary of several hundred icons originating from the old places of worship in the diocese. Although the full inventory of this heritage has not been achieved so far, and the indications of origin of many pieces have been lost, we had the chance to discover four icons corresponding to both the dimensions and to the subject matter of those we had been looking for.

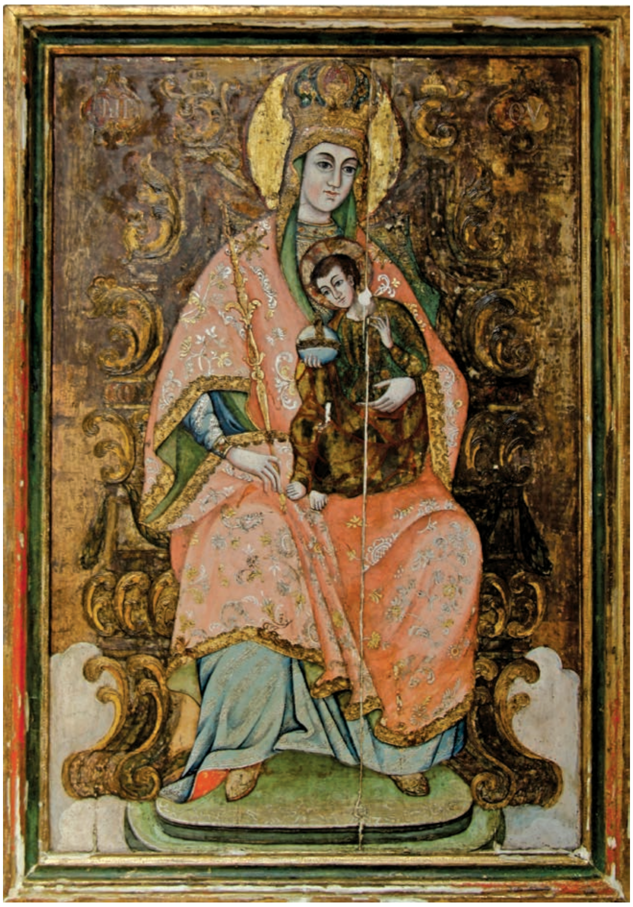
A full confirmation of the fact that these four icons once belonged to the church of Maieri resulted from the visual confrontation of Saint Nicholas' image in the Archdiocese collection with the depiction of the same hierarch, corresponding to the royal icon on the left side of the iconostasis – the only clearly distinguishable one within the photo frame.

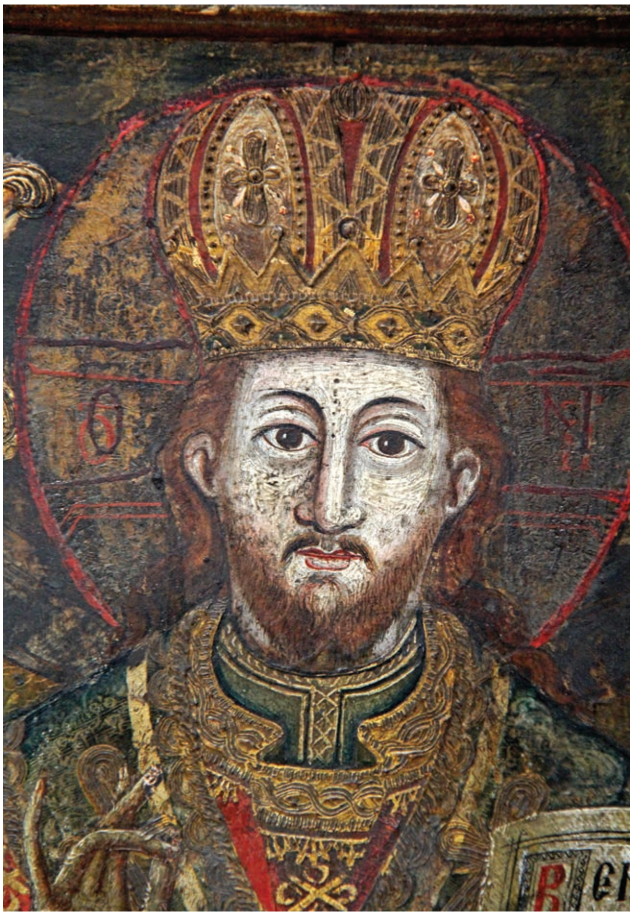
Though affected by the passage of time, the exceptional artistic quality of these four icons still makes an impression. A delicate contour describes the elongated faces, enveloped in a white, marmoreal light. The eyes open clear and large under a serene forehead, lifted over the eyebrow arch. The expression is natural and the painter knew how to convey the mood and the special character in the case of each person represented. But these subtly differentiated attitudes and feelings were, however, subordinated to the

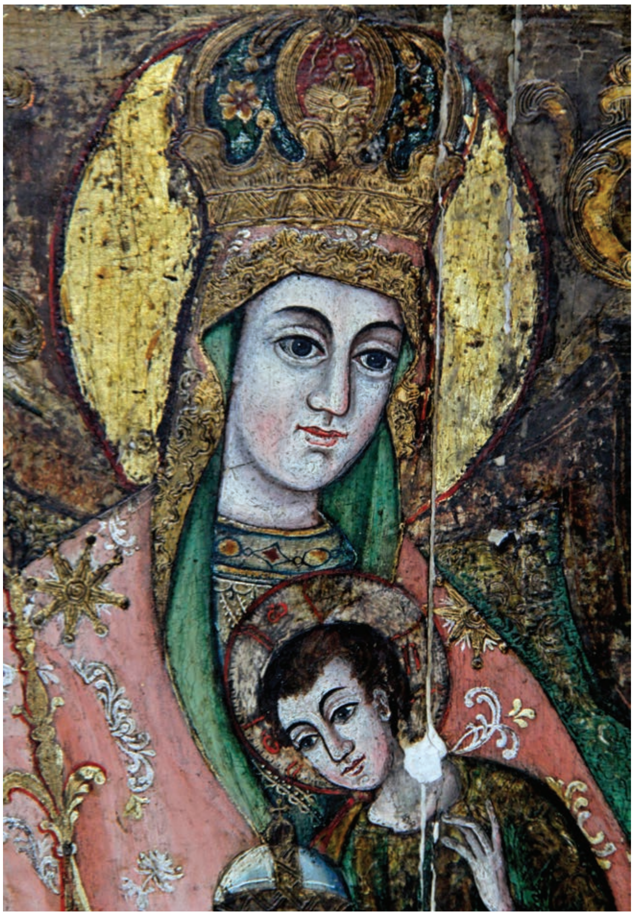
▶ Fig. 15-22: *Painter Teodor from Făgăraş (attributed to), royal door icons decorating the original altar screen in the "Long Street" "St. Luke" Church.*

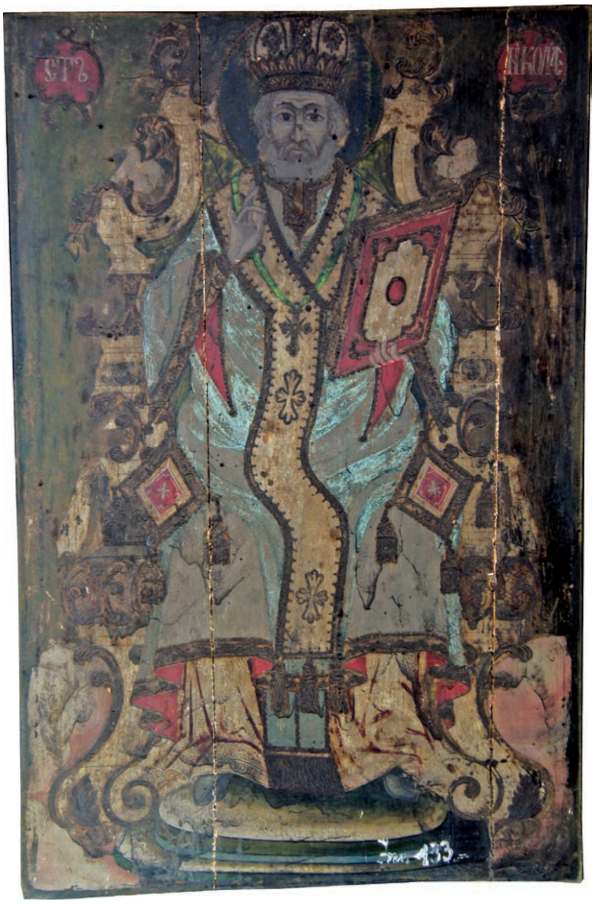
*Fig. 15, 16: "Jesus Christ the Great Hierarch", and detail.*
*Fig. 17, 18: "The Mother of God with the Child", and detail*
*Fig. 19, 20: "Saint Hierarch Nicholas", and detail.*
*Fig. 21, 22: "Saint Evangelist Luke", and detail.*

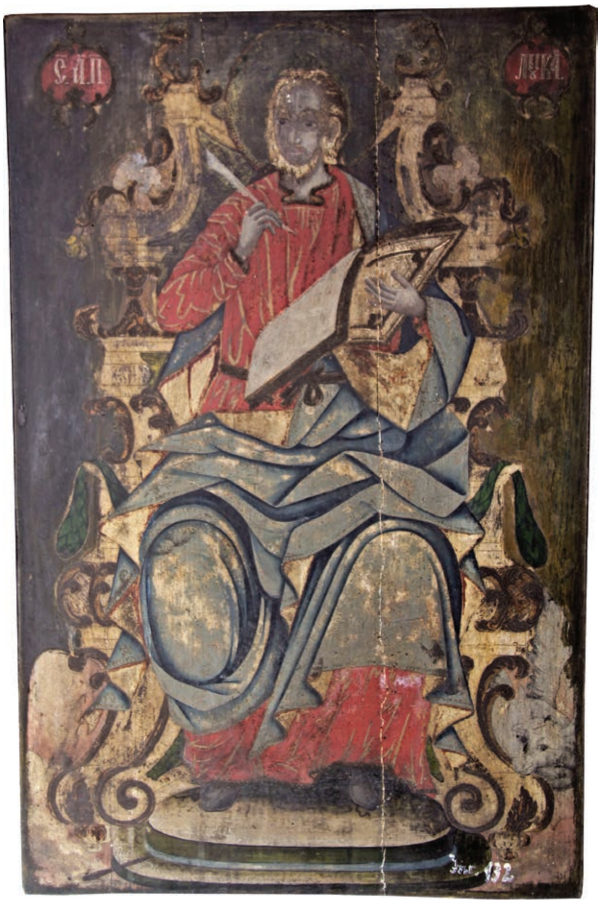


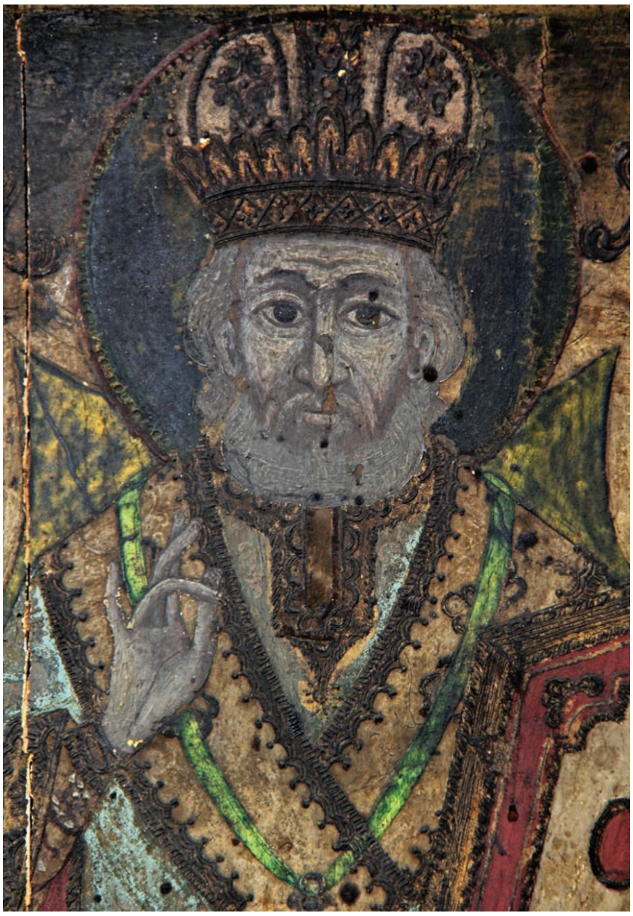


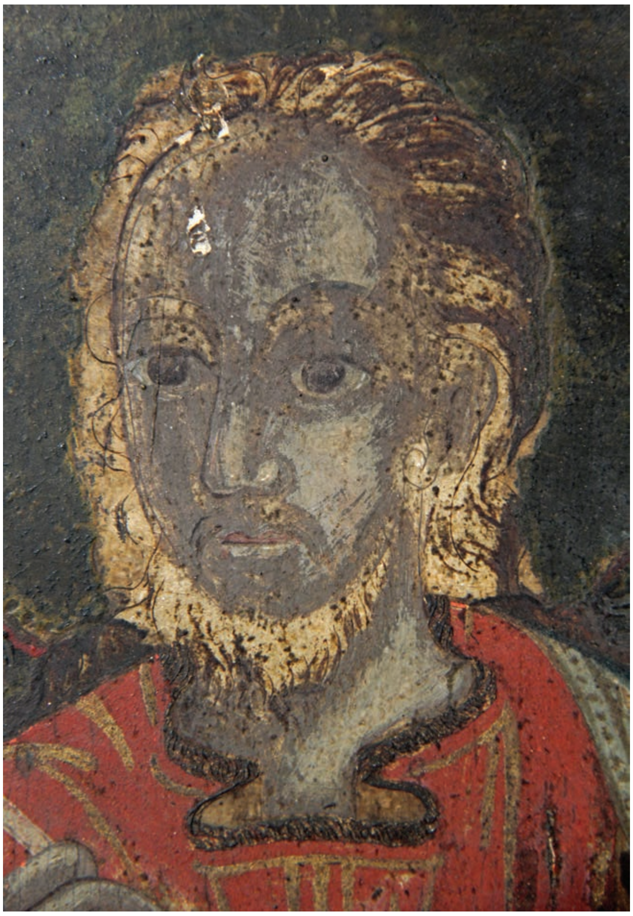


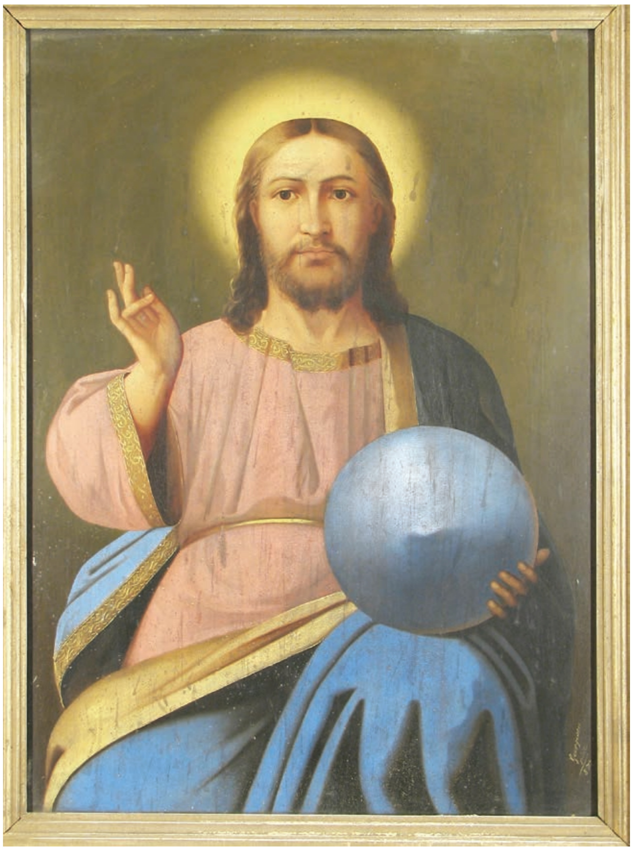


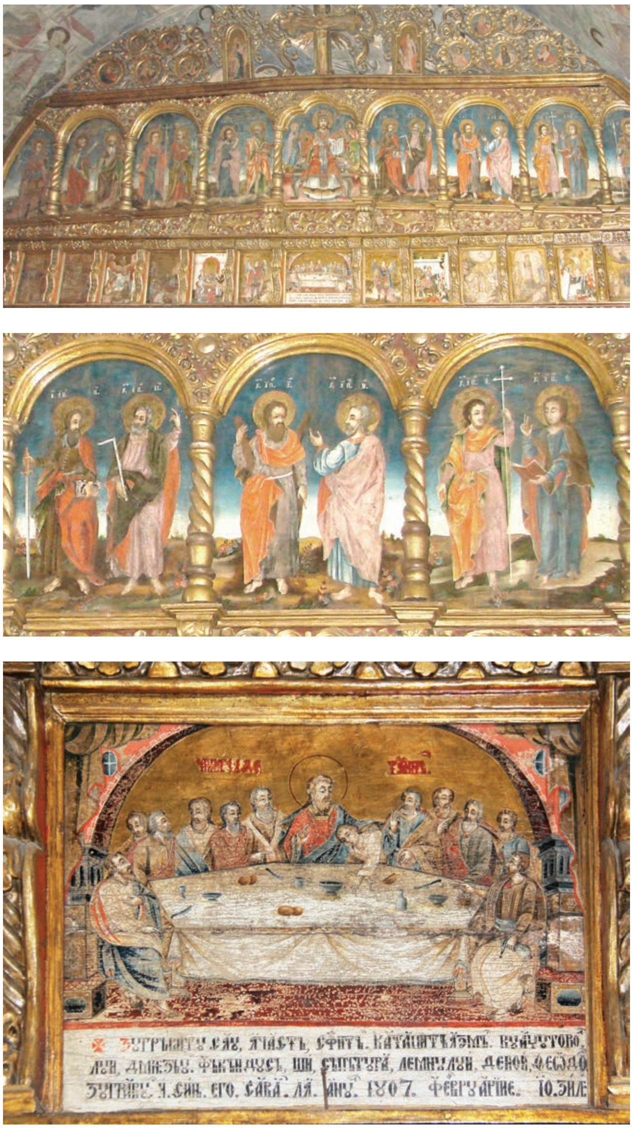












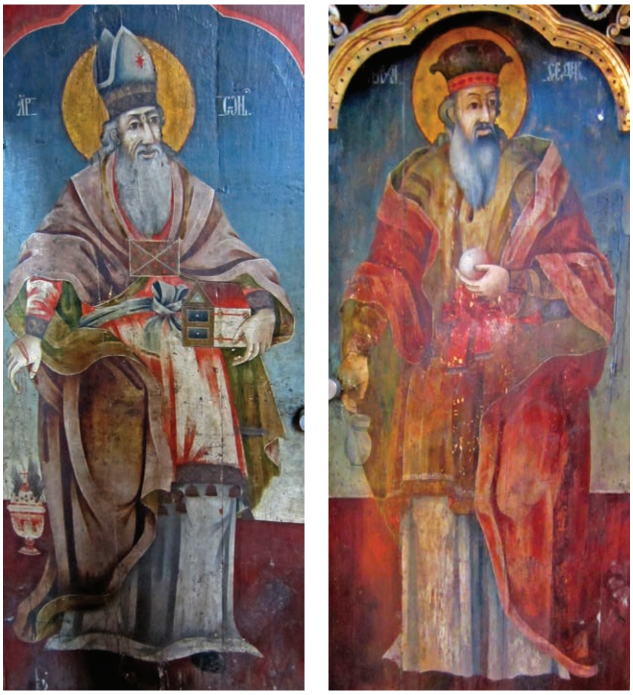


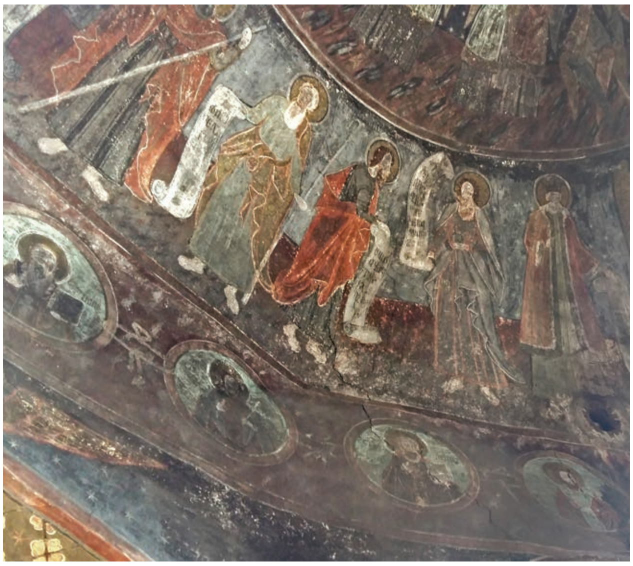
Fig. 23: *Constantin Georgescu (1843-1887?), "Jesus Christ blessing" (1887), icon belonging to the "Long Street" "St. Luke" Church.* Credits: The Church Art Collection of the Metropolitan Center in Sibiu.

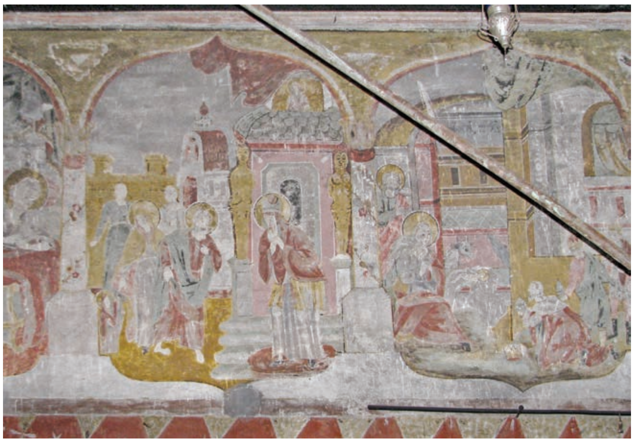
Fig. 24, 25, 26: *Painters Teodor and Sava from Făgăraş, the iconostasis of the "Palm Sunday" Church in Avrig (1807).* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.

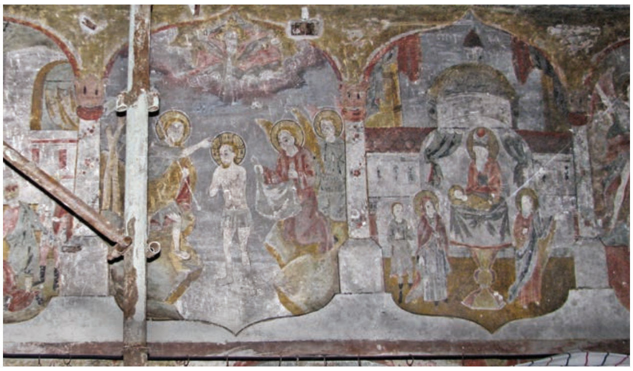
Fig. 27, 28: *Painters Teodor and Sava from Făgăraş, "Prophet Aaron" and "Melchisedec", diaconal doors in the "Palm Sunday" Church in Avrig (1807).* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.

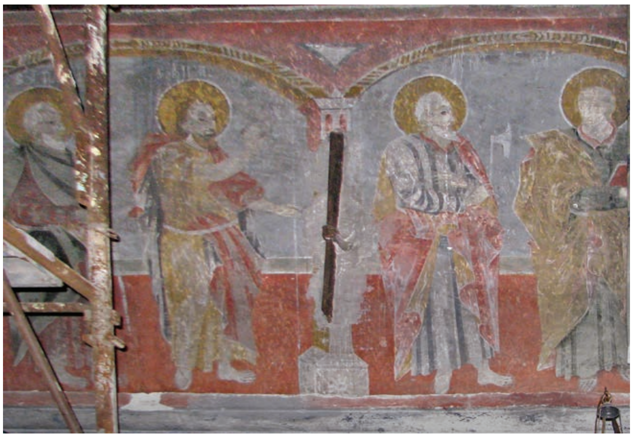
artist's preoccupation to make them express both the state of holiness and that of total transfiguration. This transition to a spiritualized condition was communicated in the most expressive way through the sophisticated and festive arrangement of the vestments. The rich crinkles seem to have given corporality a new nature. Such a style entitles us to assign them to master Teodor from Făgăraş.

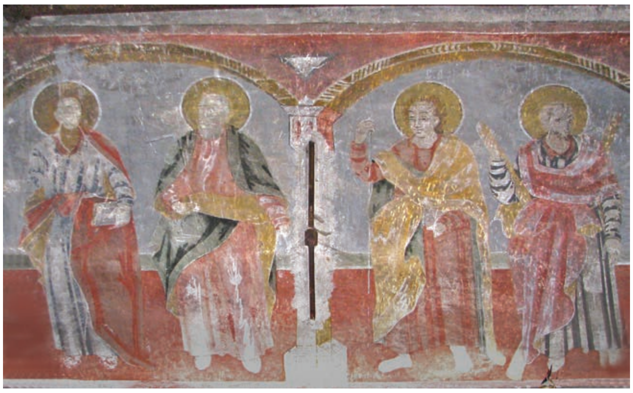
A final necessary identification, though perhaps not so difficult, still remained to be done with regards to another icon. This other icon appeared vertically in the photograph, next to the iconostasis. The icon depicted the Saviour, blessing and holding in His left hand a globe, symbol of the universe restored with the price of His sacrifice. While searching in the same collection of the Archdiocese of Sibiu, we found a royal icon strikingly similar to the one just described. Although it cannot be the one and the same icon, as the dimensions of the icon in the photograph are considerably reduced (compared to the dimensions of the surrounding objects), one may still admit that its author could be the same master who painted the icon in the Archdiocese collection. The latter holds the signature of a painter from Poiana Sibiului, Constantin Georgescu (1843-1886).











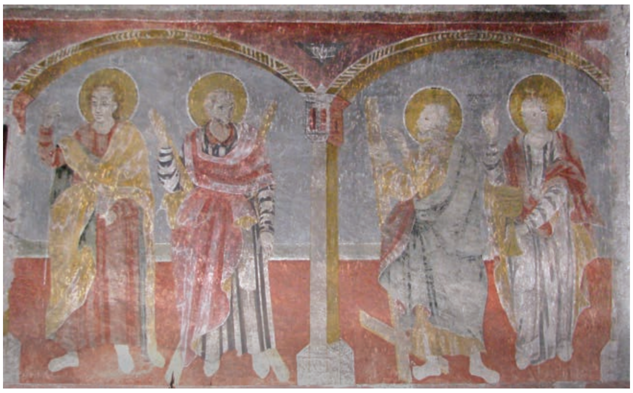


Fig. 29: *Painter Teodor and his sons, Sava and Ioan, the mural decoration of the apse vault in "The Assumption of Virgin Mary" Orthodox Church in the village of Veneţia de Jos (commune Părău, Braşov county) (1801).* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.

Fig. 30, 31, 32: *Painter Sava from Făgăraş, mural painting in the nave of the Orthodox Church in Calbor – the apostle frieze (1813).* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.

Fig. 33, 34: *Painter Sava from Făgăraş, mural painting in the nave of the Orthodox Church in Calbor – the iconostasis register (1813).* Credits: Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan.

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Georgescu painted the icon in 1872, along with other three royal icons ("Mother of God with Child Jesus", "Saint Prophet Elijah" and "Saint George the Martyr"), destined for the iconostasis of a yet unidentified church.

Such is the extent to which the use of a photographic document can serve to the historical reconstitution of past events, completing the scarcity of the details transmitted by conventional sources. More specifically, even though the analysed photograph was made a century after the building and the interior decoration of "Saint Luke's" Orthodox church in Maierii Sibiului, in a stage when all of its composition seemed marked by the patina of time, it captured the elevated ambience of an Orthodox church interior, ornamented with refinement and discretion, particularly suggestive for the cultural life in the Romanian community inhabiting the "Lower Suburbs" of Sibiu: mostly poor, but hardworking, with aspirations of integrating into the urban society of Sibiu.

Identifiable due to this photograph, the images painted on the iconostasis wall or on the wooden panels applied on it testify to the artistic level reached in the evolution of Transylvanian Romanian communities at the end of the 19th century, through representative, genuine masters such as painter Teodor from Făgăraș.

## Notes :

1 Around 1746, the "măierişte" (a collection of farms, dwellings, and barns located at the outskirts of a settlement, in order to keep the harvest and the ploughing tools) on the other side of Cibin River banks were circumscribed to a separate district. Bodogae 1981, p. 17.

2 Sigerus 1930, p. 40, 41.

3 Sigerus 1930, p. 42.

4 Puşcariu 1889, p. 46, 84.

5 Lupaş 1928, p. 20, 21.

6 Bodogae 1981, p. 19-21.

7 Chioaru 1993.

8 During the 18th century, most of these agricultural farms were held by the Saxon patriciate of Sibiu (Dumitrescu-Jippa, Nistor 1976, p. 152). These were "owners of a superior social condition (the Ehremburg families) and postal office (*Meisterpost*)" but the constructions also included a yard of the hospital (*Spitalmeirhof*). Archaeologist Petre Beşliu Munteanu made a connection between "the toponym Spitals Mayrhoff, the Romanians who were working there as servants and the district inhabited by the Romanians outside the premises walls". Beşliu Munteanu 2012, p. 105, 225; Beşliu Munteanu 2015, p. 131.

9 Bodogae 1981, p. 20.

10 Sigerus 1922-1928, p. 114; *apud* Brusanowski 2007, p. 239, n. 150.

11 Bodogae 1981, p. 20.

12 Bodogae 1981, p. 20.

13 Sigerus 1930, p. 41.

14 Chioaru 1993, p. 25.

15 This status became official when the worship place from the Josephine suburb gained a patron in the archbishop of Sibiu, by virtue of the imperial decree no. 1823 of Emperor Francis i; followed at the request of the widow Paulina Hagi Constantin Pop, also by the right of the Archdiocese to manipulate the fortune of the church, approved by Andrei Şaguna and the court in Vienna in 1854. By virtue of this, in the Synod of the Greek-Oriental Archdiocese from Transylvania, in 1899, lay deputy Partenie Cosma demanded that the state of affairs be also regulated by the organic statute. Soroştineanu 2006, p. 33.

16 Chioaru 1993, pp. 31, 32.

17 Chioaru 1993, p. 32.

18 Abrudan 2015, p. 105-156.

19 In the introduction to the first published volume of his doctoral thesis, I. D. Ştefănescu argued the following: "*...les photographies qui illustrent ce livre et celles qui nous ont servi pour l'analyse des monuments sont l'oeuvre de nos mains*". Ştefănescu 1928, p. 2.

20 Literat 1996.

21 Literat 1996, p.26.

22 Iorga 1906, p.171.

23 Literat 1996, p.49.

24 Literat 1996, p.215; notes on the activity of Sava the painter from Făgăraş also at Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran, Szöcs Fülöp 2008, p. 15-20.

25 *Museums and collections*, 1981, p. 227.

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# *La poudre aux yeux des saints*
## *Contributions ethnologiques au dossier des peintures murales endommagées en Roumanie*

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traduction de Vladimir Agrigoroaei

SUMMARY: In the specific case of the Orthodox churches of Romania, the author wishes to analyze the information concerning the popular ritual which consists in the voluntarily removal of the eyes (or of the mouth) of the saints painted on the church walls, from the perspective of the dynamic relations established between the official dogma and the religious practice, both having as reference the icon and the figure of the saint. The systematization and interpretation of the answers to the mythological questionnaires launched by Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu at the end of the 19th century combined with the ritual texts in the Romanian folklore open an ethnological perspective into a matter usually analyzed by religious art history specialists. Such practices concern the ritually formalized destruction of murals in churches in order to use the dislodged fragments of mortar or dust in magic.

KEYWORDS: mural paintings, church, folkloric religiosity, erotical lyric, charms.

REZUMAT: În cazul concret al bisericilor ortodoxe din România, autoarea doreşte să analizeze informaţiile referitoare la ritualul popular care constă în scoaterea voluntară a ochilor (sau a gurii) sfinţilor pictaţi pe zidurile bisericilor, din perspectiva relaţiilor dinamice care se stabilesc între dogma oficială şi practica religioasă, ambele având ca obiect referenţial icoana şi figura sfântului. Sistematizarea şi interpretarea răspunsurilor la chestionarele ‚mitologice' lansate de Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu la finele secolului al XIX-lea, coroborate cu texte rituale din folclorul românesc, deschid o perspectivă etnologică asupra unei chestiuni de care se ocupă îndeosebi istoricii artei religioase. Este vorba despre distrugerea formalizată ritual a picturilor murale din biserici, pentru utilizarea cvasi-magică a fragmentelor sau prafului de mortar dislocate.

CUVINTE CHEIE: pictură murală, biserică, religiozitate folclorică, lirică erotică, descântec.

Saint Jean Damascène affirmait à propos des icônes qu'elles étaient des « livres pour les illettrés » (*βίβλιοι τοῖς ἀγραμμάτοις αἱ εἰκόνες*), mais aussi qu'elles « sanctifiaient la vue » (*τὴν ὅρασιν ἁγιάζουσαι*).[1] Ce n'est peut-être pas un hasard si cette expression du saint a pu être interprétée en rapport avec les yeux, organe du corps humain, car le pluriel du mot *ὅρασις* a l'acception de « yeux ». Or, l'attribution aux icônes du pouvoir de sanctifier la vue exprime d'une certaine manière la conception byzantine selon laquelle elles n'étaient pas de banales illustrations des Écritures saintes ou un support pour l'enseignement ou apprentissage du catéchisme, comme dans le monde occidental. Les icônes étaient des objets liturgiques vivants ; elles étaient essentielles à la pratique religieuse. On dirait, comme Dillenberger, que ce développement orthodoxe est singulier, puisque l'aspect visuel et l'aspect verbal constituent deux réalités fondamentales, dont aucune ne peut prévaloir sur l'autre.[2]

Si l'on suit les idées de saint Jean Damascène, défenseur des icônes contre le courant iconoclaste et contre les accusations d'idolâtrie, l'image et son prototype se trouvent dans un rapport simultané d'identité et de différence. Le saint précise d'ailleurs que les croyants ne prient pas l'image, bien qu'ils adorent la réalité exprimée par cette dernière, et grâce à elle. En raison de cette identité dans la différence, le croyant doit savoir qu'il a affaire à la présence de Dieu à travers une réalité médiatrice. Il arrive ainsi que l'image et la réalité de Dieu fusionnent, quoiqu'elles ne soient pas identiques. Cette manière de se rapporter aux icônes a mené Dillenberger à la conclusion que, pour l'essentiel, « *questions of faith are central to the making of icons in a way that is not characteristic of the West* ».[3] Cela veut dire que les figures peintes dans un sanctuaire constituent des présences vivantes liées aux rituels accomplis dans cette église et, en même temps, aux fidèles qui participent de façon interactive à ces rituels.[4] Et alors, pourquoi quelqu'un irait-il jusqu'à les détruire volontairement? La relation d'identité subtile et la différence entre l'image et le prototype invisible fonctionnent elles toujours dans ces situations ? Quelle est la relation entre le dogme officiel et la pratique canonique populaire ? Est-il possible de respecter le dogme, tout en ignorant la praxis canonique ? En d'autres termes, la violation ou l'écart par rapport au canon officiel supposent-ils nécessairement des écarts par rapport au dogme ?

Dans une étude qui porte un titre édifiant (*Les Images abîmées : Entre iconoclasme, pratiques religieuses et rituels 'magiques'*), Simona Boscani Leoni a identifié trois catégories de motivations qui expliquent la détérioration des images sacrées par des actes volontaires des êtres humains. Ses recherches, qui portent sur les spécificités d'une aire alpine bien délimitée, ne peuvent pas être évoquées pour expliquer toutes les situations de ce type. Dans ce territoire bien défini, la chercheuse identifie trois typologies distinctes qui s'appliquent aux images abîmées : « la première concerne l'image endommagée et dissimulée pour des motivations religieuses (lors de la Réforme, mais aussi lors d'interventions de censure totale décidées par les autorités ecclésiastiques catholiques) ».[5] Or, ce genre de détérioration est bien répandu dans l'Europe entière. Le comportement agressif des chrétiens protestants envers les peintures sacrées s'est manifesté comme conséquence directe de leur refus de faire une distinction entre l'image et son prototype, de leur rejet du caractère médiateur de l'icône ou du statut intercesseur des saints dans les rapports des croyants avec Dieu. Les cas analysés par Simona Boscani proviennent de localités dont les habitants sont passés au Protestantisme. Selon la nouvelle doctrine, ces croyants ont caché les figures des saints peints autrefois sur les murs sous une strate de chaux blanche.

La Roumanie n'est pas du tout étrangère à ce type de pratique, quoique l'on s'attende à ce qu'elle concerne les anciennes églises catholiques de Transylvanie, les édifices de culte des communautés saxonnes, devenues par la suite luthériennes, ou hongroises, passées en large partie au Calvinisme. Cependant cette situation ne concerne pas uniquement les Saxons et les Hongrois, tant s'en faut. Elle se manifeste aussi dans certaines églises des Roumains de la même région ; les cas que nous évoquerons sont tout à fait ambigus. Prenons l'exemple des églises du Haţeg, une vallée des Carpates située dans le Sud-ouest de la Transylvanie. La destruction des images dans ces édifices de culte témoigne de motivations diverses, que l'on pourrait traiter de 'spectaculaires', y compris du point de vue de l'implication des Protestants dans ces affaires de destruction. Il est pourtant risqué, dans une étude de nature scientifique, de considérer que ces actes doivent tous être attribués aux Calvinistes. Le XVIIIe siècle représente une période où nombre d'églises de la région, bi-rituelles, étaient utilisées à la fois par les Roumains calvinistes et par les orthodoxes ; ces mêmes églises sont devenues ensuite gréco-catholiques (en grande partie), quand certains membres de ces communautés roumaines ont adhéré à l'Uniatisme.[6] Le cas le plus édifiant est celui de l'église de Densuş, où la destruction des peintures murales peut avoir plusieurs motivations, échelonnées sur une période de temps plus longue. Cela dit, il est vrai que le passage d'une partie de la population au Calvinisme ou à l'Uniatisme – y compris pour une partie des nobles – pouvait être accompagné de la mutilation des peintures sacrées (représentant les saints aussi bien que le Christ), surtout dans le contexte d'un conflit confessionnel local. Néanmoins, la situation a été plus nuancée, car l'appartenance simultanée des membres d'une communauté locale à trois confessions chrétiennes différentes (Orthodoxie, Uniatisme et Calvinisme) a mené à des situations de compromis. Les destructions que l'on peut observer actuellement constituent les conséquences d'un répertoire varié de gestes qui ont pu être réalisés dans un intervalle chronologique d'au moins 200 ans. Il faut les traiter avec beaucoup de précaution.

Revenons à la classification de S. Boscani Leoni. Elle affirme que le deuxième type de destruction « a trait à la manipulation de l'image par égratignure ou écriture sur la couche picturale ».[7] Cette pratique est bien attestée dans le cas des églises de Roumanie, où l'écriture de noms, d'autres

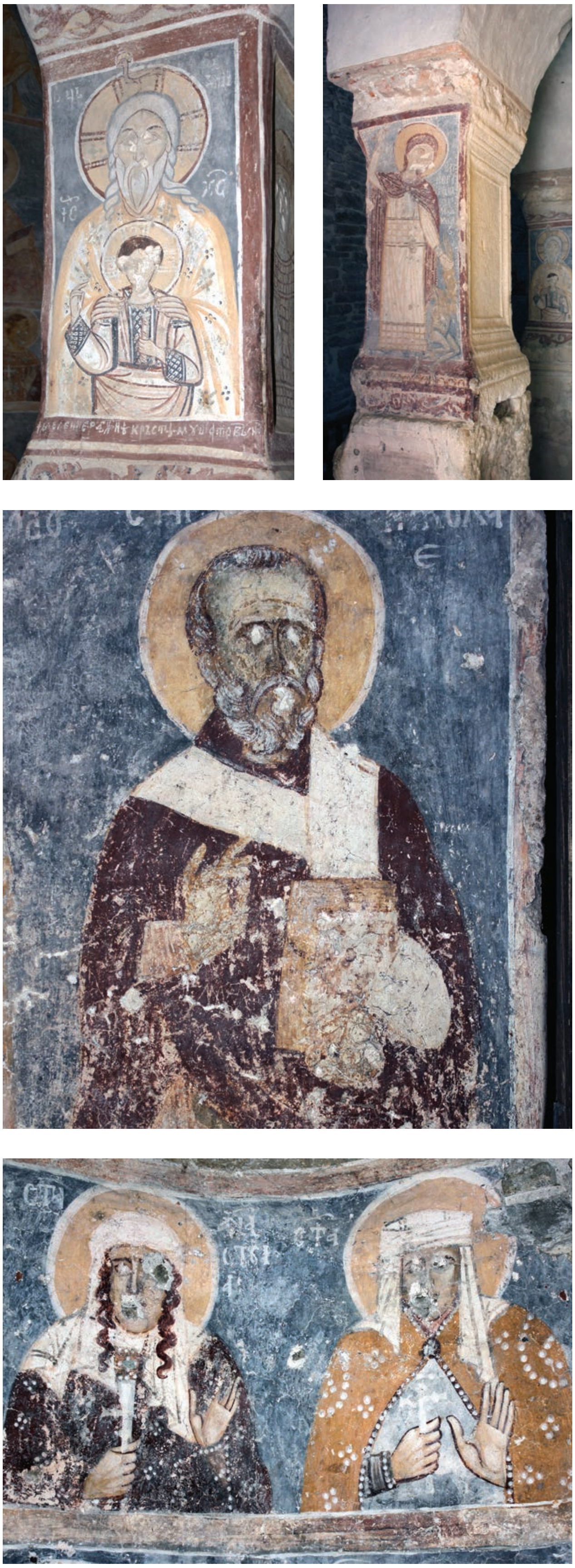
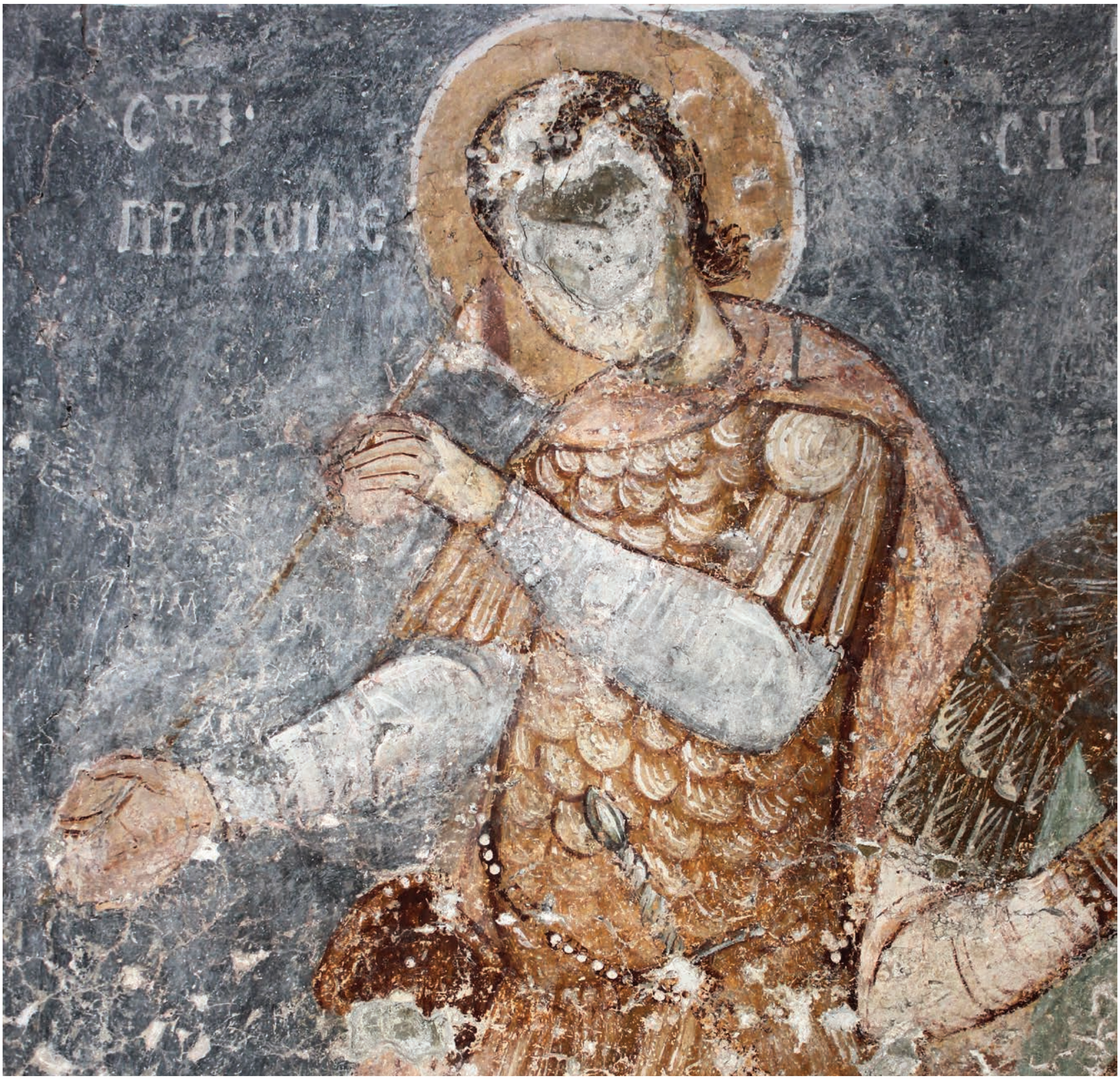


Fig. 1-8 : *Peintures murales médiévales dans l'église de Densuş. Mutilations des yeux et des bouches des saints, voire du visage dans son entier, avec une finalité discutable.*
Clichés : Vladimir Agrigoroaei (1-2), Anca Crişan (3-8).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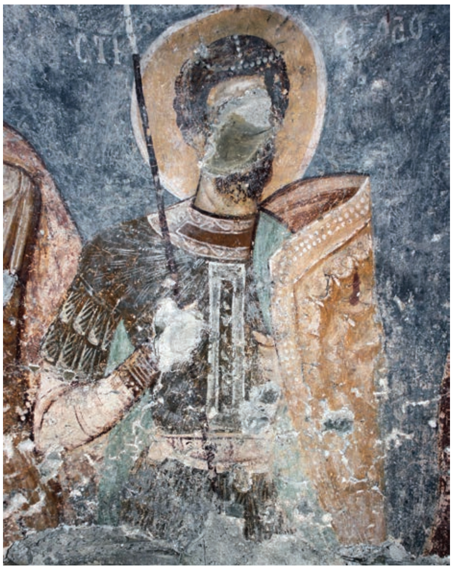

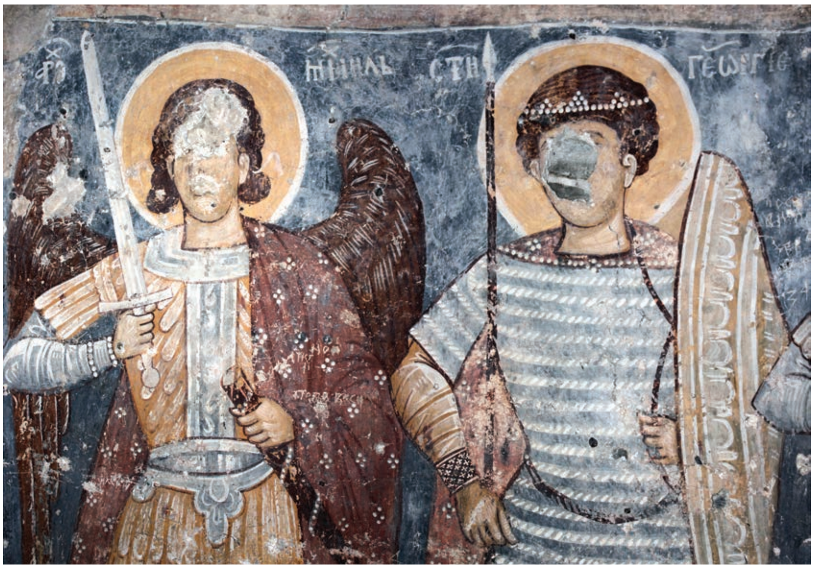

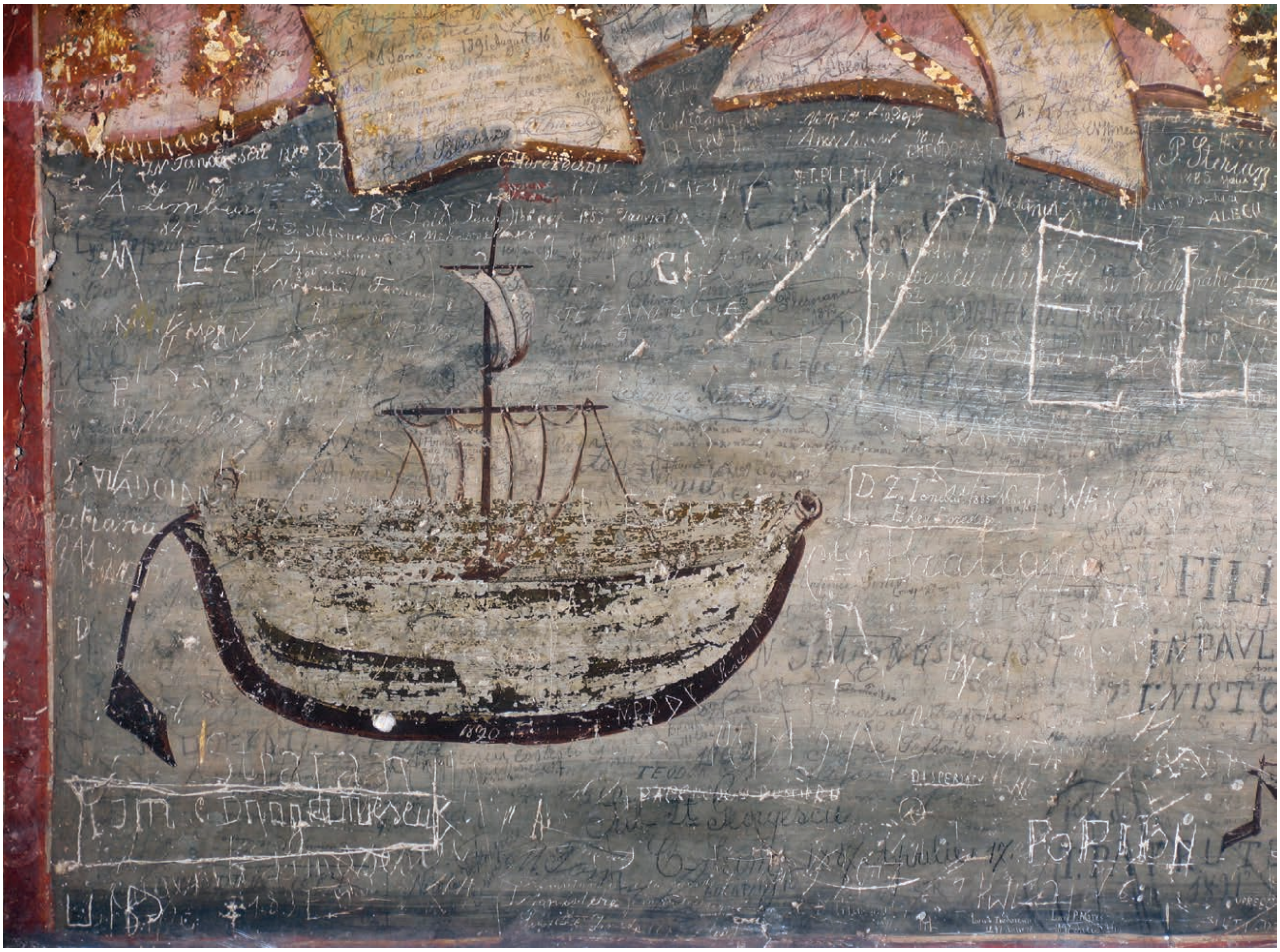

▲ Fig. 9 : *Graffiti sur les peintures murales de Polovragi.*
Cliché : Şerban Bonciocat.

mots ou le graffiti sous forme de dessins obéit à une logique ambivalente, car ces actes humains remontent à plusieurs époques historiques. Le vandalisme touristique, pour n'en nommer qu'un seul type – la destruction du patrimoine étant un concept relativement récent –, n'est qu'un aspect du problème. Nous sommes en train de rédiger une étude plus générale consacrée aux usages dévotionnels de l'écriture dans l'espace roumain, dont un chapitre entier traitera du phénomène mentionné ci-dessus. À ce stade de la recherche, il convient de noter uniquement une hypothèse que nous avons également exprimée à plusieurs reprises : ces graffiti constitueraient une sorte de *pomelnic* (en roumain, la liste des noms de personnes décédées que le pope orthodoxe récite pendant la messe, du slavon *pomĭenĭnikŭ*, 'funérailles'). Les brèves et sporadiques listes de noms que l'on identifie à Strei ou à Densuş, dans le Haţeg, à partir du xve siècle, se généralisent, si l'on suit les propositions d'Adrian Andrei Rusu, à Hălmagiu, ou dans d'autres églises de la région, au point de constituer de véritables listes funéraires murales, comme dans l'église Saint-Nicolas de Hunedoara.[8]

Enfin, il faut mentionner le troisième et dernier type d'image abîmée traitée dans la classification de S. Boscani Leoni : « l'image repeinte ou réadaptée ».[9] Cette dernière concerne très peu la présente étude, car elle sort du cadre de notre discussion.

Toutes ces situations sont attestées en Roumanie. La pratique que nous analyserons par la suite n'est pas incluse, en revanche, dans la classification proposée ci-dessus. Dans le cas spécifique de notre étude, il est plus important de traiter d'un rituel qui consiste à extraire des morceaux de mortier (poudre ou pièces disloquées) à partir des représentations peintes sur les parois des églises, ou bien à partir des couches de peinture des icônes. L'intérêt portera moins sur les destructions volontaires de grande taille, faites d'habitude avec une épée ou un yatagan. Ces cas, tout aussi intéressants que les nôtres, méritent d'être traités dans des études à part.

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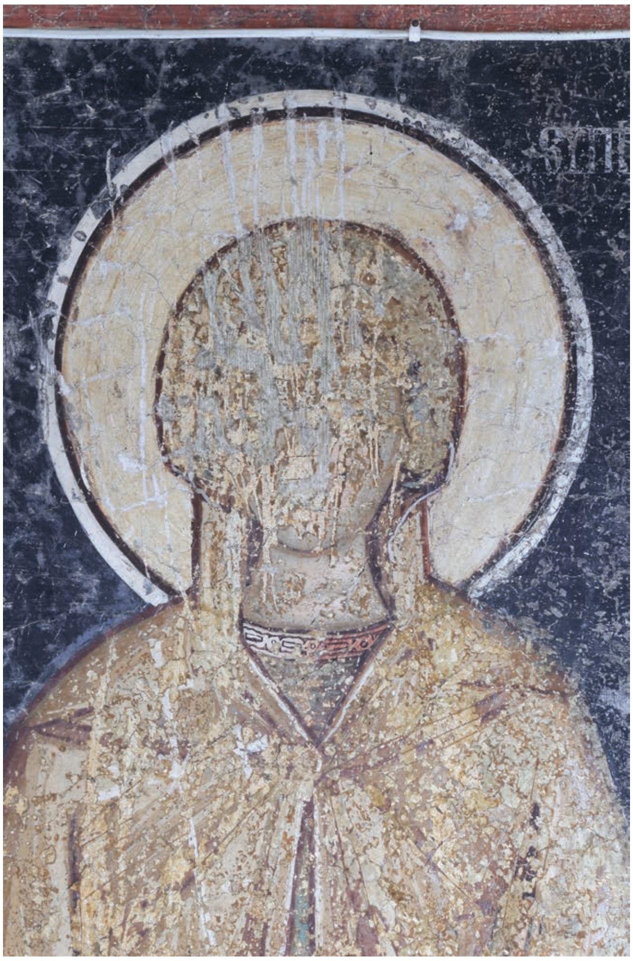
Il faudra sans doute commencer par la présentation du matériel dont nous disposons à l'heure actuelle ; à cet égard, il convient de noter que B. P. Hasdeu a rédigé deux questionnaires entre 1878 et 1885. Le premier concernait le domaine juridique (*Obiceiele juridice ale poporului român. Programa* [Les coutumes juridiques du peuple roumain. Programme] ; l'autre concernait des questions linguistiques et mythologiques (*Programa pentru adunarea datelor privitoare la limba româna* [Programme pour la collecte de données sur la langue roumaine]). Sa méthode de travail était simple : il avait envoyé ces questionnaires aux prêtres et aux enseignants de nombre de villages de toutes les régions habitées par les Roumains, y compris la Transylvanie, qui faisait à l'époque partie de la double monarchie austro-hongroise. Les réponses qu'il avait reçues par lettres devaient servir, entre autres, à la rédaction de son célèbre dictionnaire *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae*, initié sur une commande de l'Académie Roumaine, dictionnaire resté inachevé. Ces réponses, inédites pendant longtemps, ont été partiellement publiées après trois quarts de siècle



par Ion Muşlea et Ovidiu Bîrlea. Elles ont été récemment rééditées par Ion Taloş, en 2010.[10]

Or, cinquante-six réponses au questionnaire mentionnent « les yeux des saints peints sur les églises » (« *ochii sfinţilor zugrăviţi pe biserici* »), formule qui se réfère en réalité à la poudre ou la terre qui a été extraite de ces yeux, autrement dit la partie de paroi que l'on a pu arracher de ces yeux figurés.[11] La plupart des attestations proviennent de la région d'Olténie, quatre sont de Transylvanie et une autre du nord de la Moldavie. Le chiffre cinquante-six ne représente pas un nombre élevé d'attestations. Par exemple, les informations fournies ne recouvrent qu'une seule page dans un volume de six cents pages. Il est alors possible que la situation reflète soit le manque de popularité de cette pratique, soit un silence que les prêtres, les enseignants ou les villageois même ont décidé de garder. C'était sans doute un phénomène qu'ils considéraient comme gênant, incompatible avec la transmission par écrit. La raison principale était que « dans la plupart des cas, les yeux des saints sont arrachés pour être utilisés dans les sortilèges ».[12]

Outre les réponses au questionnaire, l'état de l'art sur cette question ne permet de mentionner que peu de références explicites à cette pratique. Nous les présentons par la suite :

L'église du monastère de Surpatele (dans le comté de Vâlcea) a été édifiée par la famille princière des Brancovan au xviiie siècle, sur l'emplacement d'une fondation plus ancienne. L'édifice a été abandonné vers la fin du xixe siècle ; les moniales ont quitté les lieux et l'église est devenue une ruine. Au début du xxe siècle, la même église et une partie des cellules des moniales ont été restaurées ; la vie monacale a également recommencé. En 1933, le prêtre Constantin Dănescu a publié une étude monographique (son mémoire de licence) consacrée au monastère de Surpatele. Ses recherches de terrain lui ont permis d'apprendre que « les Gitans autour, anciens esclaves [du monastère], ont spolié les briques des murs délabrés et ont même osé arracher les yeux des saints de la véranda de l'église, pour s'en servir dans leurs tours de magie et sorcellerie ».[13] Sur la base de cette attestation, nous avons effectué une mission de terrain à Surpatele et dans le village de Frâncești, dans le voisinage du monastère, afin d'observer si les 80 ans qui sont passés ont tout de même conservé les souvenirs de la pratique mentionnée par le prêtre Dănescu. Nous n'avons obtenu toutefois aucune information quant à l'affaire des 'yeux des saints'. Il se peut, d'une part, que l'intervalle de temps ait été trop long ; d'autre part, il est tout aussi possible que notre visite ait été trop courte pour que les habitants puissent se fier à nous, afin de nous transmettre un rituel qui peut presque passer pour un acte blasphémateur. En tout cas, l'état actuel du monastère, son activité religieuse intense, la vigilance des religieuses quant à la valeur patrimoniale de l'église et de ses peintures murales rendraient presque impossible toute intervention néfaste sur ces dernières.

Une deuxième recherche de terrain sur ce sujet a été réalisée à l'ermitage de Saint-Étienne, dans le monastère de Hurez (comté de Vâlcea). En regardant l'image endommagée des saints, j'ai eu une conversation avec une religieuse locale qui a attribué aux Turcs la profanation des peintures, des yeux, du visage des saints dans son entier, ou d'autres parties du corps des figures peintes. La profanation est censée avoir eu lieu pendant la période où l'ermitage a été abandonné. Coïncidence ou non, les édifices des deux monastères ont été abandonnés à la fin du xixe siècle, c'est-à-dire à la même période que la circulation des questionnaires de Hasdeu. Bien qu'il ne soit pas souhaitable de généraliser à partir de ces informations, nul ne peut ignorer que l'absence d'un gardien de l'édifice favorisait la poursuite, secrète sans doute, de l'action qui nous intéresse ici. La qualité spéciale des ruines d'une église, un espace liminaire doté d'un caractère sacré ambigu (ni église, ni lieu commun), a peut-être encouragé les pratiquants de ces rituels à continuer leurs actions, tout aussi ambiguës.

Aujourd'hui il arrive que les gestes nuisibles en question soient attribués à Autrui : sorciers gitans ou Turcs païens. En ce qui concerne les Turcs, il convient de noter que ces

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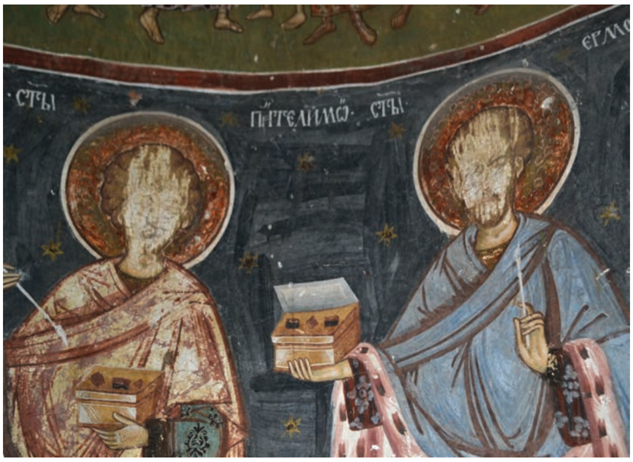
◤ Fig. 10 : *Mutilations des peintures murales de Surpatele.* Cliché : Șerban Bonciocat.

▼ Fig. 11 : *Mutilations du même type à Hurez, dans l'église de l'ermitage Saint-Étienne.* Cliché : Ștefan Iliescu.



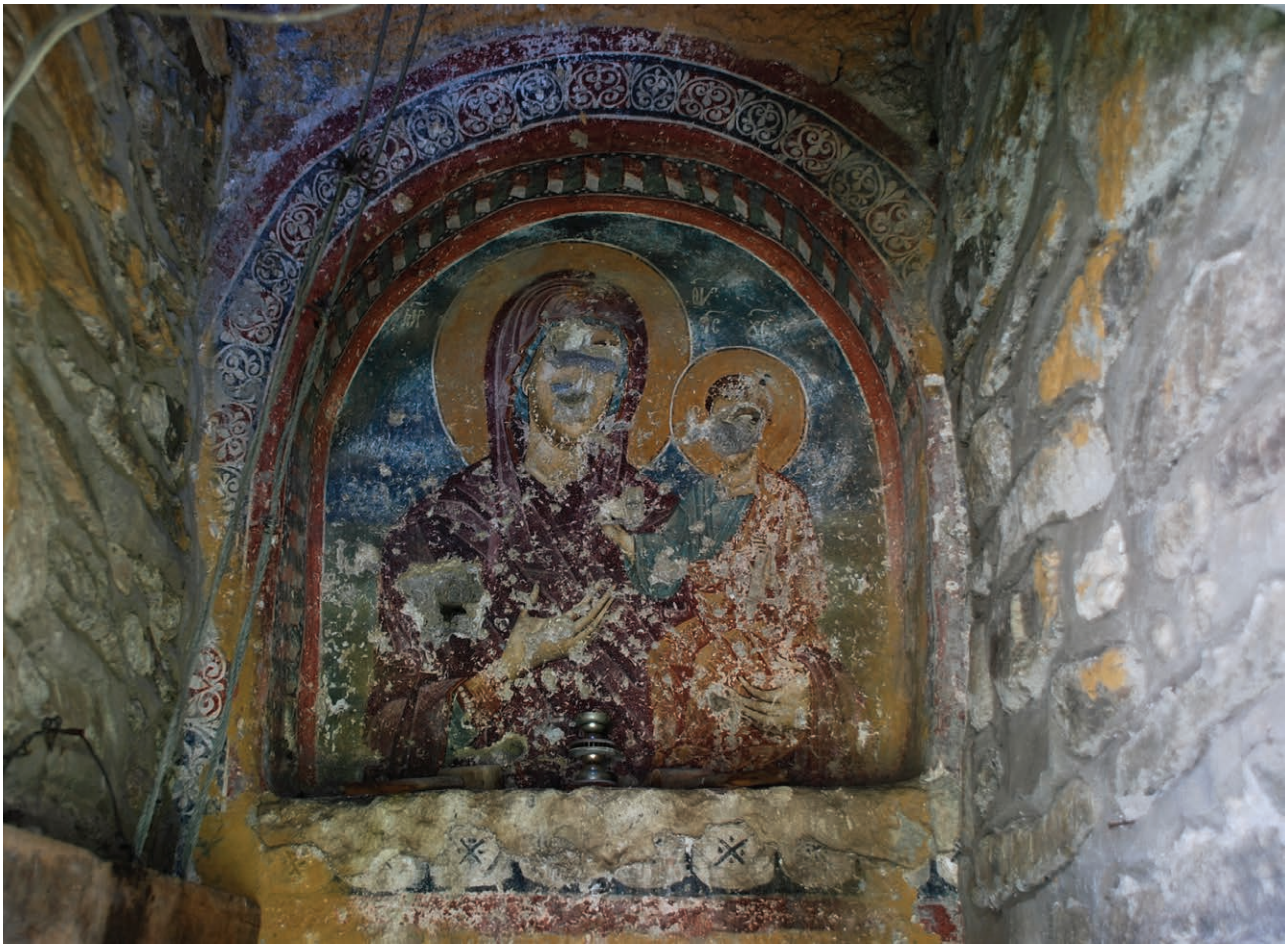
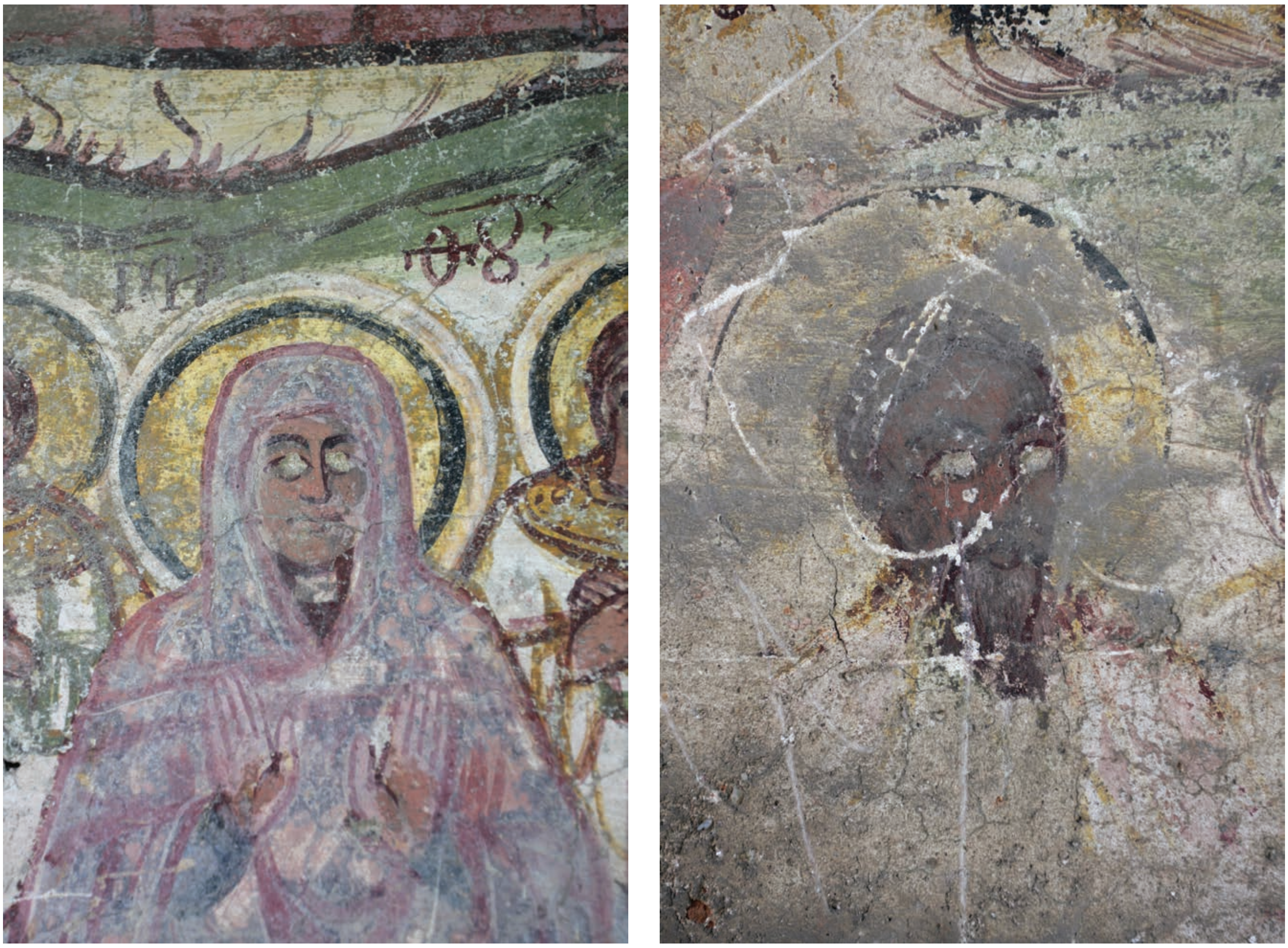


Fig. 12 : *Mutilations des peintures murales d'Ostrov.* Cliché : Mihai Bilici.

derniers ne peuvent pas être jugés responsables de la détérioration volontaire des édifices religieux chrétiens à la fin du XIX^e siècle. Ils n'étaient plus présents dans la région. Il est également impossible de généraliser sur l'appartenance ethnique ou confessionnelle de ceux qui pratiquaient le rituel. Cette précaution doit concerner aussi les cas déjà mentionnés que l'on retrouve dans le Haţeg. Les répondants aux questionnaires de Hasdeu étaient des Roumains ; leurs descriptions ne contiennent aucune déclaration concernant l'origine ethnique des pratiquants en question. Quant aux raisons pour lesquelles ils exposent la pratique, elles ne sous-entendent aucun lien avec un conflit interconfessionnel. Dans les deux cas cités, il est plus raisonnable d'envisager la mise en place d'un processus de diabolisation (et de blâme) de l'Autre, afin de protéger l'image de soi. Le phénomène nécessite bien évidemment une recherche spécialisée, mais il est plausible que les échos de cette diabolisation de l'Autre perdurent encore aujourd'hui. Le processus par lequel les rites négatifs du groupe de référence sont attribués à Autrui est amplifié par la récupération et la diffusion de ces histoires, toujours peu claires, par les médias de nos jours. Nous avons choisi un seul exemple, un article publié dans *Formula AS*, un hebdomadaire « de santé, spiritualité, reportages et écologie ». La popularité de cette publication New Age, complétée par quelques touches nationalistes, contribue à la prolifération de ces informations. L'article affirme dès le début que « dans toutes les vieilles églises orthodoxes du Haţeg, les saints sont aveugles. Personne ne sait qui les a mutilés. Les Calvinistes ? Les Turcs ? Les sorciers gitans ? Quoique les saints aient déjà payé le prix si cher de leur martyre, ils ont été mutilés à nouveau, sur les murs des églises roumaines. Aucune haine n'est plus toxique et cruelle que la haine qui est née du fanatisme religieux ».[14] La citation est basée sur les mots des prêtres locaux, dont certains ne font que s'inspirer des interprétations des spécialistes en peintures. Par exemple, le prêtre d'Ostrov, un village du Haţeg, a affirmé à propos de son église paroissiale :

> Il me semble que les pratiquants des arts de l'occulte et de la sorcellerie n'ont pas été les seuls à frapper le visage de la Mère de Dieu avec une telle sauvagerie, jamais vue ailleurs. Certains ont dit que les yeux de la Vierge ont été enlevés par les sorcières, pour leurs rituels impurs. Que, dans leur errance, elles ont fantasmé que les yeux des saints avaient des pouvoirs surnaturels et que ces pouvoirs pouvaient être mis au service du Malin. [...] Cependant, sincèrement, je ne pense pas non plus que les Turcs soient les auteurs d'une telle horreur, parce qu'ils respectaient la Vierge Marie, ils l'ont également dans leur religion sous une autre forme, ainsi que le Christ. [...] Seuls les adeptes d'une croyance étrangère, ceux qui exhortent à la destruction des icônes et de la tradition orthodoxe, pourraient se prêter à une telle sauvagerie. Et quand je pense à cela, je veux dire la Réforme calviniste, qui a commis de véritables dégâts dans le Haţeg.[15]

Il est évident que cette disculpation des (rares) sorcières et des Turcs (disparus depuis longtemps dans ces contrées) se fait au détriment de la présence de plus en plus accrue des cultes néo-protestants, en rapport avec le Calvinisme. On ne peut pas ne pas remarquer la généralisation de l'interven-



▲ Fig. 13, 14 : *Mutilations des yeux dans l'église de Broşteni.* Cliché : Șerban Bonciocat.

▼ Fig. 12 : *Mutilations du même type à dans l'église de Săliştea Izvernei, près de Baia de Aramă.* Cliché : Laura Jiga Iliescu.

tion calviniste, sans arguments qui puissent être soutenus jusqu'à la fin de la démonstration. Le Calvinisme serait le seul responsable de l'état actuel des peintures murales des parois des églises. Il n'est alors pas étonnant que l'une des intentions du présent article soit de relativiser une théorie devenue courante, que l'on évoque *a priori*, du moins pour la région du Haţeg. Pour ce qui est des yeux de la Mère de Dieu dans sa représentation d'Ostrov, dont traite le prêtre cité ci-dessus, on remarquera que l'une des réponses au questionnaire de Hasdeu venait précisément de cette localité et que la pratique (magique) n'était pas encore attribuée aux Calvinistes.

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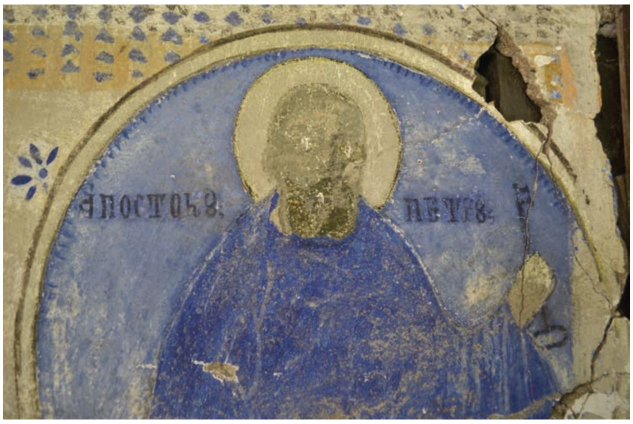
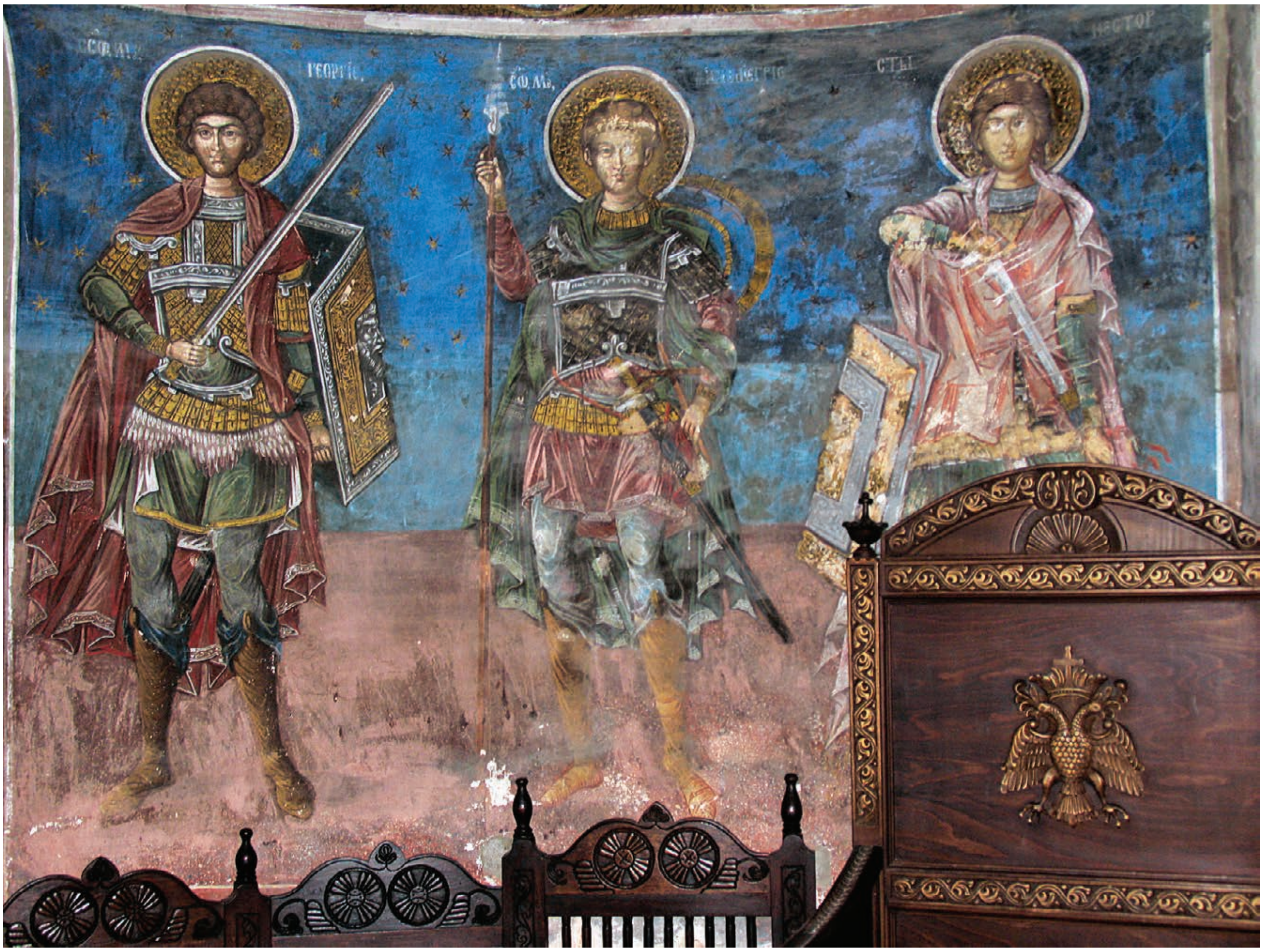
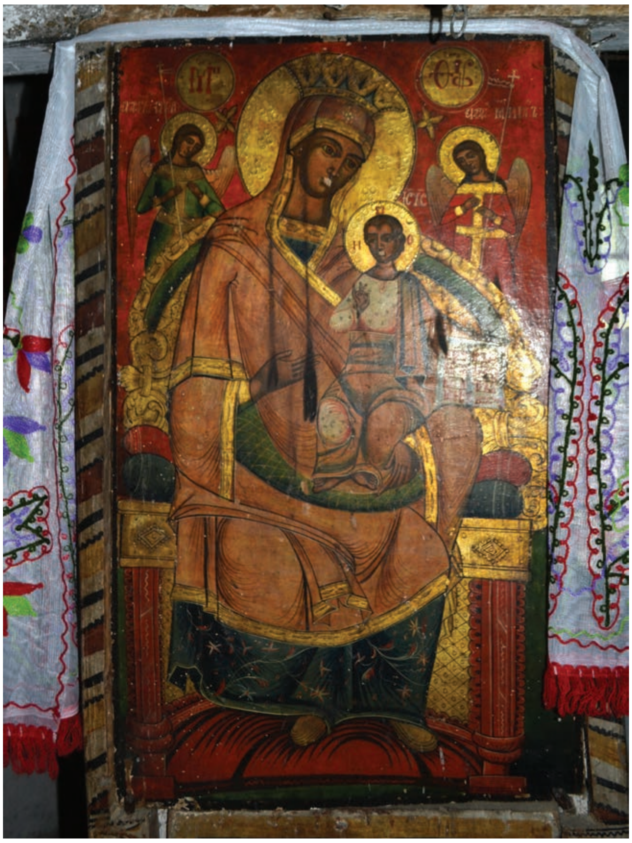
L'analyse des parois fournit plusieurs informations supplémentaires. La mission de terrain que nous avons poursuivie en 2016 en Olténie a permis d'observer plusieurs églises qui portent les traces du rituel qui nous intéresse ici. Citons à titre d'exemple l'église paroissiale de Horezu (comté de Vâlcea), celle du village d'Izverna (comté de Mehedinţi) et surtout l'église du monastère de Gura Motrului (Mehedinţi). Les peintures murales de cette dernière ont été réalisées entre 1702-1704, puis ont été couvertes par une strate de chaux et repeintes à nouveau en 1852, ce qui permet de proposer une datation des interventions magiques, qui seraient postérieures à cette dernière date. La conclusion qui s'impose dans ce cas spécifique est que les yeux des saints ont été arrachés dans la deuxième moitié du XIX$^{e}$ siècle. La liste peut continuer ensuite avec l'église du village de Crainici (Mehedinţi) ; celle du village de Broşteni (Mehedinţi) ; et enfin l'église du village de Curtişoara (comté de Gorj). À l'exception de l'église Saint-Étienne du monastère de Hurezi, tous les cas présentent des endommagements des peintures de la véranda de l'église, un espace liminal qui restait accessible lorsque l'église était fermée à clé. Cependant l'accessibilité ne joue pas, dans cette affaire, un rôle aussi important que l'on pourrait le croire. Notre interprétation doit tenir compte d'autres facteurs qui sont impliqués. Ainsi, l'on peut observer que les peintures des parois latérales extérieures ne sont délibérément pas affectées. La raison principale doit relever alors du porche en tant que tel, du statut de cet espace. Si les images endommagées de l'église Saint-Étienne se







▲ Fig. 16 : *Mutilations des yeux à Gura Motrului.*
Cliché : Șerban Bonciocat.

◀ Fig. 17 : *Mutilations des yeux et de la bouche dans une icône de l'église de Selіștea, comté de Mehedinți.*
Cliché : Ștefan Iliescu.

trouvent à l'intérieur de l'église, cela permet de comprendre que la destruction des visages, à l'intérieur de l'église, a été favorisée par leur présence dans le voisinage des fenêtres ou des piliers qui séparent le narthex de la nef. Comme le porche, ces fenêtres et piliers composent une série d'espaces de passage entre l'extérieur et l'intérieur ; il y a également une certaine gradation des registres du sacré. La situation est intéressante parce qu'elle correspond, dans le cas du rituel dont nous traitons, à la qualité ambiguë de l'acte de destruction. Le rituel se passe dans un espace liminal, quelque part entre la magie et l'acte religieux.

Malheureusement, le questionnaire, les rares informations transmises par l'écrit et notre propre analyse faite lors des missions de terrain ne fournissent pas assez de détails sur le rituel même, autrement dit sur la manière dont la poudre sainte était acquise et stockée pour être utilisée ensuite dans les sortilèges que nous connaissons si peu. Beaucoup de questions restent sans réponse. Le sexe de la personne, son âge, son appartenance ethnique et confessionnelle sont des données fondamentales pour notre interprétation. La supposition la plus raisonnable permet d'affirmer que la poudre de ces peintures murales a été extraite par un laïc, mais nous n'avons aucune idée si ce laïc présumé a été aidé par quelqu'un qui se trouvait à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur de l'église, ni quelles étaient les conditions qui pouvaient permettre au laïc en question de demander l'aide ou bien la permission du prêtre ou de la vendeuse de cierges et de bougies (une occupation omniprésente dans les villages orthodoxes roumains). S'ajoutent les motivations, le temps du rituel – nuit, jour, le passage entre nuit et jour, les jours précis de la semaine, un temps festif ou quotidien, lors de la messe – exception faite, dans ce dernier cas, pour les églises abandonnées. D'autres questions concernent les moyens, en particulier le type d'ustensiles utilisées, mais aussi les conditions et les restrictions rituelles qui devaient être observées. Enfin, ce qui nous manque le plus, ce sont les formules verbales que l'on devait sans doute prononcer pendant l'accomplissement de cette action. Ce qui s'impose, de toute évidence, c'est qu'une future recherche systématique approfondie devra obligatoirement se faire par des visites sur place dans toutes les localités mentionnées par le questionnaire de Hasdeu en direct rapport avec cette pratique magique qui concerne l'arrachement des yeux des saints.

Il s'agit probablement d'un rituel que l'institution ecclésiastique n'a jamais agréé, lequel rituel suivait sans doute ses règles, que le clergé et la communauté ne connaissaient pas. Ce devait être un rituel non-canonique, compte tenu du registre magique qui implique en quelque sorte la manipulation du sacré, une question qui deviendra encore plus claire dans la démonstration suivante. Nous ne disposons pas d'informations sur l'attitude active du clergé, mais le fait que le rituel soit effectué en secret est suggéré tant par le manque d'attestations écrites que par les mentions des rituels de substitution datant du XIXᵉ siècle. Dans les régions de l'Argeş, du Banat et du Buzău, « non seulement les yeux des saints sont arrachés dans les églises – la majorité écrasante des cas – mais aussi les yeux des saints que l'on trouve sur les croix ou les croix de chemin, voire des saints des icônes domestiques, surtout quand cet acte n'est plus possible dans l'église ».[16]

* * *

Dans ces conditions de précarité des documents conventionnels et explicites, la recherche doit se servir, de manière expérimentale, d'une catégorie de sources indirectes qui peuvent fournir quelques données supplémentaires sur un rituel mal interprété déjà lorsqu'il était encore pratiqué. Nous proposons d'expliquer l'arrachement des yeux des saints à l'aide d'une série de textes folkloriques qui utilisent un répertoire métaphorique ou explicite de verbes et de noms communs. Ces paroles témoignent d'une réalité qui entre en résonance (mais pas plus) avec les pratiques discutées ici. De même, nous n'avons pas la prétention de reconstruire le rituel en tant que tel, mais nous essayerons de l'intégrer en quelque sorte aux pratiques générales des communautés en question, à l'horizon de leurs connaissances et aux images dont ces communautés se servaient. En ce qui concerne l'utilisation des textes folkloriques, il est également important de tenir compte de la séquence décontextualisation-recontextualisation. Il est alors important de ne pas leur attribuer des fonctions trop éloignées de la réalité.

Nous disposons donc d'un corpus formé de plusieurs catégories de documents, que nous devons traiter de façon différente (mais qui se corroborent les uns les autres, étant complémentaires entre eux), à savoir, d'une part, les attestations et les brèves descriptions ethnographiques mentionnées dans les réponses aux questionnaires de Hasdeu, qui datent du dernier quart du XIXᵉ siècle ; aussi bien que d'autres mentions ethnographiques du début du XXᵉ siècle, avec un écart d'environ cinquante ans par rapport aux réponses reçues par Hasdeu. S'y ajoutent les résultats des missions de terrain que nous avons effectuées dans les années 2015-2016, l'intervalle de temps étant cette fois beaucoup plus important. D'autre part, nous disposons des peintures murales en tant que telles, un miroir fidèle du rite, quoique les destructions aient été produites bien avant le moment où nous avons fait nos observations. Les situations qui permettent une datation précise de ces destructions sont rares ; le cas des couches successives de peintures de l'église de Gura Motrului constitue une *rara avis* parmi la majorité des exemples analysés, qui ne peuvent pas être datés comme il se doit. Enfin, la troisième catégorie de documents est celle des textes folkloriques enregistrés dans les aires culturelles qui témoignent de la coutume qui nous intéresse ici.

L'une de nos principales difficultés méthodologiques concerne ces grands décalages chronologiques entre les différentes catégories de documents qui composent le corpus. Étant donné que les questionnaires de Hasdeu, le matériel de travail le plus riche dont nous disposons à présent, ont pour *terminus ad quem* la fin du XIXᵉ siècle, il est tout à fait souhaitable de corroborer ce cadre chronologique avec les autres références concernant les églises en question : les destructions des peintures, qui datent toujours du XIXᵉ siècle. Voilà pourquoi il est fondamental de choisir la troisième catégorie de documents – les textes folkloriques – en fonction de la même tranche chronologique. Notre dernière catégorie de documents sera alors formée des textes recensés au XIXᵉ siècle.

Cela ne veut pas dire que les rites en question étaient absents auparavant. Des datations plus précises d'autres peintures feront peut-être remonter ce genre de pratique aux siècles précédents. Cependant notre corpus contient beaucoup de matériaux de nature ethnologique dont les plus anciens datent du XIXᵉ siècle, ce qui nous oblige, d'une certaine manière, à nous concentrer sur cette période. Le même problème de décalage met en doute la continuité temporelle du rituel qui nous intéresse. Quoique nul ne puisse nier la possibilité de parvenir à dater des destructions dans des cas particuliers, nous n'avons aucune garantie que le rituel ait continué à être pratiqué après la date en question. Le manque de témoignages concernant cette réitération du rituel oblige à prendre en compte la possibilité que ces pratiques magiques aient pu profiter de certaines périodes chronologiques qui auraient pu favoriser les actes de ce type.

Il est alors impératif de revenir aux questionnaires de Hasdeu, afin de systématiser l'état de l'art du rituel que ces documents permettent de dresser (et non pas seulement les inconnues de l'équation culturelle que nous essayons de restituer). Notre analyse se doit de souligner plusieurs niveaux des significations attribuées à l'image correspondant à l'entité sacrée qui a été peinte (le prototype, le saint), au cas où le dogme répond en effet aux pratiques populaires. Or, dès le départ de l'analyse, une précision fondamentale s'impose. Les gestes et les rites en discussion n'épuisent pas la multitude de situations possibles qui auraient conduit à l'état actuel des peintures murales, mais ils ne concernent pas non plus une intention de destruction volontaire apportée à l'identité et à l'intégralité corporelle du saint en question. Ces actions concernent uniquement la nécessité d'obtenir une réserve de caractère sacré, un ingrédient rituel. La personne (le prototype) du saint contamine d'une certaine manière l'image (sa représentation) ainsi que le support de l'image (en l'occurrence, l'enduit qui porte les peintures) avec une puissance numineuse. En ce sens, les morceaux d'enduit ou de plâtre constituent une extension de la personne du saint ; cette extension sera recontextualisée de manière rituelle. Cette situation n'est pas du tout singulière. Nombre d'objets qui représentent des accessoires des rites liturgiques sont déployés et relocalisés dans un cadre extérieur, celui des pratiques de la religiosité populaire (parfois magique). Il s'agit de l'eau bénite, des miettes de pain ou des gouttes du vin eucharistique, du basilic, de l'huile bénite, des échardes de la croix de la table d'autel. Tous ces objets peuvent être inclus dans les rituels d'ordre secondaire dont l'efficacité est renforcée par leur contexte primaire, originaire. On dit que les yeux des saints accroissent et améliorent le pouvoir des sortilèges, qu'ils confèrent des pouvoirs divins ou assurent la réussite du sortilège.[17]

Nous avons organisé les informations extraites des réponses au questionnaire selon la manière dont la relation entre l'image et le prototype a été mise en valeur et selon la finalité rituelle.[18] Les résultats obtenus peuvent être rangés dans les groupes suivants :

1. sortilèges qui occultaient, cachaient ou faisaient sortir du champ de vision d'Autrui une série de situations désagréables ou interdites par la loi :

1a. épouses adultères ou époux adultères : « La plupart des charmes ont pour objet les hommes, pour les aveugler (figurativement), pour les empêcher de voir ce que font leurs femmes infidèles » ; mais ils peuvent être également adressés aux femmes, pour les mêmes desseins. Dans le corpus que nous analysons, il n'y a qu'une seule attestation pour ce type de situation, à Ostrovul Mare, dans le comté de Hunedoara.[19] Or, il faut se souvenir à ce propos de la destruction des peintures de l'église d'Ostrov – il s'agit du même village –, où le discours local contemporain attribue la destruction des yeux des saints à l'action des Calvinistes. Ce n'est pas un hasard si la destruction des yeux et de la bouche de la Mère de Dieu dans sa représentation au tympan situé au rez-de-chaussée de la tour de cette église a été analysée à peu près de la même manière par les spécialistes. Le répertoire des peintures murales médiévales du Haţeg considère qu'il s'agit de « lacunes dans la strate de peinture et d'enduit suite aux coups de marteau ou de lance »,[20] sans doute attribuables aux Réformés.

1b. catherinettes ou laiderons, qui souhaitaient cacher leur situation réelle, afin de se marier avec des jouvenceaux (« *feciori tineri* »), incapables d'apercevoir le vrai visage de leur future épouse.

1c. dans un autre registre, mais avec la même fonction, pour fermer les bouches et les yeux des juges, afin qu'un coupable soit pardonné.[21] Ce dernier cas permet d'observer que les yeux ne constituent pas la seule partie du corps humain concernée par cette superposition du corps réel et du corps figuré ; la bouche joue également un rôle important dans les ingrédients magiques.

Dans les situations décrites ci-dessus, les prières adressées aux saints en tant que médiateurs divins sont absentes. Qui plus est, les chantages magiques conjurent les saints à intervenir malgré et contre les intérêts de leur propre statut (positif), voire contre les règles morales, à la fois laïques et religieuses. L'invocation populaire « tout comme les saints ne voient et n'entendent pas ceci, que mon homme ne le voie et ne l'entende pas non plus ! » (« *precum nu văd și nu aud sfinții, așa să nu vadă și să nu audă bărbatul* ») peut être interprétée de deux manières différentes. Dans la première situation, si le référent est identique à la personne représentée – le saint qui devient aveugle lui-même après l'arrachement des yeux de l'icône –, ce saint ne verra plus la réalité et il ne pourra plus exercer ses fonctions judiciaires, le cas échéant. Si le rapport entre représentation et prototype est censé être consubstantiel, ce n'est pas un acte de magie par similitude, comme il semblerait, mais une recontextualisation du principe de la relation simultanée de différence et d'identité énoncée par saint Jean Damascène. En revanche, si le référent de la comparaison est la représentation elle-même, dépourvue de son contenu, une banale peinture, immobile, le saint est dissocié de son image, qui devient un objet quelconque, immotivé, aveugle et sourd. Dans les deux interprétations, le dogme n'est pas violé, bien que le canon le soit.

2. Un deuxième groupe concerne les pratiques thérapeutiques : « pour que la vue leur soit rendue, les malvoyants se rendaient à l'église et récupéraient de la poudre des yeux des saints ; ils saupoudraient cette 'lumière' des yeux des saints sur leurs propres yeux ».[22] Cette fois, l'image peinte semble être imprégnée, en quelque sorte, du pouvoir curatif divin ; l'essence sacrée du prototype est transférée à la représentation. Le principe dogmatique est de nouveau respecté, puisque la pratique populaire représente un développement de la pratique canonique et non pas un acte de magie par contact. Nous prenons également note du fait que le performateur du rite était son bénéficiaire direct.

Il existe plusieurs textes folkloriques qui témoignent de par leurs vocabulaire et images d'une réalité qui ressemble aux rites que l'on discute ici. Voici le cas d'un sortilège contre les coups reçus (« de isbitură », 'contre les heurts subis'). Il est impossible de savoir s'il était prononcé lors de l'utilisation thérapeutique de la poudre des yeux des saints. Les verbes et les accessoires présents dans ce texte évoquent, en revanche, deux gestes. L'un concerne le fait d'enlever quelque chose des yeux du souffrant, l'autre geste concerne l'application d'un produit quelconque :

*Copită copităriță,*
*Cal negru din picior te lepădă*
*Pe Cutare peste ochi îl isbiși,*
*Și leacul că i-l găsi:*
*Cu fulg negru* te râcâi,
*Cu busuioc* te limpezi,
*Cu fir roșu turburarea* o scosei,
*Junghiurile, cuțitele, usturimele*
Din vederea *Cutăruia* le scosei...

Cher sabot, sabot chéri,
Noir fut le cheval qui vit
D'un seul coup ta force entrer
Dans les yeux d'Untel blessé :
Au flocon noir le *grattant*,
De son mal le guérissant,
Au pistou il sut *frotter*,
Au fil rouge pour *enlever*,
Trouble, peine, brûlure et plaie,
Et ta *vue* fut *délivrée*...

Cette incantation récitée par une vieille dame (Stana Reșică du village de Drăgănești, dans le comté de Teleorman) était suivie de la précision suivante : « le sortilège opère dans l'eau, lorsque du basilic et une branchette de balai y sont immergés ; cette eau est projetée ensuite dans les yeux ».[23]

3. Une troisième catégorie de rites qui se servent de cette poudre arrachée aux yeux des saints est celle de la magie érotique ; elle concerne la beauté. Néanmoins, il ne s'agit

pas de la beauté en tant que telle, mais simplement de son pouvoir de séduction, du pouvoir d'attirer le regard des autres. Ces Autres restent sous le charme de la personne jouissant de ce sortilège ; ils ne peuvent plus la quitter des yeux. Le caractère contradictoire de ces pratiques consiste à mélanger un concept religieux et dogmatique (la beauté du saint en tant que reflet de la beauté suprême, imperturbable et toujours favorable de Dieu) avec les croyances dans le pouvoir de fascination de l'art et de la beauté (ou bien de la beauté de l'art). Cette dernière force ensorcelle, avec de bonnes ou mauvaises conséquences, elle attache les yeux regardés aux yeux regardants. Les yeux deviennent alors la première étape d'un chemin qui mène vers l'« intérieur » de la victime. Ces croyances ne sont pas trop différentes de celles dans le Mauvais œil ; elles s'articulent inversement. Cela permet de supposer que les saints sont ceux qui charment par leur beauté. « La femme sera aimée comme les saints sont adorés par chacun ».[24]

On peut observer ici la tendance à attribuer au saint un pouvoir dont il dispose pleinement, en son nom propre, et non pas le pouvoir reçu en tant que médiateur entre Dieu et les hommes. Cette déviation permet à l'enchanteresse / l'enchanteur d'attirer le saint dans ses jeux magiques. À son tour, la lyrique érotique roumaine contient des exemples métaphoriques faisant référence au même mécanisme par lequel le / la bénéficiaire du sortilège en question semble prendre la place de l'entité sacrée, qualité à partir de laquelle il exerce son pouvoir de fascination :

*Foaie verde boabă coarnă*
*Ioană, Ioană, dică Ioană,*
Naiba[25] *te scoase-n poiană,*
*Frumoasă ca o icoană?*
*Pupu-ți* ochii *ș-o sprânceană*
*Și-alunița de sub geană.*[26]

Ma belle Jeanne, ô gué, ma Jeanne
Pour des prunes tu vins, chère femme,
Le *Malin* manda ta flamme
En plein bois à perte d'âme
Douce icône à embrasser
Sur les *yeux* et les sourcils,
Sur le grain de ton beau cil.

Les yeux sont ici bien-aimés et protégés. Mais les chansons d'amour font référence aussi à des situations dans lesquelles l'objet religieux, en l'occurrence l'icône, devient le support des pratiques magiques :

*Nu găsesc o vrăjitoare*
*Să-mi descânte la* icoane.[27]

Je recherche une brave pythie,
Aux *icônes* qu'elle chante et prie…

En directe relation avec notre discussion, il convient de citer quelques variantes qui concernent les sortilèges d'amour (l'amoureux devient ici la victime du regard de son aimée ou vice versa) et le dommage apporté aux yeux. Le premier sortilège a été enregistré dans le village de Dioști, dans l'ancien comté de Romanați (aujourd'hui comté de Dolj) :

*Frunză verde ș-o lalea*
*Costică, inima mea,*
*De te-aș prinde undeva,*
*Numai* ochii *ți i-aș lua.*[28]

Constantin, mon doux, mon cœur,
Pour les fleurs, pour la verdeur,
Si un jour je t'attrapais
Je prendrais tes *yeux* de gré.

Le deuxième provient du village de Bistrița, dans le comté de Vâlcea :

*Puica neichii cu doniță*
*Mânca-ți-aș* gurița *friptă;*
Ochișorii *să ți-i beau,*
*După drumuri nu mai stau!*[29]

Quand tu portes, ma poulette,
Le seau d'eau mis sur ta tête,
Je boirais tes *yeux* amènes
Et ta *bouche* serait ma cène.

4. Un effet apparemment similaire à celui de la catégorie précédente (annulant le pouvoir décisionnel des victimes), mais avec d'autres fins et capitalisant sur d'autres qualités de la figure peinte, se manifeste dans la situation où « tout être devrait se tenir devant les vieilles femmes comme un saint ».[30] Il est alors possible d'identifier un mécanisme de type *similia similibus* dont la référence est l'immobilité de la figure peinte. À un niveau plus profond d'interprétation, en revanche, la signification et la finalité non-exprimées d'un tel rituel semblent être le détournement de la mission des saints. Ces derniers, intercesseurs subordonnés à Dieu, finissent par obéir au pratiquant de la magie. Le caractère immobile de l'image est transféré au saint / prototype, obligé de rester immobile, à la disposition de la sorcière enchanteresse. Il est essentiel d'observer ici la valorisation magique et dangereuse de la dialectique différence-identité qui définit la relation entre l'image et la réalité sacrée que l'icône représente. Ce qui surprend, c'est que le principe dogmatique est respecté, quoique les pratiques rituelles développées ne soient pas du tout canoniques.

5. Par rapport au registre assez 'sage' que nous venons de sonder, la catégorie suivante de notre classement constitue un véritable tournant : « les yeux de certains saints sont arrachés sous prétexte qu'ils seraient porteurs de cornes » (dans le comté de Buzău).[31] L'allusion est encore plus évidente dans la réponse suivante, où les saints ne peuvent plus lutter contre le diable, qu'ils doivent suivre. Notons, au passage, que cette réponse donne aussi quelques informations sur les gestes rituels et sur les accessoires requis : « la poudre ou la terre enlevée de l'enduit d'une peinture murale sont mises dans la boisson ou dans la nourriture d'un homme, après avoir été brûlées. Elles sont mélangées lors des sortilèges avec de l'œuf couvé par une femme pendant une semaine » (dans le comté d'Olt).[32] Ces pratiques sont déjà mentionnées dans des récits qui décrivent certaines techniques magiques, lesquelles doivent évidemment rester secrètes. Dans ces récits, les femmes couvent un œuf à l'aisselle de leur bras, afin d'obtenir le secours d'un serviteur démoniaque dans la préparation des charmes érotiques. Ce serviteur est le plus souvent un *zmeu* – personnage fantastique spécifique au folklore roumain, doté de pouvoirs surnaturels ; les *zmei* proviennent du dragon par une métamorphose surnaturelle – ou un *spiriduș* – équivalent du lutin. Enfin, il faut observer que dans le même registre magique, la poudre des yeux des saints

peut être utilisée pour voler le lait des vaches (dans le comté d’Argeş).[33] Dans ce dernier cas, une fois capturée, la vue du saint est complètement détournée et semble jouir à juste titre des puissances dangereuses du Mauvais œil.

6. Nous voici enfin arrivés à la dernière catégorie, celle qui concerne un registre de puissance positive, avec une finalité encore une fois thérapeutique (pour dissoudre cette poudre dans le bain que l’on donne aux enfants possédés) ou plus spécifiquement fertilisante (pour la mélanger avec les graines que l’on donne aux poules, afin qu’elles pondent beaucoup d’œufs et que les poussins soient nombreux et en bonne santé, dans l’ancien comté de Prut), voire pour combattre les effets du Mauvais œil et les agressions démoniaques.[34]

7. Quoiqu’il ne s’agisse pas d’une véritable catégorie, il est sans doute utile d’ajouter ici, à la fin de notre classification, une série de cas isomorphes aux pratiques discutées ci-dessus. Dans ces autres situations, la pratique de capturer et de manipuler la poudre magique ne concerne plus les yeux des saints (ou d’autres parties de leurs représentations), mais plutôt les personnages du registre négatif de la sphère sacrée. Il arrive par exemple que les yeux des démons représentés sur les parois des églises soient aussi arrachés, soit pour punir ces démons (à Orlat), soit pour utiliser leurs yeux dans la préparation des charmes (dans le comté de Dolj). Si l’action concerne une représentation de la Mort, on lui arrache les yeux et on lui coupe les jambes parce qu’elle a tué un enfant.[35] Il s’agit d’un acte de vengeance.

Ces situations ne concernent pourtant pas les icônes. Par conséquent, la logique magique ne suit plus le principe dogmatique de la relation entre la représentation et l’entité représentée. Il ne s’agit plus de la dialectique simultanée de la différence dans l’identité. L’image devient simplement un double du personnage en question. Il en va de même pour les situations où l’on a abîmé les représentations des fondateurs (ktitors) de l’église en question. Le geste vise de manière directe et explicite la personne et / ou la famille du fondateur. De telles situations témoignent parfois de conflits locaux entre différentes familles ou paroisses.

Dernier point mais non des moindres, notons également des situations qui n’ont aucun rapport avec les réponses au questionnaire de Hasdeu. À Dolheşti, dans la Bucovine, les yeux et les bouches des ktitors représentés dans la composition votive semblent avoir été arrachés, si l’on suit la légende locale, par les Turcs, car il s’agit du portrait de quelqu’un qui avait combattu ces derniers. Il est cependant impossible de savoir s’il ne s’agit pas, comme dans nombre d’autres cas, d’une banale damnation d’Autrui, surtout parce que le personnage en question a été peint sur le registre inférieur des peintures de cette église, autrement dit dans l’un des endroits les plus accessibles. Cela suffit pour donner une idée générale de toutes les pratiques qui peuvent être liées à l’arrachement des yeux des saints (et d’autres figures) peint(e)s sur les parois des églises.

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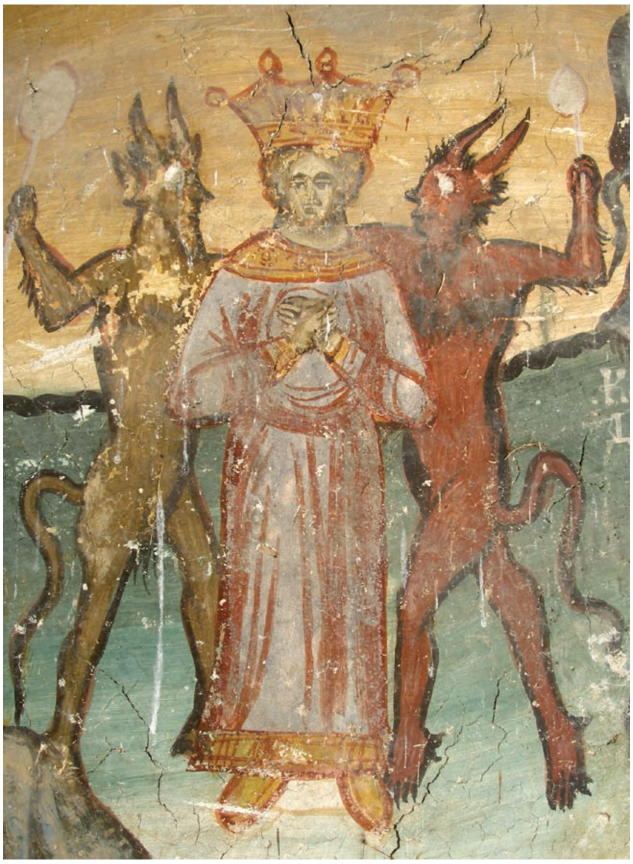
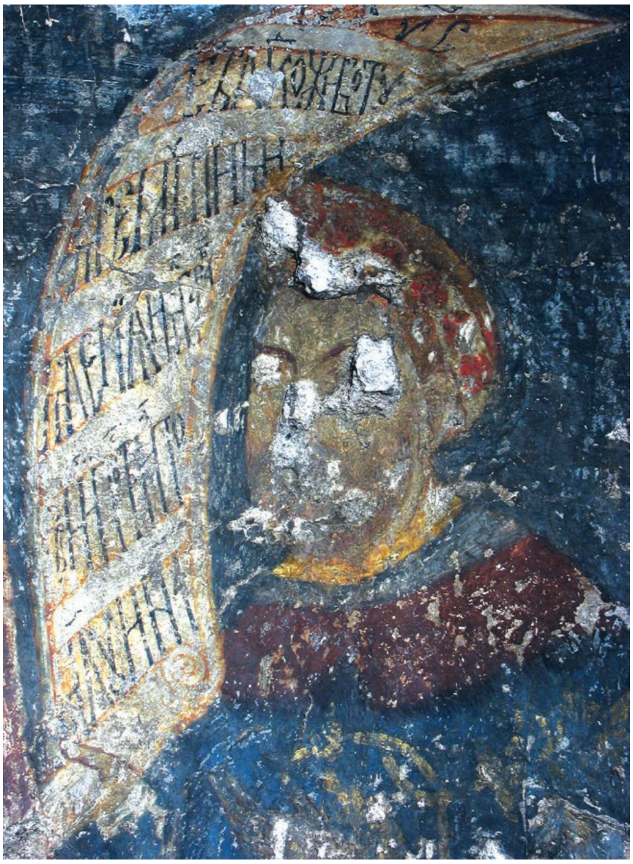
Pour le moment, il serait prématuré de tirer une conclusion. La pratique analysée dans la présente étude n’a pas encore

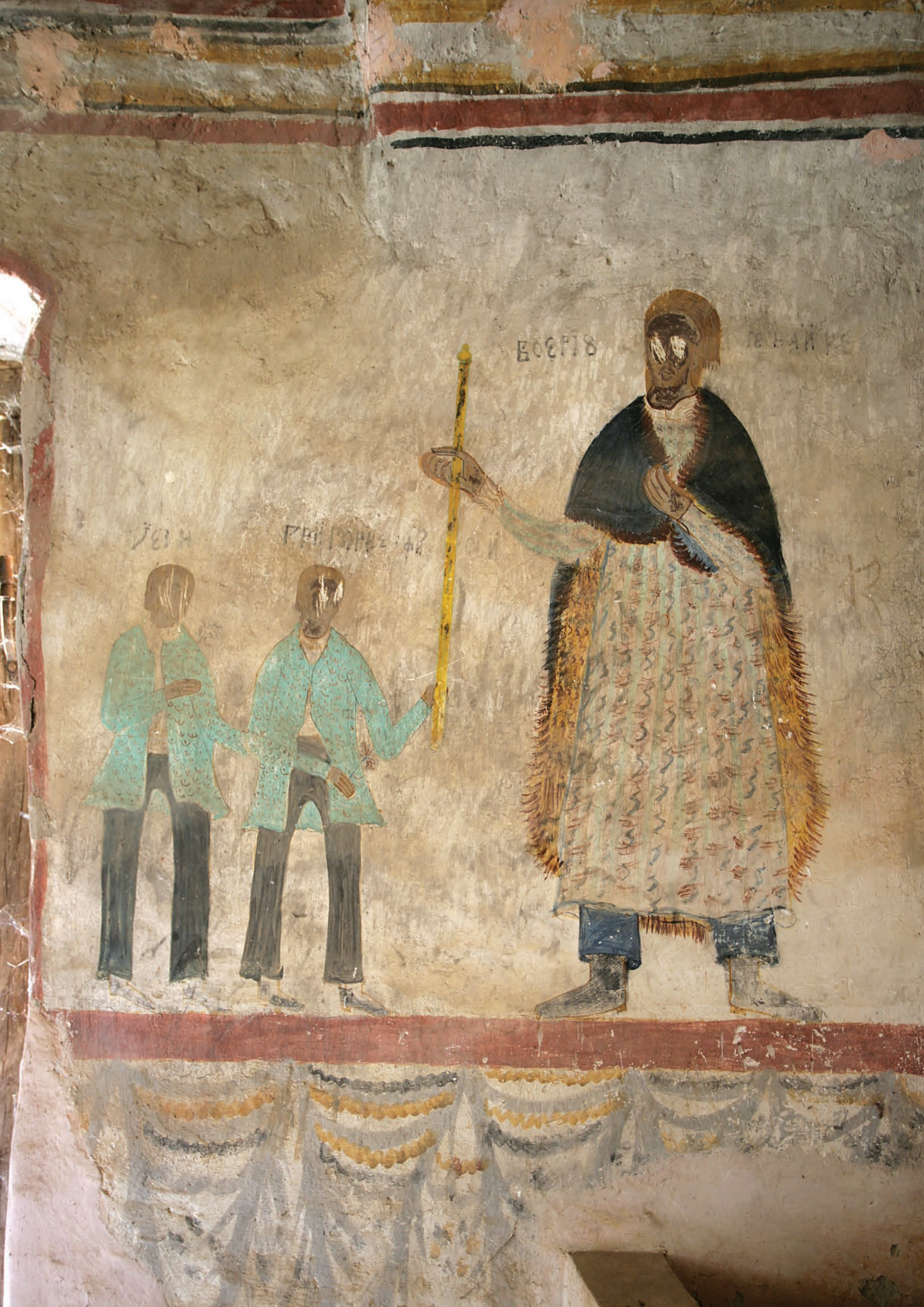
Fig. 18 : *Mutilations des yeux des diables dans les peintures murales de l’église d’Olari (comté de Vâlcea).*
Cliché : Ştefan Iliescu.

Fig. 19 : *Mutilations du visage d’un ktitor médiéval dans les peintures murales de Dolheşti (Bucovine).*
Cliché : Alexandru Mircea.

Fig. 20 : *Mutilations des ktitors modernes à Curtişoara, dans le comté de Gorj (Olténie).*
Cliché : Şerban Bonciocat.



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fait l'objet d'une recherche ethnologique approfondie ; elle est rarement attestée et relativement peu décrite. Ainsi, au lieu de conclusions prématurées, quelques observations s'imposent.

1. Notre intérêt principal s'est concentré sur l'effort d'améliorer notre interprétation d'un phénomène culturel. Nous avons essayé d'observer la manière dont les prescriptions de la théologie orthodoxe concernant les icônes – en particulier la relation entre prototype et représentation – et la doctrine selon laquelle le pouvoir miraculeux des icônes et des saints dérivent seulement de Dieu, ont été assumées, interprétées, modifiées et mises en pratique par certains individus du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle sur le territoire de la Roumanie d'aujourd'hui, surtout dans la partie méridionale du pays, dans le cas concret d'une pratique appelée génériquement « les yeux des saints ».

2. Ce qui surprend, c'est la diversité des cinquante-six réponses. Elle contraste avec la taille réduite du corpus. Il convient également de souligner la nature unitaire d'un corpus pourtant hétérogène de documents sur un phénomène qui a soumis les saints à un changement de statut, en fonction d'une contextualisation tant magique que religieuse non-canonique de l'ingrédient sacré : de la poussière ou un morceau d'enduit extrait(s) de la paroi de l'église.

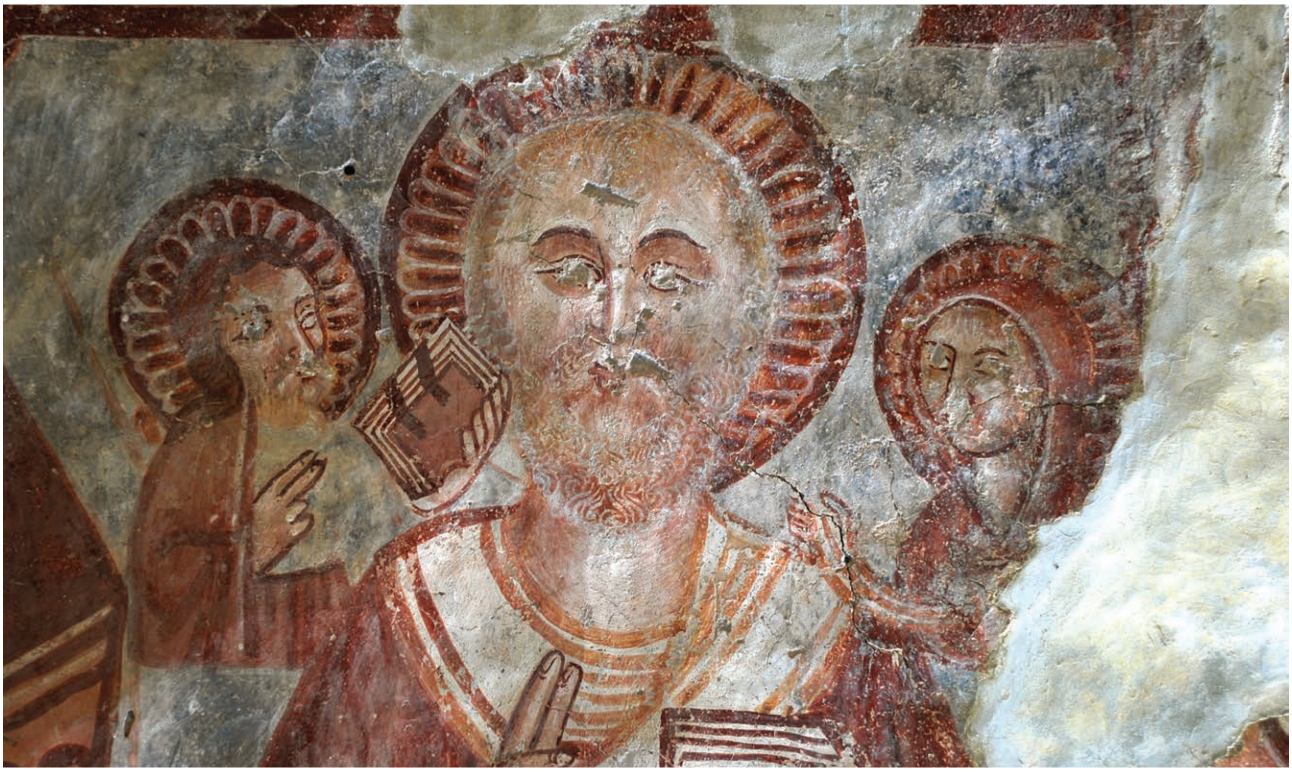
3. De manière inattendue, la relation entre le dogme officiel et la pratique canonique peut être ambiguë : l'ensemble de la pratique non-canonique est parfois contraire au dogme officiel ; cependant nous avons aussi mis en évidence des situations dans lesquelles les pratiques non-canoniques sont articulées sur la base du principe dogmatique officiel de la théologie orthodoxe, qui concerne le statut de l'icône et des saints.

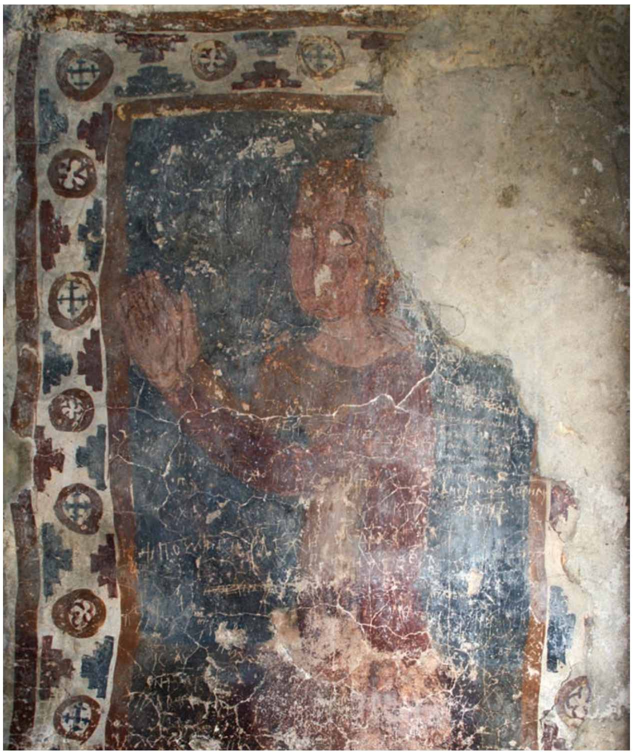
4. Le fait de corroborer les informations ethnologiques avec celles fournies par l'étude de l'histoire ou par l'histoire de l'art religieux peut mener à une série d'analyses détaillées pour chaque cas : ses saints endommagés, leur emplacement dans l'ensemble iconographique et architectural de l'église en question, les traces de détérioration volontaire ou accidentelle, les datations des peintures endommagées et surtout le rapport avec d'autres rites et signes visibles dans le même édifice. Ces observations minutieuses permettront d'arriver à des interprétations nuancées du cadre religieux qui a marqué, à diverses époques, non seulement l'état des édifices respectifs, mais aussi les moyens par lesquels les habitants se rapportaient à ces églises. Des cas tels que ceux du Hațeg seront, par exemple, reconsidérés du point de vue des observations que nous proposons ici.

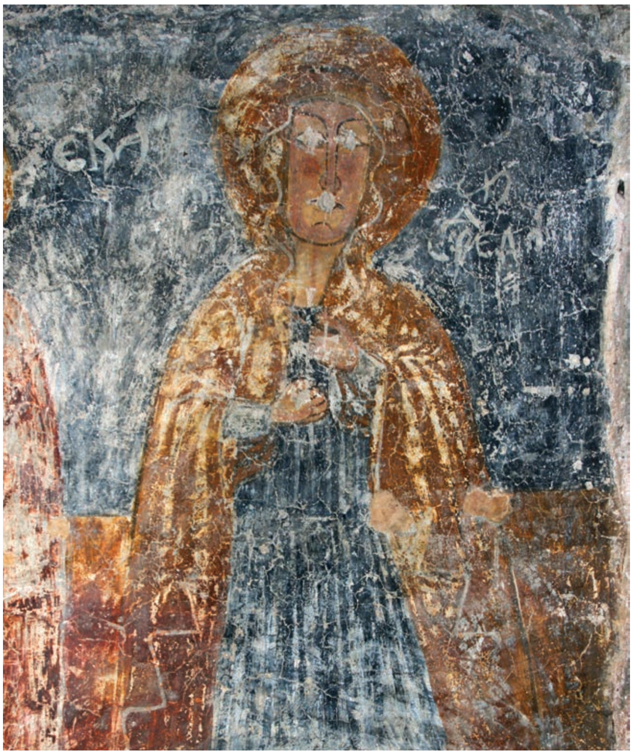
5. Tout ce qui se trouve dans une église – peintures murales, piliers, stalles et le reste du mobilier, bougies et cierges, objets de culte – compose un ensemble qui a des rapports avec un répertoire de gestes, de rites, de croyances, d'histoires, de souvenirs etc. Toutes ces catégories constituent des expressions du mode de vie et de la pensée de ceux qui utilisent le sanctuaire : les ktitors (fondateurs), les constructeurs, les peintres, le clergé, les laïcs, les pèlerins, les touristes, aussi bien que les enchanteurs. L'intérieur ou l'extérieur de la zone délimitée par les parois doit être également mis en relation directe avec le 'corps' même de l'église. Nous avons affaire à un espace que la consécration par les rituels liturgiques et par les autres prières transforme en un milieu ou en un support physique propice à un ensemble de gestes individuels (socialement formalisés). Du point de vue canonique, ces gestes se situent parfois dans la zone ambiguë entre permissivité et interdiction, voire dans la catégorie des rituels interdits.

Ce qui mérite enfin d'être observé, c'est le rôle de palimpseste que jouent les parois d'une église. Les traces visibles des rites liturgiques et des pratiques défendues sont incorporées à ces parois. Elles témoignent des actions accomplies ouvertement ou secrètement dans cet espace. L'édifice devient ainsi lui-même un participant à ces rituels.

Fig. 21, 22, 23 : *Mutilations des yeux et des bouches dans les représentations des saints et des donateurs. Peintures murales médiévales de l'église de Strei (Hațeg).*
Clichés : Mihai Bilici (22), Vladimir Agrigoroaei (21, 23).







## Notes :

1 Cf. PG, vol. 94, col. 1268A pour la citation en entier : « *Τί τούτων τηλαυγέστερον πρὸς ἀπόδειξιν, ὅτι βίβλιοι τοῖς ἀγραμμάτοις αἱ εἰκόνες, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἁγίων τιμῆς ἀσίγητοι κήρυκες, ἐν ἀήχῳ φωνῇ τοὺς ὁρῶντας διδάσκουσαι, καὶ τὴν ὅρασιν ἁγιάζουσαι* ».

2 Dillenberger 2004, p. 61 : « *The visual and the verbal are two fundamental realities, neither of which can be elevated over the other. That view of the visual makes the eastern Orthodox development unique* ».

3 Dillenberger 2004, p. 62.

4 Boscani Leoni 2006.

5 Boscani Leoni 2006, p. 2.

6 Cf. Sipos 1997 ; Sipos 2002. Je tiens à remercier Ana Dumitran de m'avoir communiqué ces informations.

7 Boscani 2006, p. 3.

8 Rusu 1986, en particulier les p. 43-44.

9 Boscani Leoni 2006, p. 2.

10 Mușlea, Bîrlea, 2010.

11 Mușlea, Bîrlea, 2010, p. 468 : « *prin care trebuie să înțelegem praf din ochi; pământul luat din ochii lor; scos din zid; partea pe care au putut-o rupe sub numele de ochi* ».

12 Mușlea, Bîrlea, 2010, p. 468 : « *în majoritatea cazurilor ochii sfinților se scot pentru a face farmece* ».

13 Dănescu 1933, p. 88 : « *țiganii din juru-i, foștii ei robi, i-au furat cărămizile zidurilor dărăpănate și până au scos și ochii sfinților din pridvorul bisericii ca să-i folosească în descântecele și vrăjile lor* ».

14 Ivanciuc 2009 : « *În toate vechile biserici ortodoxe din Hațeg, sfinții sunt orbi. Nu se știe cine i-a mutilat. Calvinii? Turcii? Vrăjitorii țigani? Ca și când n-ar fi plătit destul prin martiriul credinței, au fost mutilați încă o dată, pe pereții bisericilor românești. Nici o ură nu e mai otrăvită și cruntă decât cea născută din fanatismul religios* ».

15 Ivanciuc 2009 : « *Mie mi se pare că nu doar practicanții unor credințe oculte și vrăjitorești au lovit cu o sălbăticie nicicând văzută în alte părți chipul Maicii Domnului. Unii au zis că ochii Fecioarei au fost scoși de vrăjitoare și folosiți în ritualurile lor necurate. Că în rătăcirea lor, și-au imaginat că ochii sfinților au puteri supranaturale și că aceste puteri pot fi puse în slujba necuratului.* [...] *Totuși, sincer să fiu, nu cred că turcii ar fi fost în stare de o asemenea grozăvie, pentru că o respectau pe Fecioara Maria, o au și ei în religia lor, într-o altă formă, ca și pe Hristos.* [...] *Numai adepții unei credințe străine, care îndemnau la distrugerea icoanelor și a tradiției ortodoxe, puteau să inspire o asemenea sălbaticie. Și când mă gândesc la așa ceva, mă refer la reforma calvină, care în Hațeg a făcut prăpăd* ».

16 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010, p. 469 : « *Se scot nu numai ochii sfinților din biserici – majoritatea covârșitoare a cazurilor -, ci și de pe cruci, troițe sau de pe icoana din casă, mai ales când din biserică nu este posibil* ».

17 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010, p. 469 : « *Ochii sfinților măresc, desăvârșesc puterea farmecelor* » ; « *le dau putere dumnezeiască* » ; « *asigură reușita lor* ». ('Les yeux des saints amplifient, parachèvent l'efficacité des sortilèges; ils leur infusent le pouvoir divin').

18 L'utilisation comme amulette du mortier extrait des parois des églises est une pratique attestée dans la France du XIII$^{e}$ siècle. Cf. Bartholeyns, Dittmar Jolivet 2006, p. 18. Quoique cette utilisation soit également plausible pour l'espace roumain, elle n'est pas mentionnée dans le questionnaire de Hasdeu ou dans d'autres sources. Vladimir Agrigoroaei a attiré notre attention sur une autre pratique, à savoir les traces d'aiguisoirs sur les pierres de taille de certaines églises (à Strei, par exemple), une pratique très semblable à celles qui se rencontrent en Occident. Cette pratique, déjà mentionnée par la critique récente, mérite aussi d'être analysée du point de vue anthropologique.

19 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010, p. 668 : « *Cele mai multe farmece se încearcă asupra bărbaților, spre a-i orbi (la figurat), a-i îmbrobodi, ca să nu vadă ce fac soțiile lor necredincioase* ». ('La plupart des sortilèges sont menés sur les hommes, afin de les aveugler (au sens figuré),

de les tromper, pour qu'ils ne voient pas les agissements de leurs femmes infidèles').

20 Popescu 1985, p. 120 : « *lacune în stratul de pictură și de tencuială în urma unor lovituri (ciocan, lance?)* ». Il est dommage que nous ne puissions pas encore estimer l'envergure de ces pratiques dans l'église d'Ostrov. La peinture murale intérieure et extérieure de cette église n'a pas encore été décapée. Quelques sondages faits sur le côté sud de l'extérieur de l'église ont révélé l'existence de plusieurs fragments, parmi lesquels un visage de saint qui n'a plus ses yeux. Cette destruction est pourtant particulière ; on aperçoit immédiatement la strate de pierre, l'enduit étant très fin. Il n'est alors pas clair si l'endommagement est dû à l'action des êtres humains ou aux intempéries. Je remercie Vladimir Agrigoroaei de toutes les suggestions et informations qu'il nous a fournies lors de la rédaction de cet article, ce qui a considérablement élargi le point de vue ethnologique. Nous espérons que la contribution ethnologique sera pertinente pour les aspects portant sur l'histoire de l'art religieux.

21 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010 : « *ca să lege gurile și să închidă ochii judecătorilor, ca să scape vreun culpabil* ».

22 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010, p. 469 : « *ca să revină vederea celor suferinzi de ochi, aceștia mergeau ei înșiși la biserică, luând nițel praf din ochii sfinților, din lumina (ochilor) și presărau în ochii lor* ».

23 Tocilescu 1990, p. 434 : « *se descântă în apă cu busuioc și cu fir de mătură. Cu apa se stropește la ochi. Dela Bala Stana Reșică, Drăgănești, Teleorman* ».

24 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010, p. 469 : « *Femeia va fi iubită cum sunt adorați sfinții de toată lumea* ».

25 Un euphémisme désignant le diable.

26 Ispas, Truță 1985, p. 58.

27 Ispas, Truță 1985, p. 118.

28 Tocilescu, 1900, p. 229.

29 Tocilescu 1900, p. 278.

30 Mușlea, Bârlea 2010, p. 469 : « *toate ființele să stea înaintea babelor ca un sfânt* ».

31 Mușlea, Bârlea 2010, p. 469 : « *ochii unor sfinți se scot sub cuvânt că sunt unii cu coarne* ».

32 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010 : « *praful sau pământul scos din zugrăveală e băgat în băutura sau mâncarea bărbatului, după ce mai întâi a fost ars; e amestecat în farmece împreună cu un ou clocit de femeie timp de o săptămână* ».

33 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010 : « *pentru luarea laptelui vitelor* ».

34 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010 : « *pentru scăldarea copiilor îndrăciți* » / « *se amestecă cu grăunțele ca să scoată vara pui mulți la cloște și să trăiască* ».

35 Mușlea, Bîrlea 2010 : « *Uneori se scot și ochii dracilor zugrăviți pe biserici, fie 'din ură'...* » / « *Dacă e zugrăvită moartea, i se scot ochii și i se taie picioarele, zicând că a luat un copil* »

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# *Preliminaries to a history of Bucharest iconostases*
## *of 18th-19th centuries*

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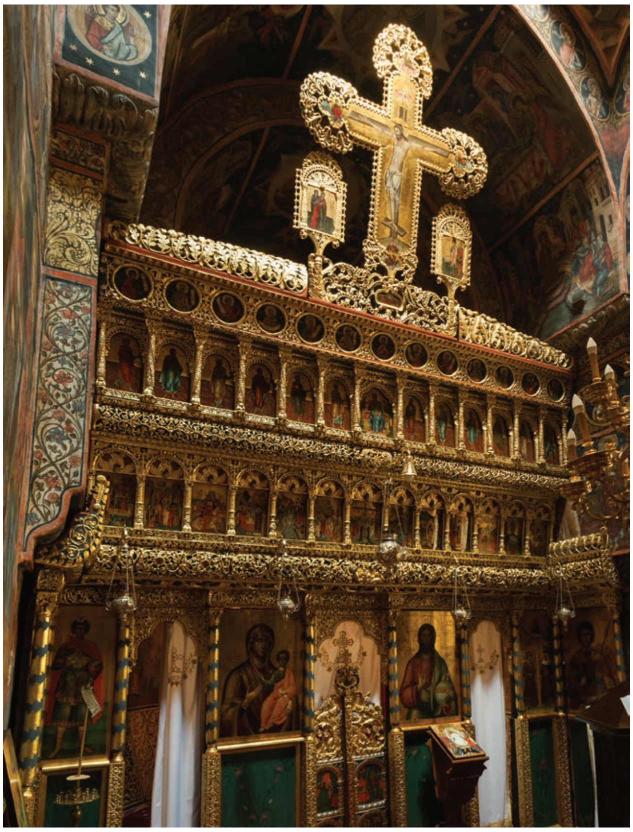
RÉSUMÉ: L'étude porte sur quatre iconostases situées dans les églises de Bucarest ; elle traite de plusieurs étapes chronologiques et de plusieurs styles artistiques. Pour ce qui est des styles de sculpture, il faut rappeler le Brancovan, le Néobaroque hellénique et le Baroque classicisant ; pour la peinture, il convient de mentionner les icônes brancovanes, les icônes russes œuvrées par les peintres du tsar, les icônes roumaines peintes pendant la transition entre la tradition byzantine et l'Académisme ou le Néoclassicisme, voire l'icône néo-byzantine. Plusieurs combinaisons de ces éléments sont présentes dans les iconostases analysées. Cela est dû, d'une part, aux choix initiaux faits par les commanditaires (comme dans les iconostases brancovanes avec icônes impériales russes qui se trouvent dans la chapelle patriarcale et dans le couvent de Stavropoleos). D'autre part, ces juxtapositions peuvent être le résultat des changements (comme les iconostases néobaroques avec icônes néoclassiques de l'Église Blanche et de la Cathédrale patriarcale). L'étude explique les changements dans les goûts des commanditaires et leur adaptation à l'évolution de l'art européen. Dans une période relativement courte d'environ 200 ans, la sculpture et la peinture des iconostases témoignent d'un passage rapide de la tradition byzantine des artisans médiévaux à la manière occidentalisée des artistes modernes, mais aussi d'un retour aux principes traditionnels de l'icône byzantine. Les ktètors modernes, membres de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique, de l'aristocratie ou de la petite bourgeoisie, ont écrit une nouvelle page dans l'histoire de l'art religieux de la capitale roumaine. L'intérieur des églises a changé ; le résumé de cette évolution peut être lu dans les couches chronologiques de l'iconostase, qui témoignent de ces changements.

MOTS-CLÉS: style brancovan, icone, iconostase, Académisme, Néoclassicisme, Baroque.

REZUMAT: Studiul analizează patru iconostase aflate în biserici din București, care alătură mai multe etape cronologice și stiluri artistice. Astfel, pentru sculptură întâlnim stilurile brâncovenesc, neobaroc elen, baroc clasicizant, iar pentru pictură: icoane brâncovenești, icoane rusești lucrate de pictorii țarului, icoana românească din perioada de tranziție de la tradiția bizantină la academism și neoclasicism, icoana neobizantină. Aceste elemente sunt prezente în iconostasele analizate în diferite combinații, fapt datorat, pe de o parte, opțiunii inițiale a comanditarului (de ex. iconostas brâncovenesc cu icoane împărătești rusești, cazul Paraclisului Patriarhal și al Mănăstirii Stavropoleos) și, pe de altă parte, modificărilor suferite în timp (de ex. iconostas neobaroc cu icoane neoclasice, cazul Bisericii Albe și al Catedralei Patriarhale). Studiul arată evoluția gustului comanditarilor și adaptarea acestora la mutațiile produse în arta europeană. Într-un interval relativ scurt, de circa 200 de ani, sculptura și pictura iconostaselor marchează o trecere de la tradiția bizantină a meșterilor medievali la maniera occidentalizantă a artiștilor moderni și înapoi la recuperarea limbajului tradițional al icoanei bizantine. În zorii modernității, ctitorii care aparțineau ierarhiei clericale, aristocrației sau micii burghezii au scris o nouă pagină a artei bisericești în capitala României. Întreg interiorul bisericilor s-a schimbat, iar iconostasul, cu straturile cronologice pe care le conservă, poate fi considerat un rezumat al acestei evoluții.

CUVINTE CHEIE: stil brâncovenesc, icoană, iconostas, academism, neoclasicism, baroc.

In the old churches of Bucharest there remain numerous valuable iconostases that could become the object of study for art historians, but, surprisingly, the field has remained almost unresearched to this day. The subject has been largely ignored, with the exception of a few specimens dating back to the Brancovan era, catalogued in the 1970s, solely approached with regards to their sculpture,[1] and that of some isolated descriptions in the monographs of a few churches and monasteries.[2] After the end of the 18th century, when the stylistic uniformity of Byzantine-tradition art was left behind, this phenomenon is all the more interesting, due to an explosion of forms in the decorative repertoire, combining elements of the Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassical and Neo-gothic styles, thus resulting in a multitude of variations and stylistic options. This is all with regards to the sculptural element of the iconostasis ensemble. The icons themselves were been subject to successive replacements, and offer an even more complex picture: within an iconostasis, sometimes even within the framework of a register, several chronological stages may coexist. The reasons differ, and one may identify at least three situations: i) the destruction or degradation of some icons, as a consequence of moving the iconostasis from one church to another, or of natural disasters (fires, earthquakes); ii) the desire of the community to renew the church heritage on the occasion of various restoration



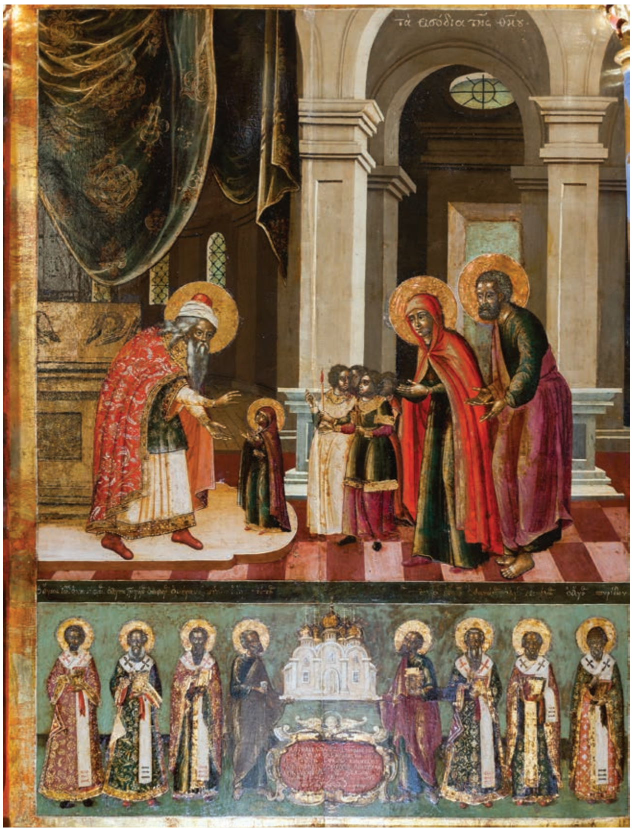


Fig. 1: *The iconostasis of the Patriarchal chapel, 1723.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 2: *The Entry into the Temple, Patriachal chapel, icon assigned to Tihon Filatjev Ivanov, 1722.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

and reconstruction projects (in which case old icons are either partially replaced or lateral panels are added); and iii) the preference of the donor for other painters and artistic styles, which is, in its turn, a symptom of the taste for novelty (the Royal icons are valued places for displaying the most recent artistic tendencies). One should also mention here a somewhat subordinate situation: the retouching or partial repainting of old panels by the painter contracted to (re)paint the church, in which instance the same icon retains several painted layers, all visible.

Our study investigates a group of four monuments in which one or more of the situations mentioned above can be found. From a stylistic perspective, these monuments fit into the following typologies:

I. Brancovan iconostases dating from the first decades of the 18th century, with the upper registers including icons painted by icon painters from the Brancovan school, as well as Royal icons made by Russian painters;

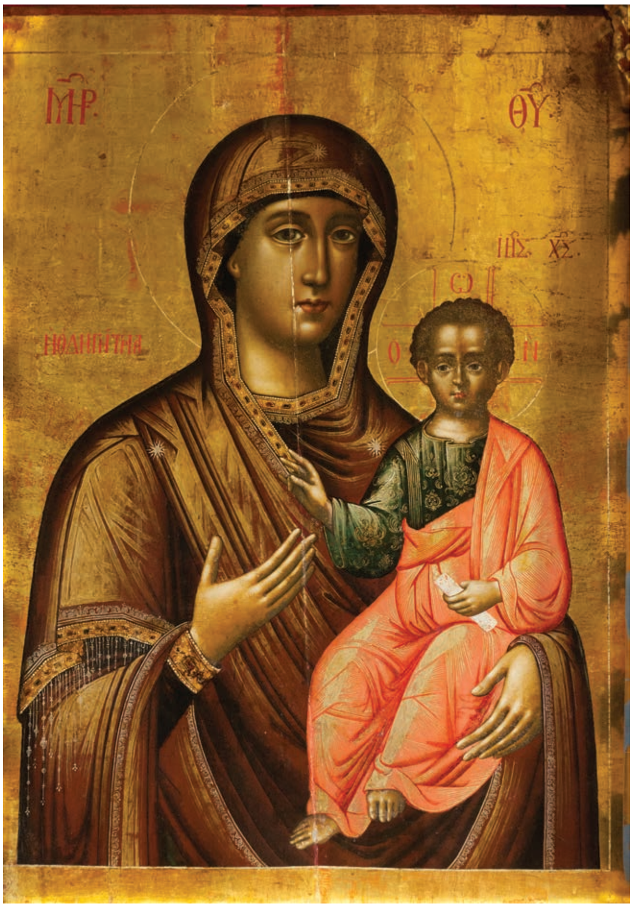
II. Iconostases belonging to the Hellenistic Neo-baroque style characteristic of the second half of the 18th century, with icons made by local painters – from the schools of Cernica and Căldărușani, in the first decades of the 19th century – and, in a second stage, by the academic painter Gheorghe Tattarescu (1820-1894);

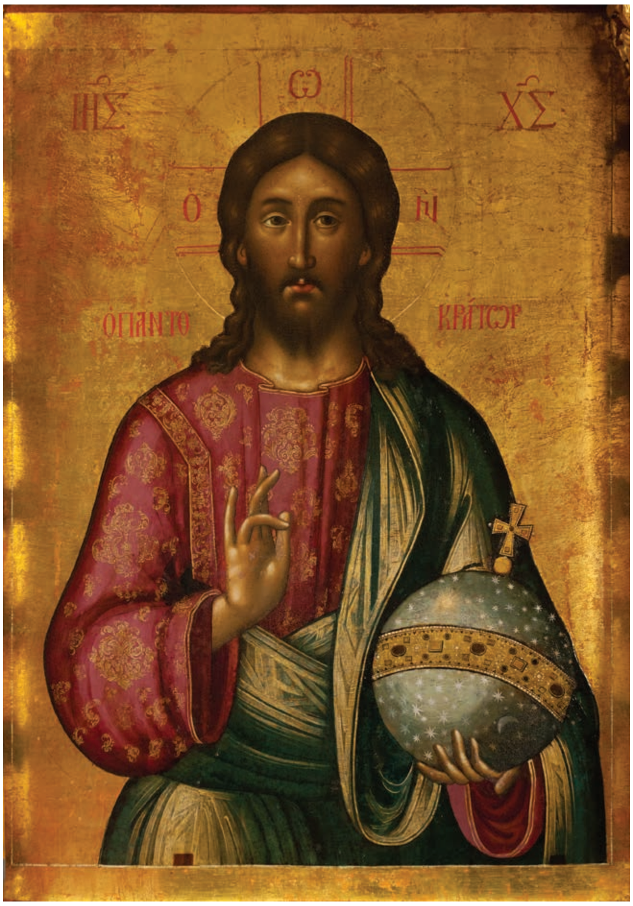
III. Iconostases with stylistic evidence of a classicizing Baroque, with icons attributable to painters from Cernica, and to some painters of the first half of the 20th century.

The examples discussed herein, as well as the authorship attributions and the stylistic categorisation proposed, intend to show the donors' evolving taste and the manner in which they adapted to the mutations produced in European art. Within a relatively short period (200 years), the sculpture and painting of the iconostasis mark a passage from the Byzantine tradition of the master craftsman to the Western manner of the modern artist, and back to a revival of the traditional language of the Byzantine icon. At the dawn of modernity, the church founders belonging to the clerical hierarchy, the aristocracy, or the *petite bourgeoisie* wrote a fresh chapter in the history of ecclesiastical art in Romania's capital city. Church interiors, furniture, and architectural forms change. The iconostasis, with the chronological layers that it preserves, may be considered to be a summation of this evolution.[3]

## *"Peter, the Russian history-painter in Bucharest" or how to bring the Tsar's painters to Bucharest.*

Amongst the churches in Bucharest which still retain a Brancovan iconostasis, there are some in which the Royal icons were commissioned from Russian workshops during the same era. The other registers belong to the tradition of Brancovan painting, but for those icons that have the biggest impact on worshippers, the choice of the donors inclined towards a different style. Such is the case of the Patriarchal residence chapel, endowed with a rich iconostasis by metropolitan Daniil (1719-1731) in 1723. This iconostasis was most likely designed by local woodcraftsmen in the style and decorative repertoire particular to the Brancovan iconostasis. The Royal icons were made by a Russian icon-maker, in a manner characteristic of the Tsar's painters and of Moscow workshops in Oruzheynaya Palata. The second register icon among the chapel's six Royal icons, *i.e. The Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple and eight Saints* (the holy hierarchs John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, saint Apostles Peter and Paul holding the model of a church,





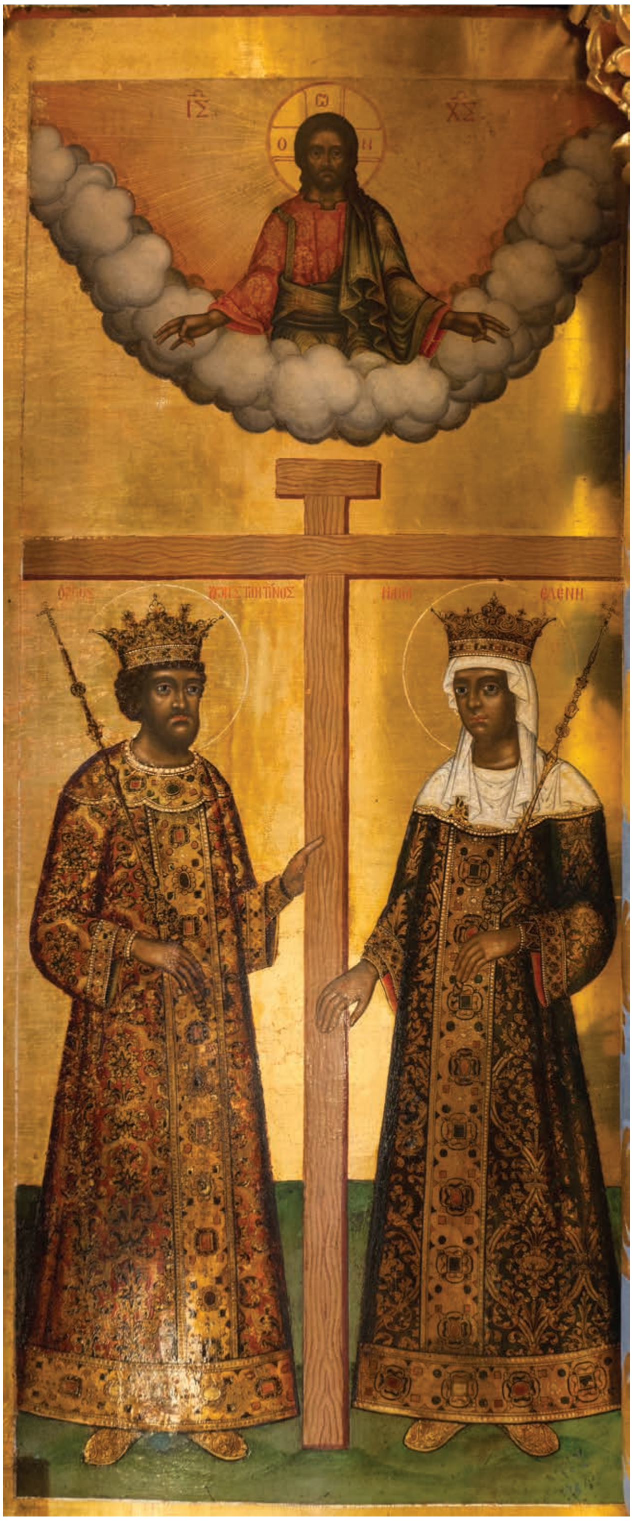
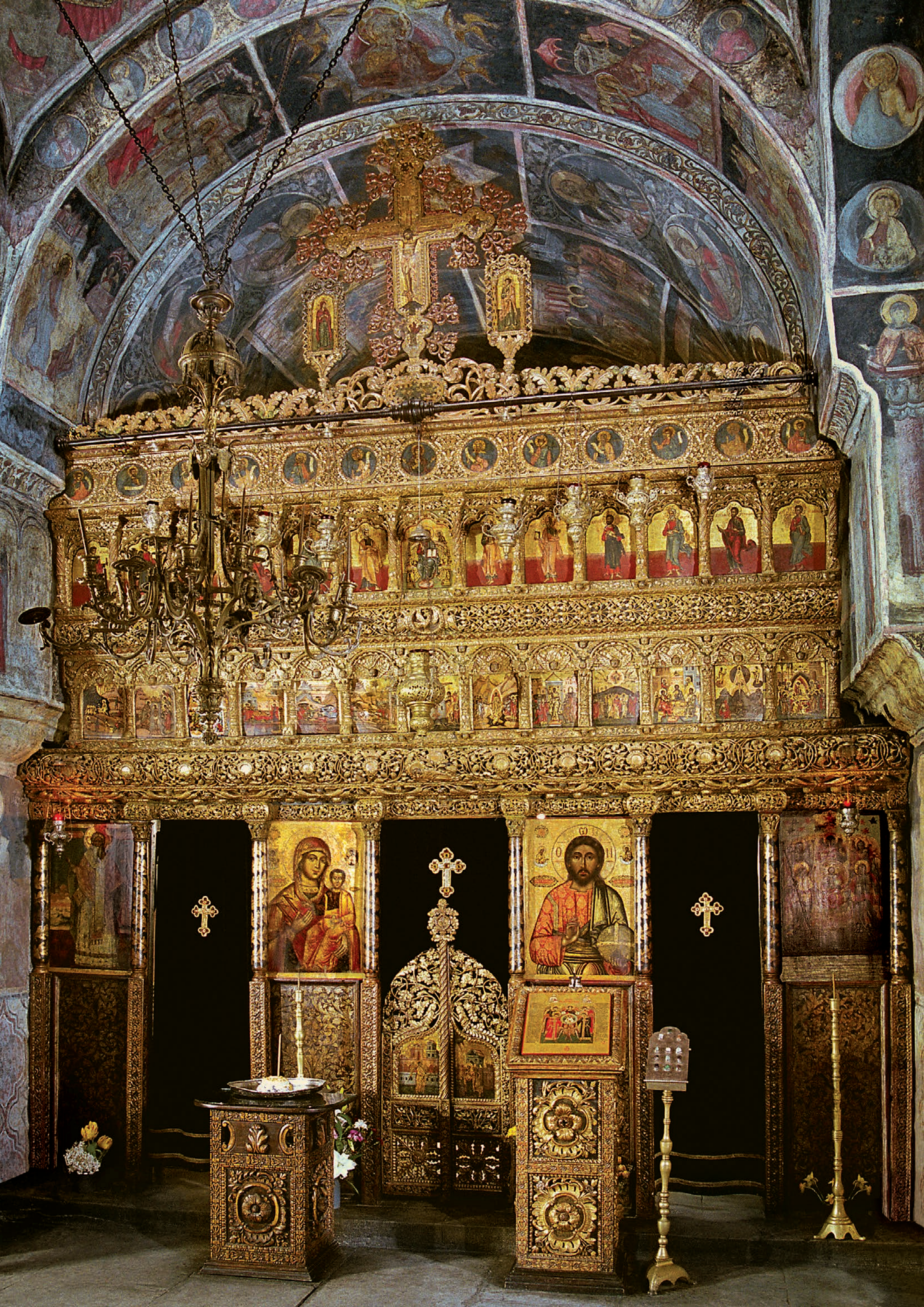
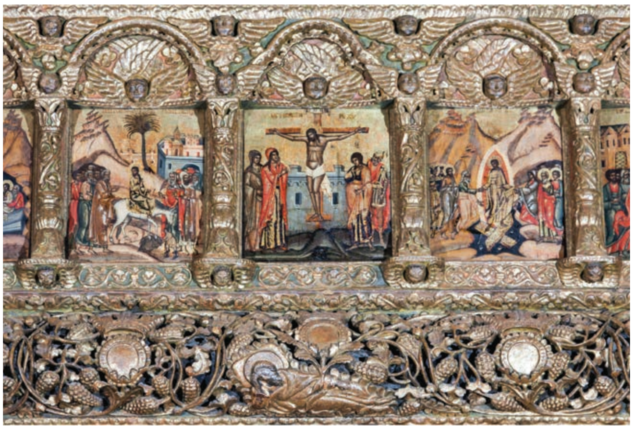


Fig. 3: *The Virgin Mary and Child, Patriachal chapel, icon assigned to Tihon Filatjev Ivanov, 1722.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 4: *Jesus Christ Pantocrator, Patriachal chapel, icon assigned to Tihon Filatjev Ivanov, 1722.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 5: *Saints Constantine and Helen, Patriachal chapel, icon assigned to Tihon Filatjev Ivanov, 1722.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.



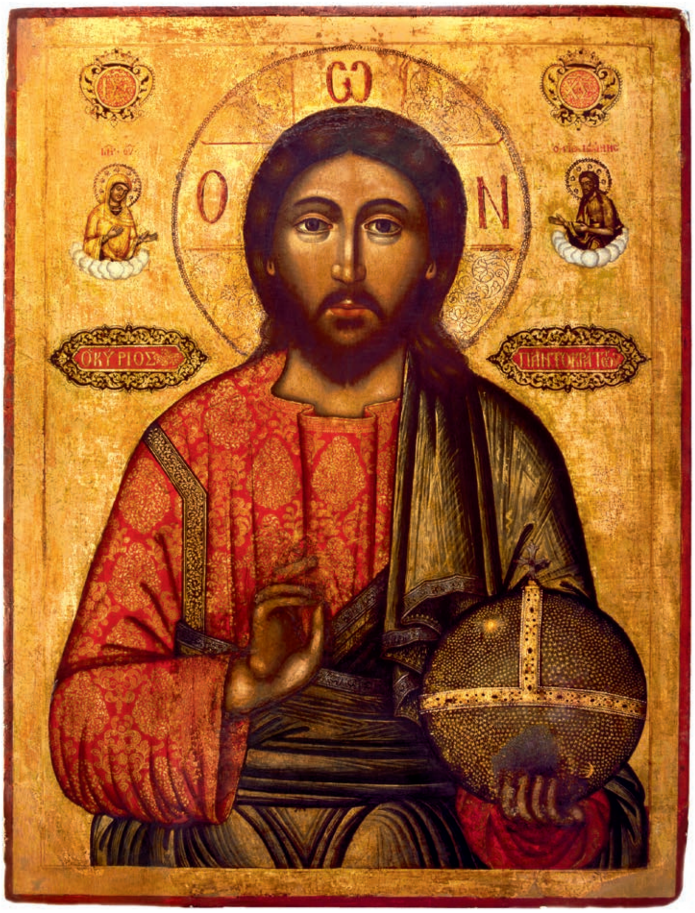


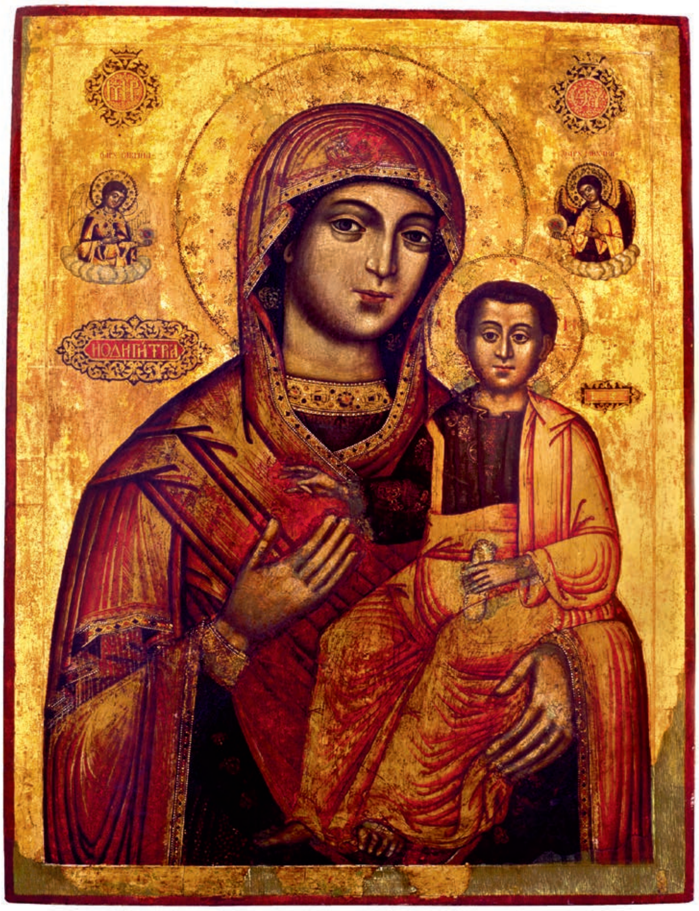
◀ Fig. 6: *Iconostasis of the Stavropoleos Monastery Church, c. 1730.* Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

▲ Fig. 7: *Detail of the feast icons register, Stavropoleos Monastery, c. 1730.* Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

▶ Fig. 8: *Jesus Christ Pantocrator, Stavropoleos Monastery, icon assigned to Peter, first half of the 18th century.* Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

◢ Fig. 9: *The Virgin Mary and Child, Stavropoleos Monastery, icon assigned to Peter, first half of the 18th century.* Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.





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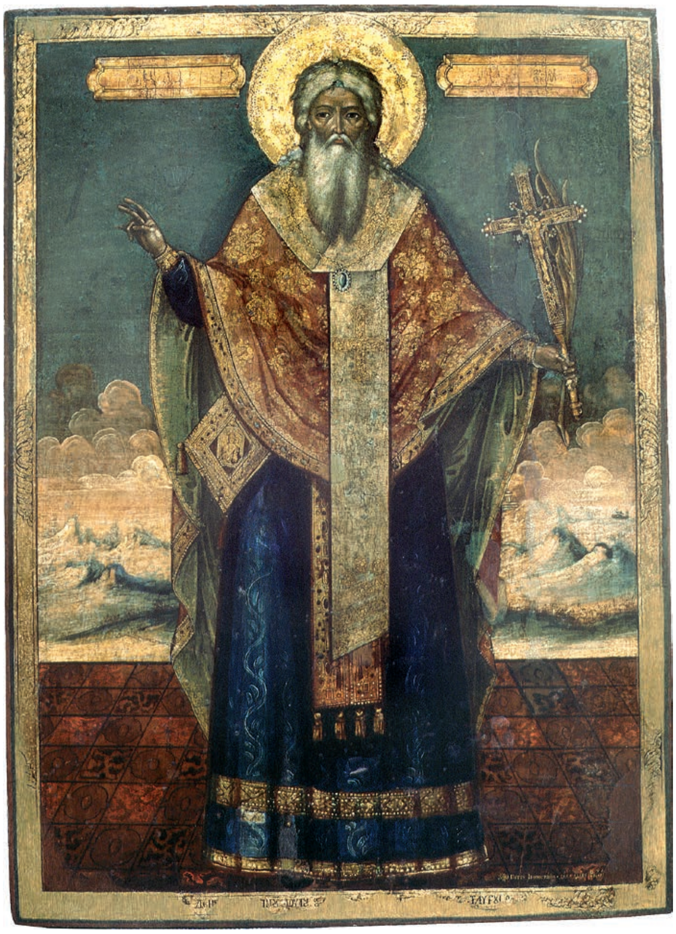
Saint Hierarchs Athanasius, Nikolas and Spyridon) bears an inscription. It tells us that: “These four holy icons were purchased by the holy Metropolitan ‘chir’ Daniil and were given to the chapel of the holy Metropolitan of Bucharest in 7230”. The text, written in Romanian, overlaps another in Greek, from which the following words can be read: “It was painted this way in <Mosc>ov<i>a through the wealth of Ioan in the year 17[22], in the month of August”.[4]

The icon of the *Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple* is obviously the product of an 18th century Russian workshop. The manner in which the physiognomy is treated, the costume details, the church with Russian architecture held by the Apostles, the background setting with Western-influenced architecture and Baroque drapery, are all clues that point in this direction. The other Royal icons belong to the same stylistic fields: their vestments with golden floraldecorations, minutely-depicted calligraphy, the volume of the faces, the dark brown complexion and heavy melancholic look position them in the Russian icon tradition deriving from the circle of Simon Ushakov (1626-1686),[5] the famous Russian painter and leader of the Tsar’s icon workshop.

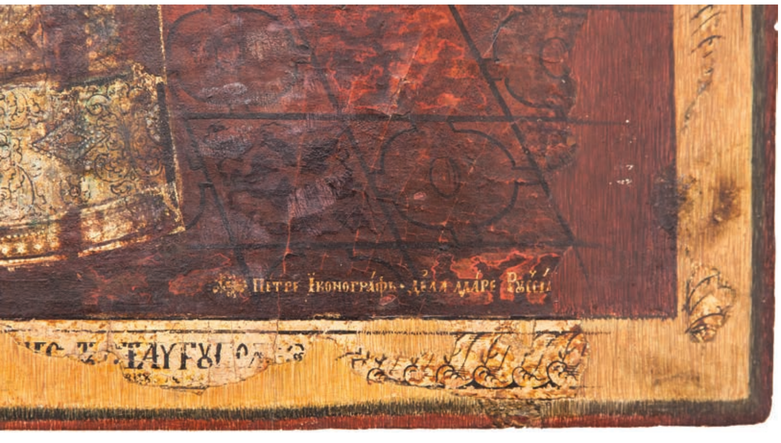
In the chapel’s icons, the manner of representing Jesus Christ follows the model imposed by Simon Ushakov, undertaken by his pupils and contemporaries, and reproduced with different variations until the 19th century.[6] The perfect oval face, the regular features with clearly arched eyebrows, the inferior eyelid slightly raised, the hair falling in curls upon the shoulders, the sober expression of a profound calm, incline towards the Western painting to which Ushakov and all his disciples were indebted.

A series of stylistic features of the icons from the patriarchal Chapel may lead to the Russian icon-maker Tihon Filatjev Ivanov (1675-1731), the son of the painter Ivan Filateva from Yaroslavl, and follower of Simon Ushakov.[7] Analogies can be established with regards to the decoration of the interior scenes,[8] to the way in which faces and vestments are treated[9], and, last but not least, to the use of the Baroque cartouche similar to those in the chapel’s icon, bearing an inscription.[10]



▲ Fig. 10: *Saint Charalambos, Stavropoleos Monastery, icon assigned to Peter, first half of the 18th century.* Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

▼ Fig. 11: *Detail of the icon of Saint Charalambos with Peter's signature ("Peter icon-maker from Great Russia"), Stavropoleos Monastery.* Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.



Two of the four Royal icons now present in the Stavropoleos iconostasis belong to the original iconostasis – *Jesus Christ Pantocrator* and the *Mother of God Hodegetria with the Infant Christ.* However, the monastery museum collection also contains an icon of *Saint Charalambos*[13] which was also, until recently, part of the iconostasis. Its inscription ("Peter icon-maker from Great Russia") may help attribute the authorship of the whole series. Nevertheless, one may only succeed in doing so if the demonstration takes into account a different series, signed by the same Peter in the iconostasis of another Bucharest church, Saint Spyridon the Old.[14] The three icons preserved there (*Jesus Christ Enthroned with Angels, the Mother of God with the Infant Christ* and *Saint John the Baptist, Angel of the Desert*) are signed with the formula: "Teodor's Peter, Russian history-painter in Bucharest". One of them also mentions the year of the painting: 1736.

Just like *Saint Charalambos* in Stavropoleos, *Saint John the Baptist* in the church of Saint Spyridon the Old is represented standing within a landscape background treated in *sfumato.* The vestments of the Saviour and Theotokos have the same serial gold calligraphic floral decoration; the faces, treated in volume, have the same dark brown complexion specific to Russian painting. Only two of the six icons on this theme – three in Stavropoleos and three in Saint Spyridon – are unsigned: the *Mother of God with the Infant Christ* and the *Jesus Christ* in Stavropoleos. The stylistic and compositional similarities point towards the same Peter who painted the Stavropoleos icon of *Saint Charalambos.* The formula in which this Peter has signed is novel: he presents himself as a painter arrived in Bucharest, working in the capital of Wallachia.

Interest in Russian art was manifest at that time throughout the Orthodox countries. Although they were still strongly connected to the great tradition of Byzantine technique and aesthetics, the painters and donors of the 18th century were also open to Western influences. Western engravings were circulating throughout the East-European territory. The fondness of the cultural elite for Western art and for the aesthetics of the Renaissance and Baroque had a strong impact on Orthodox painters, and, consequently, on the icons' donors.[15] Some founders of Bucharest Brancovan iconostases (all of whom belonged to the church hierarchy: metropolitan Daniil in the Patriarchal chapel, metropolitan Ioanichie in Stavropoleos, Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch in Saint Spyridon) adapted to this context. In doing so, they were following the fashion of the time. They erected monuments in a style characteristic of the Wallachian art of the time, they endowed them with similar iconostases, but for the larger icons, which would have had a powerful impact on the worshippers, they opted for the newest tendencies, in the spirit of their time.

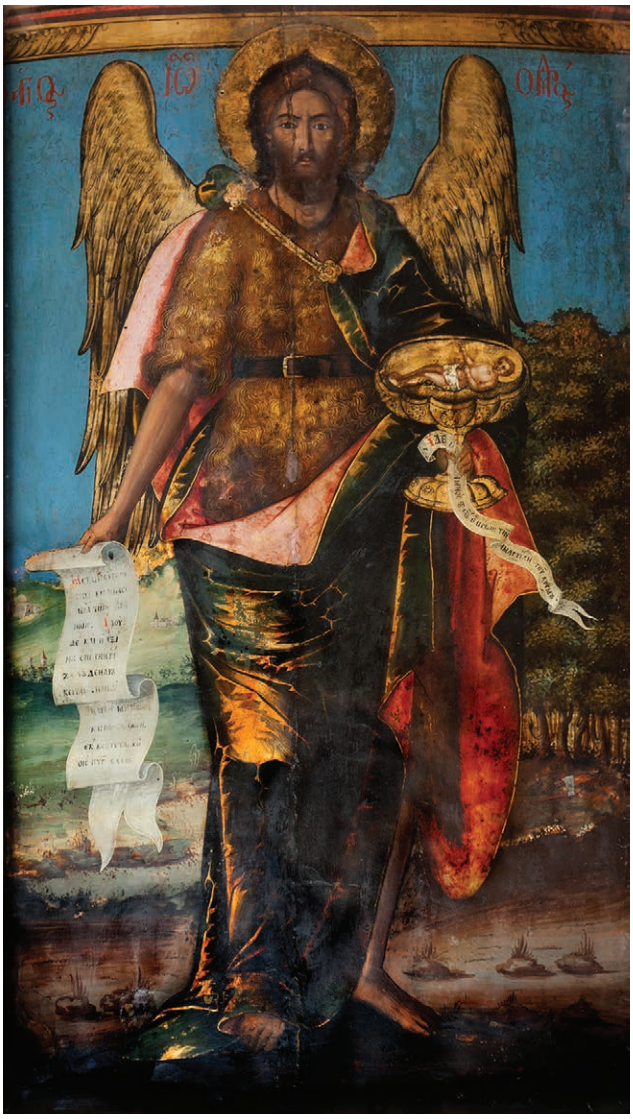
## *"...The faces to be flawless and pleasant to look at", or how to introduce modernity into traditional forms.*

Another category of iconostases worth considering can be encountered in the succeeding period (second half of the 18th century) within three Bucharest churches; these can be catalogued, from a sculptural perspective, as belonging to a Hellenistic Neo-baroque style. Greek ecclesiastic sculpture in the second half of the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century bears a strong Baroque influence. Iconostases underwent significant changes throughout this period as to their compositional structure, technique, and style. The relief becomes high and the number of lace-like rails increases. The subject matter is considerably enriched and numerous compositional paths appear, including threaded flowers, birds, animals, human figures – isolated or in complete biblical scenes – and rendered increasingly life-like. Coloured backgrounds appear, next to large golden areas, the openings in the Royal icons area are arched in different manners, the pillars have rich capitals.[16] The iconostasis of the White Church (*Biserica albă*) – which we are going to analyse – belongs to this stylistic field, as do those from the *Manea Brutaru* and *Saint John "Piață"* churches in Bucharest. The current Saint Nicholas-White Church was erected in 1827 on the site of an older church dating back to the beginning of the 18th century. The founder, chamberlain Nicolae Trăsnea, installed an iconostasis brought from an unknown church elsewhere.[17]

The icons from the iconostasis are not contemporary with the sculpture. The iconostasis lacked these icons, which were commissioned as it was installed in the church to a member of the painting school in Cernica and Căldărușani, during the first decades of the 19th century. Only four Royal icons still testify to this stage: *Jesus Christ the Teacher*, the *Mother of God with the Infant Christ*, *Saint Nicholas*, and the *Dormition of the Mother of God*. The first two have a common typology that can be identified in three other instances: in the White Church, in the Saint Nicholas In-One-Day church in Bucharest, and in the Cernica Monastery museum (icons that belonged to the Cernica Monastery church – *Saint Nicholas*). One may notice the same positioning of the characters' heads, the same type of vestment drapery. Jesus Christ's vestment is tied with a knotted string; the Virgin's *maphorion* has the same type of embroidery. We know from the inscription that the icon of *Jesus Christ* in Cernica was painted by Nicolae Polcovnicul[18] and, through analogy, we may presume that the whole series should be attributed to this painter – an important representative of the school, who worked at the beginning of the 19th century on several icons and mural ensembles in Bucharest, and led a workshop.[19] The era was one of innovation, and the biographers of Nicolae Polcovnicul considered him "a link between the old traditional painting and the new currents finding their way".[20]

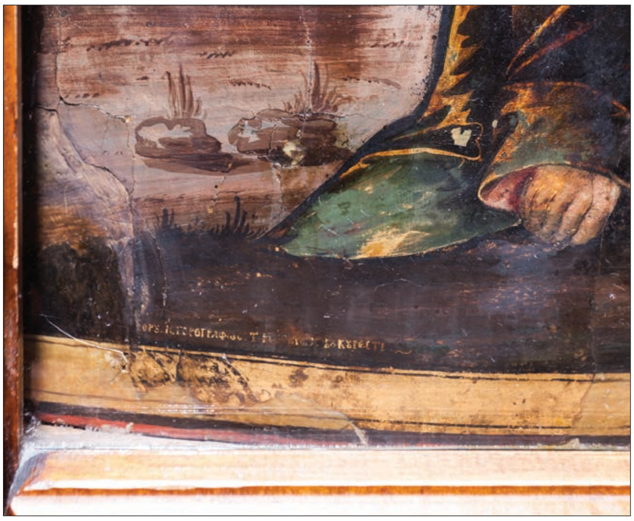
The other two Royal icons from the White Church, *Saint Charalambos* and *Saint Elijah*, as well as the rest of the icons adorning the iconostasis (the registers of prophets, apostles, and feasts) are by the painter Gheorghe Tattarescu, who was chosen to accomplish the mural ensembles of the White Church in 1873.[21] Tattarescu repainted the iconostasis icons, he completely covered the painting of 1827-1830 done by Nicolae Polcovnicul or a representative of his school. Recent restoration[22] confirmed the existence of a painted layer underneath the visible one; the restorers removed the later one, producing a witness: the icon of the prophet Solomon. Gheorghe Tattarescu, Romania's first Academic painter, reformulated the principles of Church art, further developing the innovations of the painters belonging to the previous generation. The interiors and the landscapes of the feast icons follow perspectival depths, the characters are represented with ample theatrical gestures; he relies on the expressivity of anatomical forms, on the variety of positions, on dynamism and on clever compositional framing. Pastel colours, foreign to the traditional colours of icons, are used. Halos and rays of light appear around the heads of the characters, as means of signifying holiness, a device borrowed from Baroque Western painting.

The White Church iconostasis combines three Church art periods. The sculpture inherits the constructional and decorative principles of the late Brancovan art, with a certain Greek vernacular Baroque or Levant Baroque[23]



▲ Fig. 12: *Saint John the Baptist, St. Spyridon the Old Church, Peter the Painter, 1736.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

▼ Fig. 13: *Detail of the icon above, with Peter's signature. ("Peter, Russian history-painter in Bucharest").*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.



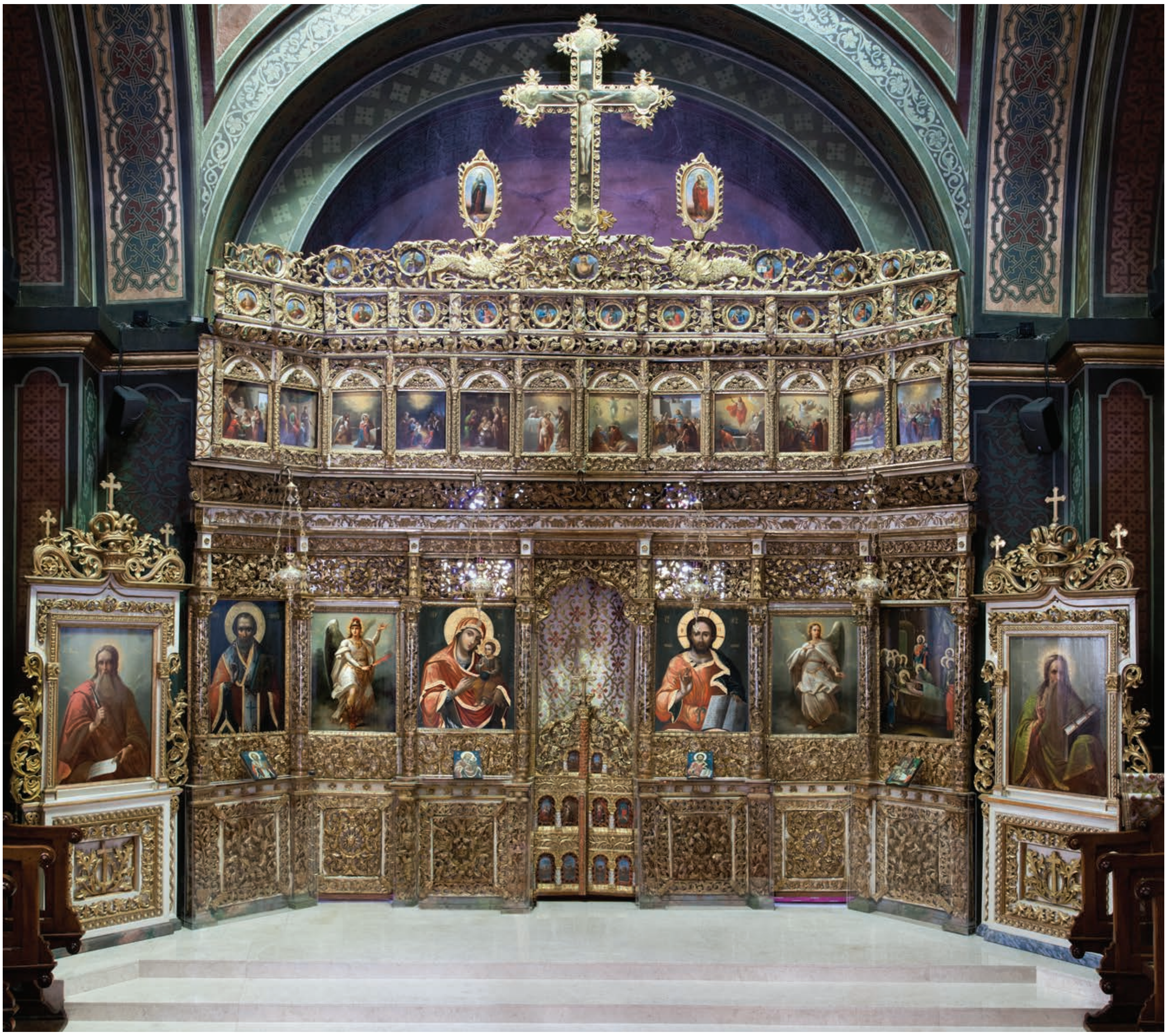
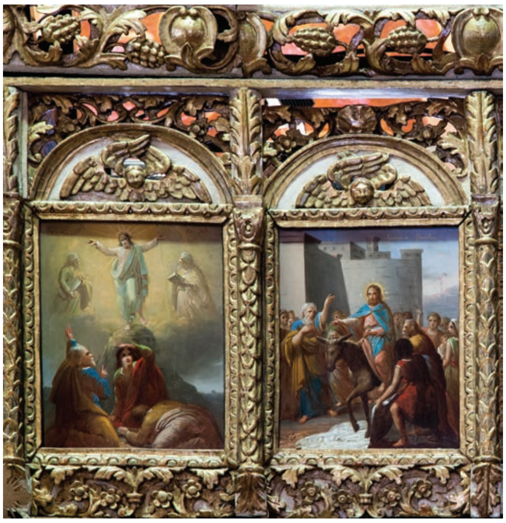
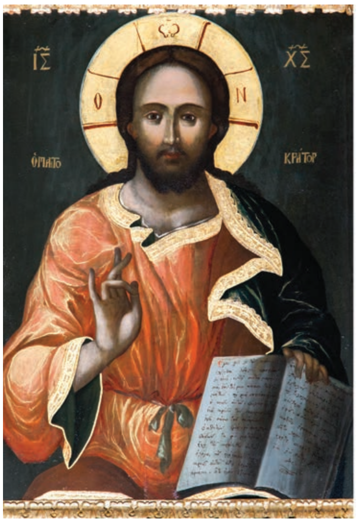


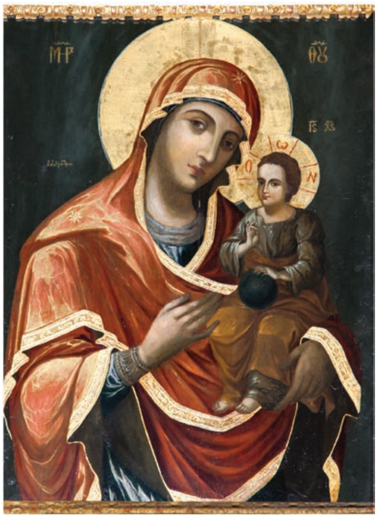
Fig. 13: *Iconostasis of the White Church, second half of the 18th century.* Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

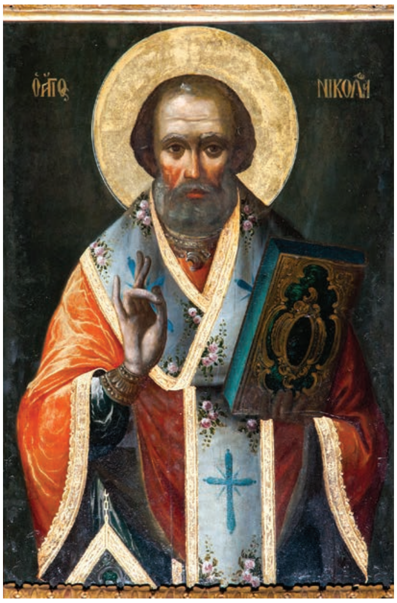
which may be compared, in terms relevant to Romanian culture, with the post-Brancovan style. The painting already hints at modernity and is greatly influenced by Western styles. With the first painter (Nicolae Polcovnicul, or another painter of that school), the transition towards a new language in Wallachian Church painting is achieved. Painting schools were attached to bishopric or monastic centres in the first half of the 19th century. Such is the case at the Cernica Monastery, whose school was established by the painter Ivan Rusu and a group of monk-painters from the Căldărușani Monastery, or the case of another school attached to the Buzău bishopric, supported by bishop Chesarie and established by Nicolae Teodorescu. Their task was to prepare painters to decorate local churches.[24] These painters aspired to represent naturalistic biblical scenes and characters as much as possible, thus escaping the canonical Byzantine frameworks. The saints were painted with a careful artistry, which seeks to suggest the consistency of the body, the soft fall of the drapery, and the shadows formed by complex lighting. It was an agreeable art, pleasant and undemanding. In his contract for the painting of the metropolitan cathedral, Nicolae Polcovnicul himself stated that "the vestments of the saints should be as much as possible made to *look imposing* and artfully worked upon, and especially the faces of the history painting to be done with delicacy and good measurement with the best artistic craft in order to be, in brief, flawless and *pleasant to look at*".[25]

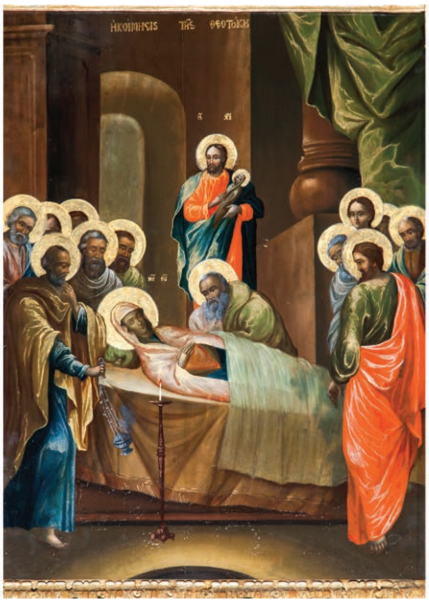
The second painter of the White Church, Gheorghe Tattarescu, went further along this path. The Neoclassical-Academic style that Tattarescu managed to impose filled Bucharest churches with a series of idealised portraits, with characters having conventional positions and attitudes, theatrical gestures, and ecstatic expressions seeking to indicate holiness. He learned the craft of painting as a pupil in the Buzău school, but once returned to its native country after years spent in Rome, Tattarescu proved himself to be a prolific modern painter, a true reformer of church painting.[26] The donors of the White Church, the founder Nicolae Trăsnea – a high ranking boyar – and the church curators always managed to chose the most novel and advanced tendencies existing at that moment. Moving on from the post-Byzantine framework of Bucharest church interiors, they chose modernity and Westernisation.











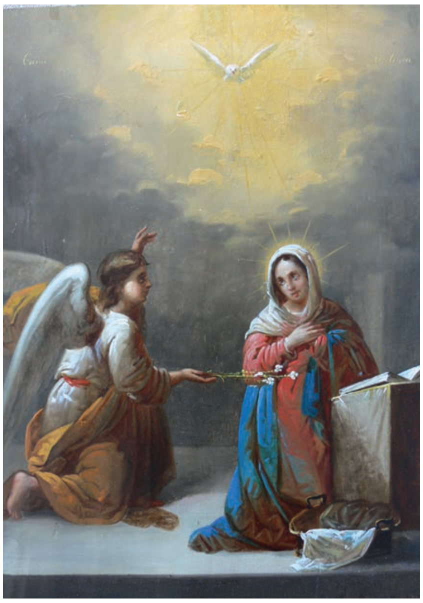


Fig. 15: *Detail of the feast icons register, White Church, painter G. Tattarescu, 1873.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 16: *Jesus Christ the Teacher, White Church, icon assigned to Nicolae Polcovnicul, c. 1830.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 17: *Virgin Mary with Child, White Church, icon assigned to Nicolae Polcovnicul, c. 1830.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 18: *Saint Nicholas, White Church, icon assigned to Nicolae Polcovnicul, c. 1830.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 19: *Dormition of the Mother of God, White Church, icon assigned to Nicolae Polcovnicul, c. 1830.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 15: *The Annunciation, White Church, painter G. Tattarescu, 1873.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

## "A type of roses painted between circles of saints" or how Neo-byzantinisim must replace academicism.

The Bucharest Metropolitan (and from 1925, Patriarchal) Cathedral is perhaps the most complex case of the juxtaposition of different styles and eras within an iconostasis. Constantin Şerban erected the eponymous church of the Holy Emperors monastery in 1655. In 1668, it became the Metropolitan Cathedral. From that moment onward, it was subject to periodic reconstruction, restoration, and transformation: each of the hierarchs succeeding to the Church governance manifested care for the headquarters of the Metropolitan he shepherded.[27] Two moments among these successive interventions are of interest to our study: the restoration from 1834-1839, when the original painting was replaced and the present iconostasis was constructed; and the one from 1932-1935, when the painting from 1836 was replaced and the author of the new mural ensemble retouched the icons of the iconostasis, with the intention of "reformulating" them in accord with his aesthetics.

The sculptural decoration and structure of the iconostasis in the Patriarchal Cathedral belong to a series that we also encounter in other churches erected or restored during the first half of the 19th century (in Bucharest, *Saint Demetrius-"Poştă"*, *Saint Elijah-"Hanul Colţii"*, *"Domniţa Bălaşa"*, *"Slobozia"*, the *Holy Trinity church* of the *"Radu Vodă" Monastery*, and, around Bucharest, the *church of Saint George* in Cernica Monastery, and the *church of the*

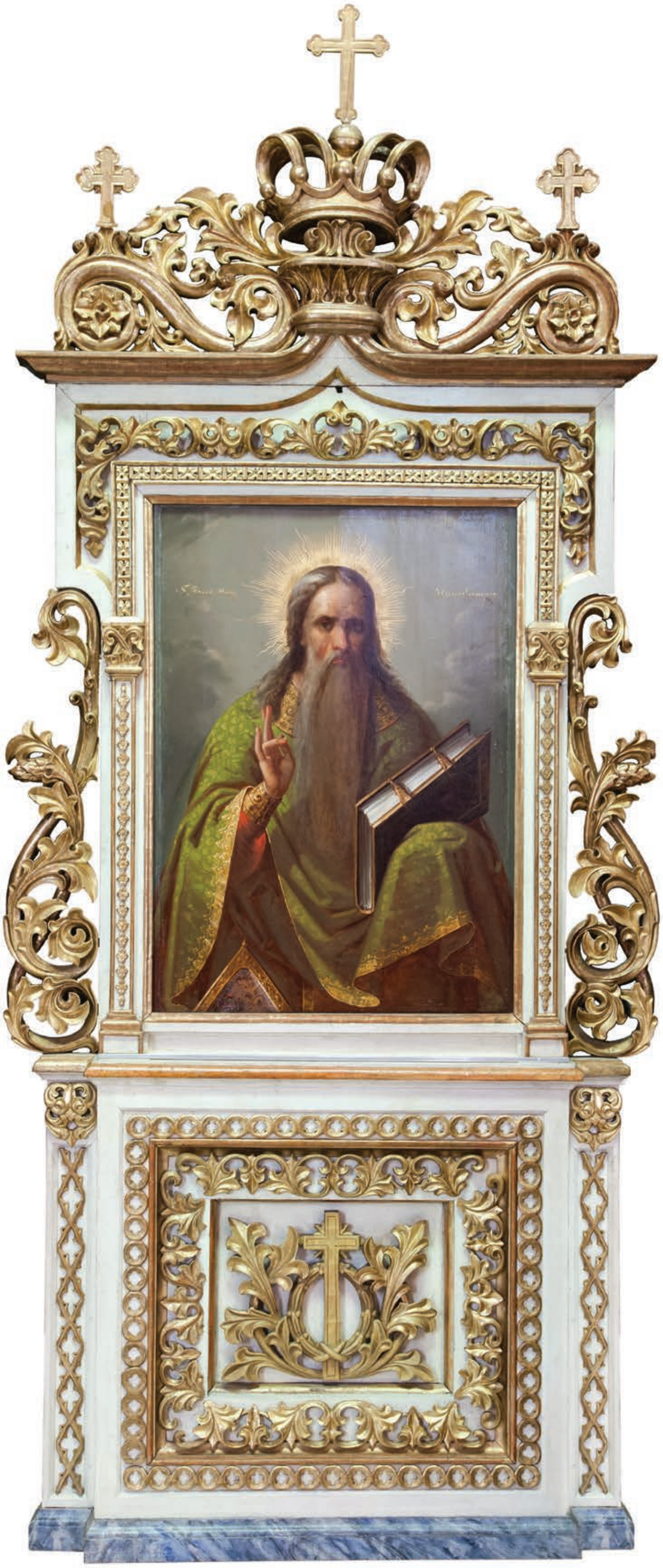


Fig. 21: *Lateral panel with the icon of Saint Charalambos, White Church, 1873.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 22: *Iconostasis of the Patriarchal Cathedral, first half of the 19th century (1834-1839).*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

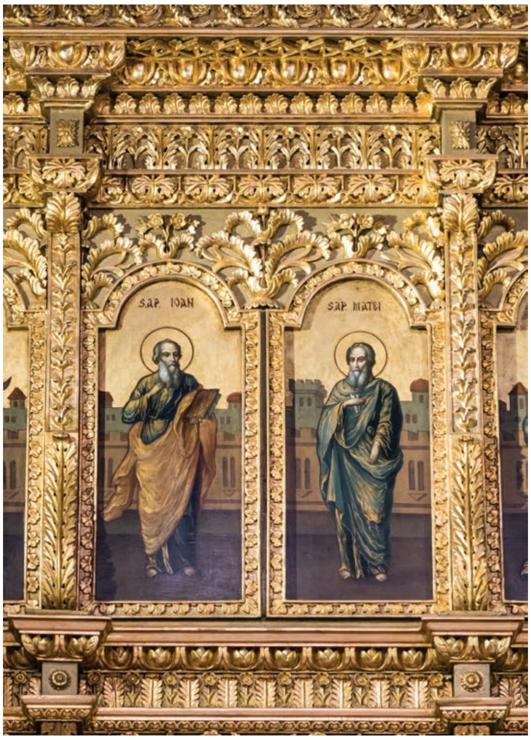
*Holy Trinity* in *Pasărea Monastery*). They all embody an approach combining elements of Baroque vocabulary with those of Renaissance, Neoclassicism, and Academism. One may believe that they belong, using a term from French cabinet-making, to the *Classicizing Baroque*. The Baroque rhetoric of articulating the registers is tempered, in these cases, with a rich repertoire of Neoclassical shapes: fluted columns, diamonds, palmettes, acanthus flowers, dentils, egg and dart on ovolo. These icons from the first decades of the 19th century belong to the most active painters of the moment, representatives of the painting schools from Buzău, Cernica, or Căldărușani.

The iconostasis of the Patriarchal Cathedral was adorned with icons by Nicolae Polcovnicul, who was also commissioned to paint the church during that stage in the cathedral's refurbishment.[28] Nicolae Polcovnicul was at that time the foremost representative of a new manner of painting: free, unconstrained by the Byzantine canons, preoccupied with assimilating the new techniques of Western art, which were supposed to confer plastic expressivity to their creations.

In the Cathedral iconostasis, the manner of Nicolae Polcovnicul, master of the Cernica school, may now be seen only on the Deacon Doors. The feast icons and those of the apostles were re-painted to a considerable degree by Dimitrie Belizarie (1883-1947) during the restoration of 1932-1935, when he was tasked with painting the Cathedral. However, Belizarie did not cover the panels completely, as Tattarescu did in the White Church, but rather gave them a Byzantine touch. He painted over them, in the pastel background characteristic of the Cernica painters, a schematic architectural decoration, flattened, just as in Byzantine art. He intervened on the figures with a black, strong contour that characterises his painting style. In the mural ensemble of the Cathedral, he also redrew the faces and figure silhouettes, as well as elements of landscape and architectural décor. Dimitrie Belizarie (1883-1947) was at that time the promoter of a Neo-byzantine style in Romanian church painting. Together with other contemporaries, he attempted to recover the iconography and technique particular to the Byzantine tradition after a period in which Church painting had encountered the strong influences of the Western currents.

Whilst Nicolae Polcovnicul was trying to reproduce the faces with verisimilitude, relating to reality as closely as possible, not abstractly and synthetically as in the Byzantine icon, Belizarie wished to return Church art to its Byzantine roots, aiming for the flattening and synthetic. Even though two opposing styles met in the icons retouched by Belizarie, the painter managed to attenuate their Western air through an artificialization of the backgrounds in the narrative scenes, thereby attaining the desired hieraticism.

Belizarie also painted the Royal icons in the Patriarchal Cathedral iconostasis (*St. John the Baptist, Jesus Christ the Teacher, the Mother of God with the Infant Christ and the Holy Emperors Constantine and Helen*), but they can no longer be seen, unfortunately.[29] In the time of Patriarch Justinian, 30 years after their execution, these icons were replaced with those we see today, which were completed in enamel by Otilia Oteteleșanu, the artist leading the enamelling section of the Patriarchal Workshops of the Biblical Institute.[30] Enamel does not have a history in Romanian art; in the fifth and sixth decades of the last century, however, Patriarch Justinian initiated a program of recovering Byzantine artistic techniques: mosaic, marble or alabaster bas-relief, and enamel, as well as mural paint-



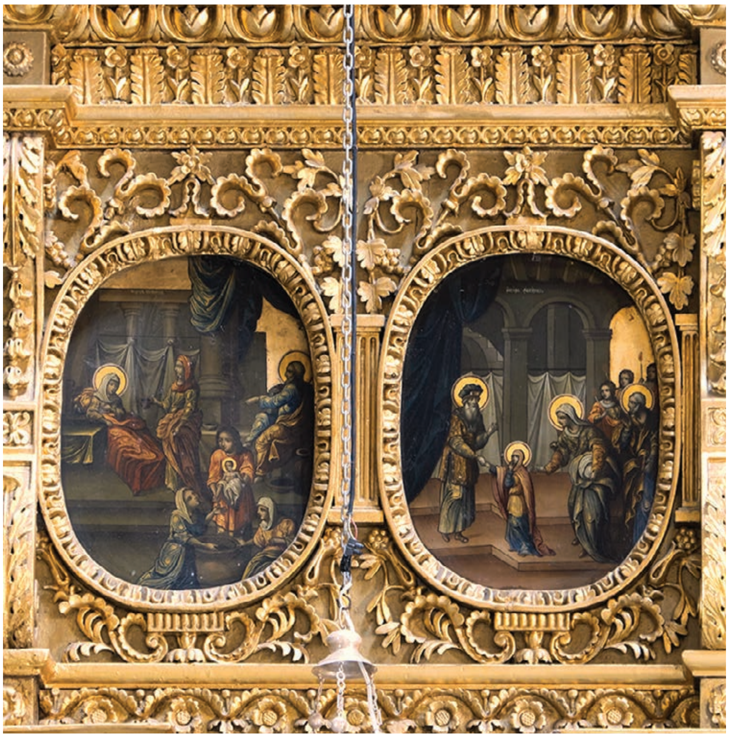
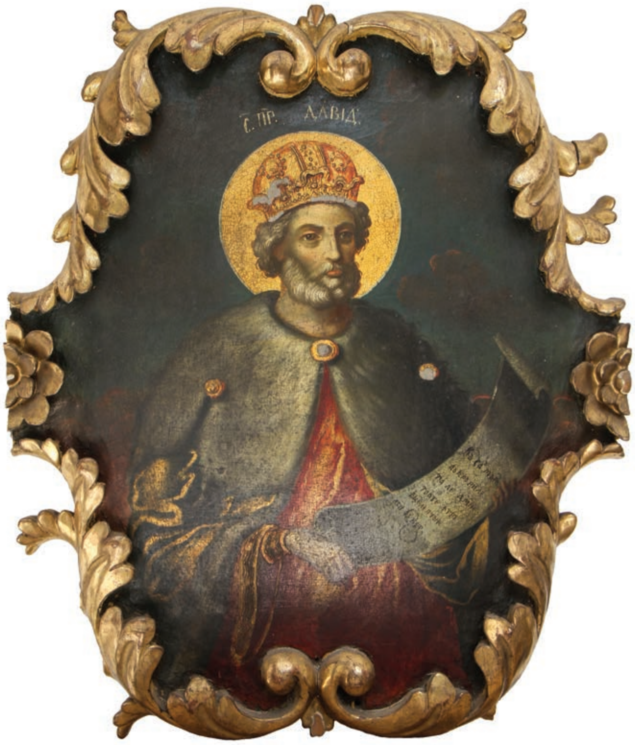


Fig. 23: *Detail of the Apostles' icons register, Patriarchal Cathedral, painters: Nicolae Polcovnicul (1836) with repaintings by Dimitrie Belizarie (1935).*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 24: *Detail of the feast icons register, Patriarchal Cathedral, painters: Nicolae Polcovnicul (1836) with repaintings by Dimitrie Belizarie (1935).*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 25: *David the Prophet, icon belonging to the Patriarchal Cathedral, Nicolae Polcovnicul, 1836.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.



ing with historical themes. He used all of these techniques in the monumental Church art of that time.[31] Nevertheless, his program did not continue for long; nor did the rigid and simultaneously soft painting style of Dimitrie Belizarie achieve a proliferation in the following decades in the churches of the Romanian capital city. Church painting of the '50s-'60s evolved on a trajectory that oriented itself towards the copying of Byzantine mural ensembles, without the theoretical pretensions of Dimitrie Belizarie, Costin Petrescu or Olga Greceanu to impose a new national style in painting.

The Patriarchal Cathedral iconostasis is a mixture of styles; it combines the classicising Neo-baroque of the sculptural element, Nicolae Polcovnicul's painting school, the Neo-byzantine style of the first decades of the 20th century, and, lastly, the 1960s revival of the Byzantine technique of enamelling. Over a period of 150 years, its donors, or in any case the church hierarchy, drifted away from Byzantium and then turned back towards it, trying to recover it programmatically. They obeyed the dominant fashions and currents of those times, whilst at the same time rejecting a radical renewal (such as, for instance, the change of all the registers), but also attempting to preserve unaltered what remained of the prior stage (Nicolae Polcovnicul in 1936, Dimitrie Belizarie in 1965).[32] One may identify here (on behalf of the patrons) either a mainly subjective approach to choosing an artist or a programmatic support for a particular direction in the Church art.

* * *

In all three situations presented here, the donors' choice of icons in the iconostases of the analysed churches responded to a cultural tendency and artistic orientation of that period. Cultural environment, church hierarchy, clergy and worshippers were reaching a consensus that determined a mutation within ecclesiastical art, immediately absorbed by the Romanian capital's churches. The choice of the Russian icon was a consequence not only of the decline of artistic life under the Ottoman rule, but also of a common tendency in the understanding of eccle-

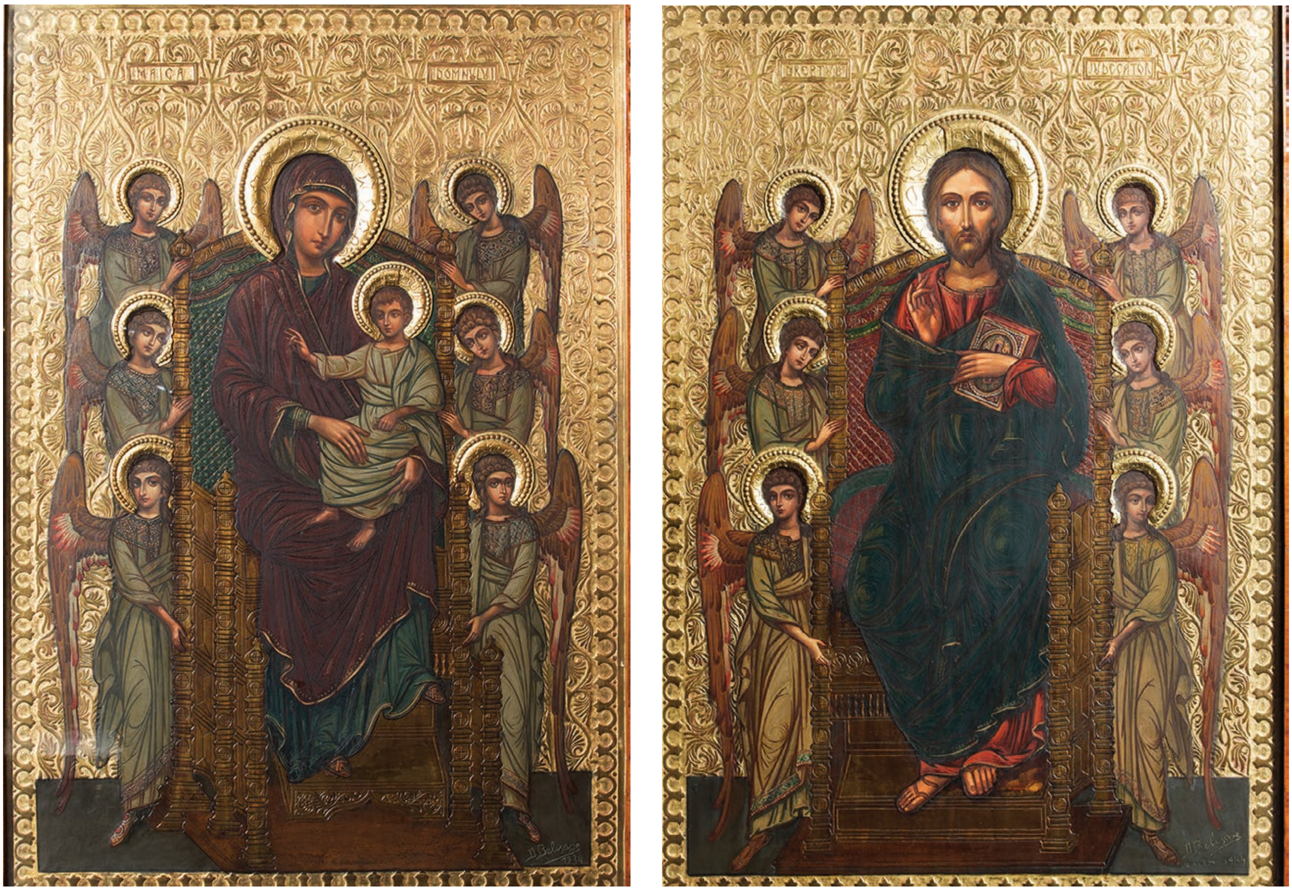
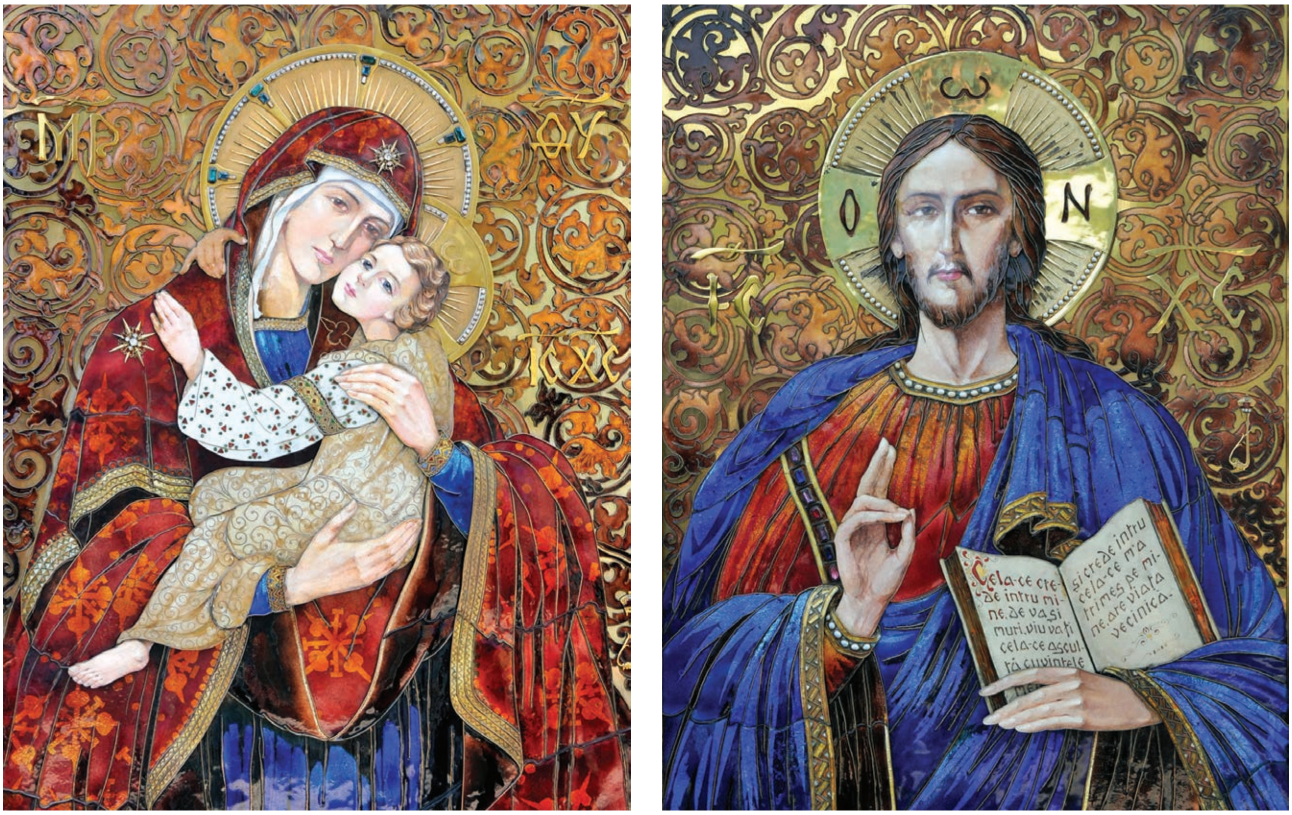


Fig. 26, 27: *Virgin Mary Enthroned with Child / Jesus Christ Enthroned with Angels, Patriarchal Cathedral, painter: Dimitrie Belizarie, 1935.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.

Fig. 28-29: *Virgin Mary with Child / Jesus Christ the Teacher, enamel icons, Otilia Oteteleşanu, 1965.*
Credits: Daniel Mihail Constantinescu.


MP ΘY
IC XC
O ΩN
IC XC
Cela-ce crede intru mine. de va şi muri. viu va fi cela-ce ascultă cuvintele
şi crede intru cela-ce m'a trimes pe mine. are viaţa vecinică.

siastical art, as well as of the Church's relation to artistic creation. This attitude was due to the circumstances that marked the history of Orthodoxy at the time. The transfer and assimilation of Western artistic elements occurred naturally in Greece, the Balkans, Russia and, no less, in Mount Athos, the centre of Orthodoxy and Byzantine art. It was the result of an essential change in the way that Church art was perceived. As soon as aesthetic factors played a decisive role in appreciating icons, the very fact of commissioning an icon (painted in the spirit of European art in the Moscow workshops of Oruzheynaya Palata) became the most evolved expression of a cultivated society, a gesture of progress for Church people.[33] This happened because the educated people of that time, the elite, the high clergy, saw and perceived the sacred image in this way.[34] The donors of the icons destined for some of the Bucharest Brancovan iconostases responded to this context, marking, through their choice, the first moment of Westernisation.

Although not completely departing from tradition, the 19th century icons by the local painters of the Buzău, Cernica, and Căldăruşani schools relied on a certain artistry of execution inspired by Academic painting. They desired to make the sacred image more and more accessible to a public already receptive to modernity. The cultivated upper class was already travelling abroad, visiting European museums and Western Baroque churches. For them, valuable Church art was no longer the hieratic and abstract post-Byzantine art. The representatives of this elite were church donors or guardians: they were the ones erecting new churches, endowing them with iconostases and different religious objects; they had the power to influence the taste of the faithful in this way.

A transformation had already taken place within the artists' mentality. Even by the end of the 18th century, the redefinition of the painter's craft and status and the establishing of a guild of *fine painters* played an essential role in outlining the new artistic concept, in the sense of the stress placed on individual creativity. Painters were no longer exclusively icon-makers; their horizons were opening up, and, little by little, they no longer felt the obligation to respect the strict canons of Church art. This innovation was taken further by Tattarescu, a supporter of a new way to regard Church art. Studying in Rome, he viewed drawing as a science of historical, allegorical and religious composition; he learned that anatomical shapes should recall Classical sculpture. Once back in his homeland, he wished to put his work to the test, trying to create a modern Romania. He founded the Academy of Fine Arts, a National Art Gallery, and an annual exhibition – all of them connected to modern art. His personality no longer had anything to do with the traditional church painter.

Tattarescu and all his followers aspired to perfect the manner of representation of the saints and of the sacred scenes, to refine the technical style, but this aspiration eventually reached a dead end. Beginning in 1889, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church restricted the interference of Western painting in Romanian churches.[35] The year 1898 saw the official publication of a *Rule for the Painting of Churches* which "stops admission to churches of those icons depicting saints in non-natural size (...), in costumes or in modern dress". From that moment onwards, it was required that the "painting and all the ornaments, whether from old or new churches" should be "according to the Byzantine style already existing in our Church".

The generation of painters formed in the first decades of the 20th century responded to this orientation imposed by the Church hierarchy. In the wider context of attempting to define a distinguishing national art, painters such as Dimitrie Belizarie, Costin Petrescu, Arthur Verona, and Olga Greceanu chose to embrace the medieval roots of Romanian art at the beginning of the 20th century, and considered the art of past painters to be the sole source of originality. The rejection of the Byzantine aesthetics had occurred only a century before, but these other church painters sought – and, most importantly, were *theorising* – a return towards the hieratic and abstract, a rejection of the mimetic reproduction of nature, of perspective, and of the sensorial. They were promoting the notion that art in the Orthodox churches should only be Byzantine all the more.[36] Costin Petrescu viewed the "lack of fantasy and perspective, in which invention is reduced to the maximum" as a quality of mural art which, in itself, made possible its perfect preservation over the centuries. Olga Greceanu thought that the hieratic conferred a certain personality to Church art and that the "eternity and belief" should be depicted only through "schematic figures, static and immobile movements". The Cathedral iconostasis perfectly sums up this ambition of returning to the medieval models in a modern era, after a period of "wandering" through various Western styles. That gesture of Dimitrie Belizarie tells it all: the Cernica school icons, influenced by modernity, had to be reformulated in a Byzantine way.

The route taken by the four iconostases analysed in this study – from Brancovan to Neo-baroque in sculpture, and from Brancovan to Academicism and back to Neo-byzantine in painting – represents in itself the path that Romanian ecclesiastical art took from the medieval to the modern. The conclusion should be drawn from the one already formulated by Costin Petrescu. For church painters, achieving a beautiful creation is not due to their talent or intelligence, but to their belief and to the purity of their souls"[37], a mentality that was, in fact, that of the medieval painter.

## Notes :

1 Dumitrescu 1972; Dumitrescu 1974.

2 Costea 2002.

3 The article benefits from the result of research undertaken over one year, within the editorial project *Iconostase din Bucureşti. Secolele XVII-XIX*, [*Bucharest Iconostases, 17th-19th centuries*] - authors: sister Atanasia Văetişi, Elisabeta Negrău, Cristina Cojocaru, Sultana-Ruxandra Polizu - to be published by the *Cuvântul Vieţii* publishing house of the Muntenia and Dobrudja Metropolitan See. I would like to thank those who supported the research: the Bucharest Archdiocese, parish priests, and monastic abbots for the opportunity to study in the field and take pictures of the objects; to the community of Stavropoleos Monastery for their material and spiritual support; and to my colleagues for dialogues and debates.

4 The inscription was published in Elian 1965, p. 301, as follows: *"And it was painted in ... Ioan; in the year 1722, month August"*. After restoring the icon, we subjected it to a new reading. I wish to thank Adrian Muraru (University A. I. Cuza, Iaşi) and Cristina Cojocaru ("George Oprescu" Art History Institute of Bucharest) for the help given in deciphering it.

5 Selezneva 1997-1998.

6 See for this: Kondakov 2009.

7 See http://www.varvar.ru/arhiv/gallery/ikona/tihon-filatyev/index.html (accessed in 19.10.2017).

8 In an icon of the *Life-Giving Spring* (beginning of 18th century) attributed to Tihon Filatjev Ivanov one may find once again the same Neoclassical style décor, the same rigorously built architecture as in the scene with the *Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple.* Icon at: http://iconaimmaginedio.blogspot.ro/2013/06/tichon-ivanov-filatjev-iconografo-russo.html (accessed on 19.10.2017).

9 An icon of *The Three Holy Hierarchs* (1687) has the same style and the same decorative language in treating faces and vestments, just as in the line of hierarchs from the lower register of the icon of the *Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple*. See the icon at: http://www.galerijamaticesrpske.rs/nasledje-postvizantijske-tra-dicije.html (accessed on 19.10.2017).

10 See *Saint John the Baptist* (1689), and a cartouche identical to the one in the chapel in *The Appearance of the Virgin to the Apostle Andrew* (1702) at: http://www.varvar.ru/arhiv/gallery/ikona/tihon-filatyev/index.html (accessed in 19.10.2017).

11 Iorga 1909, p. 354; Năsturel and Vătămanu 1968, p. 187.

12 Before arriving in Wallachia, Ioanichie took a detour via Peter the Great's Russia, to collect the money necessary to establish the monastery in the Wallachian capital. We know this from an inscription on one icon, now lost, which he brought with him to Bucharest: "In the year 1718, month of March. This holy and venerated icon is mine, the small and humble servant of God, Ioanichie the hieromonk from Pogoniana, from the village of Ostanița, which I bought, being in the Seat of Moscow, with the mercifulness of good God and of His Holy Mother, for my piety and of all pious Christians; to intercede with her One true-born Son, for my sins, for which this was also written to be commemorated. Ioanichie hieromonk." (Drăghiceanu 1913, p. 30, no. 228; Elian 1965, p. 413, no. 447).

13 Saint Charalambos was the patron of the chapel within the premises of Stavropoleos Monastery. See National Archives, Stavropoleos Monastery, XXVII/195 and XXVII/196. The chapel, built in a row with the abbot's house, was demolished at the end of the 19th century, and subsequently its patron saint was adopted by the large church of the monastery.

14 The church of the former Monastery St. Spyridon the Old was erected in 1747 by the Patriarch Silvestru of Antioch, with the support of the ruler Constantin Mavrocordat, as a place of worship for the Arabian hierarchs and monks.

15 Drakopoulou 2008, p. 32.

16 In the churches of Mount Athos, numerous such specimens from the era of modern Baroque sculpture are kept, such as the iconostases of the monastery churches of Vatopedi, Helandariou, Osiou Grigoriou, Docheiariou, and Dionysiou, but there are also churches from Aegean islands, Crete and Chios, which have these types of iconostasis. Nikonanos 1997, p. 291-294; and 1998, p. 536-542; Goulaki-Voutyra and Karadedos 2011, *passim*.

16 In the churches of Mount Athos, numerous specimens from the time of modern Baroque sculpture are kept, such as the iconostases of the monastery churches of Vatopedi, Helandariou, Osiou Grigoriou, Docheiariou, and Dionysiou, but there are also churches from the Aegean islands, Crete and Chios, which have these types of iconostasis. Nikonanos 1997, p. 291-294; and 1998, p. 536-542; Goulaki-Voutyra and Karadedos 2011, *passim*.

17 Previous studies on this subject proposed that it would have been brought over from a neighbouring church, the priory of Râmnic Bishopric, demolished at approximately the same time that the White Church began restoration, in around the 1870s. (Vătămanu 1967, p. 526-531; Stoicescu 1971, p. 370-380). The archive documents, however, do not confirm the hypothesis. The correspondence between the Bishopric priory and the curators of the White Church are kept in two funds from the National Archives (Ministry for Agriculture and Regions Fund, File 100/1868, f. 64 and Ministry for Cults and Public Instructions, File 1082/1866, f.11), in which is mentioned the list of objects from the Bishopric Priory required for the White Church. The 'temple with its icons' also appears in this list. In fact this iconostasis is the second of Râmnic Bishopric priory, a Neo-gothic specimen that ended up, as the documents from the above-mentioned files show, in a church from the Buzău Bishopric.

18 According to the inscription: "In the days of Archimandrite Kalinic abbot. 1831, 10th November. Nicolae Biv Polcovnic Painter".

19 Velescu 1968, p. 89-96; Georgescu, Stanciu 1973, p. 1290-1294.

20 Velescu 1968, p. 91.

21 Contract with the painter Tattarescu for decorating the church, 14th November 1873. National Archives, Fund Bucharest Municipality City Hall - Administrative, File 14/1831.

22 Restoration work took place between 2014-2016, being executed by S.C. IORUX TRADE S.R.L, coordinator: restorer dr. Sultana-Ruxandra Polizu.

23 Costescu 1983, p. 15.

24 For the Buzău school, see Cocora 1964, pp. 336-371. For the Cernica and Căldărușani schools, see Ștefănescu 1969, p. 364-392, and Georgescu and Stanciu 1973, p. 1290-1294.

25 Metropolitan Archives, Metropolitan Repairs Fund, File 2652/1836.

26 For Gheorghe Tattarescu, see Popescu and Cristea 2008, and Voinescu 1940.

27 Șerbănescu 1958, Miclescu 1967, Vasilescu 2008.

28 According to the contract completed on 8th October 1836. See Șerbănescu 1958, p. 834, and Nedelcu 1968, p. 224. Register for the expenses of the Metropolitan House for one year from 1st January year 1836 until 1st January 1837. Bucharest National Archives. Community Control Fund, File 5961/1836, p. 11, no. 6).

29 Dimitrie Belizarie's four icons are mounted facing the altar, behind the existing icons. They were published in Vasilescu 2008, p. 168.

30 Otilia Oteteleșanu specialised in this technique during her years of study at the Berlin Academy of Decorative Arts.

31 See, in this respect, besides the enamel icons from the Cathedral, the mosaic icons for the iconostasis in Cașin (1952-1958) and Antim (1965), the marble and alabaster iconostasis from Cașin (1952-1958) and the mural painting from the Synod Palace (1961).

32 In 1924, when Costin Petrescu was designated to evaluate the painting from the Cathedral to assess the possibility of recovering it, he mentioned in his report: "It doesn't have the characteristic appearance of the Byzantine style. The Saints don't have hieratic attitudes, nor that folding drapery depicted with rigid lines underneath which are traced the body shape and movement. The halos or the rays that fall from the sky are treated in a modern manner, in muted tones, not like the old ones that have the aspect of very clearly defined discs, or rays in the shape of long sharp strips. The drapery has a banal aspect, and a type of roses painted between circles of saints can be seen in the ornaments". The National Heritage Institute Archive, Historic Monuments Commission Fund, Bucharest Metropolitan File, vol. I, f. 16.

33 Drakopoulou 2012, p. 141.

34 Uspenski 2005, p. 235.

35 *Decisiunea* 1890, p. I-IV.

36 They were all what we might call theoretician-artists; they published books in which they wrote the principles of composition and the technique of mural painting – a type of painting manual in the form of an *ars poetica*. Petrescu 1932, Greceanu 1935, Verona 1943.

37 Petrescu 1932, p. 38-41.

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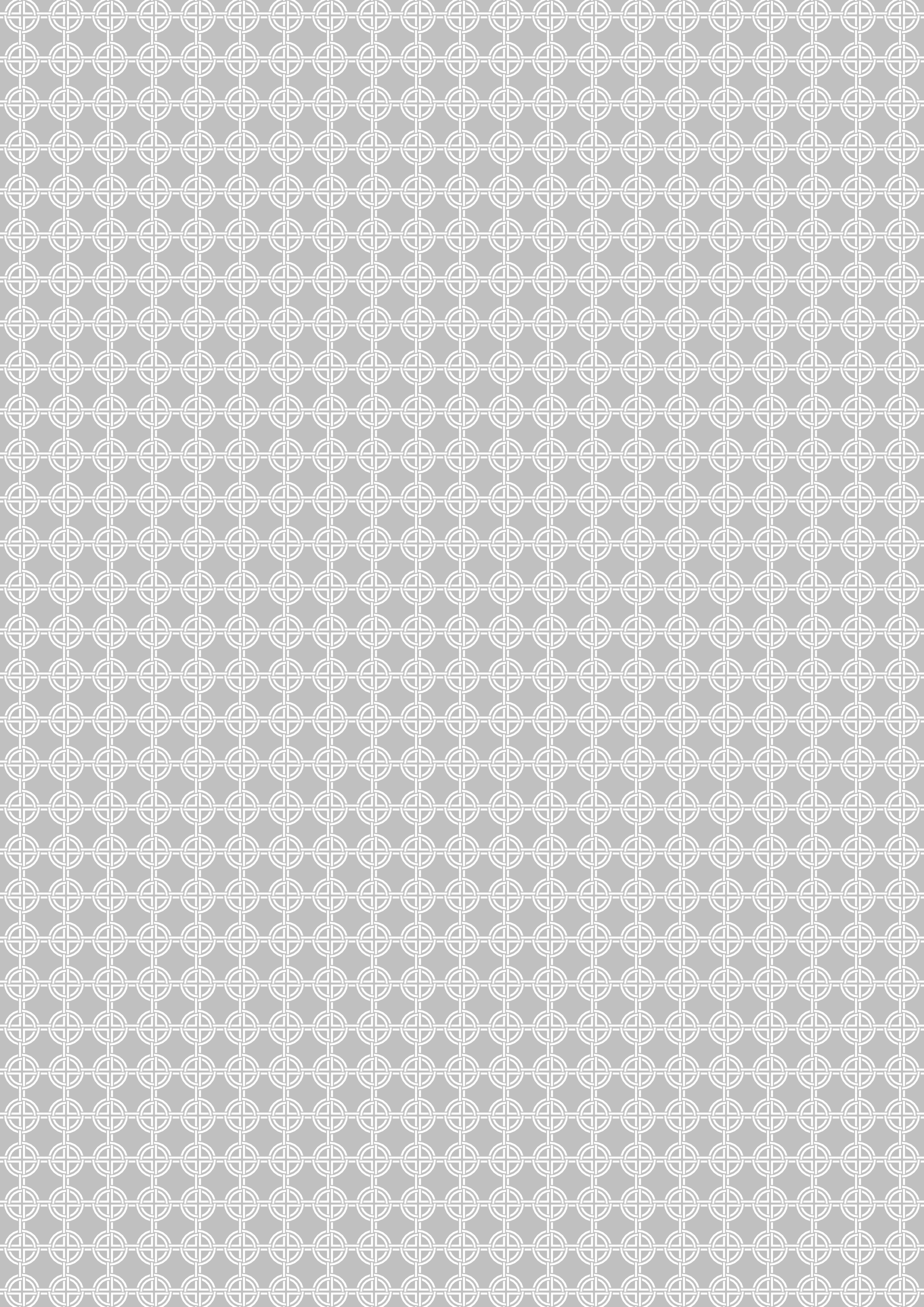

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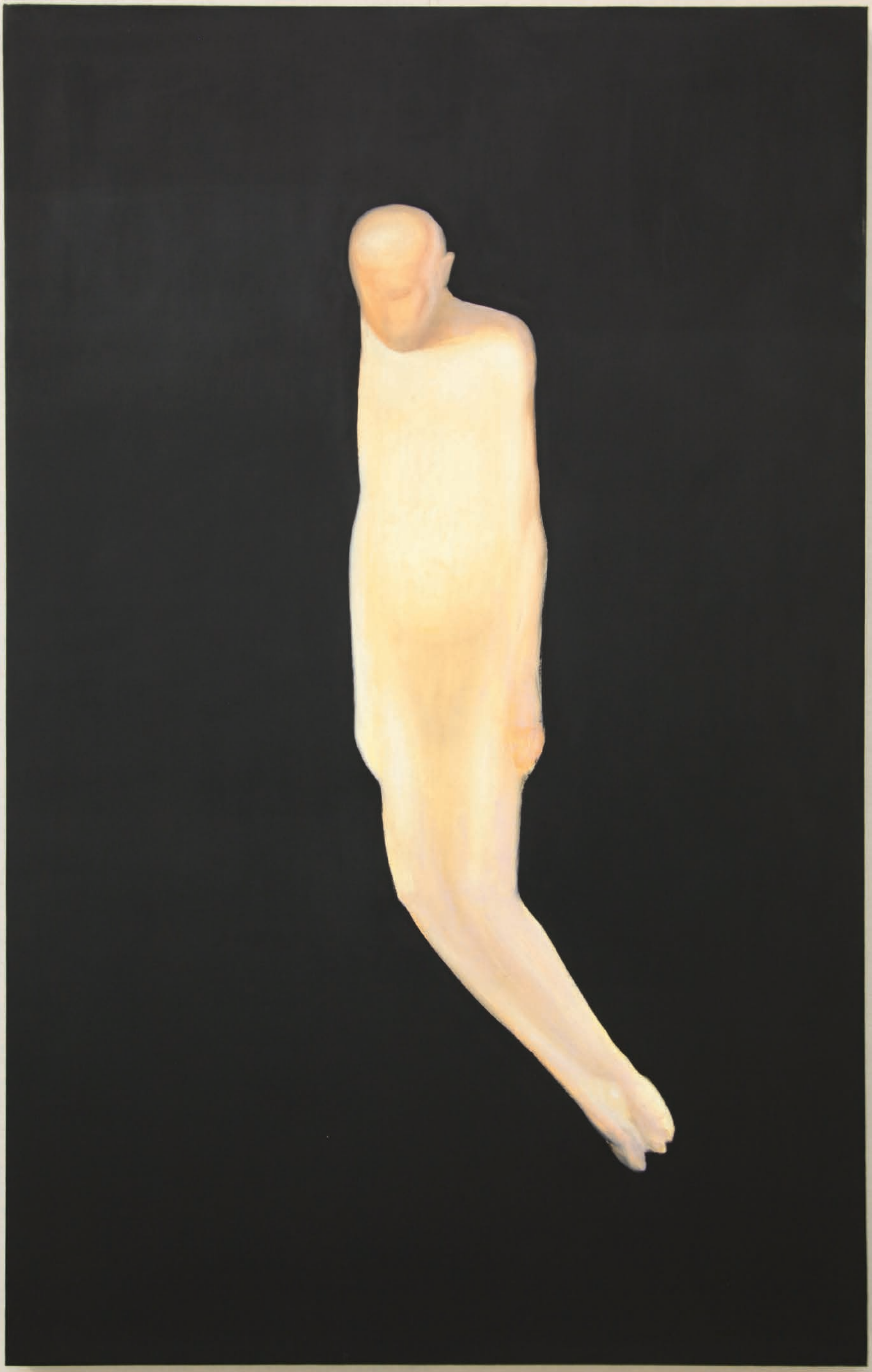

▲ Constantin Cioc, *Adam* (complete picture).

# *A Glimpse towards the Inside*

## *A dialogue with painter Constantin Cioc*

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translated by Ioana Ursu, Dragoș Ursu

Graduate of the Painting Department (1989-1995) of the Faculty of Plastic Arts at the National University of Arts in Bucharest in the class of professor Sorin Ilfoveanu, whom he also assisted in teaching (1995-2003), Constantin Cioc (born 1965 in Reghin) is one of the most talented contemporary Romanian artists. He participated in a considerable number of group exhibitions (between 1990 and 2014) and exhibited individually a couple of times as well, before and after completing his studies in France (2001-2003, *Fellowship in Plastic Arts and Applied Arts*, University Paris 1 – Sorbonne). After more than a decade of public absence, Constantin Cioc returned strongly in the spring of 2013, proposing a string of themes constructed around the three major fundamentals of plastic creation – *Man, Landscape, Object* – understood as forms of expression of the *Things' Wonderful Nature of Being (Minunata fire a lucrurilor de a fi*, Room "Constantin Brâncuși" at the Palace of Parliament). Three grand cycles – *The Restauration of Man* (comprising canvases dedicated to *The Enlightened, The Round-Trip Man,* and *The Lightening Women*), *The Apostolic Landscapes and The Subjective Objects* (which also refer to the contours of *The Chosen Vessels and The Tympana for Light*) – emphasized, within a coherent and unitary plastic discourse, the metaphors enciphered within the human figure, the symbols encapsulated in a landscape, and the allegories harboured within still life.

The line crossing his entire pictorial endeavour is interwoven by the game between *light* and *darkness* which take shape either as a clean-cut clenched fight for conquest, or of a subtle enchainment of contraries that complete and emphasize themselves mutually. Within all the levels of the painter's *inter-view* with the world (*nature, objects* or *man* himself), the moment of intersection is experienced under the sign of the glimpse that intuits, searches, traces contours even beyond the visible. Here, light is not just the "instrument" that grants biological view and perception through physical senses but rather, mostly, the filter that facilitates the descent towards the horizons of the mystery. In Constantin Cioc's universe, the tutorial sense which synasthesically includes all the other senses, is the *glimpse towards the inside*, towards the point from which sometimes erupts, other times prattles the source of light. What is seen on the canvas is the trace left by the *inner light* that gifted the painter's brush. Hence, although opting for a figurative discourse, the paintings do not depict realistic-descriptive fragments but rather signs, fragments, flashes of the spiritual states that the artist manages to steal from the invisible to which they rightfully belong. His battle is not led at the boundaries of real, but within the geometrical location of change, where the conversion of inner light to mist and the transformation of gloom to light occur.

The creator's struggle is to show that, throughout its forms of expression, *the things' wonderful nature of being* has a deep meaning, a fundament purposefully established since the beginning of the world, that can only be deciphered by the careful look of the one willing the see beyond appearances – a fundament which only the gifted hand can visionarily transcribe onto canvas. This creed is explicitly confessed in the painter's *Studio Diary*: "Between what I see and what I do is but a temporal distance. Between *the eye* and *the expression* is nothing but the unobtrusiveness of the hand."

The artist appears in the position of witness of *the things' wonderful nature of being*, nature which he struggles to absolve from the tenebrosity of oblivion, the carelessness or blindness of those living anaesthetized by the chaotic multitude of post-modern imagery; the purpose is for his paintings to aim – in his own words – "not to adorn homes, but rather souls." In 2014, Constantin Cioc proposed a new exhibition, entitled *Theolographies. Signatures, signs, seedings* (*Atelier 030202* Gallery), in which consonants C, T, N, extracted out of his baptismal name became the pylons reminding of his drawing's lines of force. The graphic sign, abstract itself, becomes personalized when extracted out of *the name's rib,* and metamorphoses into a letter that generates life. The re-semantization of the graphic signs conferred them the noble appearance of the scripts of law, through the combination of which the history of the meaning introduced and perpetuated in the world by the Incarnation of Christ becomes re-written. The objects and drawings woven onto the fundament of the painter's *trigram* suggests the sinuous inner road covered in order to convert the theophanies from the Great Feasts' icons into personal *theolographies.*

The enchainment of consonants in the installation-object or within the calligraphies laid down in the paper bed proposes the restoration of several trajectories of byzantine iconography, basing on the expressive force of simplicity from the essential lines of plastic discourse – *curve* (C), *bee line* (T) and *broken line* (N). In the absence of an interpretive text that renders the meaning of the image, a beholder unfamiliar to the atmosphere of byzantine icons may have felt limits in viewing. Therefore, either placed on scales or arranged on tetrapods, as if requesting for their own liturgical utterance, the confession-texts proposed by the artist in his exhibition offer solutions of interpretation for images open to the infinite, similar to the symbols contained in them.

Certain realities cannot be viewed frontally, due to the fear of being consumed by their ardent power. The creator cautiously hides his seeing in the spyglass of letters, at whose' bright shadow dares to pervade the scenery of byzantine icons, as witness of the *Road of the Cross.* Between *Nativity* and *Resurrection*, the steps that Christ climbed towards Heaven (*Meeting of the Lord by Prophet Simeon, The Theophany, The Transfiguration*) or the steps He descended towards the abyss (*Judas' Kiss, The Descent to Hell)* are crossroads in the middle of which the artist looks towards the consecrated model of the canons and creates his own pattern, meant to embrace the biblical event. There is no trace of iconoclasm in his creative gesture, despite his semblance of dynamiting the entire tradition of religious art. On the contrary, we are witnessing an iconodule recovering of the holy sequences, capable of receiving and generating a countless range of interpretations.

Under the sign of identity (*signature* and *seeding* – referring to the seed that dies to germinate under surface), Constantin Cioc opens the window to a reality sentenced nowadays not to destruction, but to a symbolic death of ignorance: the byzantine image. Constantin Cioc's art represents his unique manner of meeting the world, of encountering it and letting himself be encountered by it, while constantly placing within his mirror of thought-imagery fragments from the *things' wonderful nature of being*, as times before Petru Creția similarly did with *the lights and shadows of the soul.*

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INTERVIEW

CRISTINA BOGDAN (CB): When painting a canvas, does it feel different than painting an icon? Is the experience different?

CONSTANTIN CIOC (CC): When I paint an icon, it feels different than doing a painting, because the relation with the icon implies much more or, better yet, something else than painting a canvas. In case of the icon, my reference towards what I wish to represent demands a different attitude. To an icon I relate piously, I possess a particular respect towards the icon, firstly for what it represents as image. An icon is always more than just a painting – to me. And labouring on the icon is interesting in itself, because the icon *labours* me. Many times, I begin the icon by using all the knowledge I have, and still things don't work out, which means that inside my being there needs to be a... *(silence)...* in the inner part of my being there needs to be a... I don't even know how to call it... a certain balance to be able to complete the icon. Painting an icon is like performing a prayer, like saying a prayer. One needs this attitude to paint an icon. There is a time of preparation for painting the icon, I'm referring to the customary iconographer's prayer; or one may effectively pray with very personal words which come from one's own direct feelings towards the image to be represented. Unlike the attitude towards the icon, the painting requires a different kind of work, somehow at the edge / border of iconography. That is how I work... When I do a painting, I somehow imply the existence of the icon, while at the same time I consider those who relate to the icon, because when I execute a painting, I attempt to communicate something from the sphere of faith. *From the sphere of faith.*

CB: Do you feel constrained by the icon, by the fact that there is an iconographic canon to be respected?

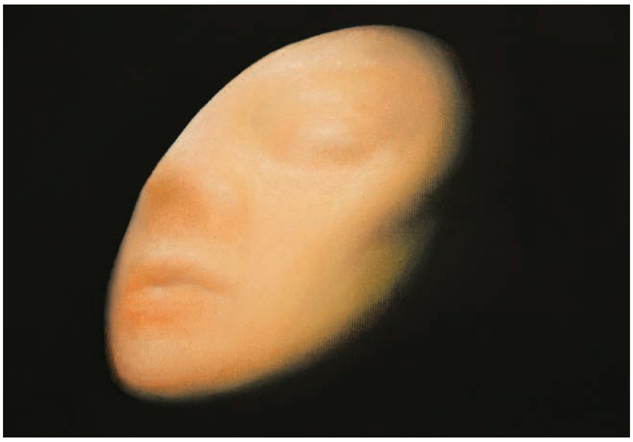
CC: Obviously, when I begin painting an icon I take into account the iconographic canons. And I always pose the problem of the icon's own *renewal.* It is given than when you begin to paint an icon, you can only paint it in *your own way.* None of us, as artists, can longer paint as Rublev did the *Christ Pantocrator,* which is one of the unequalled iconic portraits of Byzantine painting. So, obviously, when I begin to paint an icon, I paint it in my own way and manner corresponding to my knowledge, and once again, while keeping in mind the canonicity of the iconic representations. On the other hand, the icon may be renewed differently, somehow through an *inside* understanding. For that, however, one needs to possess an iconic thinking. *An iconic thinking.* It is appropriate to also refer to the spoken icon of the Church, and of the Holy Fathers, starting of course with the Scripture. The entire Scripture is itself a spoken icon. For many (religious?) words we do not own an iconic image, but when we think of them, we somehow consider them as icons, as spiritual representations of the Truth. In the Christian and the Byzantine culture there are two fundamentals, as precious as gems: *the word* and *the image.* The evolution of the Christian Byzantine culture could be regarded as standing under the sign of the Word made flesh and become icon, following the model that Jesus Christ, Son of God himself gave us through his coming to the under celestial world.

CB: Can we speak of a difference in craftsmanship when making an icon and, respectively, a painting? Is there more craftsmanship involved in the icon – since there are relatively strict rules, or does it take just as much talent to paint icons as well?

CC: Talent is obviously needed when painting the icon. I once again refer to Rublev. Can anyone reach his dimension anymore? His dimension of personal giftedness, his talent. Due to every iconographer's own gift, icons are different, they may be better or less good. In what concerns the handicraft, naturally things are being passed on: icon painting techniques have perpetuated from generation to generation and are being kept. Also, personal improvements also occur according to one's own manner of painting. If we go over the history of Byzantine painting, we notice different manners of illustrating the same image of a saint in accord with the different schools attended by different iconographers. In what concerns paintings, there is no doubt that each man's talent is connected to a certain sense of objects' representation. It is worth discussing the manner in which the artist manages to express technically what he feels about things. Some artists are more refined, other subtler, others more direct, more material - to put it so, when it comes to the colour paste. Ultimately, the solutions are many and vary from painter to painter; techniques are adapted, eventually depending on the project and the pictorial vision. Personally, I try to pay much attention to how I feel and, in this key, I try to hear my feelings and to make my eye to connect to these feelings. My pictorial vision needs to somehow position itself in the succession of the feeling that leads me to paint a certain something.

CB: Can the icon be painted on demand or is it necessary for the artist to have a certain inner state and a certain relation to what or whom he represents within the icon?

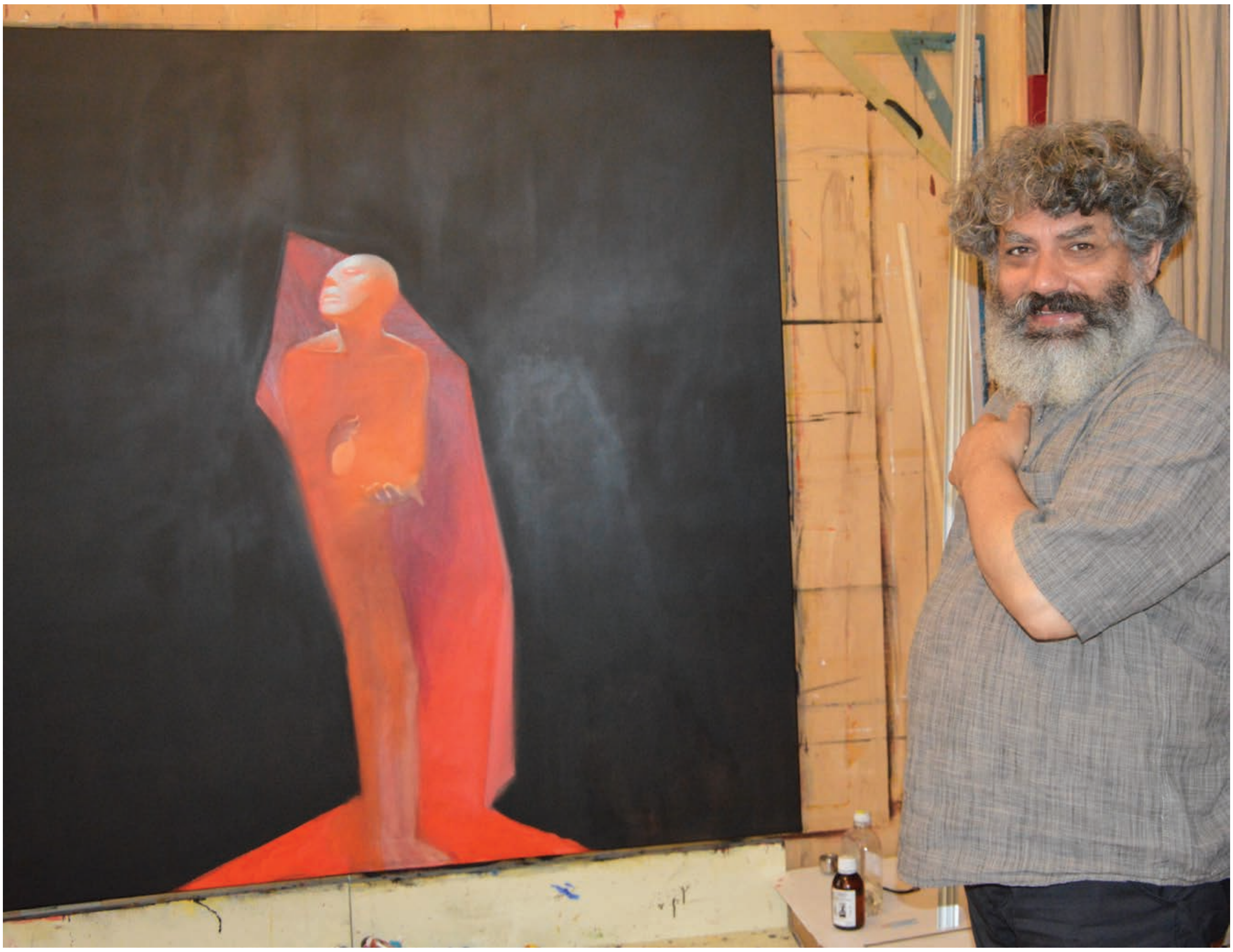
CC: The icon can be made on demand, of course. And, across time, this is precisely what happened. Various iconographers painted, on the Church's demand, on wood or on

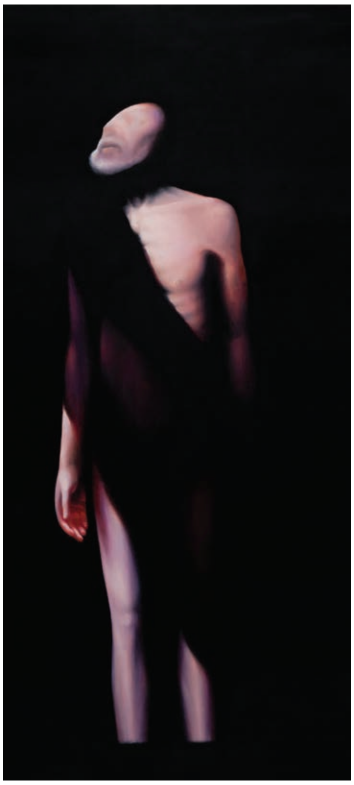


▲ *Înluminat / Enlightened One* (detail: the portrait).

▶ Two views of the painter's workshop (August 2017).

▼ *Veşmântul firilor / The Spirits' Garment* (unfinished work), oil on canvas; in the painter's workshop (August 2017).





◤ *Înluminați / The Enlightened* cycle. Image from the exhibition *Minunata fire a lucrurilor de a fi / The Things' Wonderful Nature of Being* (2013), and a detail of *Iov / Job*.

◣ The painter Constantin Cioc at the opening of the exhibition.

▲ *Vase alese / The Chosen Vessels* cycle in the same exhibition.

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glass; they figured scenes for decorating edifices of worship, according to a certain iconographic program or according to certain requests connected to particular saints. Icons are made on demand, but in order to paint them, time has to be allowed. There are artists who usually paint icons, who turn painting icons into a job and, according to this, they create a way of being for themselves, because one cannot paint... or at least I believe that one cannot paint an icon *anyhow*. One may receive a demand, but the icon's execution largely depends on one's own relation to it. As good and as expressive the icon will be, inasmuch as the painter experiences his own dimension of a Christian life, because the icon is *living*. It needs to be assimilated in your being, for it to be represented in a spiritual manner.

CB: Can you teach people how to look at icons? Is there a reading key for the icon, as there is for art in general?

CC: I usually try *to read* the icon. I give the same advice to all Christians and, generally, to all people, for the icon is read, it is a writing, not only in forms and colours, for it is also, ultimately, a *theological writing*. And herein lies the beautiful part, since the icon possesses a meaning and the meaning – in many cases – must be discovered. The icon is much more than what we see represented on its wood. The Holy Fathers gave us words. Capital words! The painters of the time gave us images! Monumental ones! The Holy Fathers gave us in writing, black on white, letters and consciences, divine images through word. The painters, however, gave us, in divine colours and forms, words painted through images. Inspired theologians were, undoubtedly, both. To the first, we owe the dogmas of the Church and the mystic of the becoming of the being. To the latter, we owe the Church's iconography and the confessing power of the image.

CB: What happens to the icon whose contours can no longer be distinguished? May it still be considered an icon?

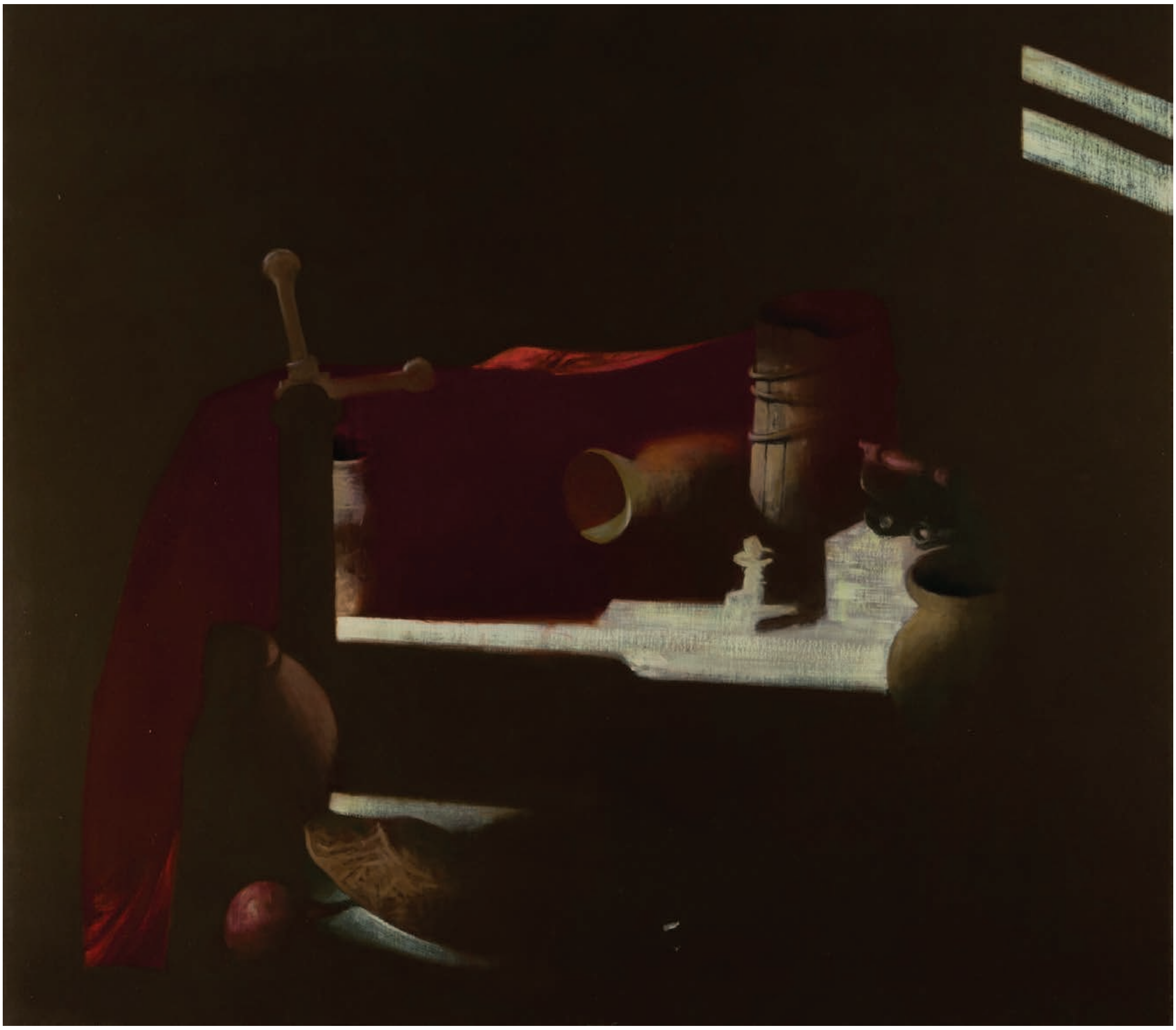
CC: As long as we know for certain that the one represented is a saint, even in the absence of his face, I still consider we are dealing with an icon. Because it is all about *reference*. To a Christian, generally speaking, the icon is no longer *just* an object. To those who regard the icon as an aesthetic object it would indeed be difficult; to a Christian, however, for as long as he, despite the absence of the face, continues to look towards the face, the icon continues to function entirely as an icon. It's a sort of view beyond what is visible.

CB: Is there a difference – to the beholders - between an icon placed inside a church and an icon placed in a museum?

CC: To the beholder, generally speaking, there might be a difference. It is appropriate to also mention the alienation of man from the icon. Because of this alienation, we perceive the icon merely as an aesthetic object, worthy of being placed in a museum and considered object of patrimony. To a Christian, however, the icon continues, despite its museification, to be an icon, with all that it implies... The face of Christ is no less true inside a museum than it is inside a church. It is inasmuch the Image of Christ in His Entire Truth.

CB: Is it more difficult for contemporary artists living in a desacralised universe to paint icons? Compared to, let's say, medieval painters, who lived within an entirely religious context? Is there some sort of weight of the world, weighing on the iconographer's shoulders, determining him to be distraught by the different kinds of messages that deter him from interiorization, averting him from his encounter with the icon?

CC: Personally, in order to paint an icon, I need to retreat from the world. And I say this once again, I have to live in a



certain manner. I try to defend myself from the violence of the outside world which, with its noise, attempts to cover my inner silence – the one that actually helps me paint the icon. To do this, I need a retreat. I need to retreat within myself, I need to retreat inside a workshop, I need silence and, naturally, I need prayer to be able to paint the icon quietly, peacefully, while having the belief that what I do is right and is of use to many.

CB: You earlier said that the icon *labours* you. Do you find yourself different after painting an icon?

CC: When I paint an icon, I always break myself down, meaning I realize how incapable I truly am. Despite all my knowledge in painting, I feel small and powerless in completing this labour by myself. I also feel, perhaps in a more acute way than with my paintings, the need for help; so, I ask for it.

CB: Is there also a joy in this weakness? Is it a weakness that obliterates you or, on the contrary, one that elevates you?

CC: It is a weakness that fulfils me, because I gladly discover myself weak.

CB: If you were to think of an appropriate word to describe the idea of icon, which would it be?

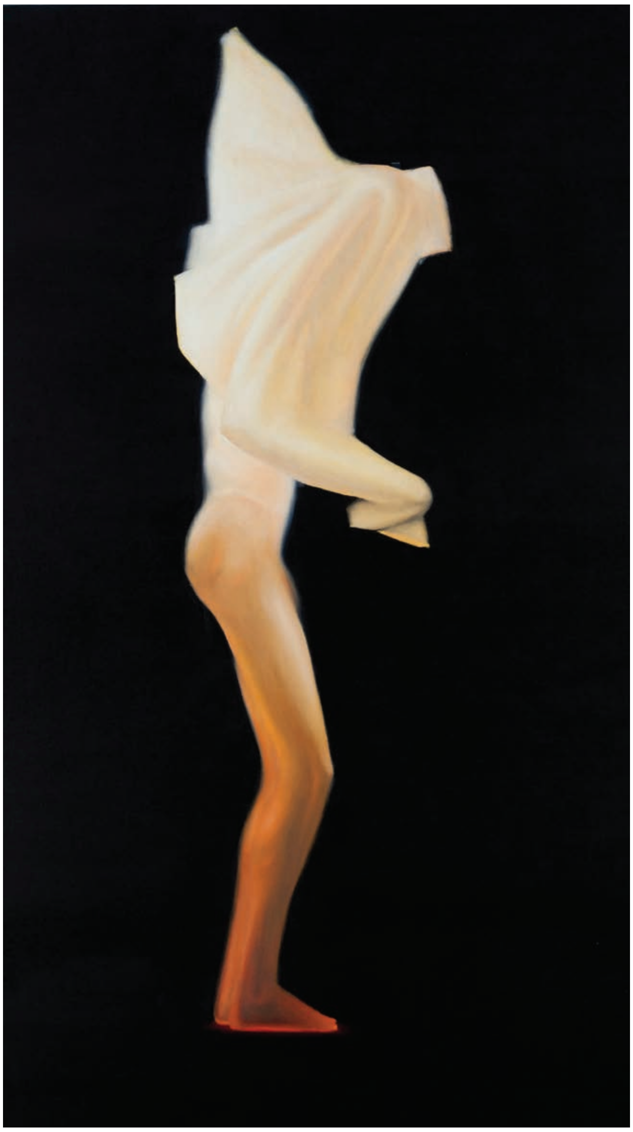
CC: The word I consider best to embrace the icon is *immortality*, because, ultimately, it is about *being*.

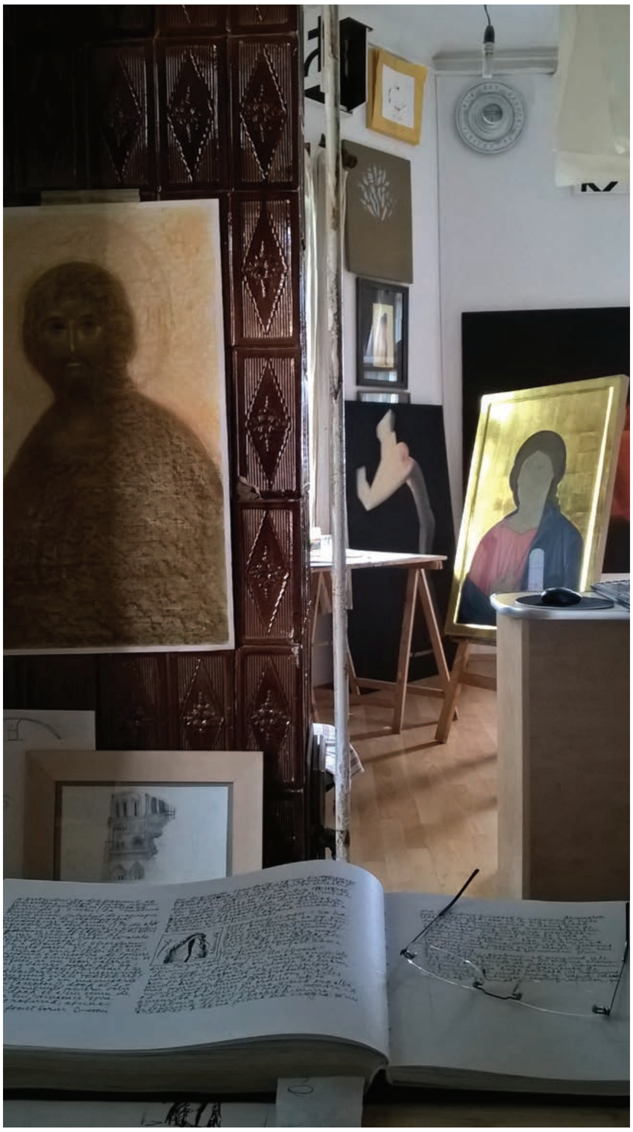
CB: Does this mean that an icon is never finished? Does it not have an end, a closure?

CC: It does not have a closure, it does not have a time and, naturally, it does not have an end.

CB: Yet still, icons are dated. We may say that they at least have a beginning when they were sent to the world by their creators. Is there a *temporality* of the icon? And a certain time the icon imposes on the iconographer? For instance, if you were demanded to paint an icon within a month, could you comply with the demand?

CC: I would definitely try to do so. (*smiles*) There are always two ways in which I speak of the icon. These are, *the Icon with a capital I* and the *icon with a lower-case i*. The latter can be done by any of the painters who deem it worthy to dedicate themselves to this labour. When speaking of the *icon with a lower-case i*, naturally, I need a certain physical time and, with enough endeavour, I could complete it within a given time span, answering to someone's demand. But then again, it also depends on my existential involvement in the genesis of the icon. I like using this word, because,ultimately, making the icon is a creation in itself, just like the genesis of the world. When creating an icon, you re-generate a world… a spiritual world.





- ◤ *Vase alese / The Chosen Vessels*, painting from the private collection of Cristina Bogdan and Dragoş Bogdan.
- ▲ *Robing in the light / Îmbrăcarea cu Lumină*, oil on canvas.
- ◥ Interior with icons – Constantin Cioc's workshop.

CB: When you review an icon that you've already sent out into the world – you've given it, sold it, placed it inside a church or within an exhibition – does it still feel *yours*?

CC: I don't sign my paintings, even less my icons. I do admit I have a curiosity about my icons, about their road throughout the world, because I keep feeling them as mine, since they are the product of my hands. But once the icon is made flesh, meaning the icon as image set on wood and considered as completed, it no longer belongs to me and, obvious, neither it belongs to the solicitor. The icon begins to bear its own life, since it completely identifies with the saint it represents and who is present unspoken, simultaneously in both this world and the world beyond. The solicitor will indeed worship this icon and treasure it as something valuable, because he also has an existential reference to the icon. But, how should I put this? The icon does not *belong* to him. He will probably pass the icon as family inheritance and, most probably, the icon will travel throughout time. I cannot know if the icon made by my hand will possess a patrimonial value in time, but I think it will still represent something to the family where the icon is bestowed on, to the house in which the icon lives and to the souls for whom the icon is *home*.

CB: To an icon, how important is the model?

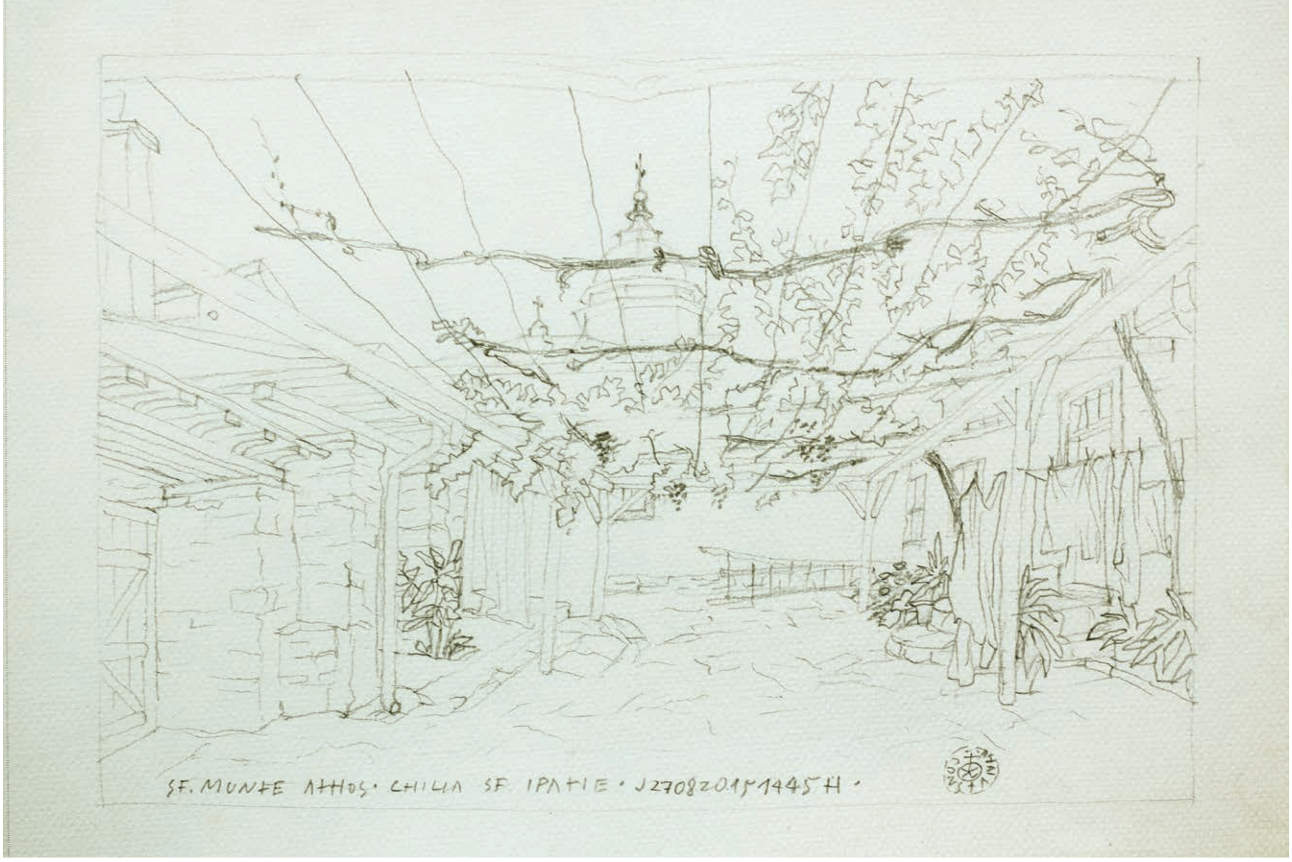
CC: To an icon, the model is extremely important. Practically, the condition of the icon's conservation throughout time is the model itself. We need a prototype, precisely because we had an archetype. And this prototype must be kept, within all of his canonical data.

CB: Do you believe in icons 'not made by human hands'?

CC: I believe in icons not-made-by-hands. And I also believe in miracle-working icons. What kind of believer would I be if I didn't believe in them?

CB: Can the icon communicate to someone who does not belong to the Christian culture? Can a man who enters a church or an exhibition understand the icon, despite not belonging to the spirit of the religion that hosts the icon?

CC: (*stays silent)* It is very difficult for someone from a different faith than the Christian orthodox one (or Christian, in general), to relate to an icon in the same way, because he/she does not see and does not feel the same things Christians see and feel. To that someone, the icon remains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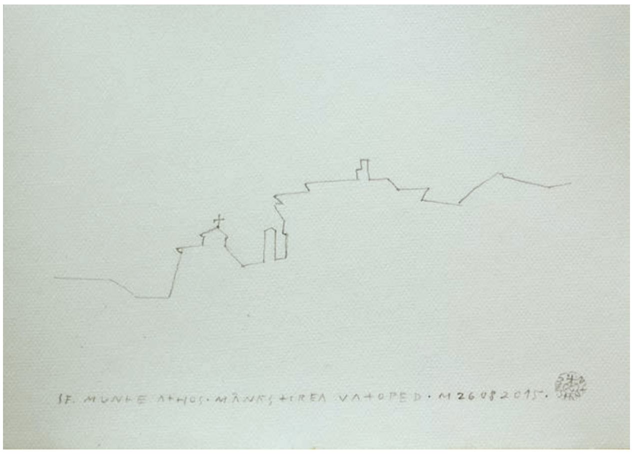
▲ *Saint Hypatios' Cell on the Holy Mount Athos*, pencil drawing on paper (August 2015).

▼ *Vatopedi Monastery on the Holy Mount Athos*, pencil drawing on paper (August 2015).

an object, eventually an aesthetic one: it owns a certain historical background, a patrimonial value – an object that looks in a certain manner and carries a certain artistic expression. But he/she misses the icon's spiritual content. That person does not possess the appropriate spiritual experience to gain a correct reference towards the icon. However, for any person, depending on each and every one's own knowledge, the icon can be a valued and valuable object. There is also this difference in looking that comes from one's deepening inside the faith or, on the contrary, from one's distance from faith. Some sort of relation between *complete* and *empty.* When you look at an icon from within that kind of faith, that faith somehow generates a discourse in accordance to an entire system, meaning it connects to the Scripture, to the Tradition, to a long succession of histories and experiences that enlighten the icon. It is like shedding light on the icon from multiple angles. And these lights are absent to the ones who don't have access to the Christian faith.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CB: How do we recognize an icon? What makes a painted object an icon? Is it already consecrated when the painter finishes it, and can it be worshipped just as soon?

CC: An image that represents a saint is already an icon through the sheer representation of saint. So, the wood painted with an image of a saint is already an icon. However, what makes the icon a spiritual focus is the consecration service. Practically, the icon becomes an icon entirely when it is consecrated and afterwards bestowed in someone's home, in a church, in a monastery cell, in a skete, anywhere.

CB: Can the icon also become an undecipherable sign to the contemporary world? If I can no longer recognize the saint from the icon based on his symbols and if I no longer decipher the Cyrillic letters that accompany the saint's image, I look at the icon and simply don't know what it's about. Could there be a sign that even I, as a Christian, could no longer understand?

CC: Reading the icon largely depends on the beholder's iconographic culture. The icon can be read on several levels. Firstly, it may be understood as a sheer representation of the written. Furtherly, we may also acquire a theological reading. And, finally, as an icon-maker myself, I notice a structural level of reading – because any iconographic storytelling, as any image, possesses a certain *structure.* This structure is, in fact, supporting the theological meaning of the icon. Through reduction, we find this structure to be a writing as well.

CB: Could we also speak – following the same idea – of a contemporary icon, constructed only out of lines and yet, that could also aid me into recomposing the pattern of the Byzantine icon?

CC: Yes, we could. I myself have tried to do so in a project entitled *Theolographies. Signatures, signs, seedings (Teografii. Semnături, semne, semănături)*, which I exhibited in 2013. I then tried to reduce the icon to its structure, starting from its constitutive elements. If we look carefully, the icons have several simple forms which compose the story. For instance, there is a form for the saints' humbleness. Holy characters are represented in a certain posture. This form of humbleness is a tense curve, similar to a crook. I like naming these forms – these humble men from the icons – as *the Lord's crooks*. Furthermore, the icons have a dynamic element. Someone, within each iconographic scene, is moving – be it either a saint, or the action of the biblical story itself. Then, we also have a lineage of balance, where the horizontal line meets the vertical line. This generally is – in my vision – the representation of Christ. If we were to summarize the scenes from the Passion of the Christ, in each of these scenes Christ will be the Cross, as in the encounter of the horizontal and the vertical. All these structural elements are essential parts of an iconographic or theolographic speak. They are "-graphies" that somehow encapsulate the theology of the icon.

CB: Is there a need for the icon today?

CC: There continues to be great need for icons nowadays as well, because ourselves, as Christians, desire to continue being as such: Christians. And being a Christian means, in brief, to be a living icon yourself. It is a hardship as well – being a living icon is a hardship that every iconographer and every man undertake, in their own measure and manner.

CB: To an unadvised reader of the icon, could the diversity in representations of the same religious character be an obstacle? Being able to represent Virgin Mary, Mother of God in many ways and in diverse references and gestures towards Child Jesus; appealing to a diverse suite of variations when representing a certain saint – could this create confusion or, on the contrary, is it a way to enrich the representation?

CC: We, as natural beings, experience things in different manners. We own an abundance of gestures when relating to things. Continuing this thought, it is only natural that all representations of our saints to be diverse, because all their stories are different as well: the way in which they lived, the ways in which they carried their own cross as Christians are very different. Byzantine iconography is highly varied and perhaps it is better so, because a certain posture can communicate more than another. For instance, Mother of God in the icon of "Sweet Kissing" can speak to beholders so much more than the classic representation of her solemnly keeping Child Jesus in her arms.

CB: Your paintings for the *Enlightened* cycle, how were they born?

CC: My work in the studio encountered a specific moment in which things took a very pleasant shift – I notice retrospectively – a shift which gladdens me. The moment in which the objects were no longer static things, but became *chosen vessel*; the moment when people were no longer in their natural stance, but attempted to become something more. This is how the *Enlightened* series began – 'enlightened' refers to the beings who exit common obscurity and place themselves in the light. What does *enlightened* mean? The one who comes into the light. The one who comes into sight. The one discovered. Naked. Divided. Or the one who enters the divine light. The one who is purified. Who renews himself. The one who resurrects. *The one who covers himself in light as with a garment.* Then, the landscapes were born – I later named them *apostolic* – for they, also, as landscapes, connect to man, to his existence, to the meaning of his existence; thus, out of ordinary landscapes, they became *apostolic* ones, in which divine beauty exists. I also wanted them to speak more about man's own relation to the divine beauty of nature. At a certain point, I wanted to invest all the classic themes with a Christian meaning, pointing out at the same time how we forget the belonging of all these to what is true, good and beautiful in the world.

CB: Do you regard these paintings as icons?

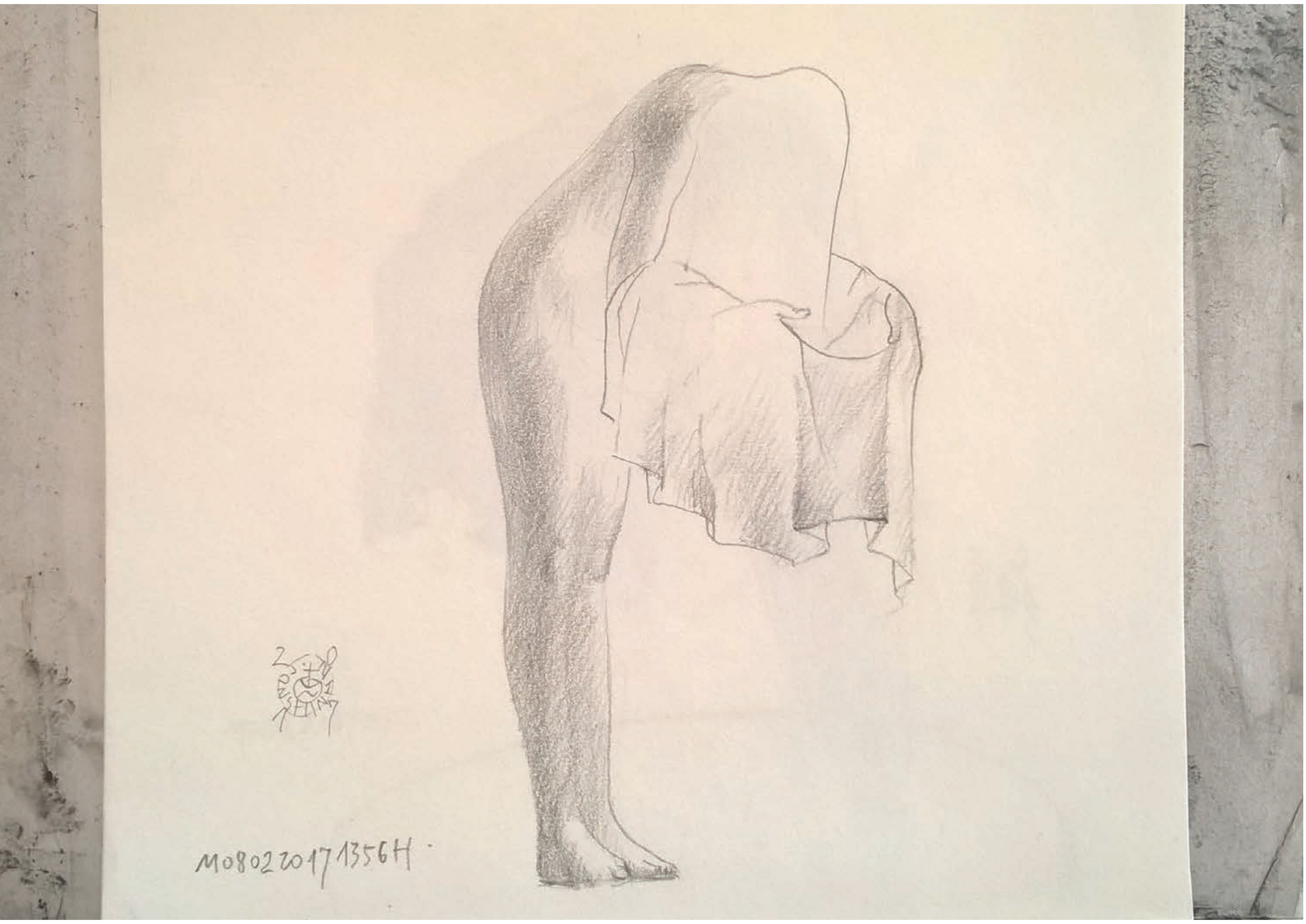
CC: This is a good question. I often think about this. My work in the studio is somehow at the border of the icon. I cannot take the icon, interpret it and modify it on the inside, but I *can* take the iconic words of the Holy Fathers, somehow understand them in my own way and then look for an original representation. That does not mean that I'm illustrating the words of the Holy Fathers, no, on the contrary. An unsought freedom naturally came…

CB: What kinds of icons have you painted?

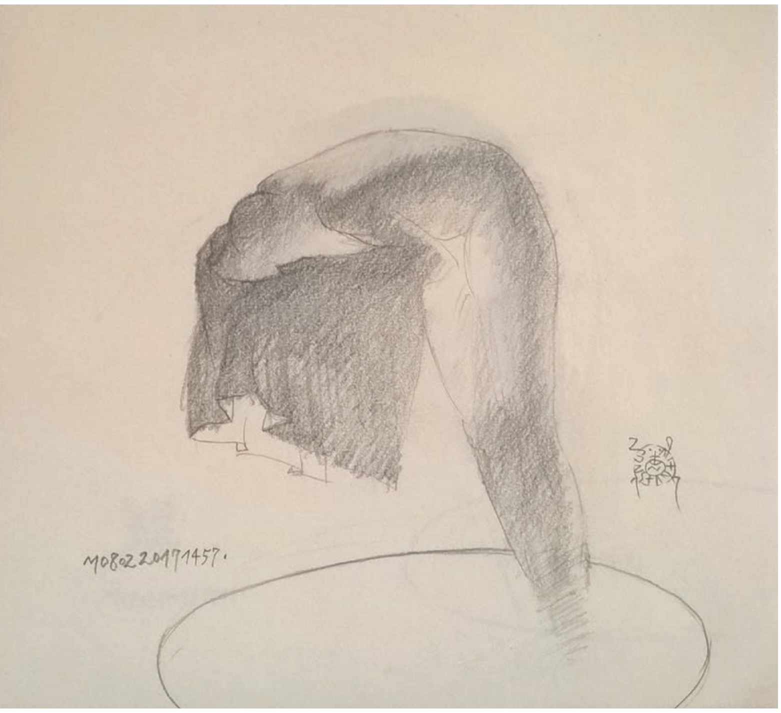
CC: In my work at the studio, I have a constant preoccupation for areas in the proximity of the icon. Even when I'm working on a specific icon, although I try to keep it canonical and within the limits of recognisable, I also struggle to give it a new meaning. For example, I maintained the Image of Christ represented as in the Veil of Veronica, but I gave it the illustration of the face Christ from the moment of the Transfiguration, entirely white. Another example: I painted the icon of Christ as defined by king Abgar when he sent his ambassador to Lord Jesus, asking him: "Please make Your Face as a shadow of Him Who makes miracles". And I tried to paint this icon of Christ as a shadow inside of which the Image appears revealed. Hence, I speak of two things: defining the icon as shadow and the revelation of the Image, the incarnation of the Image, of how the Image appeared and lived among us. Of how the icon walked among us, in flesh. I earlier mentioned working at the border of the icon and how during work in the studio several themes occurred to me, such as: *robing in the light*, a theme often found in the writings of the Fathers. It is even mentioned in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Being robed in Christ during the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Thus, I tried to produce an image that no only illustrated, but revealed this meaning of man robing in the light – for Christ is Light. Man robing in light robes himself, in fact, in Christ. Furthermore, I continued to illustrate this theme of robing through the robing of the humble one – with the sacrificial robing of man, in general. Christ died for us and he covers us all in His sacrifice. The starting model for the sacrificial robing was a piece by 15th century Italian painter Stefano di Giovanni di Consolo, known as Sassetta, a piece on Saint Martin sharing his garment with a pauper. Starting from this image of the pauper covered by Saint Martin, I created an entire series of metaphor-paintings who can give meaning to man's existence. Seeing them, the beholder can understand which should be the natural course of his existence.

CB: Let us talk about your profile as an iconographer. When did you start painting icons and in what circumstances?

CC: *(stays silent)* Once, during childhood, I experienced something very important to me as human: as I was little, very little, inside the church I heard a voice and didn't know



▲ *Prosopon 1*, pencil drawings on paper (February 2017).
▼ *Prosopon 2*, pencil drawings on paper (February 2017).



where it came from. Practically, I felt the first moment of mystery and of religious emotion back then, in a church. I though the voice I heard was the voice of God himself – I didn't notice there was a priest officiating the service. I did not have the image of a priest officiating a service, to me what I heard in that church was the voice of God. Much later, after experiencing an – let us say "un-Christian" phase, I returned to Church and rediscovered the icon. And since I had already been studying painting, I started working on icons as well. Throughout my art studies, I painted my first icons on glass and my first icons on wood, as it was required for the painting techniques' course. I enjoyed it a lot. While making icons on glass, I discovered icon calligraphy, icon writing – and then I understood that icons were not drawn, but *designated*, written. Icons are written. And maybe that was when I understood the definition of icon as *a theological writing*. Once I returned to the Church I painted icons occasionally, in several stages. Painting the icon always remained for me an inner preoccupation. I've always kept wondering how a *renewal* of the icon could be made possible, but at the same – or while at the same time I struggled to keep myself inside canon, for I do not wish to distract anyone with the novelty I attempt to propose. And, anyways, who possesses the measure of Rublev anymore, for him to be able to renew an icon? What kind of life does an iconographer need to live to be able to renew an icon? I continuously avoided to be very audacious. I tried to seek a rightful measure for the icon's renewal. I am what I am – a Christian and a painter at the same time. Through my painting, I confess my own faith.

# Codices and Codex Fragments

## A Hungarian Workshop of Codicology and Medieval Literature

Korondi Ágnes

MTA-OSzK Res Libraria Hungariae Kutatócsoport, Budapest (HU)

Medieval codices written on parchment were used by several generations and in various ways. They made possible for their makers to occupy their time in a useful and pious manner, serving God with their quills; they served as reading material for many generations of readers; they could be regarded as tools of representation illustrating the value of the sacred text recorded in them or the wealth of their commissioner; and finally, when their content or their script became outdated, their parchment served as an excellent raw material for bookbinders to recycle as book covers, flyleaves, reinforcements of the spine etc. This latter practice created a difficult but nevertheless rewarding field of study for researchers interested in medieval book culture: the examination of codex fragments. Identifying the text written on single folia or mere strips of parchment, often made hardly legible by stains, holes, folding, and wear, deducing as much information as possible regarding the type, origin, age, and history of the manuscript it belonged to requires a thorough knowledge of codicology, palaeography, history of art, music, theology, and literature, etc. However, this laborious and time-consuming detective work helps the investigators obtain a clearer and more detailed image of medieval book culture than it would be possible to attain only based on the less fragmentary written material.

This field of study is especially important in countries where only a rather small number of medieval codices have survived. Thus, in Sweden, where the Reformation made a great amount of manuscripts (especially former liturgical books) superfluous, which were therefore reused as wrappers of account books, the analysis of codex fragments helped outline the once extant book culture.[1] In Hungary the systematic examination of codex leaves preserved as binding material was also motivated by the relatively small number of extant codices. The long wars of the 16th and 17th century, especially against the Ottoman Empire, the spreading of Protestantism as well as the dissolution of many ecclesiastical institutions by King Joseph II of Habsburg and later by the Communist Regime resulted in the dispersion of medieval book collections, a great part of which was destroyed. The importance of codex fragments for the medieval history of books in Hungary was recognized by literary historian, codicologist, and palaeographer László Mezey who founded the Fragmenta Codicum research group supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in order to systematically discover and describe the medieval codex fragments to be found in Hungarian libraries. In an article presenting the raisons d'être, methodology, and first results of the research group he estimated that at least 45000 codices must have been used in medieval Hungary out of which less than 200 were being preserved in Hungarian libraries at the time he launched his project.[2] The majority of the approximately 1200 codices owned by these institutions was acquired from abroad and had no connection with Hungary. Therefore, the discovery of individual codex leaves or even fragments of leaves which on account of their content, writing, musical notation, marginal notes, or host book (which has preserved them in its binding) could be connected to Hungary added important data to our knowledge about the book culture of medieval Hungary.

The research group was mainly formed by Mezey's most talented students. Their work was also aided by external collaborators, book historians and restorers, art historians, and especially historians of church music who helped in the study of the numerous liturgical manuscripts. The book series of the workshop was finally launched in 1983 when the first catalogue of codex fragments was published.[3] After Professor Mezey's sudden death in 1984 the collective continued its work under the leadership of codicologist and Germanist András Vizkelety by publishing three more catalogues and numerous studies.[4] The two parts of the first volume describe the codex fragments

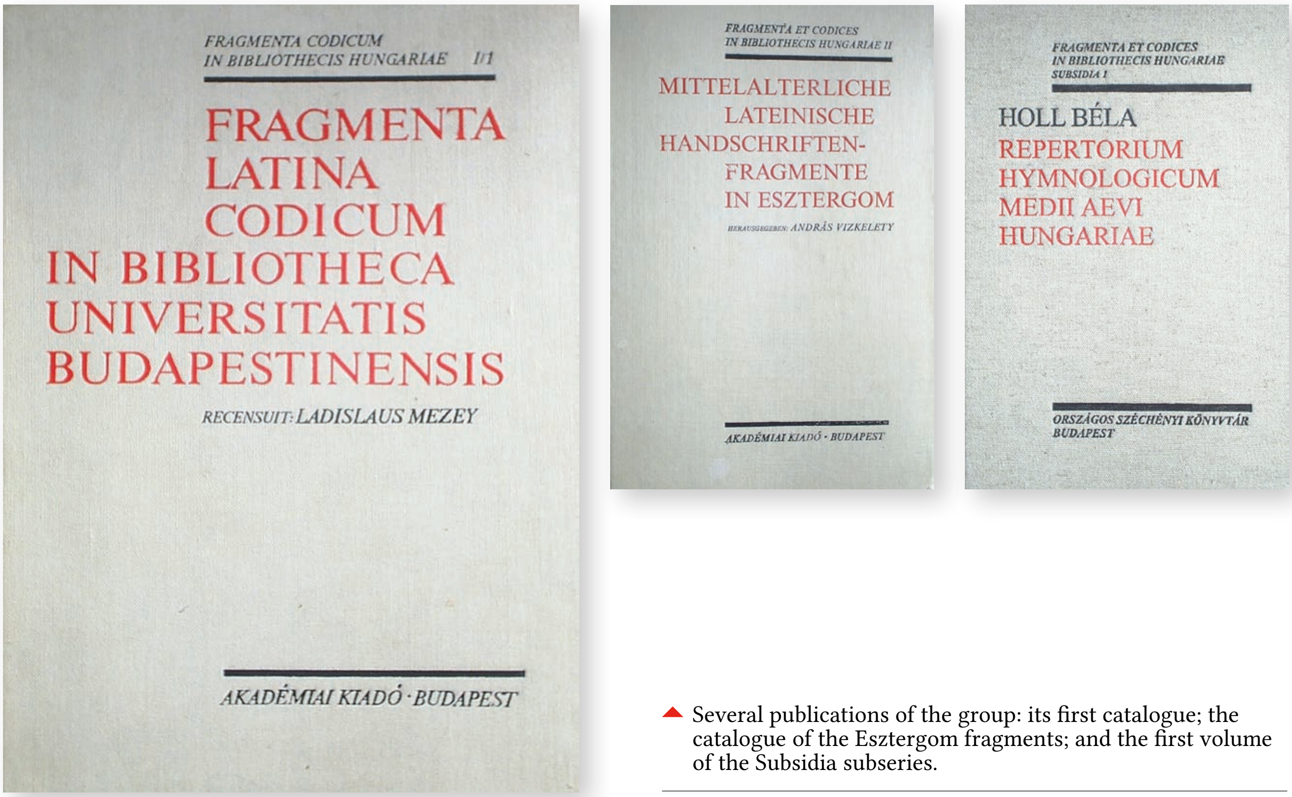
*A fragment of the Antiphonale Budense, a 15th century manuscript with Hungarian notation.* Credits: National Széchényi Library, Manuscript Collection, A023/3 f10v.

preserved in the University Library and the library of the Central Seminary the old book collection of both institutions originating from the library of the Jesuit College, the later University of Nagyszombat (today: Trnava) and from the libraries of religious houses and orders supressed by Joseph II's Secularization Decree. These book collections had a significant number of 16th and 17th century books bound in Hungary into the leaves of codices, many of the latter having been used in the Kingdom of Hungary during the Middle Ages. The second volume is the catalogue of fragments to be found in three Esztergom libraries: Esztergom Metropolitan Library, the library of the Franciscan convent, and Esztergom Town Library. Volume three describes the material preserved in Győr. Beginning with the second volume the langue of the series was changed from Latin to German, and its title was also modified from *Fragmenta codicum in bibliothecis Hungariae* to *Fragmenta et codices in bibliothecis Hungariae* signalling the widening activity of the workshop which began to compile codex catalogues as well.

In 2000 the group moved from its original headquarters in Eötvös College to the National Library where it became the Fragmenta Codicum Workshop of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – National Széchényi Library Res Libraria Hungariae Research Group. In 2002 its head became Mezey's former pupil, codicologist and literary historian Edit Madas, who lead the collective until 2017 being followed by Gábor Sarbak, another Mezey-pupil. In 2004 the fifth catalogue of codex fragments was issued.[5] While the Esztergom and Győr collections contain mostly folia and folio parts of codices unconnected with medieval Hungary, this one presents a collection mainly originating from manuscripts written or used in medieval Sopron and its surroundings, codex fragments used for binding the town's archival material as well as the early modern book collection of the town's Lutheran libraries. The books published in the *Fragmenta et codices* series after the turn of the century reflect the widening activity of the group. The Sopron fragment catalogue was preceded by a monograph on the Codex of Leuven, a 13th century Dominican sermon collection, in which the first Hungarian-language poem survived[6] and followed by a catalogue of Latin codices owned by the National Széchényi Library,[7] both compiled by András Vizkelety. Then a repertory of hymns from medieval Hungary edited by group member Kinga Körmendy was issued.[8]

At present the workshop is working on a database encompassing the descriptions and digital copies of the National Széchényi Library's codex fragments (the already completed descriptions are soon to be published in a printed form as well). However, another main activity of the latter years has been to compile codex catalogues for ecclesiastical libraries. The catalogue of the Esztergom collections (Cathedral Library of Esztergom, Archiepiscopal Simor Library, Esztergom Primate Archives, and Esztergom Town Library) is just being finished. The work on the codices preserved in the Cathedral Library of Kalocsa has already begun, which will be followed by the preparation of a codex catalogue for the library of the Benedictine Pannonhalma Archabbey. All this codicological activity as well as the individual research work of the group members has made the Fragmenta Codicum Workshop a community to be reckoned with both in the scholarly life of Hungary and of the wider East Central European region.

▼ *A fragment of the Antiphonale Varadiense (Zalka Antiphonary), a 15th c. liturgical book prepared in Prague, commissioned probably by János Filipecz, Bishop of Nagyvárad/Oradea.* Credits: National Széchényi Library, Manuscript Collection, A023/3 f10v



FRAGMENTA CODICUM
IN BIBLIOTHECIS HUNGARIAE I/1

FRAGMENTA
LATINA
CODICUM
IN BIBLIOTHECA
UNIVERSITATIS
BUDAPESTINENSIS

RECENSUIT: LADISLAUS MEZEY

AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ · BUDAPEST

FRAGMENTA ET CODICES
IN BIBLIOTHECIS HUNGARIAE II

MITTELALTERLICHE
LATEINISCHE
HANDSCHRIFTEN-
FRAGMENTE
IN ESZTERGOM

HERAUSGEGEBEN: ANDRÁS VIZKELETY

AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ · BUDAPEST

FRAGMENTA ET CODICES
IN BIBLIOTHECIS HUNGARIAE
SUBSIDIA 1

HOLL BÉLA
REPERTORIUM
HYMNOLOGICUM
MEDII AEVI
HUNGARIAE

ORSZÁGOS SZÉCHÉNYI KÖNYVTÁR
BUDAPEST

▲ Several publications of the group: its first catalogue; the catalogue of the Esztergom fragments; and the first volume of the Subsidia subseries.

## Notes :

1 *Medieval Book* 2005.

2 Mezey 1978.

3 *Fragmenta Latina* 1983.

4 *Fragmenta Latina* 1988; *Mittelalterliche lateinische* 1993; *Mittelalterliche lateinische* 1998. The complete list of publications can be consulted on the Fragmenta Codicum website: http://www.fragmenta.oszk.hu/fragm.htm.

5 *Mittelalterliche lateinische* 2006.

6 Vizkelety 2004.

7 *Mittelalterliche lateinische* 2007.

8 Holl 2012.

## Bibliographic Abbreviations:

Holl 2012 – Holl Béla, *Repertorium hymnologicum medii aevi Hungariae.* Recensuit: Körmendy Kinga. Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2012 (Fragmenta et codices in bibliothecis Hungariae, Subsidia 1).

*Fragmenta Latina* 1983 – *Fragmenta Latina codicum in Bibliotheca Universitatis Budapestinensis.* Recensuit Ladislaus Mezey cum sociis in opere Adriana Fodor, Editha Madas, Tünde Wehli, Iosepho Török, Paulo Timkovics, Gabriele Sarbak, Zoltano Falvy, Petro Erdő. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, Budapest: Akadémiai, 1983 (Fragmenta codicum in bibliothecis Hungariae, I/1).

*Fragmenta Latina* 1988 – *Fragmenta Latina codicum in Bibliotheca Seminarii cleri Hungariae Centralis.* Recensuit Ladislaus Mezey cum sociis in opere Adriana Fodor, Editha Madas, Gabriele Sarbak, Tünde Wehli, Iuditha Lauf-Nobilis, Catharina Fülep, Ladislao Veszprémy, Zoltano Falvy, Walter Pass, Petro Erdő, Clara Boross. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, Budapest: Akadémiai, 1988 (Fragmenta codicum in bibliothecis Hungariae, I/2).

*Medieval Book* 2005 – *Medieval Book Fragments in Sweden:* An International Seminar in Stockholm 13–16 November 2003. Ed. Jan Brunius. Stockholm: Kungl.Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 2005.

Mezey 1978 – Mezey László, *Fragmenta codicum: Egy új forrásterület feltárása (1974. január-1975. július),* A MTA Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományok Osztályának Közleményei 30 (1978) no. 1-2, 65-90.

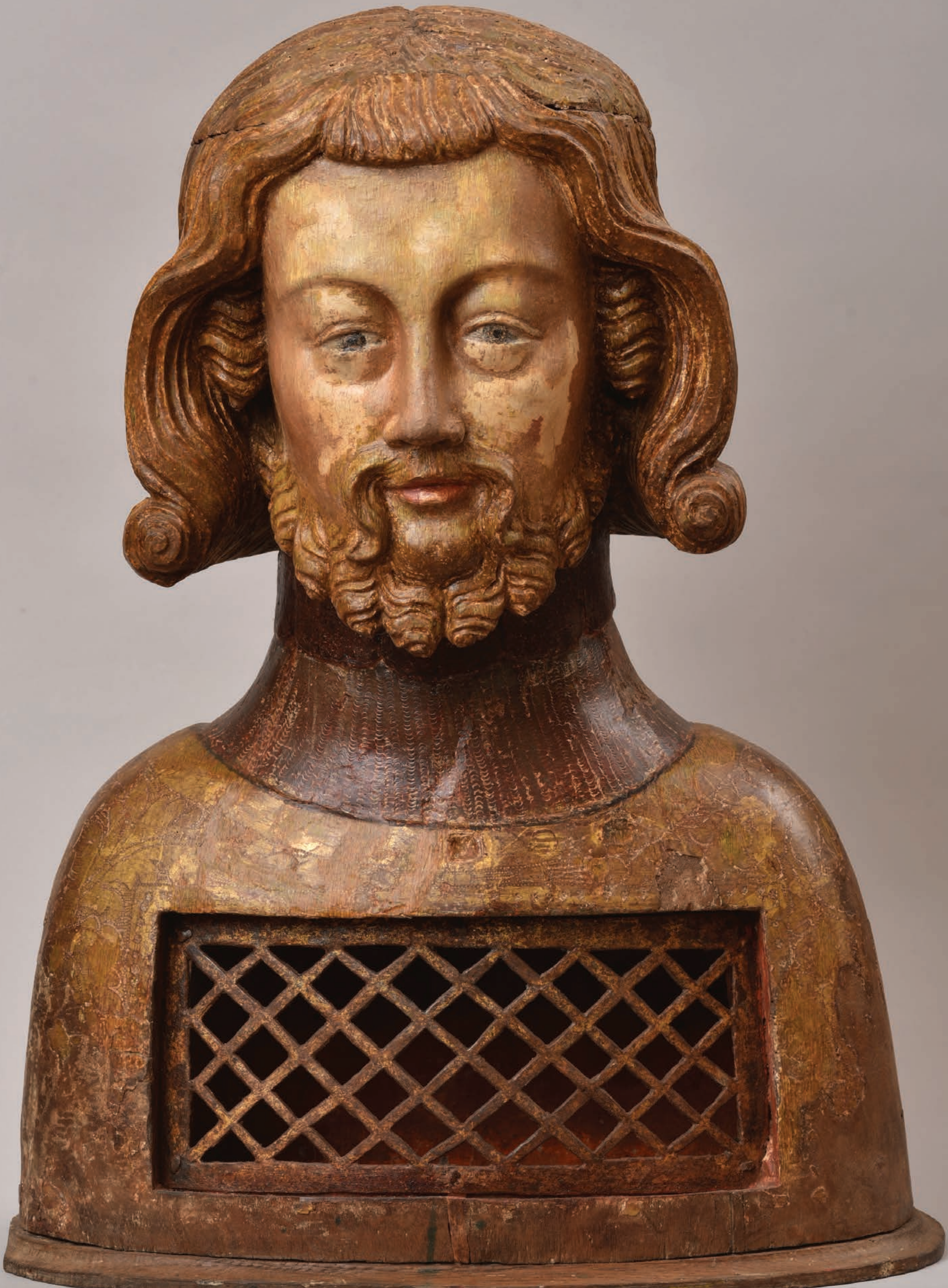
*Mittelalterliche lateinische* 1993 – *Mittelalterliche lateinische Handschriftenfragmente in Esztergom.* Hrsg. von András Vizkelety unter Mitwirkung von Péter Erdő, Katalin Fülep, Judit Lauf-Nobilis, Edit Madas, Gábor Sarbak, Janka Szendrei, László Veszprémy, Tünde Wehli. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, Budapest: Akadémiai, 1993 (Fragmenta et codices in bibliothecis Hungariae, II).

*Mittelalterliche lateinische* 1998 – *Mittelalterliche lateinische Handschriftenfragmente in Győr.* Hrsg. von András Vizkelety unter Mitwirkung von Péter Erdő, Katalin Fülep, Judit Lauf-Nobilis, Edit Madas, Gábor Sarbak, Janka Szendrei, László Veszprémy. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, Budapest: Balassi, 1998. (Fragmenta et codices in bibliothecis Hungariae, III).

*Mittelalterliche lateinische* 2006 – *Mittelalterliche lateinische Handschriftenfragmente in Sopron.* Hrsg. von Edit Madas in Verbindung mit Judith Lauf, Gábor Sarbak, András Vizkelety, unter Mitwirkung von Katalin Fülep, Veronika Szalai, Janka Szendrei, Tünde Wehli. Budapest: Akadémiai, 2006 (Fragmenta et codices in bibliothecis Hungariae, V).

*Mittelalterliche lateinische* 2007 – *Mittelalterliche lateinische Handschriften der Széchényi Nationalbibliothek* (Cod. Lat. 450-556). Hrsg. von András Vizkelety. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2007. (Fragmenta et codices in bibliothecis Hungariae, VI).

Vizkelety 2004 – Vizkelety András, *Az európai prédikációirodalom recepciója a Leuveni Kódexben. Die Rezeption der europäischen Sermonesliteratur im ‚Löwener Kodex'.* Budapest: Akadémiai, 2004. (Fragmenta et codices in bibliothecis Hungariae, IV).



# *The Christian Museum in Esztergom*
## *and its recently published online catalogue*

Sarkadi-Nagy Emese

Keresztény Múzeum, Esztergom (HU)

The Christian Museum was, at the moment of its opening in 1875, the third public museum of Hungary. Based on the former private collection of Archbishop and Prince Primate János Simor (1813 - 1891), the institution displays a high quality selection of not only Hungarian but also Italian, German, Austrian and Netherlandish art dating from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. It was of great importance that Simor was not only interested in collecting Italian and Netherlandish art, as was the trend among his contemporaries, but was also aware of the importance of old art from the Kingdom of Hungary. Thus, he was constantly present through his delegates on the art markets of Italy, Austria, and Germany while at the same time gathering - from the churches of his own diocese - ecclesiastical furniture and various liturgical objects that were out of use.

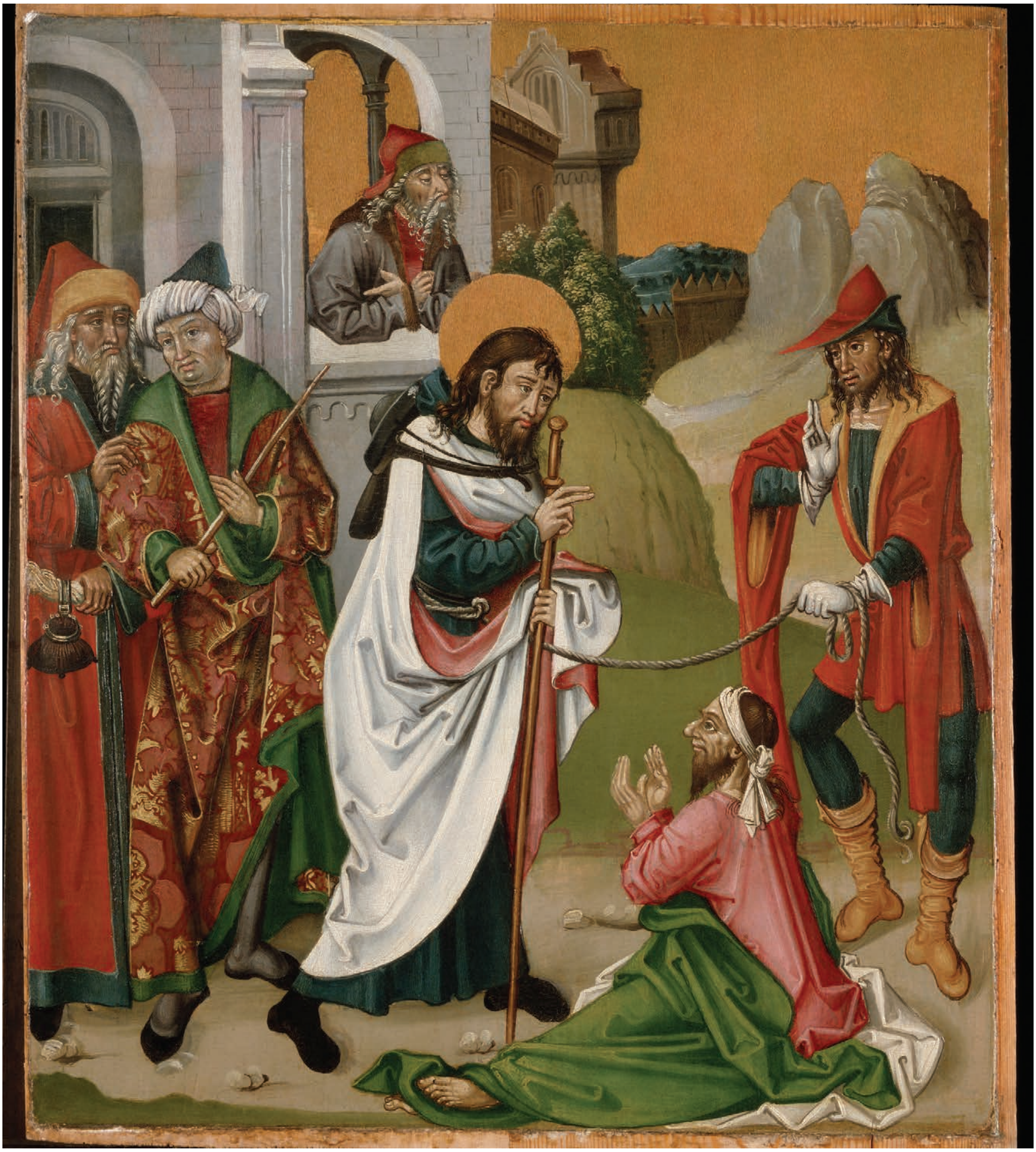
Since Primate Simor's death in 1891, the Museum's collections only grew significantly after World War I. Arnold Ipolyi, Bishop of Nagyvárad (1823-1886) made possible through his will that his outstanding collection consisting mainly of late medieval Italian, German, Austrian and Hungarian paintings and sculptures should come into the possession of the Christian Museum in Esztergom. This, however, happened only after World War I (1920). Shortly afterwards, the Museum was enriched with a collection of an entirely different nature, namely Count San Marco's bequest consisting mainly of works of applied arts and paintings (1925). Since then, the Museum has continually acquired works of art through purchases and donations.

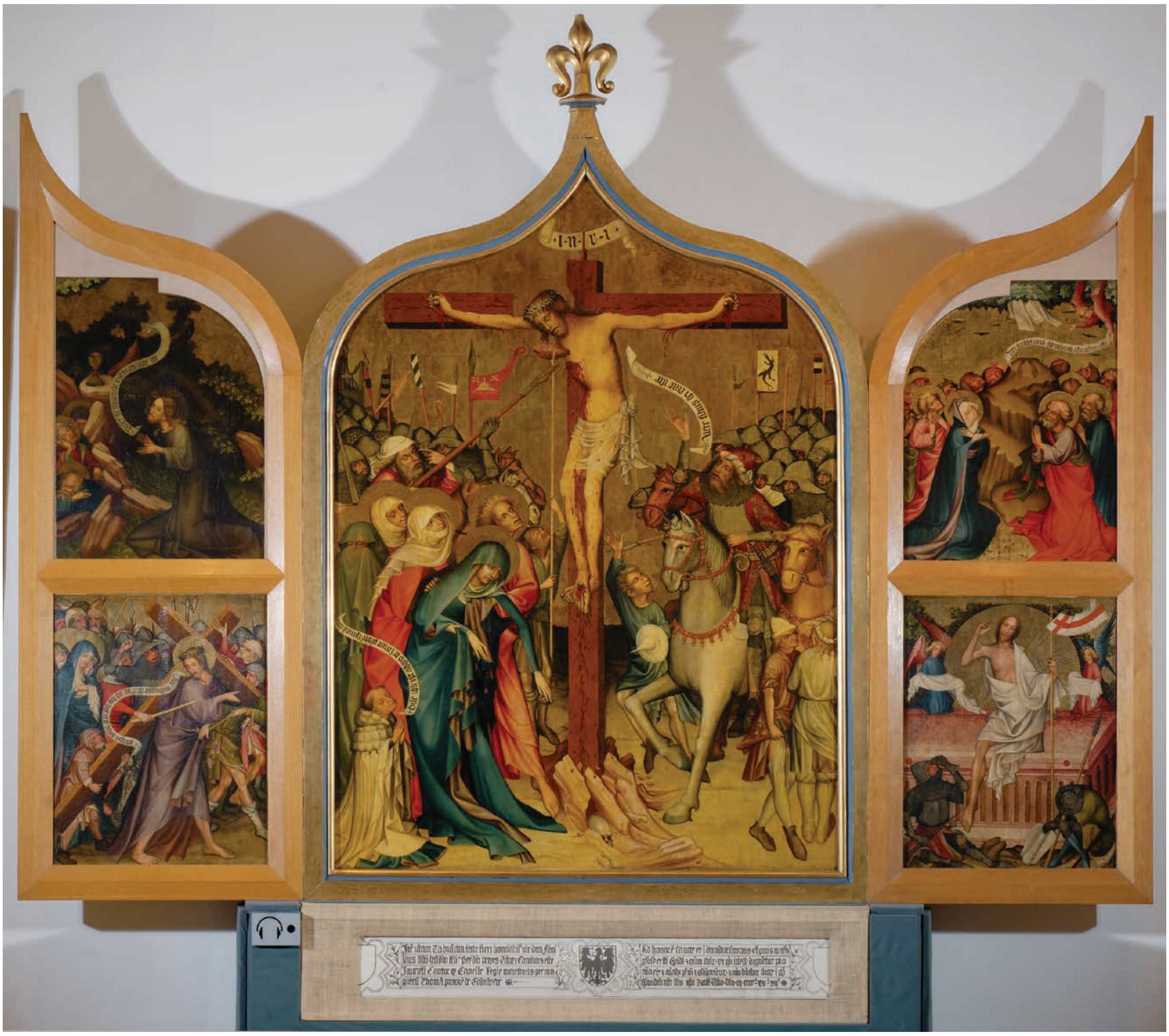
Despite their importance, the complete collection catalogues of the museum are still long in coming. A complete summary catalogue was published by István Genthon in 1948 and a number of case studies, exhibition catalogues as well as other publications have mirrored the continuous interest of researchers from all over the world in the objects of the museum.

Under these circumstances, a special opportunity occurred in 2012 (having developed until 2017) when, through the framework of a research project financed by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA PD 104215) it was possible to initiate the compilation of an exhaustive online summary catalogue for an outstanding segment of the collection, that of late medieval objects from the Hungarian Kingdom, from Austrian and German territories. While this group of objects contains well-known pieces such as the Calvary-triptych of Thomas de Coloswar or the four panel paintings of Master MS from Banská Štiavnica, a part of the works referred to were never published, while another part of them were never exhibited. The initiative did

◀ *Reliquary bust from Cologne. Around 1350.*

▼ *The Bishop's palace and the Christian Museum in Esztergom.*
Credits: Mudrák Attila, Keresztény Múzeum.





◤ *Scene from the legend of St. James the Elder. Wingpanel of an altarpiece from Szentjakabfalva (today Slovakia, Jakub), c.1480.*

◣ *Exhibition room of the museum.*

▲ *Thomas de Coloswar: Calvary-altarpiece from Garamszentbenedek. 1427 (today Slovakia, Hronsky Benadik).*

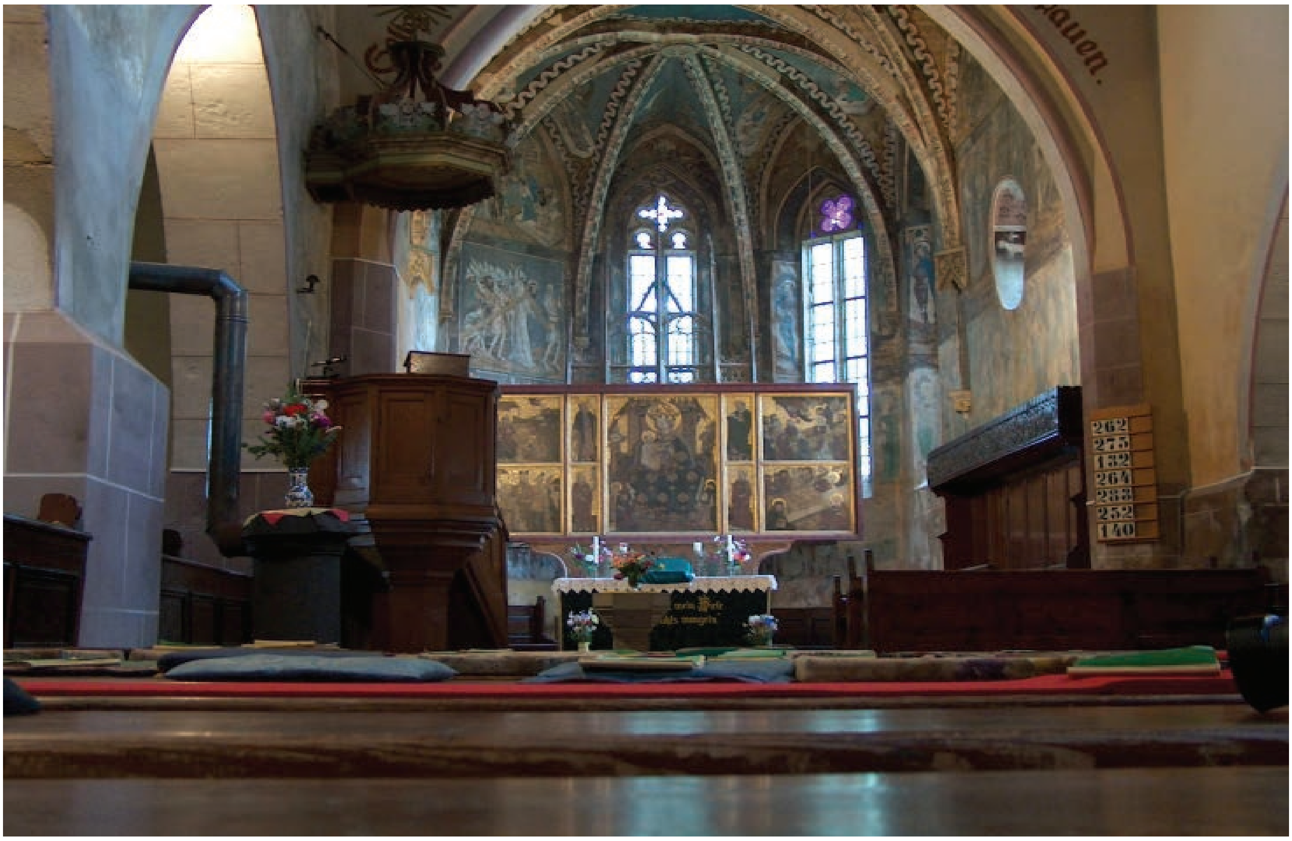
Credits: Mudrák Attila, Keresztény Múzeum.

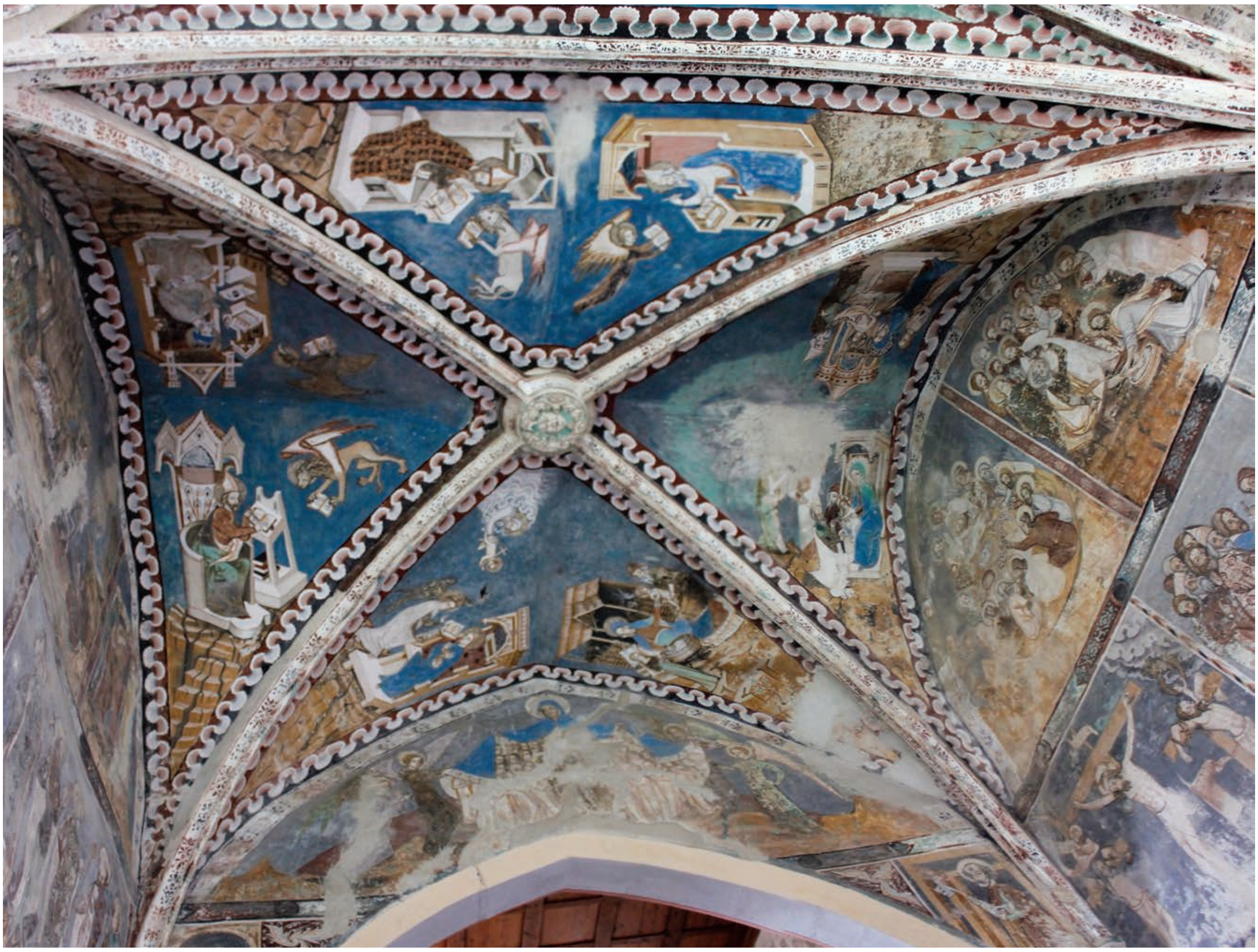
intentionally not separate the objects originating from the Hungarian Kingdom from those of the German and Austrian territories, as previous research usually did.

This is partly due to the fact that these groups of objects can be considered as a unit, based on numerous art historical and stylistic relations that can be stated among them. Mid-15th century Netherlandish art had a very strong impact on the painting and sculpture of German and Austrian regions and through them also on 15th century Hungarian art; the migration of masters among these regions was also such a well-known phenomenon that even based on stylistic analysis it is in many cases impossible to offer a certain attribution, to decide if for example a Viennese-schooled master was working in Hungary or the work was imported at a later time. Additionally, the provenance of a serious number of objects is rather uncertain, since there is no historical evidence for the Hungarian origin of some pieces recorded as such, as their prevailing place of origin is none other than the place of preservation of the private collection they were acquired from. Therefore, the new online catalogue offers an overview of all (ca. 150) objects originating from these Central European regions, destined not only to specialists, but also to the wider public; at the same time, it will hopefully represent a starting point for further research on the topic. As a result of this fundamental work, it was possible to offer online access to the respective art pieces through high quality photographs and the most important up-to-date information known on the objects, also including some recent attributions and identifications. The online form also allows a continuous update of the website with new research results; additionally, an English version is to be published online soon. The catalogue is accessible through the webpage of the museum at the following link:

www.keresztenymuzeum.hu

linguistic revision :
Ioana Ursu (Facultatea de Istorie şi Filosofie, Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca).





# *Mălâncrav / Malmkrog (Laslea, Sibiu). La chiesa fortificata*
## *Rilievo*

Irina Baldescu
Soprintendenza Belle Arti e Paesaggio per Venezia e Laguna, Venezia (IT)

*Il rilievo della chiesa di Mălâncrav / Malmkrog (Laslea, Sibiu) è stato eseguito nell'ambito di un progetto cofinanziato dalla Diocesi Evangelica di Sibiu e fondi UE, negli anni 2008 – 2009, riguardante lavori di manutenzione e valorizzazione turistica di 20 chiese fortificate della Transilvania meridionale. Il rilievo è stato realizzato con mezzi tradizionali (assi, triangolazioni), con l'ausilio di un telemetro elettronico. Il lavoro di ricerca è stato assistito dall'ing. Georgiana Tirt (Cluj Napoca) e dal geol. Attila Antal Dávid (Sfântu Gheorghe), cui si ringrazia.*

La chiesa evangelica di Mălâncrav, in forma di basilica trinavata con abside poligonale e coro, sorge su un'altura a nord del nucleo del villaggio. La torre campanaria addossata al lato ovest (l'altezza del livello di calpestio dell'ultimo piano, costituito da una struttura lignea aperta sui lati, è di quasi 23 metri) consentiva una vista panoramica della vallata che collegava Mălâncrav al villaggio vicino di Laslea, sito sulla via principale di percorrenza tra le città di Sighișoara e di Mediaș.

### Sviluppo dell'organismo architettonico.

Le prime fasi costruttive della chiesa risalgono al XIV secolo, dove probabilmente i più antichi corpi sono la torre e il coro con l'abside; gli affreschi conservati sulla parete nord della navata sono databili stilisticamente tra gli ultimi decenni del sec. XIV e i primi anni del XV, di conseguenza la costruzione si può considerare già conclusa all'epoca. Le modanature gotiche dell'arco a base della torre campanaria sono parimenti attribuibili alle prime fasi dell'edificio.

L'intervento che condiziona maggiormente la percezione odierna della chiesa è il restauro eseguito negli anni dopo il 1913 dalla Commissione dei monumenti storici di Budapest, con metodologia ascrivibile alla corrente del restauro stilistico (concettualmente caratterizzato dall'interpretazione dello stile architettonico come linea evolutiva tendente verso una forma stilistica pefetta e, di conseguenza, la propensione a operare riportando il monumento a un modello stilistico idealizzato – in questo caso, quello di un medioevo fantastico). A Mălâncrav per esempio sono stati eliminati gli intonaci esterni lasciando le murature facciavista, è stata eliminata l'edicola eretta a protezione dell'ingresso in chiesa esistente sul lato nord, è stata aggiunta la parte terminale, circolare, sulla scala a chiocciola della sagrestia ecc.

Bisogna specificare, comunque, che il restauro del 1913 ha adottato soluzioni tecniche che hanno posto rimedio a importanti problemi strutturali (per esempio il tamponamento dell'arco alla base della torre campanaria) e di umidità di risalita (un sistema di canali di ventilazione comunicanti sotteranei, intorno all'abside, all'interno e all'esterno, presenti nel progetto e intercettati durante le indagini geologiche condotte da Geoda SRL su incarico della committenza nel 2008). Ai lavori degli anni 1970 risale probabilmente la realizzazione di un cordolo in calcestruzzo nella parte sommitale del muro nord (che presentava fessurazioni diffuse) e delle „otturazioni" in calcestruzzo sulle murature della torre, laddove presentavano delle discontinuità e perdite di materiale.

Il rilievo geometrico e lo studio geologico hanno fornito delle motivazioni tecniche per alcuni problemi storici dell'edificio: dal punto di vista statico, per esempio, si è notato che tutti i solai della torre presentano la tessitura

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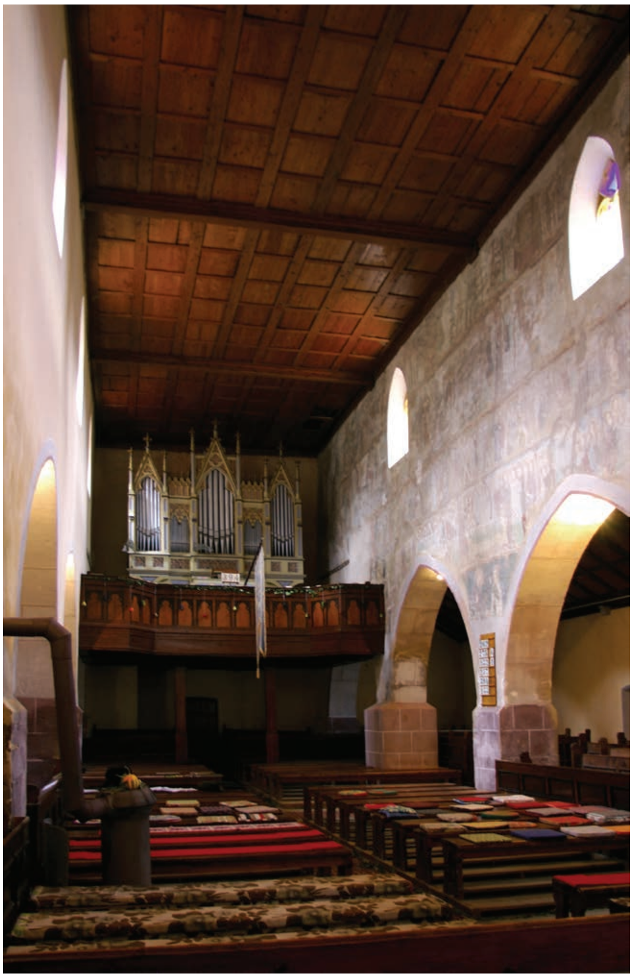
◤ *Mălâncrav. Chiesa di Santa Maria. Navata, vista verso l'abside. Si nota la decorazione delle volte (fine sec. XIV) e la pala d'altare (sec. XV).* Foto: Mioritics Onlus.

◣ *Mălâncrav. Chiesa di Santa Maria. Coro, volte a crociera affres-cate (fine XIV sec.), scene dell'infanzia di Cristo, raffigurazione dei dottori della chiesa e simboli dei quattro evangelisti; i campi decorativi sono arricchiti da una fettuccia ondulata sui bordi.* Foto: Anca Crișan.

▼ *Mălâncrav. Chiesa di Santa Maria. Navata, vista verso ovest (galleria lignea di inizio Novecento).* Foto: Irina Baldescu.



delle travi sulla direzione est-ovest, laddove il mancato ancoraggio sulla direzione nord-sud ha contribuito, probabilmente, al cinematismo di apertura della fessura verticale sul prospetto ovest della torre; durante le indagini geologiche è stata intercettata la falda freatica a circa 2,50 m sotto il livello del pavimento attuale interno, posizionata al di sopra di un esteso strato argilloso, fatto che ha contribuito estesamente, nei secoli, ad alimentare l'umidità di risalita nei pilastri e nelle pareti; un altro sondaggio ha confermato l'esecuzione del sistema di ventilazione delle fondazioni dell'abside, come da progetto del 1913.

## Riferimenti cronologici.

1305 – Il villaggio di Mălâncrav risulta essere già in possesso della famiglia Apafi. Il feudo che includeva le zone circostanti risulta possedimento del Comitato di Alba.

Inizi del secolo XIV – Probabilmente prime fasi costruttive della basilica trinavata (cantiere probabilmente iniziato nella zona absidale) e della torre campanaria. E' probabile che il cantiere fosse finanziato sia dalla famiglia Apafi che dalla parrocchia del villaggio.

Metà del secolo XIV – Prime fasi della decorazione interna (affreschi conservati sul muro nord della navata, a registri orizzontali sovrapposti).

Fine sec. XIV (ante 1382? o ante 1405?) – intervento pittorico nella zona absidale, ridecorata da affreschi di alto livello artistico. A questa fase di rielaborazione estetica è da assegnare, secondo Dancu, anche la rimodellazione del portale ovest della chiesa.

1405 – Sgrafitto nel coro: *Anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo quinto dominus Nicolaus exstitisset et fugitivus propter dampnum.*

1442 – Un documento papale menziona la cappella del Santo Sangue di Mălâncrav, dove il principe Apafi è abilitato ad emettere indulgenze. Si è assunto che si tratti di un edificio distinto dalla chiesa, eventualmente rimasto in uso per il culto cattolico, anche dopo la riforma.

1447 – Prima menzione della chiesa di Santa Maria di Mălâncrav, nel testamento di Nikolaus Apafi.

1852 – Inclusione della chiesa nell'elenco dei monumenti rilevanti della Transilvania, pubblicata da László Kővári a Budapest.

1857 – Incendio che ha danneggiato o distrutto totalmente le strutture lignee. È probabilmente in questa occasione che è andato perduto un camminamento di ronda ligneo posizionato sopra il coro della chiesa, a cui conduceva la scala a chiocciola presente in sagrestia (cf. Dancu 1980).

1865 – Il letterato inglese Charles Boner menziona la chiesa nelle sue memorie di viaggio (*Transylvania, its Products and People*, 1865 - *Siebenbürgen. Land und Leute*, 1868).

1902 – Sopralluogo a Mălâncrav dello storico d'arte Viktor Roth.

1912 – Rilievo dell'architetto Istvan Möller, per conto della Commissione dei Monumenti di Budapest (nell'archivio dell'istituzione si trovano il rilievo e il progetto di restauro). In Transilvania Möller si è occupato anche del restauro del Castello di Hunedoara.

1912 – Descrizione del monumento da parte di Viktor Roth, nello stato precedente ai lavori di restauro.

1913 – 1916 – Intervento di restauro condotto da Möller. Sono databili in questa fase:

- il completamento della forma attuale degli annessi laterali della torre, già in stato di rudere, forse anche con l'intento di creare dei corpi di appoggio per la torre;
- inserimento di alcune cornici di finestre e porte, sui prospetti nord e sud;
- il tamponamento del portale della torre;
- realizzazione di un nuovo sistema di capriate e del manto di copertura;
- inserimento della galleria e del balcone ligneo;
- inserimento di un sistema di canali di ventilazione sotterraneo, intorno al muro perimetrale dell'abside, che ha contribuito in modo molto efficace ad eliminare l'umidità di risalita e alla conservazione degli affreschi;
- a seguito del tamponamento dell'arco alla base della torre, riorganizzazione dell'accesso alla torre tramite l'annesso a nord (questo spazio dovevo essere voltato, secondo il progetto).

1925 – Nuovi interventi di restauro, difficilmente identificabili.

1968 – Realizzazione dell'impianto elettrico (cf. archivio INMI – Institul Naţional al Monumentelor Istorice, Bucarest).

1974 – Restauro dell'altare ligneo decorato. (cf. archivio INMI. Sarebbe probabilmente databile nello stesso periodo:

- il rinforzo delle murature della torre tramite otturazioni in calcestruzzo nei punti dove la muratura della torre aveva perso la coesione;
- la realizzazione del cordolo in calcestruzzo in sommità del muro nord della navata.

2001 – Progetto e interventi conservativi puntuali per il restauro degli affreschi.

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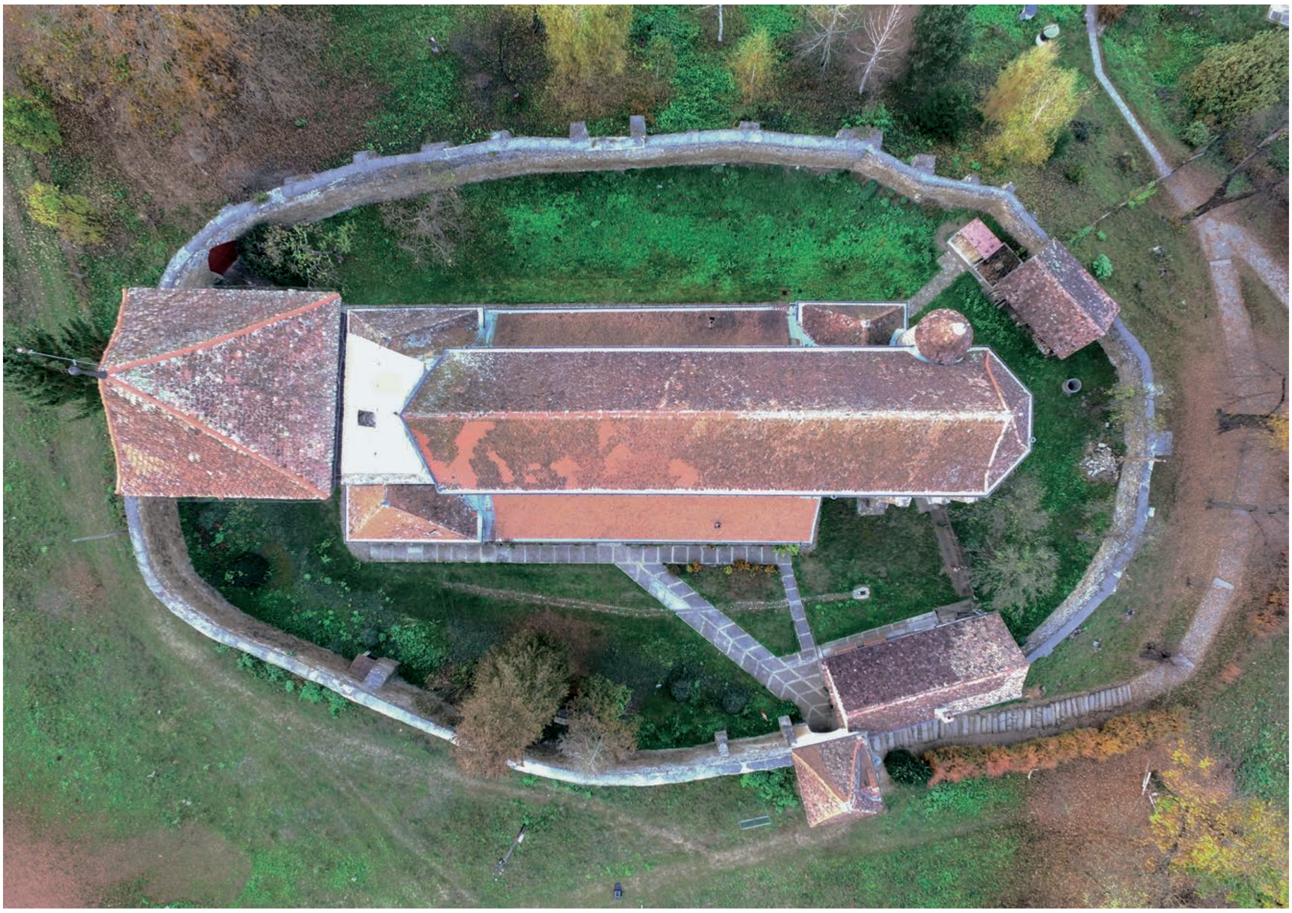
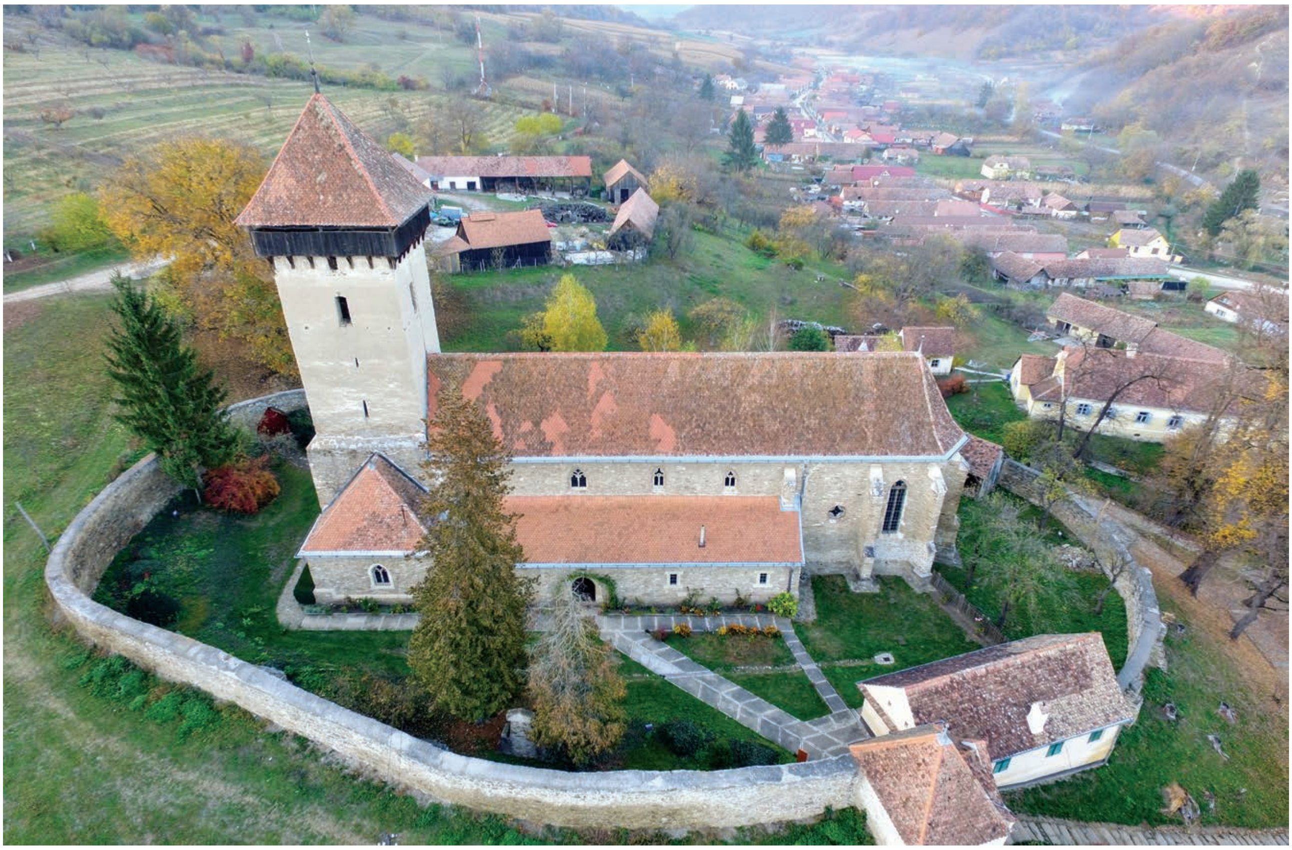
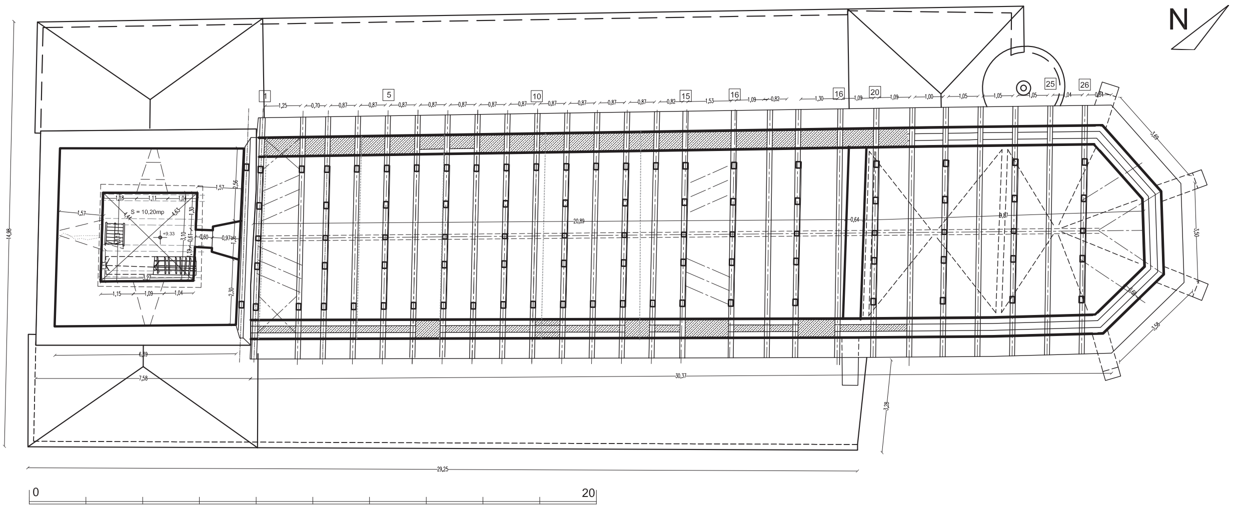


*Mălâncrav, Chiesa di Santa Maria. Aerofotografie. (sopra) Ortofotografia del complesso con la cinta di fortificazione.* (sotto*) Vista aerea da sud.* Foto: Daniel Suciu – Aerospace Mediaş.





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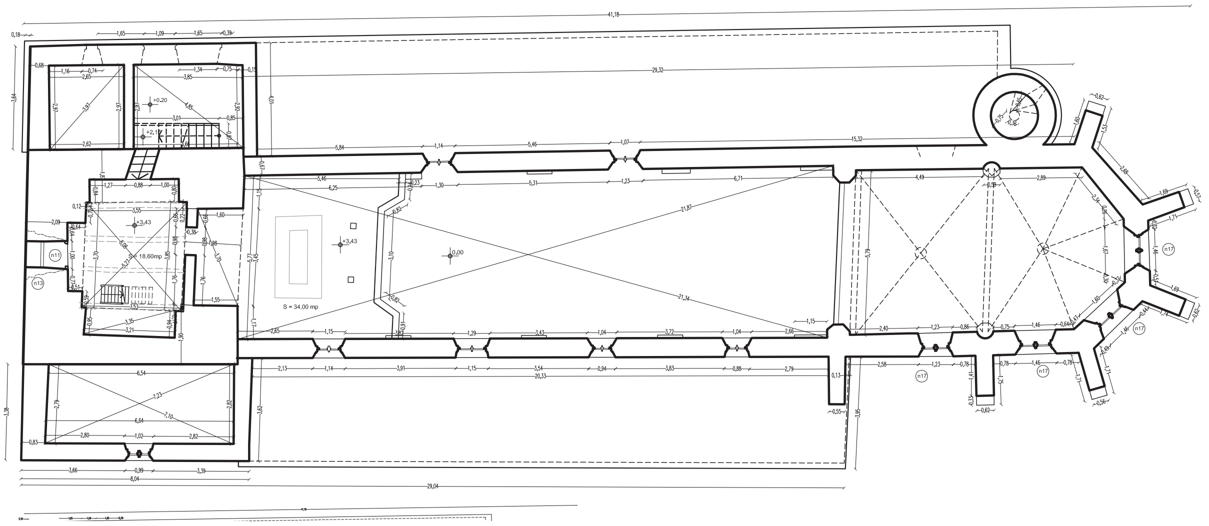

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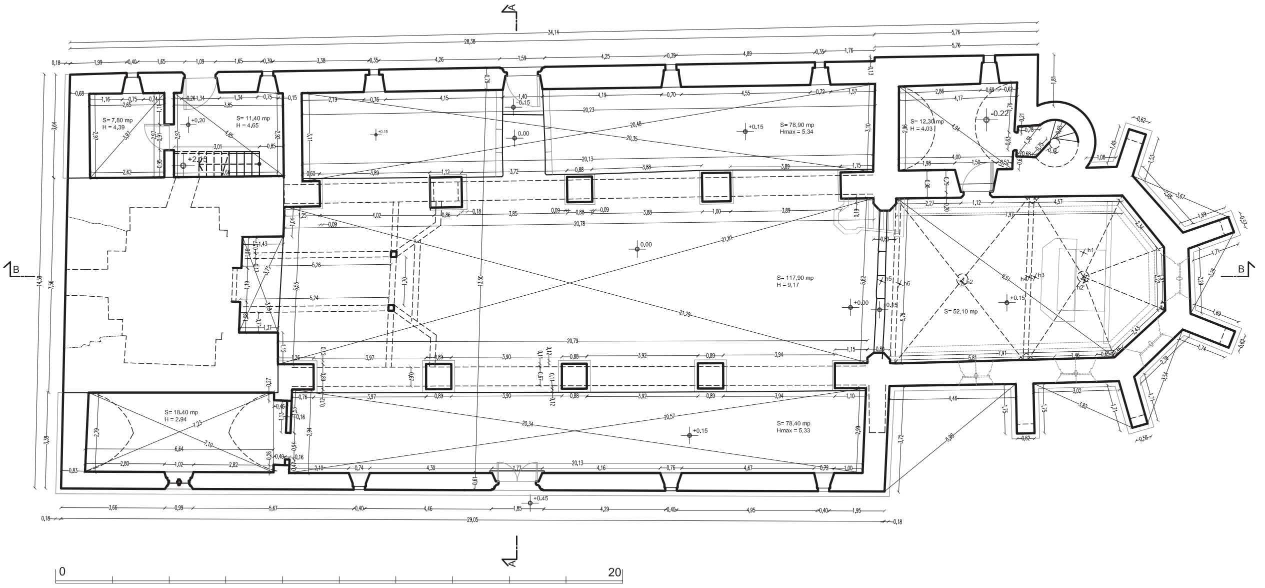

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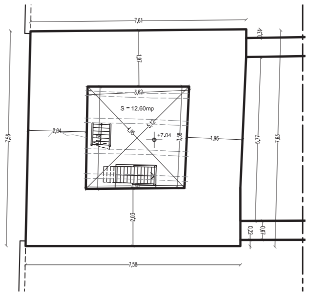
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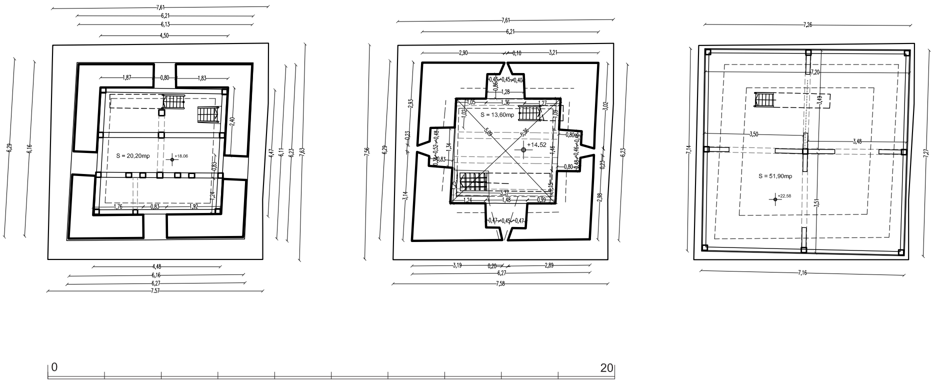
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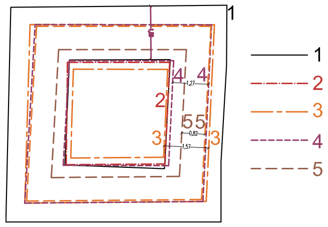
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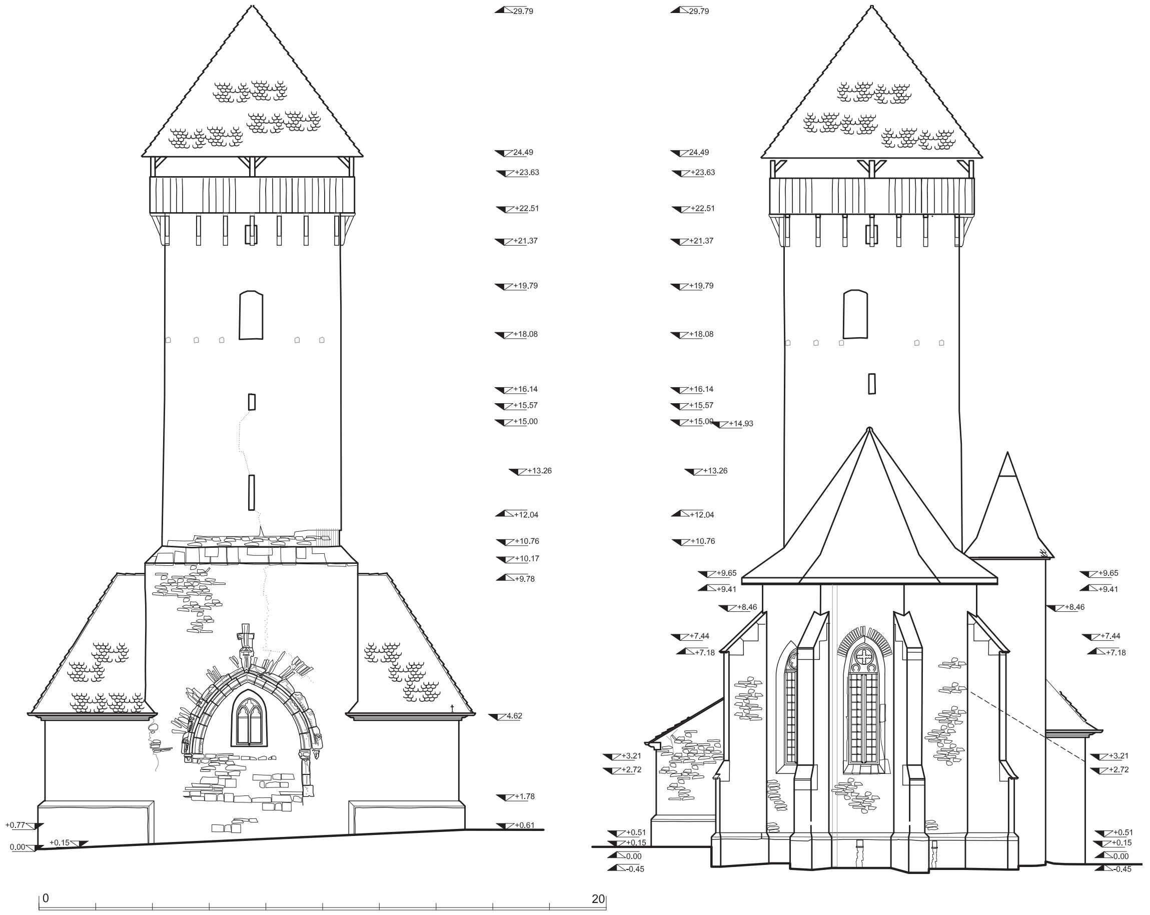
▲ *Mălâncrav, Chiesa di Santa Maria. Rilievo – planimetrie dei livelli superiori della torre.*

◀ *Mălâncrav, Chiesa di Santa Maria. Schema di sovrapposizione.*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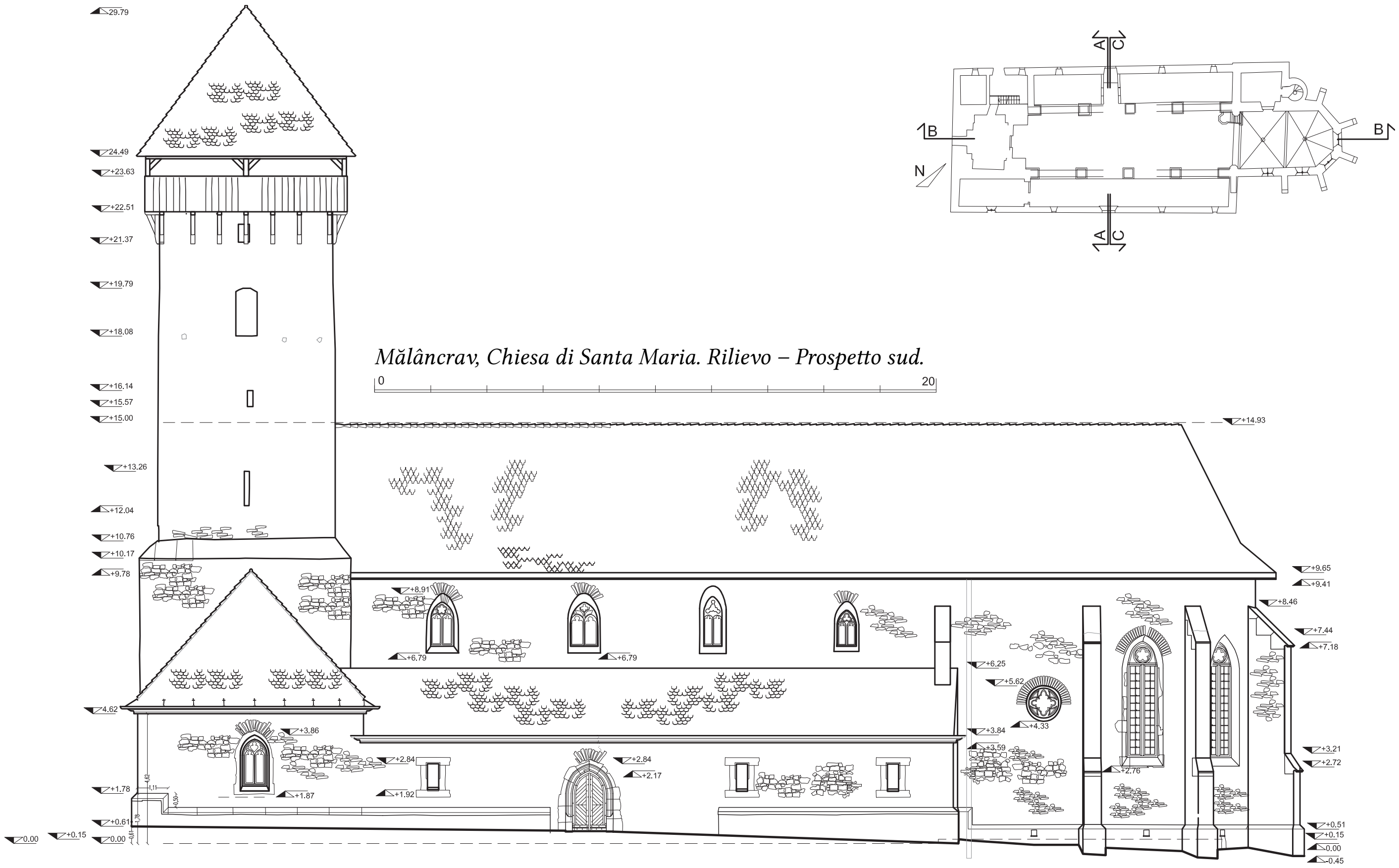

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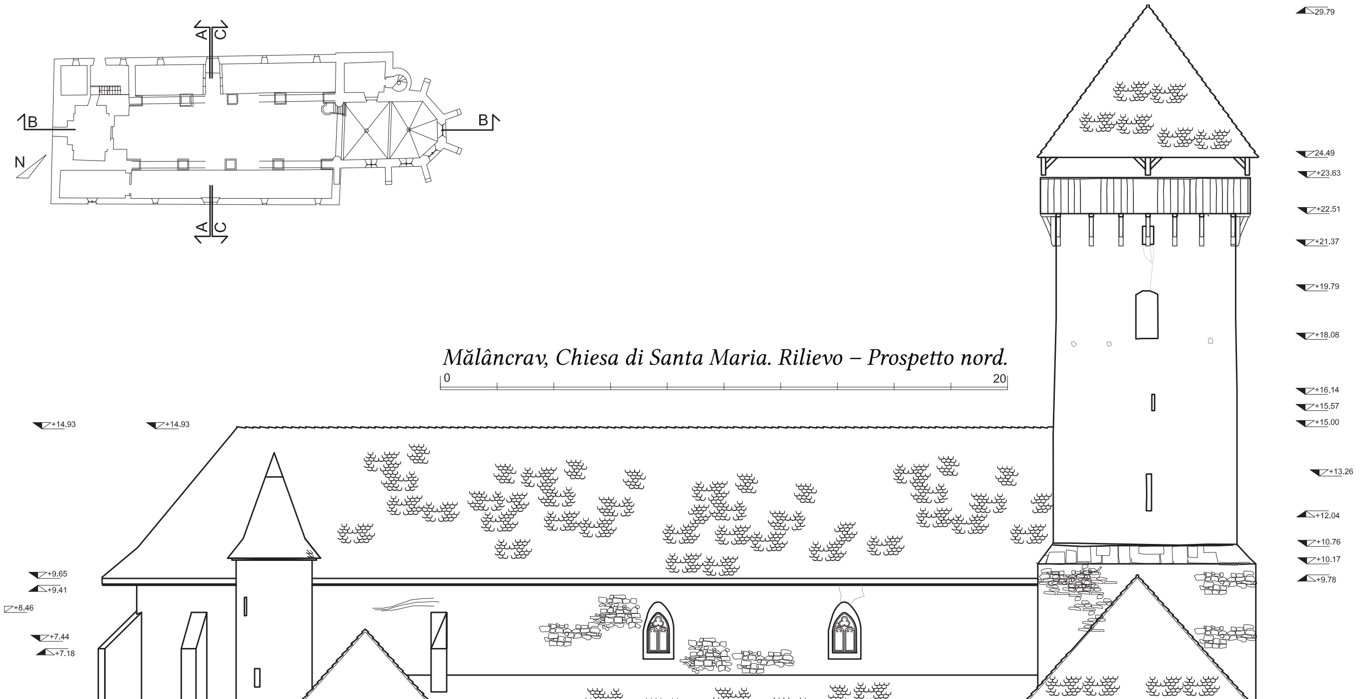

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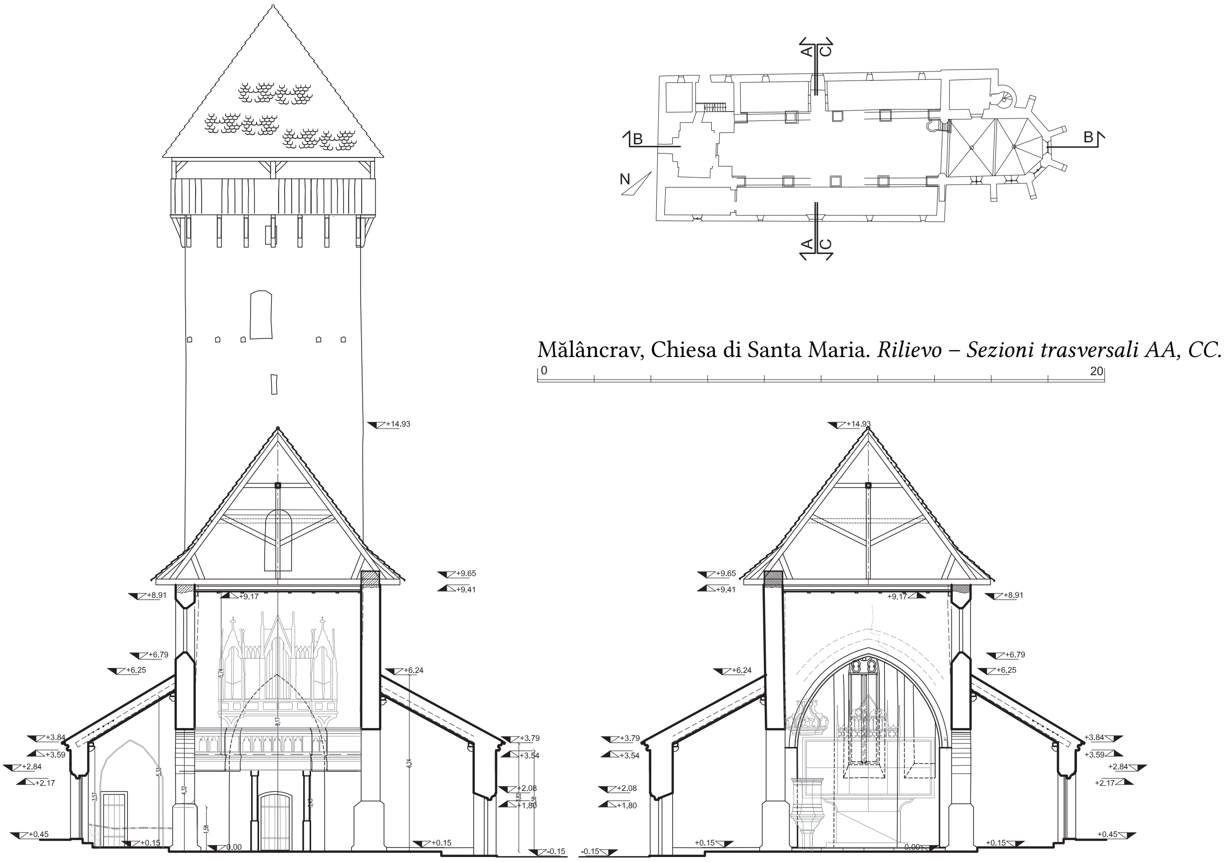
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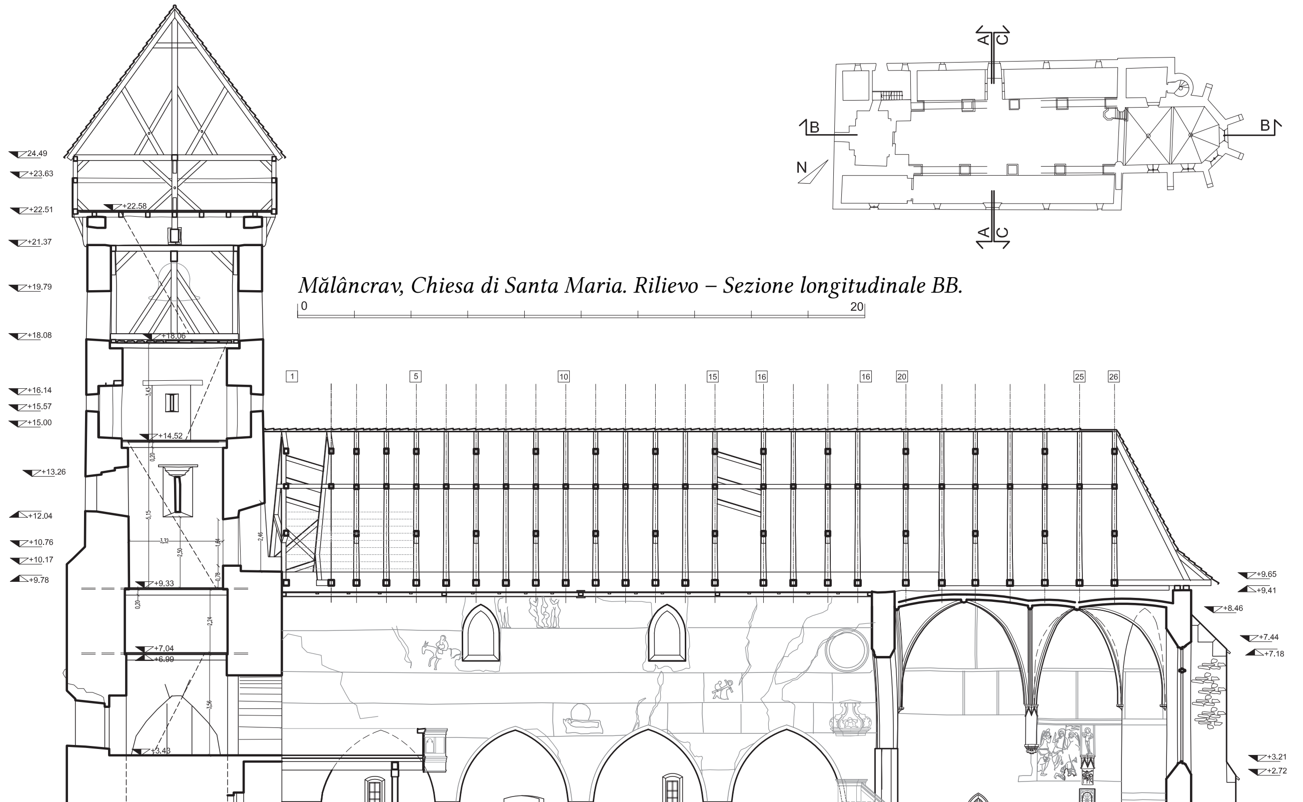
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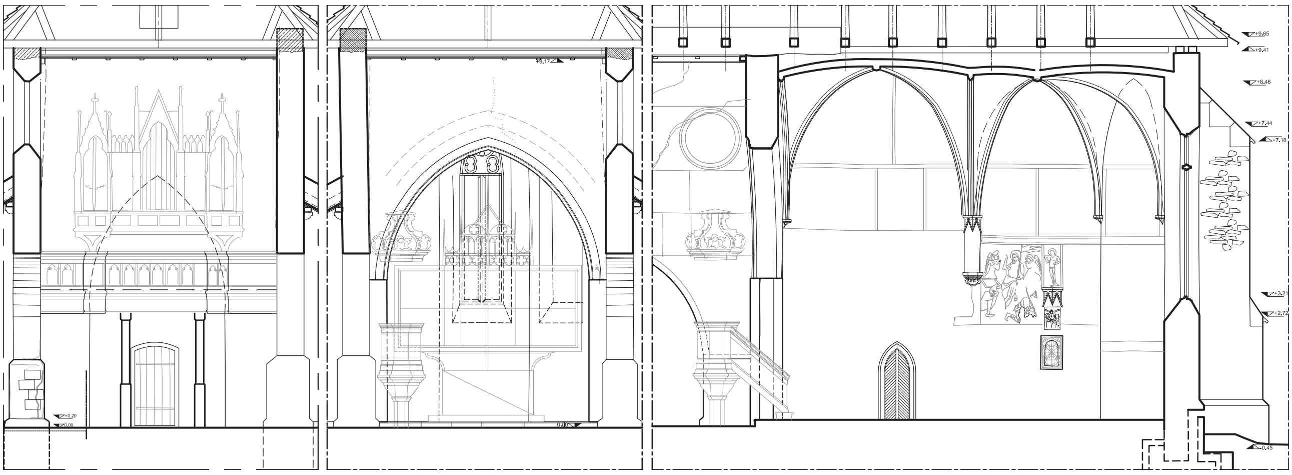
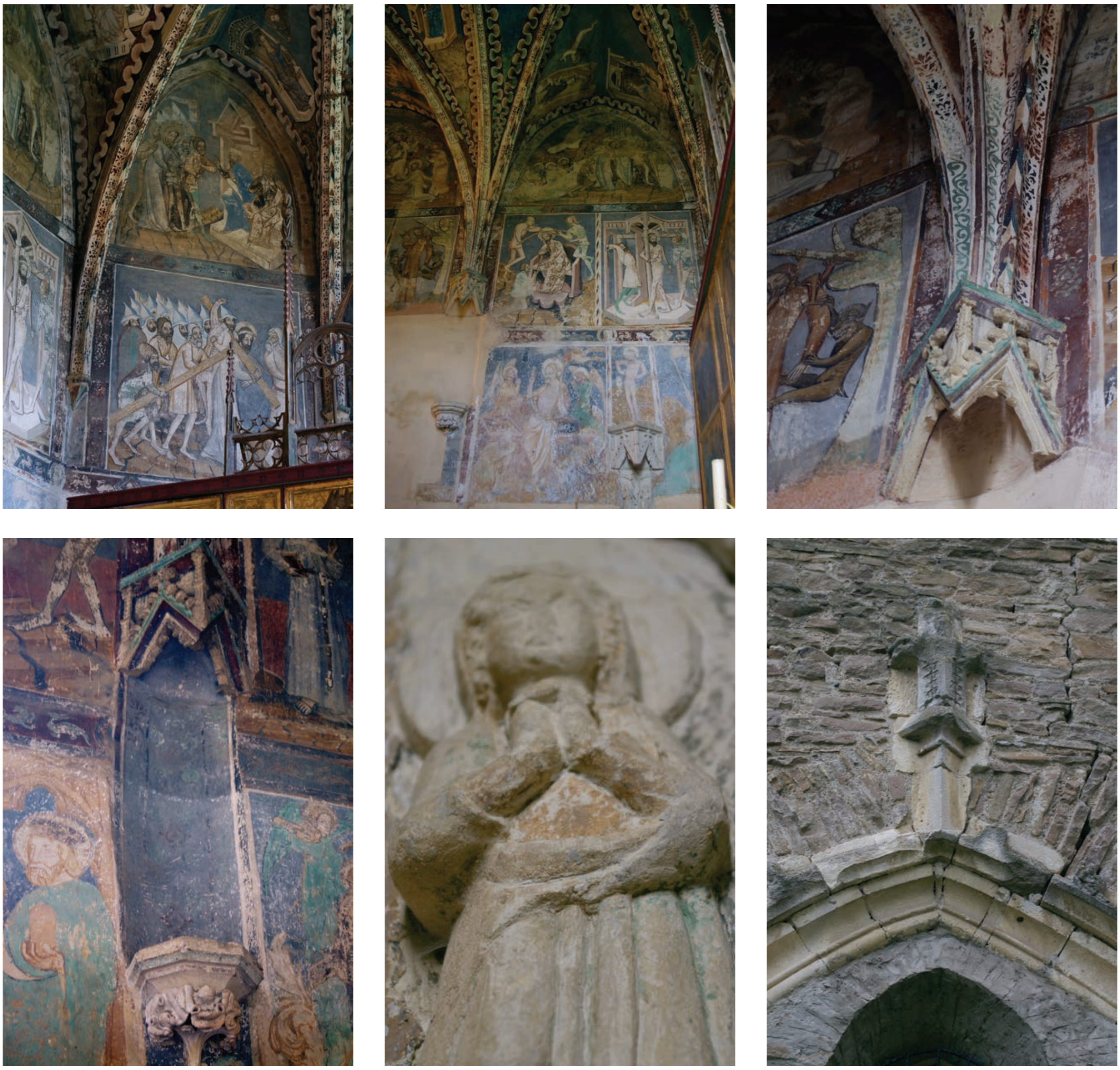


▲ *Mălâncrav, Chiesa di Santa Maria. Rilievo – Sezioni AA, CC, BB, dettagli.*

▼ *Mălâncrav, Chiesa di Santa Maria, coro e abside poligonale. Viste di dettaglio delle volte con le nervature, dei campi affrescati (fine sec.* XIV*) e degli elementi lapidei (baldachino, mensoletta) che conservano tracce di policromia.* Foto: Irina Baldescu.



# *The Icon Exhibition “Kissed again and again”*

Henrik von Achen

director at the Universitetsmuseet in Bergen (NO)

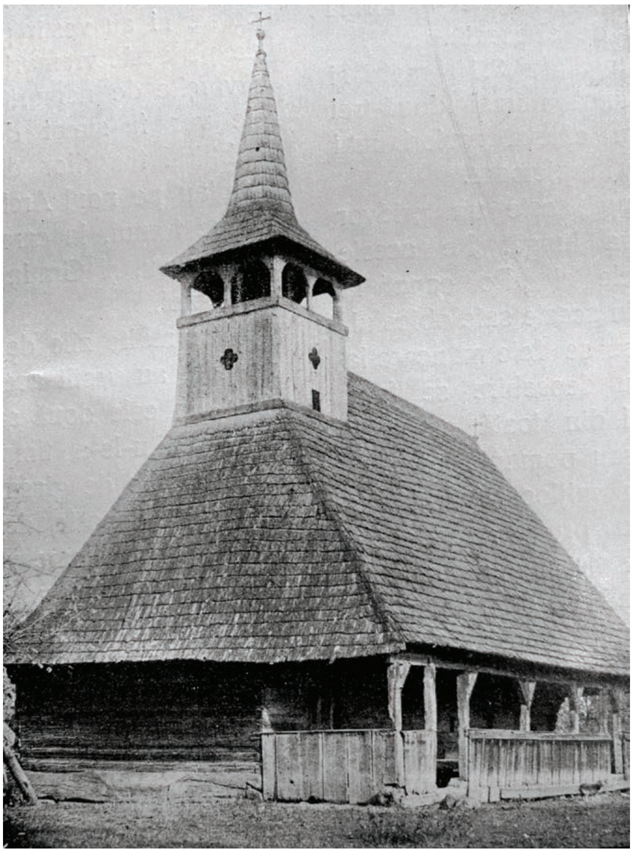
Apart from offering museological advice to those preparing the Icon museum in Alba Iulia, an exhibition of Transylvanian icons in Bergen was part of the Norwegian contribution to the Museikon project. The icon exhibition opened in one of the buildings of the University Museum in Bergen on the 4th of December 2015 and closed on the 14th of February 2016, displaying 30 icons painted on wood or glass, all painted between 1720 and 1890.[1]

## The Transylvanian icons

In the exhibition in Bergen there were no masterpieces of Romanian icon painting. On display were the everyday icons which were deeply integrated into the lives of ordinary people, the peasants of Transylvania. (Fig. 1) The icon was never meant for the art museum, but to be an integral part of the religious life of Christians, and it did not stay within the realm of theology, but were deeply connected with the devotional and liturgical life of believers. In small churches and humble homes, icons were revered as in the cathedrals, the rustic forms no less holy than the splendid work of masters, their simplicity echoing the simple faith of a peasant congregation – often painted with the same broad and worn hands which ploughed the fields and cared for the cattle. (Fig. 2) Yes, certainly, their icons might be rustic, simple and even primitive, but they mirrored the same faith and conveyed the same presence of the Divine.

The rural congregation knew that its icons were simple, they had seen others, of course. However, these often rustic, even primitive, icons, were theirs. They belonged to them, they shared a life together. Like children: they might not be the most beautiful or clever in the world, but they are ours, and we love them deeply, unconditionally – as they are. We share a life and a love. So every icon is precious like a child, and therefore beautiful; a tangible faith, a tangible hope, and a tangible love - a presence materialized. In everyday language, beauty is often characterized by the expression “*frumos ca o icoană*“, “as beautiful as an icon”. Transylvanians admit that there are more beautiful and masterfully executed icons, but there are no icons more theirs, more connected, entwined, with their history, their faith, their hopes, fears, sorrow and happiness. A mutual dependence signified the relationship born of faith: that they took care of their icons as of their children; and the icons took care of them, since the faithful were, truly, their children. Regardless of artistic quality, they needed their icons to create a heaven over their lives, to offer light, the presence and protection of saints like candles in the dark.

In cathedrals and distant and humble timber churches alike, icons told their stories which were kept in the hearts and minds of the faithful, serving a threefold purpose: promoting the glory of God, memory of the history of salvation, the communion of God and man, the splendour



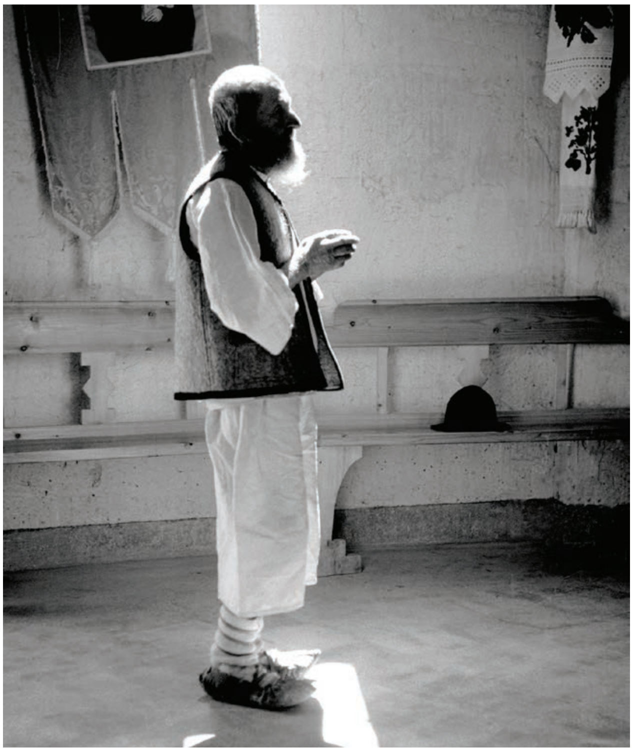
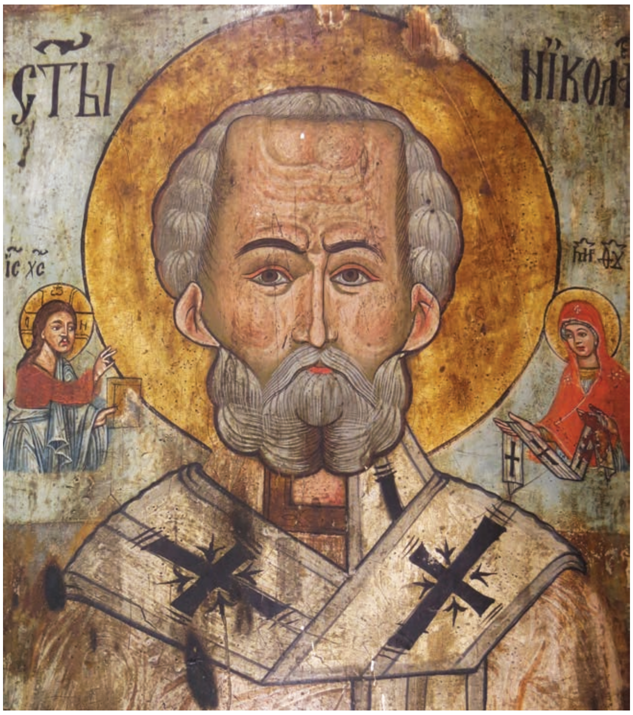


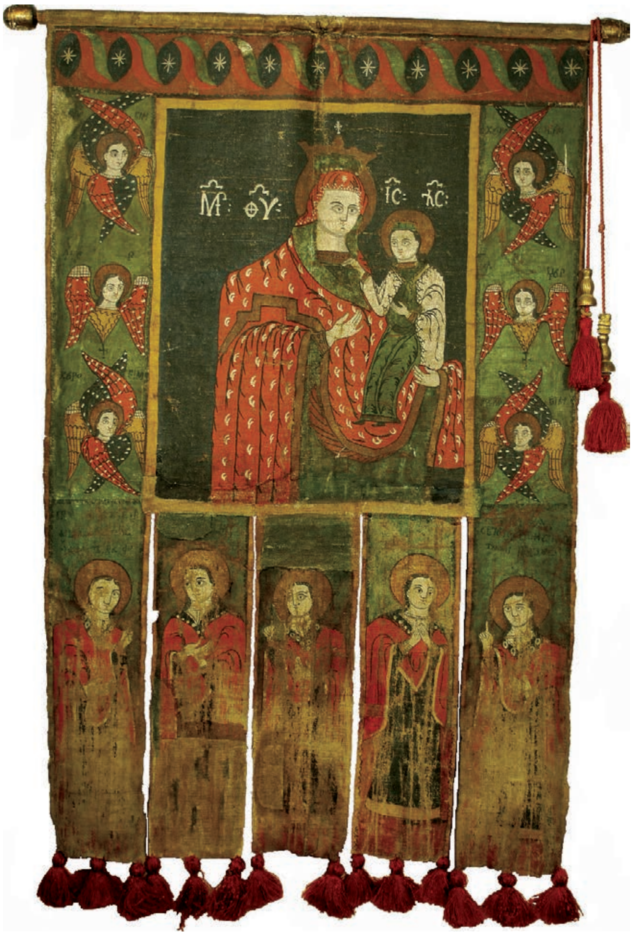
Fig. 1: *The church of Rădeşti.* Source: Radu 1911.

Fig. 2: *An old peasant praying in a church*, photo courtesy of Bishop Macarie Drăgoi.



▲ Fig. 3: *St. Nicholas, painted c. 1730, attributed to Nistor of Răşinari; detail.* Unless otherwise stated, all photos by Henrik von Achen.

▼ Fig. 4: *The processional banner from Sânbenedic, painted in 1817.*



and beautification of the holy church, and the remission of the sins of those paying homage to the icons, kissing them devoutly, bringing honour to the prototypes which they represent. Like the Church in Christian theology is the very presence of Christ since his ascension, continuing his work and filled with his spirit, the icon is the continued active, miracle-working presence of its prototype (motif), be it a saint, the Saviour or the Theotokos, the Mother of God. Divinity and holiness materialize as icon.

## The relational dimension

The exhibition in Bergen focused on one important dimension of the icon, namely how the faithful relate to the icon, how the encounter between faith and the object of faith establishes a sacred space encompassing both believer and icon, be it in the living room or within the sacred space of the church interior. (Fig. 3)

Any exhibition has to find the balance between its educational and experiential dimension, between understanding and experience. For a university museum, obviously, the educational dimension is basic – the exhibition wants to communicate research based knowledge and insights. Yet, an exhibition is not a book with real three dimensional objects as illustrations, it is something quite different. An exhibition should awaken the curiosity and interest of the visitors, offering, then, a true learning experience. While teaching or educating, the exhibition is as much about creating a wish for being taught or educated, hence, it is not so much covering a certain topic in its entirety as leaving the audience wanting to learn more and understand more, see more and experience more.

So, the objective for the icon exhibition was to provide knowledge about the icon by offering or facilitating an experience of its relational dimension. Besides making us want to know more about what we experience, experience has a dialectical relation to understanding: By experiencing, one understands better, deeper; through understanding, one's experience is enriched, perhaps even strengthened. Therefore, instead of competing, the two dimensions complete each other.

The experience offered is entertaining to the extent that it manages to be interesting, and it has an important aesthetic dimension, both in the objects on display, and in the design surrounding them. Moreover, it creates another world, a different world you step into when you enter the exhibition room. Thus, it introduces a new context instead of the one once lost as the icon was moved from a church or a private home. In the case in Bergen, the design endeavoured to recreate some of the atmosphere of a wooden wall, dimly lit, and recreate its character of an object of faith. (Fig. 4-5) All these dimensions, entertainment, aesthetics and the creation of a new special reality contribute to create the educational dimension of the exhibition.

The main focus of the exhibition was on the relational dimension of the icon, though the theological, devotional, liturgical, factual or aesthetical dimensions were all unavoidably present as well. Therefore, the exhibition was given the title "Kissed, again and again", taken from the poem *Ayíasma*, "The Purifying Well" (1965), by the Swedish poet Gunnar Ekelöf. The poem breathes the repetitive rhythm of liturgy, expressing the relation between believer and belief, the hopes and fears floating in the space between the faithful and the icon, or rather creating that space of faith, of giving and receiving, the subtle interaction between believer and image until it slowly disappears and nothing is left but faith itself and God - the encounters between heaven and earth constantly sealed with kisses:

The black image
under silver worn to shreds by kisses
The black image
under silver worn to shreds by kisses
under the silver
The black image worn to shreds by kisses
under the silver
The black image worn to shreds by kisses
All around the image
The white silver worn to shreds by kisses
All around the image
The very metal worn to shreds by kisses
under the metal
The black image worn to shreds by kisses
The Darkness, O, the darkness
Worn to shreds by kisses
The Darkness in our eyes
Worn to shreds by kisses
All we never wished for
Kissed and worn to shreds by kisses
All we escaped
Worn to shreds by kisses.
All we wish for
Kissed again and again.

(Gunnar Ekelöf, *Selected poems*, translated by W. H. Auden and Leif Sjöberg, New York, Pantheon Books, 1972)

## Presentation of religious objects or images

Of all aspects one might have focused on, precisely the relational context may be regarded the most problematic in a Norwegian context. All other aspects or dimensions contain some knowledge to Conway which might then be presented in a scholarly, distanced way: this is the theology and concept of holy images as established by the 7th Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (AD 787), this is the liturgical use of icons, this is their art historical place in terms of workshops, influences, masters, models, schools etc., this is the iconography, and so forth. Yet precisely when presenting the relational dimension, the exhibition broke down that safe distance of factual elements and tried to establish a relation between visitor and icon. (Fig. 6) This seemed incompatible with the unbiased neutrality which is generally recognized as a basic feature in the museum institution. And it easily awakens the "fear of touch" with which a European secular society so often reacts to Christianity particularly.

A museum displaying cultural history is expected to present knowledge about icons rather than the icon themselves since it is also expected to present knowledge about the relational dimension and not create the relation itself. While an art museum may present the works directly, trying to established that immediate relation between viewer and picture, as it was seen with the important exhibition of religious art in the National Gallery in London in 2000, "Seeing Salvation", a museum of cultural history, and particularly a university museum, is expected to keep its distance – at least when Christianity is the topic. In a certain sense we wanted to promote an emotional response instead of an intellectual, to focus on the experi-

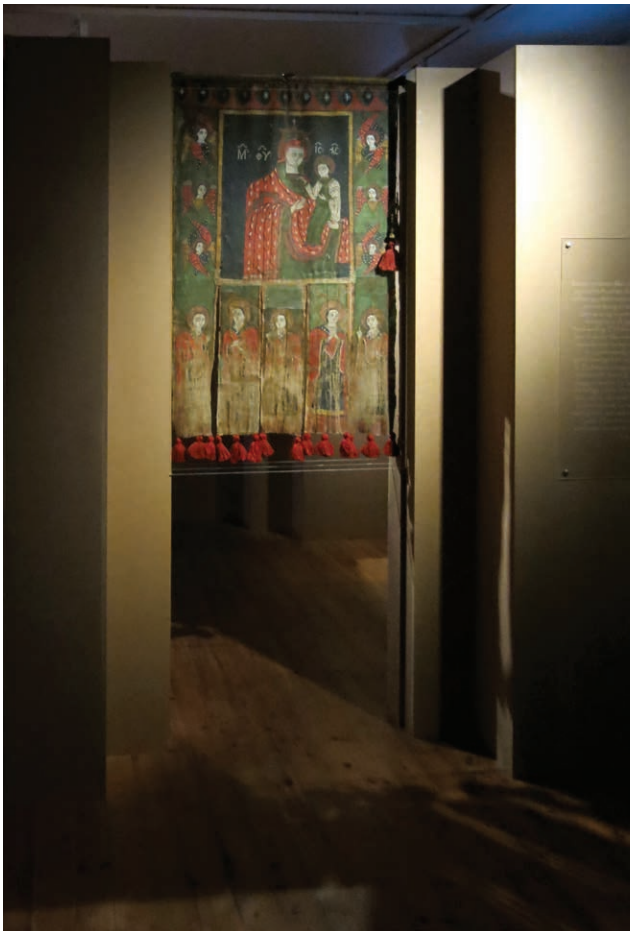


Fig. 5: *The banner from Sânbenedic, in the exhibition, visible from both sides like it would originally have been during a procession.*

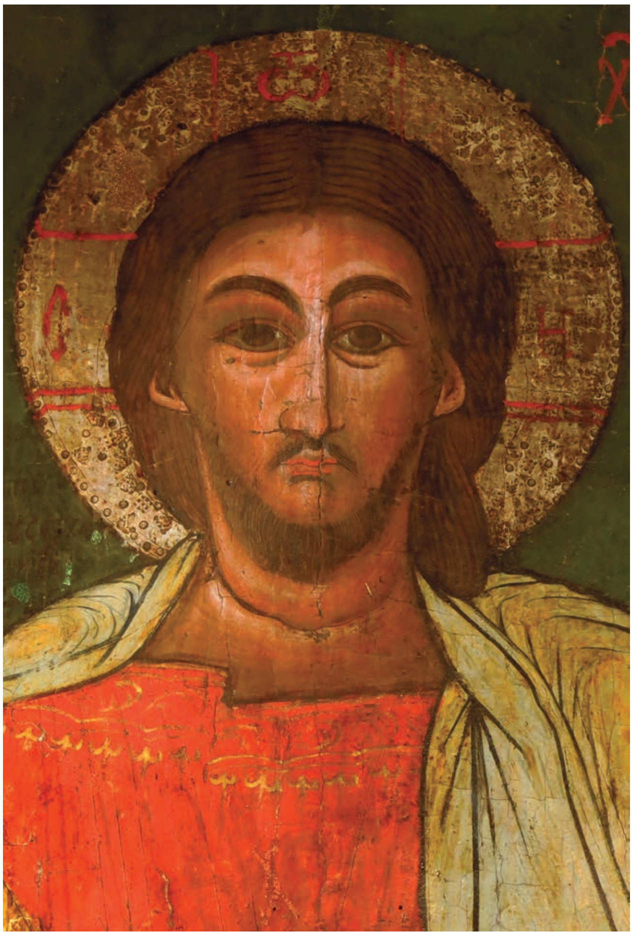
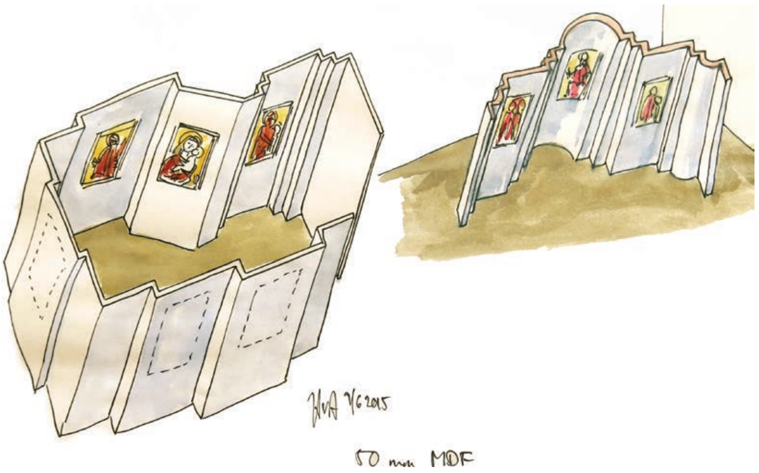


Fig. 6: *'You are seen as much as you see', Pantokrator from Spring, painted 1733 by Nistor of Răşinari.*



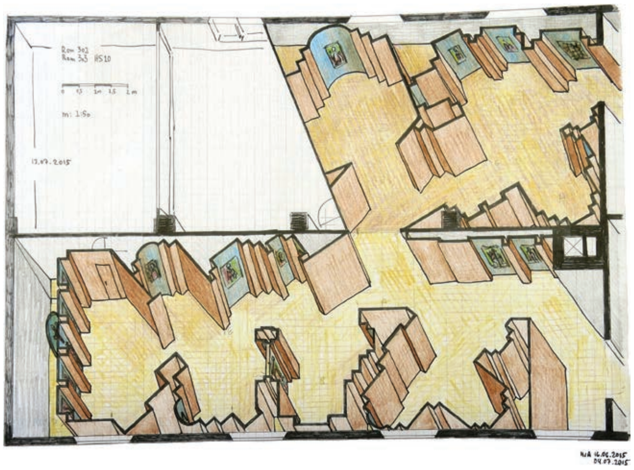


Fig. 7: *One of the first sketches outlining the concept of the design.*

Fig. 8: *Exhibition plan with wall articulations, July 13th 2015.*

ence of the icons rather than the scholarly knowledge about them. This tension between what the icon is as a religious object, and the usual approach by the neutral museum institution to such a religious object was articulated by another Swedish poet, Tomas Transströmer, in 1983, speaking of icons resting in the ground, face up: "What a strong longing! What an idiotic hope! | And over me the steps of millions of doubters".

This "fear of touching faith", an inherent hypersensitivity of European museums concerning all things Christian, may be the reason why it has been registered that "considering the central position that 'religion' has occupied in civilizations worldwide, it is strangely neglected in museums".[2] The hypersensitivity concerns all religions which are a living part of our society, partly because museums sometimes are expected to promote as well as present religion, or because the distinction between sacred spaces and museums displaying religious objects has become blurred, both in the museums, and, indeed, in the cathedrals of Western Europe.[3] Too often, religion is a phenomenon to describe, not to present as a living reality. This is curious, since "Religious beliefs are now, more than ever, a major area of public discussion, controversy and media attention, prejudice and misunderstanding'. (...) Most museums and galleries have material that relates to religions and other beliefs, but usually without any consistent approach to it", as it was stated by Reeve.[4]

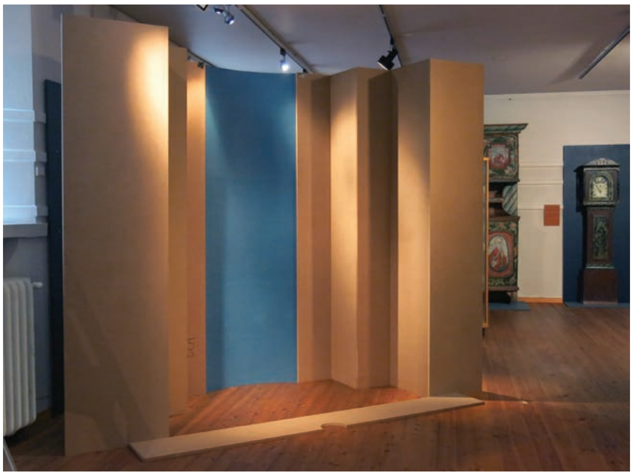
The exhibition of Transylvanian icons in Bergen maintained that precisely public museums should engage in religious cultural heritage even though "few museums have a formal policy on religious issues".[5] They probably don't need one except the fact that the museum institution should present rather than promote religion – which does not imply that an exhibition cannot legitimately provide experiences of religious objects which come close to, or actually become, religious experiences if visitors are so inclined. But precisely the religious cultural heritage is important to preserve because the material culture of faith often looses its meaning in an increasingly secular society, because it is important that access to such a heritage is provided for those whose heritage it is, and because it also is threatened by changes in religious practices and expressions. The problems concerning the latter situation became very clear after The Second Vatican Council, where old liturgical forms and devotional traditions were substituted by new forms, and the ensuing purging of churches was at its worst almost sheer iconoclasm.

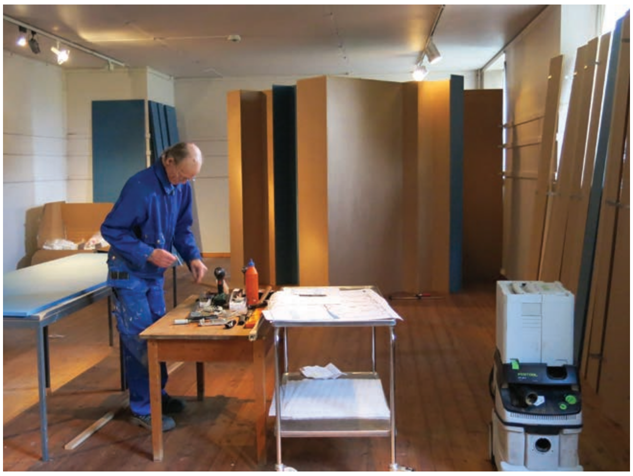
Not only religious museums, but also and not least public institutions should become concerned with developing "narratives on religion and on religious issues, for their responsibility [is] to use their collections to promote mutual understanding between people in the whole field of religious faith and practice".[6] In attempting to do so, however, one becomes painfully aware of the inherent difficulties in maintaining simultaneously the necessary distance and closeness, as well as the difficulties in presenting more than just knowledge of (historical) religions attached to objects.[7] (Fig. 7) Problems of presentation, and implications of undue ideological investment, inadequate representation or, at the other end of the spectrum, proselytizing, become obvious. Obviously, one cannot claim that the exhibition in Bergen solved all these problems, but it did something to make the phenomenon of the icon come across as embodying a relation between man and the Divine.

Nevertheless, the question arises whether faith may be adequately presented at all. If museums are institutions "founded on the secularization of religious fetishes",[8] this will often lead to display of religious objects as pure aesthetical objects, accompanied by only factual information about their religious context, barring essential aspects of access and experience and seriously reducing the phenomena displayed.[9] In cultural history museums this is especially problematic. While the performative aspect of religion like rituals or 'liturgies' is what religious monuments like synagogues, churches, mosques etc. provide as 'living museums', making it possible to understand the meaning and use of religious objects, even in part to 'experience' the faith which is so often lost in conventional display of religion in museums. However, "Kissed, again and again" wanted to show how a public museum might be enabled to a more adequate presentation of faith as a constitutive component of any religious object. Ultimately it is a question of exhibiting the intangible element of tangible religious heritage.[10]

## The design of the exhibition

Like in most other situations, the exhibitions had to accept limitations in terms of time and economy – and it had to be mounted in rooms which could be emptied and used for this purpose, without creating problems for all other rooms on that particular floor. There was three criteria for the design chosen: It should help focusing on each of the icons, give associations to their original





◤ Fig. 9: *A small section of the wall system mounted on the 18th of September 2015.*

▲ Fig. 10: *In October 2015, the museum carpenter was busy assembling some 250 pieces of 19 mm MDF plates in order to produce the exhibition walls.*

architectural context, and create closeness between icon and visitor. In this way we wanted to avoid what often happens when the museum institution approaches religious phenomena, namely 'museification'.[11] Instead we asked: How could the sacred values inherent in the icons be maintained in our setting, and the intrinsic religious meaning of them be preserved – or even restored?[12] How could the relational dimension be given a visual presentation? If the Romanian icons were just hung on the walls like paintings in an art museum, they would appear as a number of rectangles, one little distinguishable from the others. The design had to avoid that, in some way separating each icon from the others. Furthermore the exhibition design intended to restore some measure or reminder of the original context, by and large wooden churches or houses. Finally the design wanted to promote closeness to each icon, since the idea of the exhibition was not simply to display a number of icons, but to emphasize the relational dimension by making it easier for a visitor to relate to each icon separately. The risk was that designing for an immediate relation to the icon might be viewed as promoting a certain religious practice – and, indeed, it turned out to work this way – for Orthodox believers.

To house the exhibition, three rooms were chosen, two for the icons, and one for the photographs of church interiors and exteriors. The icon exhibition proper was displayed on some 165 sq. m. While the photographs were displayed directly on three walls in the third room, it was from the beginning the idea to break up the straight walls of the two other rooms. This was done by a "carpet" of new walls creating a variety of forms and receding small "chapels". (Fig. 8-9) In some ways, the inspiration was a disciplined late Baroque. The new walls was made in 19 mm MDF plates, using the height of each plate, 244, but breaking the walls up in a multitude of various planes, between 25 and 122 cm wide, creating various levels, some receding, some protruding, some places marked by a concavely curved "apses". An additional bonus was the fact that the walls would block most of the windows, and making it possible to avoid mounting any icon directly on the outer walls of the rooms. (Fig. 10) In two instances special features were introduced: a chapel for the miraculous icon from the Dragomireşti monastery in the county of Maramureş, and an iconostasis for the icons by Iacov from Răşinari. Both were made as abstract stylized features in accordance with the overall design concept.

The MDF walls were left unpainted, the brown of the material giving associations to the timber walls of Transylvanian churches and homes. As background for each icon, the MDF was coloured blue in a dusty and transparent colour which left the fine structure of the plate itself visible underneath. (Fig. 11) No other colours were introduced than light brown and dusty blue. The floor was oiled pine wood, some 20 years old, and it worked well with the MDF-walls. It was considered to render the painted 17th century drapery of the katholikon of Lupşa, (Fig. 12-13) but in the end it was decided to ensure an abstract character of the walls without copying any specific kind of decoration.

To serve the focus on the icons, and avoid a certain 'schoolbook character', the texts were made on transparent acryl to make them fit in better, the background of the text lines being the light brown of the MDF walls. There were two kinds of texts, one which gave factual information, and one which explained the relational aspect. The factual texts were in dark red brown Tahoma font, and the other in beige Papyrus font, size 60 pcts, in order not to appear intrusive, but respect the contemplative atmosphere. (Fig. 14) The letters were transferred onto the plate from behind, so as to be protected by the plate itself. In order to make it easier accessible, each text was centred, and each text line stopped where you would usually pause.

The necessity to keep a low lux level supported the contemplative mood which was enhanced by covering the windows behind the walls, thus creating a black box like interior. In a few places oil lamps were hung with electric flickering candles (due to safety regulations), and other larger such candles placed on low tables to act as references to the original context as well as contributing to the contemplative mood. Unfortunately, the photos cannot render the actual light adequately, it was softer, more refined and with more fluent transitions between lighted and shadowy areas. In addition three videos were shown continuously, all of them having the enhancement of the contemplative or prayerful atmosphere as their objective. At the entrance we had made a small film with a video where an icon was shown in a dark nondescript room in front of burning candles, persons then coming in an even rhythm to bow down and kiss the icon. The persons were dark, really only shadows, but the video at the entrance rendered visually the very title of the exhibition.

In another part of the exhibition burning candles were shown in a video, the flickering flames in the dark adding

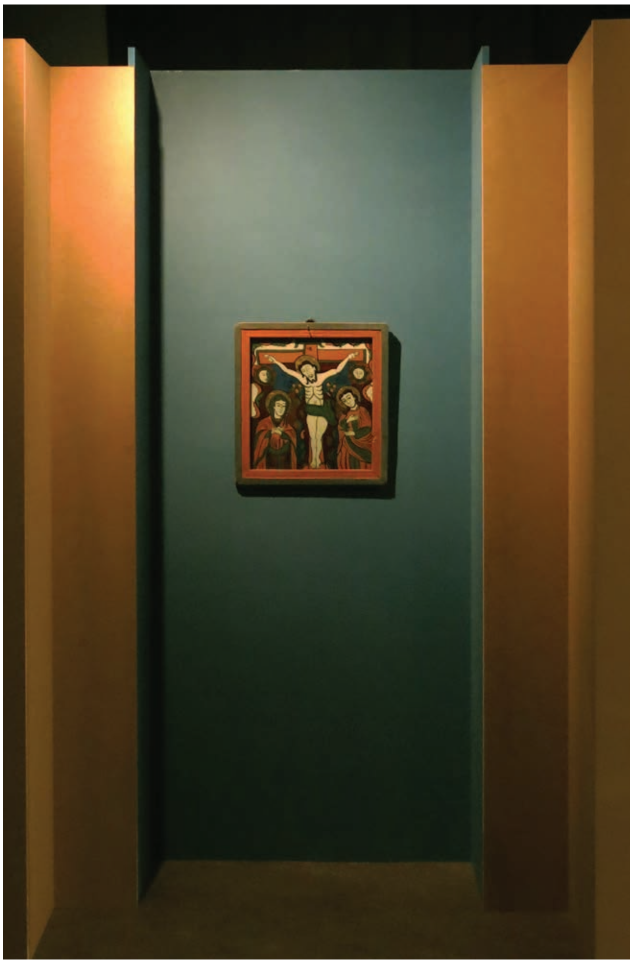


Fig. 11: *Each background was a dusty transparent blue. Crucifixion on glass, painted by a painter from Nicula in 1827.*

mystery and intensity to the atmosphere. None of these two videos had sound, since silence was an important part of the character of the exhibition. A third video showed a close up of an old woman praying, unaware of being filmed – her voice barely audible, again against a dark background in order not to break up the overall character.

## The iconostasis

As soon as it was clear that the exhibition would display icons from an iconostasis, namely four icons painted by Iacov from Răşinari in the 1740s, an imperial door by his son, Gheorghe, and a late 18th century crucifix from an iconostasis, it was decided that the exhibition structure should encompass an abstract version of an iconostasis. (Fig. 15) This was, obviously, a logical way to present the icons, and in its abstract form it did fit into the overall structure. In the exhibition it presented the icons in an instructive way, showing how the six icons were situated in the iconostasis. (Fig. 16)

In a communicative perspective, however, the main task was to explain the function of the iconostasis in an Orthodox church interior. To visitors from Western Europe the iconostasis seems a strange wall barring access of the faithful to the sanctuary. In the exhibition in Bergen we did not attempt to go into any depth concerning the development of the iconostasis and its iconographic arrangement, but to give an idea of its function in a relational context. How could it be explained as something different from simply a decorated wall blocking off view of and access to the sanctuary - a wall effectively separating clergy and people? Perhaps this was an example of how the requirements of an exhibition, the need to explain to a public, sparks new thoughts and thus initiate research, or at least point to something which needs to be researched in more depth? (Fig. 18)

Since a true icon makes the prototype present, it is a subject as much as an object; you are seen by the icon as much as you see it. Each icon is basically rendering Holiness derived from The Holy One, God. Seeing an icon, kissing it and bowing before it, articulates the relationship between God and the believer. Heaven and earth are connected, united as it were, through Holiness. Thus an encounter takes place. As a wall of icons, then, the iconostasis is a system of openings, of doors, through which God and man meet and converse. Therefore, the text written and mounted on the MDF wall in the area of the iconostasis, using beige letters in Papyrus font on three transparent acrylic plates, did not present the iconostasis as a barring wall decorated with icons, but as a system of openings:

Plate I

*The iconostasis is the wall which in Orthodox churches separate the sanctuary with the altar from the nave where the congregation stands. Its most important task is to visualize the relation between God and man. With its doors, carvings and icons, the iconostasis conveys the fact that Heaven and earth are connected, stating a connection between the reality of God and this world. The wall is perforated, riddled as it were, as each and every icon creates a connection between the reality of God and the faithful – between heaven and earth. So, it is not so much a wall keeping people out, but rather a 'complex of doors through' which the Divine may reach out to us – and we to the Divine. It is communication, a sign of hope.*

Plate II

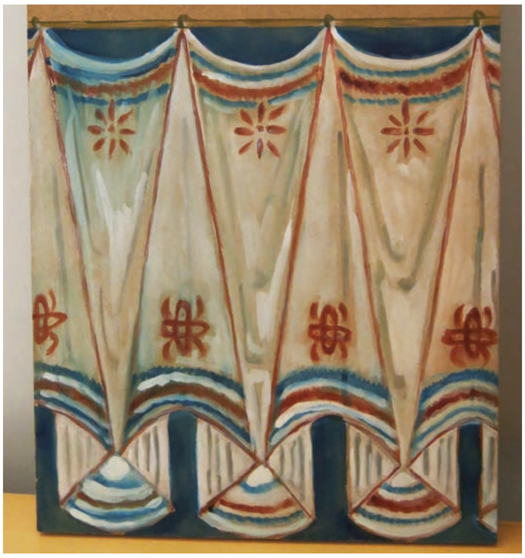
*The subject matter of the icons is always Holiness, they depict the world seen from the perspective of the Gospel. Motifs may be saints, prophets, the history of the Church, or other events from the history of salvation. God is the foundation and source of all holiness, and the history of salvation is the story of the relation between God and man, proclaiming the glory of God and his will to redeem mankind. Hence, the iconostasis is not primarily a barrier keeping the congregation away from the altar, but a communication with Holiness – at the same time a picture of the Divine reality and a door to it.*

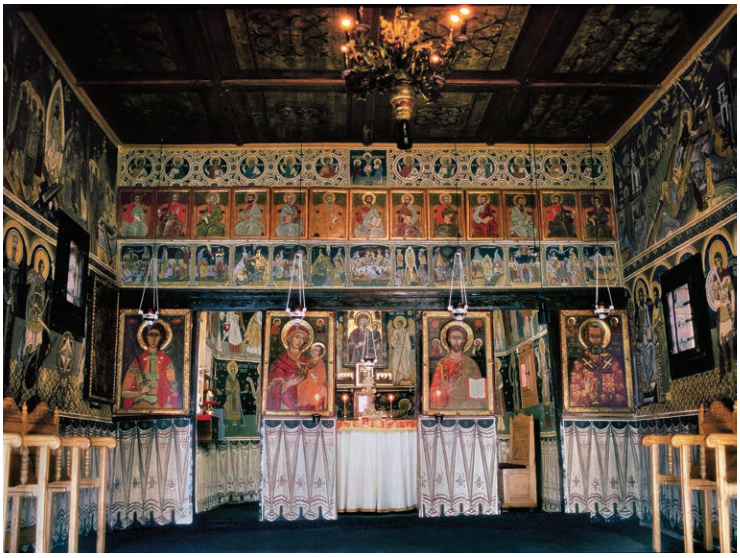
Plate III

*The iconostasis divides the sanctuary (Heaven) from the nave of the church (earth). It has doors which are used during the liturgy that clergy may go into the sanctuary or out into the nave. Through the liturgy, and in everything preached by prophets, martyrs and saints, believers encounter Divine reality as it has been revealed to and proclaimed by the Church. Here, the patriarch Germanos of Constantinople stated in 715, heaven and earth meet. In a special way God is present in the church interior with its individual devotional practices and in the liturgy of the people of God.*

In addition to these three text plates introducing the iconostasis, there were short texts informing visitors about the painter, the date and the provenance of each icon.

To Norwegian visitors, the exhibition was recognized as a 'total experience', where the visual presentation promoted a meditative mood, and a will to focus on each icon as an expression of faith rather than a masterpiece from the



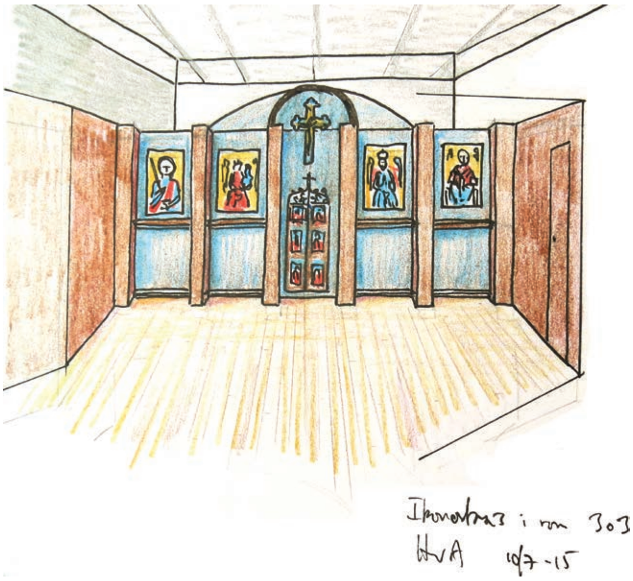


▲ Fig. 12: *Water colour sketch for a decorative pattern on the* MDF*-walls, using the drapery motif from Lupşa.*

▼ Fig. 15: *Sketch for the iconostasis, July 2015.*

▲ Fig. 13: *The church interior at Lupşa with painted drapery on the walls and the lower part of the iconostasis.* Photo courtesy of the Lupşa Monastery.

▼ Fig. 14: *A textplate on transparent acrylic, in the Papyrus font, size 60 pct.s.*



Ikonostas i rom 303
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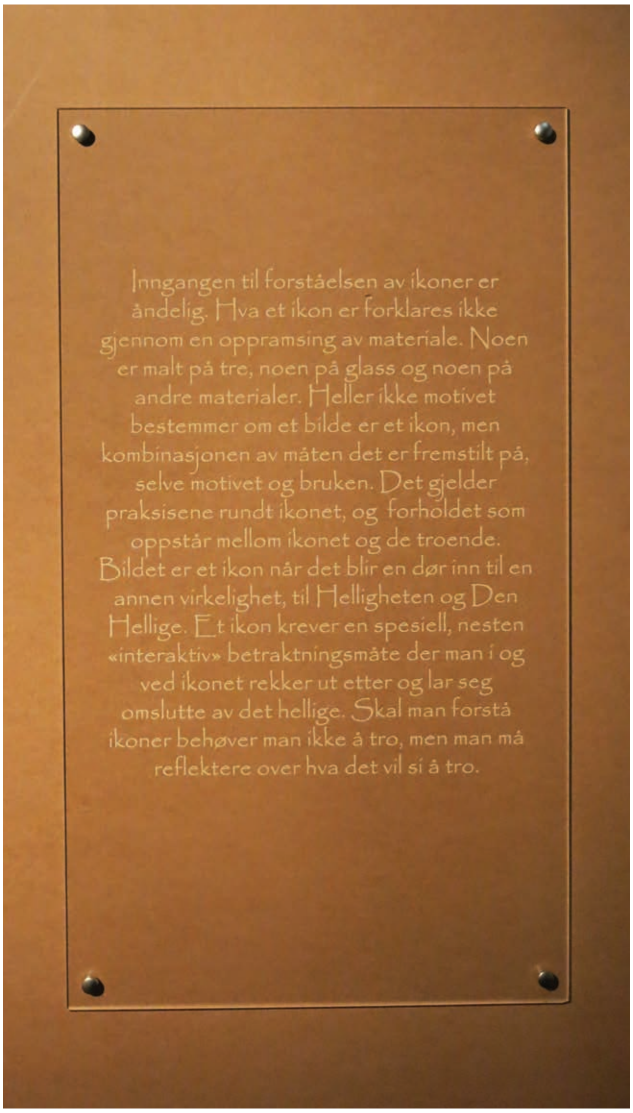
▼ Fig. 16: *The final stages of mounting an exhibition always look rather chaotic. Here, the iconostasis is made ready, two days before the opening.*



Inngangen til forståelsen av ikoner er åndelig. Hva et ikon er forklares ikke gjennom en oppramsing av materiale. Noen er malt på tre, noen på glass og noen på andre materialer. Heller ikke motivet bestemmer om et bilde er et ikon, men kombinasjonen av måten det er fremstilt på, selve motivet og bruken. Det gjelder praksisene rundt ikonet, og forholdet som oppstår mellom ikonet og de troende. Bildet er et ikon når det blir en dør inn til en annen virkelighet, til Helligheten og Den Hellige. Et ikon krever en spesiell, nesten «interaktiv» betraktningsmåte der man i og ved ikonet rekker ut etter og lar seg omslutte av det hellige. Skal man forstå ikoner behøver man ikke å tro, men man må reflektere over hva det vil si å tro.

world of icons. (Fig. 17)

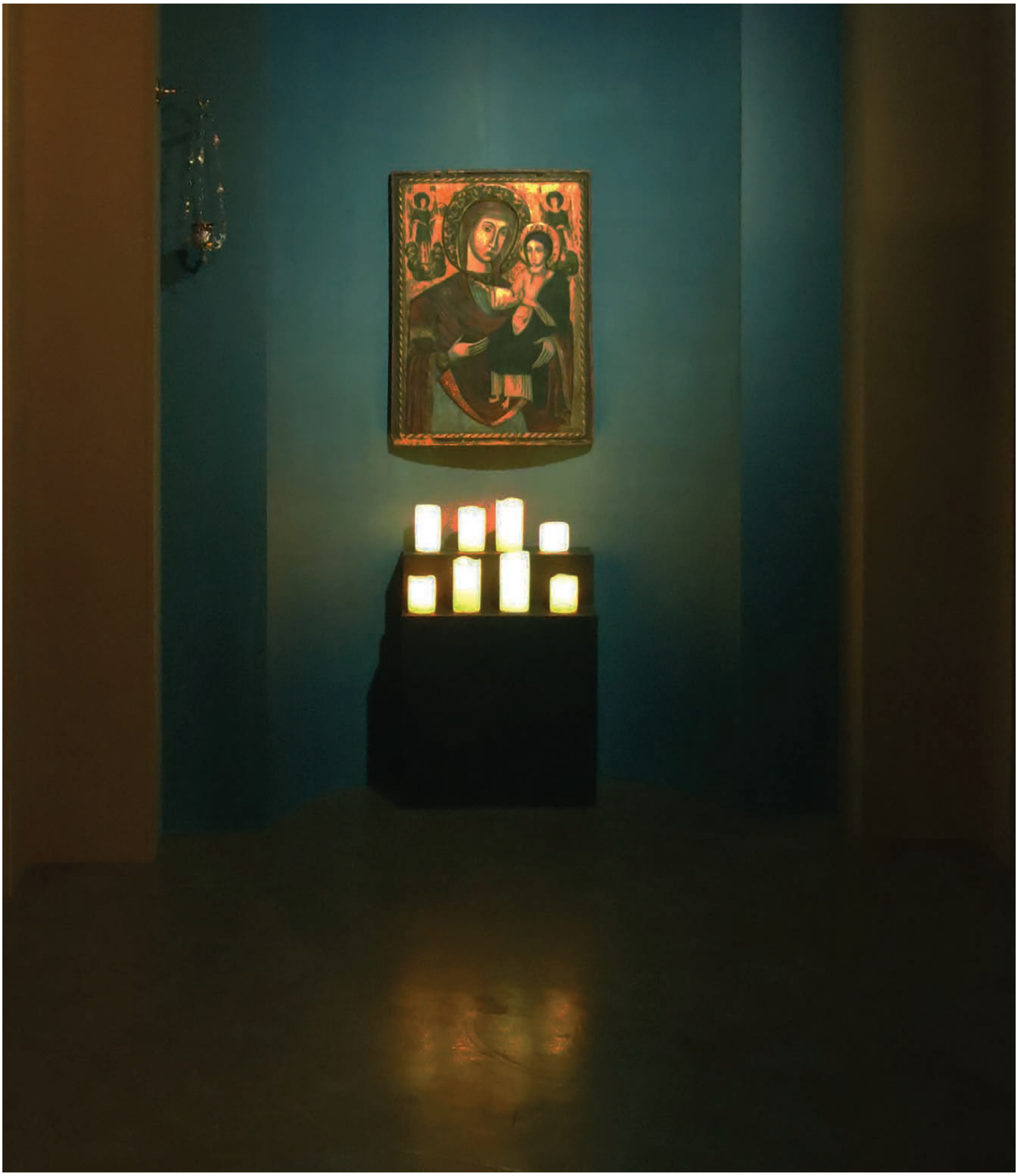
For Orthodox, and particularly Romanian visitors, their spontaneous reaction was: “This is like home”! Some weeks later, when His Excellence bishop Macarie visited the exhibition in the evening, the exhibition was for a while turned into a prayer room with prayers and singing, each then finding his or her favourite icon to venerate and pray before.

This certainly crossed the line from “neutral” albeit meditatively arranged exhibition of religious objects to a religious devotional practice focusing on the exhibits, or in which the icons were now imbedded.

To the University Museum in Bergen, or at least to its director, this use of the exhibition by certain visitors or groups was quite unproblematic, as long as the exhibition itself and in its planning was not and was never meant to promote religion or to exhort visitors to engage in such practices.

▼ Fig. 17: *The ‘Chapel’ with the miraculous icon, c. 1750, from the monastery of Dragomireşti.*

▶ Fig. 18: *Part of the iconostasis as it was presented at the exhibition.*



## Notes :

1 *Kissed again* 2015, p. 6-7 & 10-12.

2 Reeve 2012, p. 126.

3 Minucciani 2013, p. 13.

4 Reeve 2012, p. 125.

5 Paine 2013, p. 12.

6 Ibid.

7 Lüpken 2011, p. 1 (preface): "*Die Aufgabe Religion(en) im Museum auszustellen, wirft grundliegende Fragen über die Darstellbarkeit von Religion(en) (…) Können mithilfe religiöser Objekte Ideen über Transzendenz und das 'Göttliche', theologische Inhalte oder mythische Vorstellungen fassbar gemacht werden?*". See also: Schöne 2009.

8 Flood 2007, p. 44.

9 Cf. Reeve 2012, p. 129.

10 Minucciani 2013*, p. 11. See also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004.*

11 On museification of the present, see Elpers, Palm 2014.

12 *Conservation 2005*, p. 4. See further: Koussens 2007, p. 101, speaking of the national museums of France faced with "*le double défi (…) dans la sauvegarde de ce patrimoine. Ils doivent non seulement conserver les objets culturels et religieux dans leur intégrité physique, mais aussi pour leur identité*".

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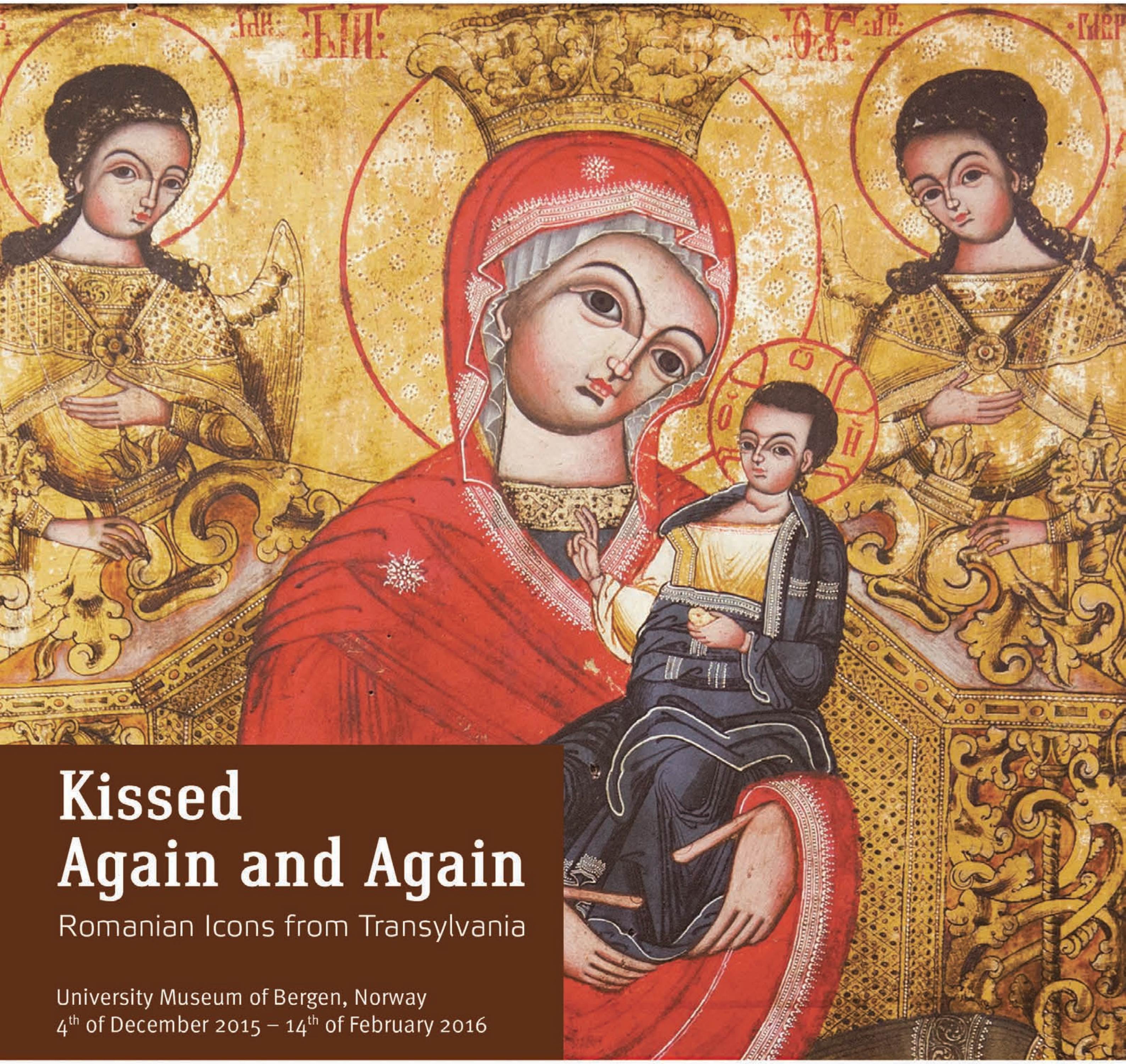

# Kissed Again and Again

## Romanian Icons from Transylvania

University Museum of Bergen, Norway
4th of December 2015 – 14th of February 2016

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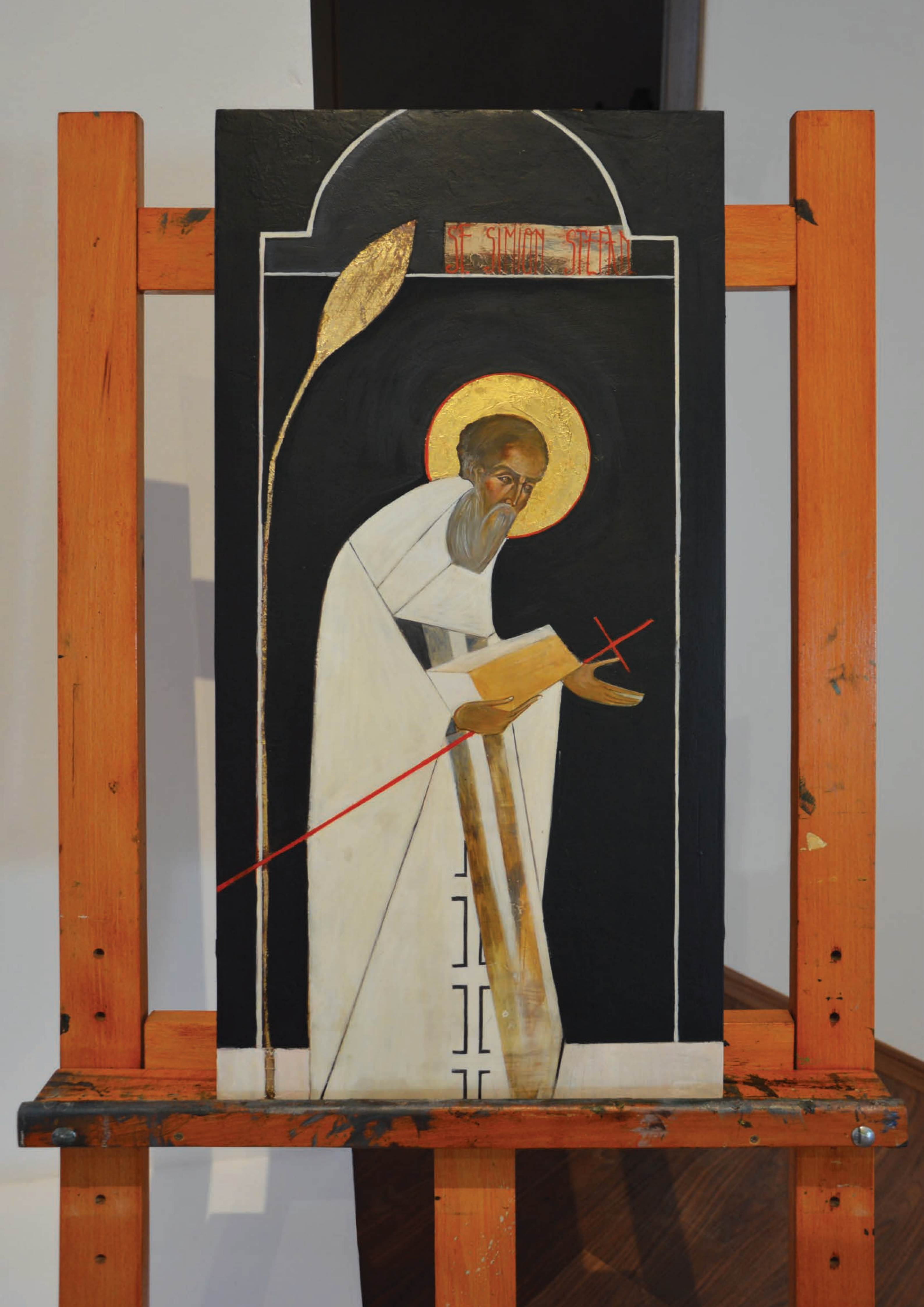
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# *Les ‘Ateliers Museikon’*

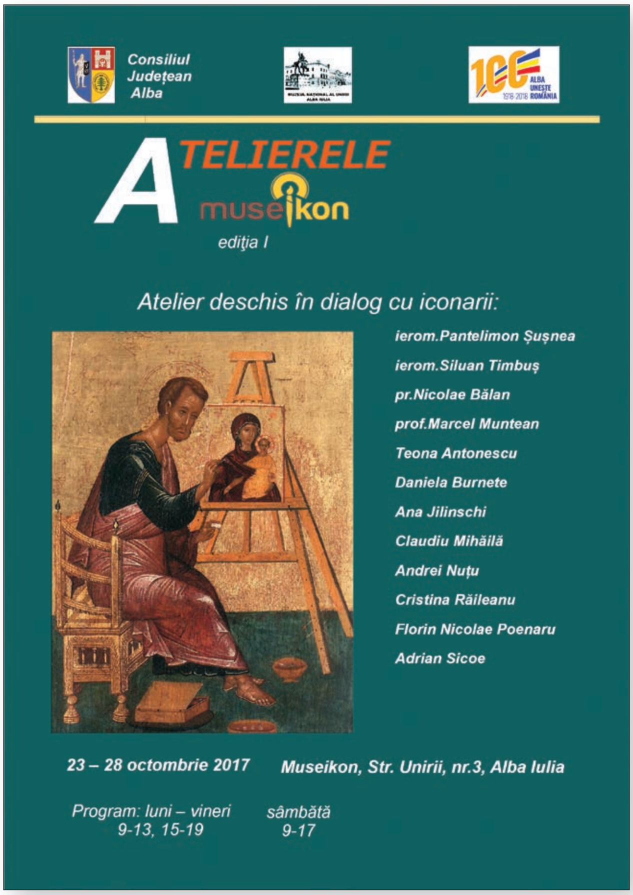
## UNE EXPÉRIENCE

23-28 octobre 2017

La première édition des ‘Ateliers Museikon’ a eu lieu du 23 au 28 Octobre 2017. Cet événement culturel et artistique public a été consacré à la vulgarisation de l’art religieux : comment peindre un icône, quels sont les défis contemporains du métier d’iconographe, comment regarder une image et comment les icônes regardées regardent à leur tour.

Les icônes sont apparues très tôt dans l’histoire du Christianisme. Elles ont hérité, en quelque sorte, des idoles du monde païen, et ont constitué l’une des formes principales d’expression religieuse des chrétiens. Le monde post-byzantin a continué à utiliser cette dévotion aux icônes longtemps après l’avènement de l’art de la Renaissance. Il continue encore aujourd’hui. Cependant, ce côté profondément spirituel a été partiellement perdu. La signification précise de l’icône, son rôle et son processus de création demeurent parfois peu ou mal connus. Dans un monde d’images, comme le monde contemporain, l’icône s’oppose souvent aux médias, au cinéma, à la photographie et à l’industrie de la publicité. L’opposition de l’image sacrée à l’image profane constitue ainsi l’écho de l’antagonisme plus général religion-science et le faux conflit donne parfois l’impression que l’icône joue le rôle des anciennes idoles.

Museikon a assumé la tâche de créer un cadre pour débattre toutes ces questions. Les ateliers ont réuni iconographes et grand public, dans une démarche pratique : la création des icônes. Les douze participants ont discuté avec le public autour de l’icône. Ils ont expliqué le processus, avec des propres règles, ils ont évoqué ainsi un monde des icônes, ni simpliste, ni naïve et encore moins peu réaliste. De plus, ceux qui sont venus aux Ateliers ont eu également l’occasion d’observer la manière dont l’image d’un saint est née. La manifestation a été consacrée au métropolitain Simion Ştefan (1643-1656). Cet hiérarque responsable de la première traduction complète du Nouveau Testament en roumain vient d’être canonisé par l’Église orthodoxe roumaine en 2011. Son iconographie est encore en cours de définition. Ce n’est pas un hasard si les ‘Ateliers Museikon’ ont insisté sur la quête des attributs qui doivent rendre plus facile l’identification du saint transylvain.


Consiliul
Județean
Alba

ATELIERELE museikon
ediția I

Atelier deschis în dialog cu iconarii:

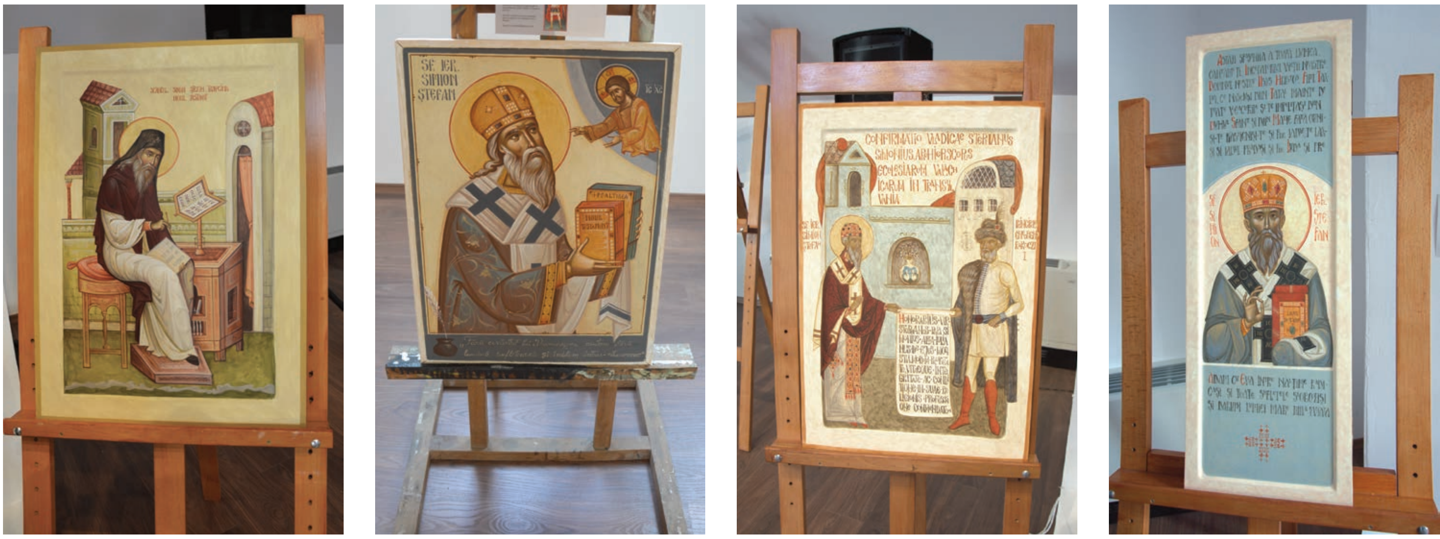
- ierom.Pantelimon Şuşnea
- ierom.Siluan Timbuş
- pr.Nicolae Bălan
- prof.Marcel Muntean
- Teona Antonescu
- Daniela Burnete
- Ana Jilinschi
- Claudiu Mihăilă
- Andrei Nuțu
- Cristina Răileanu
- Florin Nicolae Poenaru
- Adrian Sicoe

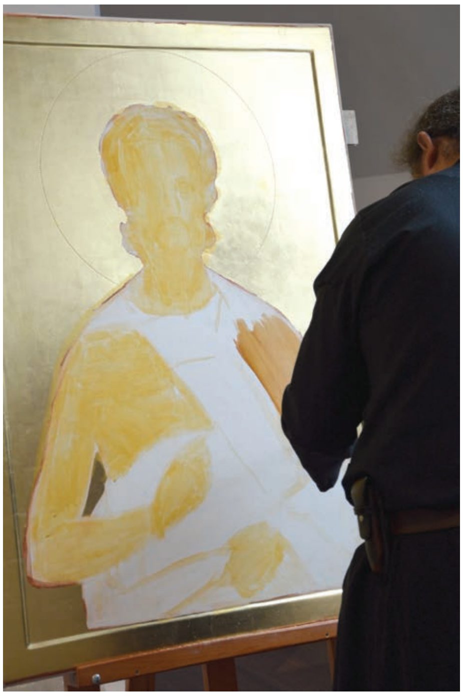
23 – 28 octombrie 2017
Museikon, Str. Unirii, nr.3, Alba Iulia

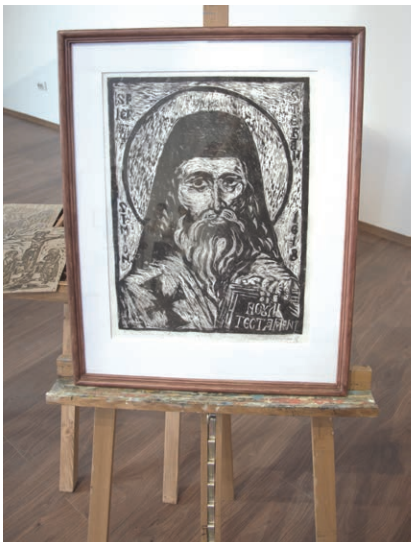
Program: luni – vineri
9-13, 15-19
sâmbătă
9-17

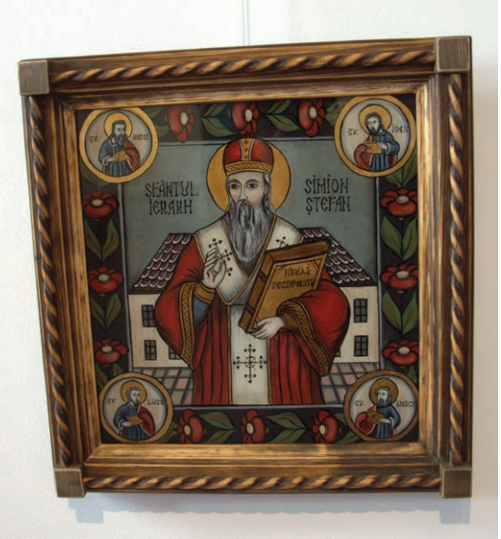
▲ *Affiche-annonce des ‘Ateliers Museikon’.*
Auteurs : Ana Jilinschi, Emanuel Jilinschi.

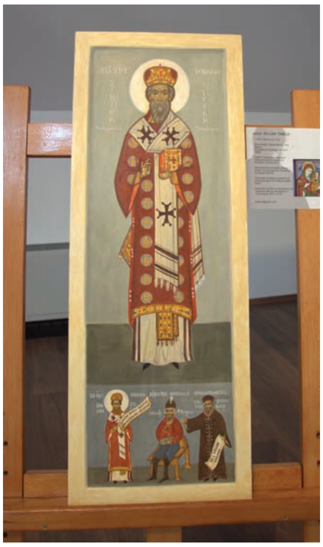
▼ Clichés photographiques pris pendant et après la manifestation. Clichés : Ana Dumitran.











## Iconographes participants :

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Victoria Daniela Burnete ;
Ana Jilinschi ;
Gheorghe Claudiu Mihăilă ;
Marcel Muntean, MCF ;
Andrei Nuțu ;
Florin Nicolae Poenariu ;
Cristina Lorena Răileanu ;
Adrian-Emanuel Sicoe ;
Pantelimon Șușnea, hiéromoine ;
Siluan Timbuș, hiéromoine.

# *Riforma e movimenti religiosi*

## Rivista della Società di Studi Valdesi

Continua il «Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi», pubblicato dal maggio 1884

GIUGNO 2017/01

RIFORMA
e MOVIMENTI
RELIGIOSI

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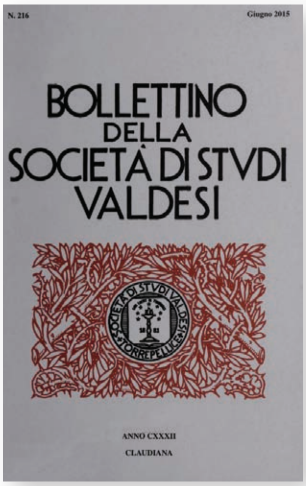
Pubblicazione sostenuta con i fondi *Otto per Mille della Chiesa Valdese* (Unione delle chiese metodiste e valdesi).

…Nel solco della sua vocazione – documentare la storia del movimento ereticale medievale e poi della Chiesa valdese, dalle origini a oggi – il *Bollettino* già da molti decenni, come si è detto, ha dato ampio spazio a temi più ampi e generali. In questa prospettiva è stato ritenuto indispensabile che la linea editoriale, pur restando fedele alla tradizione, si aprisse a nuovi contributi provenienti da diverse aree di ricerca. Occorre soprattutto guardare al grande sviluppo di studi – sui temi della Riforma, della Controriforma, dei movimenti religiosi, delle eresie, del dissenso – che si è avuto anche nella storiografia, sia italiana sia internazionale, fin dal secolo scorso, su tutto l'arco della storia dal medioevo all'età contemporanea, e che coinvolge non solo le discipline storiche ma anche quelle letterarie, filologiche, artistiche, sociologiche (Susanna Peyronel Rambaldi, *Editoriale*).



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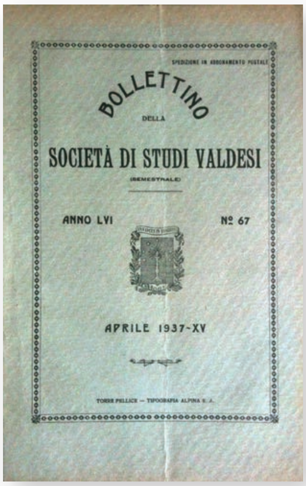

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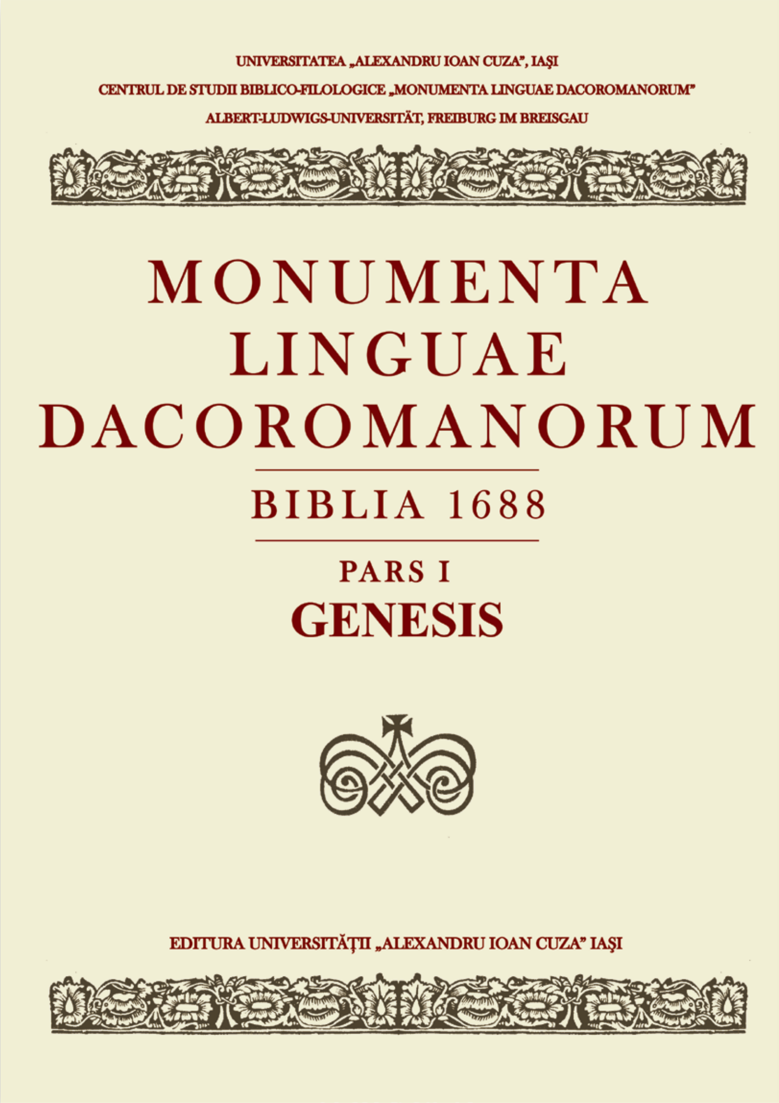
APRILE 1937-XV

TORRE PELLICE – TIPOGRAFIA ALPINA S. A.

# *Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum*

## *Biblia 1688*

Une monumentale édition critique



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MONUMENTA
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GENESIS

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Le projet *Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum* (mld) a été initié en 1988, sur une proposition de Paul Miron et suite à une collaboration entre les Universités 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' de Iaşi et 'Albert-Ludwig' de Fribourg-en-Brisgau. Il avait comme objectif l'accomplissement d'une édition critique de certains textes anciens importants pour la culture roumaine, le premier choisi étant la *Bible de 1688.*

Conformément au plan initial, elle devait paraître dans une édition comprenant 25 volumes. Suite à la proposition de N. A. Ursu, l'un des philologues impliqués dans le projet, le texte de l'Ancien Testament de la Bible de Bucarest a été édité à côté des deux autres versions de l'Ancien Testament qui lui étaient contemporaines : les versions comprises dans le manuscrit roumain 45 de l'Académie Roumaine, Filiale de Cluj, fonds Blaj, et dans le manuscrit roumain 4389 de l'Académie Roumaine, à Bucarest.

Les 25 volumes de la série *Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum. Biblia 1688* (1988-2015) contiennent, dans une première section, sur des colonnes parallèles, les textes de la *Bible de 1688*, du manuscrit 45 et du manuscrit 4389, en transcription phonétique interprétative, de même qu'une nouvelle traduction de la *Septante de Francfort*, ce qui rend plus facile la comparaison des textes ; la transcription est suivie par une section de notes philologiques qui répertorient les graphies erronées ou incertaines, les formes graphiques non-usuelles et les notes transcrites en marge des manuscrits.

La troisième section de chaque volume comprend une série de commentaires concernant les versions édités. Cette comparaison des textes édités avec leurs sources (principales et secondaires), avec d'autres traductions roumaines de la Bible, d'autres textes religieux roumains et des traductions de la Bible dans d'autres langues, met en évidence le caractère unique des premières traductions de la *Bible* en roumain. Elle cumule nombre d'informations de divers domaines d'étude : histoire de la traduction du texte sacré, histoire biblique, herméneutique, traductologie, histoire de la langue roumaine, onomastique, etc.

À partir du volume vii (*Regum I, Regum II*, 2007), les éditions sont accompagnées d'un index général de mots et de formes généré par les moyens de la linguistique computationnelle. Cet index comprend tous les noms communs du livre biblique en question, leurs formes, la première attestation du mot en roumain et leurs gloses allemandes et françaises. La méthode de travail est fondée sur la lemmatisation et sur l'analyse morphologique des mots dans leur contexte. Le programme d'analyse syntaxique et d'annotation a été élaboré pour *mld. Pars vii. Regum i, Regum ii* par l'Institut de Philologie Roumaine 'A. Philippide' de Iaşi, en collaboration avec l'Institut de Recherches pour l'Intelligence Artificielle de l'Académie Roumaine. Ce 'corpus électronique annoté' facilite l'étude des différents aspects de la langue du texte.

Pour compléter les huit premiers volumes (l'ancienne série), Vasile Arvinte a élaboré un volume supplémentaire, consacré à l'étude comparative des phénomènes linguistiques qui caractérisent les trois textes, ayant le rôle d'établir une image fidèle du stade de développement de la langue roumaine littéraire reflété par chacun des textes qui ont été utilisés dans la comparaison.

Le mérite principal de l'édition philologique de la *Bible de 1688*, publiée dans la série *Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum*, est celui de mettre à la disposition de ses lecteurs trois textes parallèles qui datent de la même époque (xviie siècle), dont deux étaient jusqu'ici inédits, et qui témoignent de nombre de types de filiations, dont certaines demeurent encore peu connus. Un autre mérite est sans doute celui de proposer deux instruments (les commentaires et l'index électronique) fondamentaux pour des recherches ultérieures.

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Centre d'études bibliques-philologiques 'Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum' : https://consilr.info.uaic.ro/~mld/monumenta/

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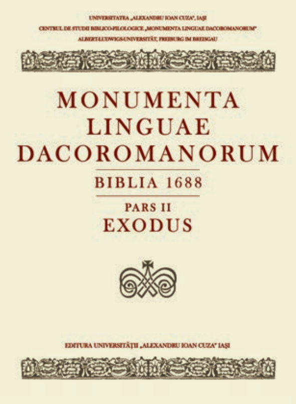
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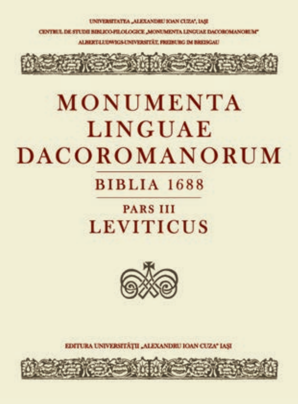
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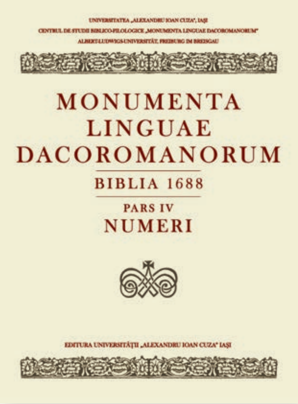
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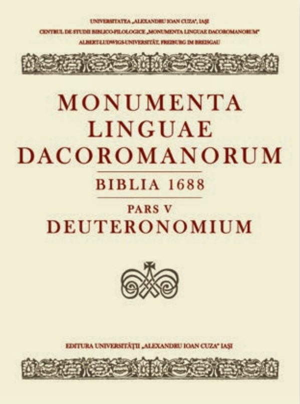
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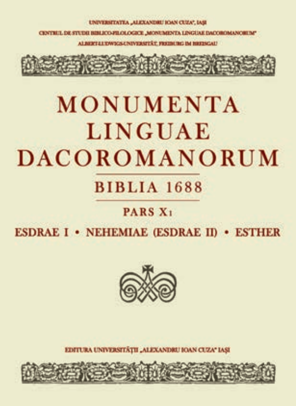
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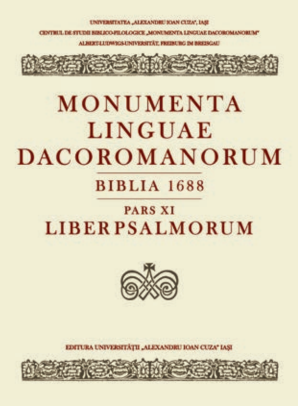
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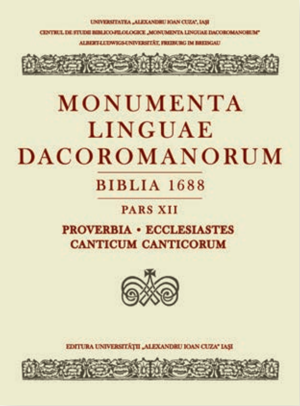
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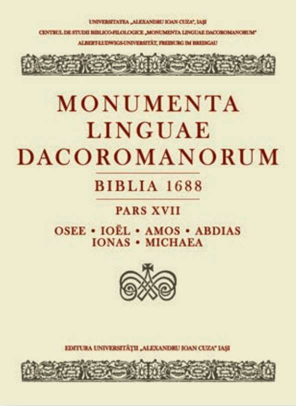
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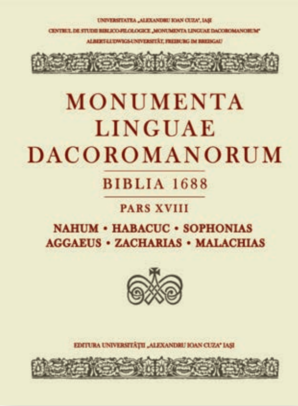
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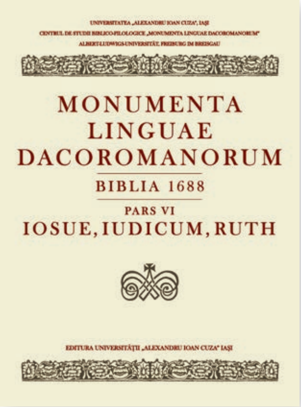
Quelques informations :

La première traduction intégrale roumaine de l'Ancien Testament est due à Nicolae Spătarul Milescu (1636-1708), qui a eu comme source principale l'édition aldine de la Bible grecque publiée à Francfort, en 1597. Les sources secondaires de Milescu étaient la version slavonne d'Ostrog, (1581) et plusieurs éditions latines non précisées dans la préface au lecteur (f. 908$^{/2}$). Initialement, Milescu avait l'intention de traduire également l'appareil critique du texte source et de noter sur les marges de son texte les différences entre la source principale et les sources secondaires utilisées, un projet qu'il n'a pas réussi à mener à bout. Cette traduction (littérale), effectuée dans la deuxième partie du XVII$^{e}$ siècle, a été revue par un autre érudit moldave, possiblement le métropolite Dosoftei de Moldavie (1624-1693). Après une deuxième révision, réalisée par un groupe d'érudits valaques, le texte de la traduction de Nicolae Milescu a été publié dans la *Bible de Bucarest* (1688). La version de Milescu, revue sans doute par le métropolite Dosoftei de Moldavie et copiée par un certain Dumitru de Câmpulung pour le métropolite Teodosie Veştemeanul de la Valachie (c. 1620-1708), est conservée dans le manuscrit roumain 45 de la Bibliothèque de la Filiale de Cluj de l'Académie Roumaine. La critique considère que la traduction de l'Ancien Testament a été faite entre 1661-1664. La transcription de la copie serait faite entre 1683-1686.

Le manuscrit roumain no. 4389 de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine de Bucarest contient une autre traduction de l'Ancien Testament, datée du même milieu du XVII$^{e}$ siècle. Elle appartient à un érudit anonyme (Daniil Andrean Panoneanul ?), qui précise dans sa préface (f. 1$^{v}$) qu'il a fait son traduction d'après la Bible slave publiée à Ostrog, en 1581, mais aussi qu'il s'est servi de la *Vulgate* publiée à Anvers, en 1565 (ou, peut-être, d'une réédition ultérieure), voire de la version de Nicolae Milescu. Pour la traduction du Ms. 4389, la critique a proposée une datation autour de 1665-1672.



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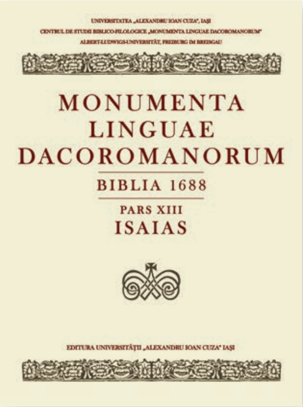

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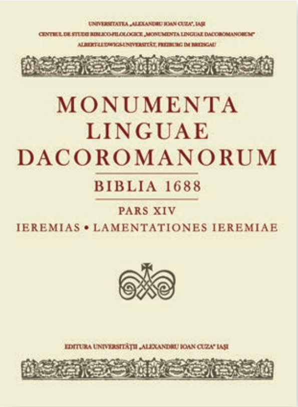

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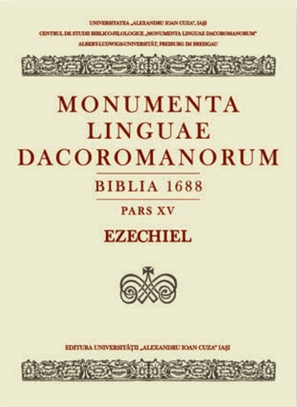

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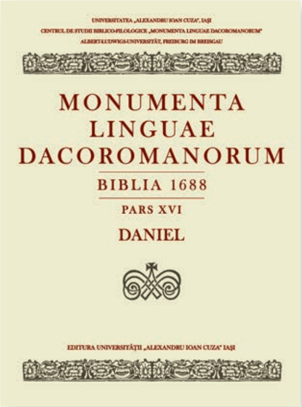

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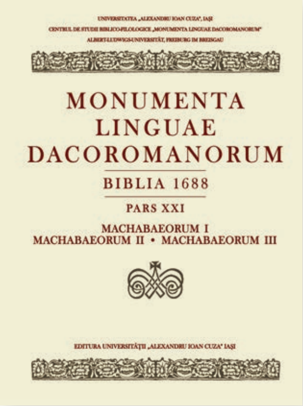

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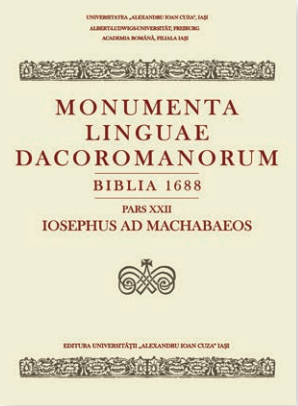

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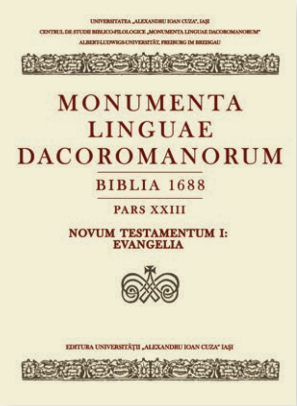
DACOROMANORUM
BIBLIA 1688
PARS XXII
IOSEPHUS AD MACHABAEOS
EDITURA UNIVERSITĂŢII „ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA" IAŞI



UNIVERSITATEA „ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA", IAŞI
CENTRUL DE STUDII BIBLICO-FILOLOGICE „MONUMENTA LINGUAE DACOROMANORUM"
ALBERT-LUDWIGS-UNIVERSITÄT, FREIBURG IM BREISGAU
MONUMENTA
LINGUAE
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BIBLIA 1688
PARS XXIII
NOVUM TESTAMENTUM I:
EVANGELIA
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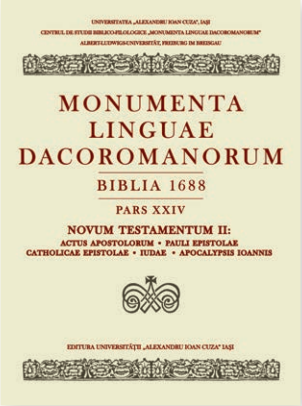

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MONUMENTA
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BIBLIA 1688
PARS XXIV
NOVUM TESTAMENTUM II:
ACTUS APOSTOLORUM • PAULI EPISTOLAE
CATHOLICAE EPISTOLAE • IUDAE • APOCALYPSIS IOANNIS
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# *Confessional Fluidity and the Byzantine Inheritance in Early Modern Ruthenian Society*

## Conference

24 November 2017, La Maison française d'Oxford

In the late 16th and 17th centuries, the Ruthenian lands — the former southern and western medieval Orthodox Rus principalities with the ecclesiastic centre of Kyiv—formed part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Though multi-confessional and multi-ethnic, by the early seventeenth century, the retreat of Protestantism and Orthodoxy among the noble citizens who formed the Commonwealth's ruling elite, ensured that Roman Catholicism dominated its high politics and its institutions.

The religious upheaval of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation spanned the Commonwealth and its Ruthenian lands, and the influx of values, concepts, mentalities and innovations associated with early modernity reformed Ruthenian Orthodox culture. After 1596, the formation of the Uniate Church and the consequent outlawing of the Orthodox Church until 1632 posed fundamental questions concerning Ruthenian religious identity, and a period of considerable confessional fluidity ensued.

In Ruthenian lands, Orthodox, Uniate, Catholics and Protestants competed for souls in a process that simultaneously strengthened confessional identities and stimulated the development of syncretic elements among them. Cultural hybridity became manifest in families, communities, and Ruthenian society as a whole. The focus on Ruthenian religious identity raised issues about the position of the Ruthenians within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and propositions were put forth to transform the commonwealth of two nations into a Commonwealth of Three Nations.

This conference is devoted to the political, religious and cultural re-visioning that fundamentally reordered the early modern Ruthenian world to accommodate the multiple cultural and historic forces that coalesced in the formation of personal, local, transcultural and ecumenical identities of Ruthenians. It explores how the Orthodox landscape formed by traditions derived from the past of Kyivan Rus was remapped to accommodate new political and ecclesiastical realities, and how the past was moulded and restaged in the invention of new traditions and identities.

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Venue: La Maison française d'Oxford 2-10 Norham Rd, Oxford OX2 6SE

### *Session I.*
### *Literature, print culture and confessions, part 1.*

9.00 am - 9.15 am: Arrival.

9.15 am: Introduction.

9.30 am - 10.00 am:
Natalia Sinkevych (Museum of history of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra – National Kyiv-Pechersk historical and cultural reserve).
*The 17th-century historical and hagiographical narrative, between Rome, Constantinople, Moscow and Warsaw.*

10.00 am - 10.30 am:
Florent Mouchard (Université de Rennes).
*Jakub Jan Susza's hagiographic narrative: Confessional fluidity as a rhetorical strategy.*

10.30 am - 11.00 am:
Discussant: Simon Franklin (Cambridge University).

11.00 am -11.30 am: Coffee break.

### *Session I.*
### *Literature, print culture and confessions, part 2.*

11.30 am - 12.00
Laurent Tatarenko (Paris-CERCEC/Lublin-IESW).
*Linguistic pluralism and confessional building in the Ruthenian clergies of the 17th century.*

12.00-12.30
Vera Tchentsova (Maison française d'Oxford).
*Shifting confessions: Orthodox co-religionists from abroad in Moscow in the first half of the 17th century.*

12.30 am - 1.00 pm:
Discussant: Ralph Cleminson (Oxford)

1.00 pm - 2.30 pm: Lunch.

### *2. Session II.*
### *Art and ritual.*

2.30 pm -3.00 pm:
Maria Takala-Roszczenko (Joensuu, University of Eastern Finland).
*Ruthenian hymnography and ritual and the construction of confessional identities.*

3.00 pm - 3.30 pm:
Nazar Kozak (Lviv University).
*'Dumb as Fishes': The Akathistos hymn and visual polemics in the 16th-century Kyivan metropolitanate.*

4.00 pm - 4.30 pm:
Olenka Pevny (Cambridge University).
*'Kiouia nostra coelum est': Petro Mohyla's re-visioning of Rus monuments in Kyiv.*

4.30 pm - 5.00 pm:
Discussant: Ágnes Kriza (Cambridge).

5.00 pm - 6.00 pm: Drink.

Convenors: Olenka Pevny (Cambridge University),
Vivien Prigent (MFO), Vera Tchentsova (MFO).

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# Confessional Fluidity and the Byzantine Inheritance
## In Early Modern Ruthenian Society

Convenors: Vera Tchentsova (MFO), Vivien Prigent (MFO), Olenka Pevny (Cambridge University)

**Venue: La Maison française d'Oxford, 2-10 Norham Road, Oxford OX2 6SE**
**Date: 24 November 2017 Time: 9.00-5.00 with coffee and lunch breaks**
**The event is free and open to the public. Register at CambridgeUkrainianStudies.org**

9.00-11.00 Session I: Literature, print culture and confessions, part 1
Natalia Sinkevych (Kyiv), *The 17th-century historical and hagiographical narrative, between Rome, Constantinople, Moscow and Warsaw*
Florent Mouchard (Rennes), *Jakub Jan Susza's hagiographic narrative: Confessional fluidity as a rhetorical strategy*
Simon Franklin (Cambridge), Discussant

11.30-1.00 Session I: Literature, print culture and confessions, part 2
Laurent Tatarenko (Paris/Lublin), *Linguistic pluralism and confession building in the Ruthenian clergies of the 17th century*
Vera Tchentsova (Oxford), *Shifting confessions: Orthodox co-religionists from abroad in Moscow in the first half of the 17th century*
Ralph Cleminson (Oxford), Discussant

2.30-5.00 Session II: Art and ritual
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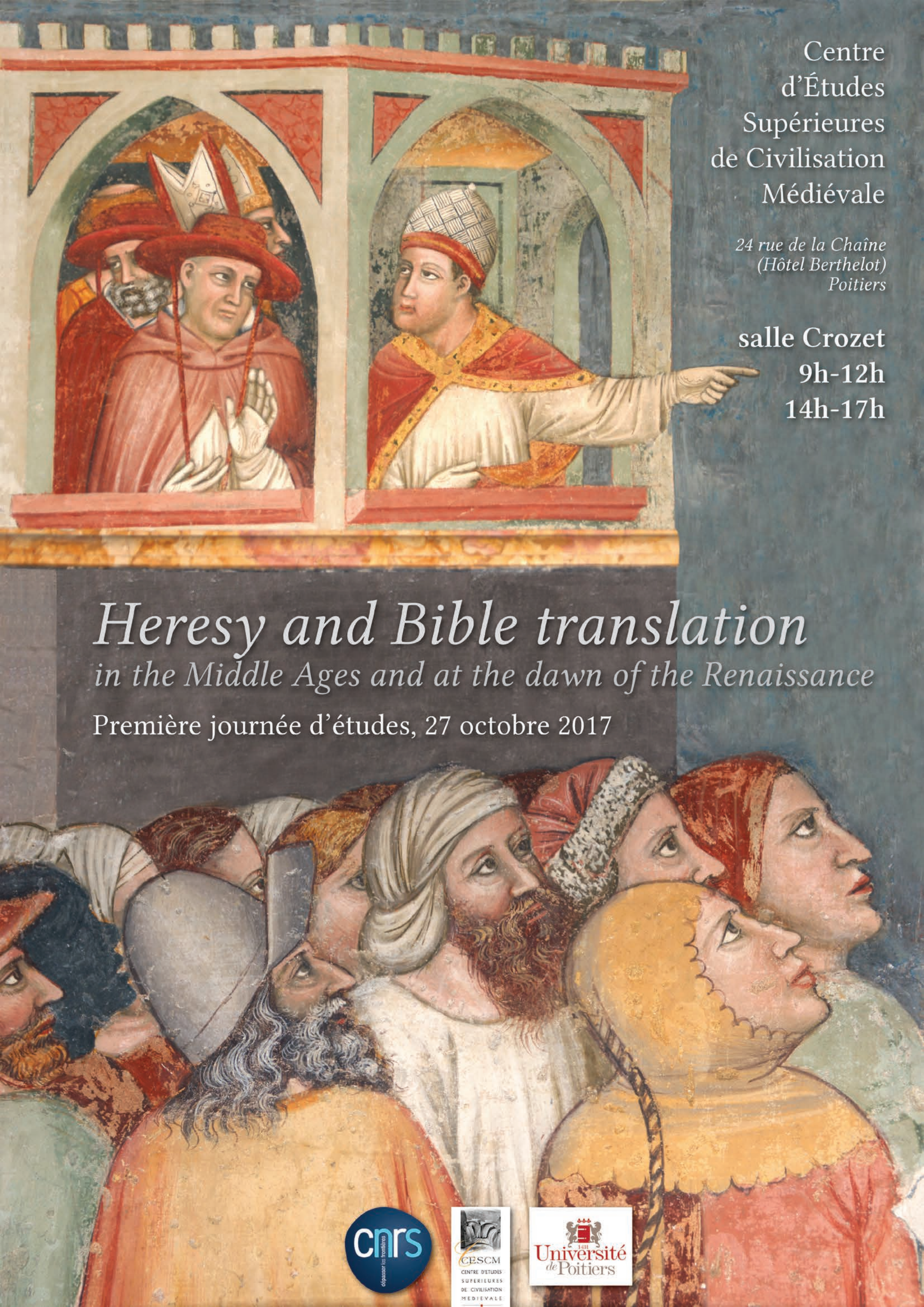
Olenka Pevny (Cambridge), *'Kiouia nostra coelom est': Petro Mohyla's re-visioning of Rus monuments in Kyiv*
To be announced, Discussant



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**salle Crozet**
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**14h-17h**

# *Heresy and Bible translation*

## *in the Middle Ages and at the dawn of the Renaissance*

Première journée d'études, 27 octobre 2017

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# *Heresy and Bible Translation in the Middle Ages and at the Dawn of the Renaissance*

## Journée d'études

27 Octobre 2017, céscm Poitiers

La traduction biblique vers le français, inspirée sans doute par des modèles vieil-anglais, constitue le point de départ d'une chaîne diffusionniste qui transforme les mouvements religieux contestataires, dissidents ou hérétiques en cercles culturels apparentés. Le statut quasi-hérétique de certaines traductions bibliques françaises se retrouve dans l'Angleterre des Lollards du xiv^e siècle, pendant que la littérature moyen-anglaise subissait déjà l'influence de la littérature française. Les Lollards ont influencé à leur tour les Hussites et le mouvement qui lie la traduction biblique et la contestation s'est poursuivi avec la Reforme de Luther. Enfin, quelques traductions bibliques hongroises sont également mises en relation avec les Hussites, quoique la question soit disputée, et les traductions roumaines sont apparues dans un contexte influencé par ces derniers (abrités en Moldavie au xv^e siècle) ou par les mouvements de la Reforme (luthériens ou calvinistes). Le jeu entre orthodoxie et hétérodoxie des premières traductions bibliques françaises a donc des échos qui pourront être mieux compris à travers une comparaison avec leurs avatars moyen-anglais, tchèques, allemands, hongrois et roumains.

Néanmoins, le problème de cette hypothèse de travail est sa prémisse : le fait de réunir les mouvements hérétiques, contestataires ou dissidents sous un rapport de causalité, de croire que les uns ont dû engendrer les autres. Cette chaîne déterministe fonctionne seulement dans le cas des Lollards, des Hussites et de la Reforme. Les rapports des deux premiers avec leurs origines (les Vaudois) ou le rapport des hérésies de l'Europe de l'Est (les *Strigolniki* russes, par exemple) avec les Valdismes de l'espace italien et allemand ne sont pas prouvables car toujours problématiques. Puisque le mouvement qui unirait l'hérésie et la traduction biblique est tentaculaire, puisqu'il n'y a pas de véritable déterminisme à identifier, il faut désormais envisager la possibilité que les différentes étapes de ce parcours ne soient pas toujours dérivées les unes des autres, mais qu'elles se soient également constituées indépendamment. Le rapport entre l'hétérodoxie et la traduction biblique étant nuancé, il est préférable d'abandonner la piste déterministe pour se concentrer sur d'autres points communs, telle la traduction biblique.

En Orient, la contestation cesse d'accorder une place prioritaire à la traduction de la Bible, car la traduction opère déjà librement dans le *Commonwealth* byzantin. L'hérésie perd alors de son importance et l'accent tombe sur la traduction. Voilà pourquoi les mystérieuses origines occidentales et les tardives continuations orientales de l'embranchement dissidence religieuse-traduction biblique peuvent éclairer l'histoire de tous ces mouvements. Du point de vue de la traduction biblique, le cas de la littérature vernaculaire hongroise et roumaine est le plus édifiant. La part jouée par le Hussitisme dans la prolifération de ces littératures, et dans la traduction des textes bibliques en particulier, a toujours été prise en compte, sans être pourtant prouvée. Le rôle des Hussites est alors devenu l'objet des débats ardus entre les savants (la *Huszita Biblia* hongroise ou l'influence hussite sur les *Psautiers rhotacisants* roumains)…

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**Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 24 rue de la Chaîne, Poitiers**

9h30-9h45: Welcome Address by the Director, Martin Aurell (Université de Poitiers / céscm, Poitiers).

9h45-10h15: Sabrina Corbellini (University of Groningen). *New communities of interpretation: Bible translations, readers and users in late medieval Europe.*

10h15-10h45: Vladimir Agrigoroaei (céscm / cnrs). *The thorny issue of heresy or heterodoxy in the French medieval translations of the Bible.*

10h45-11h: Break.

11h-11h30: Stephen Morrison (Université de Poitiers / céscm). *The Wycliffite Bible: what we know and what we do not know.*

11h30-12h: Jakub Sichálek (Austrian Academy, Institute of Medieval Research). *The vernacular Bible translation: Czech and German context.*

12h-14h: Lunch.

14h-14h30: Kateřina Voleková (Czech Academy, Institute of the Czech Language). *The Old Czech Bible translation and the liturgy.*

14h30-15h: Paweł Kras (The 'John Paul ii' Catholic University of Lublin). *The Bible of Queen Sophia and its place in the history of the Polish translations of the sacred texts.*

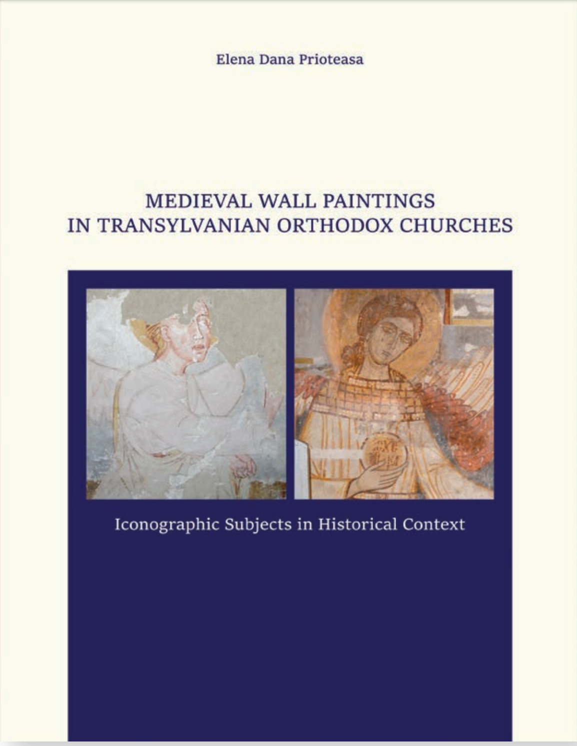
15h-15h15: Break.

15h15-15h45: Ágnes Korondi (Hungarian Academy / National Széchényi Library, 'Res Libraria Hungariae' Research Group). *Late medieval vernacular Bible translations and religious Reform: The so-called 'Hussite Bible' in Hungarian literary history.*

15h45-16h15: Iosif Camară (University of Iaşi, 'Monumenta linguae Dacoromanorum' Center). *An unusual corpus: the Romanian translations of the Bible between Orthodoxy, Heresy, and Protestantism.*

16h15-16h30: Break.

15h15-15h45: Vladimir Agrigoroaei (céscm / cnrs). *Closing remarks and new questions, followed by an outline of the future project.*


Elena Dana Prioteasa
MEDIEVAL WALL PAINTINGS IN TRANSYLVANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES
Iconographic Subjects in Historical Context

Elena Dana Prioteasa, *Medieval Wall Paintings in Transylvanian Orthodox Churches. Iconographic Subjects in Historical Context*, Bucharest / Cluj-Napoca, Editura Academiei Române / Editura Mega, 2016.

http://edituramega.ro/autor/467-elena-dana-prioteasa

*...Topics have been selected from the paintings of eight churches: the church of St. George in Streisângeorgiu (Hu. Sztrigyszentgyörgy), the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Strei (Hu. Zeykfalva), the church of St. Nicholas in Densuș (Hu. Demsus), the church of St. Nicholas in Leșnic (Hu. Lesnyek/Lesnek), the Reformed church in Sântămărie Orlea (Hu. Őraljaboldogfalva), the church of theDormition of the Virgin in Crișcior (Hu. Kristyor), the church of St. Nicholas in Ribița (Hu. Ribice), and the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Hălmagiu (Hu. Nagyhalmágy). The churches were situated in two neighboring medieval counties – Hunyad, in the Transylvanian voivodate, and Zaránd – and the paintings date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The investigation is limited to Hunyad and Zaránd Counties, where the main body of medieval wall paintings in Orthodox churches has been preserved. In addition, the historical background of the donors is comparable in both regions. The pictorial subjects that have been selected for research are interpreted in relations to their social, political, and religious context. The study of the donor portraits, military saints, holy kings of Hungary, and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross focuses on their relevance for the social and political life of the knezes. The study of the paintings in the sanctuaries mainly sheds light on aspects of the religious life of the donors or local communities. The images are analyzed taking into account the use and meaning of their subjects in Eastern and Western, particularly Hungarian, painting, and the available information regarding their historical context. While indeed the pictorial message may be understood only through its historical background, the paintings themselves can also suggest new directions for research or favor a particular interpretation suggested by other types of sources...* (p. 11-12)

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*Antim Ivireanul, Predici. Un manuscris inedit din Basarabia (1824)*, ediție critică, studiu introductiv, note, facsimil de Zamfira Mihail și Paul Mihail, București / Brăila, Editura Academiei Române / Editura Istros, 2017.

> *...Manuscrisul din Basarabia dovedește faptul că și după un secol predicile antimiene erau prețuite și folosite, precum și persistența destinației de expunere orală, prin faptul că predicile au fost transformate în „cazanii", care se citeau regulat la sfârșitul Liturghiei (este consemnată formula „blagoslovește părinte a ceti"). Existența colontitlului indică faptul că manuscrisul din 1824 a urmat modelul cărților tipărite și prin însuși acest element ar putea face dovada că, de la începutul copierii lui, fusese destinat pentru lectură publică...* (p. 16-17)
>
> OUR TRANSLATION:
>
> *...This manuscript from Bessarabia proves that even a century later, Antim's sermons were being treasured and used, and that their oral exposure was persistent: the sermons were turned into homilies ("cazanii") regularly read at the end of the Liturgy (the formula "Bless us, father, to read"/ „blagoslovește părinte a ceti" was registered). The headline indicates that the 1824 manuscript followed the model of printed books and ipso facto this could prove that, since the beginnings of its multiplication, the manuscript had been destined for public reading...* (p. 16-17)

CONTACT:

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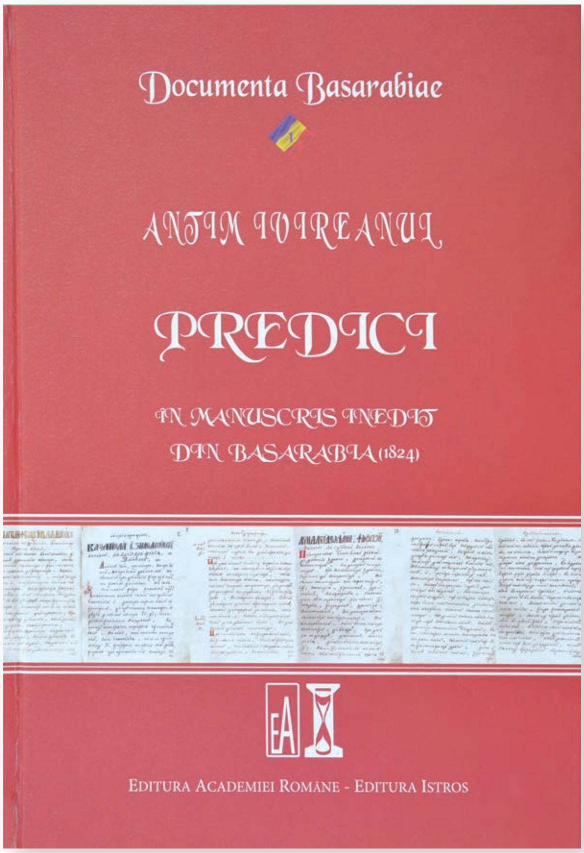
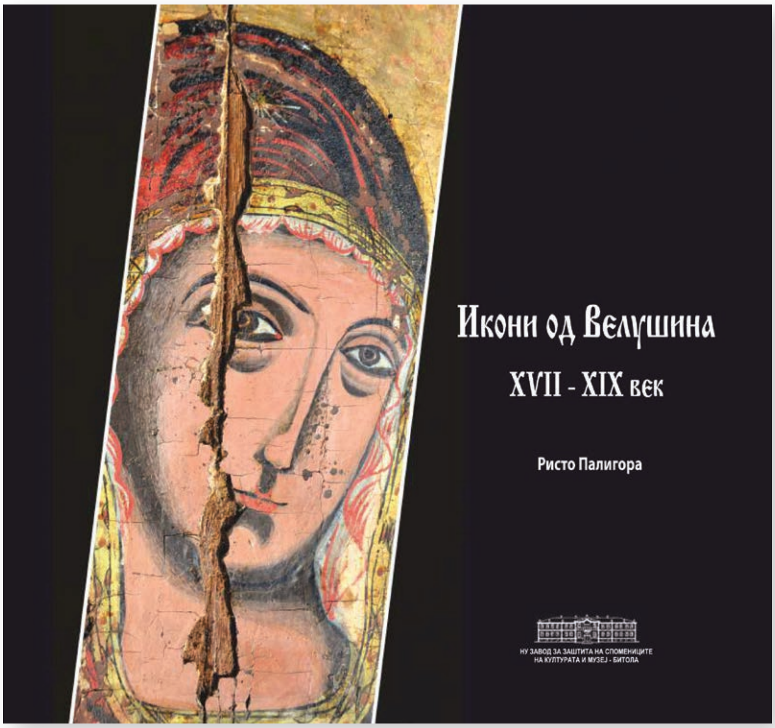



Икони од Велушина
XVII - XIX век
Ристо Палигора
НУ ЗАВОД ЗА ЗАШТИТА НА СПОМЕНИЦИТЕ НА КУЛТУРАТА И МУЗЕЈ - БИТОЛА

Ристо Палигора, *Икони од Велушина XVII-XIX век*, НУ Завод и музеј – Битола, Битола, 2017.

[Risto Paligora, *The Icons in Velušina, 17th-19th centuries*, Bitola, NI Bitola Institute and Museum, 2017.]

CONTACT:

**http://www.muzejbitola.mk/en/contact**

*...Важно место во сликарството од првата половина на XIX век во рамките на Пелагониската митрополија му припаѓа на Јован Зограф, творецот на неколку сликани ансамбли. Најстариот авторски запис, тој го оставил врз ѕидното сликарство во храмот Св. Архангел Михаил во Оптичари, во 1838 год. Таму тој се потпишал како Јован Михаил и објаснил, дека се преселил од епирското село Хиониадес во тогаш просперитетната битолска населба Трново. Во втората четвртина на XIX век, се потпишал врз ѕидното сликарство на десеттина цркви во битолско и леринско. Во 1848 година, ја насликал манастирската црква Св. Ѓорѓи во Велушина. Во тоа време, за иконостасот на истата црква, оставил неколку иконописни дела (кат. бр. 24 – 25), изведени во неговиот препознатлив стил. Една семејна група на сликари од битолското село Магарево, била многу активна од четвртата деценија на XIX век па се до крајот на тоа столетие. Изгледа дека за црквите од Велушина, свои дела оставиле Анастас Зограф, родоначалник на зографската работилница и неговите синови Константин и Димитар Анастасови. Анастас Зограф, носителот на највисоките сликарски вредности во рамките на ова семејство, речиси никогаш не се потпишувал на своите дела. Единствена негова потпишана икона од територијата на Пелагониската митрополија, е онаа со илустрацијата на Акатистот на Богородица, во црквата Св. Благовештение во Прилеп, од 1839 год. Според неговите икони направени за оваа црква компаративно ги идентификувавме иконите во Велушина (кат. бр. 26, 27, 28). Константин, постариот син на Анастас Зограф, има сличен сликарски сензибилитет. Најчесто може да се идентификува според натписите оставени врз ѕидното сликарство каде настапува заедно со својот брат Димитар. Исклучително ретко се потпишувал на иконите. Засега единствен таков пример е една икона од манастирот Трескавец од 1864 год. Сочувани се негови икони во повеќе цркви во Велушина (кат. бр. од 30 до 40). Многу повеќе сигурни податоци имаме за Димитар, кој најчесто се потпишувал со сигнатурата Д(имитар) А(настасов) З(ограф), кат. бр. 47, 48, 49...* (p. 16-17)

OUR TRANSLATION:

...An important place in the paintings of the Metropolitanate of Pelagonia the first half of the 19th century belongs to the painter Jovan Zograf, the creator of several painting ensembles. The oldest inscription mentioning his name was painted in the temple of the Holy Archangel Michael in the village of Optičari, in 1838. In that temple, he signed his name as Jovan Mihail, stating that he had moved from the district of Epirus (the village Hioniades) to the prosperous settlement of Trnovo. In the second quarter of the 19th century, the same author signed his name in fresco paintings of over ten churches in vicinity of the town of Bitola, and in the district of Lerin (Florina). In 1848, he painted the church of St. George in the village Velušina. During the same period, he painted several icons on the iconostasis in the church (cat no. 24-25), which bear witness to his distinctive manner. He belonged to a family of painters originating from the village Magarevo near Bitola, which was active in the fourth decade of the 19th to the end of century. Various works by Anastas Zograf, the founder of the workshop, are preserved in the church in Velušina, as well as several works by his sons Constantine and Dimitar Atanasov. Anastas Zograf, the painting master of the family, almost never signed his works. His only signed work in the Metropolitanate of Pelagonia is the illustration of the Akathist Hymn in the church of the Annunciation in Prilep from 1839. According to the icons made for this church and by the help of comparative analysis, we identified the icons in the church of Velušina (cat.no. 26, 27, 28). Constantine, the older son of Anastas Zograf, had a similar painting sensibility. He may be easily recognised by the inscription left behind in the frescos he painted together with his brother Dimitar. He likewise rarely signs his icons. The only example is the icon in the monastery of Treskavec from 1864. His works are preserved in the church in Velušina (from cat. no. 30 to 40). More precise data we have on Dimitar who signs his works with the signature D(imitar) A(nastasov) Z(ograf), (cat.no. 47, 48, 49)... (p. 6-7)

SÂMBĂTĂ, 8 IULIE 2017

Vernisaj: ora 17:00, sala de conferințe a Muzeului Nicolae Minovici,
strada Doctor Nicolae Minovici nr. 1, București

**Crucea**

**element de amprentare a spațiului locuit**

8 iulie – 27 august 2017

Expoziție realizată de Asociația Centro în parteneriat cu Facultatea de Urbanism a UAUIM și Asociația 37, în cadrul unui proiect finanțat de Uniunea Arhitecților din România.

UNIUNEA ARHITECTILOR DIN ROMANIA
MUZEUL MUNICIPIULUI BUCUREȘTI

▲ Exhibition poster. Credits: Cătălin Alexa.

▶ Four of the exhibition's panels.

The exhibition *Crucea – element de amprentare a spațiului locuit* [The Cross – An Imprint upon the Living Space] opened in the conference hall of the Nicolae Minovici Museum in Bucharest, on July 8, 2017, and could be visited until August 27, 2017. It was the result of a cultural project borne by the 'Centro' Association, in partnership with the '37' Association and the Faculty of Urbanism at the 'Ion Mincu' University of Architecture and Urbanism. It was financed by the Union of Romanian Architects.

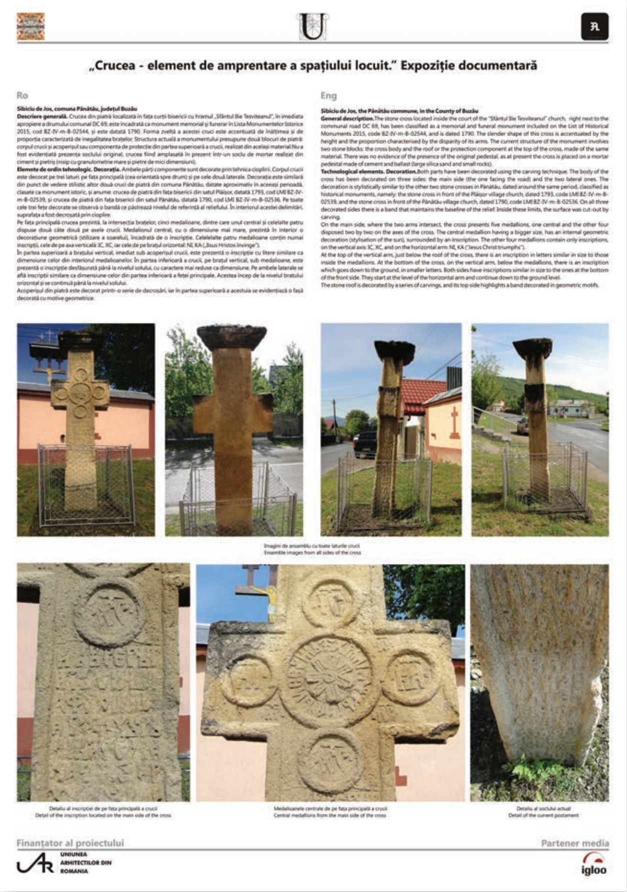
The images were taken during three field campaigns in the counties of Prahova, Buzău, Dâmbovița, Argeș, Vâlcea, and Gorj, prospected between May and August 2016.

The mixed research team specialized mainly in ethnology, but it also associated architects, urban designers, art historians, and conservation-restoration experts. The exhibition was planned so that it highlighted a multitude of elements, in order to render out the complexity of various crosses and wayside crosses: an accurate rendering of their iconographic programs, as well as their occasional repainting, their decorative elements, fabric and composition, specific types of degradation, the way in which the objects were staged, the types of writing, the significance of the inscription identification, and the elements of rituality.

The images and their accompanying texts bore witness of the team's attempt to track a living phenomenon when documenting old crosses, previously studied. The emphasis was also on raising awareness of the necessity to discuss a new methodology. Classifying crosses and wayside crosses, particularly with respect to the *List of Historical Monuments* of the Romanian Ministry's of Culture, may prove to be a difficult job, given the non-uniform nature of this process. There were also various case studies concerning the state of conservation of such cultural heritage items; some of them were classified as monuments, and some were not.

The exhibition focused upon several unique crosses, such as the "Wayside Cross from the Grove", in Tălpășești (Bălești commune, Gorj county). Unusual situations regarding the elevation of crosses were also mentioned, such as the ones staged along the processional route for the relics of Saint Philotea, in the second half of the nineteenth century.

*The project team*: Monica Bercovici-Ratoiu (coordinator), Laura Toader, Mihaela Hărmănescu, Cătălin Alexa, Luiza Zamora, Lucian Ratoiu, Cosmin Iancu, Andreea Simion.



**„Crucea - element de amprentare a spațiului locuit." Expoziție documentară**

Ro

**Sibiciu de Jos, comuna Pănătău, județul Buzău**

**Descriere generală.** Crucea din piatră localizată în fața curții bisericii cu hramul „Sfântul Ilie Tesviteanul", în imediata apropiere a drumului comunal DC 69, este încadrată ca monument memorial și funerar în Lista Monumentelor Istorice 2015, cod BZ-IV-m-B-02544, și este datată 1790. Forma zveltă a acestei cruci este accentuată de înălțimea și de proporția caracterizată de inegalitatea brațelor. Structura actuală a monumentului presupune două blocuri de piatră: corpul crucii și acoperișul sau componenta de protecție din partea superioară a crucii, realizat din același material. Nu a fost evidențiată prezența soclului original, crucea fiind amplasată în prezent într-un soclu de mortar realizat din ciment și pietriș (nisip cu granulometrie mare și pietre de mici dimensiuni).

**Elemnte de ordin tehnologic. Decorația.** Ambele părți componente sunt decorate prin tehnica cioplirii. Corpul crucii este decorat pe trei laturi: pe fața principală (cea orientată spre drum) și pe cele două laterale. Decorația este similară din punct de vedere stilistic altor două cruci de piatră din comuna Pănătău, datate aproximativ în aceeași perioadă, clasate ca monument istoric, și anume: crucea de piatră din fața bisericii din satul Plăișor, datată 1793, cod LMI BZ-IV-m-B-02539, și crucea de piatră din fața bisericii din satul Pănătău, datată 1790, cod LMI BZ-IV-m-B-02536. Pe toate cele trei fețe decorate se observă o bandă ce păstrează nivelul de referință al reliefului. În interiorul acestei delimitări, suprafața a fost decroșată prin cioplire.

Pe fața principală crucea prezintă, la intersecția brațelor, cinci medalioane, dintre care unul central și celelalte patru dispuse două câte două pe axele crucii. Medalionul central, cu o dimensiune mai mare, prezintă în interior o decorațiune geometrică (stilizare a soarelui), încadrată de o inscripție. Celelalte patru medalioane conțin numai inscripții, cele de pe axa verticală IC, XC, iar cele de pe brațul orizontal: NI, KA („Iisus Hristos învinge").

În partea superioară a brațului vertical, imediat sub acoperișul crucii, este prezentă o inscripție cu litere similare ca dimensiune celor din interiorul medalioanelor. În partea inferioară a crucii, pe brațul vertical, sub medalioane, este prezentă o inscripție desfășurată până la nivelul solului, cu caractere mai reduse ca dimensiune. Pe ambele laterale se află inscripții similare ca dimensiune celor din partea inferioară a feței principale. Acestea încep de la nivelul brațului orizontal și se continuă până la nivelul solului.

Acoperișul din piatră este decorat printr-o serie de decroșări, iar în partea superioară a acestuia se evidențiază o fașă decorată cu motive geometrice.

Eng

**Sibiciu de Jos, the Pănătău commune, in the County of Buzău**

**General description.** The stone cross located inside the court of the "Sfântul Ilie Tesviteanul" church, right next to the communal road DC 69, has been classified as a memorial and funeral monument included on the List of Historical Monuments 2015, code BZ-IV-m-B-02544, and is dated 1790. The slender shape of this cross is accentuated by the height and the proportion characterised by the disparity of its arms. The current structure of the monument involves two stone blocks: the cross body and the roof or the protection component at the top of the cross, made of the same material. There was no evidence of the presence of the original pedestal, as at present the cross is placed on a mortar pedestal made of cement and ballast (large silica sand and small rocks).

**Technological elements. Decoration.** Both parts have been decorated using the carving technique. The body of the cross has been decorated on three sides: the main side (the one facing the road) and the two lateral ones. The decoration is stylistically similar to the other two stone crosses in Pănătău, dated around the same period, classified as historical monuments, namely: the stone cross in front of the Plăișor village church, dated 1793, code LMI BZ-IV-m-B-02539, and the stone cross in front of the Pănătău village church, dated 1790, code LMI BZ-IV-m-B-02536. On all three decorated sides there is a band that maintains the baseline of the relief. Inside these limits, the surface was cut-out by carving.

On the main side, where the two arms intersect, the cross presents five medallions, one central and the other four disposed two by two on the axes of the cross. The central medallion having a bigger size, has an internal geometric decoration (stylisation of the sun), surrounded by an inscription. The other four medallions contain only inscriptions, on the vertical axis: IC, XC, and on the horizontal arm: NI, KA ("Jesus Christ triumphs").

At the top of the vertical arm, just below the roof of the cross, there is an inscription in letters similar in size to those inside the medallions. At the bottom of the cross, on the vertical arm, below the medallions, there is an inscription which goes down to the ground, in smaller letters. Both sides have inscriptions similar in size to the ones at the bottom of the front side. They start at the level of the horizontal arm and continue down to the ground level.

The stone roof is decorated by a series of carvings, and its top side highlights a band decorated in geometric motifs.

Imagini de ansamblu cu toate laturile crucii
Ensamble images from all sides of the cross

Detaliu al inscripției de pe fața principală a crucii
Detail of the inscription located on the main side of the cross

Medalioanele centrale de pe fața principală a crucii
Central medallions from the main side of the cross

Detaliu al soclului actual
Detail of the current postament

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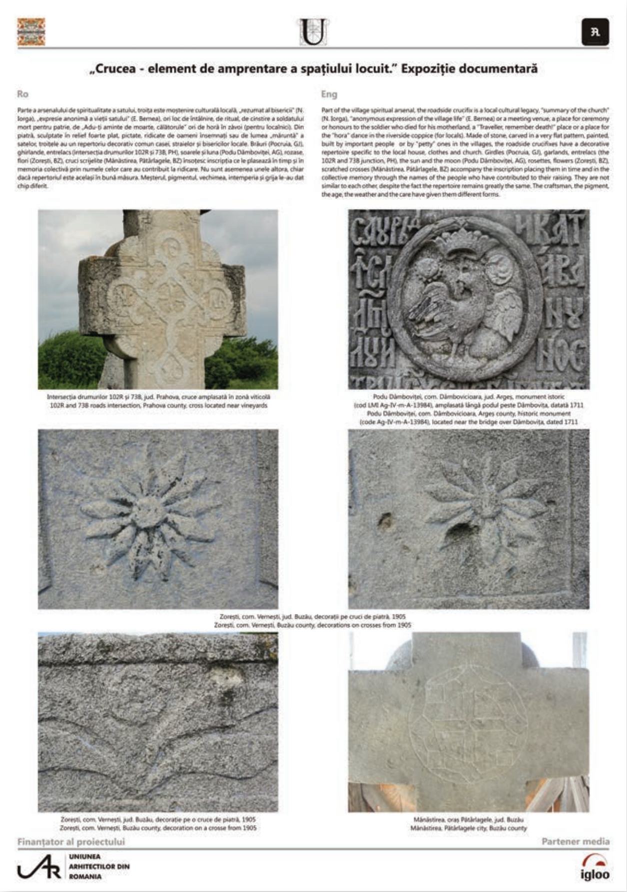

**„Crucea - element de amprentare a spațiului locuit." Expoziție documentară**

Ro

Parte a arsenalului de spiritualitate a satului, troița este moștenire culturală locală, „rezumat al bisericii" (N. Iorga), „expresie anonimă a vieții satului" (E. Bernea), ori loc de întâlnire, de ritual, de cinstire a soldatului mort pentru patrie, de „Adu-ți aminte de moarte, călătorule" ori de horă în zăvoi (pentru localnici). Din piatră, sculptate în relief foarte plat, pictate, ridicate de oameni însemnați sau de lumea „măruntă" a satelor, troițele au un repertoriu decorativ comun casei, straielor și bisericilor locale. Brâuri (Pocruia, GJ), ghirlande, entrelacs (intersecția drumurilor 102R și 73B, PH), soarele și luna (Podu Dâmboviței, AG), rozase, flori (Zorești, BZ), cruci scrijelite (Mănăstirea, Pătârlagele, BZ) însoțesc inscripția ce le plasează în timp și în memoria colectivă prin numele celor care au contribuit la ridicare. Nu sunt asemenea unele altora, chiar dacă repertoriul este același în bună măsura. Meșterul, pigmentul, vechimea, intemperia și grija le-au dat chip diferit.

Eng

Part of the village spiritual arsenal, the roadside crucifix is a local cultural legacy, "summary of the church" (N. Iorga), "anonymous expression of the village life" (E. Bernea) or a meeting venue, a place for ceremony or honours to the soldier who died for his motherland, a "Traveller, remember death!" place or a place for the "hora" dance in the riverside coppice (for locals). Made of stone, carved in a very flat pattern, painted, built by important people or by "petty" ones in the villages, the roadside crucifixes have a decorative repertoire specific to the local house, clothes and church. Girdles (Pocruia, GJ), garlands, entrelacs (the 102R and 73B junction, PH), the sun and the moon (Podu Dâmboviței, AG), rosettes, flowers (Zorești, BZ), scratched crosses (Mănăstirea, Pătârlagele, BZ) accompany the inscription placing them in time and in the collective memory through the names of the people who have contributed to their raising. They are not similar to each other, despite the fact the repertoire remains greatly the same. The craftsman, the pigment, the age, the weather and the care have given them different forms.

Intersecția drumurilor 102R și 73B, jud. Prahova, cruce amplasată în zonă viticolă
102R and 73B roads intersection, Prahova county, cross located near vineyards

Podu Dâmboviței, com. Dâmbovicioara, jud. Argeș, monument istoric
(cod LMI Ag-IV-m-A-13984), amplasată lângă podul peste Dâmbovița, datată 1711
Podu Dâmboviței, com. Dâmbovicioara, Argeș county, historic monument
(code Ag-IV-m-A-13984), located near the bridge over Dâmbovița, dated 1711

Zorești, com. Vernești, jud. Buzău, decorații pe cruci de piatră, 1905
Zorești, com. Vernești, Buzău county, decorations on crosses from 1905

Zorești, com. Vernești, jud. Buzău, decorație pe o cruce de piatră, 1905
Zorești, com. Vernești, Buzău county, decoration on a crosse from 1905

Mănăstirea, oraș Pătârlagele, jud. Buzău
Mănăstirea, Pătârlagele city, Buzău county

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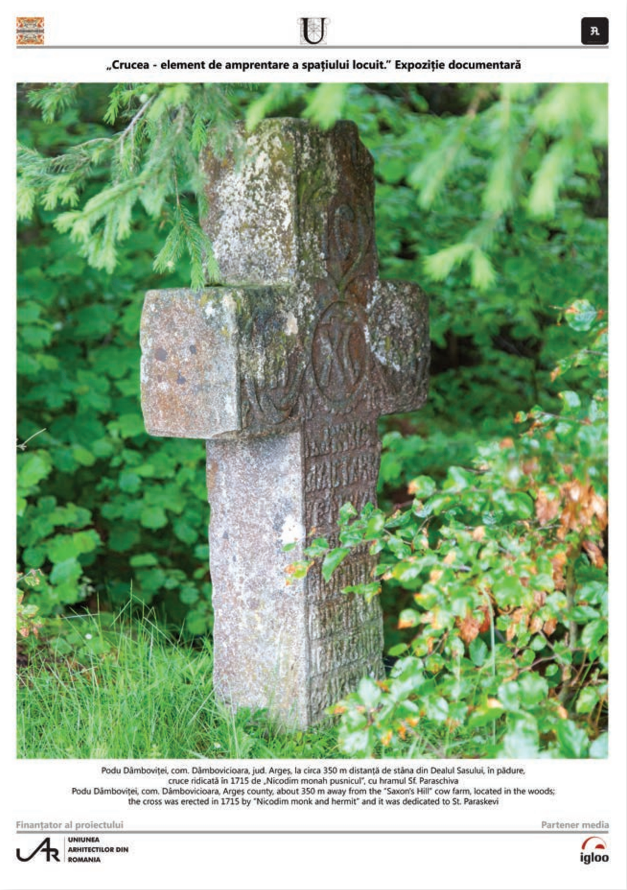

**„Crucea - element de amprentare a spațiului locuit." Expoziție documentară**

Podu Dâmboviței, com. Dâmbovicioara, jud. Argeș, la circa 350 m distanță de stâna din Dealul Sasului, în pădure,
cruce ridicată în 1715 de „Nicodim monah pusnicul", cu hramul Sf. Paraschiva
Podu Dâmboviței, com. Dâmbovicioara, Argeș county, about 350 m away from the "Saxon's Hill" cow farm, located in the woods;
the cross was erected in 1715 by "Nicodim monk and hermit" and it was dedicated to St. Paraskevi

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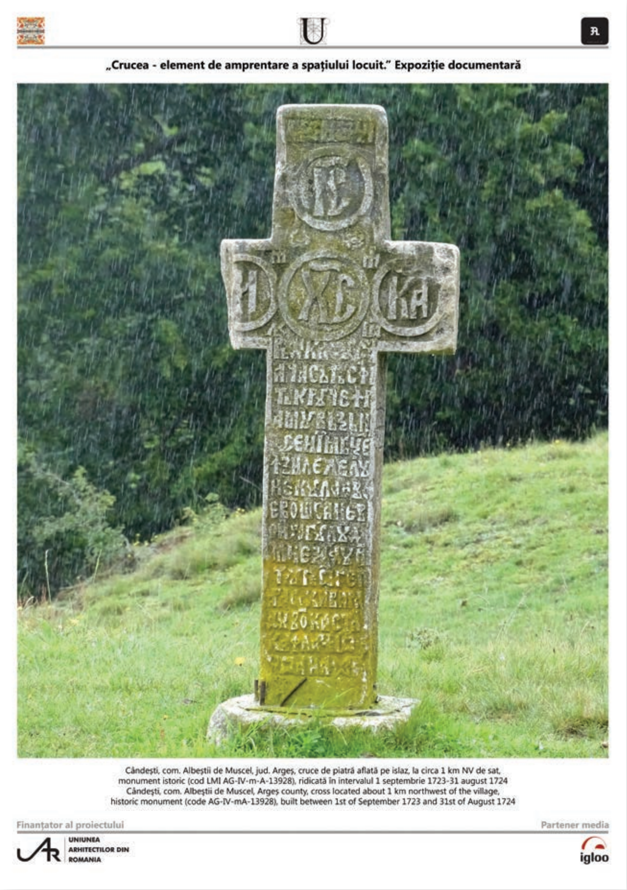

**„Crucea - element de amprentare a spațiului locuit." Expoziție documentară**

Cândești, com. Albeștii de Muscel, jud. Argeș, cruce de piatră aflată pe islaz, la circa 1 km NV de sat,
monument istoric (cod LMI AG-IV-m-A-13928), ridicată în intervalul 1 septembrie 1723-31 august 1724
Cândești, com. Albeștii de Muscel, Argeș county, cross located about 1 km northwest of the village,
historic monument (code AG-IV-mA-13928), built between 1st of September 1723 and 31st of August 1724

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