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Images as Sites of Subversion: the Passion of Christ in the Orthodox ecclesiastical art of Transylvania (eighteenth-nineteenth centuries)

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Abstract

The thesis captures the intricacies of the interplay of religion, ethnicity, politics, and social class in the scriptural imagery depicted on the walls of Transylvanian wooden churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It places emphasis on the episodes of the Passion, in which Ottoman Turks and Hungarians stand in for Christ's persecutors. It engages with alterity as constructed by ideology and social power relations. If dominant groups enjoyed superior access to power, Orthodox Romanians (who differed in ethnicity, class, language, and religion) had to face political exclusion and economic exploitation. Alterity is primarily understood as the perceived otherness of the Romanian rural society against foreign menace and politically dominant groups.

We examine the Passion scenes as sites of subversion, where Orthodox Romanians, which constituted the 'marginal majority', could allude to social iniquities, challenge the social, political, and religious might of dominant powers, as well as kindle hostility against them. In order to illustrate the way in which these renditions are related to structures of power and subversion, we investigate the connection between changes in iconography that contributed to their permeation of the religious realm and the process of identity formation of the Romanian nation in Transylvania. We argue that the painters framed the message conveyed by the paintings in such a way that it would resonate with and reinforce a mindset that the receivers, the Romanian peasantry, already possessed.

The executioners' allegorical representations are not the product of a mere correlation between Turks and Hungarians and 'enemies of the faith' or heretics, but an extension of the mentalities of the Transylvanian Orthodox communities of that time. The sharpening of ethnic and religious distinctions was intentional in shaping identity. It entailed a hierarchical ordering that privileged the marginal and discredited the influential.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Transylvania is one of the few European territories where hundreds of wooden churches survived the passage of time and still serve their purpose as places of worship. The churches are located in relatively remote villages spread across the whole intra-Carpathian territory. They are modest vernacular structures of small dimensions and simple volumes with massive roofs and tall spires. Their inner decoration presents itself in fair condition due to salutary restoration efforts, but the majority are in a precarious state and slowly fading away.

The illustration of the scenes related to the Calvary and Crucifixion in the Transylvanian wooden churches is of great interest as it has not yet been the subject of sustained scholarly research in anthropology, history, and art history. The corpus of work on the religious imagery of the Transylvanian wooden churches comprises art history studies mainly founded on methods of stylistic analysis. As these representations offer a fertile field for the investigation of cultural encounters, the thesis delivers an interdisciplinary approach of this subject. The religious scenes of the Calvary and Crucifixion that contain representations of Ottoman Turks and Hungarians represent a *topos* of the Transylvanian region, and convey an image of the ethnic and religious 'other' created as an internalisation of historical narratives of confrontation and as a form of retaliation against lived oppression. We examine the Passion scenes as sites of subversion, where Orthodox Romanians, which constituted the 'marginal majority', could allude to social iniquities and challenge the social, political, and religious might of dominant powers.

The historical coordinates of Transylvania are those of a territory disputed between foreign powers. After being part of the kingdom of Hungary from the thirteenth century, following Hungary's defeat at Mohacs by the Ottoman Turks in 1526, it gained precarious political independence, retaining it for a century and a half under Ottoman suzerainty. When Hungary came under Habsburg rule in the late seventeenth century, it was incorporated in the empire and governed as a separate unit. The seventeenth century was marked by the struggle between the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires, and by the end of the century the Habsburg Empire replaced the Ottomans in dominating Transylvania. At the end of the nineteenth century, under the dualist pact, Transylvania was re-incorporated into the kingdom of Hungary and maintained this status until it became part of Romania in 1918.

The thesis explores the cultural dynamics working through iconography, elucidating the social, religious, and political relations that informed and constrained the meanings of the religious imagery, tracing historical continuities and transformations. In so doing, it places emphasis on the significant iconographical changes that urged the insertion of Turks and Hungarians in the 'Passion of Christ' in close connection to the changes in the anxieties and aspirations of the Romanian population.

We argue that identity and its corollary, alterity underpin the meaning of the religious paintings. It is not so much the constative aspect of the artwork that defines it, but its performative aspect, the situation in which it receives meaning. Hence, we inquire into the intentions lodged in the murals, as we consider them a medium through which various agents manifested themselves and influenced the religious, social, and political realms.

The disjunction between accounts in the Gospels and such representations of the Passion series prompts us to ask what is the common denominator that ascribed the same attributes and functions to these nations? Was sharpening ethnic and religious distinctions intentional in shaping identity? Why did painters reiterate this imagery instead of reproducing the biblical script? The recurring question is: what is this deviation from the canons and what factors shaped its appearance and variation?

This research relies on a mixed method approach, employing quantitative methods in combination with data analysed qualitatively. It uses a combination of art historical interpretation, archival research, and ethnographic methods. The episodes of the Passion are investigated by paying close attention to signs associated with costume, physical features, and gestures. The work in archives implies a systematic interpretation and analysis of primary sources (archival collections held in national archives). The ethnographic approach involves on-site research of wooden churches and their decoration. The photos included in the sections presenting the iconographic programme of wooden churches and examining in detail different Passion series were personally taken in November 2015 and July 2017 as part of my fieldwork.

Chapter 2 Representation, alterity, and identity in Transylvanian church art in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries

The term alterity is derived from the Latin *alteritas*, and means 'the state of being other or different; diversity, otherness'.[1] Rather than reflecting the difference of the other, otherness reflects the way of thinking and discourse of the person who perceives the other as such. It entails a dichotomy of self/other, which creates a boundary between the self that embodies the norm, sets the standards, and achieves value and legitimacy and the other that falls short of the canonised set of values, is seen as deficient, deviant, and is susceptible to discrimination. The imbalance and inequality of power relations underlie the construction of otherness. Dominant groups (such as the Westerners in the time of colonisation) are in a position that affords them to impose their categories in the conquered territories. By stigmatising them as others, barbarians, savages or people of colour, they relegate the peoples that they could dominate to the margin of humanity. Even when it seems that the other is valued as in the case of exoticism, it becomes the object of a valorisation that is stereotypical and serves to comfort the self in its feeling of superiority.[2]

Within the field of postcolonial studies, alterity is generally associated with notions of power structures, systems of oppression, and marginality and is discussed in connection with identity formation. The seminal work of Edward Said[3] and the works of Mark Taylor[4], Trinh Minha-ha[5], Thomas Docherty[6], Ian Chambers and Lidia Curti[7], David

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[1] Galen A. Johnson & Michael B. Smith (Eds) (1990) *Ontology and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press), p. xviii.

[2] Jean-François Staszak (2009) Other/Otherness, in Rob Kitchin & Nigel Thrift (Eds) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, vol. 8 (Oxford: Elsevier), p. 43.

[3] Edward W. Said (1978) *Orientalism* (New York: Random House); *idem* (1993) *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Random House).

[4] Mark C. Taylor (1987) *Altarity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press).

[5] Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) *Woman, Native, Other: writing post-coloniality and feminism* (Bloomington and Indianopolis: Indiana University Press).

[6] Thomas Docherty (1996) *Alterities, Criticism, History, Representation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

[7] Ian Chambers & Lidia Curti (1996) *The Post-colonial Question: common skies, divided horizons* (London and New York: Routledge).

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Morley and Kuah-Hsing Chen[8], Robert Young[9], Patricia Hill Collins[10], Gayatri Spivak[11], Homi Bhabha[12], and Stuart Hall[13] addressed the problematics of alterity and difference.

Our interest resides in Spivak's inquiry into the subjective experience of life under subaltern hierarchical conditions. In her pursuit of questions about experience and internalised lived hierarchies, Spivak used Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis as a key referent.[14] She coined the notion of 'othering'[15] by drawing on Lacan's versions of the 'other'. Lacanian theorisation of subjectivity and identity involves a distinction between 'other' and 'Other'.[16]

Lacan's 'mirror' example[17] articulates the 'other' that resembles the self, as it is revealed when an infant looks into a mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being.[18] When the child sees its image in the mirror, that image must bear sufficient resemblance to the child to be recognised[19], resulting in an 'imaginary identification'[20]. At the same time, the image must be separate enough to enable the child's hope for an 'anticipated mastery' (of his bodily coordination and unity); this fiction of mastery will become the basis of the ego.[21] Thus, 'the other' is a reflection and projection of the ego; it is simultaneously the specular image and the counterpart.[22] In Spivak's approach, Lacan's 'other' stands for the colonised others, marginalised by imperial discourse and identified by their 'difference' from the centre.

[8] David Morley & Kuah-Hsing Chen (Eds) (1996) *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies* (London and New York: Routledge).

[9] Robert Young (1990) *White Mythologies* (London and New York: Routledge).

[10] Patricia Hill Collins (1990) *Black Feminist Thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (New York and London: Routledge).

[11] Gayatri C. Spivak (1988) *In Other Worlds: essays in cultural politics* (New York and London: Routledge); *idem* (1990) *The Post-Colonial Critic: interviews, strategies, dialogues* (New York and London: Routledge); *idem* (1993) *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York and London: Routledge).

[12] Homi Bhabha (1994) *The Location of Culture* (New York and London: Routledge).

[13] Stuart Hall (1996) Who Needs 'Identity'?, in Stuart Hall & Paul du Gay (Eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London and New York: Routledge), pp. 1-17.

[14] Andre Gingrich (2004) Conceptualising Identities: anthropological alternatives to essentialising difference and moralising about othering, in Gerd Baumann & Andre Gingrich (Eds) *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: a structural approach* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books), p. 9.

[15] Gayatri C. Spivak (1985) The Rani of Sirmur, in Francis Baker (Ed.) *Europe and Its Others*, vol. 1 (Colchester: University of Essex).

[16] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin (2000) *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London and New York: Routledge), p. 156.

[17] Jacque Lacan (1966) *Écrits* (Paris: Le Seuil), pp. 93-100.

[18] Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, *Key Concepts*, p. 155.

[19] Idem.

[20] Gingrich, 'Conceptualising Identities', p. 10.

[21] Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, *Key Concepts*, p. 155.

[22] Dylan Evans (1996) *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge), p. 132.

By contrast, Lacan defines 'Other' as the one in whose gaze the subject attains identity. The symbolic 'Other' can be embodied in close subjects, such as father or mother that come to represent it, or it can refer to the unconscious itself.[23] In Spivak's theories, this 'Other' is compared to imperial centres and their discourses. Firstly, it creates instances in which colonised subjects gain a sense of their identities as being dependent. Secondly, it becomes the ideological framework in which colonised subjects may come to understand the world.[24] Therefore, identity is fundamentally gained in the gaze of the powerful.[25] Although the colonising and the colonised differ from each other, Spivak sees them as inherently linked to each other, mutually defining each other's basic identities.[26]

The depiction of Ottoman Turks and Hungarians as soldiers involved in the 'Passion of Christ' is conceived as an alternative discourse that operates a redefinition of the social identities of the Transylvanian Romanians that were constructed as a result of their lived experiences of oppression under foreign domination. As a 'marginal' existence that was merely tolerated, the Romanians were subjected to strong political, social, and economic constraints. The representation of Turks and Hungarians as persecutors of Christ create a pictorial device sensibly drawn from the enmity that the Romanian peasantry harboured against them and is seen as part of the oppressed subjects' strategy to seek reparation for unevenness and inequality.

[23] Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, *Key Concepts*, pp. 155-156.
[24] Gayatri C. Spivak (1996) *The Spivak Reader*, edited by Donna Landry & Gerald MacLean (New York and London: Routledge).
[25] Gingrich, 'Conceptualising Identities', p. 11.
[26] Idem.

Chapter 3 Artistic milieus and interferences in Transylvania

3.1 Mural and icon painting in early feudalism

In the thirteenth century, after persistent attempts the entire intra-Carpathian territory was annexed to the Hungarian kingdom, which recognised the autonomy of the province and its organisation system, the *voivodate*.[27]

In the context of the consolidation of feudal authority, the royalty led a politics of oppression against the Romanians in collaboration with the noblemen and the Catholic Church, seizing the lands of the peasantry and exerting a strong pressure against them. In 1230, urged by bishop Jacob of Preneste (the apostolic legate sent to Hungary to fight non-Christians), King Bela IV pledged that he would strive 'to eradicate with all my might all heretics and false Christians from our lands. And those in our lands not subjected to the Roman Church, but with their own rite compatible with the Catholic faith, will be compelled to obey the Roman church'[28]. The Romanians, who constituted the majority of the population, fell under the category of 'insubordinates to the Roman Church'. In line with this prohibition, the Episcopal Synod of Buda of 1279 interdicted the 'schismatics', that is to say the Orthodox, to build churches and chapels.[29] Furthermore, the

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[27] Ioan-Aurel Pop, Thomas Nägler & Mihai Bărbulescu (Eds) (2003) *Istoria Transilvaniei. vol. 1. Până la 1541* [History of Transylvania. vol. 1. Until 1541] (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane – Institutul Cultural Român); Ioan-Aurel Pop (1996) Românii şi maghiarii în secolele IX-XIV. Geneza statului medieval în Transilvania [Romanians and Hungarians in the Ninth-Fourteenth Centuries. The Genesis of the Medieval State in Transylvania] (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane – Fundaţia Culturală Română); Ştefan Pascu (1971) *Voievodatul Transilvaniei* [The *Voivodate* of Transylvania], vol. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia).

[28] Ştefan Meteş (1971) *Emigrări româneşti din Transilvania în secolele XIII-XX (Cercetări de demografie istorică)* [Emigrations of Romanians from Transylvania in the Thirteenth-Twentieth Centuries (Studies of Historical Demography)] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică), p. 15.

[29] In its 126th canon, the Synod (replicated by a Polish council in 1282) ruled that the 'schismatic' clergy was not allowed to hold religious services in any church or build new churches without the approval of the diocesan bishop; they were allowed to minister their Sacraments only to other 'schismatics', and never to Latins; Latins were prohibited from attending religious services held by 'schismatics' and receiving the Sacraments from their priests; the 'Christians' were not supposed to keep company with 'schismatics', otherwise they would be deferred for punishment to the secular law. See Şerban Turcuş (2001) *Sinodul general de la Buda (1279)* [The General Synod of Buda (1279)] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană), p. 212; George Lăzărescu & Nicolae Stoicescu (1972) *Ţările Române şi Italia până la 1600* [The Romanian Countries and Italy until 1600] (Bucharest: Editura

synod of the Catholic Church held in Bratislava in 1309 deprived the Orthodox of 'all privileges, indulgences, favours, benefits, and estates'[30].

Romanian feudal architecture in Transylvania dates from the stage of early feudalism (tenth-fourteenth centuries). Fortifications, modest churches, and durable stone residences are closely connected to the existence of feudal formations, those *terrae valachorum* (the lands of the Romanians), in which local boyars and *knezes*[31] promoted the development of culture and art.

During the tenth-twelfth centuries, when the first political entities were established in Banat, Crişana, Transylvania, and Dobrogea, painting was practiced within the circumscription of the religious realm (church decoration and icons). Built mainly from wood, the churches and monasteries from this period attested in written sources perished. Such is the case of the church dedicated to Saint John the Baptist (believed to have been built in Byzantine style[32]) at Morisena (the later Cenad), a stronghold on the Lower Mureş River founded at the threshold of the eleventh century[33]; still, since the Byzantine hierarchy on which these lands depended maintained a widespread network of relations, the iconic materials required by churches in this area were either brought from Byzantium or emulated its models.[34]

The Romanian lands, even though they came under the influence of Byzantine Christianity in the tenth century, did not become closely associated with the Byzantine Empire until the mid-fourteenth.[35] It was then that an organised political life is reliably attested in the two

Ştiinţifică), p. 220. Even so, the canon proved to be difficult to implement not only when controlling the common liturgical habits of the two communities of rite, but also when it came to the construction of churches, which after all continued. See Pop, Nägler & Bărbulescu, *Istoria Transilvaniei*, vol. 1, p. 288.

[30] Candid C. Muşlea (1943) *Biserica Sf. Nicolae din Şcheii Braşovului. vol. 1. (1292-1742)* [St. Nicholas Church of Şcheii Braşovului. vol. 1. (1292-1742)] (Braşov: Institutul de Arte Grafice 'Astra'), p. 245.

[31] The *knezes* ruled over *knezates*, which were small regional territorial agglomerations. They were landowners and possessors of administrative, juridical, and military prerogatives. See Ovid Sachelarie & Nicolae Stoicescu (Eds) (1988) *Instituţii feudale din Ţările Române. Dicţionar* [Feudal Institutions in the Romanian Countries. Dictionary] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), pp.108-110.

[32] Pavel Vesa (2009) *Mănăstiri dispărute din părţile Aradului (sec. XI-XVII)* [Lost Monasteries of Arad County (the Eleventh-Seventeenth Centuries)], *Teologia*, 13 (2), p. 74.

[33] See Răzvan Theodorescu (1974) *Bizanţ, Balcani, Occident la începutul culturii medievale româneşti (secolele X-XIV)* [Byzantium, Balkans, Occident at the Beginning of the Romanian Medieval Culture (the Tenth-Fourteenth Centuries)] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), p. 115; Eugen Arădeanul (1980) Contribuţii la istoria bisericească locală în perioada feudalismului timpuriu [Contributions to Local Church History during Early Feudalism], *Mitropolia Banatului*, 30 (7-9), p. 447.

[34] Vasile Drăguţ, Vasile Florea, Dan Grigorescu & Marin Mihalache (1970) *Pictura românească în imagini. 1111 reproduceri* [Romanian Painting in Pictures. 1111 Reproductions] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 8.

Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia.[35] The two principalities acquired a certain degree of administrative centralisation, a measure of economic prosperity, and a church organisation dependent on the Byzantine patriarchate.[37] The preliminary phase of artistic development in these principalities was completed once the first forms of state organisation, *voivodates* and *knezates*, were unified. For Transylvania, the fourteenth century meant a stage of laborious affirmation of the *knezates* in the political and social life.[38] Exposed to Tatar invasions, and later to the Ottoman menace that hovered over the borders of the kingdom, the military role of the *knezates* increased considerably[39]. For special merits in battle, a significant number of *knezes* and *voivodes*[40] were ennobled, gaining important privileges. Hence, the time was ripe for art to flourish as local rulers could afford to raise secular and ecclesiastical monuments.

In Transylvania of this century a large number of Romanian monuments was erected. Generations of generations of anonymous builders raised wooden and stone churches; inexperienced or accomplished painters decorated these churches, which despite being unimposing, polarised the people's resilience and aspirations.

The oldest religious monuments decorated with mural painting, which have been preserved, date from this era. The use of pictorial decoration for churches is much older, a fact supported by archaeological evidences of several places of worship dating back to the eleventh-thirteenth centuries.[41] The Land of Haţeg, mentioned in the Diploma of the Joannites in 1247 in relation to the Southern Carpathian *voivodates*, is the richest in monuments originating in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. They are situated in the old Romanian villages along the Strei River and its affluents. Built in the Romanesque

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[35] Dimitri Obolensky (1971) *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1543* (New York: Praeger Publishers), p. 208.

[36] Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, p. 207.

[37] Ibid., p. 352.

[38] Marius Porumb (1981) *Pictura românească din Transilvania: secolele XIV-XVII* [Romanian Painting in Transylvania: the Fourteenth-Seventeenth Centuries], vol. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia), p. 10.

[39] Vasile Drăguţ (1970) *Pictura murală din Transilvania (secolele XIV-XV)* [Mural Painting in Transylvania (the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries)] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 10.

[40] *Voivode* is a Slavonic term, which means literally 'military commander'. In Transylvania, the *voivodes*' authority extended over more *knezates*. They were in charge with the military command and had political attributions. See Sachelarie & Stoicescu, *Instituţii feudale*, pp. 508-510. The rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia were also called *voievodes*; they bore the title *domn* as well, taken from the Latin imperial formula (*dominus*, in the sense of Lord or 'master of the country and of its subjects'). See Kurt W. Treptow (Ed.) (1996) *A History of Romania, East European Monograph* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 83.

[41] Ştefan Pascu *et al.* (1968) *Cetatea Dăbâca* [Dăbâca Citadel], *AMN*, 5, pp. 153-202.

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provincial style from local stone, which contained fragments from the Roman monuments in Sarmizegetusa and the surrounding areas, the churches of Strei, Streisângeorgiu, Sântămărie Orlea, Densuş, Ostrovul Mare, Nucşoara, and Râu de Mori are testimonies of a Romanian art with more distant origins. In their paintings one could discern influences of the provincial Romanesque art, as well as elements of Byzantine and Oriental art, which have fed the culture and art of the Balkan world and Eastern Europe for centuries, grafted on an ancient local layer.[42]

Obolensky emphasises that the Romanian lands made their belated entry into the 'Byzantine Commonwealth'[43] when they were 'caught' in the 'movement' in which icon-painting spread from the Byzantine Empire to the Balkan countries and to Russia. The prestige enjoyed by the art and culture of Constantinople throughout the Orthodox world, despite the political and economic decline of the Empire, made the young principalities from North of the Danube receptive to its forms. Commenting on this, Vasile Drăguţ argues that: 'As was to be expected, Byzantine painting, which had reached the stylistic phase peculiar to the Palaeologan epoch, was adopted especially by the Greek-Romanian Orthodox Church; it is to be found in the numerous foundations of the Transylvanian princes or of the *voivodes* in Wallachia'[44]. Awareness of Byzantine art forms came to Romania either by direct contact, or via the Serbian kingdom, which had adopted the Palaeologan style as early as 1321.[45]

During the Middle Ages, the Byzantine religious tradition in Eastern Europe became more homogeneous, and the slight variations in icon type, detectable in the early Middle Ages between churches and monasteries of the different Eastern European areas, are far less significant than the underlying unity of formal structure and spiritual message they conveyed. The differences became even less perceptible after 1300, when a new current of asceticism and spirituality, which had emanated from the leading monasteries of the Byzantine Empire, further strengthened the ties that bound together the various local branches of Eastern Europe monasticism.[46] In the fourteenth century, the

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[42] Marius Porumb (1968) *Bisericile din Feleac şi Vad. Două ctitorii moldoveneşti din Transilvania* [The Churches in Feleac and Vad. Two Moldavian Foundations in Transylvania] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), pp. 5-6.
[43] Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, p. 207.
[44] Vasile Drăguţ (1984) *Arta românească: preistorie, antichitate, ev mediu, renaştere, baroc* [Romanian Art: Prehistory, Antiquity, Middle Ages, Rennaisance, Baroque], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 116.
[45] Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, pp. 252-254.
[46] Elena Ene D-Vasilescu (2009) *Between Tradition and Modernity: icons and icon-painters in Romania* (Saarbrűchen: VDM), pp. 13-24; Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, pp. 294-295.

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central area of the Byzantine Empire was under the rule of the Palaeologi, which delineates a period characterised by an intensified emotion in Byzantine art. The art produced in this period is livelier, more sensitive to emotion and drama, and reveals an elegance of design, a taste for descriptive scenes and picturesque detail.[47]

The oldest wall painting that has been preserved is that adorning the church erected by Cândea princes in the village of Sântămărie Orlea (Hunedoara County) executed by an anonymous painter in 1311. The solemn feeling of the frescoes covering the nave arises from their soft glowing light, warm tones, and hues of light red earth. A certain degree of flexibility is visible in the iconographic composition, which includes scenes from the Christological and Marian cycles, the Last Judgement, figures of saints, and the fairly rare scene of 'The Finding of the Holy Cross'.[48] The third register features episodes from Mary's life[49]: 'The Meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate' (the figures are modelled carefully and given a sense of movement); 'The Birth of the Virgin' (inside a palace, Saint Anna lies on a tall bed, whose frontal is decorated with a quatrefoil with cross inscribed in a circle; three women approach her, one with her arms crossed across the chest, another holding a vessel, and the other an Oriental fan; in the lower right, the Virgin Child rests on a tall bed embellished with architectural elements, and Saint Joachim keeps vigil near her bedside); 'The Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple' (the three priests wearing mitres sit in front of a table laden with food and give their blessing).[50] The rendition is graceful, of undulant curves, softened chromatic harmonies, and slender silhouettes captured in loose dance-like movements. The Hellenistic typology of female figures, their refined elegance – Saint Helena portrayed in 'The Finding of the Holy Cross', or the young women in 'The Birth of the Virgin' – the artistic language as a whole situates these paintings in the

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[47] André Grabar (1953) *Byzantine Painting: historical and critical study*, trans. by Stuart Gilbert (Geneva: Skira), p. 45; *idem* (1967) *The Art of the Byzantine Empire: Byzantine art in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Betty Forster (New York: Greystone Press), p. 80.

[48] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, pp. 10-11.

[49] Scenes from Mary's life appear often in Cappadocia as early as the tenth century. Yet, the cycle only developed starting with the eleventh century. They occur in Serbia, at Sopoćani and Gradac churches in the thirteenth century. In the latter church, episodes from Mary's life are painted on a narthex frieze: 'Anna Praying in the Garden', 'The Meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate', 'The Birth of Mary', 'Joachim, Anna, and the Child Virgin', 'The Entry into the Temple'. In the metropolitan of Mistra (thirteenth century), scenes from Mary's life can be seen on the south wall of the nave, alongside the life of Christ. Here, they are painted on the northern wall of the nave and are inspired by the Proto-gospel of James (4.50-4). See Ioan D. Ştefănescu (1973) *Iconografia artei bizantine şi a picturii feudale româneşti* [The Iconography of Byzantine Art and Romanian Feudal Painting] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 75.

[50] Ioan D. Ştefănescu (1930-1932) *La peinture religieuse: en Valachie et en Transylvanie depuis les origines jusqu'au XIX⁻ siècle* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner), pp. 223-224.

larger sphere of Byzantine revival of the Palaeologan epoch.[51] Skilfully integrating the gracious and the monumental, blending colours with ease in warm harmonies, the painter must have descended from an elevated, complex, and contradictory artistic world, of whose scope could be found beyond the boundaries of Transylvania of that time. The stylistic and iconographic features point to the work of a painter trained in an artistic environment of Byzantine tradition, particularised by original iconographic experiences and the assimilation of elements characteristic to the Italian painting.[52]

These frescoes could not become the norm in church painting, as the artistic climate was not yet auspicious for native syntheses. Hence, borrowings from foreign art and the commission of foreign masters remained customary.

The decoration of the church of Streisângeorgiu (Hunedoara County) founded by the *kneaz* Bâlea (or Balotă)[53] in the twelfth century reflects the influence of Byzantine painting in its stage of extreme sobriety and, perhaps, rigidity. Its painting layer executed by master Teofil in 1313-1314 was applied over an even older one.[54] The figures still discernible in the frescoes are very rigid, and somehow 'atemporal'[55], which is considered by many specialists to be a feature of Byzantine painting in some historical epochs. 'Christ in Glory' blessing with both hands is represented on the vault, accompanied by apocalyptic beings holding books, thrones (winged wheels), and four seraphim situated on the corners of the vault. In the lower register, Saint Basil the Great and Saint Nicholas stand frontally, in full-length.[56] Saint Basil is clad in a white chasuble adorned with black crosses and a mitre, raising his right hand in blessing and holding a gospel decorated with red precious stones in his left; his features are elongated and sharp; the contour – lines are black and ochre.[57] Two warrior saints on horseback are visible on the north and south walls.[58] The attention given to the figures of

[51] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, pp. 10-11.
[52] Vasile Drăguţ (1968) *Vechi monumente hunedorene* [Old Monuments of Hunedoara] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 33.
[53] Elena Dana Prioteasa (2011) Medieval Wall Paintings in Transylvanian Orthodox Churches and Their Donors (PhD thesis, Central European University), p. 42.
[54] Florin Dobrei (2011) *Bisericile ortodoxe hunedorene* [Orthodox Churches of Hunedoara] (Reşiţa: Editura Eftimie Murgu), p. 92.
[55] Mircea Păcurariu (2000) *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* [The History of the Romanian Orthodox Church], vols. 1-3 (Bucharest: Editura Sophia), p. 83, and also the illustrations on p. iii from the special section following p. 64 (fig. 7 on that page).
[56] Prioteasa, 'Medieval Wall Paintings', p. 148.
[57] Ramona M. Toma (2003) Biserica medievală din Streisângeorgiu. Cauze ale degradării picturilor murale [The Medieval Church of Streisângeorgiu. Causes of the Deterioration of the Mural Paintings], *Sargentia*, 31, p. 117.
[58] Prioteasa, 'Medieval Wall Paintings', p. 148.

Saints Basil and Nicholas, and the representation of the military saints point to Byzantine-Oriental influences that, through Southern Italy, lead to Cappadocia, where the iconography of Basilian churches offered similar solutions.[59]

Despite various interdictions imposed by the Catholic high feudality, the artistic activity in the Transylvanian *knezates* experienced a gradual growth as they became more involved in the military and political life of the kingdom. As the Turkish menace drew closer, the southern *knezates* were deployed to strengthen the defence of the borders. The rising Romanian noblemen took advantage of the privileges stemming from these circumstances in order to satisfy their artistic needs.

The urban effervescence of that time in Transylvania attracted minor peregrine masters commissioned to decorate Gothic churches in many of its towns.[60] Amongst these masters, most probably coming from Northern Dalmatia, where the Byzantine stylistic forms were blended with the Italian ones, are the authors of the paintings decorating the small church in the cemetery of Strei village (Hunedoara County). Built in the early Gothic style of the thirteenth century[61], this modest but expressive edifice still retains, on its exterior and interior walls, fragments of painting executed towards the end of the fourteenth century. Partially concealed by whitewash, the apse preserves a fragment of 'Christ in Glory'[62] on the eastern section of its vault: placed

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[59] Drăguţ, *Arta românească*, vol. 1, p. 116; Ştefănescu, *Iconografia artei bizantine*, pp. 71-75; Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 12.

[60] Vasile Drăguţ (1970) Consideraţii asupra iconografiei picturilor murale gotice din Transilvania [Reflections on the Iconography of Gothic Mural Paintings in Transylvania], *BMI*, 39 (3), p. 18.

[61] After the Tatar invasion in 1241, foreign stonemasons fared to Cârţa, in the land of Făgăraş to rebuild the ruined edifices of the Cistercian abbey 'Beata Maria Virginis de Candelis'. Prior to the invasion, the architecture of the abbey had incorporated the Romanesque tradition pursued by the rival order of the Benedictines. The succesive abbey completed by mid-thirteenth century became the first Gothic monument in Transylvania, and Cârţa became a centre of diffusion of Gothic architecture in Transylvania. The Gothic style that the Cistercian monks cultivated was the 'early Gothic' or 'Burgundian Gothic', which compared to the monuments of the thirteenth century desisted from developing, becoming rather conservative. However, no matter how much the Cistercian abided by their prescriptions and statutes, they 'conceided' to influences of the 'mature Gothic' by adopting the polygonal apse. See the chapter Arhitectura goticului timpuriu în Transilvania (sec. XIII) [The Architecture of the Early Gothic in Transylvania (the Thirteenth Century)], pp. 10-35, in Vasile Drăguţ (1979) *Arta gotică în România* [Gothic Art in Romania] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane).

[62] In the West, this representation was a typical decoration of Romanesque apses and had its roots in earlier prototypes developed in Eastern Christendom and Rome (Otto Demus (1970) *Romanesque Mural Painting* (New York: Harry N. Abrams), pp. 14-18). The depiction of 'Christ in Glory' on the vault of the apse, usually accompanied by apostles in the lower register survived into the Gothic period, particularly in Central Europe (Drăguţ,

in the centre, Christ is surrounded by a mandorla of light, and an angel bows in reverence on the right. The upper portion of the walls shows a frieze of apostles displaying individualised features and pose under an arcade of arches simulating the blind arches decorating Romanesque apses. The lower portion comprises portraits of bishops, silhouettes of Romanesque churches, and the prostrated form of a personage wearing a fourteenth-century townsfolk dress (a tight chaperon coat), who is none other that the painter of the apse himself, Grozie. His painting is personalised by the decorative effect achieved within the confines of a rusticised execution, but of high level nonetheless. The figures are clearly contoured and the lines have a smooth flow, conveying synthetically surfaces and volumes. The precision of the simplified, essentialised drawing resembles the strips of lead connecting pieces of stained glass; this stylistic connection is not at all arbitrary, but is grounded on the influence the art of stained glass had on the illumination of manuscripts and mural painting. The value range within the colour palette is rather narrow: an ultramarine background, black and white drawing, yellow arcades, red, green, and ochre garments blandly decorated with circles and dots, and ochre-yellow figures with light interventions of red. The overly stylised faces of the apostles are oval, with strong jaws, widely open almond-shaped eyes, and raised eyebrows that induce a countenance of perpetual wonder. The mild rhythm of the gestures, the folds of cloth hanging loosely contribute to the decorative coherence of the ensemble.[63] Considering all stylistic details, the frescoes of the apse pertain to an eclectic art that is tied to the Romanesque tradition, but possesses elements of the international Gothic such as the precise and elegant drawing, typology of subjects, and fashion of the forked beard. Echoes of the trecento painting of northern Italy seep through and are discernible in the fresco technique, almond-shaped eyes, and decorative borders of Cosmatesque inspiration.[64] A second master adorned the nave. A remainder of a martyrdom scene, Saint Nicholas framed by Mary and Christ, a frieze of saints, 'Christ Giving His Blessing', Saint Sunday (Saint Nedelja)[65], the 'Virgin and Child', and a female saint are still visible on the southern wall. Compared to the frescoes of the apse, these frescoes indicate a penchant for modelling through chromatic variations, richer volumes, more nuanced expressions, and a more diverse embellishment of

'Consideraţii asupra iconografiei', p. 19; *idem* (1972) Iconografia picturilor murale gotice din Transilvania [The Iconography of Gothic Mural Paintings in Transylvania], in Vasile Drăguţ & Pavel Chihaia (Eds) *Pagini de veche artă românească.* vol. 2. *Studii de artă medievală* [Pages of Old Romanian Art. vol. 2. Studies of Medieval Art] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), pp. 13-17.

[63] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 40; Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 18.

[64] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 41.

[65] On the representation of Saint Sunday and its association with Saint Paraskeva see Mirjana Detelić (2010) St. Paraskeve in the Balkan Context, *Folklore*, 121 (1), pp. 94-105.

vestments. They present qualities resulting from the adaptation of forms of the trecento painting of Sienese influence in the variant in which they spread from Tyrol to Bohemia and Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia to Transylvania in the second half of the fourteenth century. Motifs of Byzantine iconography are interweaved in the iconographic programme: the 'Virgin and Child' follows the Byzantine model of 'Lovingkindness' (*Glykophilousa*), and the representation of Saint Nicholas adheres to the Byzantine canon.[66] As a whole, the master executed a warm and intelligible painting, prone to have been easily received in a provincial environment, as it was the world of small Transylvanian *knezates*.[67] A third painter, whose style reflects the local artistic milieu of Byzantine tradition from the second half of the fourteenth century, painted the builders of the church, the votive portrait, and the face of Saint George. His painting reveals a pronounced graphic character and static figures.[68]

The painting of Strei is evocative of an era when Romanian princes were compelled to resort to foreign masters to meet their artistic needs. This aspect was overturned at the end of the fourteenth century, when artistic exchanges with the self-governing Romanian provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia made their way into the painting of Transylvanian princely foundations.[69]

3.2 The fifteenth century. The painting of princely foundations

A major role in the artistic development of Romanian art in the first half of the century was the weakening of the imperial policy of religious persecution against Romanians, as they were called on to halt the Ottoman expansion.[70] At this time, the ecclesiastical ties and cultural support from Wallachia constituted the stimulus for the erection of new religious edifices and the adornment with painting of old ones.[71]

The prolific work of artists of Orthodox faith and the establishment of workshops in the vicinity of princely residences are confirmed by the great number of decorated churches and the commissioning of Romanian masters or painters influenced by their art

[66] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 41.
[67] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 19.
[68] Vasile Drăguţ (1973) Din nou despre picturile bisericii din Strei [More on the Paintings of the Strei Church], *BMI*, 2, pp. 20-23.
[69] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 42.
[70] After the defeat of the Serbians and their allies in the battle of Kosovopolje (1389), the Hungarian Kingdom came under direct threat from the Ottoman Empire. From King Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437) to King Louis II (1516-1526), Hungarian rulers undertook constant efforts to prevent its advancement.
[71] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 19.

to decorate Gothic churches. The influence performed by the Romanian painters of that epoch on the Transylvanian Catholic environment demonstrates the wide reach of Romanian art.[72]

With regard to patronage, the erection and decoration of churches were mostly commissioned by local rulers and nobles, who were rich enough to afford such a time-consuming and costly preoccupation.

It is an epoch when Romanian noblemen sought to draw closer to the Catholic world while at the same time aspired to assume a leading political role. As a consequence of these ambitions, they were gradually alienated and finally separated from the masses, which stayed faithful to their Orthodox culture and inherited forms of art. During the second half of the century, this phenomenon unfolded more outwardly. The synthesis of Byzantine and Western art is slightly diluted by the admixture of stray and timid realistic notes that reflect the denial of the static and inflexible hieratism of late Byzantine painting. However, this flexibility was superficial, as the ability to absorb new influences and elements from the environment was limited.[73]

The frescoes of Strei church set the standard in church painting for local masters and as a result were reproduced at various other churches. However, instead of imitating this pre-existent model, they sought to follow more closely the Byzantine models, which had been assimilated into their Orthodox faith.[74] Their attempts were facilitated by the diffusion of artistic forms from Wallachia.[75] The fusion of Western elements (appropriated from the frescoes of Strei) and Byzantine stylistic patterns (circulating from Wallachia) gave birth to a distinctive Transylvanian painting of novel vision and artistic programme.[76] The frescoes decorating the church of Crișcior (Hunedoara county) mark this transition. The walls of the nave show scenes from the Christological cycle ('The Washing of the Disciples' Feet', 'The Last Supper', 'The Bearing of the Cross'), a solemn representation of 'The Assumption', 'Saint Marina the Combatant of Satan', 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon', and portraits of holy martyrs.[77] These scenes are

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[72] Ibid., p. 40.

[73] Virgil Vătăşianu (Ed.) (1959) *Istoria artei feudale în Ţările Române* [The History of Feudal Art in the Romanian Countries], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), p. 407.

[74] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 18.

[75] The metropolitans of Wallachia extended their religious authority over Transylvania. Also, the Basarab dynasty *voivodes*, as rulers of large fiefdoms in southern Transylvania, erected churches (Râșnov, Rășinari) or monasteries (Scoreiu) on their estates.

[76] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 19.

[77] Vătăşianu (Ed.), *Istoria artei feudale*, vol. 1, pp. 404-405; Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, pp. 23-24; Ioan D. Ştefănescu (1981) *Arta feudală în Ţările Române: pictura murală şi icoanele de la origini până în secolul XIX* [Feudal Art in the Romanian Countries: mural painting and icons from their origins to the nineteenth century] (Timişoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului), pp. 75-77.

completed with the representation of the three sanctified Hungarian kings (Stephen, Emeric, and Ladislas), which is part of the Catholic iconographic repertory. This peculiar theme is also featured at the Saint Nicholas church in Ribiţa. This fact constitutes, at the same time, a visual marker of the authority of the Hungarian royalty. Several scholars initially assumed that the presence of the three Hungarian holy kings in a knezal church was imposed by the prohibitive decisions of the synods of the Hungarian Catholic Church against the followers of the Orthodox rite[78]. It was only in recent years that it was suggested that their presence in Orthodox churches had the mission to emphasise the privileged social status of the Romanian *knezes* and their fidelity to the central power for which they were fighting against the Turks and supported the centrifugal actions of the Hungarian high aristocracy of Transylvania.[79]

The realistic depiction of figures in its votive painting that illustrates the founder prince Bâlea mentioned in documents in 1404, and his wife, Vişe, is adopted from the Wallachian painting. In terms of style, the frescoes of Crişcior instantiate a synthesis of the Byzantine rendition of Sântămărie Orlea, from where elements of typology and chromatic range (dominated by earth reds) were preserved and the Gothic version of Strei, from where the drawing of continuous flow and the essentialised compositions were appropriated.[80] The ensemble relates to the cultural ambiance of the Palaeologan Byzantine art, yet it is imbued with provincialised notes of the Transylvanian Gothic.[81] These frescoes are among the most valuable examples of Romanian painting in Hunedoara at the onset of the fifteenth century, and stress once again the endeavour for artistic acknowledgement of the Romanian *knezates*.[82]

The realistic feature of its votive portrait is present in other frescoes in Hunedoara, such as the ones of the church in Leşnic[83] erected

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[78] Silviu Dragomir (1929) Vechile biserici din Zarand şi ctitorii lor în sec. XIV şi XV [The Old Churches in Zarand and Their Founders in the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries], *ACMIT*, pp. 235-236; Vasile Drăguţ, *Pictura murală*, p. 39; Liana Tugearu (1985) Biserica Adormirea Maicii Domnului din satul Crişcior (comuna suburbană a oraşului Brad, jud. Hunedoara) [The Dormition Church in Crişcior Village (Suburb of Brad, Hunedoara County)], *Repertoriul picturilor murale medievale din România (sec. XIV – 1450)*, 5 (1), p. 78.

[79] Adrian Andrei Rusu (1999) *Ioan de Hunedoara şi românii din vremea sa. Studii* [John Hunyadi and the Romanians of That Time. Studies] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană), p. 137; Elena Dana Prioteasa (2009) The Holy Kings of Hungary in Medieval Orthodox Churches of Transylvania, *Ars Transsilvaniae*, 19, p. 50; Valentin Trifescu (2010) *Bisericile cneziale din Ribiţa şi Crişcior (începutul secolului al XV-lea)* [The Knezal Churches in Ribiţa and Crişcior (the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century)] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Eikon), pp. 17-18, 57, 79-80.

[80] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 20.

[81] Tugearu, 'Biserica Adormirea Maicii Domnului', pp. 82-83.

[82] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 48.

[83] The analysis of its painting points out the existence of two distinct stages: while the southern, western, and northern walls of the nave preserve their initial decoration, realised around 1400, the eastern wall of the nave and the walls of the apse are covered

by prince Dobre the Romanian. Its iconographic programme is exceptionally simple. The southern wall consists of panels of saints (Daniel, Varvara, Peter, and Paul), 'Jesus on the Cross', 'The Resurrection of the Righteous', the latter scene occupying more than half of the surface of the wall. The upper register of the western wall shows two military saints riding horses and 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon'. Two panels of the lower register illustrate the pains of hell, and a third contains the votive painting of the founders. The frescoes of its nave impress through their crudely sincere expression (saints with kind, gentle faces resembling wise village elders), and its large writhing scene of 'The Last Judgement'. By forcing the canons of traditional iconography, this scene brings forth a sense of that era and brings the earthly mundane life, real and filled with anxiety, into painting.[84] The insertion of an atypical representation in 'The Last Judgement' is due to the intervention of the founder. On the southern wall, in the right of the judgement seat there are two soldiers, the first one carrying the lifeless body of a soldier that died in battle on his shoulder – with an arrow piercing his chest – the second one carrying a goat on his shoulder as a symbol of sacrifice. An inscription is painted above the scene: 'Oh my brother, if only you knew how much I suffered for my sins in foreign land'. This image is interpreted as an evocation of the sacrifices paid by Dobre in the battles against the Turks, maybe a brother killed by an arrow in foreign lands.[85] The image of Leşnic, of the soldier fallen in battle, is at least for now the only known case when the battles against the Turks find such an illustration in the context of Romanian medieval iconography. Comparable from an ideological point of view with the 'Cavalcade of Saints' from the Holy Cross Church founded by Steven the Great (1457-1504) at Pătrăuţi (1487) or the 'Siege of Constantinople' painted on the exterior of several Moldavian churches during the reign of Petru Rareş (1527-1538; 1541-1546), the image of the fallen soldier served as a call to fight against the Turks, who had repeatedly sieged Transylvania[86] and as an act of recalling the lives lost in battle[87]. The organisation of compositions is simple and clear, the drawing is ample and thick, being reduced to the essential, and the colours are in flat hues, deprived of brightness, the chromatic range being limited. On the neutral gray background of the plaster, which has the aspect and resistance of cement, there are composed, in balanced surfaces, areas of

with a painting realised in the second half of the eighteenth century. See Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 52.
[84] Ibid., p. 54.
[85] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, pp. 53-54; *idem* (1980) *Creaţia artistică în epoca întemeietorilor de ţară* [The Artistic Creation in the Epoch of State Founders] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), excerpt, p. 296; Vătăşianu, *Istoria artei feudale*, p. 25; Marius Porumb (1998) *Dicţionar de pictură veche românească din Transilvania (sec. XIII-XVIII)* [Dictionary of Old Romanian Painting in Transylvania (the Thirteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), p. 205.
[86] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 54.
[87] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 21.

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greenish grey, bluish-grey, brick red, chestnut brown, yellow and white, the borders being in reddish brown.[88] The complex stylistic structure resulted from the confluence of elements specific to the Transylvanian Romano-Gothic painting with elements of Byzantine origin, all implanted in a vivid and original artistic vision, is defining for this painting.[89]

The stylistic similarities of the frescoes of the church of Ribiţa attest the presence of the same Romanian master from Crișcior, raised and trained in the Transylvanian Byzantine-Gothic environment.[90] However, the richer chromatic range and the more firm drawing are conclusive evidences of a later phase of execution.[91] The inscription on the northern wall of the apse gives clues on the date of the painting, 1407[92]. On an ochre background, the votive painting, similar as manner of organisation to the processions of founders as shown in the Moldavian painting at the end of the fifteenth century, illustrates boyar (jupân) Vladislav and his brother Miclăuş presenting the model of the church to Saint Nicholas. The prolonged face with a wide forehead of Vladislav is framed by a rich hair and a slightly sharp brown beard. The regular features of the face, the straight nose, expressive eyes overshadowed by vigorously drawn eyebrows give him an air of nobility reminiscent of Bâlea, the founder of Crişcior. Vladislav is dressed in a long dark green cloak, whose sleeves end in richly decorated cuffs. The folds fall straight, too straight even, emphasising the touch of sobriety of this imposing character. Similarly, Miclăuş has an even prolonged face, and the identically tailored cloak has a lilac colour. Under the model of the church, Anna, daughter of Vladislav, is

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[88] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 53.
[89] Ibid., p. 53.
[90] Tugearu, 'Biserica Sfântul Nicolae', pp. 134-147.
[91] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, pp. 49-50; Tugearu, 'Biserica Sfântul Nicolae', pp. 134-147.
[92] There is a dissensus on the date of the wall painting caused by the fragmentary character of the inscriptions, which led to different interpretations. In the light of the 1993 restoration of the church, Irina Popa makes her assumptions based on the inscription revealed on the northern wall of the apse and proffers the year 1407. See Irina Popa (1995) Les peintures murales du Pays de Zarand (Transylvanie) au début du XV siècle: considérations sur l'iconographie et la technique des peintures murales, in Jean-Paul Sodini & Catherine Jolivet-Lévy (Eds) *Mémoire de DEA d'archéologie byzantine* (Paris: L'Université de Paris I – Panthéon Sorbonne), p. 24. Previous studies suggested the years 1414 (Andrei Adrian Rusu (1991) Biserica românească de la Ribiţa (judeţul Hunedoara) [The Romanian Church in Ribiţa (Hunedoara County)], *RMI*, 1, pp. 3-9), 1417 (Dragomir, 'Vechile biserici din Zărand', pp. 223-264) and 1404 (Ödön Nemes (1868) A ribicei templom 1404 – ből [The Church of Ribiţa from 1404], *Hazánk s a külföld*, 4 (4), pp. 63-64). Recent studies concurred with the date put forth by Popa, but a newly advanced hypothesis contradicts it and suggests the year 1393 as the date when the mural decoration was finalised (at least that of the apse, if not of the whole church), adding that the completion of the frescoes restoration will provide the required information for determining the different stages of execution. See Dragoş Gh. Năstăsoiu & Anna Adashinskaya (2017) New Information on the Dating of the Murals of St. Nicholas Church in Ribiţa. A Hypothesis, *Museikon*, 1, pp. 25-44.

painted. Her outfit, wore even nowadays in the region, consists of a shirt with wide sleeves, enriched with stitches and 'altite' and wears a veil ('marama') on her head rolled back and tied 'as it was customary for wives'.[93] Next to them, there are rendered 'The Presentation of Christ at the Temple', 'The Baptism', and 'The Transfiguration'. Both the stylistic features – the local rendition of the Byzantine-Gothic interferences – and the familiar knowledge of the traditional dress corroborate that the anonymous painter of these scenes was a native. A stranger, even if he had studied the dress of the locals, would not have been able to limn with such nuances the ornamentation with which a local was habituated.[94] If the walls of the apse show the faces of Saints Basil the Great and Nicholas, 'Archangels Michael and Gabriel', silhouettes of saint bishops (nowadays obscure) and deacons, as the representation of 'Jesus Eucharist', the iconostasis unravels a scene specific to the Byzantine iconography, 'The Mandylion', framed by other two representative scenes: 'The Annunciation' and 'The Birth of Christ'. The nave preserves the frieze of the founders. On the northern wall of the nave, next to the group of the three sanctified Hungarian kings (out of which only the faces of the suzerains Stephen and Emeric are discernible) and to the image of 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon', the pictorial heritage of the church is completed by a series of feast scenes: 'The Prayer of Ghetsemane', 'The Crucifixion', and 'The Resurrection'.[95]

During this century, the Romanian communities became more and more disgruntled because of their social-political situation and amply protested. One of the episodes of major social unrest was the rebellion of Bobâlna that broke out in 1437 and was directed against the increasing pressure exercised by the Catholic Szekler nobility[96]. The leaders of the uprising called for some form of political representation, such as the formation of a peasant order or estate in which Romanians would be included. After the revolt was quenched, their request was met with the formation of *Unio Trium Nationum* that granted political representation to the Hungarian, Saxon, and Szekler nobility, but denied Romanian representation in the political life.[97] The Romanians were merely 'tolerated'.

[93] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 50.
[94] Ibid., p. 51.
[95] Dobrei, *Bisericile ortodoxe hunedorene*, p. 92.
[96] Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan & Susana Andea (Eds) (2006) *Istoria României. Compendiu* [History of Romania. Compendium] (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul Cultural Român), pp. 258-259.
[97] The Diet (The Diet/Country/Assembly/Local Parliament and the National Government (*Gubernium*) were the most important constitutional institutions in Transylvania. The Diet was an important indicator of Transylvania's autonomy. The Diet of 1514 decided to inaugurate a social and political union among the Magyar, Szekler, and Saxon Nobles known under the name of *Unio Trium Nationum*. The three nations became the political power within the state. The Romanian population was excluded from the political life, the Orthodox confession was considered schismatic and thus forbidden. See Rolf Kutschera, *Landtag und Gubernium*, 12 et seqq., p. 370.

A key figure to emerge in Transylvania in the first half of the fifteenth century was John Hunyadi (1387-1456). His subsequent military exploits against the Ottoman Empire brought him further status as the Governor of Hungary in 1446 and papal recognition as the Prince of Transylvania in 1448. The call of the central government to support the fight against the Ottomans found a strong echo among the Romanian *knezes*. Even during the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg, in the third and fourth decades, the *knezes* and *voivodes* from Banat, Haţeg, and Maramureş distinguished themselves in the wars against the Turks, and as a consequence they ascended into the nobility and were granted awards and titles.[98] Yet, they did not forsake their kin and faith; they were the last generation of patrons to endorse indigenous art. However, after Hunyadi's death, the main families of *knezes* and *voivodes* converted to Catholicism in order to maintain their social position and possessions. Still, the predicament caused by the abandonment of the old patrons was overcome by the ascension of Stephen the Great to the throne of Moldavia.[99] For the Transylvanian Romanians his reign established an era of revitalisation of old cultural and artistic traditions within the ambience of princely foundations.[100]

In mid-century, Moldavia joined the traditional artistic exchange between Transylvania and Wallachia, which explains the occurrence of common stylistic and iconographic elements in their ecclesiastical painting. The church murals from Densuş (Hunedoara County) express this very complex connection.[101] The nave and the apse preserve fragments of the mural painting executed in 1443 that draw attention either through the somber nobleness of the expression or the fresh naïveté of the vision. Its stylistic analysis sheds light on the presence of three painters, two of them working in parallel. [102] The frescoes adorning the upper registers of the nave and the apse are the work of master Ştefan. A second painter, probably his disciple that belonged to the local artistic milieu, painted the lower register of the nave.[103] The scenes covering the pillars – amongst which 'Saint Marina humiliating the Devil' (a recurrent scene in the Moldavian art of that time), 'The Holy Trinity', and 'Saint Bartholomew carrying his skin over

[98] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 19.
[99] Ibid., p. 42.
[100] Ibid., p. 55.
[101] The mural ensemble, probably dating from the fifteenth century, appears to be a donation to the *knezes* of Manjina family, often mentioned in the documents of the time both concerning the convening of judgment seats and in the context of the anti-Ottoman campaigns undertaken by the Hungarian royalty. In favour of this hypothesis there are three Slavonic writings on the central pillars of the nave. One dates from 1566, attesting the death of master ('jupan') Andrias Manjina: 'In 7074 [1566] died master (jupan) Manjina Andrias, February 10'; the other two are undated and incomplete. See Dobrei, *Bisericile ortodoxe hunedorene*, p. 33.
[102] Drăguţ, *Pictura murală*, p. 52.
[103] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 16.

a rod' – allude to the provenance of the painter, a native that drew inspiration from the ordinary rural life. The colour easily follows the surface of the forms shaped by the unwavering drawing, with vague indications of modelling. The personages have an oval face, large almond-shaped eyes – as those of Crişcior or Leşnic – but the more precious chromatic choice and secure technique indicate a later stage. His frescoes are of a 'delicious naïveté'[104], especially his unwonted rendition of 'The Holy Trinity': the Father is a grandfather of quiet gentleness, bearing a close semblance to the village elders, and the Son wears a shirt ornamented with 'alesături'[105] as if he belonged to the world of the same village in which the painter lived.[106] The southern wall of the nave consists of apostles, warrior saints, thaumaturges, and female martyrs, and the lower register of the apse is reserved to the holy hierarchs.[107] The figures detach themselves from the ultramarine background, enveloping themselves in the loose rhythm of the drawing, the warm chromatic harmony, and the esoteric solemnity of the ritual. The two thaumaturges in the northwestern corner of the second register of the nave impress through their beautiful rendition. Represented frontally, the first holding a small box and the second a chalice in his left hand, they both seem to make the same gesture as if they wanted to offer a healing medicine with the teaspoon held in their right hand. The saint on the left is an unfledged youngster with a plump face and tightly curled hair after the Hellenistic fashion revived in the painting of the Palaeologan epoch. The face calligraphed with purity, the long delicate nose, small mouth, and large expressive eyes recall the models of the same epoch, as it is also the case of the subtle modelling rarely highlighted by white strokes. Boasting the same stylistic features, the second saint is a mature bearded man of austere, almost ascetic expression.[108]

Ştefan's stylistic virtues can be better comprehended after the analysis of the scenes from the apse. The large but firm movements order themselves in an ensemble of solemn ritual of whose inner rhythmicity extends in the exterior rhythms given by the contours of the garments, the gestures, and the modulation of expression. In crafting the overall effect, he did not neglect the details, drawing and modelling the physiognomic traits with scrupulous care, deepening and accentuating expressions. The figures of saints Arsenius and Athanasius impress not only through the vigorous monumentality and firmness of gestures, but also through the exact typological definition, the clarity

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[104] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini,* p. 26.
[105] 'Alesătura' (pl. 'alesături') is a technique used in the ornamentation of Romanian folk costumes.
[106] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 16.
[107] Ibid., p. 17.
[108] Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, p. 17.

and certainty of rendition.[109] Reduced to few colours (ultramarine for the setting, yellow ochre, light and dark chestnut brown, red, light and dark green, black, white, rarely mauve), the chromatic range is modelled with sobriety and delicacy at the same time, the harmony of the colours (especially in the apse) having something from the warmth of an old 'lăicer' (traditional Romanian wool rug).[110] The stylistic characteristics of these frescoes are reminiscent of the painting of Saint Nicholas Church in Curtea de Argeş[111], founded by the first Basarab dynasty in the fourteenth century.[112] The monumental vision of characters, the firm but generous drawing, and in particular the attitude, garments, and typology of the representation of hierarchs in the apse[113] conclude that master Ştefan is an exponent of the Wallachian medieval art, trained in the tradition of Saint Nicholas Church in Curtea de Argeş[114].

These reflexes of Wallachian art not only highlight an artistic unity existent at that point in time, but also a sustainable prominent artistic life in Wallachia and the seasoned aesthetic concerns of Transylvanian princes.[115] What is more, the frescoes of Densuş prefigure those of the church of Dolheştii Mari (Suceava County) through the essentialised treatment of the iconographic programme, pointing to the progression of the artistic relations with Moldavia, relations that intertwined with political and religious ones.[116]

3.3 The sixteenth century. Byzantine coordinates and Renaissance influences

Introduced in this century, the Reformation questioned the legitimacy of the use of religious images in the sacred space and the worship service, leading to the restructuring of the sacred space and a new pious attitude of the faithful.[117] In Transylvania, the Reformation generated the

[109] Ibid., p. 18.
[110] Idem.
[111] Marius Telea (2009) Influenţe culturale bizantino-apusene în Ţările Române [Byzantine-Western Cultural Influences in the Romanian Countries], *Altarul Reîntregirii*, 2, pp. 95, 103.
[112] Dobrei, *Bisericile ortodoxe hunedorene*, p. 32; Drăguţ, *Vechi monumente*, pp. 18-19.
[113] The portraits of the great hierarchs of the two churches are nearly identical. See Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 26.
[114] Vasile Drăguş (1966) Un zugrav din Transilvania secolului al XV-lea: Ştefan de la Densuş [A Fifteenth-Century Transylvanian Painter: Ştefan of Densuş], *SCIA*, 2, pp. 238-241.
[115] Drăgut, *Vechi monumente*, p. 19.
[116] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 26.
[117] David Freedberg (1989) *The Power of Images: studies in the history and theory of response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); Sergiusz Michalski (1993) *The Reformation and the*

encounter between Protestantism and Catholicism on one side, and between Protestantism and Orthodoxy on the other side. Protestant ideas spread rapidly throughout the province after Hungary's collapse[118] through preaching and printed literature. Printing presses were established in major towns, producing Protestant creeds, statements of doctrine, sermons, catechisms, schoolbooks, and hymnals. The first translation of the Bible into Hungarian was made in 1590 due to the work of Gáspár Károlyi, minister at Vizsoly in northeastern Hungary.[119]Romanian translations of catechisms and other religious books were printed at Sibiu and Braşov. For instance, the Lutheran catechism was translated in Romanian at Sibiu in 1544.[120]

The Reformation was embraced almost instantly by two of the three political nations, the Saxons and the Hungarian nobles. The Saxons, who had close contact with Germany and were unhappy with the Catholic hierarchy, were the first to accept the Lutheran Reformation, especially through the endeavours of pastors such as Johannes Honterus and Valentin Wagner. At the same time, the Hungarian nobles, mainly those from Banat and the Western Parts, also embraced Lutheranism and set their own hierarchy, different from the Saxon one. Shortly afterwards, however, Calvinism spread all over Transylvania, especially among the Lutheran nobles and the Hungarian commoners. Soon, nearly all the nobles in the principality were Calvinist. An important role in the dissemination of Calvinism and the organisation of the Calvinist Church was played by two local Germans,

Visual Arts (London: Routledge); Andrew Spicer & Sarah Hamilton (Eds) (2005) *Defining the Holy, Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate); Bob Scribner (1989) Popular Piety and Modes of Visual Perception in Late Medieval and Reformation Germany, *The Journal of Religious History*, pp. 448-469; Christine Peters (1995) Mural Paintings, Ethnicity and Religious Identity in Transylvania. The Context for Reformation, in Maria Crăciun & Ovidiu Ghitta (Eds) *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană), pp. 44-63; Maria Crăciun (2004) Iconoclasm and Theology in Reformation Transylvania: the iconography of the polyptich of the church at Biertan, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 94, pp. 61-97.

[118] Transylvania ceased to exist as a *voivodate* within the Kingdom of Hungary in 1541, when the kingdom fell apart under the Ottoman attacks. Its central part (with the capital city at Buda) was occupied by the Ottomans and turned into a pashalik, the northwest (the future territories of Croatia and Slovakia) went to the Habsburgs, while the east (Transylvania) became a semi-independent principality under Ottoman suzerainty. See Călin Felezeu (2009) Cadrul politic internațional (1541-1699) [The International Background (1541-1699)], in Ioan-Aurel Pop, Thomas Nägler & András Magyari (Eds) *Istoria Transilvaniei*. vol. 2. *De la 1541 la 1711* [History of Transylvania. vol. 2. From 1541 to 1711] (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română – Centrul pentru Studii Transilvane), pp. 15-24.

[119] Hans J. Hillerbrand (Ed.) (2004) *The Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, vols. 1-4 (London and New York: Routledge), p. 748.

[120] Paul Negruț (2003) A Survey of the History of Christianity in Romania from the Beginning of the Protestant Reformation until the End of the 19th Century, *Perichoresis*, p. 103.

Kaspar Helth and Francis David (both initially Lutheran). The latter, after becoming the very leader of the Calvinist Church, converted to Unitarianism, and organised the new Unitarian Church, which refuted the Holy Trinity.[121]

In 1564, Calvinism and Lutheranism were declared 'free or official religions' by the country assembly. In 1572, the Diet granted similar status to the new Unitarian denomination.[122] Therefore, the political and religious system was based on three recognised nations (the Hungarian nobles, the Saxons, and the Szeklers) and four 'official religions' (Calvinist, Lutheran, Unitarian, and Catholic). However, this 'acceptance' did not rule out a number of conflicts and a certain rivalry between the new faiths and the previously dominant Catholic Church, and especially among the new denominations themselves.[123] Within this climate of Protestant plurivocality, the Orthodox Church was merely tolerated, but had all the rights to exercise freely its mission and worship, it was deemed neither illicit nor innovative.[124]

Chiefly in the form of Calvinism and Unitarianism, the Reformation enjoyed only modest success among the Szeklers, who remained largely Catholic.[125] The Romanians were confronted with rather ineffective proselytising from the Calvinist Magyars, but a small percentage of the nobility went over to this confession.[126]

Amongst the concerns of the newly converted Protestants there were the role and place of icons and saints in the life of the believer. For instance, Honterus supported the removal of the altar and the pictures from the churches in Cluj and campaigned for *sola Scriptura*.[127] The repercussions on the adornment of churches were more severe in the southern and central areas. The changes to church fabric of several Catholic and Orthodox churches in the district of Hațeg demonstrate the

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[121] Ioan-Aurel Pop (2013) *Religiones* and *Nationes* in Transylvania during the 16th Century: between acceptance and exclusion, *JSRI*, 12 (34), pp. 221-222.

[122] Pop, *Religiones* and *Nationes* in Transylvania, p. 222.

[123] Ibid., p. 223; Graeme Murdock (1996) International Calvinism and the Reformed Church of Hungary and Transylvania, 1613-1658 (PhD thesis, University of Oxford), pp. 9-10.

[124] Paul Brusanowski (2006) Considerații cu privire la relația dintre Biserica Ortodoxă Română și autoritățile de stat din Principatul autonom al Transilvaniei (1541-1690) [Considerations on the Relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the State Authorities in the Autonomous Province of Transylvania (1541-1690)], *RT*, 16 (2), pp. 122-142.

[125] Pop, *Religiones* and *Nationes* in Transylvania, p. 222.

[126] Mircea Păcurariu (2010) Romanian Christianity, in Ken Parry (Ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell), p. 196.

[127] Negruț, 'A Survey ', p. 103.

alterations prompted by the Reformation: the removal of the altar stone, the disposal of the iconostasis, and the whitewashing of wall paintings. There is some evidence in Haţeg of ritual mutilation of images as well as in Densuş and Ostrov.[128] The eyes of an image were taken out in Colţi Buz and in Răchitova the face of the saint has been scraped off.[129] The northern area, more isolated and strongly connected with the Orthodox church of Moldavia, preserved the iconographic traditions and continued forms of expression characteristic to the Romanian painting from all of the three principalities.

The reaction of the Orthodox church in Transylvania, backed by the Romanian princes, was not simply reduced to the condemnation of Reformation theses, but focused on the increase of printing and the support given to Slavonic books, the restoration of old churches or monasteries, and the preservation of the old means of artistic expression.[130]

If in the second half of the century only a reduced number of monuments were decorated with mural painting (Cetatea de Baltă and probably the church of Prislop Monastery), a reversed tendency was evident in the number of icons, which was instead growing.[131]

The icons from Urisiu de Jos, 'Virgin Mary with Child' (*Hodegetria*) and 'Saint Nicholas' were painted by a Moldavian master in 1539[132] and donated the same year by nobleman Luca from Urisiu to the village church[133]. These icons reveal the artistic connections between the two provinces, the Moldavian painting school contributing greatly to the adornment of monuments in medieval Transylvania. During this period of fruitful artistic collaboration, while the Transylvanian masons,

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[128] Adrian Andrei Rusu (1997) *Ctitori şi biserici din Ţara Haţegului până la 1700* [Founders and Churches in the Land of Haţeg until 1700] (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean), pp. 141-333.
[129] Maria Crăciun (2002) Traditional Practices: Catholic missionaries and Protestant religious practice in Transylvania, in Helen Parish & William G. Naphy (Eds) *Religion and Superstition in Reformation Europe* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press), p. 83.
[130] *Porumb, Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 68.
[131] Idem; Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 74.
[132] Marius Porumb (1973) Icoanele moldoveneşti ale bisericii de lemn din Urisiu de Jos, judeţul Mureş [The Moldavian Icons of the Wooden Church in Urisiu de Jos, Mureş County], *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai. Series Historia*, 2, p. 41.
[133] Porumb, 'Icoanele moldoveneşti', p. 37. The icons are currently kept in the church of the Saint Archangels in Urisiu de Jos, which is a wooden church built in the eighteenth century near Reghin, Mureş County. See Eugenia Greceanu (1969) Tipologia bisericilor de lemn din zona centrală a Transilvaniei [Typology of Wooden Churches in the Central Area of Transylvania], *MI*, pp. 59-66.

bricklayers, and sculptors were requested by the Moldavian *voivodes* to erect important religious or laic edifices, painters from Moldavia were employed to paint churches or icons in Transylvania. The decorative elements from the repertory of Renaissance painting found at the icons from Urisiu de Jos, but also in the painting of Moldavian monasteries, as early as the end of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century prove an earlier penetration in Romanian art. The attraction exercised by the artistic centres of Moldavia, the fame of the painters who had decorated the facades of monasteries in Bucovina, the circulation of masters as well as ecclesiastical connections between the two provinces contributed to the creation of a new trend in Transylvanian painting (the local masters being strongly influenced by the Moldavian art).[134]

The Virgin holding the Child with her left arm is depicted waist-length and takes almost the entire central space delineated on each side by the apostles shown bust length. The large burgundy-red maphorion brocaded with stylised flowers and seamed with golden strips of vine stalks in relief direct the attention to her face, which expresses grief. The Child, seated frontally, is dressed in a yellow-white tunic with a stylised floral pattern and an ochre-orange himation executed with gold flecks. The same grief conveyed by olive-brown shadows envelops his face. The light is created by soft white brushstrokes, and the thin contour lines are marked with black.[135] On both sides, prophets with individualised traits hold rotuli in their hands. Amongst them, David and Solomon dressed in Byzantine garb and wearing western hats[136] demand attention; this image often occurred in the Moldavian painting at the turn of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth.[137] In the upper corners, small trilobate arcades frame the Archangel Gabriel to the left and Mary to the right, both standing, while in a secondary register the scene of 'The Annunciation' takes shape.[138]

The same minute, decorative disposition can also be recognised in the icon of 'Saint Nicholas'. The tendency towards excessive decoration is emphasised by the flat painting contrasting with the geometrised motifs of the polistavrion and the gospel that the saint holds in his left hand. The saint is an elder with wide forehead and meditative gaze and

[134] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 62.
[135] Porumb, 'Icoanele moldoveneşti', p. 38.
[136] Alexandru Alexianu (1971) *Mode şi vesminte din trecut* [Fashions and Garments of the Past], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), fig. 66-69.
[137] Porumb, 'Icoanele moldoveneşti', pp. 38-39.
[138] Ibid., p. 39.

his head enclosed in a halo decorated with vine tendrils in relief and disks. He is flanked by medallion images of Jesus with his arm reaching the saint to offer the gospel and Mary, who is shown without omophorion. As in the other icon, the centre is delineated from lateral scenes, which succinctly present the life and wonders of Saint Nicholas. In the upper corners, two of the church archbishops clad in polistavrion are framed in trilobate arches, to the left Saint Basil the Great and to the right Saint John Crysostom.[139]

Both icons share many similarities with icons of various churches and monasteries in Moldavia. Their gold setting is executed in relief, in diamond and leaf shapes paired in crosses. The broad silhouette of Mary, the treatment of faces, and the ornamental motifs of the garments are in the same vein as the royal icon from Humor (Suceava County), believed to date from the second half of the sixteenth century[140]. The painter of the royal icons from Humor is obviously more talented than the author of the icons from Urisiu, but generally speaking they both belong to the same artistic trend, 'a post-Byzantine academism', combined with numerous Renaissance elements.[141]

The icon of 'Virgin with Christ Child' (*Eleusa*) kept in the Saint Nicholas Church in Şchei was donated by a Romanian family from this village in 1564. Its placement of personages, proportion of silhouettes, and colouring of faces capture influences of the Italo-Cretan school. The painter expressed the relief of the faces by lighting up the ochre-brown under-coat of the flesh with soft hues of pink and white. The twelve apostles carrying rolled up or open scrolls frame the central scene. The geometrical treatment of the garment folds also corresponds to the features of the Italo-Cretan style. Each prophet is individualised by garment, hair, and beard. The painter's intention was to show on the Virgin's face her sorrowful presage of her Son's passion; seeing his Mother's grief, the Son presses Himself close to her with childish caresses, and she answers this by yielding to the tenderness of a mother's love. This representation transgresses the hieratic phase of Byzantine painting, coming close to the type of 'Our Lady Eleusa' developed by the Italo-Cretan school.[142] Another icon in this church donated by the Wallachian ruler Petru Cercel in 1584[143] displays the

[139] Porumb, 'Icoanele moldoveneşti', p. 39.
[140] Corina Nicolescu (1971) *Icoane vechi româneşti* [Old Romanian Icons] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 35, fig. 25; Vătăşianu (Ed.), *Istoria artelor plastice*, vol. 1, p. 141.
[141] Porumb, 'Icoanele moldoveneşti', p. 41.
[142] Porumb, *Pictura românesca din Transilvania*, pp. 68-69.
[143] Sterie Stinghe (1899) *Istoria beserecei Şcheilor Braşovului. Manuscript de la Radu Tempea* [The History of the Holy Church of Şcheii Braşovului. Radu Tempea's Manuscript] (Braşov:

attributes of the same style and was probably painted by Andreas Ritzos[144] from Candia (modern Heraklion) or a painter from his workshop.[145] The icon of the 'Virgin of the Passion' is painted on olive wood panel and is a replica of an icon signed by Ritzos and kept in the collection of the Museo Bandini in Fiesole. Mary is represented bust-length, holding the Christ child in her left hand. The Child clutches her right hand and turns his head anxiously towards the archangel on His right, who carries a cross. Hovering to the left, the other archangel carries a bowl of vinegar, lance, cane, and sponge. The background is gilded, and the nimbi are incised. The Virgin wears an olive green tunic and a burgundy *maphorion*, and the Child is clad in ochre tunic and mantle with gold highlights. The prototype of the 'Virgin of Passion' was highly popular in Italo-Cretan painting, and the formulas used were adopted from mural ensembles of the Palaeologan epoch.[146] The geometrically ordered drapery, refined drawing and colouring, and typology of figures indicate that the icon was created in mid-fifteenth century.[147]

In 1572, the state authorities allowed Romanian metropolitans to live in Alba-Iulia, which had become the capital city of the Principality of Transylvania. It became their official residence until the first part of the eighteenth century. There were close connections between the Church in Transylvania and those in Wallachia and Moldavia. The Metropolitan of Wallachia was appointed representative of the Patriarch of Constantinople in Transylvania and had the right to ordain hierarchs. [148] Moldavian and Wallachian princes founded and restored many Transylvanian churches, and also contributed with donations. The erection of the stone church of Saint Nicholas in Şcheii

Tipografia Ciurcu & Comp.), p. 4; Ştefan Pascu (1944) *Petru Cercel şi Ţara Românească la sfârşitul sec. XVI* [Petru Cercel and Wallachia at the End of the Sixteenth Century] (Sibiu: Tip. 'Cartea Românească din Cluj'), p. 43.

[144] Andreas Ritzos (active 1451-1492) signed three of the most paradigmatic Virgins of the Passion ('Andreas Rico de Candia pinxit'). See Thalia Gouma-Peterson (1991) The Icon as a Cultural Presence After 1453, in John J. Yiannis (Ed.) *Byzantine Tradition After the Fall of Constantinople* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), p. 153. One is at the Museo Bandini in Fiesole, another at the Galleria of Parma, and the other one at the Saint Blasius Church in Ston. The icons are almost perfect matches, except for slight variations in the decoration of the haloes. Andreas was from a family of painters: his father Maneas was a goldsmith and painter, and his son Nicholas and grandson Maneas painted as well; the three generations took an active role in shaping up the art scene in Heraklion from 1420 until 15711. See Gouma-Peterson, 'The Icon as a Cultural Presence', p. 153; Manolis Chatzidakis (1976) *Études sur la peinture postbyzantine* (London: Variorum Reprints), pp. 175-182.

[145] Manolis Chatzidakis (1962) *Icônes de Saint Georges des Grecs et de la collection de l'institut Hellénique de Venise* (Venice: Neri Pozza), pp. XXXII, XL, XLVII.

[146] Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint Georges*, p. 40.

[147] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 70.

[148] Păcurariu, 'Romanian Christianity', p. 196.

Braşovului was supported by the Wallachian ruler Neagoe Basarab ((1512-1521) and benefitted from several interventions of princes from Wallachia and Moldavia throughout the century. Petru Cercel (1583-1585) supported the addition of the porch and the adornment of the apse. Aron Vodă (1591-1592; 1592-1595) continued Petru's work of adornment and raised the steeple in 1595.[149] In 1572, Wallachian ruler Alexandru Mircea (1568-1574; 1574-1577) asked Transylvanian *voivode* Stephen Báthory (1571-1586) to keep the old organisation of the monastery and bishopric of Lancrăm founded by Wallachian boyars at the middle of the century. Mara Očarovič and her daughter Helena, wife of Wallachian prince Petru Şchiopul (1574-1577; 1578-1579; 1583-1591), restored the church from Bârsău (built in the previous century) sometimes before 1563.[150] Michael the Brave built the cathedral and metropolitan residence in Alba Iulia (1597)[151], churches in Ocna-Sibiului (1599[152], and Făgăraş[153].

3.4 The seventeenth century. Traditions, interferences, and innovations

After the death of Michael the Brave and the shattering of Habsburgs' ambitions, the Transylvanian principality regained its autonomy, subjecting itself to Turkish suzerainty. During much of the seventeenth

[149] See Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 1, pp. 53-54; Octavian Şchiau & Livia Bot (Eds) (1969) *Radu Tempea. Istoria sfintei biserici a Şcheilor Braşovului* [Radu Tempea. The History of the Holy Church of Şcheii Braşovului] (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură), p. 59.

[150] Silviu Dragomir (1930-1931) Ctitorii bisericii din Bârsău în judeţul Hunedoara [The Founders of the Church of Bârsău, Hunedoara County], *ACMIT*, pp. 139-148.

[151] In order to convince Transylvanian prince Sigismund Báthory (1581-1597; 1598-1599; 1601; 1601-1602) to intervene in the anti-Ottoman campaign initiated by the Christian League, Michael submitted to Bathory's suzerainty in May 1595. In compensation, he obtained the religious unification of the Romanians from Transylvania and Wallachia under Wallachia's archbishop, and was also granted permission to build the cathedral, which became the residence of metropolitan Ioan of Prislop (1585-1605). See Ioan-Aurel Pop (2017) Mihai Viteazul, apărător al creştinătăţii [Michael the Brave, Defender of Christianity], *Arhivele Bistriţei*, 1 (5), pp. 11-40.

[152] On 17 July 1609 the magistrate of Ocna wanted to tear down the church, but the priest together with the townspeople settled the matter by agreeing to pay 'church money' (ten dinars the spoused and five the widowers) to the Reformed Church. By paying this tax, the Orthodox community managed to keep its worship edifice. See Ioan Broju (1892) *Biserica din Ocna Sibiului. 1600 sau 1701* [The Church in Ocna Sibiului. 1600 or 1701] (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane), p. 7.

[153] In the spring of 1617 the church of Făgăraş no longer existed, and the land where it had been built was given to captain Mihail Gyulai by prince Gabriel Bethlen (1613-1629). See Ioan-Aurel Pop (1993) Mihai Viteazul şi Ţara Făgăraşului [Michael the Brave and the Land of Făgăraş], *Revista istorică*, 4 (5-6), p. 497.

century, Transylvania was caught between the struggle for power between the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires, and by the end of the century its dominance by the Ottoman Empire was to be replaced by that of the Habsburgs. At the start of the century, the years of general Basta's control (1601-1605), in which he persecuted the Protestants and promoted the interests of Catholicism and Austria, were ended by the Reformist Stephen Bocksai, who rose up against Habsburg emperor Rudolf II and Basta with the help of the Turks, and was elected prince of Transylvania in 1605. Bocksai was followed by Gabriel Bethlen, whose reign lasted from 1608 to 1613. After his murder the Ottomans installed Gabriel Bethlen, who ruled from 1613 to 1629. George I Rákóczi served as prince of Transylvania from 1630 until 1648. He was succeeded by his son, George II Rákóczi, who defied the Turks by attacking Poland, which led to Turkish attempts to depose him for undertaking an unauthorised war, and finally to the Turkish invasion of Transylvania.[154]

The Church was subject to heavy pressure from the Calvinist princes, who were determined to convert the Orthodox clergy and faithful to Calvinism. George Rákóczi I was especially zealous. He printed a Calvinist catechism in Alba Iulia in 1642 and demanded the Metropolitan to disseminate Calvinist teachings among his flock. Prince Mihaly Apafi (1661-1690) intervened directly in the affairs of the Orthodox Church and had Metropolitan Sava Brâncovici (1656-1659; 1662-1680) imprisoned because of his sturdy opposition to Calvinist proselytism.[155]

The Church was in a state of institutional disarray, as many decrees, diplomas, and laws stipulated, in a way or another, the submission of the Romanian Church to the jurisdiction of a Calvinist superintendent and to the decisions of the Calvinist synods. This also involved, among other things, the ordination of priests (and only of those) recommended by the Calvinist bishops and the introduction and compulsory teaching/learning of Calvinist catechism in schools. Some of these demands were included in the laws of the country, while other appear as conditions put on Romanian hierarchs by the Calvinist monarchs, whom the Diet granted free reign over their subjects. Orthodox metropolitans in Transylvania meanwhile were recognised by the secular authorities, but owed obedience to the Reformed church

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[154] Florin Dobrei (2012) Ortodoxie şi reformă în Transilvania secolelor XVI-XVII [Orthodoxy and Reformation in Transylvania in the Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries], *RT*, 94 (1), pp. 128-129.
[155] Keith Hitchins (2014) *A Concise History of Romania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 58.

superintendent. The Calvinist policy to which all those in the seat of metropolitan of Alba Iulia had to subscribe stated explicitly that crosses and images in churches would no longer be objects of rite, but mere ornaments reminding the believers of Christ's Passion (this provision was on the list of conditions of the Reformation programme laid down on 22 September 1640 and of the diplomas ordaining the metropolitans from 10 October 1643 and 28 December 1680).[156]

The churches suffered material loss, as the 'idolatrous traces' were eliminated from the worship places on the properties of the calvinised nobility.[157] The wall paintings were covered with lime[158] or suffered other alterations (they were grazed or pecked)[159]. Interfaith reports accussed the Calvinist Church of destructing the artistic heritage of Romanian churches accumulated in the previous centuries and of impeding the adornment with icons or painting by directing the parishioners' financial resources to purchasing books of worship.[160] The paucity of icons was apprehended in the context of the union with Rome, when bishop Atanasie Anghel and his synod imposed punitive actions against the priests and communities that did not have at least images of Jesus, Mother of God, and Saint Nicholas in their churches (provision 24 of the synod of 14 September 1700).[161]

The threats against Romanian Orthodoxy in Transylvania led to the emergence of the first original Romanian religious polemical work,

[156] Zenove Pâclişan (1912) Biserica românească şi Calvinismul de la moartea lui Gavrilă Bethlen până la Unirea cu Roma [The Romanian Church and Calvinism from the Death of Gabriel Bethlen to the Union with Rome], *Cultura creştină*, 6-7, pp. 167-178; Ana Dumitran (2001-2002) Aspecte ale politicii confesionale a principatului calvin faţă de români: confirmările în funcţiile ecleziastice şi programul de reformare a Bisericii Ortodoxe din Transilvania [Aspects of the Confessional Policy of the Calvinist Principality Towards the Romanians: endorsing the ecclesiastical positions and the reform programme for the Orthodox Church in Transylvania], *Mediaevalia Transilvanica*, 5-6 (1-2), p. 153.
[157] Rusu, *Ctitori şi biserici din Ţara Haţegului*, pp. 44-48.
[158] This is the case of the Saint Nicholas Church in Ribiţa. The most part of the pictorial ensemble stood hidden a long time under the impersonal coating imposed by the Reformation. It was re-brought to light partially in 1994 and 2009-2010 through restoration. See Eugenia Greceanu (1995) Ipoteze şi certitudini în frescele descoperite la Ribiţa (judeţul Hunedoara) [Hypotheses and Certainties in the Frescoes Discovered at Ribiţa (Hunedoara County)], *Ars Transsilvaniae*, 5, p. 85.
[159] Drăguţ, 'Consideraţii asupra iconografiei', p. 16.
[160] Ana Dumitran (2012) Pictura românească în judeţul Alba până la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea. Demersuri pentru o bază de date [The Romanian Painting in Alba County until Mid-Nineteenth Century. Steps Towards a Database], *Patrimonium Apulenses*, 12, p. 1.
[161] Ana Dumitran, Hegedűs Enikő & Vasile Rus (Eds) (2011) *Fecioarele înlăcrimate ale Transilvaniei. Preliminarii la o istorie ilustrată a toleranţei religioase* [The Weeping Virgins of Transylvania. Preamble to an Illustrated History of Religious Tolerance], catalogue of the temporary exhibition held at the National Museum of the Union, Alba Iulia, between 14 October – 11 November 2011, p. 29.

'Response to the Calvinist catechism' (1645)[162] of Metropolitan Varlaam of Moldavia (1580-1657), in order to refute the teachings of the Calvinists in Transylvania. Born from a free peasant family, he was a staunch defender of Orthodoxy and its cultural heritage. He recognised the value of using Romanian when he needed to address a wider audience beyond the elite. Varlaam translated into Romanian and supervised the printing of large numbers of copies of the 'Romanian Book of Teaching' ('The Homiliary') addressed to 'the Christians in Transylvania of the same kin'.[163] 'The Homiliary' was printed at the printing-house of the Three Holy Hierarchs Monastery in Iaşi in 1642.[164]

In this epoch of dogmatic and theological confrontations, the few fragments of mural painting and icons that have been preserved are evidences of a deviation from the rigid principles of Orthodox iconography. This is the case of the inner frescoes of Râmeţi monastery, which were realised without further regard to the traditional order of scenes. The layer of mural painting on the eastern wall of its nave of illustrates, contrary to the canon, 'The Ascension of Christ', the patronal feast of the church, on the upper side of the iconostasis, a space always destined to the Crucifixion. Moreover, the tier of the 'Deesis' with the apostles by each side is omitted from the iconostasis.[165]

In the second half of the century and especially towards its end, if in southern Transylvania painters still pursued a Byzantine trend in their approach and compositions and also resorted to syntheses with Renaissance elements, in the northern part of the principality (especially in Maramureş), workshops of painters of rustic formation started to play a significant part.[166] The activity of painting workshops in

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[162] Leading a deputation to Târgovişte in 1644, Varlaam met with scholar Udrişte Năsturel, the brother-in-law of Matei Basarab (1632-1654), who owned a copy of the Calvinist catechism. The Calvinist catechism was printed with the support of George Csulai (preacher of the princely court and future superintendent) on 25 July 1640. The reaction to Varlaam's rebuttal of its teachings came in 1656, when the 'Defense of the catechism' was published under the supervision of Csulai, now superintendent. See Pâclişan, 'Biserica românească şi Calvinismul', pp. 168-169, 173, 177.

[163] See George Călinescu, Mihai Beniuc, Alexandru Rosetti et al. (Eds) (1964) *Istoria literaturii române*. vol. 1. *Folclorul. Literatura română în perioada feudală (1400-1780)* [History of Romanian Literature. vol. 1. The Folklore. The Romanian Literature in the Feudal Period] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), p. 371; George Ivaşcu (1969) *Istoria literaturii române* [History of Romanian Literature], vol. 1 (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică), pp. 143-144; Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, p. 137.

[164] The printing house was founded by Petru Movilă, metropolitan of Kiev, Halyč and all Rus' at the request of the Moldavian *voivode* Vasile Lupu (1593-1661). See Cornel Tatai-Baltă (1979) Incursiune în xilogravura românească. Secolul XVI-XIX [Incursion into Romanian Woodcuts. Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries], *Apulum*, 17, pp. 441-467.

[165] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 83.

[166] Ibid., p. 82.

Maramureș subsided in intensity not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. With the rudimentary means that they had, masters sometimes reproduced the woodcuts from the prints of that time, as is the case of the anonymous iconographer from Sârbi (Susani), who transposed in a clumsy way a picture of Saint Paraskeva from Varlaam's Homiliary[167] in one of his icons.[168] Against a light background decorated with leaves, the saint is represented holding a cross in her right hand and a branch with flowers in her left, and wearing a crown; on the sides the following scenes unfold: 'The Saint kneels in prayer inside a church', 'Giving away her garment to the poor', 'Wandering in the wilderness', 'The visiting angel in the wilderness urged her to give up her soul into the care of God', 'The death of the Saint', and 'The discovery of her relics'.[169]

The most interesting ensemble representative for the phenomenon of artistic innovation in the second half of the century is preserved at Saint Nicholas church in Hunedoara. It was executed in 1654 at the expense of merchants Dumitru Marcoceanul and Nicolae Crăciun by painters Căian, Constantin, and Stan.[170] The iconographic repertory is relatively limited. A decorative frieze separates the two registers painted on the southern and northern walls of the nave: the first register comprises scenes linked to the 'Passion of Christ' ('The Crucifixion', 'The Descent from the Cross') on the upper side, which through the wealth of its details shows the influence of apocryphal writings and popular legends that were disseminated in the monastic environment as well as amongst the people, while the lower register is

[167] Metropolitan Movilă not only sent the printing equipement, but also specialists from Kiev to Iaşi. Amongst them was engraver Ilia, who decorated Varlaam's Homiliary; the woodcuts that appear in the book are dated 1641 or 1642. Ilia was one of the most famous Ukrainean engravers of that period. His name appears in books printed in Kiev and Lviv between 1638-1658. He made woodcuts for the Kievo-Pečerska Lavra printing-house in 1640. The woodcuts in the Homiliary illustrate saints and biblical scenes. The full-page illustration of Saint Paraskeva follows the pattern of a hagiographical icon (the woodcut was conceived especially for this book, as the relics of the saint were purchased from Instanbul and transferred to Iaşi at the church of the Three Holy Hierarchs by Vasile Lupu). See Cornel Tatai-Baltă (2017) Cunoaşterea xilogravurii ucrainene în diferite centre tipografice româneşti (sec. XVII-XIX) [The Influence of Ukrainian Woodcuts on Different Romanian Typographical Centres (Seventeenth-Nineteenth Centuries)], *Transilvania*, 4-5, pp. 7-8; Oksana Yurchyshyn-Smith (2003) The Printing-House of the Monastery of Trei Ierarhi in Iaşi and Its Staff, *Series Byzantina*, 1, pp. 154-157.
[168] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 90.
[169] Victor Brătulescu (1941) Biserici din Maramureş [Churches from Maramureş], *BCMI*, p. 36.
[170] Virgil Vătăşianu (Ed.) (1970) *Istoria artelor plastice în România* [The History of Plastic Arts in Romania], vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 168; Antonie Plămădeală (1987) *Biserica Ortodoxă Română. Monografie – Album* [Romanian Orthodox Church. Monograph – Album] (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al BOR), pp. 161-208.

adorned with friezes of saints.[171] The personages are of larger dimensions and slim and the architectural elements and the landscape are somewhat richer. Remarkable are the figures of the founders on the western wall (southward side) of the nave, holding a faithful model of the church in their hands.[172]

In parallel with the activity of painters in Maramureş, in the northwest of Cluj-Napoca there activated a group of painters with a similar training to those in the northern province. The most important icons owed to these masters are found in the wooden church of Ciubăncuța (Cluj County). The icon of 'Christ Pantocrator' dated 1676 sheds light on the year of creation of several other icons painted by the same anonymous master for the village church. The physiognomy of Jesus and the floral decor of the background, the drawing and technique, the overall composition speak of a master formed in the laic environment, who no longer knows the tradition of Byzantine *hermeneias*. The decorative elements of the Late Transylvanian Renaissance influenced the anonymous master, who also painted the icons representing the Apostles Peter and Paul and Archangel Michael. The setting of the three icons and the items of clothing are decorated with floral stalks, especially with the stylised tulip motif of the tulip. The imperial doors (illustrating the 'Annunciation'), an icon of 'Virgin Mary with the child' from the wooden church of Pâniceni (town situated near Huedin) as well as various icons from the Apuseni Mountains belong to the same trend in which the Renaissance-Baroque elements integrate in the Orthodox compositions of the late seventeenth century. The introduction of floral elements, Renaissance architecture or Baroque decor demonstrates a new artistic vision of the painters from this period.[173]

The end of the seventeenth century brought a revival in the Romanian art, beginning with the reign of Şerban Cantacuzino (1678-1688) and reaching profound changes under the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714). If all previous artistic epochs belonged to one principality or the other, with a relatively limited territorial expansion, the epoch of Brâncoveanu's reign became a 'common good' of all territories inhabited by Romanians, the dissemination of Brâncovan art encompassing both Transylvania and Moldavia.[174]

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[171] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 84.
[172] Vătăşianu, *Istoria artelor plastice*, vol. 2, p. 168.
[173] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 91.
[174] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 93.

During this century, the activity of painters from Wallachia showed tendencies of emancipation from the formulae of traditional painting, through the innovation of themes, a new conception of composition or the decorative and picturesque character of the style. It is the onset of a laborious and active era in which the church and icon painters wage a continuous dialogue with the past, rediscovering the beauty of old Byzantine paintings, which they integrate in a new formula to the artistic ensembles.[175]

This phase, important for the development of Romanian art in general, has a special significance to Transylvania. The substantial help given by the ruler of Wallachia to Romanians in Transylvania materialised in his foundations at Făgăraș and Sâmbăta de Sus, Ocna Sibiului and Poiana Mărului, donations of money, books and relics[176]. Due to the very workshops of painters sent by Brâncoveanu to several of his foundations in southern Transylvania, the Romanian painting in this region receives new values. During the early reign of Brâncoveanu[177], and especially after his death, with the abolition of princely sites, many painters formed at the school of painting from Hurezi would traverse the Carpathians to decorate religious monuments of the Transylvanian Romanians.[178]

3.5 The eighteenth century. Artistic interferences and stylistic changes

With the defeat of the Turks during their second siege of Vienna in 1683, Transylvania came under the sway of the Habsburgs. Under the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, the Turks recognised Habsburg control over Transylvania, and by 1711 the region had become a part of the Hungarian portion of the Habsburg Empire.

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[175] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 92.
[176] See Ştefan Ionescu & Panait I. Panait (1969) *Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu: viaţa, domnia, epoca* [Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu: life, reign, epoch] (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică), p. 191; Mircea Păcurariu (1968) Legăturile bisericii ortodoxe din Transilvania cu Ţara Românească şi Moldova în secolele XVI-XVIII [The Links of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania with Wallachia and Moldavia in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries], *Mitropolia Ardealului*, 1-3, excerpt, p. 132.
[177] Vasile Drăguţ (1971) *Arta brâncovenească* [Brâncovan Art] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 27.
[178] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, p. 93.

The imposition of Habsburg rule took place without serious opposition from the Transylvanian government or organised resistance from the population. Resolute uprisings were tangled with negotiations on conditions of subjection. Most members of the high aristocracy were sympathetic with this political change, as imperial rule could provide more effective support in defending their existing privileges. That is the reason why in the cultural and artistic fields aristocracy would become the main collaborator of the new regime. In its provisions, The Leopoldine Diploma of 1690 (ratified in 1691) reconfirmed the rights and privileges of the four recognised religions. The small nobility, the urban residents, and the peasantry could not be appeased (armed resistance in Bistriţa and Braşov in 1688 and in Baia Mare in 1689). On such reactions Emeric Thököly, supported by the Turks, based his attempt to conquer the princely throne of Transylvania. The death of Prince Michael Apafi on 15 April 1690 left the country's leadership in the hands of his son elected by the Diet in 1681 and confirmed as such in the agreements with the Habsburgs.[179] The state of tension that enveloped the Principality during those moments enabled the Turks to attempt a reversal of the situation and to impose Emeric Thököly, their own candidate, on the throne. Leading a Turkish-Tatar contingent and supported by troops coming from Wallachia, he invaded Transylvania, defeated General Heisler at the Battle of Zărneşti on 21 August 1690, and was crowned prince in the same year.[180] The redirecting of the imperial troops from the area of Serbia towards Transylvania marked the final defeat of Thököly, who was driven away at the end of October.[181]

The small nobility and peasantry resumed the struggle against the Imperials, collaborating with the Hungarian noblemen Francis Rakoczy II (1704-1711). The population was outraged by the constant growth of the tax burden, while on the other, the estates protested against the increasing intrusion of the central power in the institutional life of the country. Together, they brought about a massive anti-Habsburg uprising (1703-1711), led by Francis Rakoczi II.[182] By mid-1704, the uprising had swept across the entire Transylvania, culminating in the election of Rakoczi as Prince. But in the end the uprising was crushed by the imperial forces, and the nobles were granted forgiveness

[179] Mathias Bernath (1994) *Habsburgii şi începuturile formării Naţiunii Române* [The Habsburgs and the Beginnings of the Formation of the Romanian Nation] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia), pp. 54-55.
[180] Pop, Nägler & Magyari (Eds) *Istoria Transilvaniei*, vol. 2, p. 348.
[181] Bernath, *Habsburgii*, p. 55.
[182] Susana Andea (2006) Ţările Române în secolul al XVII-lea [Romanian Countries in the Seventeenth Century], in Pop, Bolovan & Andea (Eds), *Istoria României*, p. 355.

in exchange for their recognition of the new authority.

Transylvania experienced the direct intervention of Vienna in all matters, but this intervention was far from an unmixed evil. The plans of the dynasty included the expansion of the authority of the Catholic Church, and ultimately, the mobilisation of the resources of the Principality for its military uses against traditional foes such as the Turks. In 1692, Leopold I issued an Imperial patent declaring that all Uniates of the Eastern Rite that had formally united with the Church of Rome were to be granted all the rights and privileges that members of the Catholic Church already possessed. 'The constant looking for cohesion – to which competed factors like dynasty, monarchic absolutism, common military power, bureaucracy – Catholicism was meant not only to offer a spiritual binder to the empire, but all the more to serve as a political instrument in changing the power balance.'[183] The winning over of the majority of the population of the principality of Transylvania to Catholicism would have created not only the Catholic preponderance that the empire needed to consolidate its power, but also the instrument to constrain to fidelity the political nations.

While the offer was open to all communicants of the Eastern Church, Leopold's patent had particular appeal to the Orthodox clergy, many of whom lived in poverty-stricken circumstances. The population also found itself dividing into factions that had never before existed. Numerous material inducements persuaded the Orthodox hierarchy to accept papal supremacy and to establish the Uniate Church in 1698. The aim was to promote Catholicism in the Orthodox East and at the same time to contribute to the cohesiveness of the Habsburg Empire. Uniate Christians were isolated from their Orthodox colleagues, since Orthodox bishops, under pressure from civil authorities, counseled their flocks to avoid contact with those who had united with Rome, and especially to resist the temptation to call Uniates back to their former affiliations with the Orthodox Church. The creation of the Uniate Church divided as many Christians as it united. The Uniate clergy benefited from contact with the cultures of Western Europe, and the Principality, if not allowed to develop economically as much as it might have had if it had retained more independence, was at least spared the civil strife that had characterised much of the previous period. The Uniate Church stimulated rather than extinguished Romanian national feeling. It raised standards of education, financed seminaries and printing presses, and established connections between the Romanian

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[183] Ivaşcu, *Istoria literaturii române*, p. 285.

people and the West. These developments had a strong catalytic influence upon the hitherto neglected and dormant Romanian people.[184] Moreover, Bishop Ioan Inochentie Micu, as the head of the Uniate Church (1729-1751), regarded himself as the representative not only of his church but also of all his fellow Romanians. He launched a campaign to raise the economic, social and educational level of the Romanian peasantry, and to eliminate all inequality between the Romanian and the three nations.[185]

Towards the end of the century, the burdens imposed by the state and by private landowners had become increasingly oppressive. Peasant discontent was deepened by the failure of the Habsburg regime to introduce codes, as it had in other provinces, to regulate lord-peasant relationship. As a result, in 1784 the rebellion of Horea, Cloşca, and Crişan involving Romanians, Hungarians, and Saxons took place. The leaders called for the abolition of the nobility, the distribution of the land of the nobles amongst the peasants, equal taxation for all, and the conversion of the nobility, who were predominantly Hungarian Calvinists, to the Greek Orthodox faith[186]. The rebellion came to an end when government forces intervened at the end of the year.[187]

As a consequence of the tumultuous social and political events in which Romanians were involved, in the first decades of the century the conditions were harsh for sustained cultural-artistic manifestations. The erection of churches stagnated due to the agitation amidst the Romanian Church, which limited the production of monumental painting and icons. Moreover, the development of the Orthodox church art would go through a change that would gradually overthrow the inherited canons, blurring the stylistic and iconographic separation between Orthodox and Catholic art, and at a later stage facilitating the penetration of secular art through the breaches in the old ideological system[188]

[184] Paul Shore (2007) *Jesuits and the Politics of Religious Pluralism in Eighteenth-Century Transylvania. Culture, Politics and Religion, 1693-1773* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing), p. 47.
[185] Augustin Bunea (2012) *Din istoria românilor. Episcopul Ioan Inocenţiu Klein (1728-1751)* [From the History of Romanians. Bishop Ioan Inocentiu Klein (1728-1751)] (2nd edition, Cluj-Napoca: Napoca Star).
[186] The demand for conversion alienated the Hungarian peasants, who had joined their Romanian brethren in the revolt, and brought on ethnic and religious clashes among the rebels themselves. By mid-November reports told of rebel attacks on non-noble Hungarians, and of rebel priests who forcibly converted captured Hungarians, including peasants, to Greek Orthodoxy.
[187] Jerome Blum (1978) *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), pp. 348-349.
[188] Vătăşianu (Ed.), *Istoria artelor plastice în România*, vol. 2, p. 174.

The antipodal situation unfolded in Wallachia, which traversed an epoch of cultural and artistic blossoming under the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu. At the turn of the century, the activity of Wallachian painters showed on the one hand, signs of emancipation from traditional painting formulas through the renewal of themes, a new conception of composition and a tendency towards the decorative and the picturesque and on the other hand, a continuous dialogue with the past and the rediscovery of the beauty of the old Byzantine paintings that painters integrated in a new formula in the artistic ensembles of the time.[189]

The most important Brâncovan foundation is Saint Nicholas Church in Făgăraş. Its painting was executed at the command of the local community soon after its erection.[190] Its monumental iconostasis painted by Preda of Câmpulung is the largest of the Brâncovan epoch, even larger than those of Hurezi church and of the Metropolitan church in Târgovişte, emphasising the importance attached by the prince to its ties with Transylvania.[191] The mural painting (dated 1719-1720) with its extensive iconographic programme is signed by Preda and Theodosius, the sons of Preda of Câmpulung[192] and represents one of the most important stages in the development of the Brâncovan style[193] in

[189] Drăgut, *Arta brâncovenească*, p. 127.
[190] Vătăşianu (Ed.), *Istoria artelor plastice*, vol. 2, p. 191.
[191] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 10.
[192] Elisabeta Negrău (2011) Constantin Brancoveanu's Painters in Transylvania, *Transylvanian Review*, 20 (2), pp. 21-33.
[193] Although connected to the name of the Wallachian ruler, the Brâncovan art is the product of the Cantacuzino family, from which Brâncoveanu descended. It represents a post-Byzantine synthesis at the courtly level, in which the local tradition intermingled with pictorial influences from northwestern Greece (Thessaly and Epirus), oriental fashions not only in decoration but also in the general countenance of the lay architecture, and Venetian and Transylvanian Western models. Occassionally, the mural iconography echoes, through new themes or through embracing new redactions for traditional subjects, the cultural receptivity of the Romanian milieu to the Russian and Ukrainian ambience, the circulation of printings originating in that realm and the literary preferences of the era. This eclectic construct, specific to the Wallachian Orthodox space in its pre-modern interval, concludes the history of medieval art in Wallachia, although it would linger in the first half of the nineteenth century in both rustic as well as courtly forms, whether original or vicarious. See Anca Vasiliu (1987) Brancovan Mural Painting and Some Aspects Related to Greek Postbyzantine Art (I), *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art*, 24, pp. 3-18; *idem* (1988) Brancovan Mural Painting and Some Aspects Related to Greek Postbyzantine Art (II), *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art*, 25, pp. 45-62; *idem* (1982) Pictura murală brâncovenească. Context cultural şi trăsături stilistice [The Brâncovan Mural painting. Cultural Context and Stylistic Features], *SCIA-AP*, 29, pp. 19-36; Ştefan Ionescu (1981) *Epoca brâncovenească* [The Brâncovan Epoch] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia); Daniel Barbu (1988) Stilul brâncovenesc şi arta populară din Ţara Românească în secolul XVIII [The Brâncovan Style and the Folk Art in Wallachia in the Eighteenth Century], *AIIAI*, 25 (2), excerpt, pp. 369-376; Corina Popa, Ioana Iancovescu, Elisabeta Negrău & Vlad Bedros (2008) *Repertoriul picturilor murale brâncoveneşti*. vol 1. *Judeţul Vâlcea* [The Repertory of the

Transylvania, soon becoming a model that would be requested by many Romanian communities. It would become a standard to be followed by the Transylvanian painters in the second half of the century, especially in regards to the placement of iconographic compositions.[194] Stylistically it is related to the works of Brâncovan workshops, but not to the redoubtable ones, as it can be deduced from the numerous asperities. The iconography is very rich and traditional, with some surprisingly archaic features. At the same time, innovations also appear. Thus, the 'Anastasis', illustrating the 'Resurrection' under the image of Jesus breaking the gates of hell in the Orthodox iconography, is represented under the Western aspect in Făgăraş, namely Jesus soaring upward from the grave on a blanket of clouds while the guards fall to the ground. Trends favouring the creation of a less hieratic, more narrative and realistic style naturally produced fissures through which Western themes and iconographic drawings slided into the religious painting.[195]

The model known and accepted in the era around which the main directions in architecture, painting, and sculpture of the three principalities gravitated was the synthesis of all artistic manifestations made by the Brâncovan art, which surpassed the confines of provincial phenomena.[196] The prestige of the painting school of Hurezi Monastery [197] was the main reason behind the commission of Wallachian painters to decorate the most important foundations in Transylvania in the first half of the century.

During Brâncoveanu's reign, but more so after his death, when the royal sites were abolished, many painters from the school of Hurezi Monastery amongst whom Iosif the Hieromonk[198] came to Transylvania. He executed his first mural ensemble in collaboration with Ion the Painter at the Holy Apostles Hermitage of Hurezi Monastery in 1700; in 1707 he painted at Surpatele[199] together with Andrei, Hranite, and Ştefan,

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Brâncovan Mural Paintings. vol 1. Vâlcea County] (Bucharest: Editura Unarte); Adela Văetişi (2011) *Brancovan Art* (Bucharest: NOI Media Print).

[194] Porumb, Pictura *românească din Transilvania*, p. 95.

[195] Vătăşianu (Ed.), *Istoria artelor plastice*, vol. 2, p. 191.

[196] Ionescu & Panait, Constantin *Voda Brâncoveanu*, pp. 306-307; Drăguţ, *Arta brâncovenească*, pp. 189-236.

[197] See Teodora Voinescu (1961) Şcoala de pictură de la Hurez [Hurez Painting School], in Tudor Vianu (Ed.) *Omagiu lui George Oprescu* [Hommage to George Oprescu] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), pp. 573-587.

[198] For the activity of Iosif the Hieromonk see Voinescu, 'Şcoala de pictură de la Hurez', p. 576; Radu Creţeanu (1981) Zugravi din judeţul Vâlcea [Painters from Vâlcea County], *RMM*, 1, p. 93.

[199] See Radu Creţeanu (1972) Mănăstirea Surpatele [Surpatele Monastery], *BMI*, 41 (4), pp. 18-19.

in 1710 he decorated the porch of Bolniţa church in Bistriţa, and in 1712 he painted at Păpuşa Hermitage. The same year he collaborated with Ştefan at the realisation of the frescoes of Govora Monastery. The appreciation of his talent is indicated by the fact that he always signed his name first when working with collaborators. Thus, Iosif's presence in Transylvania in 1716-1717 for the iconostasis of the Trinity Church in Maierii of Alba Iulia is not accidental; it is owed, on the one hand, to his prestige, and on the other hand, to the Wallachian provenance of the founder of this episcopal residence, Mihai Istvanovici, the epitrop of Alba Iulia.[200]

The case of Iosif was not singular. Another well-known painter is Grigorie Ranite (Hranite), who painted at Polovragi (1712), Cozia and Sărăcineşti (in the same year, 1707), Bistriţa (1710), and Păpuşa Hermitage (1712), so that in 1737 to paint the fresco of the old chapel from Şcheii Braşovului at the head of a team in which Gheorghe, Ion, and Mihail took part.[201] Approaching a pictorial language that involved direct contact with the artistic centres of Wallachia, priest Ivan from Răşinari signed three icons for the Church of Cărpiniş in 1718.[202] In 1723, he painted the old church in Ocna Sibiului[203], founded by Michael the Brave in 1599 and restored by the beneficence of Brâncoveanu at the beginning of this century. Unfortunately, only the votive painting has been conserved. The two figures supporting the church model are Michael the Brave, the founder, and Constantin Brâncoveanu, the restorer[204].

Iosif's close collaborator, Ştefan of Ocnele Mari, was commissioned by Bishop Inochenţie Micu Klein to paint the iconostasis

[200] Drăguţ, *Arta brâncovenească*, p. 27.
[201] Muşlea, *Biserica sf. Nicolae*, vol. 1, p. 194.
[202] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură românească*, p. 12.
[203] The painters' signatures were not preserved, but the painting is assigned to Ivan. It has been argued that Nistor might have contributed on the ground of their repeat collaborations (at Geoagiu in 1724, at Răşinari in 1758). Comparing the votive painting of Ocna Sibiului to that of Geoagiu, Marius Porumb singled Ivan's work out based on the treatment of faces, hands, and clothing details. See Marius Porumb (1980) Mihai Viteazul, ocrotitor al artei şi culturii româneşti din Transilvania [Mihai Viteazul, Protector of the Romanian Art and Culture in Transilvania], *Potaissa*, 2, p. 202. For an extensive presentation of the mural painting, see Saveta-Florica Pop (2009) Pictura murală a bisericii lui Mihai Viteazul de la Ocna Sibiului [The Mural Painting of Michael the Brave's Church in Ocna Sibiului], in Nicoleta Vornicu & Cristina Bibire (Eds) *Conservarea şi restaurarea patrimoniului cultural* [The Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage], vol. 9 (Iaşi: Editura Trinitas).
[204] Vasile Drăguţ (1971) Un portret necunoscut al lui Mihai Viteazul. Însemnări privind biserica din Ocna Sibiului [An Unknown Portrait of Michael the Brave. Notes on the Church in Ocna Sibiului], *BMI*, 4, pp. 60-62.

of the cathedral of the new episcopal residence in Blaj on 26 May 1737.[205] The express mention stipulated in the contract concluded between the two sides was 'that the painter [to paint] the church's iconostasis, together with two large and small candlesticks, as befitting and beautiful as in Wallachia at Cozia or at Hurezi'[206]. The selection of an artist from Wallachia, who had decorated important princely foundations, is an indication of the desire to maintain the traditional iconography and propagate the Brâncovan style inside the Carpathian arch.[207] Ştefan used the most defining means of expression of the school from which he came. The large-format icons have the distinctive features of heightened decorative effects and abundant use of gold, not only for the background, but also for vestments decoration. A real lace of haulms and floral motifs, characteristic of the Brâncovan style, embellish the figures' vestments, furniture, and architectural elements. The iconographic theme of the patronal icon ('The Descent into Limbo') translates the persistence of archaic forms, specifically Orthodox, in which no Western compositional elements infiltrated.[208] The provision of the contract expressing the concern for the continuation and the propagation of this style in Transylvania merits attention, as it demands that a Transylvanian painter has to be instructed by the Wallachian painter.[209] We do not know to what extent this goal has been achieved, but it is certain that after Ştefan finalised his work at the cathedral, Wallachian and Transylvanian painters, exponents of a style of Brâncovan origin, painted in a series of small village churches.

Painter of south-Carpathian origin, the priest Ioan, executed the frescoes of the old church in Săliştea Sibiului (historical and art monument destroyed during the interwar period).[210] Stylistically the mural painting (1739) fits perfectly the post-Brâncovan trend, elaborated in the artistic centres of Wallachia and then diffused in the other provinces. Accordingly to tradition, Ioan placed the image of the *Pantocrator* holding the book of law and giving his blessing, framed by

[205] The contract concluded between bishop Inochentie Micu Klein and Ştefan of Ocnele Mari was published in 1971 by Ioana Cristache-Panait in Un zugrav din Ţara Românească în Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea [A Painter from Wallachia in Transylvania in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century], *SCIA*, 16 (2), pp. 325-327.
[206] Marius Porumb (1974) Ştefan Zugravul, autorul tâmplei comandate de Inochentie Micu Clain [Ştefan the Painter, the Author of the Iconostasis Ordered by Inochentie Micu Klein], in *Sub semnul lui Clio: omagiu Acad. Prof. Ştefan Pascu* [Under the Sign of Clio. Hommage to Acad. Prof. Ştefan Pascu] (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de multiplicare al UBB), pp. 486-489.
[207] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 19.
[208] Ibid., p. 20.
[209] Cristache-Panait, 'Un zugrav din Ţara Românească', p. 327.
[210] Ioan Moga (1930-1931) Cea mai veche biserică din Sălişte [The Oldest Church in Sălişte], *ACMIT*, pp. 150-160, fig. 3-8.

several concentric circles in the medial area of the semicylindrical vault of the nave; towards east, 'The Preparation of the Throne' (*Hetimasia*), framed by John the Baptist and Mother of God, accompanied by groups of archangels. The compositions on the lower side of the vault have few scenes and personages (the 'Resurrection', Jesus and a group of apostles with John the Baptist in the lead, the 'Mandylion'), because of the limited surface. The median area of the vault of the narthex is decorated with 'The Ancient of Days' and the scenes 'Ascension of Christ' and 'Baptism' to the north. The northern wall shows the 'Holy Trinity of Mamvri', the patronal feast of the Transylvanian Metropolitan Church; 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon' and 'Saints Constantine and Helena' are painted beneat it. The 'Last Judgment' had an extensive composition enfolding many figures, and was situated on the eastern wall of the porch dated 1739; it has the same paternity as the fresco of the nave, the style and iconography alluding to Ioan's instruction in the Brâncovan artistic ambiance. The porch had the northern wall decorated with several scenes, 'The Protection of the Mother of God' (*Pokrov*) dating from the same period. Stylistic and iconographic analogies point to Wallachian edifices or to the Transylvanian monuments painted by Wallachian artists. The *Pokrov* presented various analogies to Govora or Polovragi.[201] The southern facade was partially decorated with fresco in 1739, several compositions still being preserved in the third decade of the twentieth century. Three of the images represented 'Saint Nicholas', 'Jesus on the Cross', flanked by a group of holy women and by Apostle John and the Archangel Michael (bust length).[202]

The process of diffusion and assimilation of the Brâncovan style in Transylvania that started in the first decades would continue in the decades to come, reaching a great expansion in the intra-Carpathian province. The Brâncovan and post-Brâncovan painting adorned Transylvanian Romanian churches irrespective of confession, favoured for its artistic and decorative qualities.[203]

At the old church in Gurasada[204], Ioan of Deva and Nicolae of Piteşti covered the old painting with a layer of mortar and re-painted the surface in 1765[205]. Here, the stylistic tradition takes harsh and

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[201] Ioan D. Ştefănescu (1928) *Contribution a l'étude des peintures murales valaques* (Paris: Paul Geuthner), pl. 6, fig. 2; Victor Brătulescu (1940) Mănăstirea Polovragi [Polovragi Monastery], *BCMI*, 33, fig. 31.
[202] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 21.
[203] Ibid., p. 15.
[204] Eugenia Greceanu (2000) Etapele de construcţie ale bisericii din Gurasada [The Construction Stages of the Church of Gurasada], *RMI*, 1-2, pp. 32-40.
[205] Drăguţ, *Arta românească*, vol. 1, p. 467.

decorative forms and continues to get contaminated with motifs of Catholic iconography, such as the representation of the 'Holy Trinity' (in the Orthodox tradition, the Trinity was indirectly invoked by the three angels feasted by Avram). On the other hand, the newly added narthex shows a detailed illustration of the torments of hell[216], stigmatising laziness, husband and wife weaknesses, mild morals, abuses of millers and innkeepers, and those of the clerk. The scene of the 'Judgment' thus becomes a small moralising encyclopaedia, illustrated with verve and humour.

The eighteenth century is a time of transformations, either in the sense of formal and mental renewals or in that of morphological and ideological recurrences, which paved the way for modernity.[217]

The act of perceiving hieratic images, inconsiderate of physiognomic likeness and historical reality, became problematic. The now obsolete hieratic image was replaced with a 'votive-decorative' image, that of picturesque detail, anecdote, exoticism, lifelike appearance, which is a visual consequence of an entirely different way of grasping reality. Although formally indebted to the medieval Byzantine tradition with its generic repetition of saints, this way of perceiving was receptive to the decorative, ornamental, geometrical spirit taken from the register of popular art; it is a spirit that brought under its control silhouettes and colours by means of symmetries and stereotypes. This significant mutation in the field of visuality was determined by 'innovations' grounded in tradition, operating constantly between 1750 and 1850. The disjunction between two image types, the former made after medieval canons and the latter following the more ancient rules of a folklore that was added rather late to the figurative Byzantine inheritance, is essential for understanding the visual structure of the eighteenth century.[218]

The replication of conventional art, the art of plastic and semantic convention supported by the circulation of *hermeneias*[219] and

[216] Adela Văetişi (2005) Mănăstiri şi biserici din România. Transilvania [Monasteries and Churches of Romania. Transylvania] (Bucharest: NOI Media Print), pp. 33-37, ill. on p. 34; Coriolan Petranu (1927) Biserici de lemn din judeţul Arad [Wooden Churches in Arad County] (Sibiu: Tipografia şi Institutul de arte grafice Ios. Drotleff), p. 26.
[217] Răzvan Theodorescu (1984) Structuri artistice şi mentalităţi româneşti într-al XVIII-lea veac [Stylistic Structures and Romanian mentalities in the Eighteenth Century], in Răzvan Theodorescu (Ed.) *Arta românească în 'secolul luminilor'* [Romanian Art during the Century of the Enlightenment] (Bucharest: Oficiul de Informare şi Documentare în Ştiinţele Sociale şi Politice), p. 6.
[218] Theodorescu, 'Structuri artistice şi mentalităţi româneşti', pp. 7-8.
[219] Deriving from a Greek word meaning 'to be explained' or 'to be interpreted', a *hermeneia* consisted of a set of rules for illustrating the immaterial beauty in Christian Orthodox churches, icons or miniatures. See Emmanuel Moutafov (2001) *Europeanisation on Paper:*

pattern books, could no longer be justified by the principles of the Byzantine aesthetic ideal. It was replaced by a state of mind that was sensibly different in comparison to the traditional one, leading to the substantiation of a new norm governing the image, the norm of 'immediate exemplarity'. The system of iconographic and stylistic conventions is maintained, but turned into a repetition of manner that lost touch with the deep meanings of the gesture and objectivity, giving way to a superficial, moral-didactic construction of the image and the order of images in narration. Hence, the painting acquires a narrative character and the forces of suggestion are nearly eliminated. The power of symbolism is gradually replaced with the allusive power of images from the family of parables, fables, and allegories, which marks not only a transformation of the iconographic system through the penetration of new themes, but also a metamorphosis of the meaning of images concordant with the mutation produced in the religious sensitivity of the time.[220]

In the historical context of the late seventeenth century and the eighteenth century dominated by precariousness, economic, social, and political instability rarely interrupted by moments of respite and security, in a situation that fostered a mentality easily subjected to imbalances in values between the perishable reality and the ideal of absolute, church art strengthened its power to restore existential certainties, becoming the setting for a metaphorical transfer between the immediate reality to which it was addressed and the 'reassuring' perspective of eternity that it recorded. This transformation of the expressive content gave a novel character to the traditional bi-dimensionality of art. Less visible in the Brâncovan painting (an art of aulic formula), this character emerged in the painting of the eighteenth century, which retained echoes of the Brâncovan model (that had become the local traditional formula), but got engulfed in a world of fairy tales and miracles fed by narratives of Asian origin, reaching a completely flat folding with a minute description of details, without visual conventions of perspectives of any kind and relying exclusively on the virtues of the line and almost flat tints of colour. This type of decoration did not propose a getaway in a spiritualised space anymore, but an evasion in the miraculous, a model possibly born in the imagination of a society in full transformation.[221]

The mural painting, which had previously been the privilege of princely and boyar foundations, became an art of large circulation. The founders came from other social categories as well (more and more

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treatises on painting in Greek during the first half of the 18ᵗʰ century (Sofia: Aba Publishing House).
[220] Anca Vasiliu (1984) Între real şi virtual în spaţiul picturii murale din secolul al XVIII-lea [Between Real and Virtual within the Space of the Mural Painting of the Eighteenth Century], in Theodorescu (Ed.) *Arta românească în 'secolul luminilor'*, pp. 65-66.
[221] Vasiliu, 'Între real şi virtual', pp. 66-68.

varied ones), which thrived in the urban environment (townsmen, merchants, and artisans) or in the countryside (bailiffs and rich peasants). Where there were no wealthy families, the village community decided to raise its own church and each member of the rural community contributed somehow. [22] In the lands of Făgăraş and Bârsa, the new patronage was reduced exclusively to peasants, small townspeople, and petty clergy, who were promoting forms and iconographies of Brâncovan descent. Following an ancient custom, the Romanian congregation had been a patron over centuries. What is new in this century is that it increases its involvement in the erection, decoration, and endowment of churches (the inscriptions, diptychs, book notes, and documents validate this); its desire to profess its patronage became equivalent to the desire to affirm the nation to which it belonged. Moreover, its patronage in the creation of religious art had an active role in preserving and developing the Romanian language, forming a superstructure with a national profile and in maintaining the consciousness of a Romanian spiritual unity. [23]

Simply identifying the themes that form the iconographic programmes could lead to the conclusion that we face some late inaccuracies due to the ignorance of popular painters; however, a closer analysis, which would decipher the 'intrinsic', 'symptomatic' meaning in a panofskyan sense of the images contained in these programmes reveal precisely their value of documents. Beyond the iconographic program set intentionally by the artist and the collective patron represented by the village community, beyond the symbolic meaning attributed deliberately to the scenes through unanimous consensus, they constitute themselves into an expression of ideological confrontations of the era, into symptoms of a situation in the history of culture and ideas. [24]

Beginning from this century Dionysius of Fourna's '*Hermeneia* of the Art of Painting'[25] translated into Romanian by the iconographer

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[22] Mihaela Proca (2013) *Identitate regională şi specificitate românească în pictura din Transilvania meridională în pragul primei modernităţi* [Romanian Regional Identity and Specificity in the Painting of Southern Transylvania at the Beginning of the First Modernity] (Bucharest: Editura Muzeului Naţional al Literaturii Române), p. 17; Răzvan Theodorescu (1987) *Civilizaţia românilor între medieval şi modern. Orizontul imaginii (1550-1800)* [Romanian Civilisation between Medieval and Modern. The Image Horizon (1550-1800)], vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 157.

[23] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1984) Obştea transilvană, ctitor de cultură şi artă [The Transylvanian Congregation, Founder of Culture and Art], in Theodorescu (Ed.) *Arta românească în 'secolul luminilor'*, p. 85.

[24] Anca Bratu (1984) Mutaţii iconografice în pictura murală maramureşeană [Iconographic Transformations in the Mural Painting of Maramureş], in Theodorescu (Ed.) *Arta românească în 'secolul luminilor'*, p. 93.

[25] The *Hermeneia* was completed by Dionysius between the years 1729 and 1732. Dyonisius, a hieromonk that lived and operated on Mount Athos and in his native village of Fourna, was both a painter and an author. It is a compilation of post-Byzantine artistic traditions and practices structured as a series of instructions for painters and students. Its sources vary widely: older manuals, existing paintings in churches on Mount Athos, liturgical

Mihai of Târgoviște, who probably bequeathed it to his son (also an icon-painter)[226], passed through the painters' hands. Pattern-books[227] also circulated amongst painters. Radu[228] and Stan of Rășinari[229] were owners of such manuals.[230] The popular character of *hermeneias* was underlined by Vasile Grecu, who stated that they 'appeared out of the practical needs of the church painters' workshops' and not from dogmatic constraints.[231] Having a large circulation, thanks to the painters who would not have been able to work without these manuals, the *hermeneias* secured an evident unity and iconographic stability for the ensembles of mural paintings from the entire Orthodox orient. But, a highly important fact is that the painters never respected *ad litteram* the models and recommendations of these treatises.

books, oral tradition, and very likely guides published in the West or some knowledge of their content. With regard to its content, the *Hermeneia* is a combination of tehnical and iconographical instruction. See Anastasia Tourta (2008) Moştenirea bizantină în pictură după căderea Constantinopolului [Byzantine Heritage in Painting after the Fall of Constantinople], in Konstantinos Sp. Staikos (Ed.) *De la întruparea cuvântului la îndumnezeirea omului. Icoane bizantine şi postbizantine din Grecia* [From the Incarnation of the Word to the Deification of Man. Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Icons of Greece], catalogue of the exhibition of Romania's National Art Museum, 6 October 2008 – 15 January 2009 (Bucharest: Muzeul Naţional de Artă – Fundaţia Culturală Greacă), p. xxix; Jacek Mateusz Ferens (2015) Dionysius of Fourna: artistic identity through visual rhetoric (MA thesis, University of California Riverside), pp. 2-5.

[226] Ştefan Meteş (1929) *Din istoria artei religioase române*. vol. 1. *Zugravii bisericilor române* [Elements of Romanian Religious Art. vol. 1 Painters of Romanian Churches] (Cluj-Napoca: Tipografia 'Progresul'), p. 21.

[227] Painters copied these pattern-books from their fellows or passed them down from one generation to the other within the same family.

[228] Radu, a well-known artist of the post-Brâncovan period, owned a pattern-book around 1750. See Anca Vasiliu (1992) Le cahier de peintre Radu et la pratique des modèles dans la tradition post-byzantine, *Revue de l'art*, 92, pp. 32-45; Teodora Voinescu (1974) Un caiet de modele de pictură medievală românească [A Pattern-Book of Romanian Medieval Painting], in Florentina Dumitrescu & Teodora Voinescu (Eds) *Pagini de veche artă românească* [Pages of Old Romanian Art], vol. 3 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), pp. 147-276.

[229] Stan left his signature and the date 1734 on his pattern-book. While some authors believe that it records the year when it was put together (Annemarie Podlipny (1970) Caietul de modele al lui Stan Zugravul [The Pattern-Book of Stan the Painter], *RM*, 2, p. 166; Ana Dumitran & Elena Cucui (2007-2008) 'Sfânta Troiţă într-un trup' în opera zugravilor de la Feisa [The 'Holy Trinity in One Body' in the Work of the Painters from Feisa], *NEMVS*, 3-6, p. 145), some suggest it is the year when the painter was born (Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 378; *idem*, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 48).

[230] In the next century, chancellor Răducan of Oltenia copied a painting manual, dated 15 August 1815, and a quarter-century later, the hieromonk Gherontie copied out the *Iconography, the Art of painting Churches and Icons* at Hurezi, a manuscript edited in 1891 by Bishop Ghenadie of Râmnic.

[231] Vasile Grecu (1936) *Carte de pictură bisericească bizantină. Introducere şi ediţie critică a versiunilor româneşti dupa redacţiunea lui Dionisie din Furna, tradusă la 1805 de arhimandritul Macarie, cât şi după alte redacţiuni mai vechi, traduceri anonime* [Byzantine Church Painting Book. Introduction and Critical Edition of the Romanian Versions after Dionysius of Fourna's Edition, Translated by Archimandrite Macarie in 1805, As Well As after Other Older Editions, Anonymous Translations] (Cernăuţi: Tiparul 'Glasul Bucovinei'), p. 33.

The iconography experienced a cultural porosity from the forth decade of the eighteenth century to mid-nineteenth century. With the appearance of a new category of founders and the enlargement of the social sphere of the ones rich enough and willing to immortalise their memory through their donations for the erection and painting of churches, the figurative language of the post-Brâncovan art becomes rustic as well. The mission of images is to illustrate the content of religious books in an environment that is not sufficiently familiarised with reading. The masters coming from the periphery of towns or from the rural environment learn their trade from their fathers and simplify the imagistic message in order for it to be understood by a large audience, namely by those with an average culture or with no culture at all. The narrative scenes illustrated in rural churches represent adapted, simplified often preponderantly graphic renditions, and not in the least 'mechanical' repetitions of themes from previous periods, and are inspired from various sources.

Painters from local artistic centres found it appropriate to add episodes of popular origin to scenes prescribed by the *hermeneia*, including events from village life or narrative sequences that saturated the collective imaginary.[232] Thus, besides the Cycle of Christ's Life, the Marian Cycle, and images of saints, one could discern hunting scenes, village round dances, motifs from the *Physiologus*[233], the parable of the

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[232] This phenomen has a crescendo in the nineteenth century, and is given additional attention in the forth chapter of the thesis.

[233] The *Physiologus* is a book that describes animals with their habits, according to lay traditions, to be then interpreted as symbols of moral and religious ideas. Therefore, each chapter is made up of two parts: one that contains the description of the beasts with their real or imaginary habits, and another that includes their symbolic interpretation in the spirit of Christian morality. See Vasile V. Guruianu (1997) Fiziologul. Studiu filologic, studiu lingvistic, ediţie şi glosar [Physiologus. Philological Study, Linguistic Study, Edition and Glossary], in Ion Gheţie & Alexandru Mareş (Eds) *Cele mai vechi cărţi populare în literatura română. vol. 2. Fiziologul. Archirie şi Anadan* [The Oldest Popular Books in Romanian Literature. vol. 2. Physiologus. Archirie and Anadan] (Bucharest: Editura Minerva), pp. 12-100. The animal allegory of the exterior paintings of Wallachian churches has an underlying moral character, serving as a guide for the good Christian, who can become habituated with a behavioural code by decrypting the illustrated narratives. Besides, some of the Physiologist's versions bear the title of 'Word of Humble Wisdom' (for the five versions of the book that circulated in the Romanian provinces see Cătălina Velculescu & Vasile V. Guruianu (2001) (Eds) *Fiziolog. Bestiar* [Physiologus. Bestiary] (Bucharest: Editura Cavallioti), p. 141). For a description of the motifs interpolated in the iconography of the Wallachian churches during the Brâncovan and Post-Brâncovan eras see Cătălina Velculescu & Ileana Stănculescu (2010) Două cărţi populare prezente în pictura exterioară a bisericilor din Ţara Românească [Two Popular Books Present in the Exterior Mural Paintings of Churches in Wallachia], *Anuarul IEF*, 21, pp. 165-176; Andreea Răsuceanu (2014) *Cele două Mântulese* [The Two Different Mântuleasa] (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas). The forth chapter of the thesis discusses the insertion of such motifs in the work of Transylvanian painters, in particular of those in the Land of Olt.

unicorn from 'Barlaam and Josaphat'[234], the wheel of life[235], and representations of death[236] in surprising renditions.[237]

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[234] 'Barlaam and Josaphat' is a westernised, Christianised adaptation of the life of Buddha. On the Romanian territory, the legend entered the fifteenth century, through manuscripts written around the middle of the seventeenth century and is based on a Slavonic original. See Nicolae Cartojan (1929) *Cărţile populare în literatura românească*. vol. 1. *Epoca influenţei slave* [Popular Books in Romanian Literature. vol. 1. The Epoch of the Slavic Influence] (Bucharest: Editura Casei Şcoalelor), p. 232. The version known in the Romanian environment can be summarised as follows: In this world, there are people that become estranged from the teachings of God and completely ignore spiritual life, living only for the pleasures of the flesh. These people may be likened to the man fleeing from the horrible roaring and bellowing of a unicorn that is chasing him to tear him apart. Running as fast as he can, the man falls into a great pit. As he is falling, he manages to get hold of the branches of a tree, to which he holds on tightly and plants his feet firmly on a foothold between the branches. Thus, he starts to feel a little safer. But when he looks down, he sees two mice at the root of the tree, one white and the other black, gnawing through the root just on the verge of cutting through. Casting his eyes down to the bottom of the pit, he spots a frightening dragon breathing flames, yawning horribly and ready to swallow him up. When he strains his glance upon the branch on which he is hanging, he sees four serpents' heads. Still, looking upwards he sees a little honey trickling down from the branches. That very instant, he forgets about the unicorn, the fierce dragon, the serpents, and the nearly falling tree. His whole attention is bent upon the sweetness of honey and the pleasure he might feel tasting it. This is how, Barlaam tells Josaphat, people are seduced by the pleasures of a life of deceits. The unicorn is death, which pursues the life of all men; the pit is the world, full of evils and pitfalls that may lead to death; the tree gnawed by the two mice is the time each man has to live, which becomes shorter and draws closer to the end with each passing hour; the four serpents are the four fleeting and unstable elements of the human body, the disorder that may destroy the constitution of the body and cause disease; the dragon symbolises the maw of hell, waiting to engulf all those that love temporal pleasures; the trickling honey represents the sweetness of temporal pleasures, which delude people and stop them from thinking about their salvation. See *idem* (1996) *Istoria literaturii române vechi* [History of Old Romanian Literature] (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei Culturale Române), pp. 131-133; Maria Stanciu Istuate (2013) A Legend Circulating through Time and Space: Barlaam and Josaphat, *Revue roumaine de linguistique*, 58 (3), pp. 176-177. In Transylvania, a Wallachian copy of the legend reached Şcheii Braşovului in 1702. Local copies after this parable and other *exempla* were made by painter Matei Voileanu at Viişoara Hundorf around 1747-1749 (unfortunately, unlike his manuscripts, his paintings have perished). See Cătălina Velculescu (2014) Pilda inorogului sau pilda omului cu urmaritori multipli în manuscrise româneşti [The Parable of the Unicorn or the Parable of the Man with Multiple Chasers], *Apulum*, pp. 269, 277, 278. The parable can be found in the wooden churches of Budeşti-Josani and Cuhea (now Bogdan Vodă) in Maramureş and is included in the iconography of the Last Judgement, being illustrated next to the 'charitable fornicator'. See Raluca Betea (2013) Icoana Judecăţii de Apoi din biserica de lemn din Budeşti-Josani (judeţul Maramureş) [The Icon of the Last Judgement in the Wooden Church of Budeşti-Josani (Maramureş County)], *Apulum*, 50, pp. 91-92.

[235] The parable of human life illustrated as a wheel guarded by two angels is illustrated on the lower register of the belfry of the Saint Paraskeva Church in Răşinari (Sibiu County). In the left corner, Christ supports a cross with the text 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me', in the right the text 'For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it'. On both sides of the wheel, two angels try to direct its progress by cords anchored to it. Around the wheel, there are texts associated with different ages of man: 'Oh, world, how [I love you], 10', 'Now I want to live, 20', 'I would like you to take me up, 30', 'Oh, what great glory [I] have reached, 40', 'I fell from glory and I was wrong, 50', 'Oh, misleading world, how you deceive me, 60', 'Deceiving [...] world'. See Saveta-

In the same vein, the pleasure that the painters take in storytelling sometimes translates into exuberant fantasy scenes or episodes depicting aspects of mundane life that 'suffocate' religious images. On the southern facade of the church of Saint Paraskeva in Rășinari, the painter Ioan Grigorovici interpolated shepherds and women wearing dresses specific to Mărginimea Sibiului in the composition of the Nativity of Jesus (1785).[238] The attraction to illustrated stories was transposed, among others, in the representation of hunting scenes and fables on the facades of churches. The much loved book of Aesop[239] thus found a new means of dissemination, its main fables being 'read' now by the whole village (the fables illustrated by Iosif the Hieromonk on the porch[240] commissioned by Adriana Cantacuzino in the church of the infirmary of Bistrița Monastery in 1710 are of a charming freshness)[241].

Furthemore, there can be seen a growing emphasis on moralistic and satirical accents inspired by the social reality of the epoch; sometimes religious paintings served as containments of a strong criticism to oppressors. The 'judgements' painted in the churches show the painters' fine knowledge of iconographic subtleties and at the same time, the intensification of social dissatisfaction. The state of mind of the oppressed is reflected in the Last Judgements, which express feelings of

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Florica Pop (2011) Pious Paraschiva Church from Rășinari: interior and bell tower painting, *Brukenthal. Acta Musei*, 2, pp. 345-366.

[236] For the different faces of Death, as it appears in the national area, see Cristina Dobre-Bogdan (2002*) Imago Mortis în cultura română veche (sec. XVII-XIX)* [Imago Mortis in Ancient Romanian Culture (the Seventeenth-Nineteenth Centuries)] (Bucharest: Editura Universității).

[237] For the role and circulation of popular books in the Romanian Principalities, see Radu Crețeanu (1976) L'influence des livres populaires sur les beaux-arts en Valachie aux XVIIIe siècles, *Synthesis,* 3, pp. 101-120.

[238] Pop, 'Pious Paraschiva Church from Rășinari', p. 358.

[239] *Aesopia*, understood as a collection of varied fables attributed to Aesop, is a didactic-moralising book, clearly aimed at the secular life, without any tendency to address questions pertaining to the mystical sphere or convey spiritual decryptions of selected narrations, even if it sometimes introduces humans and deities as characters. Throughout its transmission, *Aesopia* was often associated with the *Physiologus* when it came to church paintings. See Cătălina Velculescu, Ileana Stănculescu & Iuliana Damian (2014) Grifoni și trandafiri în vremea lui Constantin Brâncoveanu [Griffins and Roses during Constantin Brâncoveanu's Reign], in Ștefan Zară (Ed.) *Spiritualitatea mărturisitoare a culturii românești în perioada sfântului martir Constantin Brâncoveanu* [The Spirituality of the Romanian Culture Advocated during the Reign of the Martyr Saint Constantin Brâncoveanu] (Râmnicu-Vâlcea: Editura Praxis a Arhiepiscopiei Râmnicului), p. 190.

[240] The Aesopian fables painted on the walls of the porch are: the eagle wounded by an arrow; the mouse, the frog, and the hawk; and the fox and the crane. See Velculescu & Stănculescu, 'Două cărți populare prezente în pictura exterioară', pp. 165-168; Velculescu, Stănculescu & Damian, 'Grifoni și trandafiri', pp. 184-185.

[241] Drăguț, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 99; Marius Porumb (1983-1984) Rășinari, un centru de pictură din secolul al XVIII-lea [Rășinari, an Eighteenth-Century Painting Centre], *AIIAC*, 26, p. 388.

revolt against the unjust order of the society.[32] Here, in the midst of sinners, tormented by agile demons with a 'devilish' fantasy, are lined up all those who, in one way or another, gave a hard life to the peasants: 'the rapacious boyar', 'the unjust judge', 'the legislator that bends the law', 'the land usurper', 'the lady innkeeper that commits thefts and is of loose morals', 'the Turkish akinji and hussars'.[33] The oppressors' damnation became a recurring theme in church painting in nineteenth century Transylvania and caused the reaction of the political authorities of the time who found it challenging and, therefore, imposed their covering with lime after the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867.[34]

In parallel, another branch of popular art developed: icons painted on glass, imbued with the same identity message. Thus, similar creations put in a negative position the representatives of other nations, such as the well-known icon from Făgăraş, preserved in the Museum of icons on glass Pr. Zosim Oancea - Sibiel, illustrating the parable of the Rich Man and poor Lazarus, where the wealthy man is wearing clothes specific to a Hungarian nobleman (Grof), or the series of the Resurrection icons in which the soldiers guarding the tomb are identified with Austrian or Hungarian army regiments.

Influenced by local traditions, often at the request of the founders, but also resorting to their own sensibility and understanding, painters intervened constantly on the prescribed models, operating smaller or bigger modifications that, depending on the quality of the artistic work and the authority of the foundation, could become themselves traditional conventions.[35] Their style of painting lacks occasionally canonical rigour in favour of expressiveness. They meditated upon themes, motifs, and symbols from legends and engravings and added novel elements according to their personal sensitivity.

Descending from priests' sons or, most often directly from peasants, these artists transferred the mentality of the region to which they belonged to their paintings. It is needless to say that this laicisation process is also due to the fact that the painters no longer descended only from monks, but also from among the priests' sons, peasants, and townsmen. They knew the hagiographic literature that was to be found under the form of popular books better than they knew the Saints lives

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[32] Drăguţ, preface to Dionisie din Furna (1979) *Carte de pictură* [The Painter's Manual] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 7.
[33] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 102.
[34] It is worth mentioning the case of the Orthodox church from Tulgheş (nowadays part of Săcele), Braşov county, where in 1877 the offending scenes were covered with several layers of lime that would only be removed in 1939.
[35] Drăguţ, preface to Dionisie din Furna, *Carte de pictură*, p. 8.

as presented in the dogmas.[246] The reading of these books stimulated the painters' imagination whilst the popular fantasy diminished the hieratic character of the Biblical themes, throughout humanisation and emphasis upon certain feelings and moods. The movement, the characters who are hurrying towards something with an ample, demonstrative gesticulation, scenes where fear, violence, joy, mercy, pain, repentance, characters in danger - sacrificed or saved - are presented, give life to the Biblical scenes.[247]

The limited wall space of these small village churches painted with the villagers' money implied the limitation of the iconographical themes in a synthetic or sometimes even elliptical consideration. Thus, one can notice a preference for certain subjects over others. Their distribution in the pictorial space was determined by a didactic, moralising concept. Certain themes would recur in a more detailed and essentialised rendition, the dogmatic logic of their distribution being also carefully studied by the painters. The main themes were 'The Passions', 'the Sunday after the Resurrection', and Mary's life. Their main source of inspiration was prayers and religious hymns sung at Christmas.[248]

We are now witnessing the crystallisation of a new vision of the world and life and the mutations occurring in the way of thinking will influence the iconographic representations through the emergence and the noticeable continuity of some elements of narrative character, with reference to the reality of the era, historical events, technics, the style and the iconography being closely linked. The change of the mentality and the evident presence of some laic elements in the artistic expression and in the post-Byzantine ambience are reflected in the painters' attitudes towards their own works, to which they give other purposes than the intended ones, linked to their desire to have their own say towards the history of their people through emotional participation in the historical events, reflecting themselves, even allusively, through the intercession of religious images.[249]

We are in an epoch when the convincing power of the church diminished and the rational ideas spread by the Enlightenment gained more and more ground in Transylvania. This allowed painters to introduce in a series of laic elements taken from the popular art or everyday life. In their attempt to create a more natural setting for the

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[246] Maria Zintz (2001) *Zugravi din sudul Transilvaniei în secolele XVIII-XIX. Familia de zugravi Grecu* [Church Painters in Southern Transylvania in the Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries. Grecu Family] (Oradea: Editura Universității), p. 112.
[247] Zintz, *Zugravi din sudul Transilvaniei*, p. 112.
[248] Ibid., p. 108.
[249] Maria Zintz (2011) *Pictura murală a bisericilor româneşti din Ţara Făgăraşului în secolul al XVIII-lea şi în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* [The Mural Painting of Romanian Churches in Făgăraş Country in the Eighteenth Century and the First Half of the Nineteenth Century] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), p. 202.

characters, with a more dynamic and complex narrative, where communication should 'look' natural, even if that meant expressing some truthful feelings and emotions, they strayed from the canons established in the *hermeneias*.[250]

The major characteristic of the post-Byzantine painting in the eighteenth, but also of the nineteenth century, beyond the iconographical syncretism, is the continuous rustication of the plastic vocabulary, with the stereotypical repetition of old prototypes and the schematisation of forms, which end up being coloured contours in a rather limited chromatic range. The new eclectic elements appear as theorised in the copied or translated *hermeneia*, such as the one of the Macedonian painter Dico Zograf.[251]

Under the circumstances of the fragmentation of the feudal class, which for centuries had ensured the development of painting based on the theological doctrine of the Middle Ages, once with the transfer of founding initiative to congregations and guilds, religious painting gradually falls from the category of high art to low art.[252] The first painters' guild was formed at Gherla at the initiative of the Archpriest of Gherla, Avram Meheşi, in 16 November 1777.[253]

Such a development did not stop at the outset of a new age, which begins in the nineteenth century, when linked to the process of economic and social transformations, the Transylvanian art will distance itself from the medieval tradition to meet the needs of a society in an accelerated process of modernisation. More and more rusticated, left in the heritage of country masters, the mural painting will endure for a while, revealing works worthy of attention.[254]

The conservatism offered by the stability of the iconographic programme lasts until the nineteenth century, when the traditional style

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[250] Zintz, *Zugravi din sudul Transilvaniei*, p. 109.
[251] Proca, *Identitate regională şi specificitate românească*, p. 11.
[252] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 102.
[253] The document of its establishemnt was published in 1967 by Ioana Cristache-Panait in O breaslă a xilografilor din Transilvania [A Transylvanian Xylographers' Guild], *RM*, 4 (3), pp. 221-222. Attesting the necessity of such an association of artistic forces at that time, because of the big number of painters, the document enumerates eleven artists coming from four towns: Constantin Gavenda, Gheorghiţă Gavenda, Ion Tolmaz, and Achim Surlaş from Ocna Dejului; Oana the Painter, Mihăilă Muntean, Petre Potcoavă, and Ure the Painter from Hăşdate; Todosia the Painter and Irimie Murar from Silivaş; and Crăciun the Painter from Buneşti. The guild was made up of 'painters that paint and print on paper', which supposes the coexistence of two different working techniques in the daily activity of the members. Unfortunately, there is not much information on the activity of the members, except for the work of Mihăilă Muntean, who is known as the author of various icons and wall paintings in the wooden churches from Gâlgău (Sălaj County). Nonetheless, the painters' xylographs spread widely in the Romanian villages, being the main interior decoration together with the glass icons. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, pp. 79-84.
[254] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, p. 104.

is eclipsed by the classicising manner imputed by the authority of western European painting academies. In parallel, the imagistic of popular nature proliferates in the rural centres or the ones at the periphery of towns of icon makers until close to the twentieth century.[255]

Chapter 4 Centres of icon-painters and icon makers in the eighteenth century

The eighteenth century, especially the second half, witnessed a proliferation of paintings and painters. Before long local artists outnumbered those coming from Wallachia or Galicia. The reason for this reversal lies in the political and religious climate of the Romanian communities in Transylvania after the province's addition to the Habsburg Empire at the end of the seventeenth century. Even though changes were slow and seemingly elusive, after the union with the Church of Rome, the attitude of the Habsburg administration towards the Uniate Romanians and extensively, towards the Orthodox became more yielding. The softening of confessional rigidities allowed a limited, but steady progress. The Romanian churches were provided with new sources of income for their endowment. The new revenues were modest, but regular; they were spent on restoring old worship places or building new ones in villages that did not have their own. [256] In the last two decades of the century, the social and ecclesiastical revival experienced by the Romanian population after the decrees issued by Joseph II led to the erection of hundreds of churches. [257] Judging by the pace at which edifices arose in a relatively short period of time, it was assumed this was also the effect of the commitment of the church hierarchy (whether Greek – Catholic or Orthodox) to support such an initiative. [258]

The number of painters increased as the income accumulated and the demand grew. Moreover, the re-establishment of the Orthodox

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[256] Henrik von Achen & Ana Dumitran (2015-2016) *Kissed Again and Again. Romanian Icons from Transylvania,* exhibition catalogue, 4 December 2015 – 14 February 2016, The University Museum of Bergen, Norway, p. 42.

[257] Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan (2017) Under the Sway of Orthodoxy and the Reformation. Romanian-Saxon Confessional Relations in Transylvania between 1688 and 1848, *Transylvanian Review*, 26 (3), p. 61.

[258] Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan (2016) The Building of Bell-Towers Added to Romanian Churches. A Pattern of Intercommunity Cooperation in the Religious Life of the Romanians and the Saxons from Sibiu County, in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century, *Ecumenical Review Sibiu*, 8 (1), p. 12.

Bishopric of Transylvania in 1761[259] determined the apprentices of Wallachian masters to pursue the opportunity that arose. The emergence of two competing Churches in the rural landscape of Romanian villages also led to an increase in masters' numbers. The hectic struggle for preserving ancestral churches or the eagerness for building new ones characterised all communities where villagers took to both sides of the confessional segregation. The search for a formula that would still express their identity while in union with Rome, or the efforts to gain the trust of political authorities in the case of those who declared themselves Orthodox enabled a change in the painting itself. It increasingly incorporated elements of Western repertoire, or followed Western manners of representation, and these influences came from disparate places around them. They could be Ukrainian, Serbian, Greek, or Viennese. It still followed the Byzantine models when created by validated painters, or became sincerely naive when painted by simple peasants lacking professional instruction or theological knowledge.[260]

The recruitment of painters and craftsmen to carry out the earliest mural works seems to have been an equivocal process, given that there were even fewer suitable painters for the job than master builders. They were trained in an era and a region where artistic interferences played their part in blurring ethnic and confessional boundaries, and their work shows marked signs of adapting to different demands from diverse clients. Differences in doctrine met linguistic differences, so that Slavonic inscriptions are found alongside figures of Hungarian saints, paintings in the Byzantine style adorn Catholic churches, and themes from the Catholic repertoire are found on the walls of Orthodox churches. The Romanian patrons' openness to Western artistic tastes in particular enabled such a mélange, as did a lack of instruction in the teachings of their own church, the dual confession of many families and the limited number of professional artists at work, with the same

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[259] The massive uprising of the Orthodox rural population led by the monk Visarion Sarai in 1744 shook the union and inaugurated a period of fifteen years of almost continuous unrest in the countryside. The ferment culminated in the uprising headed by another monk, Sofronie of Cioara, which lasted from the autumn of 1759 until the spring of 1761. The objectives of Visarion and Sofronie and their followers were freedom of worship and the right to choose their own priests and to have a bishop of their own. They displayed uncompromising hostility towards the union with Rome and felt a closer kinship with Orthodox Serbs than with Uniate Romanians. In order to restore peace, in 1761, Empress Maria Theresa (1740-1780) recognised the legal existence of their church and appointed a bishop for the Orthodox in the person of Dionisie Novacovici, the Orthodox Bishop of Buda and a Serb. See Keith Hitchins (1996) *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp. 202-203; Mihai Săsăujan (2002) *Politica bisericească a Curţii din Viena în Transilvania (1740-1761)* [The Church Policy of the Vienna Court in Transylvania (1740-1761)] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană).
[260] von Achen & Dumitran, *Kissed Again and Again*, p. 47.

painters carrying out commissions on both Catholic and Orthodox sites. These were the defining features of a society predominantly made up of serfs and ministered by a church without political support, and such initial conditions explain why doctrinal particularities were secondary to visual message.[261]

The designation of artistic centre is given here to a settlement or region that attracted and concentrated a high density of artistic activity and built a sense of continuity between generations of artists linked through their work. Still, when it comes to the continuation of their practice, it is more about mimicry, the resilience of certain models, rather than the conscious adherence to a standard. Such an exigency would have been harder to naturalise in the Romanian environment from Transylvania. Even though there were masters that gathered gifted apprentices with promising careers around them, the transmission of craft from father to son was more customary. The pervasion of new influences accelerates as we get closer to the end of the century and no major artist resisted it. The transmission of a specificity was burdened by the hesitations of the master himself and its undertaking depended on the merit of his apprentices. Those who were satisfied with learning from a single master were usually less gifted and could not render more than old models, which the frequency of repetition turned into mere patterns. The gifted ones always felt the need of new experiences, attended many workshops to fulfil their formation and even adapt to a new taste.[262]

Icon and fresco-painters were mostly peregrines. Their activity had no borders and as such it expanded in territories of neighbouring counties, thus competing with local painters. Obviously, artists of repute such as those from Răşinari, Ivan, Nistor, Stan, and Iacov, then the descendants of the last one, Gheorghe and Nicolae found employment with ease in a wider area; creations of others also got through, especially during fairs, but at a lower price. In fact, no centre held a dominating force on the neighbouring territory. Nonetheless, in this territory one could find a concentration of specific works: Simion Silaghi's icons embellished almost every church in the Apuseni Mountains, icons of Simion from Bălgrad were spread in villages

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[261] Ana Dumitran (2013) 'That he may be the donor and be remembered in the holy liturgy'. Donations of Artwork to Romanian Churches in Transylvania Down to the Mid-Nineteenth Century, in Daniel Dumitran & Valer Moga (Eds) *Economy and Society in Central and Eastern Europe. Territory, Population, Consumption. Papers of the international Conference Held in Alba Iulia, April 25ᵗʰ-27ᵗʰ 2013* (Vienna/Zurich/Munich: Lit Verlag), p. 259.
[262] Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în județul Alba', p. 6.

around Alba Iulia, and those made in Feisa were found with predominance on the Târnave Plateau.[263]

The second half of the century brought several changes in the artistic milieu; old models validated by Byzantine and post-Byzantine art were challenged by dynamic compositions and an iconography characteristic to the Occident. But these changes required a search for new models and their realistic illustration, as well as adding three-dimensional depth and space to works; for this an academic education, to which few Romanian artists had access only later, was necessary. What could be acquired in our studied timeframe was limited to apprenticeship next to a Baroque painter, as is the case of Simion Silaghi and possibly of Gheorghe, son of Iacov, and Dimitrie Dimitriu.[264] The reception of the Baroque style in the rural environment, primarily for its decorative and sophisticated character, occurred without its major significances.[265]

4.1 Şchei

Braşov was an urban centre with traditionally strong comercial, diplomatic and religious ties with Wallachia and Moldavia.[266] During the Saxon rule of Braşov (from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century), Romanians were forbidden from owning property inside the citadel walls, so they settled in the southwestern district of Şchei.

First built of wood in 1392 and replaced by a stone structure in 1495, the church of Saint Nicholas was the core of the district and polarised forces that contributed to the creation of one of the most

[263] Ibid., p. 11.
[264] Ibid., p. 12.
[265] Anca Pop-Bratu (2015) *Pictura murală maramureşeană. Meşteri zugravi şi interferenţe stilistice* [The Mural Painting of Maramureş. Masters and Stylistic Interferences] (Bucharest: Editura ACS), p. 58.
[266] Ioan Aurel-Pop (2007) Relations between Stephen the Great and Transylvania, in László Koszta, Oliviu Mureşan & Alexandru Simon (Eds) *Steven the Great and Matthias Corvinus and Their Time: in memoriam Virgil Cândea et András Kubinyi* (Cluj-Napoca: IDC Press), pp. 125-136, pdf version retrieved from http://dspace.bcucluj.ro/handle/123456789/48230 (9 July 2017); Laurenţiu Rădvan (2009) On the Medieval Urban Economy in Wallachia, *SAAIC*, 56, pp. 489-501.

prominent artistic centres in Transylvania. The church received significant support from Moldavian and Greater Wallachian *voivodes* throughout the centuries[267]. In the eighteenth century it was extended through the addition of the Annunciation Chapel on the northern side in 1733-1734, the elongation of the nave and the eastward relocation of the altar in 1740, and the erection of the Ascension Chapel on the southern side in 1750-1752.[268] After its expansion, the church turned into a field of artistic labour.

The construction of the Annunciation Chapel was supported by archpriest and chronicler Radu Tempea[269]. This noteworthy addition to the church was the feat of masters of Wallachian origin as well as local masters. The triptych depicting the patronal feast painted in Brâncovan style in 1734 was a preparatory attempt to earn the commission for the inner frescoes and iconostasis. The community gave the commission for the frescoes to an experienced painter of Lesser Wallachia, Grigorie Ranite of Craiova[270], who had been in charge of the team that painted the nave of the church of Tismana Monastery in 1732, and had painted the frescoes of the Church of Vădeni together with his son Ioan and Vasile

[267] Wallachian rulers Vlad Călugărul (the Monk) (1481; 1482-1495) and Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521) supported the erection of the stone church in 1495. Moldavian princes Petru Cercel (1583-1585) and Aron Vodă (1591-1592; 1592-1595) made major contributions to the edifice. Following the advice of the archpriests of Şchei, Petru supported the addition of the porch to the stone church and the adornment of its apse and of the old church. Aron continued Petru's work of adornment and raised the steeple in 1595. See Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 1, pp. 53-54; Octavian Şchiau & Livia Bot (Eds) (1969) *Radu Tempea. Istoria sfintei biserici a Şcheilor Braşovului* [Radu Tempea. The History of the Holy Church of Şcheii Braşovului] (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură), p. 59.
[268] Marius Porumb (2003) *Un veac de pictură românească din Transilvania – secolul al XVIII-lea* [A Century of Romanian Painting in Transylvania – the Eighteenth Century] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 33.
[269] Radu Tempea II (1691-1742) came from a family of scholars from Şchei. He became one of the most prominent representatives of the Romanian historiography in Transylvania in the first half of the eighteenth century; his work entitled *The History of the Holy Church of Şcheilor Braşovului* reports events related to the history of the church covering a period of 250 years from 1484 onwards. See Dorina Negulici (1979-1980) Familia Radu Tempea în cultura naţională [The Radu Tempea Family in the National Culture], *Cumidava*, 12 (23), pp. 363-364.
[270] In order to acquire more knowledge regarding the work and life of Grigorie Ranite, see the chapter dedicated to this master in Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, pp. 55-59 and the material of Ana Dumitran (2010) Un zugrav de elită: Grigore Ranite [An Elite Painter: Grigore Ranite], *AUASH*, 14 (1), pp. 83-98.

Diaconu.[21] As a result, Grigorie and his assistants, Gheorghe (his brother), Ioan, and Mihail executed the frescoes.[22]

It was believed that the content and style of the frescoes evoked funerary valences[23], yet the recess served as mortuary chapel much later. Initially, it was used as 'sacristy, or Chapel of Oblation'[24] and served for small occasional religious services. The *Inventarium and record of donations to the Holy Church* of 1759 provides a description of the chapel: 'To the north there is the Chapel dedicated to the Annunciation, built in stone, with steeple, inner and outer decoration, and no exterior doorways'[25]. So at that time, entering the church was only possible from the inside. The founder of its porch (built at a later date) was Hagi Radu Inaş.[26]

The execution was carried out in several stages. The oldest stage consists of the internal and most likely external frescoes realised by Grigorie and his assistants in 1738. The porch firstly had its vault and eastern wall painted, its frescoes corresponding to a different stylistic phase. The last stage coincides with the frescoes on the walls formed by closing the arches towards the yard and opening the access to the chapel, probably in the seventh decade. From a stylistical point of view, the mural realised by Grigorie Ranite's team in 1738 used the elaborate models of the school of Hurezi, thus continuing the tradition of the Brâncovan art.[27]

Connected to the theme of the chapel, the outer painting illustrates several scenes from the Mariological Cycle on the northern wall ('The Assumption of the Virgin Mary', 'The Annunciation', and 'The Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple'), 'The Tree of Jesse', and 'The Descent of the Holy Spirit' (the Pentecost) on the eastern wall. This painting was the first such achievement in Transylvania in the eighteenth century and it would become widely spread in the south of

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[21] Regarding Grigorie Ranite's activity in Wallachia see Vasile Cărăbiş (1975) Pictori zugravi din judeţul Gorj în sec. XVII-XIX [Painters in Gorj County in the Seventeenth-Nineteenth Centuries], *RMM*, 12 (2), p. 77; Radu Creţeanu (1980) Zugravi din judeţul Vâlcea [Painters in Vâlcea County], *RMM*, 49 (2), p. 92.

[22] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 33.

[23] Ştefănescu, *La peinture religieuse en Valachie et en Transylvanie*, pp. 287-288.

[24] Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol.1, p. 190.

[25] Ibid., p. 194.

[26] Hagi Radu Inaş was the epitrop of Saint Nicholas Church and one of the most important donours of the first half of the eighteenth century. He died in 1756. See Candid C. Muşlea (1946) *Biserica Sf. Nicolae din Şcheii Braşovului* [St. Nicholas Church of Şcheii Braşovului], vol. 2 (1743-1837) (Braşov: Institutul de Arte Grafice 'Astra'), p. 93.

[27] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, pp. 33-34.

Transylvania in the second half of the century. The inner frescoes impress through the accuracy of the iconographic programme, which was given careful consideration; treating and addressing certain themes with insistence and prioritisation point to the involvement of Radu Tempea. The rectangular chapel, with no apse to the east, but a small one to the north, is covered with a semi-cylindric vault with three penetrations each on the north and south sides. In the central area, a steeple perforates the vault. The *Pantocrator* is painted on the dome. The median eastern area of the vault depicts 'Virgin Mary with Child on the Throne', flanked by two archangels and followed by a new-testamentary Holy Trinity to the west. The western side of the vault illustrates several scenes from the Passion Cycle: 'The Prayer on the Mount of Olives', 'The Arrest of Jesus', 'Jesus before Anna', 'Jesus before Caiaphas', 'The Flagellation', and 'The Crowning with Thorns'. 'The Resurrection' and 'The Descent of the Holy Spirit' are presented in the two penetrations next to the steeple, setup that reproduces faithfully those of the church murals in Greater Wallachia.[278]

The theme of 'The Resurrection', presented in its various instances, is allotted a large space within the chapel. Painted in classical manner on the vault facing the apse, it is prolonged by six 'appearances' on the apse vaults: 'The Announcement of Christ's Resurrection', 'The Supper at Emmaus', 'Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene', 'Peter and John at the Tomb', and 'The Doubt of Thomas'.[279] 'Christ's Resurrection' became a central tenet within the Byzantine realm in the fourth century;[280] the Biblical passages referring to the Resurrection were adopted into Wallachian church murals as early as the fourteenth century as it is the case of the mural from the apse of the Royal Church of Curtea de Argeş. Here, such an extensive presentation of this cycle as well as the painters' use of the *hermeneia* point to the desire to preserve the iconographic tradition threatened in its doctrinal purity by Western influences. This line of reasoning is emphasised by the occurrence of

[278] Ibid., p. 34.
[279] Regarding the theme of the Ressurection, see Gabriel Millet (1916) *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile aux XIV, XV et XVI siècles, d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont Athos* (Paris: Fontemoing et C, E. de Boccard, successeur), pp. 517-518; Ioan D. Ştefănescu (1973) *Iconografia artei bizantine şi a picturii feudale româneşti* [The Iconography of the Byzantine art and Romanian Feudal Painting] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), pp. 128-135; Dionisie din Furna, *Carte de pictură*, pp. 147-150; C. Săndulescu-Verna (Ed.) (1979) *Erminia picturii bizantine dupa versiunea lui Dionisie din Furna* [The Hermeneia of Byzantine Painting after the Version of Dionysios of Fourna] (Timişoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului), pp. 156-158.
[280] Ioan Bria (1981) *Dicţionar de teologie ortodoxă* [Dictionary of Orthodox Theology] (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române), pp. 216-230.

'The Vision of Saint Peter of Alexandria'[281] on the eastern wall of the apse. The image in the lower register, that of Arius in a vessel riding the furious waves of the sea is uncommon. A nominative inscription written in unusually large characters accompanies this scene. The allusion to the preservation of the Orthodox belief is corroborated by the composition of 'The First Council of Nicaea of 318 Holy Fathers' (the council held in 325 condemned the teaching of Arius)[282] on the southern wall of the nave, in a central space marked by a penetration of the vault. The scene depicts emperor Constantine the Great in the centre, flanked by bishops. An opened scroll inscribed with the Nicene Creed is held by the bishops in the first row.[283]

Several scenes from the Old Testament ('The Young Men Thrown into the Fiery Furnace by Nebuchadnezzar' and 'Jonah and the Great Fish'), or of martyrs ('The Seven Children of Maccabees with Salome and Saint Eliazar'), which at first sight might seem solitary and unrelated to the ensemble, actually complement the former scenes and hint to the concerns of the community regarding the safeguarding of its faith, threatened by the Catholic proselytism.[284]

Grigorie had a talent for fresco painting, while his brother Gheorghe mastered tempera and wood painting; the latter authored the

[281] The origin of this composition in Byzantine art originated in miniatures and illuminated manuscripts (from the end of the tenth century to the beginning of the eleventh century). The incorporation of the motif into the decorative programmes of Byzantine churches occurred later (early thirteenth century). In wall paintings of the Palaeologan period, the Vision of Peter of Alexandria is frequently depicted on the altars of Byzantine churches. This tendency continued in the art of the post-Byzantine period up to the late nineteenth century. See Sašo Cvetkovski (2012) The Vision of Saint Peter of Alexandria, from the Church of Saint Archangels in Prilep. Iconographical Research, *Zograf*, 36, p. 83. Peter was archbishop of Alexandria in the early fourth century, and was the prelate that excommunicated Arius over doctrinal differences regaring the nature and divinity of Jesus in 311. When Peter was seized and thrown into prison during the reign of Diocletian (284-305), he was visited by a delegation of clerics, who asked him to receive Arius into the fold of the Church. Then, Peter, after having said 'Arius, both in the present time and the future, will be cut off from the glory of Jesus Christ the son of God', recounted to them his Vision. According to his narration, while praying in his cell that night, he had been visited by a boy about twelve years old, with radiant face and wearing a linen tunic rent in two, from the neck to the feet, which he held with both hands on the chest to hide his nakedness. When Peter asked 'Lord, who has torn your tunic?', the boy replied 'Arius', and advised him not to accept Arius in communion. See Archimandrite Silas Koukiaris (2011) The Depiction of the Vision of Saint Peter of Alexandria in the Sanctuary of Byzantine Churches, *Zograf*, 35, p. 63.
[282] Christopher Walter associated the representation of the Vision directly with the depiction of the First Ecumenical Council and distinguished it as purely doctrinal in content. Christopher Walter (1982) *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London: Variorum Publications), pp. 245-248.
[283] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 34.
[284] Ibid., p. 35.

icons adorning the iconostasis of the chapel. The icon of the patron saint bears the signature and completion date of the iconostasis (1738). The lower section of the three-tier wooden iconostasis consists of the royal doors with a representation of the patron saint and the deacon's doors that integrate icons illustrating 'Saint Nicholas on the Throne', 'The Mother of God with Child on the Throne', 'Christ the Emperor', and 'Christ in Majesty'; these representations show a predilection for minute decorative details and reproduce Brâncovan models. The next tier, separated by an architrave decorated with stylised vegetal and floral haulms, encloses icons of the great feasts within its colonnades. The upper tier consists of arches that frame busts of apostles flanking the scene of 'Jesus Giving His Blessing'.[285]

It is believed that after decorating the chapel, the team settled in Şchei, as the elongation of the church was still progressing and their presence was required for its embelishment. Radu Tempea mentions that the iconostasis was finished in 1739 and installed in the church the following year.[286] The enlarged church was painted entirely the same year.[287] A description of the church dated December 1761 refers to the appearance of the edifice: 'Cross-shaped, arched, stone-paved, with interior and exterior decoration, covered with tiles...'.[288] 'Four evangelists are painted on the pillars in front of the church. Christ, Mother of God (*Theotokos*), martyrs Gheorghie and Dimitrie. Over the door, the patron saint, Saint Nicholas, above it the Apostles Peter and Paul and their martyrdom. Above them, the Resurrection of Christ, with the four 'appearances' after His Resurrection'.[289]

Nowadays, only fragments of these paintings are preserved, and the interior frescoes of 1739 have completely disappeared. Fragments of external painting are found only on the southern wall (revealed by the last restoration of the monument) and the façades of the southern and eastern apses. Although the aforementioned scenes ceased to be visible, it has been inferred from the description of 1761 attesting the existence of an iconographic ensemble that the external

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[285] Idem.

[286] Stinghe, *Istoria beserecei Şcheilor Braşovului*, p. 157: '…paid by some Christians, mostly by boyar Toma Gheorghi Moldoveanu, the son-in-law of the late epitrop Petcu Setrariu, the two big candlesticks together with the sculpting work costing 316 florins and the gilding work, 914 florins'.

[287] Stinghe, *Istoria beserecei Şcheilor Braşovului*, p. 158.

[288] The text continues: '…it has thirteen iron-barred glass windows, the spire has twelve windows and it is covered with white metal shingles.' See Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 1, p. 239.

[289] Ibid., p. 244.

painting of 1739-1740 (at least on the western façade) was carried out by Grigorie's group. This hypothesis is confirmed by the placement of 'The Resurrection of Christ' accompanied by the 'appearances', to which these painters had paid special attention in the mural of the Annunciation Chapel, between the four pillars of the western façade.[290]

Around 1740, Grigorie headed for Banat, most probably at the recommendation of the community of Şchei, who maintained connections with the Orthodox hierarchy there. Moreover, one of his collaborators from 1734 at the painting of Vădeni Church near Târgu Jiu, Vasile Diaconu, was already in Banat, where he had settled since 1736. From the rich work of Grigorie in Banat during the fifth decade, two icons from 1740 representing the 'Archangel Michael' and 'Saint Nicholas' were preserved at Partoş Monastery[291], then the royal doors from 1745 at Drinova (Timiş county)[292], which are stylistically identical to those of Banatska Subotića (Yugoslavia), a town near Vârşeţ, where Vasile Diaconu also carried out his activity. The paintings from Partoş and Drinova foresee Grigorie's rich creation of icons in southern Transylvania in the sixth and seventh decades.[293]

The iconostasis of the church, which was completed in March 1740, is one of the most valuable achievements of the eighteenth century in the intra-Carpathian province.[294] Its painting and sculpture are a display of the Brâncovan style. Its monumental structure, preserved in its entirety, with richly carved polychromed and gilded elements, recalls the sumptuous iconostasis of the Saint Nicholas Church in Făgăraş finalised during the Brâncovan epoch. The lower tier consists of the royal icons, depicting *Deesis*, 'The Mother of God with Child on the Throne', 'Saint Nicholas', and 'The Assumption of the Virgin Mary'. Ioan the Painter[295], a Wallachian painter, signed the royal icons. Above the architrave ornamented with whirling vegetal motifs there is the tier

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[290] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 35.
[291] Ion B. Mureşianu (1973) *Colecţia de artă religioasă veche a Arhiepiscopiei Timişoarei şi Caransebeşului* [The Old Religious Art Collection of the Archbishopric of Timişoara and Caransebeş] (Timişoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului), pp. 45, 50.
[292] Ibid., p. 57.
[293] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p 35.
[294] The iconostasis is presently preserved in the Church of the Assumption of Our Lady in Predeluţ (Bran commune, Braşov County), as a donation of the community of Şchei in the mid-nineteenth century. See Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 1, p. 326.
[295] The painter of the iconostasis, Ioan, does not seem to be the one and the same person with the homonym painter mentioned in the dyptich of the Annunciation Chapel and who was part of the group led by Grigorie Ranite in 1738. Given the amplitude of the work and the special artistic quality of the iconostasis, owed of course to a mature artist, it is supposed that its author was another Wallachian painter. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură,* p. 36.

of the great feasts framed by colonnetes covered by semicircular arches decorated with vegetal motifs. The third row consists of the twelve apostles, with Jesus in their midst flanked by Mary, John the Baptist, and two archangels. The upper row includes Messianic prophets painted directly on the beam, in medallions enriched with sculpted foliage. After its completion, Ioan settled in Braşov, where he had orders from the rich merchants of Şchei and the Romanian communities in the Land of Bârsa.[296]

The construction of the Ascension Chapel in 1750-1752 corresponds to a phase in which the artistic activity gravitating around the church intensifies. The church inventory from 1761 describes the chapel and provides information regarding its founders and commission: 'Stone paved and covered with tiles, and the steeple of white metal shingles; with interior and exterior decoration. In front of it there is a porch on stone pillars, painted, with no doorway to the church. The steeple inside is supported on two pillars. The founders were the epitrop Radu Pricop and his wife Paraskeva, and the commisioner of all work, Hagi Pricop, and his wife Anastasia. Its erection started in 1750 and was completed in 1752'.[297] Branched out from the southern side of the church, with its ingress from the narthex, this second chapel is a rectangular edifice with a semicircular recessed apse crowned by a semidome at the east end. The steeple rising over the nave has an inside round-headed dome resting on pendants, which are supported by pilasters attached on the eastern wall. A porch opening from the church, with no connection to the exterior, was added to the west.[298]

The frescoes decorating the inside and outside of the chapel were executed by a team of icon-painters, whose names were captured in the diptych of the altar, namely masters Ioan and Iancu, aided by their disciples, Constantin and Irimia. The frescoes of masters Ioan and Iancu[299] were completed in 1752. The iconographic programme follows the prescriptions in the 'guide for painters'. The spine of the apse vault is decorated with 'The Mother of God with Child on the Throne' flanked by archangels. The upper frieze shows medallion portraits of prophets, and underneath them, church fathers in rich vestments. Inside the

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[296] Idem.
[297] Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 2, p. 243.
[298] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 36.
[299] The two painters were originary from Wallachia, where they had begun their activity by paintings the icons of the church in Bodeşti (Vâlcea County) in 1750, and the frescoes of the church in Şomăneşti (Gorj County) the same year. See Cărăbiş, 'Pictori zugravi din judeţul Gorj', p. 76.

steeple of the nave, the inscription running round the rims of the medallion enclosing the 'Pantocrator giving His Blessing' painted on the dome reads: 'God seeks from heaven to the sons of men to see if there is someone that knows the son of the true God'.[300] The prophets, apostles and the Liturgy, with Hetimasia's Throne to the east are rendered on the tambour of the steeple. The evangelists are depicted on the pendants, and saints shown in bust-length are placed in medallions on the four arches. Full-figure military saints are depicted on the northern and southern walls, while representations of parables cover the western wall. A large composition of the Last Judgement stretches on the eastern wall of the porch and partially on the semi-cylindric vault. The masters embraced unitary stylistic and iconographic approaches in the execution of the inner painting. Ioan and Iancu also adorned the iconostasis of the chapel. Though it is not dated, it is believed to have been finished in 1752[301]. The small wood-carved iconostasis is a gilded and polychromed piece that retains a wide decorative repertoire of Brâncovan tradition. It consists of several tiers: that of the royal doors, the great feasts, and the icons of the apostles, all crowned on the top by the cross of Christ. The royal icons are signed, namely 'Jesus Christ Archiereus' by Iancu and 'The Mother of God with Child' by Ioan. The close partnership of the two can be easily grasped, considering the lack of formal stylistic differences between these icons. The icon of the patron saint of the chapel and that of Saint Nicholas belong to the same fruitful collaboration. Minutely executed, the triptych of 1752 presents the colour palette recognisable at the four royal icons. Analogies of detail and composition can be also found in the case of the royal doors. Two other icons adorning the chapel can be attributed to the same centre from which Ioan and Iancu belonged. The icons illustrate Saint George and Saint Demetrius, each surrounded by scenes from their lives.[302]

The chapel was painted on the outside in 1752 or soon after, since at the time of the church inventory of 1761, the chapel was already 'painted on the inside and outside'[303]. Nowadays, the painting is better preserved on the southern façade and the apse. The exterior was decorated on the basis of a programme designed according to the façade

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[300] Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 1, p. 64.
[301] The inscription on the triptych (also the work of the two masters) indicates: 'The triptych of the Holy Chapel of the Ascension of Christ the Saviour that was painted and embellished by the servant of God the epitrop Radu Pricop. 1752'. See Marius Porumb (1972) Zugravii icoanelor Paraclisului nou din Şcheii Braşovului [The Painters of the Icons of the New Chapel of Şcheii Braşovului], *AMN*, 9, p. 571.
[302] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 37.
[303] Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 2, p. 243.

articulation elements. On the southern façade and the apse, the projecting eaves cornice is ornamented with vegetal and geometric motifs; beneath it there is a torus, and at the bottom a frieze of medallions portraying busts of prophets interlinking in a cross; on each medallion there are letters that compose the following phrase: 'The one that will not take up my cross and follow after me is not worthy of me'.[304] This phrase acts like a generic over the scenes placed under the geminated arches between the pilasters. The pilasters and arches are decorated with stylised motifs of vegetal haulms, recurrent in the Brâncovan painting. The scenes on the façade are arrayed from left to right: 'The Prodigal Son's Tale', Saint Marina, The Holy Trinity and 'The Lapidation of Saint Archdeacon Stephen', 'The Finding of the Forerunner's Head', 'The Healing Spring', 'The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist', and 'The Fire seen by Moses on Mount Sinai'. The polygonal apse is articulated by piers that support geminated arches. The painting is structured just like on the southern façade, in the upper part medallions containing busts of saints, and under the arches the scenes: 'Christ the Good Shepherd', Saint Spyridon, Saint Charalambos, 'Jesus Emperor and Great Archiereus', and two Holy Fathers of the Church. The artistic qualities and stylistic body of the external painting give authorship to Ioan and Iancu. The painting impresses through its bold draughtsmanship with graphic accents, which emphasises the drapery of garments through a balanced chromatic. Larger compositions include landscape and architecture elements treated according to conventional models specific to the Brâncovan sphere. The message conveyed by the iconographic selection is rather significant. Relevant in this respect it is the scene of the Good Shepherd 'that protects his flock of raptors and opponents', a prevalent theme encountered in the sixth decade.[305]

The porch of the Annunciation Chapel was open, with arches on the western and northern sides, but closed with windowless masonry in the eighteenth century, when the doorway into the chapel was built. The interior of the porch was decorated with frescoes, the iconographic programme unfolding on the walls and the semi-cylindric vault. The eastern wall, around the arcade that leads to the chapel, was decorated with nine medallions encircled by vegetal veins. The medallions in the upper register depict from left to the right the Apostles John and Peter, Mary, Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, and below, to the left of the arcade the evangelists Luke,

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[304] Muşlea, *Biserica Sf. Nicolae*, vol. 1, p. 68.
[305] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 37.

Matthew, and Mark. The eastern wall depicts the 'Resurrection' and one of 'the appearances' to the south. The southern wall shows 'The Healing of the Paralytic at Capernaum', and the western one 'The Sunday of the Blind Man' and 'The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman'. The semi-cylindric vault is divided into two, and each side shows scenes from the 'Apocalypse of Saint John' (The Revelation). Considering the significant number of scenes substantiating the Apocalypse, as well as the rarity of these scenes in the ecclesiastical painting in the Romanian environment in general, it was assumed that the iconographic programme was conceived in connection with the mural ensemble of the Ascension Chapel, to which archpriest Eustasie Grid made an essential contribution.[306]

Masters Ioan and Iancu took disciples under their wing at Şchei, two of whom contributed to the altar of the Ascension Chapel. The work of Constantin, the former of the disciples attested in 1752, is still hard to pin down, as this name appears multiple times[307]; instead the latter, Irimia, is mentioned as an independent painter starting with 1760[308].

Ioan settled permanently in Şchei. His name was added to the registers of the Church of Saint Nicholas on September 1762, when he baptisd his son, Ion[309], and in September 1776 when he married off his daughter, Ilinca[310]. His role in the instruction of apprentices in Şchei is not fully known. If, in the case of Constantin and Irimia, the relationship with their master is quite clear, we cannot pronounce ourselves in regards to others. Amongst his pupils that worked their way up towards the end of the century, it is certain that his son, Ioan Ioanovici undercarried works in the ninth and tenth decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the next.[311]

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[306] Ibid., p. 38.
[307] Bearing the name of Constantin, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the following painters are known: Constantin the Deacon from Braşov, identical with Constantin Boghină; Constantin the Painter from Şchei, who painted in collaboration with Gheorghe and Ioan at the church in Mateiaş in 1798. See Porumb, *Dicţionar*, pp. 86-87.
[308] In the *Registry of the Christened* of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Şchei he is mentioned for the first time in August 1760; on 11 August 1762 his son ('Petru of Irimie the Painter') was baptised. Nicolae Dunăre (Ed.) (1974) *Ţara Bârsei* [Bârsa Land], vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), p. 243.
[309] 'Ioan of Ioan the Painter', in the *Registry of the Christened*. Dunăre, *Ţara Bârsei*, vol. 2, p.243.
[310] 'Radu Ioan marries Ilinca of Ioan the Painter'. Idem.
[311] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 38.

In 1761, Neagoe the Icon Painter lived in Şchei, and married off his daughter Ana to Petru Munteanu in January 1772. The same source informs us that Radu Ioanovici 'married Ilinca of Ioan the Painter[312]. Also, the *Registry of Marriages* mentions Radu Iconariu (the Icon Painter), who at that time married off his son Dumitru, who would become a painter as well, in 1770.[313]

Unfortunately, little is known about the paintings made by these local painters. Fieldwork in the Land of Bârsa or the neighbouring areas has contributed to the discovery of works signed or that could be attributed to painters coming from this centre. At the Orthodox Church of Zagon (Covasna County), there is an icon depicting 'The Mother of God with Child', undated work signed by Radu the Painter, which could be assigned to the above-mentioned Radu the Icon Painter.[314] At the same church, the royal icons ('Jesus Archiereus on the Throne', 'The Mother of God with Child on the Throne', the 'Archangels Michael and Gabriel', and 'Saint Nicholas') are signed by Ioan the Painter, a painter of Brâncovan tradition, who certainly belongs to the same artistic environment.[315]

The mural painting of the Church of Mateiaş (Braşov County) was executed by a team of painters from Braşov, consisting of Gheorghe, Ioan, and Constantin. The mural, replaced by a new fresco in 1960, dated back to 1798, and an inscription marked the names of the authors.[316]

Constantin Boghină, an artist with a particularly rich activity, is one of the painters in Braşov at the end of the century. His painting rifts from the traditional post-Brâncovan path, his iconography and compositions tending to Baroque-inspired westernised forms. The

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[312] The Archives of the Church of Saint Nicholas include numerous data concerning the painters of Şchei, mentioned in the *Registry of the Christened* and the *Registry of Marriages*, proof that they were inhabitants of this district. Dunăre, *Ţara Bârsei*, vol. 2, p. 243.

[313] Dunăre, *Ţara Bârsei*, vol. 2, pp. 243-244.

[314] Marius Porumb (1976) Zugravi şi centre româneşti de pictură din Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea [Painters and Painting Centres in Eighteenth-Century Transylvania], *AIIACN*, 19, p. 121.

[315] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 39.

[316] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1970) Cu privire la unele monumente din Ţara Făgăraşului în lumina relaţiilor cu Ţara Românească [On Several Monuments in the Land of Făgăraş in the Light of the Relations with Wallachia], *BMI*, 39 (2), p. 31.

painter had commissions not only in Braşov or the localities in the Land of Bârsa, but also in Cluj, Sibiu, and at Cheia Monastery in Wallachia.[317]

The great number of widely known painters that worked in this centre was facilitated by the auspicious environment, in which various social categories of the Romanian population ordered the decoration of churches and chapels with painting and a large number of icons (donated to churches or kept in houses for private devotion).

4.2 Răşinari

Settlement in the proximity of Sibiu, with its long history and ties to Wallachia, Răşinari became a cultural and artistic centre of great importance in the first half of the century.[318] Răşinari had the status of a serfs village[319] with all the economic implications this entailed, complicated by vexations caused by the lack of rights on the 'Royal Land'.[320] At the beginning of the century, the village was subjected to

[317] Meteş, *Zugravii bisericilor române*, vol. 1, pp. 123-125; Victor Brătulescu (1938) Biserici din Valea Teleajenului [Churches on the Teleajen Valley], *BCMI*, 31, p. 183; Ioana Cristache-Panait (1969) Bisericile româneşti din Săcele [Romanian Churches in Săcele], *MI*, 2, pp. 81-82; Marius Porumb (1971) Contribuţii la cunoaşterea unor zugravi din veacul al XVIII-lea din Transilvania [Contributions to the Knowledge of Eighteenth-Century Painters from Transylvania], *AMN*, 8, p. 610.

[318] Regarding the history and the economic and cultural development of Răşinari see Victor Păcală (1915) *Monografia comunei Răşinariu* [Monograph of Răşinari Commune] (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane).

[319] Angelika Schaser (2000) *Reformele iozefine în Transilvania şi urmările lor în viaţa socială: importanţa edictului de concivilitate pentru oraşul Sibiu* [Josephinian Reforms in Transylvania and Their Consequences on Social Life: the importance of the edict of concivility for the city of Sibiu] (Sibiu: Editura Hora), pp. 118, 122, 266.

[320] In the eighteenth century, the Romanians in Transylvania were tolerated (meaning 'abiding'), in the sense of living on the fringes of society at the mercy of the dominant nations and through the goodwill of the imperial house. As such, the Romanians did find themselves on the fringes of society, most of them being either serfs in the counties administered by the Hungarian aristocracy, or free peasants, in the area known as *Fundus Regius* (Royal Land) and inhabited by Saxons. This latter territory, established following King Andrew's Diploma (1224), corresponded to the geographical area settled by the German colonists who had arrived in Transylvania in the twelve-thirteenth centuries and was divided into nine seats (Orăştie, Sebeş, Sighişoara, Cincu, Mediaş, Nocrich, Sibiu, Miercurea, and Rupea) and two districts (Braşov and Bistriţa). The population consisted of Romanians, Saxons, and Szeklers, but only the Saxons - or indeed those of the Evangelical confession of faith - enjoyed citizenship rights. The area was under the legal jurisdiction of the Saxon University (*Universitatis Saxonum*), located in the town of Sibiu, which operated as a political and administrative body and was led by the Saxon *comes.* Romanians and

heavy taxes by the Sibiu magistrate, which determined it to renew its complaints to the Court and Aulic Chamber of Vienna, demanding a place in Wallachia 'for they are ready to leave their homeland and look elsewhere in vain for a life'.[321] The situation of its people was perpetuated until 1786, when the decision of Emperor Joseph II spared the locality of any ruling, by declaring it free royal village.[322]

The village had a population of 770 families in 1773[323], summing up 3 850 souls[324], and was by far the most populated Romanian parish in Transylvania. It was certainly the richest parish, as it could be deduced from a *Specificatio* of the punishments imposed on the communities involved in monk Visarion's movement[325]. We learn from this that the village paid some fines, one of 800 and the other of 1000 Hungarian florins, while the next summed up 1020 Hungarian florins.[326] Hence, even though they belonged to a social category at the outskirts of society, they were not poor people.

Saxons lived together on this territory from the Middle Ages until the contemporary era, when most Saxons departed following the retreat of the German army in 1944 and later the fall of the communist regime. As opposed to the rural environment, where they lived either in mixed villages or in separate settlements, in the urban environments those who did not belong to the Saxon nation - namely, the Romanians, the Hungarians, and the members of other ethnic groups - were not allowed to purchase real estate in keeping with a legal provision that remained in force until Joseph II issued the Rescript on concivility on 4 July 1781. The emperor's Rescript on concivility gave citizenship and ownership rights in the Saxon towns and villages to all of his Transylvanian subjects, and henceforth the Romanians were allowed to purchase and own property in both the rural and the urban environments, putting and end to the Saxon monopoly on real estate and to the exclusively Saxon citizenship rights in the *Fundus Regius*. With this measure, Joseph II shook the very foundations of the Saxon administration, indicating clearly that all the inhabitants of this territory, without exception, were to be deemed free and enjoy equal rights. This paved the way for the future social and political emancipation of the Romanians, who could join a guild, attend the Saxon schools, work in the administration, and own real estate. See Abrudan, 'Under the Sway of Orthodoxy', pp. 56, 60.

[321] Păcală, *Monografia comunei Răşinariu*, p. 422; Meteş, *Emigrări româneşti din Transilvania*, pp. 131-132.

[322] Schaser, *Reformele iozefine în Transilvania*, p. 149.

[323] Augustin Bunea (1900) Din istoria românilor. Episcopul Ioan Inocenţiu Klein (1728-1751) [From the History of the Romanians. Bishop Ioan Inocenţiu Klein (1728-1751)] (Blaj: Tiparul Seminarului Archidiecesan), p. 364.

[324] *Şematismul veneratului cler al archidiecesei metropolitane greco-catolice române de Alba Iulia şi Făgăraş pre anul Domnului 1900, de la Sânta Unire 200* [Clerical Directory of the Venerated Clergy of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan See of Alba Iulia and Făgăraş for the Year of Our Lord 1900, or 200 from the Holy Union], 1900, Blaj, p. 559.

[325] See Keith Hitchins (2007) The Court of Vienna and Confessional Problems in Transylvania, 1744-1759, *AUAH*, 11 (2), pp. 253, 254, 256, 267.

[326] Silviu Dragomir (1930) Istoria desrobirei religioase a românilor din Ardeal în secolul XVIII [The History of the Religious Liberation of the Transylvanian Romanians in the Eighteenth Century], vol. 2 (Sibiu: Editura şi tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane), p. 70.

The artistic and cultural dimension that historian Ştefan Meteş attributes to Răşinari 'where the famous icon painters were' is correctly reported to the reality of that time, since some of the most talented artists in Transylvania emerged from the Răşinari community.[327] Radu the Painter, active at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, probably a close apprentice of the versed artist from Wallachia, Pârvu Mutu, is insufficiently known, both the painter and his work being analysed in terms of a single icon from a private collection in Syria ('Virgin Mary and Child' signed and dated '1700, Radu from Răşinari' in Georges Abou Adal's collection).[328]

The activity of the first generation of painters, Priest Ivan and Master Nistor the Elder, is connected to Transylvanian artistic traditions, but at the same time pervaded with the style of the Brâncovan school.[329] An explanation of this contamination has only been attempted so far by Ioana Cristache-Panait, who found the presence of the ecclesiarh Mihail from Răşinari at Cozia as an argument for the formation of the two painters on the Brâncovan sites. [330] Whatever the motivation behind their presence to the south of the Carpathians or what offered them this chance, their presence in that environment is believed to be beyond dispute; in the era, a visit to the Brâncovan sites was necessary for any painter interested in high-quality professional training.[331]

Approaching a language that involved direct contact with Wallachian centres, Ivan painted three icons in Cărpiniş (Roşia Montană

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[327] Meteş, *Zugravii bisericilor române*, vol. 1, p. 129.
[328] Virgil Cândea (1997) Les icônes roumaines, in Virgil Cândea *et al.* (Eds) *Lumières de l'Orient chrétien: icônes de la collection Abou Adal* (Genève – Beyrouth: Art et Patrimoine), catalogue de l'exposition au Musée d'an et d'histoire de Genève, 12 décembre – 4 mai 1997, pp. 298-299; Saveta – Florica Pop (2012) Iconostasul Bisericii Cuvioasa Paraschiva din Răşinari, Sibiu (1761-1763) [The Iconostasis of the Pious Paraskeva Church in Răşinari, Sibiu (1761-1763)], *AUCDCI*, 3 (1-2), pp. 79-119.
[329] Porumb, 'Zugravi şi centre româneşti de pictură', p. 104; *idem, Un veac de pictură*, p. 43.
[330] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1984) Rolul zugravilor de la sud de Carpaţi în dezvoltarea picturii româneşti din Transilvania (secolul al XVIII-lea – prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea) [The Role of the Painters from the South of the Carpathians in the Development of the Romanian Painting in Transylvania (Eighteenth Century – First Half of the Nineteenth Century)], *SCIA*, 31, p. 76; *idem* (1978) Importante însemnări de pe cărţi vechi bisericeşti, tipărite la Vâlcea şi în alte părţi [Important Notes on Old Church Books, Printed in Vâlcea and Elsewhere], *MO*, 30 (1-3), p. 54.
[331] Ana Dumitran, Elena-Daniela Cucui & Saveta-Florica Pop (2009) Nistor Dascălul: Contribuţii la biografia unui zugrav din prima jumătate a veacului al XVIII-lea [Nistor the Scholar: contributions to the biography of a painter from the first half of the eighteenth century], *AUASH*, 13, p. 223; Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 194.

commune, Alba County) in 1718[332]. For 'Mother of God with Child', Ivan used a basic chromatic for faces and hands, starting from a tone of ochre-brown with successive overlays to ochre-red. The lights were applied through pronounced strokes, following the anatomical shape of the face, while the proplasma was used for the shadow areas. On the small, slightly oval face of Mary, contoured with a thick line vanishing on the left side, the eyes are built over the underlay with white superimposed on the iris, creating a dark-light contrast, while the graded tones from the iris and pupil suggest proximity. The iris, slightly oval, is partially covered by the upper eyelid contoured by a vigorous curve, to which the less pronounced outline of the lower eyelid is subordinated. The nose, which starts at the base of the left eyebrow, gets thinner near the eyes.[333]

A group of five icons executed in the companionship of Nistor in 1720 are preserved in Certege village: 'Mother of God with Child' (*Eleusa*), 'Jesus Pantocrator', 'Saint Nicholas', 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon', and 'Mother of God with Child' (*Glikofilousa*). Out of the group of five, only the *Eleusa* bears their signature[334], which made it difficult to single out their individual pieces[335]. The *Eleusa* is painted within a polylobed arch, and on its two sides, the twelve Messianic prophets are represented in full-length holding scrolls in their hands. The central characters crowned with diadems and nimbi in relief are projected on a golden setting. The infant has a prominent, protruding forehead and an aquiline nose. The relief of their faces, the geometrical play of the folds, and the silhouettes of the prophets indicate the painters' knowledge of archaic prototypes.[336] 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon' portrays the holy warrior mounted on a rearing horse, in a slight semi-profile, and captures his movement when readying his spear to kill the dragon

[332] In the church of this village, Nistor, with whom he collaborates later, painted an icon in 1723. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 43; Alina Geanina Ionescu (2009) *Icoane pe lemn şi sticlă din principalele colecţii sibiene* [Icons on Wood and Glass in the Main Collections of Sibiu] (Sibiu: Editura Astra Museum), pp. 19, 54; Alexandru Efremov (2003) *Icoane româneşti* [Romanian Icons] (Bucharest: Editura Merdiane), p. 134.

[333] Saveta-Florica Pop, Elena-Daniela Cucui & Ana Dumitran (2010) Zugravul Nistor Dascălul din Răşinari [Master Nistor the Scholar from Răşinari], *NEMVS*, 5 (9-10), pp. 40-41.

[334] 'And I wrote Priest Ivan the Painter from Răşinari with Nistor the Painter.' See Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', p. 233.

[335] Marius Porumb informs the presence of three icons at Certege, painted by Ivan together with Nistor (*Eleusa*, 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon', and 'Saint Nicholas'), which recall the previous icons at Cărpiniş and anticipate those at Ocna Sibiului and Poiana Mărului. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 43. Dumitran, Cucui & Pop assigned the icons 'Saint Nicholas' and the 'Pantocrator' to Ivan, and 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon' to Nistor. They also believe that the second icon of 'Mother of God with Child' belongs to Nistor. See Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', pp. 233-234.

[336] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 43; Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', p. 236.

under the astonished eyes of the viewers. The richness of gold on the upper side, meant to confer opulence, transposes us into another space, where, in the left corner, the large hand of Christ appears in a blessing gesture. The saint is dressed in military garb embellished with a string of pearls; the harness of the horse is also ornamented. His face is painted with an ochre-brown base colour, on which the skin tones and light areas overlap. The shades outlining the beard, the corners of the lips and the periphery of the face are also done in ochre-brown, the nose is articulated with brown strokes and starts at the base of the right eyebrow, and the lips are painted in red, contrasting with the intense light and shadow in this area.[337] In the case of the fifth icon, the *Glikofilousa* image of Mary, of smaller size, the attempt to assign it to one of the two painters converges towards Nistor. By making an analogy between the two icons with the same theme, one could find a stylistic awkwardness, which compared to their co-signed icon, does not fit Ivan's work. The chromatic of the faces, with ochre-green for the background, ochre-red for carnation and white for light, brings the two together, but the smaller icon has obscured portions that are not gradated, such as the edge of the face, the area underneath the beard and eye area. The strokes of light are ample, the chromatic transitions from the underlying layers are not so gracefully treated, and what Ivan is supposed to have done as the first author of the larger icon, namely effectively building the colour so that the underlay could be seen easily from under the area of light, it is not found in the smaller one, where the final strokes are applied roughly over the proplasma. Even though Nistor tried to copy Ivan's model, the shape of the eyes, larger than in the other icon, with calligraphed eyelids and eyelashes, gives him away. Other elements that one does not find in the larger icon are the shape and rigidity of the hands.[338]

In March 1723, Ivan painted the icons of the *Pantocrator* and 'Saint Nicholas' at the Brâncovans' Church in Poiana Mărului (Braşov County)[339]. The same year, he decorated the old church in Ocna Sibiului 'majestically, illustrating various scenes from the life of the Saviour, the lives of the saints, and the icon of heaven and hell'.[340] From the old mural ensemble only the votive painting on the western wall of the narthex survived.[341] For a long time it was believed that the founders that

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[337] Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', p. 233.
[338] Ibid., p. 234.
[339] They are currently in the collections of the Art Museum in Braşov.
[340] Broju, *Biserica din Ocna Sibiului*, p. 10.
[341] Nicolae Iorga (1906) *Scrisori şi inscripţii ardelene şi maramureşene. 2. Inscripţii şi însemnări, studii şi documente* [Letters and Inscriptions from Transylvania and Maramureş. 2. Inscriptions and Notes, Studies and Documents] (Bucharest: Atelierele grafice Socec

support the church model are Constantin Brâncoveanu and Priest Ioan of Ocna, as mentioned in the inscription. Nonetheless, it has been clarified that the image represents Michael the Brave as the founder and Constantin Brâncoveanu as the restorer of the monument.[342] Ivan and Nistor painted a similar votive painting in the narthex of the Geoagiu de Sus Monastery (Alba County) in 1724, in which they represented Michael the Brave. The inscription attests that the Metropolitan of Carlowitz Demetrius is the founder of the church and Ivan and Nistor its painters. [343] The text does not refer to the identity of the personage; however, the image is that of a *voivode*, dressed in caftan, garnished and coated with a samur pinned in front and worn on shoulders, and a cloak tied with a waistband that peeks out from underneath. The voivode formally recalls the representations of the epoch engravings, as well as the image from the fresco of Ocna Sibiului. The painters must have deliberately omitted, in both cases, the name of the ruler, as not to face any backlash from the Transylvanian authorities, who could not look at this in a positive light.[344]

In the third decade, Ivan and Nistor continued their work in several localities in the central and southern regions. Ivan painted icons in Boarta (Sibiu County), Tău (Alba County)[345] and Broşteni (Sibiu County) in 1724.[346] Afterwards, Ivan settled for several years in Râmnic (Wallachia), where he became a trusted collaborator of Bishop Climent (1735-1749). [347] Nistor painted in the centre of Transylvania. In 1730, he

[341] et Comp. Soc. Anonimă), p. 139; Corneliu Creangă (1966) Contribuţia lui Constantin Brâncoveanu la zidirea unei biserici în Ocna Sibiului [Constantin Brâncoveanu's Contribution to the Erection of a Church in Ocna Sibiului], *MA*, 11 (1-3), p. 153.

[342] Vasile Drăguţ (1972) Un portret necunoscut al lui Mihai Viteazul [An Unknown Portrait of Michael the Brave], *BMI*, 4, pp. 60-62.

[343] Susana Andea & Avram Andea (1993) Date noi privind bisericile din Geoagiu de Sus în secolul XVIII [New Data Regarding the Churches in Geoagiu de Sus in the Eighteenth Century], *AT*, 3, pp. 175-177.

[344] Drăguţ, 'Un portret necunoscut', p. 62. Ivan was also a typist and ecclesiastical demnitary in the centre of Râmnic. Since he was a scholar of that epoch, it must have been a deliberate choice. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 44.

[345] Cristache-Panait has hesitated to assign three icons from Tău to Ivan or Nistor in Cristache-Panait, 'Rolul zugravilor de la sud de Carpaţi', p. 76, but subsequently reached the conclusion that they belong to Ivan in *idem* (1987) *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice din Episcopia Alba Iuliei, mărturii de continuitate şi creaţie românească* [Wooden Churches Historical Monuments from the Episcopate of Alba Iulia, Testimonies of Continuity and Romanian Creation] (Alba Iulia: Editura Episcopiei Ortodoxe a Alba Iuliei), pp. 120-121. Ana Dumitran and Elena-Daniela Cucui also believe that the group of icons is the creation of Ivan in (2008) Prezenţe artistice la biserica de lemn din Tău [Artistic Presences at the Wooden Church in Tău], *Studia UBB Theol,* 53 (3), pp. 147-148.

[346] The icons are kept at the History Museum in Sighişoara. Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 194; Efremov, *Icoane româneşti*, p.136, illustrations on pp. 259-260 (wrongly dated the seventeenth century).

[347] Meteş, *Relaţiile bisericii româneşti ortodoxe din Ardeal*, p. 44.

signed the royal doors of the wooden church of Iernut (Mureş County), an edifice demolished in the interwar period.[348] He also painted a picture of the 'Virgin Mary with Child', discovered in the church of Pleaşa, near Râmeţ Monastery (Alba County). The monumental icon was part of the dower of an older edifice replaced by the current one in 1820, and it must have initially been part of the iconostasis. In the left lower corner, we distinguish the inscription with the date and signature of the painter: '23 August 1730. Most sinful painter Nistor Nicolovici of Răşinari'.[349] In 1733, he finished two royal icons at the Church of Şpring (Alba County).[350] As in the icon of Pleaşa, the Virgin's face in *Hodigitria* is represented in a slight semi-profile and is round, strongly contoured on its left side. The gradation, achieved through successive strokes, starts from ochre-brown as base colour, shifting to ochre-red for the flesh

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[348] Atanasie Popa (1930-1931) Biserica de lemn din Iernut (Târnava Mică) [The Wooden Church of Iernut (Târnava Mică)], *ACMIT*, pp. 262-263, 269.

[349] We learn from this for the first time that Nistor was the son of a certain Nicola, from who comes the derivation of Serbian inspiration, Nicolovici. Analysing the artist's other well-known signatures, the association of his name with Răşinari first appeared in Iernut in March 1930, only a few months earlier than in Pleaşa. Previously, in 1720, at Certege, Ivan, who authored the common signature, only declared himself from Răşinari, Nistor being indicated only by his profession. As this is the oldest mention of their collaboration, it is not mandatory that both were from Răşinari, but that the establishment of Nistor's residence there has come just as a consequence of a stable, long-lasting collaboration between the two. The two mentions of 1730 are, in fact, the only ones in which Nistor discloses his place of residence or his possible origin. The icon from Pleaşa, on which he mentioned his descendancy is, for the most part, his most meticulous achievement; the preoccupation for the finesse of the details, the grace of the faces, the artistry of the execution indicate not only a great painter but also someone who had other resources held in reserve since he achieved such a performance. On these grounds, one might assume that Nistor not only did not originate in Răşinari, but also that he was the son of a great painter, who gave him a thorough teaching, invoking such a lineage being able to promote him and to confirm his mastery. The same hypothesis finds its foundation in the person of the painter Nicola of Brâncoveni, attested in documents between 1679 and 1702, who signed in 1699, along with Preda and Efrem, the fresco on the vault of Hurezi, and father of painter Gheorghe, another exponent of the Brâncovan painting, mentioned in inscriptions from 1701 to 1738. Not being able to extract Nicola's contribution from the Hurezi masterpiece, we cannot yet establish the influence that the father had on his alleged son. However, there are some clues in the vicinity of the vault of the 'Holy Apostles Peter and Paul' Hermitage painted by archdeacons Iosif and Ioan in 1700. Here, on the inferior edge of the nave windows, we encounter two faces of archangels, which would also be illustrated by Nistor, a sign that he knew that work well or had access to the two painter's models. Moreover, as we already know, Iosif the Hieromonk also traveled to Transylvania, where he fulfilled the commission for the iconostasis of the church in the Maieri neighborhood of Alba Iulia in 1716-1717. If Nistor were his apprentice, he had the opportunity to get acquainted with the Transylvanian environment and opt for the north of the Carpathians, where there were many possibilities of affirmation. If correct, this illustrious kinship could provide information on the environment in which the young Nistor was formed. See Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', pp. 225-226.

[350] Gelu Mihai Hărdălău (1981) Zugravii din secolele al XVIII-lea şi al XIX-lea în judeţul Alba [The Painters in Alba County in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries], *Apulum*, 19, p. 395.

tones and white for areas of light. The eyebrows are long and arched, drawn over the underlay with brown, the outline of the nose is made with a modulated line, which starts at the base of the forehead and gives a soft look, a special grace to the face. The mouth, very delicate, geometrically treated, with small lips and an accentuated commissure is closed as if for contemplation. The gradation of tones used for the Child's face is identical to that of the Mother; the face, the neck and the ears are heavily contoured, the nose is stiffer, the hair is drawn over the background colour, the cheeks surround the mouth harmoniously.[351] But unlike the previous picture, where the interest for detail is remarkable (the Mother of Pleaşa wears a tunic edged with beads of pearls and a cloak with gilded floral decoration), the Mother of Şpring surprises through the contrast between its impressive dimensions and the austerity of execution, inspired in this case by Ivan's icon painted for the church in Cărpiniş.[352] The simple drawing, with geometric tendencies, and the large mass of colour without differences in intensity confer the Şpring icon majesty and awkwardness at the same time.[353] The pair icon attributed to Nistor is the Saviour flanked by the twelve apostles. The same simplicity of the drawing, the same monotonous colours, the same overall impression as in the *Hodigitria*, all point to a full-fledged artist bound by material circumstances to make a less expensive icon. Christ's nimbus is graven and gilt with metallic foil, the face is oval, the eyebrows are drawn over the proplasma with brown. The gradation is achieved by successively overlapping layers of colour, from ochre-green to ochre-red and white. The line of the nose begins at the base of the left eyebrow and is applied over a shadow area. The slightly elongated shape of the eyes is given by the suave contour, and their discontinuous lights painted in red are the ones that welcome the viewer. The beard is calligraphicaly drawn with brown over the background, the shadows stand out in the lower area of the nose and the chin. The lips commissure is rendered in brown, and their red colour is harmonised with the colour of the nose and the eyes. The ears are stylised, their colour is identical to that of the face, and the hair is drawn in brown over the base colour.[354]

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[351] Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', p. 227.
[352] Efremov, *Icoane româneşti*, pp. 134, 222, illustration on p. 256; Geanina Curcă (2008) Cultul icoanei în iconografia bizantină din perspectivă istorică. Stilul bizantin reflectat în icoanele de secol XVIII-XIX din colecţiile sibiene [The Cult of the Icon in Byzantine Iconography from a Historical Perspective. The Byzantine Style Reflected in the Eighteenth-Nineteenth Century Icons in the Collections of Sibiu] (PhD thesis, 'Lucian Blaga' University, Sibiu), p. 157, illustration on p. 98.
[353] Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', p. 228.
[354] Idem.

Returning to Transylvania, Ivan carried out a relentless work, embellishing several edifices with icons and frescoes. In 1752, he painted three icons at Ohaba Streiului;[355] the icons depicting 'Mary the Empress with the Child', *Deesis*, and 'Saint Nicholas' impress through their intense chromatic, their drawing pervaded by the Byzantine style, and draw inspiration from older Wallachian models.[356] Ivan's activity continued until the end of the seventh decade, when he produced various icons in Sibiu County from Apoldu de Jos, Cornățel, Poiana Sibiului, and the royal doors of the Wooden Church in Sângătin.[357]

Ivan's return to Transylvania coincided with the completion of the new stone church in Rășinari[358], when only the fresco decoration was required. Reviving his older partnership with Nistor, the two began to paint the façades of the Church of Pious Saint Paraskeva in 1758. The vast scene depicting the 'Mourning of Jesus' on the exterior of the apse incorporated their signature: '1758. Painter Pop Ivan, Master Nistor the Elder'.[359] Assigning Nistor the designation of 'master' indicates that he

[355] Dumitran, Cucui & Pop re-attribute these pieces to Nistor, in 'Nistor Dascălul', pp. 231-232.

[356] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 44.

[357] Ioana Cristache-Panait, 'Rolul zugravilor de la sudul Carpaților', p. 76.

[358] The construction of the Saint Paraskeva Church in Rășinari began as early as 1753, one year after the old church was demolished. See Emilian Cioran (1940) Biserica cu hramul Cuvioasa Paraschiva din Rășinari [The Church with the Saint Pious Paraskeva Patron in Rășinari], in Nicolae Colan, Dumitru Stăniloae & Grigorie T. Marcu (Eds) *Omagiu Înalt Prea Sfinției Sale Nicolae Bălan mitropolitul Ardealului la douăzeci de ani de arhipăstorie* [Tribute to His Holiness Nicolae Bălan Metropolitan of Transylvania at Twenty Years of Service] (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane), p. 325; Augustin Bunea (1902) *Episcopii Petru Pavel Aron și Dionisie Novacovici* sau *Istoria românilor transilvăneni de la 1751-1764* [Bishops Petru Pavel Aron and Dionisie Novacovici or The history of the Transylvanian Romanians from 1751-1764] (Blaj: Tipografia Seminarului Archidiecezan), p. 215: on the basis of a letter from Bishop Aron to the Archbishop of Rășinari, attributes the foundation to the Bishop of Blaj. Cioran, 'Biserica cu hramul Cuvioasa Paraschiva', p. 330, notes that 'Bishop Aron sanctified the church in 1757, offering his help. It was inferred wrongly that he built it. A few years before the Orthodox had spent 2000 florins with the restoration of the church.' Silviu Dragomir (1930) *Istoria dezrobirii religioase a românilor din Ardeal în secolul al XVIII-lea* [The History of the Religious Liberation of the Romanians in Transylvania in the Eighteenth Century], vol. 2, (Sibiu: Tiparul Topografiei Arhidiecezane), p. 237: 'Considering the argument that the priests and the uniate bishop contributed to the erection of the church in Rășinari, the church was assigned to the uniates.'

[358] Along with the icon of Pious Paraskeva, there are still other icons painted by Grigorie Ranite, namely 'Mother of God with Child on the Throne', *Deesis*, 'Pious Paraskeva' (the second one), 'Saint Nicholas on the Throne'; in the Church of Saint Elijah in the same locality, there are three other icons coming from the old church, which undoubtedly have the same paternity: 'The Transfiguration of Jesus', 'Lazarus' Resurrection', and the 'Ascension', painted on the same panel with the 'Sunday of Thomas'. The last three are feast icons. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 45.

[359] On the left side of the scene, there is an inscription with the donours' names: 'This icon was paid by judge Bucur with his wife Sora to be remembered for ever', Cioran, 'Biserica cu hramul Cuvioasa Paraschiva', p. 333. Ivan and Nistor also painted other scenes on the façades of the church. The apse preserves the 'Annunciation' scene around the eastern

must have taken on pupils for training;[360] this is not attested in documents, nevertheless it is assumed in analogy with other similar occurrences during the century.[361] Considering the identity of preoccupations and common execution of several works, we are determined to look together at the two masters and at least for the third decade place the two sons of priest Radu Man from Răşinari, Iacov and Stan, around them as helpers and disciples.[362]

Iacov and Stan are part of the second generation of painters, which had its heyday in the second half of the century. Their direct knowledge of Wallachian works of art, their participation in decorating Wallachian edifices, or their contact with apprentices of post-Brâncovan school coming to Transylvania played a decisive role in their formation.[363]

The note Iacov left on a manuscript Homily from the Church of Pious Paraskeva provides a valuable insight into his kin.[364] Iacov got married to his wife 'by the law' (meaning Orthodox, as his family's faith)[365] at the Monastery of Sărăcineşti in Wallachia in 1754.[366] Although the name of his wife, the daughter of priest Stan of Sad, is not disclosed here, a subsequent inscription reveals that she was called Mary.[367] From this marriage, Iacov had a son, Gheorghe, who followed on his father's

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window, and in the higher alcoves the 'Holy Trinity at Mamvri,' the 'Prophet Elijah', and 'Saints Constantine and Helena'. Above them, the 'Mourning of Christ', an apostle and 'Saint Nicholas' are depicted. The images on the northern façade are very damaged. In the niches, there appear different saints, among whom the image of Paraskeva is dated 1758 and has the same paternity. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 45.

[360] Idem.

[361] The closest example is Grigorie Ranite, the master of brothers Iacov and Stan, who appears with the attribute 'teacher', both in Iacov's writings and in his brother's model book. See Teodora Voinescu (1978) *Radu Zugravu* [Radu the Painter] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), pp. 11-12.

[362] Dumitran, Cucui & Pop, 'Nistor Dascălul', p. 224; Ana Dumitran, Elena-Daniela Cucui, Elena Mihu & Saveta-Florica Pop (2010) *Iacov Zugravul* [Iacov the Painter] (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip), p. 11.

[363] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 45.

[364] Nicolae Iorga, *Scrisori şi inscripţii*, p. 155, no. 531.

[365] Iacov's father appears as non-uniate priest in the conscription of 1733. *Şematism*, Blaj, 1900, p. 559.

[366] Athanasie Dincă Bârlădeanul (1906) *Sfânta episcopie a eparhiei Râmnicului – Noul Severin în trecut şi acum în al XLI-lea an al domniei Majestăţii Sale Regelui României, Carol I* [The Holy Episcopate of Râmnic – the New Severin Diocese in the Past and Now in the Forty-First Year of the Reign of His Majesty the King of Romania, Carol I] (Bucharest: Tipografia 'Gutenberg' Joseph Göbl), p. 262.

[367] On an icon from Şilea, the painter wrote the following text: 'In remembrance head of the family Iacov the Painter and Maria'. See Hărdălău, 'Zugravii din secolele al XVIII-lea si al XIX-lea', p. 398.

footsteps and became a prolific painter in the settlements of the Apuseni Mountains in the last quarter of the century.

While undertaking training in painting, Iacov continued his formal education in the cultural centre of Râmnic under the guidance of Bishop Grigorie Socoteanu (1749-1764)[368], a friend of his father. Between May 1749, when Grigorie, abbot of Cozia, was consecrated bishop of Râmnic, and 1754, Iacov was under the hierarch's protection while undergoing instruction.[369] In 1752-1753, Grigorie Ranite painted the Chapel of the Episcopate[370], which was an opportunity for the young painter to deepen his visual education. The fact that they had known each other since then is confirmed by the participation of Grigorie as godfather in Iacov's wedding in November 1754. Later, in 1760, Grigorie along with his son Ioan painted the interior of the church in Rășinari, most probably at the recommendation of the two sons of priest Radu Man.[371]

At the beginning of September 1761, Iacov and Stan were at Argeş Monastery, their presence here being related to the restoration of some frescoes or the painting of icons, as recorded in the inscription on the southern façade of the monument.[372] Iacov's encounter with the Wallachian painter David from Curtea de Argeş from his earliest signed works was significant for his further artistic development. They painted together four icons in post-Brâncovan style at the wooden church in Iernut in 1740.[373]

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[368] Former abbot of Cozia, Bishop Grigorie Socoteanu of Râmnic is the founder of the Chapel of the Episcopate (1750-1751) – built with the help of Transylvanian merchants and painted by Grigorie Ranite – and of the Church of All Saints in Râmnic,. See Nicolae Iorga (1932) *Istoria bisericii româneşti şi a vieţii religioase a românilor* [The History of the Romanian Church and Religious Life of the Romanians] (Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Culte), pp. 141, 143.

[369] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 46.

[370] Radu Creţeanu (1980) Zugravi din judeţul Vâlcea [Painters from Vâlcea County], *RMM*, 49, p. 92.

[371] The original inscription from the nave indicates the two artists as being the authors of the painting covering the wall separating the nave from the narthex, and of the four large icons in this space. In 1761, the artists were working on the pieces of the large iconostasis which they completed in 1763, interval in which they painted the surface from the base of the bell tower and the two registers of its southern façade. In 1758, the iconostasis was substituted with the one made by Gheorghe (son of Iacov) along with Ioan Grigorovici, kept in the church from Rășinari. See Saveta-Florica Pop (2011) Painters from Rășinari (1700-1848) (PhD thesis, 'Lucian Blaga' University, Sibiu).

[372] Meteş, *Zugravii bisericilor române*, vol. 1, p. 69.

[373] Popa, 'Biserica de lemn din Iernut', p. 277; Cristache-Panait, 'Rolul zugravilor de la sud de Carpaţi', pp. 80-81; *idem, Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, p. 232.

There are other works from this period of creation in the post-Brâncovan style, such as the icons from Turda in 1742, or those at the Ciunga Monastery (Uioara de Jos, Alba County) in 1746, icons currently preserved at the Musem of Blaj[374].

After his return from Râmnic, Iacov painted several icons at the Wooden Church in Cuci (Mureş County) in 1753-1754 and Tiocu de Jos (Cluj County) in 1755.

At the request of the villagers in Galda de Jos (Alba County), eager to give their church a *Triodion* printed in Bucharest in 1746, the painter passing by this town wrote the inscription that conveys the names of the donours, noting at the end: '…and I wrote Iacov the Painter of Feisa, confirmed by those who bought it in the year 1764'.[375] The establishment of the painter in Feisa (Alba County) is also confirmed by the existence of several icons painted by the artist in nearby churches – at Sânbenedic in 1757, Fărău in 1758, and Şilea in 1775 and 1776. He probably arrived at Feisa in 1762, where he was appointed priest. Established in this village, Iacov, now a mature and versed painter grouped around him several pupils with whom he later decorated various churches in central Transylvania.[376]

Priest Nicolae of Feisa, who painted the Wooden Church in Cheţani (Mureş County) in 1769 and later performed in several settlements in the same area, was Iacov's disciple. His early creation presents obvious stylistic analogies with his master's paintings. His work comprises the icons dated 1777 at Găbud (Alba County), several paintings at Deag (Mureş county) in 1784, Tăuni (Alba County) in 1790, Şilea (Alba County) in 1794, and Dâmbău (Mureş County)in 1796[377].

Toader and Lică are also Iacov's assistants, the three of them signing the painting of several icons at the Frunzeni Church (Mureş County) in 1783; the inscription left on the back of the panel depicting

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[374] The icons from Ciunga were brought to Blaj in 1932 according to the inscriptions on the back of the panels. Iorga, *Scrisori şi inscripţii*, p. 196, nr. 689.

[375] Eva Mârza (1979) Cartea veche românească pe Valea Gălzii, jud. Alba [The Old Romanian Book from Galda Valley, Alba County], *Apulum*, 17, p. 344. The note from Galda de Jos is the only one of those known to date, mentioning that Iacov is from Feisa. There is no other signed painting that mentions the name of this vilage next to the painter's name.

[376] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 47.

[377] Greceanu, 'Tipologia bisericilor de lemn', pp. 60, 66; Hărdălău, 'Zugravii din secolele al XVIII-lea şi al XIX-lea', p. 411.

the 'Descent of the Holy Spirit' suggests that the two are Iacov's pupils.[378] Toader is identifiable with Toader Popovici, a painter who carried out a vivid activity on the upper course of the Mureş River and in the Transylvania Plain during the last decades of the century. Toader and Lică also signed the 'Mother of God with Child' from Tuşin (Sânpetru de Câmpie, Mureş County).[379] Toader's painting is rather flat, with no chromatic gradations in the interpretation of volume, but a balanced chromatic emphasised by dark tinges, a pronounced decorative character, and attention to details. The figures have hieratic gazes and somewhat awkward proportions and clumsy gestures. The gilded backgrounds often have archaic decorative motifs in relief.[380] Lică painted at the wooden churches in Cuştelnic (Mureş County) in 1788 and Subpădure (Mureş County) in 1789, signing his works as Vasile Porfirie Ban of Feisa.[381] Trained in the workshop from Feisa, which probably was his native village, Vasile Ban was endowed with precarious artistic skills, tributary to models belonging to Nicolae. Nonetheless, he was a reliable collaborator of his master, next to whom he signed almost all his known creations. The oldest one is the mural painting of the church dedicated to Saint Nicolas from Cuştelnic. The only work made by him, unfortunately precariously preserved, is the painting of the iconostasis and the nave of the church from Noşlac, dating from 1822. He signed similar works together with Nicolae in Lunca Mureşului in 1810, and in 1814, for the wooden church in Târgu-Mureş.[382]

Gheorghe, Iacov's son, is also one of his disciples; his early works denote the post-Brâncovan style that he had assimilated from his father. The works from his first decade of activity are characterised especially by a graphical aspect, but which is not lacking in expresivity. In 1764, he began to be preoccupied only with physiognomies, which were treated anatomically, with a special care for naturalness. Gradually, Western influences insinuated themselves in the models inherited from Iacov, similar to those from the artistic ambient of Lviv; we are not aware how Gheorghe appropriated them and how he achieved the technical knowledge to substantiate them. After 1778,

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[378] The inscription on the back of the icon from Frunzeni is written in such a way that the size of the characters in which Iacov's name is written detaches him from his collaborators. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 47.
[379] The icon is currently in the collection of the Deanery of Târgu-Mureş. See Vasile Mureşan & Marcel Naste (2015) *Toader Popovici Zugravul* [Toader Popovici the Painter] (Târgu-Mureş: Editura 'Vatra Veche'), p. 35.
[380] Mureşan & Naste, *Toader Popovici Zugravul*, p. 35.
[381] Greceanu, 'Tipologia bisericilor de lemn', p. 60.
[382] Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', p. 16.

when he collaborated with Simion Silaghi at the embellishment of the church from Albac, the two co-signing the royal icons, he became more inclined towards the Baroque. And still it is hard to speak of him as a Baroque artist, though there are some pieces that show dynamism, the diagonal orientation of the composition, three-dimensionality, and realism in the representation of characters (the image of Prophet Elijah from Întregalde realised in 1789 and the iconostasis of Pious Paraskeva Church from Răşinari).[383]

The work of the Feisa painting centre would reach a peak in the next century, as many popular painters would surge from it and adorn numerous Romanian religious edifices in the central area of Transylvania.

Iacov's artistic activity, as known nowadays, fragmented by many gaps, is made up of many wooden icons. Although he was knowledgeable in fresco technique, as his presence alongside his brother at Curtea de Argeş in 1761 suggests, conditioned by the commissions he secured in the area where he had settled with his family, he painted a large number of icons for the wooden churches on the middle course of the Mureş River, the Târnave Valley or in the area of Cluj. The decisive factor in the process of his formation is related to the cultural-artistic environment of Wallachia, his works being eloquent examples of post-Brâncovan art.[384]

The analysis of the main themes approached by Iacov allows the following conclusions with the claim to define his style. A first observation is the special attention to contouring, which is particularly noticeable when painting the iris, pupil, upper eyelid and nose, which always follows a bold line ending either in the form of a club, or in a sophisticated elaboration that insists on the lateral lobes, the nostrils being treated with a delicate drawing and a surprisingly adequate colouring. The calligraphy of the eyebrows follows a graceful and robust curve, giving a special delicacy to physiognomies. The eyes, slightly flattened, with the slightly suspended irises, have the upper eyelid finished sideways with a horizontal line that subordinates the lower eyelid. The ears, schematised to different degrees, are never symmetrical. The hair and beard, especially in 'Saint Nicholas' icons, are treated with the utmost care for detail. The decoration is abundant in the presentation of garments, thrones, and crowns, and the ornamental

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[383] Ibid., pp. 50-51.
[384] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 47.

motif of the double pearl string is an almost indelible detail. The chromatic was inherited from Ivan and Nistor, but the favorite sources were taken from Grigorie's repertoire. But the teaching Iacov received from his masters was appropriated and transfigured to such an extent that it is almost impossible to establish what he owes to whom.[385]

The second son of priest Man, Stan was born in Răşinari in 1734[386], as mentioned in a note left in his notebook.[387] His career began around 1750 after serving his apprenticeship in Wallachia, where he had adopted the post-Brâncovan style. In 1752, chancellor Matei Voileanu[388] painted the wooden church in Sânpetru de Câmpie (Mureş County), together with Irimie Săvăstreanu and Stan Munteanu.[389] It is believed that the latter might have been Stan.[390]

His model notebook is suggestive for his formation in Răşinari; it contains copies of older ensembles of mural painting, as well as icons and original etchings and book illustrations. Its content represents an

[385] Dumitran, Cucui, Mihu & Pop, *Iacov Zugravul*, p. 90.

[386] Podlipny ('Caietul de modele al lui Stan Zugravul', pp. 166-170) assumes that the year in the note is 'the year of writing this model notebook', hence the conclusion that Stan was fully active in the fourth decade. The hypothesis that this is the year when the owner came into the posession of the notebook is suggested by Ana Dumitran, Elena-Daniela Cucui, Saveta-Florica Pop & Elena Popescu (2011) *Stan Zugravul* [Stan the Painter] (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip), p. 16.

[387] Voinescu, *Radu Zugravu*, p. 29, thought that the notebook was from 1734, according to the information taken from Podlipny. The identification of Stan, the author of the model booklet, with Stan from Răşinari is validated by the fact that amongst the engravings collected by its author and owner there is also a note with the following text: 'This is the holy iconostasis of the Episcopy of Blaj, painted by Master Grigorie Hranite, 17 ... ', the mentioned painter being one and the same person with the godfather from Sărăcineşti of his brother Iacov and, of course, the master of the two brothers.

[388] In 1736, chancellor Matei Voileanu was at Bistriţa Monastery in Oltenia. See Ştefan Meteş (1936) *Mănăstirile româneşti din Transilvania şi Ungaria* [Romanian Monasteries from Transylvania and Hungary] (Sibiu: Tipografia Arhidiecezană), p. 79.

[389] Şematism, Blaj, 1900, p. 476; Ioana Cristache-Panait (1999) Toader Zugravul (sec. al XVIII-lea) [Toader the Painter (the Eighteenth Century)], *ANGVSTIA*, 4, p. 165.

[390] Matei Voileanu collaborated with Iacov at the Church of Pata (Cluj County) in 1746; in this case, a liaison between the two might have been mediated by his elder brother. The statistics of the Diocese of Timişoara from 1767 mention priest Stan Manovici (the surname translating into 'son of Man') in the village of Sânmihai, near Timişoara, who came to Banat from Drăguş, a town with an old monastery, where Matei Voileanu undertook works as painter and copyist of manuscripts (see Ioan Dimitrie Suciu & Radu Constantinescu (1980) *Documente privitoare la istoria Mitropoliei Banatului* [Documents Regarding the History of the Metropolitanate of Banat], vol. 1 (Timişoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului), p. 304). The name of Munteanu, added to his firstname is connected to the fact that Stan had traveled and learnt the art of painting in Greater Wallachia, where he decorated the Şerbăneşti Monastery in 1753, along with three other fellow painters (see Creţeanu, 'Zugravi din judetul Vâlcea', p. 95, considered Stan, the third painter from Şerbăneşti, identical with Stan from Răşinari; Cristache-Panait, 'Rolul zugravilor de la sud de Carpaţi', p. 77).

index of the path he followed, the iconographic sources he used, and his preferences, and reflects his transition from the Brâncovan and post-Brâncovan styles to an art under the incidence of the Baroque (present in a specific formula in all Romanian provinces in the late eighteenth century).[391]

In 1761 he was at Curtea de Argeş together with his brother,[392] and it can be assumed that Stan, similarly to Iacov, received guidance from Grigorie during his stays in Wallachia, or maybe earlier when he was in Banat[393].

The inner decoration of the Church of Răşinari realised by Grigorie and Ioan[394] became a staple for the subsequent development of the Transylvanian painting, their iconographic programme being taken as a model by Stan, as well as by other painters of the same generation from this centre. The iconographic programme translates in a faithful manner the iconography specific to the Brâncovan foundations and, in Transylvania, represents the iconographic prototype of churches dressed in pictorial adornment over a century (in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century).[395]

Starting from the eighteenth century, predominantly in the second half, painters took a certain freedom, introducing various elements inspired by everyday life in the traditional themes. It is the time when they addressed a more realistic concept in the manner of painting, maintaining and adjusting some models, enriching them with details taken from nature[396], which expresses the creative freedom of

[391] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 49.
[392] Meteş, *Relaţiile bisericii româneşti din Ardeal*, p. 65.
[393] Grigorie Ranite painted the royal doors in Drinova, Banat, in 1743. Other works at monuments in Banat could be assigned to him as well. Marius Porumb (1978) Relaţii artistice în pictura românească din Transilvania şi Banat în secolul al XVIII-lea [Artistic Relations in the Romanian Painting from Transylvania and Banat in the Eighteenth Century], *Tibiscus*, 5, p. 235.
[394] Both the painting of the porch and the façades of the steeple belong to Grigorie and Ioan. In the central niche of the upper register of the southern façade of the steeple there is the monumental image of the Pious Paraskeva, an image structurally identified with the wooden icon of the patron saint, dated December 1760. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 49.
[395] For the description of the iconographic programme see Pop, 'Pious Paraschiva Church from Răşinari', pp. 358-365.
[396] Nicolae Stoicescu (1967) Cum se zugrăveau bisericile în secolul al XVIII-lea şi în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea [How Churches Were Painted in the Eighteenth Century and the First Half of the Nineteenth], *MO*, 19 (5-6), p. 409.

painters at the end of the Middle Ages.[397] The pleasure of narration, in which the main action in the scenes is often consumed in a number of adjacent episodes inspired from everyday life, comes forth on the southern façade of the spire: alongside the moralising scene of 'The Wheel of Life'[398] and the image of the 'Apostles Peter and Paul', in 1760 Grigorie painted the birth of Jesus, in which, together with consecrated characters, he illustrated personages from Mărginime village. In the foreground, a young girl dressed in the specific costume of this place pours water in a cup of for the Child's bathing, and besides her, an old sheperd, with a hood and a cloak similar to those worn by the the shepherds in Mărginime, is engaged in a conversation with Joseph, who seems pensive and puzzled. In a secondary plan, there is a young shepherd blowing his whistle, along with his flock of sheep, and a little more in the background, another young shepherd who, holding a cauldron in his hand, comes rushing after finding out the great news of the birth.[399]

Stan stayed at Argeş Monastery until 1761, when he returned to Transylvania; he settled down in Orăştie, settlement that he regularly appended to his name starting with 1766, which means his residence here must have been of longer standing.[400]

It is believed that at the end of the decade he was in Banat, in Sânmihai in 1767 and in Utvin in October 1768 (both localities near Timişoara).[401]

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[397] Voinescu believes this period in painting to be 'downward' in relation to the sources of Byzantine tradition and 'upward' in regards to the works resulted from the direct study of nature. See Teodora Voinescu (1982) The Post-Byzantine Icons of Wallachia and Moldavia, in Kurt Weitzmann (Ed.) *The Icon: holy images – sixth to fourteenth century* (London: Evans Brothers), p. 69.

[398] In the left side of the surface, there is illustrated the parable of the human life trhough the image of a wheel guarded by two angels. In the left corner, Christ supports a cross with the text 'If anyone wishes to walk with Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me', in the right the text 'For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it'. On both sides of the wheel two angels try to direct its progress by cords anchored to the round object. Around the wheel, there are texts associated with different ages of man: 'Oh, world, how [I love you], 10', 'Now I want to live, 20', 'I would like you to take me up, 30', 'Oh, what great glory [I] have reached, 40', 'I fell from glory and I was wrong, 50', 'Oh, misleading world, how you deceive me, 60', 'Deceiving [...] world'. See Pop, 'Pious Paraschiva Church from Răşinari', p. 358.

[399] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 49.

[400] Ibid., p. 50; Dumitran, Cucui, Pop & Popescu, *Stan Zugravul*, p. 18;

[401] Suciu & Constantinescu, *Documente*, p. 304.

In 1767, the connections maintained by the people of Braşov with the church hierarchy in Banat, as well as the prestige enjoyed by the painter, earned Stan commissions in Şchei, where he painted several icons in the post-Brâncovan style. [402] On his way to Braşov, Stan painted in the region of Hunedoara[403] and at the Afteia Hermitage in the Sebeş area[404].

His early works keep the traditional Brâncovan forms alive; however, after 1770, new tendencies make their way in his painting, with predominance in his icons[405] (several icons at Sibiel in 1775-1779, the iconostasis at Sălişttea Sibiului in 1780), such as the introduction of compositional and decoration elements from the Western environment assimilated in Banat, where the contact with such influences was more direct. Nonetheless, Stan remained a traditionalist in the mural ensembles he signed at Sibiel (Sibiu County) in 1775, Mesentea[406] (Alba County) in 1781, Turdaş (Hunedoara County) in 1782, and Cristian (Sibiu County) in 1790. In the frescoes of the above-mentioned churches, it is possible to recognise the same iconographic scheme used by Grigorie at Răşinari in 1760 that Stan approaches in his own way.[407]

Ioan the Painter[408] was amongst Stan's first disciples, who had an intense activity towards the end of the century. He assisted Stan at

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[402] In Şchei, Stan signed the Last Judgment icon in 1767; four other icons are dated the same year and are part of the museum collection of the Holy Trinity Church (Braşov): the 'Sunday of the Blind Man', the 'Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women', the 'Sunday of the Paralytic', and the 'Samaritan Woman at the Well'. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 50.

[403] A *Deesis* icon coming from an unknown locality in Hunedoara County is in the collections of the Gai-Arad Monastery. It is signed and dated 'Stan the Painter 1767'. See Horia Medeleanu (1986) *Valori de artă veche românească în colecţia Mănăstirii Sfântul Simion Stâlpnicul din Arad Gai* [Values of Old Romanian Art in the Collection of Saint Simeon Stylites Monastery in Arad Gai] (Arad: Editura Episcopiei Aradului), p. 52.

[404] Two icons from the Afteia Hermitage (Alba County), 'Virgin Mary with Child' and the 'Assumption' are signed by 'Stan the Painter from Orăştie' and dated 1767. It is interesting to point out that this mention of the locality also appears on two icons from Gura Râului (Sibiu County), signed and dated 1769. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 50; Dumitran, Cucui, Pop & Popescu, *Stan Zugravul*, p. 21.

[405] The icons from Sibiel, depicting 'Virgin Mary with Child on the Throne' and 'Saint Nicholas', are obviously influenced by the Orthodox Baroque painting as it was practiced in the Serbian Church. The thrones are no longer painted in the Brâncovan style; their illustration is typical for the Baroque style. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 50.

[406] Regarding the church in Mesentea, see Victor Brătulescu (1937) Biserici româneşti din Transilvania. Biserici întărite [Romanian Churches in Transylvania. Fortified Churches], *BCMI*, 30, p. 19.

[407] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 50.

[408] Ioan seems to be related to Stan, probably a son-in-law, this hypothesis stemming from the identical name of the painter's daughter with that of Ioan's wife. See Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 50.

Mesentea (1782), Deal (1789)[409], Cristian (1790)[410], Laz (1791)[411], and Beriu (1793). He signed an icon of the 'Virgin Mary with Child' kept in the collections of the Şchei Museum: Ioan Painter from Orăştie. God forgive him and his whole kin. Year 1792, May 10. Priest Ioan, parson in Şugag village'.[412] He was last attested in 1814 by a signature on the painting of the cross monument in Sibiel.[413] The fresco of the larger Church in Sălıştea Sibiului from 1787-1788 was made by Ioan in collaboration with Vasile Munteanu, a local painter. In 1794, Ioan and Vasile finalised the mural esemble of the Church of Fântânele (Sibiu County).[414]

Another disciple was Ioan from Poiana (Balşa commune, Hunedoara County). His works from Petrila-Câmpa (Hunedoara County) in 1803 and Apoldu de Jos (Sibiu County) in 1820 prove that he learnt painting from Stan, whose models he reproduced with fidelity.[415]

In the last decades, Mărginime village in Sălistea Sibiului polarised several local painters, who were stylistically influenced by the artists of Răşinari, by Stan in particular, who was probably the initiator of this local group. The painters from Sălişte were present especially at the religious monuments in the region; however, this artistic centre expanded its activity by the beginning of the twentieth century.

His most talented disciple was Vasile Munteanu, through which Stan's stylistic influences became the characteristics of Sălişte painting centre[416] that would recruit artists from the neighbouring villages, such as Savu Poienaru from Poiana Sibiului, the founder of Laz painting centre (Alba County)[417], Nicolae Oancea from Vale, Oprea Painter, then

[409] His name appears here as Ianăş Covaci. See Dumitran, Cucui, Pop & Popescu, *Stan Zugravul*, p. 21.
[410] Stan and Ioan decorated the interior and exterior of the church. Marius Porumb (1995) Pictura exterioară din Transilvania (sec. XVIII) [The Exterior Painting in Transylvania], *AT*, 5, p. 67; *idem, Dicţionar*, p. 381; *idem, Un veac de pictură*, p. 50.
[411] Gelu Mihai Hărdălău (1978) Noi date privind activitatea unor zugravi din centrul Laz [New Data on Some Painters from Laz Centre], *Apulum*, 16, pp. 485-501, illustrations 3a-b; Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 381.
[412] Dumitran, Cucui, Pop & Popescu, *Stan Zugravul*, p. 21.
[413] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 85.
[414] Porumb, 'Zugravi şi centre artistice', p. 19.
[415] Dumitran, Cucui, Pop & Popescu, *Stan Zugravul*, p. 22.
[416] For the descendancy of Sălişte's centre from Stan's work see Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 352; *idem, Un veac de pictură*, p. 50.
[417] Laz was an important glass-painting centre in the vicinity of Sebeş, founded by Savu Poienaru from Poiana Sibiului at the end of the eighteenth century. Savu and his descendants practiced painting on glass, wood and canvas, and from the second half of the nineteenth century, on metal plate. Besides the workshop of the Poienari family, Aurel Rodean, Pavel Zamfir and his son Savu and, for a while, Ioan Morar also painted in Laz. Ana Dumitran, Szöcs Fűlöp Károly & Elena Băjenaru (2012) *Icoane pe sticlă din Transilvania.*

Florian Munteanu, with whom Vasile signed the exterior painting of the church in Grui in 1812.[418] All these painters are tributary to Stan's models, especially those that initiated their activity at the end of the century.[419]

On the one hand by accentuating the shadows and the thickness of the strokes, on the other hand by assimilating Baroque clichés, Stan's style of painting managed to hinder the characteristics of the Brâncovan art to such a degree that it can hardly be seen as having originated in it. Such an individualisation is quite remarkable for someone who was formed at a time when the mannerism of post-Byzantine origin, through its refined effects, had a higher rate of assimilation.[420]

Stan's contribution to the spiritual and artistic development of Transylvanian Romanians does not only involve his own creation. It consists, especially, in the heritage that he left, in the group from Salişte, and particularly, in that from Laz, to that segment of art that remained attached to tradition. Stan's models, reproduced until late in the nineteenth century, represent the direct connection between the authentic Brâncovan art and its rural derivates spread more and more frequently through glass painting.

In the eighth decade, a third generation of artists consisting of pupils and descendants of painters from the previous generation emerged, which would soon become promoters of a new style that would gradually drift apart from the traditional painting.

Gheorghe, son of Iacov, painted the wooden church in Cojocani (Alba County) in 1771 in collaboration with Crăciun the Painter, and the wooden church in Sartăş in 1780[421] with Toader Ciungar. He manifested himself in a manner influenced by the Western art. His icons adopted gilded settings with decorative floral and vegetal reliefs, a working technique learnt from a close collaboration with Simion Silaghi-Sălăjeanu. Gheorghe's compositions have a vivid, harmonious chromatic, in most of the cases his characters have modelled faces

Colecţia Szöcs [Transylvanian Glass Icons. Szöcs Collection] (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip), p. 12.
[418] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, pp. 252, 352.
[419] The painters from Sălişte might have had a direct connection with Stan and not one mediated by Vasile Munteanu. See Dumitran, Cucui, Pop & Popescu, *Stan Zugravul*, p. 22.
[420] Dumitran, Cucui, Mihu & Pop, *Iacov Zugravul*, p. 17.
[421] At Sartăş (Alba County), Gheorghe collaborates with Toader Ciungar, which is evident from the inscription above the door separating the narthex from the nave. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 51.

presented frontally, yet without having that hieratism so characteristic to the old icons.[422]

After 1785, he signed a contract for the painting of a new iconostasis in the Church of Pious Paraskeva, together with Ioan Chiş. The icon depicting 'Mary the Queen with Child on the Throne' dates from 1785. It was probably a first trial, for the epitrops of the church to approve the realisation of the whole iconostasis by the two painters. In 1931, a document written by Sava Popovici found in the canopy above the altar[423] records important information about the two: '... in 1787 AD, during the reign of Emperor Joseph II, the priests and elders of the village together with the painters that painted the iconostasis, Gheorghie of Cacova Aiudului[424] and priest Niţ[425] from Gâjasa de Sus with 750 florins and the altar doors 25 [florins]'. Such an explanation regarding the locality in which Gheorghe settled explains, once more, the spread of a large number of his icons, especially in the area of Aiud, on the eastern valleys of the Apuseni Mountains, and on the middle course of the Mureş.[426]

Another painter connected to this centre, Ioan Grigorovici, son of Grigorie Ranite, collaborator in 1760 at the interior mural of the Saint Paraskeva Church, returned here in 1785 to complete the painting on the southern façade, where the ample scene of the 'Anastasis' is partially preserved. Formed in the ambiance stemming from the Wallachian centres in the first half of the century, Ioan developed an eclectic style, in which the post-Brâncovan component coexists with many Baroque elements, especially in the way of composing images and decor.[427] Apparently, the painter settled in the area of Sibiu, maybe even in Răşinari, his presence being attested in the next decade.[428]

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[422] Idem.
[423] Cioran, 'Biserica cu hramul Cuvioasa Paraschiva', p. 333.
[424] Cacova Aiudului, nowadays Livezile commune, Alba County.
[425] Porumb believes this is a wrong reading of the document when it comes to the name of the painter priest Niţă (maybe Ioniţă?), since Gheorghe's collaborator is Ioan Chiş, as mentioned in the inscription on the royal icon. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 51.
[426] Gheorghe painted icons in several villages: Albac (1778), Sartăş (1782, 1793), Noşlac (1783), Mănăstirea Râmeţ (1792), Coşlariu (1788, 1791), Berghin (1791), Întregalde (1789), Găbud (1802). See Hărdălău, 'Zugravii din secolele al XVIII-lea şi al XIX-lea', pp. 402, 403, 407.
[427] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 51.
[428] In 1794 Ioan painted an icon in Veştem (Sibiu County). Iorga, *Scrisori şi inscripţii*, p. 201.

Ioan the Painter from Poplaca was active in the last decade of the eighteenth century, but also in the first decades of the next, and was a last and late pursuer of the post-Brâncovan style.[429]

4.3 Iconography in the Apuseni Mountains

Located in the central-western area of Transylvania, the Apuseni Mountains were a region in which cultural interferences with the Romanian lands in the vicinity, but also with distant ones led to a synthesis that combined the post-Byzantine tradition with Western elements. Included in the Byzantine and then post-Byzantine cultural realms from early Middle Ages, this region was, due to its geographic position, in constant contact with Western art. The paintings produced here are part of the ample artistic movement occurring in all Romanian lands in the eighteenth century, during which the artistic centres drifted apart from the tradition of the post-Byzantine art and became receptive to new international trends.[430]

In the first decades of the century, most of the painters active in the Apuseni Mountains came from artistic centres outside Transylvania, an overwhelming part being played by representatives of Brâncovan and post-Brâncovan styles from Wallachia or originating in Transylvanian centres that were in direct connection with the cultural environment of Wallachia; the artistic trend generated would survive in this region in the achievements of rural workshops, surpassing chronologically the limits of this century.

The prestige of Wallachian art and artists, the important role of Wallachian religious and cultural centres, in which books that were diffused in all provinces were printed, and the fame of the painting schools that functioned in the precincts of Wallachian monasteries were of major interest to the scholars and artists of Transylvania in the eighteenth century.

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[429] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 51.
[430] Drăguţ, Florea, Grigorescu & Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini*, pp. 100-101.

It this context it bears particular significance that in the first decades noted painters of Răşinari such as Ivan and Nistor embellished churches in the Apuseni Mountains.[431] The first known works of the two were at the Church of Cărpiniş (Roşia Montană commune, Alba County)[432] and Certege (Alba County).

Teodor the Painter and Priest Matei painted an icon of 'Jesus on the Throne', flanked by the 'Mother of God' and 'John the Baptist' at the church in Roşia Montană[433] in 1727. The two painters had solid technical knowledge, and the ornamental repertoire and setting lead to the conclusion that they underwent instruction in a Wallachian centre.[434]

In 1728, Andrei the Painter, who would have a rich activity in the next decades in settlements of the Transylvanian Plain, on the Someş Valley, in Bistriţa[435] and Reghin, painted on the Arieş Valley at Poşaga de Jos (Alba County), and Vasile the Painter painted four icons at Ocoliş (Alba County) in 1731 and 1734.[436]

Vasile Ban signaled his presence on the Arieş Valley in 1727 by signing on a Homily of Varlaam from the Ocăşeşti Monastery in Sub Piatră village (Sălciua commune, Alba County).[437]

With a decorative graphic style of a pronounced popular nature, Oprea the Painter painted at Micleşti (Mogoş commune, Alba County) in 1742, and the following year at Galda de Sus. During the same period, Gheorghe Ranite painted two royal icons at Mogoş (Alba County).[438]

In the eastern region of the Apuseni Mountains, Ioan of Beriu painted at Aiudu de Sus (1749), Mogoş (1754), and Geogel (1756). In

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[431] Regarding the rich activity of the two painters, see Porumb, 'Răşinari', pp. 377-380.
[432] The icons are currently preserved at the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu.
[433] The icon is currently in the Museum Collection of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in Alba Iulia.
[434] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 62.
[435] In Poşaga de Jos, Andrei signed the icon of the 'Archangel Michael'; the second icon, that of the 'Virgin Mary with Child', is dated 1728.
[436] Hărdălău, 'Zugravii din secolele al XVIII-lea şi al XIX-lea', p. 412.
[437] Florian Dudaş (1983) *Cazania lui Varlaam in Transilvania* [Varlaam's Homily in Transylvania] (Cluj-Napoca: Arhiepiscopia ortodoxă română a Vadului, Feleacului şi Clujului), pp. 362-363.
[438] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 62.

collaboration with Stan from Răşinari, he also painted at Curechiu (Hunedoara County).[439]

Stan's widely scattered work included this region. He realised numerous icons in settlements of the Metaliferi and Zărand Mountains, such as Trestia (Hunedoara County) in 1765, Băiţa, Hărău, Bârsău and Curechiu (Hunedoara County) in 1770, then in Cib (Alba County) in 1771, Izvorul Ampoiului (Alba County) in 1774. He also executed the fresco from Mesentea in 1781-1782.[440]

Simion Silaghi – Sălăjeanu, one of the most endowed and productive painters of the epoch notable for the longevity of his activity[441], adorned churches in the land of Cluj and the eastern areas of Bihor and Sălaj, on the valleys of Mureş and Someş towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. He was originary from Sălaj County; however, there is no information on his hometown. It is believed that he came from a family of free peasants, or petty nobles. During the eighth decade, he went to Cluj to attend school and begin his apprenticeship under a local master. A signature from 1773 written on the back of a royal icon at the wooden church in Dretea village (Mănăstireni commune, Cluj County) attests to his presence in Cluj as a disciple of master Andraş.[442] Aside from his pupil's acknowledgment, the identity of the master as well as his work is uncertain. Since his name was not attached to other pieces, the work of the master was lifted out anonymity by analogies with the early work of the pupil.[443]

The constant features in the compositions of Andraş from Cluj were the elongated silhouettes of the figures, the abundance of stylised

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[439] Cristache-Panait, 'Rolul zugravilor de la sud de Carpaţi', p. 85.

[440] Hărdălău, 'Zugravii din secolele al XVIII-lea şi al XIX-lea', pp. 399, 408, 412.

[441] There are eight decades between the first and last attestation of his work (1773, respectively 1853). See Ana Dumitran (2012), Pictorul Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu. În căutarea identităţii [The Painter Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu. Searching for His Identity], *AUASH*, 16 (1), p. 189.

[442] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 63; Doina Ionescu (2005) Activitatea pictorului Simion Silaghi-Sălăjeanu în ţinuturi hunedorene, în perioada 1808-1848 [The Work of the Painter Simion Silaghi-Sălăjeanu in the Lands of Hunedoara, between 1808-1848], *Ţara Bârsei,* 4, p. 160.

[443] Ana Dumitran attempted to recover the paternity of the master's work; she attributed a series of works spanning from 1748 to 1773 to master Andraş based on similarities between the early creation of Simion Silaghi and various creations contemporary to his debut. See Ana Dumitran (2013) Siladi Şimon, ucenicul jupânului Andraş din Cluj. Parcurs retrospectiv în căutarea unui maestru [Siladi Şimon, the Apprentice of Boyar Andraş from Cluj. Retrospective Steps in Search of a Master], *Apulum,* series *Historia & Patrimonium*, 50, pp. 271-330.

vegetal decoration embellishing their garments and the almost translucent manner in which it was achieved (a type of *grisaille*), and the similar minute ornamentation on their nimbs.[44] Large pieces, typically filling the space dedicated to royal icons, in vivid colours, the works attributed to Andraş are discernible by the delicacy of the drawing that although sometimes lapses into graphism, it sketches elegant, slender, slightly elongated, but graceful characters exuding inner balance. In fact, this very graphic aspect and the serenity of the figures are the main differences from Simion Silaghi's early works, which show a special attention to the anatomy of the faces, treated realistically, in a Western manner. That is why it is right to ask whether the technical knowledge necessary to achieve pictorial effects such as those in the icon at Dretea could have been assimilated in the workshop of Andraş. Hence, one cannot dismiss the fact that Simion Silaghi might have had a second master.[45] Even though significant fragments of Andraş's work were recovered, a precise definition of his style is not yet possible. What we now know allows us to remark only that the absorption of Baroque influences was made to a lesser extent than one would expect from a resident of Cluj. His art, of average but not mediocre quality, falls within the limits of production of a provincial workshop, whose commissioners were exclusively from rural areas.[46]

In the following years, Simion Silaghi painted in villages in the northwestern area of Cluj, in the contact area with Sălaj, or in his native land. In 1774, he painted the wooden church and several icons in Bica (Mănăstireni commune, Cluj County), and in 1776, he realised four icons in Mănăstireni (Cluj County).[47] He is also believed to be the author of a Resurrection icon of the wooden church in Fodora village (Gâlgău commune, Sălaj County).[48]

In 1776-1777, he met Gheorghe from Răşinari, at that time established in Cacova Aiudului (now Livezile, Alba County). The timing is particularly important for the subsequent development of their works, which bear a mutual influence. Gheorghe's painting reflected the post-Brâncovan tradition, conveyed in the iconographic compositions and accentuated decorative treatment of the ensemble; as

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[44] Dumitran, 'Siladi Şimon, ucenicul', pp. 274, 276, 285.

[45] Ibid., p. 282.

[46] Ibid., pp. 285-286.

[47] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 63.

[48] The inscription on the icon representing the Resurrection mentions the donours priest Vasile, his wife Ana, and other parishioners and that it was painted in 'January 1775 by the painter Sălăjean Simon'. See Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice biserice ști*, pp. 321-322.

a result of his collaboration with Simion Silaghi, it later drifted towards a transition style that integrated more elements of Western art. From the collaboration, Simion Silaghi discovered and then assimilated compositional structures, decorative and technical elements specific to old Romanian painting. He adopted the gilded or polychromed frames with stucco, which he would use throughout his entire activity.[449] Their earliest known partnership dates back to 1778, when they co-signed several icons at the Wooden Church in Albac (Alba County).[450] As regards the sources on which they drew, the icon of the 'Sunday of All Saints' depicts a theme related to the rich hagiographical literature characteristic to the Brâncovan age;[451] it made use of the image from *The Key to Understanding*[452] (printed in 1678) as a model, which was resumed in several other cases. The saints' faces in the icon 'Synaxis of the Archangels' (1772) at the wooden church in Dobrin (Sălaj County) attributed to Andraş recall the saints' faces in the icons painted by Simion Silaghi in 1774-1776 for the church in Fodora (Sălaj County)[453] and not at all surprising, the ones in the icon depicting the same theme signed by Gheorghe in 1769 for the church in Pădureni[454]. The possibility that Gheorghe might have undercarried training under the same master is as tempting as opportune for their meeting in Abrud in 1778.[455] The only visible element today that unites these two artistic destinies is the iconostasis of the Certege church,[456] in particular two of the royal icons, the *Pantocrator* and 'Saint Nicholas', which are considered replicas of those of Certege.[457] The *Pantocrator* for the Someşeni church also falls into

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[449] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 63; Ionescu, 'Activitatea pictorului Simion Silaghi-Sălăjeanu', p. 160.

[450] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 369; Ana Dumitran & Elena-Daniela Cucui (2008) *Zugravii de la Feisa* [Painters from Feisa] (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip), p. 70, cat. nr. 39, pp. 82-83, cat. nr. 58, pp. 90-91, cat. nr. 69, p. 96, cat. nr. 78.

[451] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 63.

[452] *The Key to Understanding* was the first book printed on the printing press founded by Metropolitan Varlaam of Wallachia in Bucharest. The book is a translation of a work compiled by Ioaniky Galeatovsky, abbot of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev and contains woodcuts executed by Ivan Bykov. See Dennis Deletant (1983) Rumanian Presses and Printing in the Seventeenth Century: II, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 61 (4), pp. 481-482.

[453] 'Mother of God with Child' (1774), kept in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in Cluj-Napoca; 'Descent into Hell' (1775); 'Jesus Christ Pantocrator' (1776); 'Synaxis of the Archangels' (1775). The last three icons are kept in the church of Fodora. See Dumitran, 'Pictorul Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu', p. 220, fig. 15, p. 218, fig. 13.

[454] Cristache-Panait, 'Rolul zugravilor de la sud de Carpaţi', p. 85, fig. 22; *idem* (1985) Valenţele istorice şi artistice ale bisericilor de lemn din judeţul Cluj, propuse pe lista monumentelor [Historical and Artistic Valences of the Wooden Churches in Cluj County, Nominated on the Monuments List], *RMM-MIA*, 2, p. 41; Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 282.

[455] Dumitran, 'Siladi Şimon, ucenicul', p. 279.

[456] The iconostasis was realised by Vasile Zboroschi in 1752. See Dumitran, 'Pictorul Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu', p. 193.

[457] See illustrations in Dumitran & Cucui, *Zugravii de la Feisa*, p. 70, cat. nr. 39, p. 90, cat. 69.

this category.[458] One could easily notice hesitations in following this model, which means that the icon was executed before 1778, supposition also supported by the use of the same tone of green as in the icons from Fodora and Mănăstireni.[459]

The steady commissions of icons and wall painting by the communities in the Land of the Moţi[460] determined Simion Silaghi to settle in Abrud. After settling down, he realised several works, including the icons at Roşia Montană in 1780, the mural painting of the Albac Wooden Church[461], the iconostasis at the Assumption Church in Abrud in 1791, and the royal icons at the wooden church in Lăzeşti (Vadu Moţilor commune, Alba County) the same year.[462] Apart from Gheorghe, valuable painters suh as Sima the Painter, Simion Oprovici, and Nicolae Ciungar grouped around him and made Abrud an important artistic centre.[463]

The work of the painter lasted until the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. After 1800, his activity extended to the middle course of Mureş, in Zarand, Banat, and the lands of Bihor and Arad[464]. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, he painted together with Gavril Silaghi at monuments on the Arieş Valley and, at the end of his life, collaborated with painters Dimitrie Dimitriu from Bucharest and Anton Simon from Cluj.[465] Gavril Silaghi was his son and one of his closest apprentices and assistants. Working alongside his father since 1804, he painted until the middle of the nineteenth century on the Arieş Valley and in Abrud.[466]

The quality of Simion Silaghi's paintings proves not only talent, but also the correct grasp of technique and thorough study of drawing. The apprenticeship years spent in a cultural environment in which the Baroque style was adopted since the first half of the century had a

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[458] The icon is kept in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in Cluj. See Dumitran, 'Pictorul Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu', fig. 18, p. 223.
[459] Dumitran, 'Pictorul Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu', p. 193.
[460] Also known as Ţara de Piatră (The Stone Land), it is an ethnogeographical region of Romania in the Apuseni Mountains, on the upper basin of the Arieş and Crişul Alb rivers. It covers parts of the Alba, Arad, Bihor, Cluj, and Hunedoara counties.
[461] Dated between 1780 and 1785, partially destroyed by the monument's displacement.
[462] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 63.
[463] For more information on Abrud centre, see Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', pp. 60-66.
[464] Coriolan Petranu (1927) *Bisericile de lemn din judeţul Arad* [Wooden Churches in Arad County] (Sibiu: Tipografia Institutului de arte grafice Drotleff), p. 29.
[465] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 64.
[466] Idem.

strong influence on him; his works are characterised by the use of morphological elements specific to this style.[467] During the mature stage of his work, the painter adopted an eclectic style, in which the post-Brâncovan component coexisted with Baroque elements. Generally, he excelled in the art of portraiture. His personages are rendered in a distinct arrangement, accompanied by the usual iconographic attribute. Their physiognomy is modeled meticulously. The female characters have bright, elegantly shaped faces, either with rich hair or with a draped look that highlights the beauty of the face. The male characters have a high forehead, fine and straight nose, large eyes highlighted by pronounced arcades. The varied clothing, with wide folds of drapery strewed with ornamental motifs of Baroque repertoire, complements the sumptuousness of the images.[468]

4.4 Hunedoara

Over the centuries, the lands of Hunedoara have been in a continuous cultural dialogue with Wallachian artistic centres, as it could be derived from the murals of the churches in Râu de Mori - Susani, Ostrov, Hunedoara, and those of Prislop Monastery. During this century, the fresco decoration and icon painting in the Romanian foundations flourishes as the artistic and cultural ties with Wallachia intensify.[469]

The Wallachian painter Ioan from Ocnele Mari executed the iconostasis of the Prislop Monastery together with his apprentice, Mihail in 1752, as mentioned in the inscription on a *Hodigitria*. Unfortunately, it is the solely preserved icon from the entire iconostasis.[470]

Simeon the Painter from Piteşti was one of the most active painters in the lands of Haţeg and Hunedoara. Simeon undercarried instruction in one of the artistic centres in Wallachia, perhaps in Râmnic. He was an exponent of a post-Brâncovan style with personal

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[467] Ionescu, 'Activitatea pictorului Simion Silaghi-Sălăjeanu', p. 160.
[468] Ibid., p. 164.
[469] Porumb, *Dicţionar*.
[470] Mircea Păcurariu (1986) *Istoria Mănăstirii Prislop* [The History of Prislop Monastery] (Arad: Editura Episcopiei), pp. 96-97.

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accents; the vigorous strokes and lively colours give a decorative and picturesque touch to his paintings. Simeon is the son of 'Simeon, archpriest of Piteşti', as conveyed by a note from 29 July 1767, when he was in Silvaşu de Sus.[471] In the following years there is evidence of the 'humble amongst priests, priest Simeon the Painter parson in Silvaşi de Sus'. In Transylvania, he was first attested at Prislop Monastery in 1759, where according to the inscription above the ingress to the nave, he painted the whole church together with his apprentice Nicolae[472]. Nicolae would become one of the most active painters in Hunedoara. The collaboration between master and apprentice would continue in the future as well. From the old painting of the Church of Prislop Monastery, several scenes from the Akathist to Virgin Mary and the Christological Cycle are preserved in the upper register of the narthex: the eastern wall is covered with depictions of the 'Birth of Jesus' and the 'Worship of the Magi'; the southern wall shows depictions of the 'Flight into Egypt' and 'Jesus Speaking to the Disciples', *Deesis*, the 'Protection (*Pokrov*) of the Most Holy Mother of God', and the 'Virgin of the Sign', surrounded by angels; the northern wall illustrates the 'Presentation of Jesus to the Temple' and 'Mother of God on the Throne', flanked by the archangels. Simeon and Nicolae also painted the western outer wall of the monastery church. In the niche above the entrance there is the icon of the patron, 'Saint John Bogoslov' sitting on a throne and flanked by two angels with opened scrolls. A large-scale composition of the Last Judgement covered the entire façade, from which only a few fragments are preserved. On the left side there are represented the Heaven, the Mother of God throning in the middle of a schematic landscape, the 'Veil of Veronica', and to the right the wise virgins. On the right of the entrance one can see the 'River of Fire' and the sinners, as well as the 'Judgement of the Publican', which alludes to the realities of that period.[473]

He settled in the village of Silvaşu de Sus, near Prislop Monastery, probably around 1760, becoming a parish priest, a fact revealed by several notes he left on liturgical books. An inscription on the *Pentecostarion* of Blaj in 1768 pointed out that the book was bought through the 'endeavour of the humble [amongst priests] priest Simeon the Painter, parson in Silvaşi de Sus'. A similar inscription from 1775 was left on a *Triod* printed in Blaj in 1771. The text on a *Gospel* from Blaj

[471] Păcurariu, *Istoria Mănăstirii Prislop*, p. 68.
[472] Iacob Radu (1913) *Istoria vicariatului greco-catolic al Haţegului* [The History of the Greek-Catholic Vicariate of Haţeg] (Lugoj: Tipografia Gutenberg), p. 96; Păcurariu, *Istoria Mănăstirii Prislop*, p. 65.
[473] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 68.

printed in 1765 mentions that 'in 1774 AD at the priest's house. This Holy Gospel is bought by the servants of God Ioja Dănilă, Dragota Lascu and boyar Giura Ianoşi and Stoica Lascu and through the aid of boyar Napcia Ioja in ... days. Wrote the priest Simeon the Painter...'[474], which points to the fact that Simeon owned a household in Silvaşu de Sus.

In 1770 he was active in the lands of Hunedoara, where he painted the mural ensemble at the Church of the 'Holy Archangels' in Ghelari with the assistance of Nicolae; the dyptich of the altar states the names of the authors and of Simeon's parents and wife.[475] In 1776, he signed the mural painting of the church in Cinciş-Cerna[476], whose iconographic programme reminded of the painting ensemble made by the artist at Nucşoara. A year later, he signed the painting of the royal doors of the 'Holy Trinity' Church in Haţeg. From the same year a church flag depicting Saint George and Archangel Michael in tempera on linen signed and dated 'Priest Simion Painter 1777' is kept in the Romanian old art collection of the Banat Metropolitanate in Timişoara.[477]

The mural painting of the old church in Nucşoara was completed with the installation of the iconostasis signed by Simeon, together with the following text: '17 September 1779. The storm lifts up many sea waves, the thought of man more allied to practice, not so much the unease and fear of the beginning, but the unease and danger lying at the end, every fine beginning shows him its tribulations, and the end of all things asks for payment. Praised be God's power, from beginning to end, and priest Simeon with his painting gives Jesus praise and glory'. The mural and the icons are well preserved, attesting an artist with real qualities, who is knowledgeable of the iconography and manages the brush skillfully, his graphic and decorative style being highlighted by the chromatic harmony. The space is organised in compartmented registers. Medallions depicting the *Pantocrator*, the 'Mother of God with Christ as Child' (*Platytera*), and 'Saint John the Baptist' are placed in the median area of the semi-cylindric vault of the nave.[478] To the north and south, in the lower tier of the vault, in a frieze of arches, the painter illustrated female martyrs and saints in bust

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[474] For the notes on books see Eugen Pavel (1979) Cărţi cu însemnări manuscrise (II) [Books with Annotations], *Sargetia*, 14, pp. 313-314.
[475] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 374.
[476] Because the church was demolished, many of its valuable paintings are kept at Hunedoara Castle.
[477] Mureşianu, *Colecţia de artă religioasă veche*, pp. 57, 78.
[478] Ioan Ovidiu Abdrudan (2008) Biserica 'Sfântul Ioan Evanghelistul' din Apoldu de Jos [Saint John the Evangelist Church in Apoldu de Jos], *AFTAŞ 2005-2006*, 6 (31), p. 225.

lenght, and beneath them, saints standing. A large scene of the Assumption takes the space of the lunette on the western wall of the nave, and beneath it the Last Judgment is preserved fragmentarily. Above the triumphal arch anticipating the apse, the scene of Jesus crucified between the thieves was painted, which includes personages in eighteenth-century costumes. In the semidome of the apse, the 'Ancient of Days' and the 'Virgin of the Sign' (*Oranta*) are represented, while on the walls there are holy hierarchs in medallions or standing. The mural painting is not signed or dated, but beyond the shadow of a doubt it belongs to Simeon and was executed around 1779.[479]

In this phase of his creation, Simeon painted icons for the Church of Prislop Monastery (1780), the Church of Sânpetru (1783-1785), and Densuş (1789). He also painted the frescoes of the churches in Subcetate (1783) and Baru Mic (1785).[480]

Simeon's apprentice, Nicolae, probably came along with his master from Wallachia, all the more so since they were from the same city. Soon after the completion of the Prislop frescoes, Nicolae became an independent painter, signing the mural ensemble of the Church of Gurasada (Hunedoara County) together with Ioan the Hierodeacon of Deva in 1765. The mural painting consists of two distinct parts, the frescoes of the nave and narthex, each of which carries the seal of the author's artistic personality. Vasile Drăguţ thinks of Nicolae as the author of the fresco of the nave, which reveals the traits of a painter with an obvious workshop formation traceable in the execution and compositional organisation; the drawing is done with verve, and the colour has a relatively rich range. Although it is not an easy task to sort out his hand on the ensemble, it seems that the narthex has a more open approach, mainly due to theme treated here (The Last Judgment). However, the most important aspect is that this is the collaborative work of a painter originating in Wallachia and a Transylvanian painter, which confirms once more the strong artistic ties between the two provinces.[481]

Resuming the collaboration with Simeon in 1770, Nicolae assisted his former master in painting the interior of the Church of the 'Holy Archangels' in Ghelari, and painted the royal icons by himself. Conscious of the value of his work, but also of the fact that he came

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[479] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 69.

[480] Idem.

[481] Vasile Drăgut (1972) *Picturile bisericii din Gurasada* [The Paintings of the Church of Gurasada], *BMI*, 2, pp. 63-65.

from a prestigious painting centre, the painter added his origin as if it were a title of nobility to his signature on the icons: 'Nicolaus Painter of Transalpina' or 'Nicolae Painter of Wallachia'.[82]

4.5 Sălaj

The presence of mural ensembles and icons is striking in volume and quality in this artistic centre. Because of its geographic position and history, Sălaj was closely linked to the surrounding regions of Maramureş and Bihor. Local painters or those who came from considerable distances here embellished numerous churches.[83]

In the first decades of the century, Moldavia exerted an intense cultural influence on the northern Transylvanian regions, by virtue of formerly established connections. For instance, Vasile the Moldavian, copyist, miniaturist, and painter of icons and churches, was first attested in Bocicoel village in Maramureş in 1700, where he copied and illustrated the *Homily of Varlaam*[84]. In 1718, he was in Sălaj, in Gârbou village, copying a *Liturghier* and a *Strasnic* (Liturgical books)[85]; however, the information on his work as painter of icons and churches is scarce. Valea Groşilor wooden church (Cluj County), a settlement in the limitrophe area of Sălaj, preserves three icons, the 'Virgin Mary with Child', *Deesis*, and the 'Archangel Michael' painted and signed by Vasile the Painter in 1722, an artist identified with the manuscript copyist. It is also belived that he painted the mural of the Gâlgău wooden church (Sălaj County), a church that no longer exists.[86]

Amongst the Moldavian itinerant painters from the first half of the century there are also two icon painters, Andrei and Zaharia, who not only worked here, but also on the higher course of the Great Someş, in the Transylvania Plain, and the Apuseni Mountains. The *Hodigitria* of

[82] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 69.
[83] Ibid., p. 85.
[84] Dudaş, *Cazania lui Varlaam*, pp. 455-456.
[85] Gabriel Ştrempel (1959) *Copişti de manuscrise româneşti până la 1800* [Copyists of Romanian Manuscripts until 1800], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei), p. 266.
[86] Dudaş, *Cazania lui Varlaam*, p. 152; Atanasie Popa (1930-1931) Biserica de lemn din Gâlgău [The Wooden Church of Gâlgău], *ACMIT*, pp. 186-203: does not mention the contribution of Vasile the Moldavian to the decoration of the monument.

'The Archangels' Wooden Church in Borza, a village on the Agrij Valley (Creaca commune, Sălaj County) is their oldest work (1720). The vegetal motifs decorating its background and the stylised flowers adorning its border could be connected to the artistic environment of Maramureş and that of northern Moldavia, or to older paintings of remote Transylvanian churches. They treated figures graphically, with accentuated brushes and used a warm chromatic, in which ochre and light red predominated.[487] In 1728, Andrei painted two icons representing the 'Mother of God with Child' and the Archangel Michael at the 'The Archangels' church in Lower Poşaga (Alba County)[488]. Many icons that they authored were diffused in various Romanian churches in the Transylvanian Plain and on the Someş Valley.[489]

In 1740, Vasalie painted at the wooden church of Sânmihaiu Almaşului (Sălaj County); he was probably a modest painter considering his artistic instruction and technical knowledge. In 1742, he painted the royal doors depicting the Four Evangelists and several images of the Holy parents of the Church in the apse of the old Monastery of Strâmba Fizeşului (Păduriş village, Sălaj County)[490]. This adornment was realised with the endeavour of hieromonk Domintian, future egumen of the monastery.[491]

The unsually rich activity unfolded on many decades of Nechita the Painter, icon painter and muralist, is linked to the monastic settlements of Sălaj, which existed in the first half of the century and were cultural and artistic centres, such as the Monastery of Strâmba Fizeşului or Bălan Monastery on the Almaş Valley His works covered the areas of Bihor, Huedin, Cluj, the Transylvanian Plain, the Someş Valley, and Sălaj. His strong personality transpires in his style of painting, which makes his icons and parietal decoration easy to recognise. His works would have been under the sign of anonymity, as the painter had the habit of dating, but not signing his works according

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[487] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 86.

[488] The icon 'Virgin Mary with Child' is dated in the upper part in Cyrillic and with Arabic figures in 1728, and the second, that of the Archangel Michael, is signed 'Andrei the Painter' and has a donation inscription. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 86.

[489] Most of them are not dated or signed. Among the works known today belonging to Andrei and Zaharia, we mention the icons from Cătina (Cluj County) in 1741, Săcălaia (Cluj County), Sărata (Bistriţa-Năsăud County), Cetan (Cluj county), and Bârlea (Cluj County). Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 86.

[490] Regarding Strâmba Fizeşului, see Şematism, Blaj, 1900, p. 283; Meteş, *Mănăstirile româneşti*, p. 146; Ioana Cristache-Panait (1969) Bisericile de lemn din Valea Almaşului [The Wooden Churches from the Almaş Valley], *MI-SLR*, 3, pp. 142-143; Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, pp. 355-358.

[491] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 86.

to an older tradition preserved up to the beginning of the century. In the patrimony of the Orthodox Church in Buza (Cluj County) there is an icon depicting the 'Mother of God with Child' whith a precious inscription at the bottom, identifying the donour with the author of the painting: 'This holy icon I made it Nechita the Painter. Let it be alms to my offspring and I forever. 1753'.[492] The icon, currently in the museum collection of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in Cluj-Napoca, is larger than usual, with a richly carved frame. The gilded setting, with geometric motifs in relief or incised, crosses inscribed in diamonds, the motif of the twisted rope, sometimes colonettes and frontons, are characteristics of Nechita's work. His compositions are made with confidence, proving a thorough training and rich experience. The relief of the faces is achieved by overlapping the colours in successive layers - white, pink, and yellow-orange shades - while the colour range of the garments is dominated by intense red, metallic green, and blue, sometimes perforated with gold. The texts on books and scrolls, or donation inscriptions are carefully engraved.[493]

Nechita's earliest work is located in Cubleşu wooden church (Cuzăplac commune, Sălaj County) and is a *Deesis* (1740).[494] Two years later, he illustrated the Crucifixion and apostles' frieze surrounding 'Jesus on the Throne' on the wall separating the nave from the apse at Dretea Wooden Church (Mănăstireni commune, Cluj County). The same theme and technique of painting on clay canvas are found at Beznea Wooden Church (Bratca commune, Bihor County) at the parietal painting and the icon of 'Virgin Mary with Child' that were attributed to him. In 1745, he responded to a commission in Sânmihaiu Almaşului, where he painted the royal icon of the *Pantocrator* and that of the patron saints, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel.[495]

Amongst his paintings, dating from this epoch, there are three representations of the *Pantocrator*, the oldest one (1748) in Dâncu (Aghireşu commune, Cluj County), the second one (1749) in Cutiş (Almaşu commune, Sălaj County), and the third (1750) in Dragu (Dragu commune, Sălaj County), which is in the collections of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in Cluj-Napoca. At Ticu-colony (Aghireşu commune, Cluj County), in the wooden church brought from Tămaşa

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[492] For the text of the inscription see Porumb, 'Contribuţii la cunoaşterea unor zugravi', p. 608.
[493] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, pp. 86-87.
[494] The icon from Cubleşu is reproduced in Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, p. 304, yet only the date is mentioned.
[495] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 87.

(Cuzăplac commune, Sălaj County) there are several icons of the painter, some dating back to 1751 (such as 'Jesus Pantocrator', the 'Mother of God with Child', and the 'Archangel Michael'). Continuing to work in the same region, the painter was present with works in several churches, of which the royal doors of 1752 and the icons 'Jesus Pantocrator', 'Mother of God with Child', and the Archangel Michael of 1753 (Sânpaul, Cluj County), as well as the royal doors of 1755 from Berindu (Sânpaul commune, Cluj County). From this stage of his creation there are paintings in the churches of Văleni (Mănăstireni commune, Cluj County), a *Pantocrator* from 1745 in Arghişu (Aghireş commune, Cluj County), Romanian Mănăştur (Manastireni commune, Cluj county), and Pria (Cizar commune, Sălaj County).[496]

In 1762, he painted a royal icon at Feleac (village near Cluj), meeting Nistor (a native of the village) on that occasion; Nistor would become his student and close collaborator, whose first works were reported in the years to come[497]. In the seventh and eighth decades, Nechita continued to paint in the settlements of Sălaj, such as Agrij, Sânmihaiu Almaşului in 1770, and Bălan in 1770-1771.[498]

Mihăilă Muntean from Hăşdate, a member of the guild founded in Gherla in 1777, painted the interior of the Gâlgău wooden church in 1795[499], as well as several icons from the same place of worship. Probably his work in the north of Sălaj was much richer, but unfortunately, in the current state of research, there is no other information about it.

Radu Munteanu of Ungureni, a painter from the Land of Lăpuş worked in the northern area of Sălaj, in the villages on the Someş Valley; some of his icons are preserved in the churches of Chiueşti and Rugăşeşti.[500]

Several murals and icons from various wood churches in Sălaj and the Land of Codru were attributed to Ţiple Popa and Ioan the Painter, but the only monument known nowadays, whose decoration still retains the signature of the two artists, is the wooden church of 'The

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[496] Idem.
[497] Marius Porumb (1968) Contribuţii la cunoaşterea unui meşter zugrav din veacul al XVIII-lea – Nistor Zugrav din Feleac [Contributions to the Knowledge of an Eighteenth-Century Master – Nistor the Painter of Feleac], *SUH*, 1, pp. 22-30.
[498] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură,* p. 87.
[499] Popa, 'Biserica de lemn din Gâlgău', p. 199.
[500] Porumb, 'Contribuţii la cunoaşterea unui meşter zugrav', p. 609.

Holy Archangels' in Chieşd.[501] In the narthex, the painters rendered aspects of everyday life, with more poignancy in the composition of the Last Judgment covering the western wall, which expresses a social criticism called upon to 'correct' the faults or flaws of the village inhabitants. The Sloth, Plague,[502] and Death are represented in anthropomorphic forms on the southern wall as a reminder of the transcience of life.[503] The 'Parable of the Ten Virgins' unfolding on the northern wall reinforces the eschatological meaning of the Last Judgment. The iconographic programme of the ensemble is of post-Byzantine tradition with Baroque influences reduced to decorative elements and, more rarely, to compositional construction.[504]

The mural painting of the wooden church in Ulciug (1781) is the work of Petru the Deacon of Preluca, icon painter and muralist active in the second half of the century in the lands of Lăpuş and Chioar.[505] The mural he executed for the church is tributary to the Baroque. The iconographic programme prioritises the eschatological character and has many moralising accents. Inside the apse, holy fathers in episcopal attire placed in arches cover the walls, and the image of 'Jesus in the chalice' adorns the altar. The upper register is occupied by apostles in bust length and the vault by the *Deesis*, in which Jesus Archiereus is flanked by Mary and John. Apart from the Holy Trinity in Western rendition as its centrepiece and the Evangelists, the vault of the nave is filled by the following scenes: 'Prophet Elijah', 'Jacob's Scale', 'Lyaeus and Saint Nestor', 'Saint George', and 'Saint Demetrius'. The narthex is dominated by the Last Judgment, along with the virgin martyrs. The

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[501] The mural painting of the church in Zalnoc (Sălaj County) was assigned to the two painters. See Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, p. 435. In the Land of Codru, they realised several mural ensembles in Corund (Satu Mare County), Orţâţa (Maramureş County), and Bicaz (Maramureş County). See I. Iuraşciuc & Sabin Şainelic (1975) Monumente de arhitectură populară: bisericile de lemn din zona Codru [Popular Architecture Monuments: the wooden churches in the Codru region], *Satu Mare. Studii şi comunicări*, 3, pp. 165-203.

[502] The image of the Plague, riding on a donkey is interpreted as an iconographic rarity for the space of the porch. Also, a Saint Elijah (partially preserved) rises up to heaven on a chariot drawn by winged horses. See Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, p. 294.

[503] This type of images can also be seen in other monuments in the region of Codru, a region adjacent to Chieşd. See Iuraşciuc & Şainelic, 'Monumente de arhitectură populară', pp. 179-180.

[504] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 89.

[505] Aurel Socolan & Adalbert Toth (1969) Zugravi ai unor biserici de lemn din nord-vestul României [Painters of Several Wooden Churches in the North-West of Romania], *Marmaţia*, 1, p. 44; Porumb, 'Zugravi şi centre româneşti de pictură', p. 120.

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colour range, based on vibrant colours, gives a festive touch to the whole ensemble.[506]

In the last decades, many local painters undertook work in Sălaj. Ioan Pop of Românaşi decorated numerous edifices in his native land, and by virtue of his reputation and talent, he earned commissions in more distant regions. In January 1794, he completed the iconostasis of the wooden church in Sânmihaiu Almaşului. The following year, he executed the mural of the wooden church in Sânpetru Almaşului, his presence in this village being recorded on a Gospel printed in Blaj in 1765: 'through me the humble painter Ioan Pop', record dating from 14 January 1795.[507] The same year, he painted the wooden church in Stâna, close to Zalău, with his apprentice. The inscription on the iconostasis mentioned that the church was built in 1778 and painted in 1795, through the expense and strife of the Orthodox people of Stâna, under the reign of emperor Francis, during the service of the Orthodox bishop Gherasim Adamovici and the archpriest Peter of the Miluan, 'by painters Pop Ioan and Pop Precup'.[508]

Ioan Pop painted the murals of most of the monuments in Sălaj, some of them dated but not signed. Judging after the stylistic and technical elements, the painter executed the mural fragments of the wooden church of Baica (Hida commune), the Bălan Josani Wooden Church, the mural of the church of Bârsău Mare, of the churches of Bozna, Brusturi, Ciumârna, Creaca, and Păduriş (Fizeş Monastery), as well as icons from the wooden church of Chichişa (Românaşi commune) and of Brusturi (Creaca commune) dating from 1800-1801.[509] In 1800, he finished the interior painting of the wooden church of Păuşa (Românaşi commune, Sălaj County). The apse of the church was also decorated, its scenes frm the Mariological Cycle and the scene of 'Saint Nicholas saving the sailors' being still visible nowadays. In 1801, he painted the royal doors from Hida, and the following year finished the mural painting of the same church. The long inscription records the founders and ends with the year and the painter's name.[510] It is documented that the painter signed himself on a Book of Epistles printed at Blaj the same year in the village of Şimişna (Rus Commune, Sălaj County), on the Someş Valley: '... and it was written by myself Ioan pop Zugrav from

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[506] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 90.
[507] Ioana Cristache-Panait & Ion Scheletti (1971) Bisericile de lemn din Sălaj [The Wooden Churches in Sălaj], *BMI*, 40 (1), p. 40.
[508] Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, pp. 404-405.
[509] Ibid., pp. 241, 250, 259, 271, 290, 295, 302.
[510] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 91.

Unguraş in 13 1802 July'.[51] His reputation led him to the wooden church in Apahida (Cluj County) in 1808,[52] a place quite distant from the area where he usually worked.

Due to his theological instruction, the painter had an in-depth knowledge of iconography; he was also a good observer, the religious scenes being often supplemented with details from everyday life. The decorative elements also have an important role in the murals as well as in the painting of his icons, suggesting the preservation of the post-Brâncovan tradition until early nineteenth century.[53]

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[51] Ana Cânda (1985) Carte veche românească în judeţul Sălaj [The Old Romanian Book in Sălaj County], *AMP*, 9, pp. 611-612.
[52] Atanasie Popa (1930-1931) Biserici vechi de lemn româneşti din Ardeal [Old Transylvanian Wooden Churches], *ACMIT*, pp. 285-286.
[53] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, p. 91.

Chapter 5 Tradition and innovation in the nineteenth century

Until mid-nineteenth century, Romanian painting was destined almost exclusively to the religious realm.[514] The idea of aesthetic pleasure and sensual delight was completely alien to the painter and sculptor of that time. Art served to embellish the house of God, to make it brighter, worthier of its purpose. From time to time, it adorned the princely palace and the boyars' and highly ranked dignitaries' houses. However, this happened less often than one might expect. The vicissitudes, wars, and invasions deterred the preservation and collection of valuable artworks. This precarious state of affairs was expressed by Dinicu Golescu in his *Notes*: 'In my homeland, because of the instability, no adornment can survive ... For what we work in ten years, we lose in one day...'[515]. The themes of religious pieces were taken from the Bible and their treatment adhered to old Byzantine canons. Nonetheless, the artist's personality found frequent occasions of manifestation, especially in terms of execution. But rather rigid limits prevented an overly individual vision and forced the painter to execute a composition in which the traditional element took the leading role. Thus, the landscape and portrait, without entirely missing, were engaged differently than in Western art. In sacred compositions, depictions of nature were reduced to mere decorations and ideally conceived as a simple suggestion of space, of places where the scenes occurred. The individual portrait almost did not exist; generally, it evoked the donor or founder. Instead, group portraits were the norm. These compositions, of considerable proportions, were placed on both sides of the entrance to worship edifices, and presented the founder and his family. The men were depicted as serious, severe, immobile, in luxurious exotic costumes, with well-defined features, often harsh and almost fiery in appearance; the women were depicted as delicate, feeble, dainty, immobile, in heavy silk dresses embellished with fur and expensive stones, along with the

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[514] Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în județul Alba', p. 5.
[515] Dinicu Golescu (1915) *Însemnări* [Notes] (Bucharest: Editura Minerva), p. 191.

children's cortege lined up by size or age.[516]

In the second half of the century, completely different ideas and practices originating in Western art substitute these norms and practices in the religious art and are also engaged in the profane art, which now emerges. Their effects translate into a sudden break from the past. Wax (encaustic) or oil painting is preferred to the fresco, even when it comes to covering large surfaces. The artwork, instead of serving the cult and decorating the walls of churches in order to excite and educate the believer, often becomes a means to galvanize the crowds, incite a patriotic feeling, presenting capital scenes in the history of the nation.[517] While the art piece changes its destination and nature, the significance of its author also changes. The term 'painter' (*zograph*)[518] itself is re-defined: those who now made a name for themselves as masters or underwent formal instruction in Western fine arts schools recommended themselves as painters, while *zographs* referred to those painters confined to the universe of workshops or daubers, crude painters.[519] The painter gains more prestige and becomes qualified to stand beside the high classes of society. This change is precipitated when representatives of these social classes, the boyars' children, take up painting (The term *zograph* is used until the middle of the century. Perhaps then, under the influence of the Italian language, it turns into 'painter').[520]

Several reasons contributed to these transformations, but the most important is the frequent and direct contact with Western countries especially between 1810 and 1830, when young Romanians (many if not most of them presumably Uniates) travelled for study visits to Austria, Italy, and France.[521] In a province where the Austrian and Hungarian influences disputed for dominance, the young Transylvanian elite had steady cultural ties with Vienna, while its contact with the artistic and cultural environment in Pesta was sporadic and unproductive.[522]

The native-born painters that went abroad for training exerted

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[516] Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, pp. 25-26.
[517] Ibid., p. 26.
[518] The Romanian word *zugrav* derives from the ngr. *zographos* and it used to designate the church painter, a meaning that is now obsolete; its current use is that of 'dyer', which is why we chose to translate it as 'painter', and explain here how its meaning changed.
[519] Dumitran, Károly & Băjenaru, *Icoane pe sticlă din Transilvania*, p. 7.
[520] Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, p. 27.
[521] Idem.
[522] Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, p. 30.

influence on the development of taste. Most were from families of priests, sons or grandchildren.[523] Showing enthusiasm in modern ideas, they did not always wonder if they possessed the qualities required to succeed in the disciplines that spurred their interest and were novel at that time. They were not able to appreciate if the works they produced were somewhat distinct or inferior to those that served as their model. They did not question their abilities, only saw the nobility of their purpose and persevered. George Oprescu refers to this as 'a touching phenomenon of illusion', rich in consequences 'even if the aspirations of these serious, laborious but unequally endowed men outweighed their spiritual possibilities and means of expression'.[524]

The Byzantine tradition was kept alive despite the waning of the post-Byzantine model, which endured until the nineteenth century. This survival compensated for the rather tardy emergence of post-Byzantine painting in the Romanian provinces, as compared to neighbouring countries.[525] In the eighteenth century, most of the icons and murals from rural and monastic environments were executed 'in traditional Brâncovan style, interpreted by a charming, picturesque, and popular vision'[526]. Teodora Voinescu identifies this as the last stage in local post-Byzantine religious art, and argues that painting in a good Byzantine tradition, as accomplished in the churches of the fourteenth-eighteenth century, experienced an epoch of crisis and confusion in the nineteenth century. In her opinion, this crisis was brought about by the influence of Western religious painting on Romanian iconography and the development of secular oil and easel painting.[527] Her argument stands to some extent, since there was a crisis in the nineteenth century, but not the end of Romanian icon and mural painting of Byzantine lineage.

The strong influence of Western models was visible at all levels of Romanian society, and it included the penetration of secular influences in the religious visual realm. Prior to the overt orientation towards Western painting of this century, painters 'succeeded in maintaining,

[523] Idem.
[524] Ibid., p. 31.
[525] Voinescu, 'Post-Byzantine Icons', p. 379.
[526] Ibid., p. 378.
[527] The penetration of the oil technique in easel painting towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, with a delay of several centuries compared to Western Europe, had consequences for the mural religious painting, which at the end of this century borrowed the new technique and used it in parallel with fresco. Eduard Andrei (2016) Ipostaze ale modernității în pictura religioasă dobrogeană din secolul XX: Nicolae Tonitza, Nina Arbore, Costin Ioanid [Hypostases of Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century Religious Painting in Dobrogea], *SCIA.AP*, 6 (50), p. 50.

with a vision apparently diffuse, the artistic continuity of the Rumanian icon along traditional lines'. 'These painters, who showed a remarkable sense of reality and a robust power of selection and synthesis, receptive to the taste of succeeding epochs, distilled from the vast iconographic repertoire their favourite types and themes. Adding or suppressing details, they enriched and at times even transformed the conventions according to local requirements.'[528]

At the end of the previous century progressively more 'realistic' elements penetrated the 'mannerist' Brâncovan style due to the influence of the Western painting. [529] These elements mainly concerned the depiction of human form, which was based on a detailed study of anatomy. This tendency towards realism also implied the use of perspective in art, including mural and icon painting. Looking for creative solutions, the painters of urban environments focused on easel painting, slowly abandoning the rules and traditions of Byzantine painting. 'The rupture between form and content gradually changes the representational essence, the icons turning into simple paintings of religious subjects.'[530]

Icon painting became a prosperous occupation to which some painters committed for pecuniary gain, disregarding the quality requirements and canons of the Church. The activity of icon and wall painting, which in the beginning of the century was still thriving and carried out in the Byzantine style, was soon to be degraded by 'mediocre artisans that experimented in a dilettante way'. According to Jacque Wertheimer-Ghika, even though icon painting was quantitatively considerable, it was not of high quality, because 'the Byzantine tradition had lost its freshness'[531]. The prosperous merchant class could afford to order churches to be built and painted according to their uneducated theological and artistic taste. This happened in response to the ever-growing demands of a newly rising social class, the country boyars: 'The modest artistic standards of this clientele fostered a rather unassuming indigenous style, which was nonetheless sincere and

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[528] Voinescu, 'Post-Byzantine Icons', p. 379.

[529] Marius Porumb (1977) Zugravi de şcoală brâncovenească din Transilvania primei jumătăţi a secolului al XVIII-lea [Painters of Brâncovan School in Transylvania in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century], extract from *Publicaţiile Arhivelor Statului Cluj-Napoca*, p. 415.

[530] Ana Dobjanschi, Emanuela Cernea & Carmen Tănăsoiu (2008) *Ghidul Galeriei de Artă Veche Românească* [The Catalogue of the Gallery of Old Romanian Art] (2ᵈ edition, Bucharest: Muzeul Naţional de Artă al României), p. 153.

[531] Jacque Wertheimer-Ghika (1971) *Gheorghe Tattarescu şi revoluţia de la 1848* [Gheorghe Tattarescu and the Revolution of 1848] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 8.

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expressive'.[532]

Two movements coexisted in the nineteenth century Transylvanian church painting: the Western type of church painting, which appealed to painters that studied abroad and spread in the second half of the century, and one based on the traditional style of Byzantine lineage, especially in fresco painting, practised in villages and provincial towns. The former, evocative of Italian Renaissance and based mainly on oil painting, was represented by academic painters such as Constantin Lecca and Mişu Popp, while the latter was cultivated by many painters coming from the peasantry.[533]

The crisis through which the tradition of icon and mural painting passed after the first half of the century was surpassed in early twentieth century, when the forging of a national style was pursued in Transylvania.[534] Prelate Elie Miron Cristea[535] made a call to a broader Byzantine horizon, as a component of the Romanian religious monumental painting. His theoretical studies focusing on iconographic projects[536] were a stimulus for the replacement of the Western academic language introduced in religious painting by Lecca and Popp with forms that respected the hieratic and decorative features of the religious painting of Byzantine origin[537].

In the introduction of his book, *Iconography and dispositions …*, Cristea noted that: 'Church painting developed under the regional influence and affinities of different peoples, and several branches of church painting formed over time, the Byzantine-Oriental and the Latin-Western styles among others.'[538] He further referred to some of their defining traits: 'The typical figures of the Byzantine art are thinner, scrawnier, sometimes stiff, like mummies, with elongated faces: they

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[532] Vasile Drăguţ & Dan Grigorescu (1990) *History of Romanian Art. An Outline* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică), p. 190.

[533] Drăguţ & Grigorescu, *History of Romanian Art*, p. 215.

[534] The national style firstly emerged in Bucharest at the initiative of architect Ion Mincu and spread henceforth to all Romanian provinces. See Viorel Nimigeanu (2007) Pictura bisericilor ortodoxe din Transilvania în secolul XX [The Painting of Orthodox Churches in Transylvania in the Twentieth Century] (Bucharest: Editura Palimpsest), p. 25.

[535] Elie Miron Cristea (1868-1939) held high positions within the hierarchy of the Romanian Orthodox Church, those of bishop, metropolitan, and patriarch. See Maria Roşca (1999) Iconografia lui Miron Cristea [Miron Cristea's Iconography], *ANGVSTIA*, 4, p. 339.

[536] Elie Miron Cristea (1905) *Iconografia şi întocmirile din Internul Bisericii Răsăritene* [Iconography and Dispositions within the Eastern Church] (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecesane).

[537] Virgil Vătăşianu (1982) Octavian Smigelschi (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 40.

[538] Cristea, *Iconografia şi întocmirile*, p. VI.

have a demure stature with harsh contours, in dark colours. The Byzantine painter deviates from nature, from reality and focuses more on the reproduction of typical traditional forms. The Western painting, however, seeks to present the saints' figure in the most beautiful forms. The Byzantines, on the contrary, prefer dogmas to the beauty of nature.'[539] Disgruntled by several icons adorning Orthodox churches in Transylvania and several aspects of the Transylvanian dioceses, where statues of Franciscans, Jesuits, and various saints known only in the Western Church could be found, he argued that the motivation behind his book was to get rid of this anarchic state and establish the fundamental principle on which church painting should develop moving forward. His supervision of the painting work for the Orthodox Cathedral in Sibiu (built in 1902-1906) gave him the opportunity to advance a painting that embraced 'the traditional, canonised principles of Byzantine painting', and would revive the old tradition of Romanian Orthodox art than once flourished.[540] Cristea criticised the decadent Byzantine painting, pointing out that the saints do not have a natural colour; they have copper-coloured faces, a dull unnatural expression, and are sometimes disproportionate.[541] Moreover, as he wrote in an article published in the *Romanian Telegraph* regarding his supervising role, he fostered the rich application of Romanian motifs in the decorative painting and the adornment of the clothing when suited.[542] He invoked consistently a call for the use of the resources of popular culture generated in the world of the traditional village of yore, which he considered a true identity dower that had to be defended and promoted.[543]

The Romanian Orthodox Church, strengthened by the *Tomos* of the Ecumenical Patriarch Vasile II, which recognised the Romanian Patriarchate as 'autocephalous, but linked through its dogmatic teachings to the Eastern Church', was declared national church by the Constitution of 1923. The presence of metropolitans and clergy devoted to the Orthodox Church and the promotion of its values in Transylvania played a significant part in the effervescence of the artistic field. The orientation towards Romanian traditions within the Uniate Church

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[539] Ibid., p. VII.
[540] Ibid., p. 18.
[541] Roşca, 'Iconografia lui Miron Cristea', p. 340.
[542] Idem.
[543] Dorel Marc (2015) *Clerical Speech, Ethno Culture and Folk Literature in Elie Miron Cristea's vision – Referring to the Austro-Hungarian Period, Discourse as a Form of Multiculturalism in Literature and Communication, Section: history and cultural mentalities* (Târgu-Mureş: Arhipelag XXI Press), p. 152.

might be also added to this. The strive to preserve the independence of the Uniate Church, its Romanian character and Eastern dogmas according to the old law and custom of the Eastern Church, came through in several synods of the Church (1850, 1868, 1893, 1918).[544] In this context, the Holy Synod of 1902 asserted the obligation to follow the canons of the *hermeneia* and the Holy Tradition: 'Considering the Byzantine painting and along with it the other fine arts as the only ones capable of representing with splendour the majesty and piety of the holy figures ... decides: to assign the priests and epitrops of all churches the duty to bring the icons that are to adorn the church and their models before the Diocese for preliminary approval prior to inspecting the painting of a church. Any deviation from the above provision will attract the priests' defrocking.'[545]

5.1 The academic movement

Constantin Lecca (1810-1887) and Mişu Popp (1827-1892) are representatives of the era of the so-called primitives and precursors.[546] Referring to the artistic milieu of the time and their audience, Oprescu believes they had 'the fate of martyrs', as they sought the understanding of a young bourgeois society 'saturated by the traditional Byzantine art from villages in its phase of ultimate degeneration.[547]

Constantin Lecca was born in Braşov in December 1810. His father must have been a merchant or a man of some wealth, since he afforded a sound education for his son. Lecca enrolled in the school functioning within the premises of the Saint Nicholas Church in Şchei[548],

[544] Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, p. 228.
[545] Ioan Bizău (2005) Incursiuni în teologia şi arta icoanei, in Leonid Uspensky, Boris Bobrinskoy, Stephan Bigam & Ioan Bizău (Eds) *Ce este icoana?* [What Is the Icon?] (Alba Iulia: Editura Reîntregirea), p. 91.
[546] The primitives or precursors of the Romanian modern painting are the painters that imposed the easel painting in the Romanian provinces in the first half of the nineteenth century. Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, p. 140; Ion Bălăceanu (1982) Pictori şi zugravi bisericeşti la români în secolul al XIX-lea [Romanian Painters and Church *Zographs* in the Nineteenth Century], *BOR*om, 100 (5-6), pp. 535-549.
[547] See Virgil Vătăşianu (1932) Opera pictorului Mişu Popp [Painter Mişu Popp's Work], *Ţara Bârsei*, 4, p. 312.
[548] Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, p. 141.

and continued his education abroad in Buda[549] and presumably in Vienna and Rome[550]. His trips to Rome might have taken place sometime between the end of 1830 and June 1834.[551] Between 1845-1847, Lecca studied at the Saint Anne Academy in Vienna under Professor Gselhoffer.[552] He fled to Braşov after the Revolution of 1848. Here, he got aquainted with Mişu Popp (seventeen years younger), with whom he painted at the church of Saint Nicholas in Şchei.[553]

Lecca and his successor, Gheorghe Tattarescu (who made his debut when Lecca's work had already gained popularity) replaced the old technique and style of church painting with Western ones. The naïve scenes, abundant in characters, immovable and hieratic, of an archaism anchored in the art of the Middle Ages and the Orient, or agitated by dynamic poses so that to speak to the audience from afar, in vivid colours suited for the mat and rugged aspect of the walls disappeared. Lecca and Tattarescu introduced a style contradictory to the tradition, a Western 'illogical and very fragile decoration on the walls of a Byzantine edifice'.[554]

Mişu Popp divided his time between portraits and religious painting[555]. In Transylvania, apart from Saint Nicholas Church, he painted the churches of Satulung, Cernat, Toderiţa, Râşnov, Ţânţari,

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[549] An article featured in *Curierul românesc* mentioned Lecca's presence in Buda in 1829. *Curierul românesc* [The Romanian Courier], 25 November 1829, p. 281

[550] Lecca attended the Batistelli workshop in Rome, according to Doina Pungă (2007) Few Historic, Stylistic and Technical Guide Marks of Some Romanian Artists's Presence in the XIX⁰ Century in Italy, *Muzeul Naţional*, 12, p. 186.

[551] This date is advanced by Oprescu in *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, p. 141, but there are several contradictory hypotheses regarding his departure. Some suggest it took place before 1833 (Barbu Theodorescu (1932) Tipografia olteană [The Printing House of Lesser Wallachia], *Boabe de grâu*, 10, p. 470; *idem* (1969) *Constantin Lecca* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 8), while others imply it took place after 1835 (*idem* (1938) Constantin Lecca (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române), p. 43; Alexandru Marcu (1931) *Tătărescu* (Craiova: Editura Ramuri), p. 24).

[552] Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, p. 148.

[553] Ibid., pp. 143-144; Lecca painted an iconostasis for Saint Nicholas Church according to Mihai Manolache (1975) Noi date privind activitatea artistică a pictorului Constantin Lecca la biserica voievodală Sfântul Nicolae din Şcheii Braşovului [New Data on Constantin Lecca's Artistic Activity at Saint Nicholas Voivodal Church in Şcheii Braşovului], *MA*, 20 (1-2), pp. 60-61.

[554] Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, p. 146.

[555] For a detailed presentation of his religious painting, see Elena Popescu (2007) *Mişu Popp: reprezentant al academisului românesc. Pictura religioasă şi pictura laică* [Mişu Popp: a representative of Romanian academism. The Religious and Secular Painting] (Sibiu: Muzeul Naţional Brukenthal), pp. 47-98.

Arpatac (Araci), almost all of them in the region of Braşov.[556]

Popp was a follower of classicism. He stood amongst the artists that consciously gave Romanian art a new direction in mid-nineteenth century. Alongside Lecca (whose activity developed almost exclusively in the Principalities), he was the sole promoter of this new orientation in Transylvania.[557]

Before leaving for Vienna in the autumn of 1845, he undertook painting under the instruction of his father, Ioan, who was a church painter. Ioan worked in the style of the Moldavian-Cretan school, as it had developed prevalently in Nicula, where it became receptive to Western influences.[558] The icon he executed for the church of Ţânţari village in 1820 depicting the 'Coronation of the Virgin by The Holy Trinity' serves as an example for the development of the Nicula centre and what Popp could have learnt in his father's workshop. The naturalist elements of Western origin abound, and the iconographic model pertains to the Baroque art of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The icon is conceived in the Byzantine-decorative style, and its expressivity is given entirely by the drawing. The contours and inner lines are the only means of offering expressivity to the faces, a spiritual expressivity that, if here and there draws near caricature, still has nothing to do with the Western realism of the nineteenth century. Modeling attempts in the classic sense can only be distinguished in the accessories, draperies, and the clouds floating around the Holy Trinity or those raising the Virgin to heaven. The small heads of the angels, which appear from the waves of clouds, are the culminating point of manifestation of the Western influence; Western art could only make its way through such auxiliary elements.[559]

The Baroque era at the end of the seventeenth century and the turn of the eighteenth recorded a significant development in Vienna, due in part to traveling artists from the west or the south, but especially to indigenous artists. In the following period, however, the artistic significance of the Habsburg capital decreased, so it seems that Mişu Popp could not have chosen a place and a time more inappropriate for learning than Vienna in 1845-1847. Obviously, this choice cannot be imputed to him. During that period, Vienna was seen as the 'capital of

[556] Corneliu Comănescu (1932) Pictorul Mişu Popp [The Painter Mişu Popp], *Ţara Bârsei*, 4, p. 117.
[557] Vătăşianu, 'Opera pictorului Mişu Popp', pp. 291-292.
[558] Ibid., p. 292.
[559] Idem.

the West', the quintessence of the West. The long and difficult to cross distances prevented the formation of close ties with the world lying further west from it, which made the Romanians living in Transylvania direct their political and cultural interests on this metropolis. For a young artist with modest means the contact with the Viennese artistic scene was almost a fatality.[560] Under such circumstances, Popp could only come under the influence of the classical school, and this influence remained decisive for his entire subsequent development (he left Vienna when realism was around the corner). All his works, both religious creations and portraits, stand as evidence.[561]

The mural cycle of the 'Assumption' Church in Satulung (Săcele County) is composed of sixty-seven scenes distributed on the walls and vaults of the narthex, nave, and apse.[562] In addition to the murals, executed in tempera, the church preserves several oil paintings of the same author.[563] Nearly all the Byzantine representations of the ensemble are substituted by Occidental motifs, except for the three icons showing the 'Assumption'. The representation on the iconostasis is the most loyal to the Byzantine tradition, while the painting of the narthex and the panel on the porch parapet present a classical variation of the Byzantine prototype: the Virgin lies on the bed, surrounded by the apostles, but three bishops in rich garments appear in place of Jesus; the Mother's soul rises above the clouds, floating to heaven, where Jesus awaits.[564] All other representations drift from the tradition.

Popp could not imagine this vast ensemble himself. There are many borrowings: minute copies, copies done in a free manner, and personal creations under determined influences, often coming from extremely diverse sources. His most fertile sources of inspiration were the xylographs executed after Gustave Doré's drawings for the illustration of the New Testament. Their direct copies are for instance the 'Denial of Peter', the 'Whipping of Jesus', the 'Pharisee and the Publican', the 'Flight into Egypt', and 'Jesus at the home of Martha and Mary'. Adaptations inspired by the same stamps are, among others, 'Jesus on the Mount of Olives', 'Jesus walks on the sea', Jesus and the Samaritan woman', 'The rich man and Lazarus', and 'The tribute money'. The 'Descent from the Cross' by Rubens[565] and the stamp

[560] Ibid., pp. 293-294.
[561] Ibid., p. 294.
[562] Ibid., p. 296.
[563] Ibid., p. 298.
[564] Ibid., p. 299.
[565] Popp could have known the painting found in the Antwerp Cathedral from reproductions, or perhaps he saw the painting with the same subject at the Armenian

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showing the 'Healing of the paralytic' by Jan van Luyken, sculpted by CHR. Weigel[566] were also used for inspiration.[567]

When it comes to his murals, each scene is framed by a small and discreet golden border with vegetal or geometric motifs. The figures are wide and drawn massively; the draperies seem heavy, and the thick creases are often rounded to exaggeration. The attitudes and expressions of the figures are always in intimate connection to the subject, and the figures that pose with no purpose are completely eliminated. The landscapes are reduced to light indications, a field treated sketchily, a few remote trees, and some architectural motifs (often a simple wall with a few columns).[568] Popp could not copy the colours, as he knew most of the originals through colourless stamps.[569] The colours he used are rather vivid compared to the discreet nature of tempera, but their intensity is well harmonised. The sky is a pale blue, a yellow-green dominates the landscapes, and the costumes are green, blue or red, and seldom ochre-yellow.[570]

5.2 The traditional style: a blend of old and new. The Land of Olt

In the first half of the century, the post-Brâncovan style, which had been responsive to Baroque influences since the previous century, got more 'diluted' as a consequence of its indulgence of lay elements, and 'declined' as painters compromised their artistic efforts to reconcile the high demand for artworks and commissioners' scant financial resources. Moreover, the affinity for Catholic themes became more pervasive: themes such as 'Our Lady of Sorrows', 'Jesus, the true vine', and the 'Holy Trinity crowning Virgin Mary' were commonly treated.[571]

Church in Gherla, which is believed to be the work of Rubens' apprentices. See Vătăşianu, 'Opera pictorului Mişu Popp', p. 299.
[566] This is a stamp that was in the painter's possession and now is in the collection of Astra Association in Braşov. See Vătăşianu, 'Opera pictorului Mişu Popp', p. 299.
[567] Ibid., pp. 299-300.
[568] Ibid., p. 303.
[569] Ibid., p. 300.
[570] Ibid., p. 303.
[571] Ioana Rustoiu, Elena Băjenaru, Ana Dumitran & Szöcs Fűlöp Károly (2008) …*Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul* […By Me, Ioan Pop the Painter] (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip), p. 7.

New forms of artistic expression that catered to new tastes and preferences were pursued; they pervaded a social segment with low incomes, which did not have claims on the quality of the purchased product, since it was more preoccupied to possess it. Painters matched their skills to these forms of expression and modes of creating that arose from unconventional materials, such as glass and metal foil. The painting on glass[572], known in Transylvania from mid-eighteenth century[573], easily complied with this reality. The emergence of icons on glass is symptomatic of a more practical form of devotion; as laypersons wanted small icons for private use, they became a common occurrence in their households, thus implying a domestic audience. Seen as a more humble means of artistic expression, befitting the living conditions of the Transylvanian Romanians[574], the icon on glass was a keen competitor to the 'expensive wood icon' made by masters trained in prestigious workshops[575]. On the one hand, such claims might be a bit hasty, since they leave out the high cost of glass and gold foils often used in profusion for this type of icon. On the other hand, the transformation of

[572] Painting on glass was already familiar to the Paleo-Christian art. These techniques developed in Byzantium during the Middle Ages and were imported in Italy at the end of the thirteenth century, from where they reached Central Europe at the beginning of the fourteenth century (Juliana Dancu & Dumitru Dancu (1975) *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă* [Folk Painting on Glass] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 11). During the eighteenth century, the painting on glass became very important in the manufactures of Silesia, Bavaria, Austria, and above all, Bohemia. About fifteenth workshops were active in Transylvania in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries (Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, pp. 17-18).
[573] The opinion that the beginnings of the Romanian glass painting must be sought in the seventeenth century (Nicolae Iorga (1934) *Les arts mineurs en Roumanie*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Édition de L'Imprimerie de l'État), p. 30; I. C. Ioanidu & G. G. Rădulescu (1942) Icoane pe sticlă [Icons on Glass], *BMI*, fasc. 113-114, p. 151; Cornel Irimie & Marcela Focşa (1968) *Icoane pe sticlă* [Icons on Glass] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), pp. 5-6) could not be confirmed in a convincing way. The scarcity of glass objects in the epoch is on the contrary, an argument against such a reality. For the dating in the eighteenth century of the beginning of this craft, see Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, pp. 20, 127-128, note 20. One of the first, and probably the most important, was that of the village Nicula (North to Cluj-Napoca), visited every year by thousands of pilgrims, since a miracle happened in the local church in 1694 or 1699: the icon of the Theotokos began to weep (Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 20). Some German painters from the workshop of Sandl might have foreseen the remunerative side of the event and, therefore, set up at Nicula a shop of votive images. The local peasants took over this business from the Germans, and soon became specialised in the exquisite production of icons on glass (Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, pp. 20-21). Anyways, if the technique undoubtedly reached Transylvania from the West, the main source of inspiration for the artists, in Nicula and elsewhere, remained the Byzantine iconography. They interpreted the traditional images, usually from cheap engravings produced in the nearby village Hăşdate (Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 35), in a naïve style, and were especially fond of vegetal motifs.
[574] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 6.
[575] Ibid., p. 25.

glass painting into a mass phenomenon[576], as in the case of the Nicula[577] centre, is undeniable. In the nineteenth century, Nicula Monastery was the most prolific centre of icon painting on glass in Transylvania.[578] Smaller and cruder, but compensating through their vivid colour and surprising drawing, the icons of Nicula spread across cities and villages, reaching the most remote areas and becoming an object of devotion present in almost all Romanians' houses. Their price was affordable, contributing to an intense popularisation of religious art, which prejudiced the icons of endowed painters, sold at higher prices. Several gifted painters preferred to work 'from a deficit': they refused to compromise on quality, even if this meant they could only sell their icons as long as the price was lowered. Petru Prodan of Suatu, near Cluj,

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[576] At Nicula, Gherla, and Şchei, the icons were no longer painted by one man, by a particular painter. There was a real division of labour in the workshops: one painter drew the outlines, another one applied the main colours, another wrote the name of the saints or various feasts in Cyrillic. Finally, the oldest icon painter would go over it and put a finishing touch here and there. Ion Muşlea (1995) *Icoanele pe sticlă şi xilogravurile ţăranilor români din Transilvania* [Icons on Glass and Xylographs of Romanian Peasants in Transylvania] (Bucharest: Editura Grai şi Suflet – Cultura Naţională), p. 128. The owners, but probably also older painters were helped along by more gifted apprentices, whose talent developed with practice and instruction (Gheorghe Pavelescu (1945) Romanian Painting on Glass, *Review of the Foundations*, 12 (3), p. 642). Almost the entire community joined in this work in its desire to perpetuate profit, using templates in order to speed up the process and leaving the icons unsigned. This conception subordinated to material interest reflected heavily on the development of the artistic vision. If in the first phase of Nicula centre's existence, until 1800, each icon could be appreciated as a jewel of the genre, remarkable through its sober and elegantly combined colours, clear contours and pronounced expressivity, starting with the nineteenth century and more precisely towards its middle a serial production with direct repercussions on quality was introduced. The traits of the latter are retrieved by the invariant replay of the same chromatic range (red, light blue, ocher yellow, black) and template for works with identical subjects. Aurel Chiriac (1997) Pictura de cult românească între secolele XIV-XVIII [The Romanian Religious Painting in the Fourteenth-Eighteenth Centuries], *Simpozion. Comunicările celui de al VI-lea simpozion al cercetătorilor români din Ungaria*, pp. 16-17.

[577] Nicula is situated in Cluj County, in the vicinity of the small town of Gherla. In 1910 this village had 857 inhabitants, of whom only two were Hungarians, 7 Jews and the rest Romanians (Constantin Martinovici & Nicolae Istrati (1921) *Dicţionarul Transilvaniei, Banatului şi celorlalte ţinuturi alipite* [Dictionary of Transylvania, Banat and Other Annexed Lands] (Cluj: Institutul de Arte Grafice 'Ardealul'). It stands on a hill characteristic of the Romanian Plain. The monastery was established in the sixteenth century (cc. 1552) and now has two churches. The first (wooden) church built by the hermit Nicolae burnt down in 1973. People brought a similar one from Fânaţe, near Bistriţa-Năsăud, and replaced the old church. The monumental church of Nicula Monastery was constructed between 1875 and 1879. It has a circular iconostasis carved out of wood in a unique style, with numerous post-Brâncovan artistic elements. This church preserves the wonder-working icon painted in 1681 by Luca from Iclodul Mare village. The patronal feast of Nicula Monastery is the 'Dormition of the Mother of God' (15 August), and its annual pilgrimage draws hundreds if thousands of people to the monastery. Protosinghel Dumitru Cobzaru (2001) *Monografia Mănăstirii 'Adormirea Maicii Domnului'* [Monography of the 'Dormition of the Mother of God' Monastery] (Nicula: Editura Ecclesia).

[578] Radu Constantinescu & Mircea Sfârlea (1994) *Monumente religioase. Biserici şi mănăstiri celebre din România* [Religious Monuments. Famous Churches and Monasteries in Romania] (Bucharest: Editura Editis), p. 54.

established in Maierii Albei Iulia[579], Savu Moga of Giurtelecu Hododului, who settled down in Arpaşu de Sus, Matei Ţâmforea of Cârţişoara, and Ioan Pop from Făgăraş are amongst them.[580]

There were two distinct trends in the painting around Făgăraş and the Land of Olt: the one of the professional painters, and that of the lay artists, peasants, some of whom inherited the craft from father to son, without attending an organised workshop or practicing on any mural painting site (this is the case of Matei Ţâmforea).[581] The murals and icons realised by painters from the Grecu family fit into the former trend.[582]

5.2.1 The Grecu family

The first generation of painters from the Grecu family came from the Land of Olt (Arpaşu de Jos) and settled down in Săsăuş (Sibiu County) at the beginning of the century. The work of Ioan, Nicolae, and Alexandru absorbed the post-Brâncovan tradition of the artistic centres in Wallachia. Nicolae and Alexandru became immersed in the post-Brâncovan style during their apprenticeship with Pantelimon, the Wallachian painter[583], together with whom they painted the Zărneşti chapel. In 1804, they painted the church in Mohu (Sibiu county)[584], but also a few icons and a cross[585], and the church from Arpaşu de Sus (Sibiu County)[586]; between 1806-1810, Ioan and Alexandru painted the church in Sărata (Sibiu County)[587]; in 1808, Nicolae painted the nave and narthex of the church in Beclean (Braşov County), in 1809 the church in Cârţişoara-Streza (Sibiu County), then the one in Viştea de Sus (Braşov

[579] Ana Dumitran & Ioana Rustoiu (2007) *Steagul bisericesc, obiect de cult şi exponat muzeal* [The Church Flag, Cult Object and Museum Exhibit], catalogue of the temporary exhibition held at the National Museum of the Union and opened between 18 October – 28 November 2007 (Alba Iulia: Editura Altip), p. 4.
[580] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, *…Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 7.
[581] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 70.
[582] Ibid., p. 68.
[583] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 147.
[584] Idem; Meteş and Literat attributed the painting to Ioan and Alexandru Grecu (Metes, *Zugravii bisericilor române*, vol. 1, p. 120; Valeriu Literat (1996) *Biserici vechi româneşti din Ţara Oltului* [Old Romanian Churches in the Land of Olt] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia), p.141).
[585] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 147.
[586] Cristache-Panait assigned the painting of Arpasu de Sus edifice only to Nicolae Grecu and dated it 1815 (Cristache-Panait, 'Cu privire la unele monumente din Ţara Făgăraşului', p. 31).
[587] Cristache-Panait, 'Cu privire la unele monumente din Ţara Făgăraşului', p. 31.

County)[588]. In 1810, Alexandru painted the church in Viştea de Jos[589], in 1812 he signed an aer (a veil used for covering the paten and chalice) for the church in Ucea de Sus, and one for the church in Arpaşu de Sus a year later[590].

The second generation, Nicolae the son and Gheorghe continued to adorn the houses of worship in the area: Colun (1812), Fofeldea (1814), Arpaşu de Sus (1815), Ţichindeal (1818), Voievodeni (1820), Cârţişoara-Oprea (1824)[591]. At the end of his career, Nicolae signed with Vasile (probably his direct descendant) the decoration of the edifice in Săsăuş.[592] In Vasile's painting, the lay elements and strident colours gained prevalence in the detriment of the post-Brâncovan tradition, which is barely discernible.[593]

The Grecu brothers' mural painting was characterised by a precise, elegant drawing, and a limited chromatic - green, red, and yellow.[594] Valeriu Literat believed that their mural painting 'must have left a deep impression on the parishioners'[595].

Besides the stylistic heritage from south of the Carpathians, the paintings from the Land of Olt show a particular sense, a hybrid visual culture, born from the combination of images, engravings, and pattern notebooks from both Christian areas. Such cultural interferences are most visible in the Passion Cycle.[596]

The iconographic cycle of the Passion is contained in twelve episodes, each episode comprising several scenes forming a continuous narrative. The scenes that describe the events from the Saviour's arrest

[588] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p.147.
[589] Ştefan Meteş (1930) *Viaţa bisericească a Românilor din Ţara Oltului* [The Religious Life of the Romanians in the Land of Olt] (Sibiu: Editura Asociaţiunii), p. 97.
[590] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 147; Literat, *Biserici româneşti din Ţara Oltului*, p. 215.
[591] Cristache-Panait, 'Cu privire la unele monumente din Ţara Făgăraşului', pp. 31-32.
[592] Maria Zintz (1986) Pictura murală din sudul Transilvaniei în secolele XVIII-XIX. O familie de zugravi din sudul Transilvaniei: familia de zugravi Grecu [Mural Painting in Southern Transylvania in the Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries. A Family of Painters in Southern Transylvania: the Grecu family], *Crisia*, 16, p. 474.
[593] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, pp. 147, 149.
[594] Elena Băjenaru (2007) Consideraţii asupra picturii pe sticlă la fraţii Grecu [Considerations on the Painting on Glass of Grecu brothers], *Cumidava*, 29, p. 270.
[595] Literat, *Biserici vechi româneşti din Ţara Oltului*, pp. 166-196.
[596] Silvia Marin-Barutcieff (2009-2010) Picturing the Difference. Image of the Jew in Several Orthodox Churches of Southern Transylvania (Part One – Elements of Jewish Costume), *Studia Hebraica*, 9-10, p. 433.

in the Garden of Gethsemane to His crucifixion are rather peculiar.[597]

In the paintings from Săsăuş and Mohu, the painters followed the *hermeneia* with accuracy. Starting from Sărata, they introduced certain elements that customise the characters and mark their ethnicity, creating a correspondence between the function and status they held in society and the role they played in the Scripture. Therefore, the personages in Christ's Passion display attributes of the ethnic nations in Transylvania (Saxons, Hungarians, Austrians, and Romanians).[598] In the scene depicting the 'Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus', the soldiers hold swords and lances, and wear helmets (Ţichindeal, 1818) or Turkish turbans on their heads (Cornăţel, 1820; Fofeldea, 1821), except for their captain, who wears a Habsburg officers' uniform. Also, unlike the frescoes of Mohu, Arpaşu de Jos, Cârţişoara-Streza or Cârţişoara-Oprea, the physical features of these soldiers are complemented by prominent moustaches specific to the Austro-Hungarian hussars, even if the soldiers are dressed in medieval attire[599].

During the Passion, the Habsburg soldiers increase in number and represent both 'German' regiments (including Walloons, Moravians, Croatians, and Italians) and Hungarian light cavalry units. The latter are composed mainly of Hussars, whose uniforms are easily distinguished in the frescoes of Colun and Fofeldea. Soldiers in grenadier, infantry or cavalry uniforms are often remarked (Sărata, Colun, and Ţichindeal).[600]

The characters' dress is treated with considerable attention and emphasis on details. Hence, uniforms abound of buttoned-bumps, chenille, gallons, aiguillettes and helmets of various designs, even if sometimes only stylised. Comparing the representations from the churches painted by the Grecu brothers with contemporary lithographs and drawings of uniforms, there is a greater sense for detail and resemblance to the historical reality than in an Orthodox icon.[601] The weaponry is the only anachronistic element: the soldiers commonly carry a traditional spear or a sword, and sporadically an officer sword typical to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The firearms are missing, except for the scene of the 'Procession to Calvary' from

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[597] Dragoş Boicu (2016) The Ethnic Pluralism of the Nineteenth Century in Transylvania According to the Ecclesiastical Painting of the Grecu Brothers, *RES*, 8 (1), p. 62.
[598] Boicu, 'The Ethnic Pluralism', p. 63.
[599] Zintz, *Pictura murală a bisericilor româneşti din Ţara Făgăraşului*, p. 197.
[600] Boicu, 'The Ethnic Pluralism', p. 65.
[601] Ibid., p. 66.

Fofeldea: the guards escorting Jesus (made up by Hussars) are preceded by a janissary holding a gun. Here, the Austrian and Turkish soldiers take the roles of the oppressors, while Simon of Cyrene is represented in typical Romanian clothes.[602]

The Saxon patriciate plays a dominant authority role in the scenes that adorn the churches from Fofeldea and Ţichindeal. In the scenes of the trial, the high priest Caiaphas and his father in law, Annas, as well as the Pharisees and the crowd waiting outside Pilate's palace are dressed as Saxon patricians. Perhaps the most striking example is the fresco of Ţichindeal, where Annas is represented as an old man with a long beard, wearing a dolman (a long Turkish robe open in front) decorated with buttons and chenille, girded waist and covered by a cloak with fur edges. The same type of clothing is reserved to Caiaphas. From the conventional representation, only the miter on his head is preserved, painted like a high hood split in two, as recalled in Dionysius's hermeneia. In the fresco of Fofeldea, the Jewish crowd is dressed in a similar style, wearing a short cloak, whose folds seem to indicate even a folded collar (ruff; German: *Halskrause*), specific to the Protestant clergy.[603]

Similarly to the soldiers, the garments represented in the frescoes have a correspondent in the contemporary reality. The Saxon garb of the patricians had already borrowed features from the clothing of the Hungarian and Polish nobility in the sixteenth century, which actually derived from the oriental garb of the higher Ottoman special stratum.[604] Thus, quite early clothes with oriental influences were imposed among the Saxon male patricians, specifically the dolman and mantle; at the end of the seventeenth century, the portraits of the senators in Brasov show the prevailing dress of the Saxon patricians as it was passed over centuries: the long baize dolman, decorated in the chest are with bump-buttons and golden band, stitched with drawstring gold and tied at the waist with a cord of red silk, masterfully knotted, to which is added a long cloak like a cape; on its hem it was sewn a strip of fur and on the shoulders could be seen the so-called *felso* (Hungarian), a cape lined with fur.[605]

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[602] Ibid., p. 66, 68.
[603] Ibid., p. 69.
[604] Ibid., p. 70.
[605] See the portraits of Simon Drauth the Elder and Simon Drauth the Younger or that of Martinus Closius in Radu Popica (Ed.) (2013) *Portretele Patriciatului Săsesc din Braşov. Un capitol de artă transilvană* [Portraits of the Saxon Patriciat in Braşov. A Chapter of

Regarding the characters' physiognomy, the judges have deformed figures and wear a tough expression, indicative of the decisions that they would make, and their oversized traits are intentional and not due to the painter's clumsiness.[606]

Although Hungarians appear timidly along with Austrian groups of soldiers in the scene of arresting and escorting Jesus before Annas and Caiaphas, they become the protagonists of two distinct scenes in which Christ is flogged and mocked before the Crucifixion (Cornățel, Colun, and Țichindeal). Dressed in tight clothes, which might be interpreted as a sign of evil[607], and covered with hats or Phrygian bonnets, the torturers distinguish themselves through their outfits: short jackets, tight pants, and boots reminding us of the Hungarian townsfolk of the time. In the first scene, Christ, tied to a stone column, is scourged by two people, while in the mockery scene, other three torturers torment Him by fixing a crown of thorns with pliers on his head and hitting the crown with a hammer.

The representation of Romanians is meant to put them into a favourable light as in the scene 'When they took Christ to crucify Him'. On the road to Golgotha, Jesus, dressed in purple garb, falls exhausted under the weight of the cross. A group of soldiers lead him, hitting and threatening him, while another soldier and the Jewish leaders open the way and seem to order Simon of Cyrene, barefoot and dressed in clothes specific to Romanian peasants, to take over the burden of the cross carried by Jesus. The outfit is simple, consisting of a long shirt, tight pants, and a cloth belt over the shirt (Fofeldea, Țichindeal) or a leather girdle (Colun). Simon of Cyrene's clothing is so simple that it can easily pass as an ancient one, and the key element is the absence of footwear.[608]

In parallel, the icons on glass from Făgăraş[609] were imbued with the same identity message. Thus, similar creations showed other nations in a negative light, such as the icons illustrating the parable of the Rich Man and poor Lazarus, where the wealthy man wears clothes specific to

Transylvanian Art], catalogue of the temporary exhibition open between 27 September – 10 November 2013 (Braşov: Editura Muzeului de Artă), pp. 48-49, 65.

[606] Zintz, '*Pictura murală a bisericilor româneşti*', p. 205.

[607] Anca Niţoi (2004) Imaginea celuilalt - Imaginea necreştinului. Evrei şi musulmani în pictura altarelor poliptice transilvănene - secolele XV-XVI [The Image of the Other – The Image of the Non-Christian. Hebrews and Muslims in the Transylvanian Polyptych Altars – the Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries], *SUCH*, 1, p. 317.

[608] Boicu, 'The Ethnic Pluralism', pp. 72-73.

[609] It is currently preserved in the Museum of icons on glass Pr. Zosim Oancea – Sibiel.

a Hungarian nobleman (*Grof*), or the series of the Resurrection icons in which the soldiers guarding the tomb are identified with Austrian or Hungarian army regiments.[610] In the same way, Ioan Fulea explains Christ's mockery scene from Fofeldea, where, instead of a crown of thorns, a crown of red-hot iron was placed on his head while other torturers are blowing horns into his ears, imitating a vintage stamp with Gheorghe Doja: 'this scene [...] and other like it presents a fine illustration of the troubled past of the Romanians in these parts, and represents a form of struggle against the past oppressions'.[611]

A theme to which the Orthodox Church did not assent, but was approached by Nicolae and Gheorghe at Voievodeni is the 'Holy Trinity in One Body', represented as a three-faced bishop with four eyes, three noses (with the corresponding moustaches and beards), framed by the triangular halo of the Father and the nimbus of the Son. The Holy Trinity knew two forms of expression in the Byzantine iconography: the vetero-testamentary 'Mamre Supper' or the 'Philoxenia of Abraham', and the neo-testamentary 'Coronation of the Virgin' 'specific to the Occident, inspired by the verses of the Song of Songs'[612], which shows the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, placing a crown on the head of Mary.[613]

The first known representation of this non-canonical version of the Holy Trinity can be traced back to the seal of Roger, the archbishop of York, dated 1154, showing a monstruos chimaera with three heads and the inscription *Caput nostrum trinitas est* along with the sign of the cross[614]; one hundred years later the image can be found on a Cambridge Psalter[615]. Later, the books in which the Unitarians (antitrinitarians)

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[610] Boicu, 'The Ethnic Pluralism', p. 74.
[611] Ioan Fulea (1981) Biserici-monumente istorice, pictate de familia Grecu [Historical Monument-Churches, Painted by the Grecu Family], in *Arhiepiscopia Sibiului - pagini de istorie* [The Archiepiscopate of Sibiu – Pages of History] (Sibiu: Editura Centrului Mitropolitan Sibiu) p. 217.
[612] Ştefănescu, *Iconografia artei bizantine*, p. 65.
[613] Elena Băjenaru (2007) Icoana pe sticlă din Ţara Făgăraşului şi sursele iconografice [The Icon on Glass in the Land of Făgăraş and Its Iconographic Sources], *Ţara Bârsei*, p. 146.
[614] Jurgis Baltrušaitis (1973) *Il medioevo fantastico. Antichità ed esotismo nell'arte gotica*, trans. by Fulvio Zuliani & F. Bovoli (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni), pp. 67-68.
[615] The illumination in the thirteenth-century Psalter in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge, which portrays three separate heads emerging, snake-like, from a single trunk to which are attached a pair of uplifted wings. This example illustrates a scene from Genesis where Abraham has a vision of the Lord and offers him bread and wine; a miniature on the folio opposite shows Abraham kneeling with raised hands before a similar tricephalous figure. Robert Mills (2003) Jesus as Monster, in Bettina Bildhauer & Robert Mills (Eds) *The Monstruos Middle Ages* (Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press), pp. 39-41, illustration on p. 40.

corroborated their doctrine on the unity of God contained engravings 'dedicated to the deformed knowledge of the divinity through the doctrine of the trinity established by the Antichrist[616]; one of the engravings show a trifacial figure crowned with the papal tiara, which is the Antichrist himself[617]. This genre was prohibited by Pope Urban VIII in 1628.[618]

In Transylvania, the triune form was found for the very first time at Galda de Jos (Alba County) in 1752[619], then at the churches in Cuştelnic (Mureş County) in 1756[620], Galda de Sus (Alba County) in 1782[621], Tălmăcel (Sibiu County) in 1780[622], and Lunca Mureşului (Alba County) in (1810)[623]. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the three-headed form painted by the Grecu brothers must have been inspired by the work of their father, who was a collaborator of Pantelimon[624] This theme was only addressed by them in mural painting. In the region of Făgăraş, Ioan Pop is the only one that transposed it on icons on glass.[625]

The region of Făgăraş met the conditions that allowed the development of glass painting: the existence of glass workshops (Porumbacul de Sus, 1619-1894; Arpaşu de Sus, 1715-1899; Cârţişoara, 1718-1869)[626] and a majoritary Romanian population.[627]

Certain elements of the Grecu brothers' mural paintings were transferred to their icons: the decorative elements (the rosettes adorning

[616] Nicolae Sabău (1996) Afterword, in Literat, *Biserici vechi româneşti din Ţara Oltului*, p. 261.
[617] Idem.
[618] Baltrušaitis, *Il medioevo fantastico*, p. 69; Mills, 'Jesus as a Monster', p. 47.
[619] The image is painted on the semi-circular vault of the apse. See Marius Porumb (1980) Vechea biserică din Galda de Jos (jud. Alba), un monument al arhitecturii medievale româneşti din Transilvania [The Old Church in Galda de Jos (Alba County), a Monument of Romanian Medieval Architecture in Transylvania], *AMN*, 17, p. 417; Dumitran & Cucui, 'Sfânta Troiţă într-un trup', pp. 156-166, illustration on p. 164.
[620] The painting is found on the vault of the apse. See Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 97; Dumitran & Cucui, 'Sfânta Troiţă într-un trup', pp. 166-171, illustration on p. 169.
[621] Wooden icon assigned to Stan from Răşinari; Dumitran & Cucui, 'Sfânta Troiţă într-un trup', pp. 171-174, illustration on p. 173.
[622] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 408.
[623] The hypostatic union of three persons in one is painted within a medallion on the vault of the nave. See Dumitran & Cucui, 'Sfânta Troiţă într-un trup', pp. 174-177, illustration on p. 176.
[624] The church of Tălmăcel was painted by Pantelimon, who also painted a 'Holy Trinity in One Body' together with Nicolae the Elder at Beclean in 1808. See Băjenaru, 'Icoana pe sticlă din Ţara Făgăraşului', p. 146.
[625] Ibid., p. 147; Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, …*Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, pp. 43-44, illustrations on pp. 94, 95, 96
[626] Ligia Fulga (1997) Sticla transilvăneană în secolele XVII-XIX [The Transylvanian Glass in the Seventeenth-Nineteenth Centuries] (Braşov: Editura C2 Design), p. 4.
[627] Băjenaru, 'Consideraţii asupra picturii pe sticlă', p. 269.

the saints's vestments at the Săsăuş church are recast as part of the background in their glass icons), the particular manner of drawing the hands, faces, and writing the inscriptions. Their instruction as church painters is reflected in their painting on glass (their following of the canons and hermeneias, of the indications on saints' features and clothing, as well as the age of the characters.[628] There are no elements of social critique or satire in their painting on glass, as opposite to the work of Ţâmforea, for example. At Ţâmforea, the costumes of the characters in the iconographic themes of Saint Charalambos, the Last Judgment, are those of hussars or *grofs*. Grecu brothers' icons scarcely contain secular, profane elements, such as a solitary flower or chariot of the Făgăraş region (in icons representing Saint Elias). The themes approached are diverse: the Christological scenes, the life of Mary, and hagiographic sequences.[629]

The icons on glass distinguish themselves by the precision of the drawing and the arrangement of garment folds, which indicate 'the movement of the bodies wrapped in them, constructing the anatomy of the characters with geometric accuracy, and highlighting the relations between them'[630]. The painters consider carefully the optical perspective, compositional balance, and the significance and theological message of the subject. The characters' expressions are natural, warm, inspired from reality, the faces having nothing from the Byzantine hieratism.[631] The distinctive element is the chromatic range with refined and tender tones, never dark, striking through their power and liveliness.[632]

The detachment from tradition of the painting on glass led to a negative phenomenon in terms of aesthetic value. The first painters of the Grecu family had more precision and confidence in drawing, composed scenes more thoroughly, and used a harmonious chromatic. The following painters became more stereotypical, weaker in the execution of the drawing and composition.[633]

The mural and glass painting of the Grecu's brothers exerted a major influence on Savu Moga, one of the most renowned icon makers in the region of Făgăraş, both from a thematic and compositional point

[628] Ibid., p. 270.
[629] Ibid., p. 271.
[630] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 69.
[631] Băjenaru, 'Consideraţii asupra picturii pe sticlă', p. 271.
[632] Ibid., pp. 270-271.
[633] Ibid., p. 273.

of view.[634]

5.2.2 Savu Moga

The work of Savu Moga covers the second half of the century. Moga is a peasant icon painter as many of his predecessors or contemporaries. Despite this, the artistic value and quality of his icons show a well-defined artistic personality. His icons are remarkable due to their minute, clear and elegant style, to their brightness and subtle but rich colours emphasised by golden layers. His art is full of harmony and is the result of the skillfully mix of dynamic drawing and well-defined colours.[635] He strictly adhered to the conventions of iconography in a good Byzantine tradition: elementary and mandatory directions concerning attitudes, traits, age of the characters, and costume. Beyond the general framework of representation, the icon painter knew how to interpret the relationships between characters and emphasise their theological or dogmatic significance through formulas of portraiture typology, the meaning assigned to the gestures, and the discrete staging.[636] He is supposed to have learnt the craft of painting on glass at Gherla or Nicula. His idiosyncrasy is bringing the sumptuous sought by Byzantine art onto glass painting, an unfamiliar characteristic to the peasant painters of Nicula or Şchei and unusual even in the Land of Olt.[637]

Moga was acquainted with the churches decorated by the Grecu brothers, at least those in Arpaş and Cârţişoara; the abundance of characters appearing in their compositions is found in his icons, particularly in the 'Birth of Jesus'. Similarly to the Grecu brothers, Moga dresses the mercenaries, the soldiers that capture Jesus, the guardians of the tomb (in the 'Great Canon' and the 'Burial of the Lord', 1864), and the soldier that beheaded Saint John the Baptist in Hungarian uniforms, and adds the fork-shaped mustaches to their facial traits.[638]

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[634] Băjenaru, 'Consideraţii asupra picturii pe sticlă', p. 270; Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, pp. 70-71.

[635] Olimpia-Angela Coman-Sipeanu (2010) Personalitatea iconarului Savu Moga pusă în valoare de o colecţie muzeală [The Personality of Icon-Painter Savu Moga as Highlighted by a Museum Collection], *SUCH*, 7, pp. 291-305.

[636] Mihaela Proca (1994) Savu Moga: un iconar [Savu Moga: an icon-painter] (Bucharest: Editura Tehnică), p. 59.

[637] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 74.

[638] Ibid., p. 76.

Son of a peasant serf, he was born in the Giurtelecul Hododului village[639]. Moga left a note on an icon saying that he was born in 1816, and the parish register recorded that he died in December 1899. His daughters (Trifana Glia and Paraschiva of Ion Dateş), the village priest that officiated at his funeral, and all the people that knew him were certain that he came from Transylvania, from a village on Someş Valley called 'Juratelic' by Trifana and 'Zolatelic' by Paraschiva.[640] However, nobody knew what made him leave. The priest believed he was a 'runaway convict', but his son-in-law differed in opinion: 'He said that his parents had five children, and after his father died, he said the water came and took everything, and they scattered, and he left everything behind and came here, in our village'. He 'recovered himself' in Arpaş and decided to leave there until his death. After settling down, he married Safta Tutor, daughter of Mihai from Lunca.[641]

In sociologist Henri Stahl's opinion, the icon that he found in Ucea village is the most beautiful icon that Moga painted. He signed himself on it as 'Savu Moga, icon maker, Arpaşul de Sus', dated the icon 1884 and left a note regarding the commissioner: 'Nicolae Sarsame paid for it'.[642]

At the time of Stahl's interviews, many peasants from Arpaş and the Land of Olt remembered Savu Moga, but their memories were fading. According to everyone's recollection, 'he was a peasant like any other peasant […], who tilled the soil, alongside other villagers. But Moga's character was different: 'he did not paint much and was too generous. Likewise old painters, he did not start to paint until he prayed and completely abstained from food for two days. He always carried a *pravila*[643] in his bag.' His generosity matched his pride; he was aware of his fame and this is why he 'put high prices on his work': he used to sell one big icon for 10 zloty', and 'earned so much that he could

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[639] Vasile Drăguţ (1967) Un mare meşter iconar - Savu Moga [A Great Iconographer- Savu Moga], *Arta plastică*, 8.

[640] Taking an interest in glass icons, sociologist Henri Stahl and ethnomusicologist Constantin Brăilou made a sociological inquiry about the life and work of Savu Moga on their trip to Arpaşu de Jos village in 1932. In 1943, Brăiloiu organised an exhibition entitled 'The Icons on Glass of Savu Moga of Făgăraş, 1816-1899', in which he used Stahl's transcripts from 1932. The fragments that he included in his book from 1981, *Amintiri şi gânduri din vechea şcoală a 'monografiilor sociologice'* [Memories and Thoughts from the Old School of 'Sociological Monographs'] (Bucharest: Minerva) are portions taken from the exhibition catalogue published by Brăiloiu (pp. 201-204).

[641] Stahl, *Amintiri şi gânduri*, pp. 201-202.

[642] Ibid., pp. 202-203.

[643] Prayer book that contains morning and evening prayers read daily by the faithful as well as pre-communion prayers.

afford a fortune'. More importantly, he only worked when commissioned: 'he did not wander through villages to sell his work', and 'did not search for customers, as the customers were the ones to look for him'.[644]

All the persons that witnessed him working said that he did not use old models and his model more than one time. 'He made the drawing himself on white paper, on which he placed the glass so that he could draw the contours and copy the model under the glass. He did everything. He knew everything there was to know. He was very skilled.'[645]

He bought the glass from Cârţişoara, and the paint from Făgăraş. He always painted more icons at once, so that when he had to wait for the painting he applied on one to dry, he could continue his work at another.[646]

It is not known who his master was. Some believe he learnt how to paint when he was imprisoned in Gherla, from where some believed he escaped. The village priest belived that he drew inspiration from the wooden icons made by Pavel Grecu from Săsăuş. According to Stahl and Constantin Brăiloiu, Moga was an 'easel painting', as he drew inspiration directly from nature, painting landscapes and people that he could see in the Land of Olt. As time passed, his art developed, his sense of layout, proportions, perspectives and colour being in his case completely unordinary.[647]

In a review of the exhibition curated by Brăiloiu (including forty-eight of his icons), the editorship of the *Society of Tomorrow* magazine[648] was impressed by the icon of 'Mother of God' of 1877, 'enveloped in an atmosphere of resigned sufferance'[649]. The authors also mentioned the icons of the 'Holy Trinity', 'Baptism of Jesus', 'Descent from the Cross', 'Saint George' in strident colours, and two icons depicting the 'Birth of Jesus', in which Moga illustrates a Hungarian and Romanian personages; 'the former must stand for the authorities, and the latter for the Romanian shepherd, pious, adamant, holding a hid rook, self-

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[644] Stahl, *Amintiri şi gânduri*, p. 203.
[645] Ibid., p. 204.
[646] Idem.
[647] Idem.
[648] *Societatea de mâine, Revistă de ştiinţă sociografică, de estetică şi cultură* [Society of Tomorrow. Magazine of Sociographic Science, Aesthetics, and Culture], November 1943, 11, p. 172.
[649] Idem.

conscious, while the Hungarian personage is the conceit itself'. An icon left unfinished by Moga and completed later by Țâmforea, the 'Last Judgement' presents mankind before the final judgement, which is split and lead on three routes: one that goes to heaven, one to hell and an intermediary one. What induces humour is the fact that the damned souls on the road to 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' are 'those that think and write', revelers, musicians, and women.[650]

A cycle of legends regarding the New Testament gave birth to atypical iconographic themes: the toils of hell and the border customs of the sky (*vămile văzduhului*)[651]. These legends appertain to the apocryphal apocalyptical texts such as the Apocalipse of Apostle Paul, Apocalipse of Apostle John, and the Apocalipse of the Mother of God. These had a great influence on the Romanian popular literature, circulating in the form of manuscripts (*Codex Sturdzanus*)[652] or prints[653]. According to these narratives, the Mother of God, wanting to know the toils that people have to endure in the afterlife, asks Jesus to allow her to go to hell, in the company of the Archangel Michael. In hell, the Mother of God sees the sinner burning in rivers of pitch; depending on the sins they committed, some were immersed to their wait, some to their chest, and others were covered in pitch to their heads. Terrified of what she had seen, returning to Jesus, she asks him to offer them a ray of hope: from Friday before Easter and the Sunday of All Saints to live in heaven, and afterwards return to hell. Elaborated in the clerical environment[654], with an evident moralising intention, the trip to hell of the Mother of God became a source of inspiration for icon painters. Moga painted an icon entitled the 'Toils of Hell' in 1864. The icon is made of two registers: the

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[650] Idem.
[651] The soul's journey after death is described in the writings of various Church Fathers. According to Saint Makarios the Alexandrine, immediately after death, the soul begins its ascent to heaven for the first three meetings with God. During this ascent, evil spirits try to impede the soul's journey, and the soul has to pass through twenty-four tribunals or border customs of the sky, each dealing with a particular category of sins. Evil spirits are the customs officers that interrogate the soul. This stage of the journey is completed on the third day, when the funeral service is performed to secure safe passage and the resurrection of the soul. After this, the soul is taken to angels to visit Heaven for six days, and on the ninth day it prostrates itself before God for the first time. Then, for the next thirty days, it is taken by angels to visit hell, and on the fortieth day, it is brought back to prostrate itself before God again, and receive God's judgment regarding where it will reside.
[652] *Codex Sturdzanus* is a compilation of apocryphal religious texts, which were copied by the Transylvanian priest Grigore from Măhaciu between 1580-1619. See Nicolae Cartojan (1974) *Cărțile populare în literatura românească.* vol. 1. *Epoca influenței sud-slave* [Popular Books in Romanian Literature. vol. 1. The Epoch of the Southern-Slavonic Influences] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română), pp. 21-24.
[653] Cartojan, *Cărțile populare în literatura românească*, p. 101.
[654] Ibid., p. 98.

lower register shows Saint Michael holding a scale; the righteous stand to his left and to his right, the sinners immersed in the river boiling with fire; the upper register shows Jesus giving his blessing, and angel next to him, and on his each side the Mother of God and Saint John Bogoslov praying on his knees for the sinners' forgiveness.[655] Elements from the Apocalipse of Saint John Bogoslov are also present in the composition: the angel holding a cross, and the horde of angels at Christ's feet.[656]

5.2.3 Ioan Pop

After Saint Nicholas Church was built in Şchei, the region of Făgăraş continued to amass painters that perpetuated the Brâncovan tradition. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the painting centre in Şchei reached the peak of its activity and at the same time gained recognition as an important centre of glass painting.

Ioan Pop painted in Făgăraş in mid-nineteenth century. He was born the son of Anania and nephew of Pop Rad in Galaţii Făgăraşului.[657] In 1828, he married a priest daughter, Maria, with whom he had six children.[658]

The priest Aron of Galaţi, who had come into possession of Pop's work, not long after recommended the painter in a newspaper article from 1907, touching briefly on his early activity in Făgăraş 'around 1838-1841 until 1858'. Pop is described as 'an illiterate man, [who] executed beautiful icons solely in Byzantine style, writing correctly the titles of his labour in Chyrillic, then signing his name with pride on the

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[655] Băjenaru, 'Icoana pe sticlă din Ţara Făgăraşului', p. 144.

[656] Cartojan, *Cărţile populare în literatura românească*, p. 118.

[657] Although Ioan Pop is one of the greatest artists of the nineteenth century, his identification in the artistic frame of the epoch was not easy, on the one hand because of the inflation of this name among the painters of Făgăraş, and on the other hand because of the confusion arisen from reading wrongly his signature: Irimie Ioan Pop, instead of 'Through me, Ioan Pop'. After clarifying this latter aspect and eliminating his contemporaneous homonyms, it has been concluded that the painter was born in Galaţii Făgăraşului, as son of Anania Pop and grandson of priest Radu, being baptised by the parisher from Făgăraş, Nicolae Bodrogcozi on 26 December 1794 (Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, *…Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*). Dancu & Dancu, in *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 25 support a different hypothesis, believing that he was from the Popp-Moldovan family that came from northern Transylvania and settled down in Galaţi at the beginning of the century.

[658] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, *…Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 11.

icon'[659].

The painter addressed unusual themes, derived from Catholic iconography. Still, rather than bringing forth novel themes, he familiarised the Romanian environment (Greek-Catholic and Orthodox) with illustrations long known in the Western world.[660] The inspiration he drew from *hermeneias* and illustrated church books kept his icons close to the canons and away from the 'monstrous icons that even gave babies the creeps'. Pop's icons accommodated a 'more refined taste', and replaced the offer of less endowed but zealous painters that went astray, disobeying the canons and 'drawing overpriced caricatures that were sold to our simple and naïve people'[661]. Even though his icons were eclipsed by the great number of icons produced at Nicula, by 1833 he already built a clientele that sought his work for the artistic execution, correspondence to canons and unwonted themes approached.[662]

The xylographs in church books were the predilect inspiration for his icons, as Ion Tătaru noticed. According to him, the painter turned to 'the xylographs of old religious books, which he reproduced thoroughly on a larger scale, executing a series of icons with the same theme, with great draughtsmanship and chromatic range'[663]. The wall painting and iconostases of village churches also influenced him. It is believed that the paintings of Grecu brothers influenced him.[664] The 'Sunday of Myrrh-bearing Women' (an instance of the 'Resurrection') and 'Sunday of the Blind Man' (both reproduced in the icons on glass at Almasu Mare-Suseni and Calbor) are painted on the narthex of the church dedicated to 'The Assumption of the Virgin Mary' in Beclean.[665] From its inner decoration, Pop adopted the decorative elements, especially the lobs frame enclosing the scenes, the decorative backgrounds, the saints with full figures, the vestments with drapes overstressed by differently graded lines; or he might have learnt all these under the guidance of one of the masters who painted here, for the painter from whom he

[659] *Ţara Oltului*, Făgăraş, 1 (44), 1907, p. 5.
[660] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, …*Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 12.
[661] *Telegraful român* [Romanian Courier], 65, 10 august 1853, article attributed to Andrei Mureşanu, referring to the Nicula icons.
[662] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, …*Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 12.
[663] Ion Tătaru (1969), *Review* of Irimie & Focşa, *Icoane pe sticlă*, *SCIA*, 1, p. 152.
[664] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, …*Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, pp. 14-15.
[665] Literat, *Biserici vechi româneşti din Ţara Oltului*, fig. 79, 80. The painting of the apse is attributed to Pantelimon and the one of the nave to Sava (Ibid., p.110). Cristache-Panait attributes the painting from Beclea to Nicolae Grecu from Săsăuş (Cristache-Panait, 'Cu privire la unele monumente din Ţara Făgăraşului', p. 32).

learnt was definitely a church painter.[666]

Pop was an apprentice of Ioan Pop Moldoveanu[667], with whom he was might have been related, then of Sava from Făgăraş.

Sava was active in Făgăraş in the first half of the century[668]. Even though his painting incorporates many traditional elements, its decorative repertoire is influenced by neoclassical models. In 1813, he painted the church dedicated to Saint Nicholas in Calbor (Braşov County), and the following year the porch of the church dedicated to the Assumption in Sâmbăta de Jos (Braşov County)[669]. In 1821, he realised the wall painting of the church in Mândra. Literat attributed to him the painting of the church in Beclean, from which Pop drew inspiration.[670] The thick strokes of the creases on the garments, the figures with rounded faces and pointed eyes, the drawing of the architecture that provides the background for the scenes are all strikingly similar to elements in Pop's icons. Sava was also as a painter on glass. Pop was Sava's apprentice for many years[671], in which he was in the shadow of his master, who signed the works on which both collaborated. Such is the fresco of the nave of Saint Nicholas church in Calbor signed by Sava in 1813. If the painting of the iconostasis and the walls is in tune with his subsequent work for the Mândra church, certain portions and especially the image of the 'Holy Trinity crowning the Virgin', enclosed in a medallion surrounded by the Evangelists, reveal a candour of the drawing that is absent at Mândra; its absence cannot be fully explained by the experience that he might have meanwhile gained. The faces with largely opened eyes are in contrast with the deformed limbs, in particular oddly thin legs, this association pointing to the artist's insufficient familiarity with anatomical

[666] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, …*Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 13.
[667] Author of mural paintings in the churches of the Land of Olt and around Braşov, as well as some altars, pulpits, and icons from Secuime, Gherla and Someş Valley, he started his work at the end of the eighteenth century. See Ion Frunzetti (1991) *Arta românească în secolul al XIX-lea* [Romanian Art in the Nineteenth Century] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 146.
[668] Literat identifies him in the matriculation registers with the name Budoiu, Perşinaru (originated in Perşani) and the Painter (Literat, *Biserici vechi româneşti din Ţara Oltului*, p. 101).
[669] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p.346.
[670] Literat, *Biserici vechi româneşti din Ţara Oltului*, p. 101. Cristache-Panait attributes to him only the adornment of the church of Calbor, the painting of the porch of the Sâmbăata de Jos church and the interior of the one in Mândra (Cristache-Panait, 'Cu privire la unele monumente din Ţara Făgăraşului', pp. 31-32.
[671] His prolonged apprenticeship might have been caused by the difficulty to ensure his existence on his own. Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, *…Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 15.

proportions. The surplus of creases on the sleeves of the garbs that, despite obvious efforts, remain rigid also indicates a novice, but one full of potential. The elongated figure of the Virgin, the physiognomy of God the Father, who has wrinkles on His forehead are found in Pop's icons, these themes being amongst his favorites. All these considerations hint to the contribution of the nineteen-year-old disciple to the execution of the fresco on the ceiling. Yet, the inscription only records Sava's name.[672]

Pop's career as painter on glass was based on the solid knowledge of fresco painting and his adoption of Catholic themes. The former was of service to him in the realistic portrayal of personages, which receive volume and correct anatomical features. Their emotions are conveyed by shadows and gradients, a technique learnt from Sava, which he succeeded to master. The latter was the selling point of his icons; it made him stand out amongst other painters and earn commissions, being thus encouraged to develop his own style, somewhat unconventional.[673]

The 'Baptism of Jesus' was a theme often approached by Pop, in his glass and wooden icons. Usually, three main characters are depicted: in the waters of the Jordan Jesus is baptised by John; the Holy Spirit, symbolised by a white dove, descends above Jesus. An angel holding a large, white towel in his hands is present at the scene. In his icons, the Jordan is a shallow water, only a little of its surface is visible. One could also notice an omission of important details recommended by the hermeneia (the old man with the chalice and the fish swimming around the feet of Jesus)[674] or apocryphal legends[675] (Adam's contract with Satan that Jesus crashes under His feet)[676]. For the background, the decorative

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[672] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, …*Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, pp. 15-16.
[673] Ibid., p. 16.
[674] Dionisie din Furna, *Carte de pictură*, p. 103.
[675] For a concise presentation of the of the apocryphal legends used as sources by icon painters in the region of Făgăraş, see Băjenaru, 'Icoana pe sticlă din Ţara Făgăraşului', pp. 143-148.
[676] The *Life of Adam and Eve* is the only Romanian apocryphal book dedicated to the protoplast, which was widely circulated in the Christian literature and knew several traditions: Armenian, Georgian, Greek, Latin, and Slavonic. They all narrate the life of the first humans, told either by Eve or Adam (on the deathbed, surrounded by his family). The text draws on the Genesis excerpt (1,26:5,5), but it additionally develops on a series of themes regarding the life of the proto-parents outside heaven, and the context of their death and burial. The Romanian tradition of the apocryphal book derives from the short recension of the Slavonic *Vita Adam et Evae*, which is a translation from Greek. The icon was supposed to illustrate the passage referring to the contract or *cheirograph* Adam made with Satan. 'Then God showed us mercy and the archangel Joel gave us one seventh of paradise.' Adam and Eve were allowed to till the ground covered with thistles and thorns,

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elements change in each icon, the painter maintaining only the position and attitude of the characters.[677]

At Almaşu Mare-Suseni and Glod, Pop approached complex themes in which a great number of personages are involved. He also introduced scenes related to the chain of miraculous events surrounding

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and then tame the animals. When Adam starts plowing the earth with the help of oxen, the devil comes and asks his due, claiming to be the lord of the earth: 'I will not allow you to plow the earth, since the earth is mine, and the sky and heaven are God's. Hence, if you want to be mine, till the ground, but if you want to belong to God, return to heaven.' But Adam replied: 'The sky, the earth and the whole world belong to God.' Then Satan asks Adam to sign a contract for the right to work the soil, and Adam assents to sign a contract with him in which he pledges allegiance to the Lord of the earth (knowing that God will come on earth in human form). Adam took a flat stone and wrote on it: 'My children and I belong to the one that rules the earth.' This is how Adam was deceived, submitting his offspring to Satan' s rule until the incarnation ad baptism of Christ. These will mark the end of the contract and Satan's dominion. Satan took the rock and hid it in the river of Jordan and had four hundred devils guard it. See Cartojan, *Cărţile populare în literatura românească*, p. 47; Emanuela-Cristina C.-C. Timotin (2016) *Adam şi Eva în literature română veche (secolele al XVI-lea – al XVIII-lea). Texte canonice, scrieri apocrife şi credinţe populare* [Adam and Eve in Old Romanian Literature (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries). Canonical Texts, Apocryphal Writings, and Popular Beliefs] (Bucharest: Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române), pp. 31, 35, 46-47. The occurrence of the motif of the contract in iconography resides in canonical texts that evoked a cheirograph enslaving the mankind to evil. These texts are the Epistle to the Colossians (II,14), the twenty-second verse of the Akathist Hymn and the evening prayer for Tuesday of the fifth week of the Triodion. Émile Turdeanu (1981) La Vie d'Adam et Eve en slave et en roumain, in *idem Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancient Testament* (*SVTP* 5; Leiden: Brill), p. 115. Its occurrence in religious iconography is witnessed by the description of a scene in the seventeenth-century *Painter's Manual* by Dionysius of Fourna. Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves*, pp. 115-122 discussed the iconography of the contract. The motif was depicted on the frescoes of churches in Moldavia and Bucovina, as shown by Paul Henry. Other canonical writings, namely the Gospel of John (12,31) and an excerpt by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 4: 4) suggested that the earth belonged to the devil. These scriptural and exegetical sources were the inspiration for the representations of the pact between Adam and Satan on the walls of the churches of Voroneţ and Vatra Moldoviţei (mid-sixteenth century), and Suceviţa (the end of the sixteenth century). A mural from Voroneţ with a Slavonic inscription shows Adam seated, writing the *cheirograph* on a scroll on his knees, while Satan looks on. See Paul Henry (1930) *Les Églises de la Moldavie des origines à la fin du XVI siècle. Contribution à l'étude de la civilisation moldave* (Paris: Ernest Leroux), p. 246. The legend of the cheirograph had a 'remarkable *floruit*' in Moldavia and Wallachia from the sixteenth century on, but the reasons behind it remain unclear. Michael E. Stone (2006) *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies. Collected Papers*, vol. 1. Series *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 144 (Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA: Peeters), p. 211. The detail of the hiding of the contract in the Jordan is an iconographic theme present in the representations of Christ's Baptism. In a Romanian miniature painting (1609) of the Baptism from the school of Atanasiu Crimca of Dragomirna (metropolitan of Moldavia), Christ is shown standing on a rock in Jordan. The heads of three serpents extend from the front edge of the rock and in his hand Christ holds a scroll inscribed in Slavonic 'The Cheirograph of Adam'. This is a double representation of the cheirograph, both as a rock guarded by serpents and as a scroll. Stone, *Apocrypha,* p. 109; Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves*, p. 122.

[677] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, *…Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 34.

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the Calvary to the habitual scenes.[678]

The 'Mirror of the Inner Man' is a theme that might have been depicted only by him. It is part of the unconventional subjects included in the repertoire of Romanian painters, along with the image of the little girl with the geese to whom Virgin Mary appears, present at Ţâmforea and the female painter Prodan the young[679]. Moga and her[680] also touched on a theme of the same category, a scene in the Passion cycle, with Christ tied to the pole, also present at Pop, but not as a self-standing representation, but as a detail in complex ensembles illustrating the Crucifixion and Resurrection.[681]

Even in Pop's icons, the 'Mirror of the Inner Man' was approached only once. A late work, from 1863, it is the result of the combination of two widespread themes in the Catholic West: the death of the good man and the sinful man, and the series of moralising images inspired by the 'Carte des Coeurs' devised by the missionary Michel Le Nobletz[682] at the beginning of the seventeenth century, which was difussed through a volume entitled *The Booklet of the Heart*, first printed in 1812[683]. The work entered the Orthodox environement through the German edition printed in Saint Petersburg in 1820, being translated into Russian and published by Metropolitan Mikhail Nevski the same year. Brought to Moldavia by Russian and Ukrainian monks attracted by the fame of prior Paisius Velichkovschi[684], this version was translated

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[678] Ibid., pp. 34-35.

[679] Rustoiu & Dumitran, *Steagul bisericesc*, p. 98, fig. 117.

[680] Ibid., p. 92, fig. 111.

[681] Rustoiu, Băjenaru, Dumitran & Károly, *…Prin mine, Ioan Pop Zugravul*, p. 49.

[682] Michel le Nobletz (1577-1652), the Breton itinerant preacher, devised 'tableaux énigmatiques' and 'cartes peintes' for didactic purposes. His 'carte des coeurs' has an interesting scheme based on various sources, including Etienne Binet's *Saintes faveurs du petit Jésus* (1626), an emblem book based on Anton Wierix's *Cor Iesu amanti sacrum*, a set of engravings published in Antwerp between 1579 and 1604. See Jean Michel Massing, Elizabeth Mansfield, Anthony Griffiths, Laura Suffield et. al (1992) Notes, *Print Quarterly*, 9 (1), p. 63; In many cases, his works followed the traditional patterns of religious imagery, with subjects as varied as the ship of the Church, the Ten Commandments, the ladder to Paradise, the anatomy of a Christian's heart, the Christian soldier, and the moralist interpretation of the Greek letter epsilon by Pythagoras. See Franz Reitinger (2005) The Persuasiveness of Cartography: Michel le Nobletz (1577-1652) and the School of Le Conquet (France), *Cartographica*, 40 (3), p. 82.

[683] Elena Băjenaru (2004) Oglinda celui din lăuntru – temă iconografică rară în pictura ţărănească pe sticlă [The Mirror of the Inner Man – Rare Iconographic Theme in the Folk Painting on Glass], *Ţara Bârsei*, p. 156.

[684] Saint Paisius Velichkovsky lived from 1722 to 1794. He was a Ukrainian by birth, a native of Poltava, which was his hometown. But the locus of his major life's work and his spiritual reputation have established him as one of the greatest honorary Romanian Orthodox saints, so much so that he is often called Saint Paisie of Neamţ. He was the towering spiritual figure that first brought the Philokalic tradition to the Slavic lands, and

into Romanian and printed in 1833 at Neamţ Monastery under the title 'Mirror of the Inner Man'. The volume was republished in Bucharest in 1835 and in Sibiu in 1839, the Sibiu edition being considered as the most probable source of the explanatory texts in the icon[685].

The piece is structured on two registers: the upper register shows the 'Kingdom of God', and the lower one shows the man and his sins. In the upper register illustrating the spiritual realm, Pop painted three anthropomorphic elements: the eye, the ear, and the hand. These, used for their symbolic valences, suggest the Trinity and the attributes of divinity, such as the omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. The notes written next to these symbols strengthen the plastic expression of the iconographic theme: 'The eye sees', 'The ear hears' and 'The hand writes their [men's] misdeeds'. The transition from the upper to the lower register is made through a text that explains the iconographic theme: 'This icon is the mirror of the inner man'. The lower register is divided in three sub-registers, whose succession has to be followed from the right to the left. They present the inner man, the inmost man of the heart in three hypostases: the sinful man that drifts away from God and lets the sins and devil in; the man that realises his condition (fallen from grace) and accepts repentance (metanoia) through penitence; and the man reconciled with himself and God through asceticism.[686]

The inner man is conceived in the shape of a heart, since in the biblical tradition and Christian spirituality the heart is a centre of interpersonal communion, a place where man and God meet and that is why it does not cease to aspire to transcendence.[687] Inside the heart there

that can be rightly regarded as the modern father of the Jesus Prayer. Paisius was regarded as a major Starets in the great Optina hermitage near Moscow, and it was his teaching that undoubtedly inspired the creation of the *Way of the Pilgrim* (the book purports to have been written as the autobiographical record of a poor Russian peasant of the nineteenth century. Treading his way across the Steppes, he directed all his mental energies around the countless recitation: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me sinner.' The story advocates how the prayer of the ehart can happen if one wills it: a transitioning from prayer on the lips, to prayer in the mind, to prayer of the heart). Sadly, although he is one of the most important of the early modern spiritual masters of the Orthodox tradition, next to nothing is available in accessible studies about him. The life and work of this major figure in the history of spirituality goes largely unnoticed; yet he was a man who lies behind the major revival of the Philokalic spirituality that characterises modern Orthodoxy. See John A. McGuckin (2009) The Life and Mission of St. Paisius Velichkovsky. 1722-1794. An Early Modern Master of the Orthodox Spiritual Life, *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 9 (2), pp. 157-173.

[685] Băjenaru, **'Oglinda celui din lăuntru'**, pp. 156-157.

[686] Ibid., p. 154.

[687] On this subject, see the study of Oliver Clément (1996) Omul tainic al inimii [The Inmost Man of the Heart], in *idem Trupul morţii şi al slavei* [The Body of Death and of Glory] (Bucharest: Christiana), pp. 31-43 and Paul Evdokimov (1996) *Ortodoxia* [Orthodoxy]

are represented the seven capital sins and the devil, and in its upper part the eye and the star. The text explains: 'The inner image of the man that became a slave of sin and let the devil inside him'.[688] Pop used the list made by metropolitan Petru Movilă (1596-1646) in the *Testimony of Orthodox Faith*[689] in his representation of the deadly sins (pride, greed, lust, gluttony, wrath, envy, sloth).[690] Each capital vice has a correspondent in the animal realm: pride – the peacock, greed – the mole, lust – the goat, envy – the snake, gluttony – the pig, wrath – the lion, sloth – the frog. Lay books that circulated at the time in the Romanian environment, such as the *Physiologus* and the *Flower of Gifts*[691] contain wide descriptions of animal behaviours, which are presented as symbols for sins.[692] The iconographic system consisting in the association

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[687] (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române), pp. 72-74.

[688] Băjenaru, **'**Oglinda celui din lăuntru', p. 155.

[689] Towards the end of October 1642, a group of theologians from abroad came to Iaşi to research and bring corrections to a *Testimony of Orthodox faith* brought from Kiev. The manuscript, in Latin, came from what was then called the Little Russia, and was the work of the Metropolitan of Kiev, Galicia and all of Russia, Petru Movila. See *Preface*, in *Mărturisirea de credinţă a Bisericii Ortodoxe. 1642* [Testimony of Faith of the Orthodox Church. 1642] (1981) (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române). p. 5. Translated for the first time in Romanian by chancellor Radu Greceanu and printed in Buzău in 1691, this *Testimony of Orthodox Faith*, regarded as the symbolic book of the Eastern Orthodox Church, was widely popular between 1691 and 1932, a number of seventeen editions being printed. See *Preface*, in *Învăţatura de credinţă creştina ortodoxă* [Teaching of Christian Orthodox Faith] (1952) (Bucharest: Editura Sfintei Arhiepiscopii a Bucureştilor), p. 3.

[690] Băjenaru, **'**Oglinda celui din lăuntru', p. 155.

[691] In Transylvania, one of the oldest translations of these books were made by Costea Dascălul [the Scholar] (1689?-1704) of Şcheii Braşovului; he translated the *Flower of Gifts* in 1690 and the *Physiologus* three years later (from the Slavonic version of a Greek manuscript). The *Flower of Gifts* is a compilation of selections from ancient thought, aiming to instruct and teach. See Adrian Marino (1996) *The Biography of 'The Idea of Literature': from Antiquity to the Baroque*, trans. from Romanian by Virgil Stanciu and Charles M. Carlton (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), p. 137. Work of a transitory character, between apocripha and lay novels, the *Flower of Gifts*, of Italian origin, illustrates the preference for allegorical and religios compillations with an essentially moralising and didactic character specific to Renaissance humanism. See Alexandra Moraru (1996) Floarea darurilor. Text stabilit, studiu filologic şi lingvistic, glosar [The Flower of Gifts. Text, Philological and Linguistic Study, Glossary], in Ion Gheţie & Alexandru Mareş (Eds) *Cele mai vechi cărţi populare în literatura română*. vol. 1. *Floarea darurilor. Sindipa* [The Oldest Lay Books in Romanian Literature. vol. 1. The Flower of Gifts. Sindipa] (Bucharest: Editura Minerva), pp. 12- 193. Both books aim that 'by assembling the short narratives accompanied by spiritual interpretations to open the road for receptors to understand mystical or moral truths of the Christian religion. By subjecting the explanation to persuasion, the entire textual construction is based, in both textx, on analogy. In relation to the speech of the *Physiologus*, which is characterised by 'deliberate removal of any clarification on the details of symbolic values of animal stories', the *Flower of Gifts* tries to motivate the relation vice/virtue and the animal, emphasising the common semantic features of the symbolised and the symbol. See Cătălina Velculescu (2001) Introduction, in Velculescu & Guruianu (Eds) *Fiziolog Bestiar*, pp. 3-22.

[692] Cartojan, *Cărţile populare în literatura românească*, pp. 236-237.

of animals with sins was popular in the West in the sixteenth century, especially in the rural religious environment, as an instrument of moral pedagogy.[693]

The devil, painted as half-animal, resides in the deepest part of the heart. Its presence betrays the despicable joy, vainglory, pride, the vanity of having contributed to the fall and the loss of a new soul. This attitude is suggested by its hopping that even 'surpasses the limits of the grotesque'[694].

The elements painted outside the heart are presented in antithesis with those related to sin. Here comes the good angel, as the Messenger of God, and the dove (Holy Spirit), shrouded by a cloud.

In the second sub-register, there is represented the 'Inner image of the sinful man that repents and starts to get away from sins'. Repetance is seen as a metanoia, as a 'change of mind', a change in the way and attitude to perceive the things and characters around man. It is a revival of man's powers of knowledge, which are awakened from the numbness of sin. Pop has painted this suggestively. The good angel that instills good thoughts in man's mind carries a sword in his left hand, and the moon in his right. The sword is a symbol of judgment, of God's righteousness. It reminds one the sword of fire of the archangel that guarded the entrance to Eden, after the first humans were banished from paradise. The moon is the symbol of death, but also of change, it represents the death of the old man and the change of the human nature, which is renewed by repentance.[695]

In the third sub-register there is painted the 'Inward Visage of Man's Asceticism, which by obedience to God and faith in Jesus was reconciled in his heart'. Sins are removed from the heart of man by remembering the Passion and death of Christ.[696]

One of his most valuable icons, the 'Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple' (1865) [697] combines the composition typical to the Byzantine art with the pleasure of narration and minute description, whith plenty of details: it shows an impressive cortege that walks

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[693] Jean Delumeau (1989) *Sin and Fear: the emergence of a Western guilt culture*, trans. by Eric Nicholson (New York: Saint Martin's Press), pp. 237-241.
[694] Băjenaru, 'Oglinda celui din lăuntru', p. 157.
[695] Idem.
[696] Ibid., p. 158.
[697] It is part of the Brukenthal Museum's collection of icons.

towards the church, where is awaited by the priest standing at the entrance, and above the church a cloud of cherubims surrounding God the Father, who gives His blessing; while its lower left side illustrates the still surface of the slope coloured in warm green and brown, the upper right side is occupied by the tight rows of celestial beings, their array being suggested by overlapping nimbs looking like fish scales, a process much used in Byzantine art, as well as in the Moldavian mural painting of the sixteenth century. The people forming the cortege carry torches in their hands, igniting them from each other, causing a wave of motion transmitted to the whole crowd. At a small distance behind it, Joachim and Anna accompany Virgin Mary, who is to remain in the temple in the care of the priests until maturity. In order to be highlighted, the group of the three characters is a little distant from the cortege forming an impact mass. The gesture of each character is studied, reproduced with simple but convincing means, multicoloured vestments, in a well decanted alternation of tones, which causes somewhat of a chromatic agitation, but at the same time produce a mosaic of gorgeous glow, augmented by the angels' nimbs. The stereotypical expression of the faces with eyes wide open looking towards the sky seems to suggest the confident and tedious expectation of fulfillment. A fine, precise, clear drawing characterises this work of an educated master, but who remained close to the soul of the people embodied in his painting.[698]

5.2.4 Matei Ţâmforea (1836-1906)

The sharp sense of observation, satire, rich fantasy, and innate pleasure for storytelling made Matei Purcariu, called Ţâmforea, the most interesting personality among the icon painters from the Land of Olt. Matei was born the son of the serf Ion Purcariu working on the estate of the count Oliver Teleky in Cârţişoara-Oprea in 1836. According to the oral tradition, Ion Purcariu also used to paint on glass and it could be assumed that Matei learnt the craft from his father.[699]

The uniqueness of his work is given by his storytelling charm. No detail escapes the passionate storyteller, who is focused on the precision of facts and their veridical presentation. His 'Last Judgements' comprising tens and hundreds of personages earned him the reputation

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[698] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, pp. 69-70.
[699] Ibid., p. 80.

of a fine observer of morals and manners, of the attributes and sins of the people around him. The densely populated scenes become possible through the use of vertical perspective, the crowd of small figures being ordered in three overlaid registers: the upper one corresponds to heaven, the median one to earth, and the lower one to hell. [700] Another division of space in order to host several episodes on a small surface is created in the 'Passion of Christ', where a suite of events depicted in small successive scenes provide a spatial rendition of time. This type of representation is common, in general, to primitive art, but also to the Romanesque and Gothic painting, accustomed with such stories unfolding in mural friezes. The narration of the scenes laden with details substituted for reading and writing, which were the appanage of privileged classes. Matei's icons were addressed to a social stratum that in its majority did not know to read or write, but understood the language and the biblical scenes illustrated. Cârţişoara and Arpaş were villages of serfs, peasants of a precarious economic and social condition.[701]

Not only the recording of the details itself is interesting, but also the moralisiong content. Matei saw the occupations of the sinners heading towards the mouth of hell as vanities and fool's errands: the fiddlers – *cetera*[702], clarinet and bagpipe players – walk in front of the procession, followed by a couple in love, a man with glasses reading a book, a pair of lovers walking holding hands under a red umbrella, a young peasant woman accompanied by an officer armed with sword. The sinners are usually men from the higher classes, in Saxon dress, sometimes a priest corrupted by the devil; they belong almost exclusively to the urban environment. One of his 'Last Judgements' presents an innkeeper putting water into the wine and then serving it to the peasants sitting around a barrel. The same innkeeper appears in the lower register burning in the fire of hell as punishment for deceiving his customers with diluted wine. One can notice the punishment of complacency and the reward of the poor and lorn expected from the divine judgement in a different theme preferred by the painter, the story of poor Lazarus, who receives the bones from the rich man's table. 'The rich man feasts, and Lazarus weeps', Matei wrote on a similar icon dated 1877 kept in the collection of the Museum of Popular Art. The dogs lick his sores and take the bones that were thrown to him; but as the reverse of the medal, Lazarus is then laid in Abraham's bosom,

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[700] Irimie & Focşa, *Icoane pe sticlă*, p. 13; Lucia Dem. Bălăcescu (1943) Savu Moga şi Horia Damian [Savu Moga and Horia Damian], *Universul literar*, 31, p. 3.
[701] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura ţărănească pe sticlă*, p. 81.
[702] Plucked stringed instrument of Corsican origin.

under the tree of heaven, while the rich men at the banquet are engulfed in the flames of hell.[703]

Apart from the 'Last Judgements', in which Matei ingeniously depicted the monsters living in hell, the devils, the hydra, and the Leviathan, he showed his talent in the illustration of several other themes: the 'Passion of Christ' and other scenes from the Christological cycle (The Birth, Burial, 'Christ Pantocrator', 'the true vine'); the patron saints (Nicholas, Charalambos, Theodore Tyron, George, and Elijah) and the 'onomastic' saints (Paraskeva, Constantine and Helena, Peter and Paul). Saint Elijah, the bringer of rain is approached frequently. His ember horses are harnessed at a boyar carriage, as he might have seen at the feude lord, with the angel-coachman sitting on the box seat, another angel prodding the horses while flying, and a third one riding one of the horses in front. The saint is treated with the attention required to a boyar that departed on a long journey. There are various interpretations of this theme in his painting. Usually, the red horses are painted on a blue-cobalt sky, but there are also scenes with Saint Elijah on a white-pink background.[704] His depiction of the saint in an icon made in 1875 shows the immixture of Romanian popular beliefs: the lower part represents an arable ground with trees and flowers on it; the prophet rides on a road formed by clouds, which is certainly not a traditional feature occuring in Byzantine iconography.[705]

If Savu Moga's icons are considered authentic paintings, the ones made by Matei are thought to pertain to the illustration: the decorative vision and the preponderance of graphic elements give his icons the aspect of coloured drawing. The drawing of Matei lacks the verve and confidence of Savu. The line is slightly trembling, and presents interruptions. His characters are drawn from imagination and lack grace. The graphic character of his icons is evident in the filling of empty spaces with floral elements, mainly branches in bloom; however, their size does not keep any proportion in relation to the character they frame or the elements of architecture composing the setting. The typical branch present as a distinctive sign in almost all of his icons is a long stem with round flowers and leaves placed symmentrically.[706]

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[703] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura țărănească pe sticlă*, pp. 82-83.
[704] Ibid., p. 83.
[705] Ioan Petru Culianu & Carmen Culianu (1983) Interferences between Iconography and Folklore in Roumania, in Hans Kippenberg (Ed) *Visible Religion. Annual for Religious Iconography*. vol. 2. *Representations of Gods* (Leiden: E. J. Brill), p. 43.
[706] Dancu & Dancu, *Pictura țărănească pe sticlă*, p. 84.

The portraits find support in decorative elements, which are used due to the *horror vacui* manifested in the absence of a rigorous stylistic conception capable of articulating the composition. The decorative flora sometimes departs from the naturalistic representation, taking strange exotic shapes, such as trees with slim trunks on which three rows of leaf crowns are placed in the shape of a fan. Such shapes might have been suggested to him by the mural painting or wood icons that perpetuated forms of tropical vegetation transmitted through Byzantine and Persian art.[707]

The colour is used to alternate surfaces, to detach the characters from the background painted in white and sometimes warmed by shades of pink. On the white background, the scenes live with equal intensity, being composed of red, blue, green, ochre, light yellow, brown, black, and golden.[708]

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[707] Ibid., p. 85.
[708] Idem.

Chapter 6 The mural painting of wooden churches

6.1 Description of wooden churches

Transylvanian wooden churches are modest, vernacular constructions that are part of small rural communities. Their structure is simple, logical, and solid.[709] They are erected on a foundation of thick beams resting on boulders taken from nearby rivers or quarries.[710] The walls are made of beams fastened together at the corners and arranged in horizontal layers according to the *Blockbau* system; their upper ends peak out from the walls in a dovetail joint to the east and west, taking the shape of widespread jagged wings or a stylised horse head, enlivening the walls, but also sustaining the eaves purlins in which the rafters are fixed.[711] The roof is steep, shedding the rain and snow, and its wide eaves protect the body of the church from these elements. There are two types of roofs: a single roof that covers the entire edifice, or the roof with two eaves that integrates a separate roof for the apse. The main element of elevation is the tower, which rises at the western end of the roof's ridge, its base resting on the transoms above the ceiling of the narthex.[712] Compared to the horizontal solidity of the building, it brings a variation in height, grace, and elasticity.[713] Its elongated silhouette has a gallery of arches covered by a conical or pyramidal helmet. The helmet is of two main types: the slender Gothic helmet (the Gothic helmet with four turrets)[714] and the Baroque or post-Baroque helmet of bulb shape.[715]

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[709] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 11; Carmen Florescu (2015) Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş şi Europa. Studiu comparativ [The Wooden Churches in Maramureş and Europe. Comparative Study], *Memoria ethnologica*, 56-57, p. 82.

[710] Marius Porumb (2005) *Biserici de lemn din Maramureş* [The Timber Churches of Maramureş] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române), p. 40.

[711] Porumb, *Biserici de lemn din Maramureş*, p. 41; Marius Câmpeanu (2012) Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş – valori ale patrimoniului mondial UNESCO. 'Arta rostirii' în lemn şi 'teologia' picturii murale [Wooden Churches in Maramureş – Values of UNESCO World Heritage. The 'Art of Speech' in Wood and 'Theology' of the Mural Painting], *Bibliotheca Septentrionalis*, 2, p. 6.

[712] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 12.

[713] Ibid., p. 22.

[714] Bogdana Tarnavschi (1982) Biserici de lemn din Ţara Lăpuşului şi din Ţara Chioarului [Wooden Churches in the Lands of Lăpuş and Chioar], in Ştefan Pascu, Virgil Vătăşianu &

Its construction evolved from that of the belfry, which in very few cases can be still found next to the church.[716] The roof and tower are covered with shingles or sometimes with tiles (in more recent times). Open porches supported on pillars incised with carvings and increments shelter the western or southern façade of some churches.[717] The portals are commonly carved with motifs such as the cross, sun rosette, tree of life, bicephalous bird, serpent, and torsade, coupled with small rectangles and diamonds.[718] Several churches are surrounded by a girdle shaped like a twisted rope.[719] The light that comes inside is not at all abundant; it enters through small windows protected by bars or shutters, usually only two in the nave.[720] Some churches had their windows enlarged, while some maintained their initial size.[721]

Wooden churches dominated over the village, not only through the privileged location on a hill with long perspective over the surroundings[722], but also through the solemnity, resignation, and isolation from the world, which the presence of the cemetery amplified. The elevation and isolation also represent qualities of a more practical nature: the protection of the church, preservation of the wood from wind, and a clear bell acoustics.[723]

The most commonly used wood was the oak. In order to raise the churches, the carpenters selected the trees with a straight, dense trunk that was resistant to dampness. The cutting was done in autumn or winter, because in other seasons the wood contained a lot of sap,

Marius Porumb (Eds) *Monumente istorice şi de artă religioasă din Arhiepiscopia Vadului, Feleacului şi Clujului* [Historical and Religious Art Monuments from the Diocese of Vad, Feleac, and Cluj] (Cluj-Napoca: Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română a Vadului, Feleacului şi Clujului), p. 135.

[715] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 82.

[716] Incipient wooden churches, believed to have evolved from worship edifices similar to the peasants' wood houses (Ioan Toşa (1973) Probleme de evoluţie planimetrică a bisericilor de lemn din Transilvania [Problems of Planimetric Evolution of the Wooden Churches in Transilvania], *Anuarul MET 1971-1973*, 6, pp. 231, 252) had a structure enclosing the bell attached to its body. See Greceanu, 'Tipologia bisericilor de lemn', pp. 27-69; Ioan Chintăuan, Mihaela Bolog & Florica Pop (2002) *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud, ghid* [Wooden Churches in Bistriţa-Năsăud, a Guide] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Supergraph), p. 110.

[717] Câmpeanu, 'Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş', p. 6; Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 110.

[718] Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 113;

[719] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 13; Porumb, *Biserici de lemn din Maramureş*, p. 41.

[720] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 10.

[721] Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 113.

[722] Alexandru Baboş (2004) *Tracing a Sacred Building Tradition. Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders in Maramureş until the Turn of the 18ᵗʰ Century History of Architecture* (Norrköping: DigitalPrint AB), p. 34.

[723] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 9.

which means that the carpenters were knowledgeable of the mechanism between physiological parameters of the vegetation and certain astronomical phenomena. The oak was used mainly for the beams and the fir for accessories (most frequently the furniture of the interior).[724]

1. The Holy Trinity Church, Agârbiciu.
Photo: November 2015.

2. View from the cemetery of the Holy Archangels Church, Ocolişel.
Photo: November 2015.

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[724] Nicu Jianu & Marcel Lapteş (2004) *Vechi biserici de lemn din judeţul Hunedoara. Repertoar etnografic* [Old Wooden Churches in Hunedoara County. Ethnographic Repertory] (Deva: Editura Corvin), p. 6.

The plan of the churches has the shape of a rectangular hall divided into three, according to the requirements of Orthodox places of worship: the apse, the nave, and the narthex. The termination to the eastern end of the church, the apse is sometimes in the continuation of the walls of the nave, but more often is recessed. It varies both in terms of form and size. It might have three or five sides at the exterior, most times verging on forming half a regular polygon. The square and semi-circular apses are quite rare. Inside, the apse often gains two other sides, cutting two sides from the nave's walls, as the iconostasis is not placed at the convergence of its sides and the nave's walls, but more to the west. The plan with polygonal closure to both east and west is seldom found. The nave has a cylindrical vault (*voute en berceau*) supported by arch ribs that spring from small inner corbels, while the narthex has a flat ceiling. The vault of the apse may be flat, cylindrical, smaller, and lower than the one of the nave or composed of pendentives that form a semi-dome. Its moldings converge at the keystone, which features a carved wooden rosette. These ornaments point to a wooden transposition of the Romanesque stone vaults.[725] The nave is separated from the narthex by a wall with door and apertures in its upper part. The iconostasis usually has three doors, but in some cases only two.[726]

Wooden churches are known to have been built since at least the fourteenth century.[727] Most of the times, however, the early built churches (in the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries) were demolished due to advanced deterioration, and new ones were built on the same site in the same architectural style. [728] Most of them date from the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries.[729] The wooden churches surviving from the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries already exhibit a mature wooden architecture. Such churches display both Byzantine and Western features. The Byzantine features are substantiated by the layout of the church, mainly visible in the succession of rooms separating women from men or the profane from sacred through different passages.[730] One

[725] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, pp. 10-11; Câmpeanu, 'Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş', p. 6; Virgil Antonescu (1964) Restaurarea câtorva biserici de lemn din Maramureş [The Restoration of Several Wooden Churches from Maramureş], *Monumente istorice. Studii şi lucrări de restaurare*, pp. 133-149.
[726] Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 112.
[727] Virgil Vătăşianu (1982) Consideraţiuni privind evoluţia arhitecturii ecleziastice pe teritoriul arhiepiscopiei Vadului, Feleacului şi Clujului [Considerations on the Evolution of Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Territory of the Diocese of Vad, Feleac, and Cluj], in Pascu, Vătăşianu & Porumb (Eds) *Monumente istorice şi de artă religioasă*, p. 306.
[728] Florescu, 'Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş', p. 81.
[729] David Buxton (1981) *The Wooden Churches of Eastern Europe: an introductory survey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 216.
[730] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, p. 227.

of these partitions developed in the iconostasis, which in the Byzantine world became not a barrier, but a window connecting the faithful to the heavenly realm.[731] The light left inside through small and few openings in the walls also create a mystical atmosphere wished for inside the Eastern Church. The Western features are visible in the outward appearance the church, in the slender tower and sloped roofs. Leaving aside the vernacular vocabulary of motifs, the richly decorated portals at the entrance are also reminiscent of western fashions.[732]

The eighteenth century is considered the peak of the religious wooden architecture in Transylvania.[733] The reason for the erection of new wooden churches in this century was, in some cases, the destruction of former ones, either because of unexpected fire and flood or because they fell into ruin. A significant number of churches were looted or set on fire by the Tartar army in 1717 during the Austro-Ottoman war of 1716-1718, but were subsequently rebuilt.[734] Over the ensuing decades, the painters conveyed the spoliation in their inscriptions and immortalised the invaders amongst the damned in the Last Judgement scenes.[735] The reprisal to the religious movement instigated by Sofronie also led to the destruction of many churches. In order to put an end to the religious tensions in the Principality, Maria Theresa agreed to the appointment of an Orthodox bishop for the Romanians in the ministerial conference on 17 October 1760.[736] Moreover, the royal rescript of 20 October 1760[737] delegated a commission to investigate the factual causes of the unrest.[738] The Commission was asked to act sensibly, without resorting to force.[739] In March 1761, the Court assigned baron Nicolau Adolf Buccow, the new

[731] Leonid Ouspensky (1992) *Theology of the Icon*, trans. by Anthony Gythiel & Elizabeth Meyendorff (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), p. 278 ff; Pavel Florensky (1996) *Iconostasis*, trans. by Donald Sheehan and Olga Andrejev (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), p. 43; Michel Quenot (1991) *The Icon: window on the Kingdom* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), p. 48.
[732] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, p. 277.
[733] Ibid., p. 32.
[734] Porumb, 'Zugravi şi centre româneşti de pictură', p. 111.
[735] Câmpeanu, 'Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş', p. 7.
[736] Bernath, *Habsburgii*, p. 166.
[737] Silviu Dragomir (2002) *Istoria dezrobirii religioase a românilor din Ardeal* [The History of the Religious Liberation of the Romanians in Transylvania], vol. 2 (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia), p. 178.
[738] Săsăujan, *Politica bisericească*, p. 198.
[739] Mihai Săsăujan (2007) Atitudinea cercurilor oficiale austriece faţă de ortodocşii din Transilvania, la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea, în baza actelor Consiliului aulic de război şi a rapoartelor conferinţelor ministeriale din Viena [The Attitude of the Austrian Official Circles Towards the Orthodox in Transylvania in Mid-Eighteenth Century, on the Basis of the Acts of the Aulic War Council and Reports of the Ministerial Conferences in Vienna], *AUASH*, 11 (2), p. 245.

commander general of Transylvania, with the restoration of order and introduction of bishop Dionisie Novacovici to the Orthodox Romanians.[740] Although Maria Theresa demanded that the process of separating the churches should show a great deal of caution and avoid the use of force, General Buccow acted defiantly, using violent and abusive means. In separating the churches, he favoured the uniates, which created atypical situations in which in some villages the uniate priest kept the parochial house and the church in the absence of followers, while the Orthodox were left to officiate their sermons outdoor or in improvised places.[741] If in some village there was the least sign of opposition or dissatisfaction with the authorities' procedures, military interventions were used.[742] A large number of Orthodox stone and wooden churches were demolished or burnt down at General Buccow's orders.[743] After the edict of religious tolerance of 1781, the obstacles to erecting or repairing churches should have been removed. In fact, the situation did not change much, but some progress was still made. The rural communities' demands for the approval of the construction or renovation of churches grew.[744]

The wooden churches built in the nineteenth century did not reach the same greatness and charm.[745] At the beginning of the century, a series of epidemics (cholera, plague, and smallpox) took thousands of lives or caused the emigration of thousands of people to other lands or countries. Their consequences, in addition to hunger, poverty, and taxes, were amplified by numerous natural disasters such as years of drought, fires, and floods. All these affected the erection of churches, which were more modest, sometimes done in haste and built by making concessions in terms of proportions and execution techniques.[746]

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[740] Bernath, *Habsburgii*, p. 166.
[741] Greta-Monica Miron (2009) Biserica greco-catolică din Transilvania în anii reformismului [The Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania in the Years of Reformism], in Remus Câmpeanu et al. (Eds) *În spiritul Europei Moderne. Administraţia şi confesiunile din Transilvania în perioada reformismului terezian şi iosefin (1740-1790)* [In the Spirit of Modern Europe. The Administration and Denominations in Transylvania during the Theresian and Josephine Reforms (1740-1790)] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană), pp. 161-162.
[742] Săsăujan, *Politica bisericească a Curţii din Viena*, pp. 236-237.
[743] Mircea Păcurariu (1991) *Uniaţia. Pagini din Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române din Transilvania* [The Union with Rome. Pages from the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania] (Satu Mare: Editura Vox), p. 25.
[744] Aurel Chiriac (1997) Pictura de cult românească între secolele XIV-XVIII [Romanian Religious Painting in the Fourteenth-Eighteenth Centuries], *Simpozion*, p. 12.
[745] Ioan Godea (1996) *Biserici de lemn din România (nord-vestul Transilvaniei)* [Wooden Churches from Romania (Northwestern Transylvania)] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 39.
[746] Ibid., p. 40.

Over time, the churches suffered various alterations. In the majority of the churches, these were limited to roof coverings, floors, groundsills, apertures, altar tables or iconostasis. In recent decades, many churches have been abandoned due to their small capacity and lack of amenities like electricity and heating. As a result, they are in an advanced state of deterioration and some are at risk of immediate collapse.[747] In a few cases, the interventions changed their initial appearance. Nowadays, restorers commit to bring wooden churches back to their original form and structure. It has been and still is very difficult to accomplish this, since in most cases the testimonies that attest to their initial appearance are missing. The lack of older drawings or photographs is supplemented in some cases by archival documents. A peculiar situation characterises the travelling churches. [748] Many churches were disassembled and moved within the same settlement as a consequence of the systematisation of villages imposed by the Habsburg Empire in the eighteenth century. Others were sold or donated to other villages that did not have enough resources to build a new church.[749]

6.2 Founders and donors

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Romanians had a low political and social status; although they were more than half of the population in Transylvania, they enjoyed few rights and were not allowed to have properties or citizenship.[750] Romanians retained the status of 'tolerated', most of them forming the lower strata of society as shepherds, soldiers, and serfs. There were only a handful of Romanian boyars[751], who had been completely Magyarised and were part of the Transylvanian Diet on the side of the Hungarians.[752] In 1783 and 1785, Joseph issued decrees emancipating the serfs of Transylvania, measures that had their greatest impact on the Romanians. Henceforth, they were to have their personal

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[747] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, p. 25.
[748] Florescu, 'Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş', p. 81.
[749] Godea, *Biserici de lemn din România*, p. 45.
[750] Schaser, *Reformele iosefine*, pp. 214-215.
[751] Viorel Roman & Hannes Hofbauer (1998) *Transilvania: Românii la încrucişarea intereselor imperiale* [Transylvania: the Romanians at the crossroad of imperial interests] (Bucharest: Editura Nova), p. 81.
[752] Ibid., p. 82.

freedom and under certain conditions could leave their villages as well as acquire and freely dispose of landed property.[753] Serfdom was abolished through the revolution of 1848, the serf being declared free proprietor of his land.[754]

The Austro-Hungarian feudal rule did not allow the Orthodox Romanians to construct their ecclesiastical buildings in a lasting manner[755], thus prohibiting the use of stone and masonry, which was to be reserved for the official religions and nations. The proliferation of wooden churches was somewhat spurred by this injunction. As serfs, Romanians were not allowed to cut wood for building purposes from landlords' forests. The permission to cut wood in order to raise churches was conditioned by the fulfilment of feudal obligations or the adherence to the Uniate Church; as a consequence, the number of such approvals was low. The dependent peasantry was not bound to Romanian seigniors, as they had largely been absorbed into the Magyar aristocracy over the centuries[756], and the Hungarian seigniors were even less inclined to heed to their requests. As a consequence, there were many situations when the peasants circumvented orders and laws to gain access to timber without the landlords' consent.[757] When they failed to obtain the necessary approvals, they used certain subterfuges to secure timber for church building: they either acquired timber under the pretence of using it for constructing or repairing their houses or purchased an entire house that they dismantled in order to raise the church from its beams.[758]

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the most ambitious founders invested in the outer fabric, along with icon screens

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[753] Keith Hitchins (1999) The Romanian Enlightenment in Transylvania, *Balkan Studies*, 40 (1), p. 122.
[754] Katherine Verdery & David Prodan (1990) The Origins of Serfdom in Transylvania, *Slavic Review*, 49 (1), p. 12.
[755] Godea, *Biserici de lemn din Romania*, pp. 32-33.
[756] David Prodan (1971) *Supplex Libellus Valachorum. Din istoria formării naţiunii române* [*Supplex Libellus Valachorum*. From the History of the Formation of the Romanian Nation] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR), p. 104.
[757] At the end of the eighteenth century, in the mountains, on the border between Buteni and Călata Mare (Cluj County), a village with inhabitants that came from the area of Abrud was established. They erected the church together, without the landlords' knowledge, informing them only when the church was finished. See Ioana Cristache-Panait (1996) Obştea transilvană, ctitor de cultură şi de artă (secolul al XVIII-lea) [The Transylvanian Parish, Founder of Culture and Art (the Eighteenth Century)], *RMI*, 1-2, p. 30.
[758] Godea, *Biserici de lemn din Romania*, p. 47.

and costly murals. From the middle of the eighteenth century a church was no longer complete in the absence of murals.[759]

The written evidence on the painting of wooden churches furnished in official records of the eighteenth century is rather scarce. The census (*conscriptiones*)[760] of this century merely registered the existence of places of worship. Moreover, the canonical visitations[761] conducted in 1761 to gather information that might aid the Greek Catholic church in regaining possession over churches that had been appropriated by the Orthodox[762] showed little to no interest in icon and wall painting, while focusing on making an inventory of goods such as chalices, censers, books, vestments, altar cloths, and bells.[763] Taking these aspects into consideration, the value of inscriptions from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries grows substantially.[764] The inscriptions on portals, walls, triptychs, and paintings shed light on the founders' involvement. Most frequently, the names of founders and donors are listed plainly, right after a significant entity of the epoch (the emperor,

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[759] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, p. 279.

[760] The conscriptions carried out in the eighteenth century bear the names of the ones that compiled them: Klein, 1733 (Augustin Bunea (1900) *Din istoria românilor. Episcopul Ioan Inocenţiu Klein (1728-1751)* [From the History of the Romanians. Bishop Ioan Inocenţiu Klein (1728-1751)] (Blaj: Tipografia Seminarului Archidiecesan), pp. 304-414); Petru Pavel Aron (Augustin Bunea (1901) Statistica românilor din Transilvania în anul 1750, făcută de vicarul Episcopesc Petru Aron [The Statistics of the Romanians in Transylvania in 1750, Made by Episcopal Vicar Peter Aron], *Transilvania*, 9, pp. 245-292); Buccow, 1761-1762 (Ciobanu, 'Statistica românilor ardeleni', pp. 623-698; *idem* (1926) *Statistica românilor din Ardeal făcută de administraţia austriacă în anul 1760-1762, copiată din arhivele de război din Viena* [The Statistics of the Romanians in Transylvania Carried Out by the Austrian Administration in 1760-1762, Copied from the War Archives in Vienna] (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul de arte grafice 'Ardealul'); the one of the Orthodox Romanians from 1766 (Keith Hitchins & Ioan N. Beju (1979) Statistica românilor ortodocşi din Transilvania, din anul 1766 [The Statistics of the Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania in 1766], *MA*, 7-9, pp. 505-551).

[761] Done with the approval of sovereigns and at least from the second half of the eighteenth century in the presence of local officials as observers, the episcopal canonical visitations reflected the policy that the Viennese Court wanted to disseminate throughout the territory. More and more important during the second half of the century, the bishops took over the duties of some state officials, who had to provide information from the place ascribed either on the state of the union and implicitly, on confessional relations or on the patrimony of the Uniate Church (lands, parishes, churches, cemeteries) relevant to the living standard of the subjects. See Miron, 'Biserica greco-catolică din Transilvania', p. 87.

[762] In the spring of 1761, an imperial commission began its work of separating the faithful and ecclesiastical properties of the two Romanian denominations now legally recognised. See Radu Nedici (2013) Religious Violence, Political Dialogue, and the Public: the Orthodox riots in eighteenth-century Transylvania, in Dumitran & Moga (Eds) *Economy and Society*, p. 92.

[763] Greta-Monica Miron (2004) *,…porunceşte, scoale-te, du-te, propovedueşte…'. Biserica greco-catolică din Transilvania. Cler şi enoriaşi (1697-1782)* ['…Obey, Arise, Go Forth, and Preach…'. The Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania. Clergy and Parishioners (1697-1782)] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană), pp. 354-368.

[764] Dumitran, 'Donations of artwork', p. 267.

the bishop or other prominent figures) and followed by supplications for their own and their families' remembrance, salvation, and forgiveness of sins.[765]

The parish church was not only the most sacred construction, but also the most important and respected place in a village, and as such concentrated the consideration and protection of the entire community. Those who invested in it secured their natural belonging to and their status within the community.[766] Founders and donors seem to have strived to sign from the smallest to the most noteworthy acts of endowing. All donations were welcomed, but some were valued more than others and this distinct treatment was projected on the founders' role and status, creating a hierarchical order of precedence. The most important ones donated or still owned the land where the church was built, and provided the necessary timber.[767] The second place was reserved for those that commissioned and paid the master carpenters. They were succeeded by those that invested in the murals, iconostasis, royal doors, and icons. The priest received special recognition, as he mobilised the members of his parish to make offerings to the church and sometimes took it upon himself to contribute to its construction and endowment. The church books, bells, sacred vessels, altarpieces, robes, and furniture were also expensive and the contributions highly treasured. Eventually, the entire parish was involved in various degrees or, on the contrary, one founder could cumulate several deeds, from the

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[765] For instance, the inscription on the iconostasis of the wooden church of Stâna (Sălaj County) reads: 'the Assumption was chosen the patron feast of the church to protect all the kin and [the church] was raised from scratch in 1778 and painted at the expense and through the efforts of the righteous believers from Stâna village, in the days of the holy emperor Francis and follower of the non-uniate Greek law in the great principality of Transylvania Gherasim Adamovici under the honourable archpriest Petru of Miluan, painter Pop Ioan, Pop Precup'. See Godea, *Biserici de lemn din Romania*, p. 175.

[766] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, p. 252.

[767] On 15 June 1704, the landlords in Sângeorgiu de Pădure granted the right to raise a church to the Romanians, at the request of priest Petru of Hodac, who had rebuilt their millpond. See Cristache-Panait, 'Obştea transilvană', p. 29. A wealthy merchant, Hagi Stoian Constandin, bought on 3 April 1793, with the sum of 550 forints, from Ilyés Maria the land on which the wooden church of the Holy Archangel Michael in Târgu Mureş was to be built. The construction, once begun, was interrupted for a short period due to the opposition manifested by several groups hostile to the Orthodox. Only after the repeated and insistent interventions with the Gubernium (Transylvania's Government) in Cluj, they obtained the approval to continue the works started in April, managing to finish the construction in the winter of the same year (1793). The general works at the church were finished in 1814, when the interior was painted. The inscription at the right end of the arch of the nave's vault connecting with the apse's semi-dome reveals both the names of the founders, Hagi Stoian Constandin and his wife Siriana, and a group of the parishioners. See Nicolae Sabău (1997) Pictura bisericii ortodoxe de lemn 'Sf. Arhanghel Mihail' din Târgu Mureş [The Painting of the Orthodox Wooden Church 'Holy Archangel Michael' in Târgu Mureş], *Studii şi comunicări. Revista Bistriţei*, p. 363.

granted land to murals and church books. Last but not least, the poorest ones that could not afford to make donations and contributed by working with their bare hands were also regarded as founders.[768]

Almost all inscriptions give credit to the clerics serving at the time of building, renovation or adornment. Their commendation points to a closer ecclesiastical involvement in caring for the good order and functioning of churches. The most costly work was the mural painting[769], and several donors supplied the amount required for the paintwork. Usually, the priests defrayed the costs by paying for the apse paintings, as was the case at Cojocani (Alba County) in 1769[770] or for the iconostasis, as occurred at Sărata (Bistriţa-Năsăud County)[771]. Archdeacons made significant contributions in cases where a church had not been painted. The royal icons of the now vanished wooden church in Iclandu Mare (Mureş County) were donated by the archdeacon Gavril, who could not afford to pay for them fully and commissioned them by instalments in 1745 and 1753.[772] The wooden church in Lupu (Alba County) was renovated and painted by the endeavour of the archdeacon Maniu of Broşteni, who also paid for the church in Broşteni (Sibiu County) to be

[768] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, pp. 225-226, 296.

[769] The scant resources of the communities lessened by the wars and hunger Transylvania faced between 1813-1817 risked depletion due to the enthusiasm showed in the construction and adornment of religious edifices. Concerned that the commitment to the decoration of the newly built churches, which was disproportionate compared to funds allocated to other expenses from the total earnings, might jeopardise the economic situation of the parishes, the bishop Vasile Moga (1774-1845) tried to temper from the priests' and parishioners' enthusiasm by ordering them to limit themselves to acquire only what was strictly necessary for the sermons. The bishop believed that it was a priority that the priests strengthen their social status to the level reached by the clerics of other denominations through a better management of the church possessions, from which they could secure a steady and sufficient income and thereby, cut back on the parishioners' dues. And the safest means to attain economic stability was, in the bishop's conception, the acquisition of land. He repeatedly urged the archpriests to prevent the waste of money, which could have been used to purchase land and buildings, by giving up the embellishment of churches with expensive mural paintings. The bishop's solicitation had the expected effect, as after 1824 and until after mid-nineteenth century, no mural painting sites were established in the area of Sibiu. Instead, no exhortation to moderation was enough to overcome the zeal of the faithful to commission icons to decorate the iconostases of the newly built or even old churches. See Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan (2017) Pictori muralişti şi iconari, în bisericile din părţile Sibiului, din vremea păstoririi episcopului Vasile Moga [Mural and Icon Painters in the Churches around Sibiu during the Leadership of Bishop Vasile Moga], *Astra Sabesiensis*, supplement, 1, pp. 585, 587.

[770] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, pp. 93-95.

[771] Corneliu Gaiu (2016) *Topografii spirituale. Biserici de lemn din judeţul Bistriţa-Năsăud* [Spiritual Topographies. The Wooden Churches in Bistriţa-Năsăud County] (Bistriţa: Editura Nosa Nostra), p. 51.

[772] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice,* p. 359.

built and endowed with all that was necessary for divine service, including icons and possibly wall-painting.[773]

Dedicatory inscriptions speak of communal consciousness and personal involvement, recording cases where: the priest and parish raised the amount needed for the paintwork together (we encounter such situations at Lunca Mureşului (Alba County) in 1810[774], Răstoliţa (Mureş County) in 1812[775]); the work was paid from church funds (Sartăş (Alba County) in 1780[776], Valea Lungă (Hunedoara County)[777], Mirăslau (Alba County)[778], Tău (Alba County) in 1822-1829[779]); the villagers supported the costs (Bezled (Sălaj County) in 1759[780], Sânmihaiu Almaşului (Sălaj County) in 1794[781], the now vanished church in Lunca (Mureş County) in 1781[782], Sălişca (Cluj County)[783], Dângău Mic (Cluj County) in 1802[784], Finişel (Cluj County) in 1807[785], Furcşoara (Hunedoara County) in 1808[786], Păniceni (Cluj County) in 1809[787], Voivodeni (Sălaj County) in 1831[788], Păuşa (Sălaj County) in 1880[789]); the political authorities paid for it (the vanished wooden church in Bucureşci (Hunedoara County) was built and probably painted at the expense of the 'inspector of the domain Deva' in 1809[790]; the wooden church in Dragu (Sălaj County) was painted through the contribution of the village mayor and the epitrop in 1806[791]; the county authorities supplied the money for the paintwork at the churches in Copand (Alba County)

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[773] Miron, 'Biserica greco-catolică din Transilvania', p. 330; *Şematism*, Blaj, 1900, p. 190.

[774] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, p. 84.

[775] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1992) *Arhitectura de lemn din Transilvania*. vol. 1. *Judeţele Alba, Mureş şi Harghita* [Wooden Architecture in Transylvania. vol. 1. Alba, Mureş, and Harghita Counties] (Bucharest: Editura Museion), p. 157.

[776] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, pp. 49-51.

[777] Dobrei, *Bisericile ortodoxe hunedorene*, p. 389.

[778] Idem.

[779] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, p. 87.

[779] Ibid., pp. 119-120.

[780] Godea et. al (Ed) *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, p. 252.

[781] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1978) Biserica Sf. Arhangheli Mihail şi Gavril din Sânmihaiu Almaşului [The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church in Sânmihaiu Almaşului], in Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, pp. 392-394.

[782] Mureşan & Naste, *Toader Popovici Zugravul*, p. 36.

[783] Cristache-Panait, 'Obştea transilvană', p. 30.

[784] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 102.

[785] Ibid., p. 129.

[786] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1992) Valoarea istorică a bisericilor de lemn [The Historical Value of the Wooden Churches], *RMI*, 2, p. 93.

[787] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 285.

[788] Godea, *Biserici de lemn din Romania*, p. 177.

[789] Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, pp. 359, 361.

[790] Ioana Cristache-Panait (2000) *Arhitectura de lemn din judeţul Hunedoara* [Wooden Architecture in Hunedoara County] (Bucharest: Editura Arc 2000), p. 75.

[791] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 113.

in 1856 [792] and Sânbenedic (Alba County) in 1861[793]); the churches were painted 'from the village coffer' (at Şpălnaca (Alba County) in 1858)[794].

The ranking resulted from the contributions was reflected in the configuration of places partitioned to each family inside the church and in its cemetery. The worthiest ones deserved the first places in front of the iconostasis[795] and were granted the burial places closest to the church, situated in the proximity of the southern or eastern side.[796] The great prestige gained from the place within the community inside the church during mass must have urged the potential founders to plan their contributions long in advance and maybe even negotiate it with others and establish the future order before the work started.[797] The only ones apparently excepted from these concerns were the clerics, who had their established places, but even they had to think for their descendants and not least care for the salvation of their souls and of their ancestors.[798]

6.3 Icon-painters and audience

The painters of wooden churches were freemen or petty nobles, priests or descendants of priests, small-town craftsmen, but mostly peasants.[799] They learnt the basics of the craft and honed their skills in local workshops or within the family, carrying on the painting of their

[792] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice,* p. 98.
[793] Ibid., p. 64; Miron, 'Biserica greco-catolică din Transilvania', p. 326.
[794] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice,* p. 75.
[795] In Lozna (Sălaj County), the villagers resorted to the rule that privileged the parishioners depending on their pecuniary contributions applied inside the wooden church when the construction of the new brick church posed the issue of the attribution of places. See Ilie Bădescu, Ozana Cucu Oancea & Gheorghe Şişeştean (Eds) (2011) *Tratat de sociologie rurală* [Treatise of Rural Sociology] (Bucharest: Editura Mica Valahie), p. 196.
[796] Bădescu, Cucu Oancea & Şişeştean (Eds), *Tratat de sociologie rurală*, p. 191.
[797] The inscriptions speak of the importance that donors gave to their contribution by not expressing only piety, but displaying their socio-economic status and gaining a place of honour inside the church, the possession of stalls (stasidia) being a delicate issue and maybe the most pertinent form of expressing the prestige on which the hierarchies were built in each community (An eloquent example is offered by the 1797 protocol of the wooden church in Cojocna, which 'records any type of help, who with what helped the Holy Church' helped, and on whose basis was possible to verify the distribution of stalls. See Nicolae Sabău (1979) Informaţii privind construirea bisericii de lemn din Cojocna, jud. Cluj (1794-1796) [Information on the Construction of the Wooden Church in Cojocna, Cluj County (1794-1796)], *AIIAC*, 22, pp. 373-374).
[798] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, p. 226.

fathers.[799] They were itinerant painters, whose livelihood was based on obtaining commissions; consequently, they travelled from one village to another, looking for work randomly or reaching communities where they were specifically requested thanks to prior achievements. We could conjecture that when an artist was at work in a parish, the neighbouring parishes seized the opportunity to commission new painting work.[801]

Even though echoes of the Brâncovan style still reverberated in their paintings, these peregrine painters favoured a post-Byzantine style infused with secular elements that reflected mundane realities and historical events[802], as well as Western influences on theme representation.[803] Several reasons contributed to this 'breach' in the canons: the same painters carrying out commissions on both Catholic and Orthodox sites, the Romanian benefactors' openness to Western artistic tastes, painters' lacunar instruction in the teachings of their own Church, the dual confession of many families, and the limited number of professional artists at work.[804] Yet, the realism that they bring to the compositions does not diminish the meaning of the biblical message, but on the contrary, it amplifies its internalisation.[805]

Their creations befitted the requirements of a category of population that was largely illiterate. [806] By the late eighteenth century, when the number of peasants that knew how to write grew, the Church had 'a quasi-monopoly on the written word in the rural society'. The written culture was almost exclusively the domain of priests, who were able to come to a more educated understanding of their mission to assist the laypersons in their worship of God. Knowledge was gained in schools functioning within the church premises or, in the absence of

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[799] Godea, *Biserici de lemn din Romania*, p. 96; Zintz, *Zugravi din sudul Transilvaniei*, p. 106.
[800] Proca, *Identitate regională şi specificitate românească*, p. 17.
[801] Dumitran, 'Donations of Artwork', p. 274.
[802] On the nave's vault of the wooden church in Tisa (Burjuc commune, Hunedoara County), next to the image of the Pantocrator, the death of Horea, one of the leaders of the peasant uprising of 1784, on a breaking wheel was painted in 1793. See Ioana Cristache-Panait (1984) Tipuri sociale şi aspecte de critică socială în pictura monumentelor de lemn din centrul şi vestul ţării [Social Typologies and Aspects of Social Critique in the Painting of the Wooden Monuments in the Centre and West of the Country], *RMI*, 1, p. 59, illustration on p. 57. Joseph's imprisonment from Mohu (Sibiu County), realised in 1804, hints to the imprisonment of Horea, Cloşca, and Crişan. See Fulea, 'Biserici-monumente istorice', p. 220.
[803] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 32; Zintz, *Zugravi din sudul Transilvaniei*, p. 108; Pop-Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureşeană*, pp. 79, 348.
[804] Dumitran, 'Donations of Artwork', p. 259.
[805] Chiriac, 'Pictura de cult românească', p. 13.
[806] Proca, *Identitate regională şi specificitate românească*, p. 17; Keith Hitchins (1996) *The Romanians, 1774-1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 220.

schools, by apprenticeship next to a priest or deacon, who ensured a minimal level of instruction and religious education.[807] Even those seeking to enter priesthood were usually ordained after an apprenticeship next to a priest of some repute.[808] Therefore, the plastic solutions that they preferred offered a much more accessible message of the themes, which often unfold in settings inspired by the village environment and in which daily occurrences, behaviours, popular garments, as well as the desires, worries, and struggles of the parishes transpire. According to Cristache-Panait, the painters' spiritual solidarity with the parish as collective founder is reflected by the insertion of these elements in the iconographic programme.[809] In 1788, at Sânpaul and in 1818, at Agârbiciu (Cluj County), Dimitrie Ispas, remunerated by 'the contribution of the whole village', confessed in the dedicatory text: 'I do not rebuke anyone for anything, I [forgive] everyone who hurt me, from the least to the greatest, and I wish health and long life to all…'. Painters made use of mountainous landscapes, frames of pots and painted eggs (at the wooden church in Brăzeşti, Alba County), furniture pieces (*laviţa* (traditional bench) depicted within the apostle frieze of the iconostasis; chairs (such as the one on which the Sloth sits at Almaş-Sălişte, Hunedoara County or at Sălcuţa, Bistriţa-Năsăud County).[810] The physiognomy of young women from the surrounding region, their hair and clothing are used by painters to illustrate the wise and foolish virgins (at Bulgari[811], Vad[812], Voivodeni[813] or Sârbi, in Sălaj County)[814]. Joseph of Arimathea, when taking the body of Jesus down from the cross, is illustrated as a Transylvanian peasant at Almaş-Sălişte and Păduriş (Sălaj County). In 1816, at Turbuţa (Sălaj County), in the representation of the 'Road to Emmaus', the peregrine disciples, customarily dressed in the Byzantine fashion, look like two peasants from Sălaj that escort a village priest on the soft hills near the Someş River. In 1821, on the trinity's vault at Şerbeni, priest Gheorghe painted a carpenter and a potter inside a workshop full of pots. Moreover, the painters associate the Transylvanian Romanian with good and righteous deeds, while using the physiognomy and dress of his social and political oppressor to depict characters bearing negative

[807] Bădescu, Cucu Oancea & Şişeştean (Eds), *Tratat de sociologie rurală*, p. 256.
[808] Toader Nicoară (1997) *Transilvania la începuturile timpurilor moderne (1680-1800). Societate rurală şi mentalităţi colective* [Transylvania at the Beginning of Modernity (1680-1800). Rural Society and Collective Mentalities] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană), p. 97.
[809] Cristache-Panait, 'Obştea transilvană', p. 33.
[810] Cristache-Panait, 'Tipuri sociale şi aspecte de critică socială', pp. 57-58.
[811] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1978) Bisericile de lemn din judeţul Sălaj [Wooden Churches in Sălaj County), in Godea et al. (Ed.), *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, p. 273.
[812] Ibid., p. 427.
[813] Ibid., 432.
[814] Ibid., p. 401.

connotations. Such is the case of the pagan Lyaeos[815] and the executioner that beheads Saint John the Baptist, and quite frequently of the soldiers that mock Christ (Berghin (Alba County), Aghireşu and Surduc (Cluj County), Zagra (Bistriţa-Năsăud County), Chinciuş, Dâmbău, and Bernades (Mureş County), etc.).[816]

6.4 Iconographic programme

The painting was executed on a thin layer of plaster applied over the surface of the wood and narrow strips of flax or hemp canvas of widths varying between five and twenty centimetres, depending on the surface they cover: gaps between beams, intervals from a wall to another or from a wall to the vault, small portions with asperities (wood knots).[817] Sometimes the strips are spread over the entire surface of the walls. These strips of canvas perform multiple functions: they provide support for the painting, making the connection between the wood and the grounding; they even out the surface and form an elastic buffer for wood volume variations due to fluctuations in temperature and humidity.[818] The pigments were applied with a binding medium on the dry plaster surface, using the tempera technique. The aspect of the painting is duller or more lustrous depending on the binder: egg, casein or oil emulsion.[819]

The iconographic programmes of wooden churches reflect the Orthodox tradition, with certain Western influences.[820] The arrangement of scenes as well as their number varies. Painters usually respected the placement recommended in the *hermeneias*, but occasionally inserted new scenes or altered their order.[821]

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[815] Brătulescu, 'Biserici din Maramureş', pp. 13-14, 93, 100.
[816] Cristache-Panait, 'Tipuri sociale şi aspecte de critică socială', p. 58.
[817] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 9; Pop-Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureşeană*, p. 350.
[818] Pop-Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureşeană*, p. 350; Constantin Măruţoiu et al. (2011) FTIR Analysis of Painting Materials from the Church Saint Paraschiva, of Poienile Izei, Maramureş, Romania, *International Journal of Conservation Science*, 2 (1), p. 31.
[819] Pop-Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureşeană*, p. 350.
[820] Ibid., p. 348.
[821] Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 113; Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 16.

The mural paintings, either loyal to tradition of tributary to outer influences, carry within an innovative concept, by virtue of which elements of the surrounding reality are included in the landscapes, architecture, and the characters' garments.[822]

In the apse, the painting has been preserved sparsely. Customarily, the following scenes occur: 'The Holy Trinity', 'Abraham's Sacrifice', 'The Synaxis of the Holy Archangels', 'The Holy Fathers', 'The Burial of Jesus', Mother of God surrounded by angels, 'Jesus on the Throne', 'The Holy Spirit'. The next scenes occur less frequently: 'Christ in the Wilderness', 'The Coronation of the Virgin', 'The Washing of the Feet', 'The Last Supper', 'The Three Travellers and Abraham', 'The Dream of Jacob', Cain and Abel, 'The Four Evangelists', 'The Crucifixion', 'Christ at the Sea of Galilee', the Sun and the Moon.[823]

3. View inside the apse of the Holy Archangels Church, Racâş. Photo: July 2017.

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[822] Pop-Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureşeană*, p. 350.
[823] Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 113.

The painting of the nave is marked by a moralising parallelism between scenes of the Old Testament - beginning with the original sin and carrying on with the series of sins that ensued - and those of the New Testament, reduced almost exclusively to the Passion, presented in a more detailed manner, and redemption for the sins of humanity, described by the Old Testament.[824] The townsfolk identify the vault of the nave with heaven ('cerime').[825] Painted in blue, the vault is decorated with medallions enfolding the Father (bearing the traits of the Ancient of Days), the Son (the *Pantocrator)*, the Holy Spirit, 'Our Lady of the Sign', The Holy Trinity, and the Evangelists; sometimes Cain and Abel, 'The Sacrifice of Abraham', 'The Presentation of Mary', the Sun and the Moon, and angels are represented.[826]

4. 'Christ Pantocrator' and 'The Ancient of Days' on the vault of the nave of Saint Barbara Church, Ticu-Colonie. Photo: July 2017.

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[824] Pop-Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureşeană*, p. 348; Câmpeanu, 'Bisericile de lemn din Maramureş', p. 9.
[825] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 21.
[826] Ibid., p. 16.

In ensembles dating from the first years of the nineteenth century, the iconographic programme of the vault changes, being mostly dedicated to themes of the Ascension, with apocalyptical allusions; later on, during the course of the following decades, the depictions of the Trinity (in Western representation) and the Four Evangelists would appear.[827]

5. John the Evangelist on the vault of the Holy Archangels Church, Nima. Photo: November 2015.

The northern and southern walls of the nave include episodes from the life of Jesus (the Passion, miracles, and healings); the feasts of the Virgin; the feasts of John the Baptist; other feasts and Sundays (for instance, 'Sunday of Doubting Thomas', 'Sunday of the Myrrhbearers', 'Sunday of the Samaritan Woman'); 'The Ascension of the Cross'; saints (the representation of Saint Demetrius, associated with the battle between Saint Nestor and the giant pagan Lyaeos is a common

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[827] Pop-Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureșeană*, p. 349.

occurrence)[828] and angels. The scenes unravel in simple rectangular frames that develop into a continuous narrative stretched on different registers separated by horizontal lines or decorative borders with rich floral ornaments. Above the entrance to the nave from the narthex, Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge or Saint Elijah's ascension in a chariot of fire are depicted.[829]

6. Adam and Eve around the Tree of Knowledge on the western wall of the nave of the Holy Archangels Church, Tăuţi. Photo: November 2015.

The following scenes are shown in the narthex: 'The Wise and the Foolish Virgins', representations of the 'Last Judgement'. There are also depictions of Mother of God, 'The expulsion from the Garden of Eden', 'Noah's Ark', and Holy Paraskeva.[830] The painting turns into a *biblia pauperum* for a largely illiterate audience and is ingrained with instructional and moralising accents, which are openly manifest in

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[828] Idem.
[829] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 16.
[830] Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 114.

representations of the Last Judgment, especially in details of the punishments that await the sinners: a barren woman is punished by having to breastfeed snakes or being pierced by spears; the publican, the miller, and the dishonest merchant are hanged upside down and have a barrel, millstone or balance wrapped around their heads; the 'priest that receives money and does not serve' is devoured by flames inside a barrel. The Archangel Michael weighs the souls of humans, but carries a sword and a censer (instead of a pair of scales). On the right there are those tortured by devils and forced into the mouth of hell, which is represented as the gaping mouth of a huge monster or devil. To the left the good souls are shown, often with some rising from their graves. The number of the good souls is lower than the evil ones, and the number of women going to hell is higher than that of men, a discrimination imputed to popular beliefs.[831]

7. Fragment of the Last Judgement (the sinners and the mouth of hell) in the narthex of the Holy Archangels Church, Ocolişel. Photo: November 2015.

[831] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 18; Alexandru Avram & Ioan Godea (1975) Monumente istorice din Ţara Crişurilor [Historical Monuments from the Land of the Criş Rivers] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), p. 57.

8. The alewife and barren woman, detail of the Last Judgement of the Holy Archangels Church, Ocolişel. Photo: November 2015.

Although the works were executed from memory, some possibly according to schemes, the realistic tendency is manifested: where the brutality of the executioners, the nailing, whipping, the crowning with thorns are represented, the scenes are passionate and wild, the nudes of Adam and Eve, of the punished women, of Christ crucified have realistic details without bashfulness, the mouth of hell is conceived realistically as a dragon or monster with large teeth. Costumes and architecture are generally ideal, as previously represented, so it is possible for the painter to have worked after models or older sketches. There are also holy scenes that have a local character. Archangel Michael has a 'nemeş' (noble) costume, just like the Virgin of the Annunciation, some executioners have royal costumes of that time, and some of the citadels look like Transylvanian fortresses.[832]

The main decoration of the church, the iconostasis is skilfully carved in wood, containing medallions and panels inset in gold above the royal doors and bearing figures of prophets and apostles. The

[832] Petranu, *Bisericile de lemn*, p. 19.

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twelve feasts are placed above the doors, with the Last Supper in the centre; to the left of the royal doors: Mother of God with Child; to the right: Jesus Christ; in the lower right corner, the patron saint, and to the left a favoured saint. The royal doors illustrate the Annunciation and the Evangelists; the side doors show an angel or deacon.[833]

[833] Ibid., pp. 10, 20, 21; Chintăuan, Bolog & Pop, *Biserici de lemn din Bistriţa-Năsăud*, p. 113.

Chapter 7 Iconographic analysis and iconological interpretation of the Passion of Christ as depicted in icons and frescoes

7.1 The Saint Barbara Church, Ticu-colonie

9. Outside view of the Saint Barbara Church, Ticu-colonie. Photo: July 2017.

The Saint Barbara Church in Ticu-colonie (Cluj County) was raised initially in Tămaşa (Sălaj County) in the early eighteenth century; according to records, in 1733[834], as well as three decades later[835], it was an Orthodox church. Ursu Broină, a painter born in Stoboru, who painted churches near Huedin and on the Almaş Valley[836], realised its inner decoration in the last quarter of the eighteenth century [837]. Broină also decorated the now lost church of Fildu de Jos (Sălaj County) in the eighteenth century[838] and is believed to have decorated the churches of Cubleşu (Sălaj County) in 1775[839] and Aghireşu (Cluj County)[840].

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[834] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1978) Biserica Sf. Varvara din Tămaşa [The Saint Barbara Church in Tămaşa], in Godea *et. al*, *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, p. 409.

[835] The conscriptions recorded the presence of eighty-seven Orthodox families in Tămaşa in 1761-1762. See Greta-Monica Miron (2007) *Biserica greco-catolică din comitatul Cluj în secolul al XVIII-lea* [The Greek-Catholic Church in the County of Cluj in the Eighteenth Century] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană), pp. 264, 266.

[836] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 60.

[837] Cristache-Panait, '*Biserica Sf. Varvara*', p. 409; Ursu Broină might have worked together with an apprentice for the decoration of the church. See Silvia Marin-Barutcieff (2013) Un pictor transilvănean pierdut…? Ursu Broină [A Lost Transylvanian Painter…? Ursu Broină], *Apulum*, 50, p. 363.

[838] Cristache-Panait, '*Biserica Sf. Varvara*', p. 239. The inscription left by the painter reads: 'by the ephemeral hand of Ursu Broină, in (year) 17…, in the days of emperor Joseph and Maria Theresa, at the villagers' expense'. See Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 60. Although the date of execution cannot be ascertained, it is deemed to belong to the period between 1765-1780, when Maria Theresa co-ruled with her son, Joseph.

[839] Popa, 'Biserici vechi de lemn', pp. 19, 20; Cristache-Panait & Scheletti, 'Bisericile de lemn din Sălaj', p. 40; Ioana Cristache-Panait (1978) Biserica Învierea Domnului din Cubleşu [Christ's Ressurection Church in Cubleşu], in Godea *et. al*, *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*,

The church was moved from Tămaşa[841] to the newly established village of Ticu-colonie in 1935. The village was in fact a fledgling colony of the Şorecani mines and housed miners and their families. The owners of the mines, brothers Mihail and Grigore Manoilescu, paid for the transport and restoration of the church, the latter being entrusted to Elena Popea.[842] Her intervention does not vie with a restoration in the modern sense, since she redid portions that suffered decay ('The Fall of Adam and Eve', the frieze of saints decorating the lower register of the nave's walls) and retouched several elements (for instance, Popea chose an orange-yellow hue for haloes instead of the ochre used by Broină; more than that, the cheeks tinted in red at Broină became sallow at Popea). Still, she left several segments untouched or made only minor alterations to others; her contribution did not affect the development of the composition and message constructed by Broină.[843] In her *Memories*, Natalia Manoilescu-Dinu alluded to the preservation of the initial painting, at least in the case of the scenes inspired by the Gospels.[844]

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pp. 302-304. In 1968, the exterior of the church and partially its interior were coated with whitewash, only the decoration of the apse, the iconostasis, and the nave's vault being maintained. See Marin-Barutcieff, 'Ursu Broină', p. 362.

[840] This is a hypothesis put forth by Marin-Barutcieff ('Ursu Broină', p. 362) by comparing its painting with Broină's known work. There is no information on its execution date. The church was initially built in Văleni in 1780 and moved to Aghireşu in 1931. See Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 14.

[841] Since a newly erected stone church ministered to the needs of the community in Tămaşa, in the meantime the wooden church went out of use and was slowly deteriorating. For that reason, the community consented to its transfer. See Cristache-Panait, 'Biserica Sf. Varvara', p. 409.

[842] These pieces of information are provided in the commemorative document attesting the second founding of the church signed by the Manoilescu family on 29 September 1935, displayed on the western wall of the nave, above the entrance. See fig. 10.

[843] Marin-Barutcieff, 'Ursu Broină', p. 363.

[844] Natalia Manoilescu-Dinu (2007) *Memorii* [Memories] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Renaşterea), p. 90.

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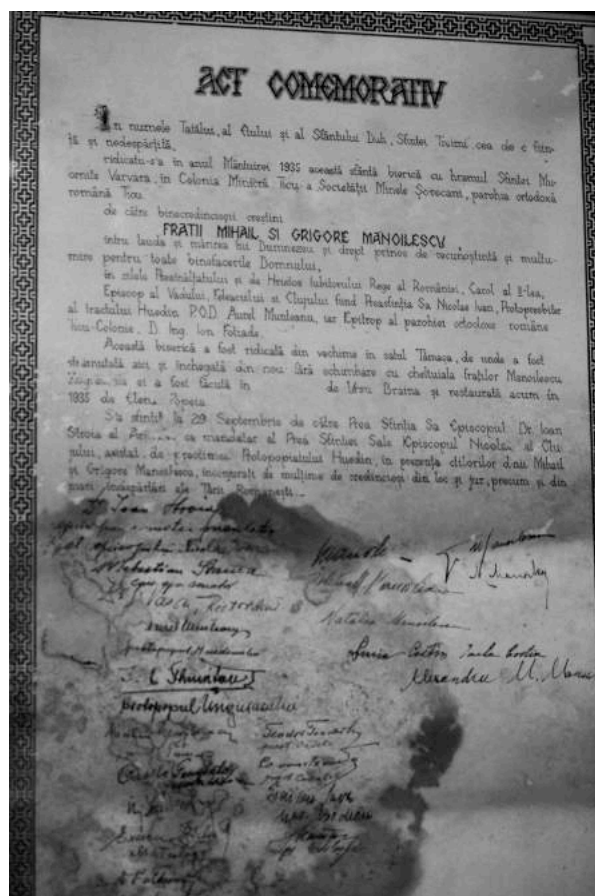
10. Commemorative document, nave, western wall, above the entrance. Photo: July 2017.

11. The Betrayal of Christ, nave, southern wall. Elena Popea's intervention. Photo: July 2017.

The painting is in an overall good state of conservation except for some sections that have been affected by water seeping through cracks in the roof. From our discussion with the parochial priest, we found out that the shingle roof was last replaced in 1974 and despite the fact that it was in need of repair, such an undertaking exceeded the financial resources of the parish and there was no funding prospect.

12. Damage caused by rain infiltration on the ceiling of the apse. Photo: July 2017.

The Passion Cycle unfolds in the median register of the nave's vault on the southern and northern sides, ending with 'The Crucifixion' on the upper part of the iconostasis. Four scenes are depicted on the southern side: 'The Betrayal of Christ', 'Jesus before Annas', 'Jesus before Caiaphas', and 'Jesus before Pilate'. The sequence is continued on the northern side, from left to right, with 'Pilate Washing his Hands', 'Christ at Herod's Court', 'The Flogging of Christ', 'The Mocking of Christ', and 'The Road to Golgotha'. This pictorial narrative plot does not abide by the conventions, as it engages Hungarian soldiers and burghers as Jesus's perpetrators.

The Romanian peasants' mistrust of the nobility reinforced their perception of the noble as enemy. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Hungarian became a metonym for the noble landlord, and by extrapolation for the local authority[845]:

> The notion of 'Hungarian' was assimilated to that of the landlord that enjoyed noble privileges and was Protestant or Catholic, that of 'Saxon' to the concept of townsman and free peasant of Lutheran confession, and finally, the term of 'valach' (Romanian) designated the bondsmen category, who were

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[845] For the overlapping of 'Hungarian' and 'authority' in the modern Transylvanian imaginary, see the study of Luminița Ignat-Coman (2010) Figurile alterității în Transilvania secolului al XIX-lea [Figures of Alterity in Nineteenth-Century Transylvania], in Ionuț Costea, Ovidiu Ghitta, Valentin Orga & Iulia Pop (Eds) *Istoria culturii. Cultura istoriei. Omagiu profesorului Doru Radosav la vârsta de 60 de ani* [History of Culture. Culture of History. Homage to Professor Doru Radosav at the Age of 60] (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut), pp. 197-205.

barred of political rights and adhered to the Greek-Oriental or Uniate religion.[846]

A polarisation was effectuated between Romanians, the oppressed, and Hungarians, the oppressors. If previously the persecution had been religious, it then turned into an ethnic one: the Hungarians were against Romanians elevating their status, since keeping them 'submerged' in a subordinate position would mean they could be further exploited.[847] The pressure was real up to a point, but hyperbolised in the collective imaginary. The 'struggles against the Turks' were powerfully imprinted on the national consciousness; and once they were over, the role of 'hereditary enemy' was taken up by Hungary.[848] The image of the Hungarian was associated with pride and predilection to overindulgence and luxury, vanity, doubtful morality, lack of loyalty and ingratitude to the Habsburg dynasty, which freed them from the Turks and repositioned Hungary amongst Europe's leading states.[849]

The antagonists of Christ are dressed in items of hussar uniform and armed with sabres. Their clothing and weapons serve as identity markers. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, costume played an important role in defining ethnicities in the European social imaginary. 'While the Turk is recognised by his oriental turban, loose pantaloons, and upturned toes of his slippers, the Hungarian wears a tight-fitting tunic buttoned up in front with gold braid, narrow pants, tall boots, and a fur-trimmed coat and saber.'[850] Dress could identify ethnic or national origin, geographical location, profession, religious affiliation, and social class.[851]

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[846] Schaser, *Reformele iosefine*, p. 28.

[847] Their image was not only negative: Hungarians were also seen as tolerant, able to live in harmony with the other nations. See Ciprian Moldovan (2016) Imaginea maghiarului şi a germanului în mentalul colectiv românesc din Transilvania (sfârşitul sec. al XVIII-lea – prima jumătate a sec. al XIX-lea) [The Image of the Hungarian and the German in the Romanian Collective Mentality in Transilvania (the End of the Eighteenth Century – the First Half of the Nineteenth] (PhD thesis, Babeş-Bolyai University), pp. 85-138.

[848] Lucian Boia (2001) *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest: Central European University Press), p. 155.

[849] Nicoleta Hegedűs (2010) Imaginea maghiarilor în cultura românească din Transilvania (1867-1918) [The Magyars' Image in the Romanian Culture of Transilvania (1867-1918)], (PhD thesis, Babeş-Bolyai University).

[850] Rebecca Houze (2015) *Textiles, Fashion, and Design Reform in Austria-Hungary before the First World War: principles of dress* (Farnham: Ashgate), p. 248.

[851] Idem.

The hussar, the light cavalry soldier of Hungarian extraction[852], was the idealised masculine image against which man measured himself until late eighteenth century, his demeanour and garb being imitated even by civilians[853]. Although at origin the hussar uniform derived from that of Ottoman cavalry corps[854], in the modern period it came to be identified with the Hungarian cultural space[855]. After securing the southern borders against the Turks at the end of the fifteenth century, the hussars elevated their social status; hussar leaders advanced to the highest nobility, and their costume became indelibly linked with the Hungarian national dress[856]. Therefore, in the sixteenth century a man's costume consisted of two shirts worn one over the other, a *dolman*[857] and a *mente*[858], trousers, and a high cap of fur or felt. The second half of the seventeenth century witnessed a series of uprisings, starting from Emeric Thököly's insurrection in 1672-1679 and closing at Francis Rákóczi II's anti-Austrian revolt in 1703-1711, which ended up altering the morphology of the hussar uniform. The military dress was cropped short for convenience in horse riding and narrowed due to the high prices of fabrics. Rakoczi's revolt ended in failure, but the uniform

[852] The hussars' reputation is related to the political transformations that took place at the end of the seventeenth century. After the death of Francis II Rákóczi and the loss of independence in favour of the House of Habsburg, many exiled soldiers from the Hungarian cavalry offered their services to various European armies. Thus, the first Hussar regiment in a foreign army was created in France in 1692, and later on other countries followed suit. See André Corvisier & John Childs (1994) *A Dictionary of Military History and the Art of War*, trans. by Chris Turner (Oxford: Blackwell), p. 367.

[853] Irena Turnau (1991) *History of Dress in Central and Eastern Europe. From the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. by Izabela Szymańska (Warszawa: Institute for the History of Material Culture, Polish Academy of Science), p. 23.

[854] Emir Bukhari (1978) *Napoleon's Hussars*, illustrated by Angus McBride (London: Osprey Publishing), p. 3.

[855] Regardless of the geographical area in which this military body was introduced, the uniform retained its national Hungarian character. See Corvisier & Childs, *A Dictionary of Military History*, p. 368.

[856] Katalin Földi-Dózsa (1980) How the Hungarian National Costume Evolved, in John P. O'Neill & Polly Cone (Eds) *The Imperial Style: fashions of the Hapsburg era*, based on the exhibition Fashions of the Hapsburg Era: Austria-Hungary, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, December 1979 – August 1980 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art), p. 79. Even the ceremonial wedding costume for men makes use of the hussars' clothing, as evidenced by a later engraving from 1810 reproduced by Paul Mathias (1980) A View of Hungary, in O'Neill & Cone (Eds) *The Imperial Style*, fig. 63, p. 93.

[857] The *dolman* was a coat or jacket based on a narrow rectangle of cloth, which was widened with gussets down the waist and the right side of the front overlapped the left one. It usually had a small turn-up collar and sleeves exposing decorative cuffs of the shirts. It was buttoned with decorative buttons and loops, and with braids of various widths. See Turnau, *History of Dress*, p. 17.

[858] The *mente* was worn over shirts and the *dolman*. It was cut straight from the shoulder seams or fitted to the waist, from which it flared out. It usually had a huge collar added to it, turned down at the shoulders and at the back. The back part was considerably longer than the front one and the sleeves were exceptionally varied. The front and the edges were trimmed with a double row of loops and buttons and generally with a profusion of *passementerie*. Ibid., p. 19.

of his men became the standard costume at court. Shorter coats drew attention to the trousers, which were trimmed with *passementerie* and embroidery to match the *dolman* and *mente*; aside from being aesthetically pleasing, the heavy decoration helped protect the wearer from sword wounds.[859] The Hungarian aristocracy in Transylvania incorporated elements of this dress into its attire, as it can be seen in engravings of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries.[860] During the first half of the eighteenth century the *dolman* was worn cut close to the body and hemmed at mid-thigh. The *mente* too was closer cut, and on both garments the *passementerie* was finer than before. Further modifications of the dress were made after mid-century, when the influence of the Paris fashion favoured by the Vienna court made itself felt in Hungary. Samuel Teleky's gala outfits from around 1760 consisted of tight, hip-long dolmans, knee-long *mentes* adorned with fur and *passementerie*, and narrow trousers. The dolman, retaining its old cut, functioned as a waistcoat, while close-fitting *mente* assumed the cut of the style 'à la française'. Not everyone adopted the French breeches, but the tricorne hat and white powdered wigs were quite popular.[861]

The *dolman* and *mente*, narrow and close-fitting trousers, and ankle boots make up the attire of the personages of the Passion[862]. Moreover, the executioner that beheads Saint John the Baptist is garbed in the same vesture, which corroborates the adversarial role assigned to the Hungarians. The habitually profuse ornamentation of the clothing is merely sketched; however, the elision of décor is counterpoised by the accurate depiction of accessories, which act as signals in exposing the personages' ethnic identity: conical caps decorated with fur bands, with a falling top looped sideways or backwards and trailing tassels, plaited girdles wrapped several times around the waist, long boots with folded tops or knee-covering tops, boots with laces, pumps, and striped

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[859] Turnau, *History of Dress*, p. 22; Földi-Dózsa, 'The Hungarian National Costume', p. 82.

[860] Géza Galavics, Ágnes P. Várkonyi & József Jankovics (1990) *Régi erdélyi viseletek. Viseletkódex. A XVII. Századból* [Old Transylvanian Costumes. Costume Code. The Seventeenth Century], based on the collection 'The True and Exact Dresses and Fashions of All the Nations in Transylvania', held in the British Library, Manuscript Collections in London (Budapest: Európa), plate 2; Robert Born (2011) Mapping Transylvania as a Multiethnic and Multiconfessional Region in Costume Books (17ᵗʰ-19ᵗʰ Centuries), in Constanţa Vintilă-Ghiţulescu (Ed.) *From Traditional Attire to Modern Dress: modes of identification, modes of recognition in the Balkans (XVIᵗʰ-XXᵗʰ centuries)* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing), pp. 52-82.

[861] Földi-Dózsa, 'The Hungarian National Costume', p. 83; Turnau, *History of Dress*, p. 24.

[862] Aside them, personages wearing items of Jewish clothing appear in the compositions 'Jesus before Annas', 'Jesus before Caiaphas', 'The Flogging', and 'The Mocking' of Christ. For the visual representations with Jewish clothing in the Orthodox iconography, see Marin-Barutcieff, 'Picturing the Difference', pp. 430-446.

stockings.[863] Similarly, the clothing depicted is potent in insinuating social boundaries and ranking and articulating the antinomy between the urban and rural societies. The persecutors wear the dress specific to noblemen and burghers of the Austro-Hungarian empire around 1780: tricorne and bicorne hats, high-narrow brimmed hats, hip-covering caftans resembling French frock-coats, breeches, stockings, buckled shoes, and aprons.[864] Wigs play their part in this contraposition, as they are one of the best tokens to show one's social standing; apart from members of lower classes, no man of respectability before the 1770s wore his own hair.[865] The iconography of the nave reveals their variety and congruence with the etiquette of the moment[866], from the short wig, with two loops on each side of the head worn by the servant that helped Pilate wash his hands, to the one tied in a pony tail at the nape of the head of the servant in the episode of the trial before Herod. Another individualising trait is the twirled moustache, which was a signifier of Hungarian masculinity customary stretching back to the sixteenth century[867]. 'Any gentleman of consequences felt obliged to grow a beard reflecting his rank and character.'[868] In his travelogue, John Paget refers to the moustache as a typical symbol of Hungarians:

> [The] length of mustache is a matter of considerable pride to its possessor; the officers of a regiment of hussars have been known to allow extra pay to a soldier who was very remarkable in this way, to enable him to maintain his mustaches in wax. In no country of Europe is the mustache held in such respect as in Hungary; all, except the clergy, - masters and servants, professors and students, from the highest magnate to the lowest peasant, - cherish with vast affection this hirsute covering the upper lip.[869]

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[863] Földi-Dózsa, 'The Hungarian National Costume', p. 81.
[864] For details regarding the dress of Transylvanian townspeople see Turnau, *History of Dress*, pp. 29-30.
[865] Mikkel V. Pederson (2017) Status, in Peter McNeil (Ed.) *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic), p. 128; Aileen Ribeiro (1985) *Dress in the Eighteenth Century Europe. 1715-1789* (New York: Holmes & Meier), p. 15.
[866] For changes of the wigs during the eighteenth century, see Anne Rooney (2005) *A History of Fashion and Costumes*. vol. 5. *The Eighteenth Century* (New York: Facts on File), p. 9.
[867] Földi-Dózsa, 'The Hungarian National Costume', p. 81; Alexander Maxwell (2015) The Nation as a 'Gentleman's Agreement': masculinity and nationality in nineteenth-century Hungary, *Men and Masculinities*, 18 (5), pp. 536-558.
[868] John Bátki (2000) *Krúdy's Chronicles: turn-of-the-century Hungary in Gyula Krúdy's journalism* (Budapest: CEU Press), p. 46.
[869] John Paget (1839) *Hungary and Transylvania Travelogue* (London: John Murray), p. 463.

13. Jesus before Annas, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

The scene depicts the episode of Jesus's exchange with Annas, as recounted by the Gospel of John. Jesus is dragged with His hands tied by an iron chain in front of the high priest. The painter captures the instance during the interrogation when one of the servants standing close is about to slap Jesus for what he considers impertinence in His answers. That servant is clad in a striated hat, a shirt with lace collar and a short overcoat with lapels and long sleeves, narrow trousers with what seems to be slit pockets, a mantle fastened around the waist with a plaited girdle, and boots with elongated-knee covering tops. The servant holding the chain sports a triangular bonnet, shirt with lace collar, overcoat with lapels, a long mantle, striped stockings, and low-heeled shoes. The man on the far right, approaching the scene from behind Annas, wears a wide-brimmed hat, a *mente* with a large collar turned down at the shoulders and the back longer than the front, reaching the ankle-boots, and knee breeches.

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14. Jesus before Caiaphas, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

The servant that pulls Jesus' s hair and is about to strike Him is clad in a lop-sided hat with tassel, a shirt with high neckline, an overcoat open at the neck, breeches, and green stockings; the servant that holds the thick rope tying His hands wears a tricorne hat, a hip-covering *mente* with a knee-long *dolman* underneath, long trousers, and low-heeled shoes. The two men on the left are clad in long *mentes* trimmed with fur and hats with fur brims.

15. Jesus before Pilate, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

The soldier glancing back over his shoulder and holding a spear wears a callote hat with fur brim, a short blouse with longue wide sleeves, Turkish-like bloomers tightened at the waist with a braided girdle, and boots with turn-down tops. The servant on the verge of striking Jesus with a club wears a bicorne hat, short blouse with sleeves rolled above elbow, breeches with stockings, an apron, and low-heeled shoes. The servant dragging Him by the rope wears a tricorne hat and has an apron tied around his waist as well.

16. Christ at Herod's Court, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

The officer on the far left is clothed in a tricorne, a great coat reaching the ankles and short *dolman* opened at chest, breeches, and stockings. The servant raising the club wears a fur-brimmed pointed hat, a longue fur-lined *mente* with elbow-length sleeves and tightened at the waist, and longue narrow trousers, while the one bringing Jesus closer to Herod is clad in an above the knees coat with high neck and turned back cuffs, and breeches with stockings.

17. Pilate Washing his Hands, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

Pilate wears a lop-sided hat with tassel, a great coat over a waistcoat, breeches with stockings, and flat shoes. The servant pouring him water from a jug wears a knee-length coat with high-neck and turned back cuffs, breeches with stockings. The man on the left of Christ wears a tricorne hat, a great coat, short shirt, breeches, and stockings, while the one on the right wears a pointed hat with fur brim, a knee-length coat with high neck, breeches, and stockings.

18. The Flogging of Christ, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

Apart from elements of dress that are reiterated here, both characters are outfitted in long cloaks fastened around the neck; also, the character on the right is set apart by his ankle laced boots.

19. The Mocking of Christ, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

The cloaks and the wide-brimmed hat make their appearance in this scene as well.

20. The Road to Golgotha, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

The turban strikes a discordant note in the now familiar pattern, and is used here to finish off an otherwise Hungarian costume.

21. The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, nave, northern wall.
Photo: July 2017.

The executioner with his sword drawn wears a pointed bonnet
with the falling top looped backwards, short shirt with its sleeves
above the elbows, tight fitted trousers tucked into stockings, and
long pointed boots.

While the painter relegates the Hungarians to the sphere of
perpetrators, he conjures up a character that stands in opposition to
them as benefactor and protector, and that is the emperor Joseph II. [870]
Referring to the mythical atmosphere created around the Austrian

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[870] For an extensive study on how the painter constructs the character of Joseph II, see Silvia
Marin-Barutcieff (2011) Aproapele de departe, străinul de aproape: între Iosif al II-lea ca
pater familias şi maghiari ca alteritate nocturnă. Teme iconografice într-o biserică
transilvană din secolul al XVIII-lea [The Neighbour from Afar, the Stranger from a Near:
from Joseph II as *pater familias* to Hungarians as nocturnal alterity. Iconographic Themes
in a Transylvanian Church of the Eighteenth Century], *AUA*, 15 (2), pp. 215-241; *idem*
(2011) Între arhanghelul Mihail şi tatăl pământesc: o declaraţie de loialitate şi ataşament
faţă de împăratul Iosif al II-lea în pictura religioasă din Transilvania [Between Archangel
Michael and Earthly Father: a testimony of affection and loyalty towards the emperor
Joseph II in the religious painting from Transylvania], *Apulum*, 48, pp. 25-38.

emperor, Liviu Maior argues that the peasantry believed that he had its welfare at heart, but the noblemen prevented him from achieving his plans.[871]

> The demophile attitude cultivated by Joseph II left a deep impression on the collective memory and mentality of ordinary peasants: peasants find out that they are not left to the discretion of their owners anymore, and that noblemen are not those powerful and infallible men they were until then. Even the nobleman or the landowner is subject to law, to higher authority, and gradually a new mental attitude is born – an attitude of consciousness of the existence of civil rights and fair justice. The emperor becomes the one that strives to defend common people from the excesses of the nobility, which is guilty of their condition.[872]

The painter composes this character by projecting three symbolic narratives that permeated the mentality of the rural masses onto his depiction: 1. the one who administers justice (the encounter between the Holy Archangel Michael and Joseph); 2. the one who leads the way (Joseph the emperor substitutes for Joseph the husband of Mary in the 'Flight into Egypt')[873]; 3. the one who protects the people by averting danger (Joseph in the hypostasis of bell-ringer).[874]

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[871] Liviu Maior (1993) *Alexandru Vaida Voievod între Belvedere şi Versailles* [Voivode Alexandru Vaida between Belvedere and Versailles] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Sincron), p. 16.
[872] David Prodan (1975) *Răscoala lui Horea* [Horea's Revolt], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Pedagogică), p. 81.
[873] The painter did not follow the indications in Dionysius's *Hermeneia* (see Dionisie din Furna, *Carte de pictură*, p. 102), which advised that Joseph should follow close behind Mary and the child astride on a donkey; instead, Joseph leads the way.
[874] Nicolae Sabău identified the bust of Joseph II within the medallion of a candlestick gifted by Maria Theresa to the Greek-Catholic Bishopric of Oradea, in whose collection it can still be found. The portrait depicts Joseph II with a wig, dressed in a dark green coat with red collar and cuffs (Nicolae Sabău (2005) *Metamorfoze ale barocului transilvan*. vol. 2. *Pictura* [Metamorphoses of the Transylvanian Baroque. vol. 2. The Painting] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega), p. 337), which is of a striking resemblance to how Broină depicted him. We can only assume the painter might have seen inside an episcopal palace or within the confines of the Năsăud border regiment, where this representation must have existed.

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22. Holy Archangel Michael and Joseph II, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

The archangel wears a wig tied at the back, fashionable in mid-eighteenth century. The rest of his outfit is made up of a short shirt, a longer overcoat, breeches tugged in stockings, and pointed shoes. Joseph wears a wig with two side loops, and holds a tricorne in his left hand. He is clothed in a long frock-coat with collar and cuffs, breeches with stockings, and hessian boots (widely popular in the 1790s).

23. The Flight into Egypt, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

In 1786, Broină sent a letter to emperor Joseph II, in which he complained about the destruction of the monastery that he had raised in his native village, Stoboru. The letter was written a few years after the decree on the dissolution of monasteries issued on 12 January 1782[875]. Broină introduced himself as 'peasant painter of churches, for his monastery was tore down'.

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[875] The state religious reforms on monasteries peaked during 1782-1786, when Joseph II ordered the dismantling of about 800 monasteries (about one third of the existing monasteries) in the countries part of the Austrian monarchy. All cloisters living a purely contemplative life were disbanded, only those that dedicated themselves above all to agriculture, care of the sick, and education remaining. The property of the dissolved institutions was used to ensure more provision at parish level and provide for new bishoprics, parishes, priests, and auxiliaries. See Săsăujan, *Politica bisericească*, p. 46.

24. Joseph II ringing the church bells. Photo: July 2017.

According to its content, the painter was compelled to dismantle the monastery by an act issued by the authorities of Cluj stating that all monasteries had to cease function. Obliged to tear down the construction in eight days, he chose to ignore the authorities' decision. Hence, when the eighth day came, the local authorities, amongst which 'judge Căceli Jiga' and 'deputy Djulai', seconded by people from neighbouring villages tore down the church.

The writing is very formal and stresses, more in a medieval than modern manner, the apotheosis of Joseph. The painter tries to appeal to the emperor with an encomium that calls to mind the 81ᵗ psalm: 'God delivered you, as God ordained rulers over his people to defend and protect it, the same way the body cannot exist without a head, the people cannot exist without your dominion.' He then goes on as follows:

I pray to his very highness to take pity on me and on what came about to me, as I have been deprived of 500 florins, and the land was taken from me by my lord Rădaia Mihai and claimed as his, and I was left a poor man. And this land, your highness, was cleared by myself with great exertion, which I deem worthy of those 500, since my lord neither wants to give up the land, nor to compensate me for my labour.

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Your Majesty, I pray to the most merciful, holy, forbearing emperor, who was given wisdom and was enlightened by God to take pity on me, or allow me to rebuild it, or have my lord give back my land, so that I can make a living in this world.

From Ursu Broină, a deep reverence to your highness, bending my knees to the ground and may God bless your rule. Amen.

Broină Ursu from the upper district

of Cluj,

from Stoboru village

To the enlightened, his highness Joseph, plea and grievance.[876]

The faith in the good emperor, 'bonus patronus'[877], developed as a result of Joseph's policies aimed at fading social disparities and improving the condition of the lower layers of society, excluded from the political system. The emperor declared it his sacred trust to care for the wellbeing of his subjects, to assure the 'greatest happiness to the largest number', and to provide honest and efficient government to all within the Habsburg dominions.[878] The authority of the emperor was exercised with prevalence in the field of justice. The peasantry's belief in the clemency and reparative actions of the emperor comes through in the letter. The reliance on the protection of the sovereign, regarded as deliverer of earthly justice that defends the afflicted and needy, was strongly rooted in the Transylvanian Romanians' collective mentality. The emperor's multiple interventions in favour of his Romanian subjects strengthened the conviction that they are in the presence of a long-awaited doer of justice, which contributed to his mythicisation.[879] In 1786, the prestige enjoyed by the 'good emperor' was amplified by Joseph's first visit in Transylvania.[880] In his autobiographical notes,

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[876] ASC, Ilie Dăianu Catalogue, 1087, ff. 1.
[877] Bernath, *Habsburgii*, p. 257.
[878] François Fejtö (1982) *Joseph II. Un Habsburg Révolutionnaire* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin), pp. 207, 321.
[879] Petre Din (2004) Ipostaza justiţiară a împăratului Iosif al II-lea în sensibilitatea colectivă a românilor ardeleni [The Redeeming Hypostasis of Emperor Joseph II in the Collective Memory of the Transylvanian Romanians], *SUCH*, 1, pp. 201-202.
[880] The royal journeys and entrances of Joseph between 1768-1788 are under the badge of political pragmatism, the need to solve various administrative, economic, military cases on the spot (aimed at solving certain state problems). The royal entrances in the time of Joseph were an extended and real dialogue with the subjects. See Doru Radosav (2002) Les

Heidendorff, a court clerk in Mediaş that accompanied the Emperor on his journey in 1773, draws attention to Joseph's 'demophile attitude': 'the Emperor stops whenever his subjects' address him, he 'listens to people' and has 'his own way of talking to his subjects'.[881] His benevolence also influenced how he was socially perceived. The same year, Joseph visited Rodna-Nouă. ''Seeing some houses he said, 'I give the Church and the houses near it to the inhabitants of this place. Let them bring a resident priest.' He also ordered to have a painter brought to make an iconostasis according to the Greek rite, and presented a set of surplices, a lead chalice, a plate, and a star to the parochial church, which still exist…This is how the place came to have its own church''.[882] Nevertheless, royal philanthropy is conditioned by rules and norms specific to the art of governing. Jean Bodin wrote about the benevolence expected by the subjects and the one standardised and formalised by rules and advices: 'The king who wants to treat his subject as a good father is not constrained by human laws, still, he gives orders regarding the naming or dismissal of certain office holders; the honours and wages for the jobs are not distributed among all the subjects but only among those who deserve it. The riches of the king belong to the most royal, the army to the most courageous and justice to the most honest'.[883] Consequently, royal munificence is outlined by rules and expectations, services and rewards, royal paternalism and the loyalty of subjects, the administration and distribution of power, and the inclination and kindness of the king or emperor. He had a 'great competence in presenting and withdrawing gifts according to his own will'; equally, he had to pay attention to the virtues of those that received them.[884]

Petitions substitute potential meetings during royal entrances; they want to be a 'sui generis' means of regulating and reinstating order in the social corpus and its relations with royalty. From the perspective of the length of royal entrances, they are an *in absentia* dialogue with a

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'Entrées royales' in Transylvania and the Banat (18ᵗʰ-19ᵗʰ Century). Discourse and Representation, *Philobiblon*, 4-6, pp. 287-288. Regarding his journey to Transylvania in 1773, see Derek Beales (1987) *Joseph II. vol. 1. In the Shadow of Maria Theresa 1741-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 359.

[881] Ştefan Pascu (Ed.) (1983) *Izvoarele răscoalei lui Horea. Seria B. Izvoare narative. vol. 1. 1773-1785* [Historical Manuscripts of Horea's Uprising. B Series. Narratives. vol. 1. 1773-1785] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R), pp. 22-23.

[882] Pamfiliu Grapini (1903) *Monografia comunei mari Rodna-Nouă din fostul district al Năsăudului (azi comitatul Bistriţa-Năsăud), împreună cu note despre valea Rodnei* [Monography of Rodna-Nouă Commune in the Former District of Năsăud (Nowadays Bistriţa-Năsăud County), with Notes on Rodna Valley] (Bistriţa: Tiparul Tipografiei A. Baciu), p. 101.

[883] Jean Bodin (1577) *Le six livres de la république*, cited in Natalie Zemon Davis (2000) *The Gift in Sixteenth Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 165.

[884] Radosav, 'Les Entrées royales', p. 305.

clearly ordering purpose.[585] Broină's intention of proving that his claims were legitimate showed in his petition, yet it did not elicit the response he desired. As a matter of fact, his petition did not even reach the addressee. The response was issued by the Transylvanian Government on 20 September 1787; it was written in German on the back of the painter's letter and denied his requests. The fact that it was written on verso is proof enough that it had not reached the emperor.[586]

A note left on a *Chiriacodromion* printed in Bucharest in 1732[587] also refers to the incident. It was made by the Greek-Catholic sexton Petru Sâncrăian on 10 December 1948. The note refers to the area in Stoboru where the monastery was raised: 'Memory. About the Monastery from Podu-Rotund. Around 1786, Ursu Broină from Stoboru commune asked the Government of Sibiu for permission to build a monastery on the border of Stoboru commune. And it was given.'[588]

In a connected series of short articles published in *Răvaşul* in 1905, Ilie Dăianu offers a praiseful portrayal of the painter. His depiction has the ability to make one feel sympathetic and appreciative of the painter[589]:

This wonderful man, with a beautiful face and soft voice, came here not long ago, descending on this land from those mountains with gold mines, whose greatest fair is Abrud and which sheltered many bold hearts and intrepid minds in the course of time, whose fruits of labour were enjoyed by the entire people.

People around him wondered about him and his name, unusual then in those parts, but very often used in the mountains with

[585] Ibid., p. 281.
[586] Marin-Barutcieff, 'Ursu Broină', p. 365.
[587] The edition of 1732 is a reprint of the one printed in Alba-Iulia in 1699. The *Chiriacodromion of Gospels with Homilies* is a compilation of homilies from Varlaam's collection, *The Key to Understanding,* and the *Story of the Forty Martyrs* (printed at Alba-Iulia in 1689). See Corina Teodor (2002) De la tradiţia lecturii la partizanatul confessional: Chiriacodromionul (1699) în mediile ardelene (sfârşitul secolului al XVII-lea – secolul al XVIII-lea) [From Traditional Reading to Confessional Subjectivism: the Chiriacodromion (1699) in the Transylvanian environment (the end of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries)], *Libraria*, 1, pp. 87-97.
[588] The mentioned *Chiriacodromion* is part of the Collection of the Orthodox Deanery in Zalău. See Marin-Barutcieff, 'Ursu Broină', p. 365.
[589] See *Răvaşul* [The Epistle] (19 august 1905, no. 33; 26 August 1905, no. 34; 30 September 1905, no. 39; 7 October 1905, no. 40, available on-line at http://dspace.bcucluj.ro/handle/123456789/8400).

fir trees, from which he came down here on the valley of Almaş, because this man dressed as a moţ[890] had many skills, all the more precious as they were so rare in these parts, - not only did he know how to read from the books written in archaic language kept on the lecterns of small churches, to sing beautifully and softly, but also to paint beautiful faces inside churches, as no one had seen before in those parts, except at the old monasteries.[891]

However, a letter dated 24 October 1784 paints him as an unscrupulous person that used to engage in questionable conduct. The letter was addressed by the archpriest Daniil Pop from Cătina (village situated between Stoboru and Năsăud) to the bishop Ioan Bob, and expresses strong disapprobation of the painter's works ethics.[892] It informs the bishop of a quack painter named Ursu, who took refuge within the Năsăud border regiment[893], in order to be exempted from paying back a large debt. According to the letter, Ursu used to hold the position of archpriest Pop's chaplain in Cătina. The long list of felonies with which he was charged impelled Daniil to castigate him. It seems that Broină exploited again and again one of his commissioners' trust. Broină was commissioned by Grigoraş Murăşan to paint 120 icons for 120 florins, but instead of bringing this assignment to fruition, he used a quarter of the amount to raise a church. The large order of icons that the painter took upon himself to make might imply that he was a recognised painter in that region and partially justify the commissioner's credulity. Ursu borrowed other sums of money (20 florins, then 5 florins, and 7 mărieşi[894]) from the same plaintiff. It seems that the misdemeanours were a family affair, as Daniil mentions that his wife stole 6 florins from Grigoraş, as she herself confessed on her deathbed. He is also charged with stealing and selling 14 sheets of glass for icons. He also cut a sheet of glass (purchased for 8 mărieşi) into small pieces that he turned into small icons, which he later sold for his own benefit. His misdeeds are not limited to the objects of his profession, but extend to the civil realm and speak for the painter's pragmatism. He got his hands on the baize bought by Grigoraş with 4

[890] Inhabitant of the Apuseni Mountains.
[891] *Răvaşul*, 30 September 1905, no. 39, p. 157.
[892] ASA, Catalogue of the Romanian Uniate Metropolitan in Blaj, 78/1784.
[893] The second Năsăud regiment is one of the units set up during the second half of the eighteenth century using recruits from amongst the locals. At the same time, it is the completion of a string of frontier formations that previously held the southern and south-eastern borders of the Habsburg Empire. See Valeriu Şotropa (1975) *Districtul grăniceresc năsăudean* [The Năsăud Military District] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia), p. 11.
[894] Coin subdivision of the florin, with the face of the Mother of God on one of its sides.

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măriești from Sibiu and made pants for his apprentice with it. In order to make him pay back his debts, Daniil took him to work at the church in Cătina, but Broină did not commit to it, and fled to avoid punishment to the Năsăud border regiment, over which the archpriest had no authority. In disarray, Daniil pleads for the bishop's help and asks him to take measures for the painter's imprisonment as the only way left to redeem himself:

> All these scrutinised, the scoundrel spent 26 fl.

> Despite all these, that perjurer and deceiving priest and painter misled this piteous man. I gave him work at the church in Cătina in order to pay back this man, but him, betraying others as well, made himself scarce inside the second Regiment, where, together with his son, must be drinking and ripping people off to this day.

> In order to compensate for the money and pains of this piteous man, I decided to courteously recommend your highness, to show mercy and write a missive to the General to discard him so that he could be captured within the confines of the military base.

We cannot tell for sure that the allegations that Daniil brought to the bishop's attention are concordant with facts, since some doubt was cast upon his morals as well. Daniil was criticised harshly in the epoch for having a mistress.[895] Despite Daniil's marred authority, there must be a grain of truth in his assertions, which counterbalances the flattering description made in the pages of Răvașul.

The painter's biography impels us to believe that he transgressed the consecrated dogma of religious art in order to get a cathartic relief by expressing his contempt of the figures of authority that were the cause of his misfortune; by assigning the roles of Roman soldiers and Jewish servants to Hungarian soldiers and nobles, he achieves a form of remedial justice. Moreover, he substantiates the stereotypical constructions of Hungarians and the dynastical loyalty to the enlightened monarch ingrained in the popular mentality.

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[895] Petru Maior reproaches Daniil for keeping a concubine in a letter addressed to Ioan Bob on 8 January 1788. See Petru Maior (1968) *Scrisori și documente inedite* [Unpublished Letters and Documents] (Bucharest: Editura pentru literatură), pp. 23-25.

7.2 The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church, Tăuți

25. View from the western side of the Holy Archangels Church, Tăuţi. Photo: November 2015.

The Holy Archangels Church in Tăuţi (Cluj-County) displays a rectangular plan with a pentagonal recessed apse[896] (frequent in all Romanian provinces)[897]. The church was moved to its present location in the middle of the cemetery from another part of the village known under the name of 'Leşioară'. It is built from a combination of fir and oak, and some of its beams were replaced when it was reassembled; in its present form, it has the apse made entirely of fir, the western wall of oak, while the rest is made of both fir and oak. In the eighteenth century, the Orthodox community in Tăuţi was compelled to adhere to the Uniation. Hence, throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the next, a Greek-Catholic parish functioned here; it was organised in three subsidiaries (Feneşel, Vlaha, and Recea), which did not have any Greek-Catholic parishioners. The return to Orthodoxy of the whole community put an end to this situation in 1948.[898]

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[896] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1981) Consideraţii privind tipologia monumentelor istorice de lemn din judeţul Cluj [Reflections on the Typology of the Historical Wooden Monuments in Cluj County], *RMI*, 1, pp. 58-59.

[897] Greceanu, 'Tipologia bisericilor de lemn', pp. 34-40.

[898] This information incorporates both oral lore and written records and is related by the document certifying the consecration of the church on 7 June 1998. The fact that the church operated under the Greek-Catholic confession throughout the nineteenth century is stated in Simion Retegan (2006) *Parohii, biserici şi preoţi greco-catolici din Transilvania la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea: 1849-1875: mărturii documentare* [Greek-Catholic Parishes, Churches, and Priests in Transylvania in Mid-Nineteenth Century: 1849-1875:

The church was painted after its relocation, in 1829. Dimitrie Ispas and his son Ioan decorated the interior, according to the inscription left on the upper side of the nave's western wall: 'Glory, praise, and reverence to One God as Holy Trinity, who bestowed His grace on us from the beginning so that we could meet the end. This church was painted in the days of his highness Francis II, the Orthodox bishop Ioan Bob, archpriest Teodor Baldi, parish priest Ioan Prodan, deacon Irimieş Gligor, verger Irimieş Tirilă, epitrop Duma Ştefan at the expense of the whole village, by my hand Dimitrie Ispas together with my son Ioan we pray for forgiveness'. Dimitrie decorated wooden churches in the upper basin of the Someşul Mic River and in the region of Sălaj: Sânpaul around 1788, Agârbiciu in 1801, Dângău Mic in 1802, Muntele Rece in 1803, Straja in 1806, Finişel in 1807, Păniceni in 1809 (all these churches are located in Cluj County), and Petrindu (Sălaj County) in 1835.[898] His recurrent signature was: 'by my hand the humble painter'.[900]

documentary testimonies] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Argonaut). 1948 is the year when the Uniate Church was abolished. After securing the political subservience of the Orthodox Church, the communist regime forced the unification of the two Churches. Most of the churches and other properties belonging to the Uniate Church were handed over to the Orthodox Church. See Lucian N. Leustean (2007) Constructing Communism in the Romanian People's Republic. Orthodoxy and State, 1948-49, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59 (2), pp. 314-316.

[899] The painter collaborated with Ştefan at the churches of Dângău Mic, Straja, and Păniceni (here they were assisted by Ioan) and with Ursul at the church of Finişel. See Atanasie Popa (1969) Zugravi şi şcoli de zugravi ai bisericilor de lemn din Transilvania. Dimitrie Ispas [Painters and Painting Centres of Wooden Churches in Transilvania. Dimitrie Ispas], *AMET*, pp. 581-612. The church of Petrindu was transferred to the Transylvanian Museum of Ethnography in 1965. See Ioana Cristache-Panait (1978) Biserica Pogorârea Sfântului Duh din Petrindu [The Descent of the Holy Spirit Church in Petrindu], in Godea *et. al, Monumente istorice biserceşti*, pp. 363–364; Popa, 'Dimitrie Ispas', p. 607.

[900] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 191.

26. The inscription made by the painter, nave, western wall, above the entrance. Photo: November 2015.

The church is currently in use, with the service being held regularly twice a week, on Wednesdays and Sundays. According to the information provided by the parochial priest, repair and strengthening interventions on the roof structure were made in 1962 and 1996. At the time of our visit, further attempts were being made to stabilise and consolidate the roofing. The painting was restored between 1990-2010 and is in a very good condition, with the exception of a few portions where the plaster and fabric were completely detached, leaving the bare wood in sight.

27. Lacunae in the painting, nave, northern wall. Photo: November 2015.

The scarce material on the painter's life and artistic environment makes the task of interpreting his execution of the Passion problematic. The sheer number of his commissions hints to a prolific career. Born in Gilău (Cluj County), Ispas formed himself and established his reputation in the area of Cluj; the early nineteenth century marks the incipit of his collaboration with Ştefan and Ursul; after a while, his son, Ioan, became his assistant. Ispas pursued post-Byzantine models[901] permeated by Brâncovan influences[902]; however, he could not fully grasp them, since he had not been taught by a master and used to paint ad-hoc, without relying on preliminary sketches, which enfeebled the execution.[903] He lacked formal training, but his native talent compensated for this shortcoming. His painting is known for its decorative and graphic style, and vibrant colours that give an impression of festive splendour.[904]

The main part of the Passion narrative is spread across the western and southern walls of the nave. The western wall features the stories of 'Jesus before Caiaphas' and 'Jesus before Pilate', while the median register of the southern wall comprises the following scenes: 'The Flogging of Christ' (its visibility is severely impaired by the tearing of the plaster and fabric), 'The Mocking of Christ', 'Jesus Being Stripped of His Clothing', and 'The Nailing to the Cross'. The Crucifixion completes the narrative and covers the upper part of the iconostasis. The area preceding the trial before Caiaphas is too damaged to even conjecture its theme and raises questions on the actual incipit of the sequence. The viewer is told the order by means of composition details, such as the orientation of bodies in various scenes and the clear pointing signs and gesticulations. The absence of the landscape and architectural structures (the only architectural forms that occur are the occasional thrones of Christ's judges) focuses the viewer's attention on the characters filling the compositions. The characters that the painter created defy the laws of perspective and anatomy; too large heads rest on too small trunks and limbs, and their disproportion is augmented when they are shown in profile or attempt an ample movement (a soldier with an outstretched left foot tries to pull Christ's tunic off). They are captured in clumsy and automatic motions; gestural poses seem to be replicated for different characters, as if they were taken out

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[901] Corina Nicolescu (1971) Moştenirea artei bizantine în România [The Heritage of the Byzantine Art in Romania] (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane), pp. 60-61.
[902] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 191.
[903] Victor Cioban (2018) Dimitrie Ispas (?1775-1835), *Caiete Silvane*. https://www.caietesilvane.ro/articole/3790/Dimitrie-Ispas-1775-1835.html (accessed February 2019).
[904] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 191.

from the same mould. Sometimes they fail to properly carry their gear (a lance left suspended, a fallen club obstructed by the soldier's body). Their peculiarity is increased by their sartorial appearance; here, as well, the soldiers' garb borrows elements from the hussar uniform, but it comes across as simplistic when compared to the outfits depicted by Broină. The emblematic items are part of the headgear (hats with elongated tops ended with tassels, fur hats with plume, and the *kolpak*[905]) and footwear (long boots with tassels and spurs)[906]. Other signs that distinguish them are the moustache and long hair[907]. The soldiers are an antipode to the 'daughters of Jerusalem' and Simon of Cyrene, who are impersonated by Romanian peasants clothed in the folk dress of that period[908]. In two of the scenes, the women hold their infants (with aged faces) in their arms and are also accompanied by an elder child. This representation might be connected to the excerpt in the Gospel of Luke that relates how Christ addressed the women following Him on the way to Calvary:

> Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!, Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us, and to the hills, 'Cover us'. For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry? (Luke 23: 27-31)

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[905] The most widespread Hungarian headdress is a fur *kolpak* of various heights. See Turnau, *History of Dress*, p. 21.

[906] Földi-Dózsa, 'The Hungarian National Costume', p. 79; Mathias, 'A View of Hungary', p. 92.

[907] Men wore their hear long, divided in the middle or pleated into a pigtail. Alice Gáborján (1976) Hungarian Peasant Costumes. A Tentative Approach to a Summary, *Néprajzi Ertesítő*, 58, pp. 125-126.

[908] For a concise description of the Transylvanian folk dress, see Turnau, *History of Dress*, pp. 50-52; An illustration from the *Trachten Kabinett von Siebenbürgen* reproduced in Alexandru Alexianu (1971) *Mode şi veşminte din trecut* [Fashions and Garments of the Past], vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane) presents the women's traditional dress (fig. 3, p. 41).

28. Jesus before Caiaphas, nave, western wall, above the entrance. Photo: November 2015.

The soldier on the left wears a hat decorated with fur band and plume, a short shirt and apron, tight trousers, and pointed boots with tassels and spurs. The one on the left holding the club wears a hat with falling top looped backwards with tassel, a hip-long shirt, and the same tight trousers and boots with tassels and spurs. The woman (one of the 'daughters of Jerusalem' that makes an early appearance) is attired in a *neframe* with geometrical pattern, earrings, chemise with rippled high collar, sweater (which came into use in the nineteenth century) and front cut *westa* on top, skirt with *catrinte*, and short boots. The elder child that follows her is clad in a long tunic and flat shoes.

29. Jesus before Pilate, nave, western wall, above the entrance. Photo: November 2015.

The soldier on the left is clothed in a hussar fur *kolpak*, a short shirt covered by a cloak, tight trousers and long boots. The one to his right carrying a rod over his shoulder to which a sack with nails is tied wears a calot hat with feathers, hip-long shirt, tight trousers and long boots. Pilate sports a bicorne hat and a long tunic with embroidered high neck. The soldier on the right wears a hat with falling top looped backwards with tassel, a cloak, short shirt, apron, narrow trousers folded above the knees and short boots.

30. The Flogging of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: November 2015.

We can only discern a soldier wearing a hip-long shirt, tight trousers, and ankle-boots.

31. The Mocking of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: November 2015.

The soldier on the left wears a fur-brimmed hat with plume, a cloak, hip-long shirt, apron, tight trousers, and long boots with tassels and spurs. The soldiers framing Christ wear the same type of hat.
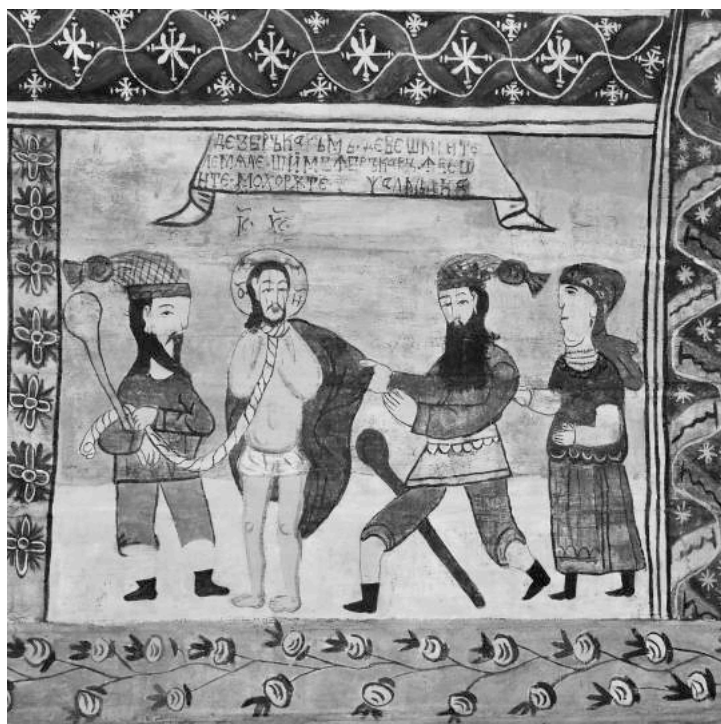
32. The Disrobing of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: November 2015.

The soldiers are dressed in a similar fashion as the ones featured in the other scenes. The woman that seems to hinder the soldier's action wears a *neframe* with ornate brim, earrings, chemise with rippled high collar, sweater with short sleeves, skirt with *catrinte*, and short boots.

33. The Nailing to the Cross, nave, southern wall. Photo: November 2015.

The personage standing by Christ's feet, Simon of Cyrene, wears a tunic and a spherical fur hat. The women have the same ornate *neframe*, blouses, skirts and *catrinte.* The one on the left is accessorised with a beaded necklace.

The Passion series sets apart the two ethnicities, by painting a very thick line between them: Hungarians are cast into antagonistic roles, while Romanians are cast into adjuvant ones. By standing in for Christ's executioners, the former are contaminated with their malevolence, while the latter typify the pious serving Christ by taking part in the scenes as the ones that supported Christ and mourned His suffering.

7.3 The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church, Nadăşu

34. Southern view of the Holy Archangels Church, Nadăşu. Photo: July 2017.

According to the village elders' recollections, the front portal of the Holy Archangels Church in Nadăşu (Cluj County) bore an inscription attesting its foundation: '1720, at the expense of the whole village, master Chiran Ion al Surdului'.[909] The church is the successor of an older edifice, from which it inherited a sixteenth-century icon of the 'Dormition'[910] and a copy of the Slavic *Gospel* purchased by priest Iustin from Călata village in 1582[911]. It also acquired certain archaic elements, such as the existence of only two doors that provide access to the apse.[912] Its initial plan, rectangular with a recessed polygonal shaped apse[913], was extended in 1862 to increase the nave. The entrance, protected by a porch on the southern side, was moved to the western side, and in front of it a portico was attached to the central body of the church. The narthex is ceilinged and has two openings on each side of the entrance towards the nave, which features a choir in its first half.[914] Its massive

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[909] This information was collected during the author's fieldwork in the 70s. See Cristache-Panait, 'Obştea transilvană', p. 28.

[910] From 2004 the icon is part of the collection of the Archiepiscopate of Cluj.

[911] Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania*, pp. 70-71.

[912] Cristache-Panait, 'Valenţele istorice şi artistice', p. 35.

[913] The apse has the peculiarity of being at an angle to the axis. See Cristache-Panait, 'Consideraţii', p. 59; *idem*, 'Valenţele istorice şi artistice', p. 35.

[914] Cristache-Panait, 'Valenţele istorice şi artistice', p. 36; Vasile Lechinţan & Marian Văcariu (2016) *Nadăşu – schiţă monografică – Statornicie creştină şi istorie românească. Judeţul Cluj* [Nadăşu – Monographic Study – Christian Continuity and Romanian History. Cluj County] (Cluj-Napoca: Studia), p. 52.

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tower features an open gallery, a parapet and four turrets at the base of the roof.[915] The protruding corbels are cut in steps and decrease in wideness until the midsection of the walls.[916] The roof suffered alterations as a result of successive repairs; if in 1930 it was covered with shingle, in 1988 the covering was replaced with metal sheet, which vitiated the original aspect.

The history of the parish records several frictions regarding confessional changes. Faced with the adherence to the Uniate Church in 1699, the villagers decided against it and maintained their opposition even with the risk of defying the county authorities, which made efforts to persuade them to join the Uniation. Finally, they caved in and accepted a Greek-Catholic priest in 1773; the church was consecrated under the new rite by Ştefan Pop Timandi, vicar general of the bishop Inochentie Klein. In 1761, the congregation (all the sixty-six families), except for the priest, reverted to Orthodoxy.[917]

35. Detail. The steeple of the church. Photo: July 2017.

[915] Constantin Măruţoiu *et al.* (Eds) (2017) *Biserici de lemn din Transilvania: Cluj, Sălaj* [Wooden Churches of Transylvania: Cluj, Sălaj] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega), p. 64.
[916] Cristache-Panait, 'Valenţele istorice şi artistice', p. 35.
[917] Lechinţan & Văcariu, *Nadăşu*, pp. 49-50.

The church is in use, being the only one in the village. Its two distinct phases of erection implied two phases of decoration. The painting on the walls of the nave and narthex was executed by Traian Boboş, who was the church epitrop.[918] The elongated section of the church (eastern part of the vault, iconostasis, and apse) was painted by Dionisie Iuga of Nicula in 1890.[919]

36. Fragment of the decoration of the apse realised by Dionisie Iuga. Photo: July 2017.

The conserved painting of the older ensemble incorporates Christological scenes, friezes with holy martyrs, and medallions enclosing the 'Ancient of Days', the Mother of God, the Holy Spirit (shown as a dove) and 'Christ Pantocrator'. As far as its current condition is concerned, we could say it is fairly well preserved; the northern part of the nave's vault has been affected by moisture and the western part by abrasion, mainly caused by the addition of the choir. The more recent painting is in a worse state of conservation; out of the fragments that are still visible, we could discern the evangelists Luke and Mark on the eastern side of the vault, and the wise and foolish virgins decorating the walls of the narthex.

The older ensemble expresses features of the Baroque art, such as the affinity to verisimilitude and naturalism, dynamic movement, and a desire to suggest extensions into space. Unfortunately, the dearth of sources on the painter's origins or training does not allow us to deduce how Boboş became exposed to the style. The space that the painter dedicated to the Passion is reduced to the 'Nailing to the Cross', placed on the northern side of the nave, in the lower register of the

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[918] Lechinţan & Văcariu, *Nadăşu*, p. 51.
[919] Ibid., p. 52. The painter left an inscription on his contribution above the royal doors.

vault. The characters populating the scene, engaged in nailing Christ's limbs to the wood of the cross, are partly or entirely armoured. If from the neck down they fit the image of the Roman soldiers, the facial traits and the reoccurring feathered turban suggest the infiltration of camouflaged Ottomans. The most conspicuous trait that uncovers their identity is the *palabıyık* or the handlebar moustache[920], which sometimes reaches hyperbolic sizes. Soldiers displaying similar features also appear in the Resurrection scene.

37. The Nailing to the Cross, nave, lower register of the vault. Photo: July 2017.

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[920] The handlebar moustache is trimmed from the corners of the mouth downwards – above the mouth, and is allowed to grow in an unrestrained fashion. See Müge Özoğlu (2016) Modernity as an Ottoman Fetish: representations of Ottoman masculinity in *Kesik Bıyık*, *Masculinities*, 6, p. 89.

38. The Resurrection, nave, median register of the vault. Photo: July 2017.

7.4 The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church, Racâş

39. Southern view of the Holy Archangels Church, Racâş. Photo: July 2017.

The exact erection date of the Holy Archangels Church in Racâş (Sălaj County) is not known, but dendrochronological analyses showed that its main body was erected around 1558, repaired, and eventually heaved in 1761 and 1772.[921] The conscription of 1760-1762 registered the existence of the worship edifice that served eighty-eight Orthodox families.[922] The church has a rectangular body closed to the east by a polygonal recessed apse. It has an interesting vaulting system: at their usual height, the lateral walls retract on a wavily sculpted beam to be further elevated; the barrel vault starts at the level of the second beam of the truss.[923] The roof has two eaves; the lower eave covers the porch on the southern side, and extends on the northern and western facades, being disconnected at the apse. The porch has richly carved posts and short braces that do not form arches.[924]

The edifice underwent two restoration works in 1985-1986 and 2001-2004.[925] The construction of a new church in 1962 involved the termination of ritual in the wooden church; the religious service is held twice a year with the occasion of the patronal feast and the celebration

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[921] Baboş, *Wooden Churches, Carpenters and Founders*, p. 139.
[922] Mihaela Turian (2007) Biserica 'Sfinţii Arhangheli Mihail şi Gavriil' din Racâş [The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church in Racâş], *Revista I.D.E.I.,* 3, p. 108.
[923] Cristache-Panait & Scheletti, 'Bisericile de lemn din Sălaj', p. 40.
[924] Măruţoiu *et al.* (Eds), *Biserici de lemn din Transilvania*, p. 178.
[925] Turian, Biserica 'Sfinţii Arhangheli Mihail şi Gavriil', p. 108.

of the Pentecost. Its mural ensemble is in a good state of preservation. There are two large missing sections on the western side of the vault and western tympanum, parts that had to be replaced during the restoration process due to irremediable damage. The wear and thinning of the painting layer can be observed over the whole of the painting, but it does not impede the 'reading' of the images. The integrity of a few scenes is affected by lacunae and window openings that were cut at a subsequent date.

Ioan Pop of Românaşi[926] is thought to have realised the painting in 1783.[927] As discussed in an earlier chapter, Ioan Pop is connected to the centre of artistic production that developed within the orbit of Sălaj; he was active in the late eighteenth century and practised a post-Byzantine style that carried on residues of post-Brâncovan tradition. The pictorial narration of the Passion develops in several sequential clips in the upper registers of the nave's northern and southern walls. The order of events is disrupted by the 'Calvary', which is interposed between 'The Mocking' and 'The Disrobing of Christ', instead of following after them.

40. Inner view of the Holy Archangels Church, Racâş. Photo: July 2017.

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[926] Ioan Pop of Românaşi was deemed likely to have painted the church on the basis of themes depicted, floral décor, and colour tones, as well as the luminosity of faces. See Cristache-Panait, 'Bisericile de lemn de pe valea Almaşului', pp. 131–145.
[927] The assumption regarding the date was derived from the inscription found in the apse: 'this holy apse was paid by priest Nicolae and his wife Toadora, on 8 August 1783'. See Cristache-Panait & Scheletti, 'Bisericile de lemn din Sălaj', p. 34.

The soldiers that participate in Christ's torment seem to be improvisers in variations on a theme: Roman soldiers clad in armour constitute the model that is taken and altered into multifarious appearances: their feathered helmets are taken off and changed for bicorne hats, eastern turbans, and hats trimmed with fur and plume; their torso armour, tunic, and cloak are removed so that close-fitting *mentes* (which emulate the 'habit à la française')[125] can be put on; and their trousers (*braccae*) are replaced with breeches and stockings. This eclecticism, which brings actual Roman soldiers and Hungarians, quasi-oriental Romans and Romans whose features hint at Hungarians in pretence into the Passion cycle, might potentially trouble it with an infusion of prejudice.

41. Jesus before Annas, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

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[125] The *mentes* assumed the cut of 'habit à la française' under the influence of Paris fashion in the eighteenth century. See Turnau, *History of Dress*, p. 24.

42. Jesus before Caiaphas, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

43. Jesus before Pilate, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

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44. The Flogging of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

Note the antagonistic appearance of the soldier on the left, shown from profile, with bloodshot eyes, bulbous nose, and mouth wide open.

45. The Mocking of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: July
2017.

46. The Road to Golgotha, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

Note the twirled moustache of the soldier that forces Christ to take the beams of the cross upon His right shoulder.

47. The Disrobing of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

48. The Nailing to the Cross, nave, southern wall. Photo: July
2017.

7.5 The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church, Ocolişel

49. Southern view of the Holy Archangels Church, Ocolişel. Photo: November 2015.

The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church in Ocolişel (Cluj County) was built in 1852 from fir wood. It was preceded by an older edifice whose existence is recorded in Klein's conscription of 1733[929] and Buccow's conscription of 1760-1762[930]. Its existence is corroborated by a note left on the pages of a sixteenth-century psalter in 1840, which urged for it to be kept safe, as it was the first print of an *Apostle* in Romanian.[931] The edifice was destructed by fire in the events of 1848.[932] It has a rectangular plan with a recessed pentagonal apse.[933] Located on its southern side, a porch with simple pillars and a parapet protects the entrance, which has been moved from the narthex's wall to that of the nave. Its spire has a double eave and a gallery with parapet.[934]

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[929] Bunea, *Episcopul Ioan Inocenţiu Klein*, annex X.
[930] Ciobanu, *Statistica românilor ardeleni*, p. 651.
[931] Cristache-Panait, 'Consideraţii', p. 58.
[932] The village inhabitants led by priest Vasile Fodor, a tribune in the army commanded by Avram Iancu, fought in the Revolution of 1848. The village and the church were set on fire by the Hungarian troops. See Silviu Dragomir (1965) *Avram Iancu* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică), p. 115; *idem* (1944) *Studii şi documente privitoare la Revoluţia Românilor din Transilvania în 1848-1849* [Studies and Documents about the Transylvanian Romanians' Revolution in 1848-1849], vol. 2 (Sibiu, Cluj: Cartea românească din Cluj), p.204; Dumitru Suciu (Ed.) (2010) *Revoluţia transilvană de la 1848-1849. Date, realităţi şi fapte reflectate în documente bisericeşti ortodoxe 1848-1850* [The Transylvanian Revolution of 1848-1849. Data, Realities, and Events Recorded in Orthodox Ecclesiastical Documents 1848-1850] (Bucharest. Editura ASAB), p. 83.
[933] Cristache-Panait, 'Consideraţii', pp. 58-59.
[934] Cristache-Panait, 'Valenţele istorice şi artistice', p. 36.

The church is the only one in the village and is currently in use. Originally, the covering of the roof was made of shingle, but it was replaced with tiles in 1964. Due to water infiltration, the painting on the southern wall is partially affected. Apart from this, the painting is in a good condition.

The decoration, a reverberation of the art of the painters of the Apuseni Mountains, was realised by Maer Darie of Valea Ierii in 1878.[935] The drama of the Passion unfolds in the lower register of the vault on the southern and northern sides.

50. Inscription testifying to the date of execution of the painting, iconostasis, above the royal doors. Photo: November 2015.

The scenes in which the soldiers partake have minimal architecture and no landscape. The footwear of the soldiers is suggestive of that of footmen, appropriate for marching; it consists of ankle-high *kapca*[936] that resembles leather stockings with elongated or folded tops and widened back, over which flat shoes are put. The shoes are quite similar to *bocskor*, Hungarian leather sandals[937]. The high caps and feather coifs seem exact copies of the headgear worn by Hungarian soldiers in various illustrations included in Gáborján's study.[938] Their striped thigh-length tunics with shoulder patches and fastened with scarfs around the waist partly cover narrow-fitting trousers.

[935] Ibid., p. 37.
[936] Turnau, *History of Dress*, p. 22.
[937] Gáborján, 'Hungarian Peasant Costumes', p. 129.
[938] See illustrations 6 and 18 in Gáborján, 'Hungarian Peasant Costumes', included after the Hungarian version of her study, after p. 92.

51. The Betrayal and Arrest of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo:
November 2015.

52. Jesus before Caiaphas, nave, southern wall. Photo: November 2015.

53. Pilate Washing his Hands, nave, northern wall. Photo: November 2015.

54. The Flogging of Christ, nave, northern wall. Photo: November
2015.

55. The Mocking of Christ, nave, northern wall. Photo: November 2015.

56. The Road to Golgotha, nave, northern wall. November 2015.

7.6 The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church, Osoi

57. Western view of the Holy Archangels Church from the path leading up to the church. Photo: July 2017.

The church of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel in Osoi (Cluj County) was built in the late eighteenth century.[939] It has a rectangular narthex and nave, and a polygonal recessed apse. The steeple rising above the narthex features an open gallery with four arches on each side and a plank parapet. The helmet of the roof is tall and thin, with swept eaves. The nave's barrel vault stems directly from the purlins and is strengthened by a tie beam piercing the base of the vault.[940] The church was covered with metal sheets decades ago and elevated on a foundation of boulders about thirty years ago.[941]

The painting suffers from erosion, humidity, and darkening. It is better preserved in the upper tiers of the nave. Large portions of the walls are covered with icon scarves (ştergare) and woven wall rugs (păretare), whose mounting left dents in the painting layer. Damage was

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[939] Consuela Bendea (2009) *Repertoar biserici de lemn din judeţul Cluj. vol. 3. Starea de conservare şi patrimoniul* [Repertory of the Wooden Churches in Cluj County. Vol. 3. Conservation Status and Patrimony] (Cluj-Napoca: Consiliul Judeţean Cluj, Centrul Judeţean pentru Conservarea şi Promovarea Culturii Tradiţionale), p. 119.
[940] Măruţoiu *et al.* (Eds), *Biserici de lemn din Transilvania*, p. 73.
[941] Bendea, *Repertoar biserici de lemn*, p. 122.

also inflicted on the painting of the ceiling of the narthex by two punctures made for the bell's ropes.

58. The date of the painting written above the entrance to the nave. Photo: July 2017.

Iosif Perşe of Elciu painted the interior in 1821.[942] The painting of the narthex is fragmentary, with very faint traces on the ceiling and northern wall; the heads of the wise and foolish virgins are still discernible on the western wall. Inside the nave, Saint Elijah and Adam and Eve are depicted on the western wall. The lower register consists in figures of military saints, better preserved on the northern wall. Above it, there are scenes from the life of Christ, delimited by decorative borders made up of haulms. On the vault, the four evangelists appear on each of the four corners, while medallions with the Archangel Michael, 'Christ Pantocrator', the Holy Spirit, and 'God the Father' cover the surface of the central axis.[943] The iconostasis was cut out to integrate the Resurrection, which is surrounded by medallions enclosing the apostles grouped in pairs of two; its lower tier is covered by a depiction of prophet David playing the harp; two figures are faintly perceptible on the royal doors. The painting of the apse is barely visible.[944]

Iosif was an inhabitant of Elciu and a priest serving in the village church[945], which he is believed to have painted. [946] His work includes the decoration of the churches of Dragu (Sălaj County) in 1806[947], Voivodeni (Sălaj County) in 1831[948], Aşchileu Mare (Cluj County)

[942] Cristache-Panait, 'Valenţele istorice şi artistice', p.37.
[943] Bendea, *Repertoar biserici de lemn*, p. 120.
[944] Ibid., p. 122.
[945] He is mentioned as Ioan Perşe instead of Iosif Perşe in *Şematism*, Blaj, 1900, p. 282.
[946] Cristache-Panait, 'Valenţele istorice şi artistice', p.37.
[947] Cristina Bogdan (2015) Y a-t-il un corps du péché et de la maladie? La Paresse et la Peste dans l'iconographie religieuse roumaine (XVIII-XIX·siècles), *Martor*, 20, p. 158.

in 1839, Brâglez (Sălaj County) in 1842[949], and Solomon (Sălaj County) in 1845[950]. It is thought that Ţiple Popa and Ioan the Painter, both natives of the same village[951], might have been his masters. They executed the murals of several churches in the Land of Codru[952]: Chieşd (Sălaj County) in 1796 (their only signed work)[953], Corund[954], Soconzel[955] (both in Satu Mare County), Bicaz, and Orţâţa (both in Maramureş County)[956].

The soldiers involved in the Passion tend to dilate the compositional spaces that they were allotted: they spill out from compositions that seem too narrow to fit them or stride in a scene as if just arriving from another, being caught in between in a sort of interstitial space that is only alluded, being obscured by the thick borders. Some do not appear to have a body (such is the case of the turbaned head between other two turbaned characters standing on the right of Jesus in 'The Arrest'), as if there was no room for him in the composition. Roman soldiers that give the impression of having been lifted out of model books show up in multiple scenes next to soldiers with mongrelised outfits made of mismatched elements: feathered

[948] Cristache-Panait & Scheletti, 'Bisericile de lemn din Sălaj', p. 34.
[949] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 286; Atanasie Popa (1930) Biserica de lemn din Brâglez (jud. Sălaj) [The Wooden Church of Brâglez (Sălaj County)], *ACMIT*, pp. 353–365.
[950] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1978) Biserica Sf. Apostoli Petru şi Pavel din Solomon [Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Solomon], in Godea *et. al*, *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, pp. 402-403.
[951] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 286.
[952] The Land of Codru is a historical region in the northwest of Romania, comprising the territories of Satu Mare, Maramureş, and Sălaj. See Bogdan Codre (2013) Zona Codrului – străveche oază de identitate şi spiritualitate românească [The Land of Codru – an Ancient Oasis of Romanian Identity and Spirituality], *Memoria ethnologica*, 48-49, pp. 96-104.
[953] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, pp. 182, 436-437; Ioana Cristache-Panait (1978) Biserica Sf. Arhangheli Mihail şi Gavril din Chieşd [The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church in Chieşd], in Godea *et. al*, *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, pp. 291-294; Bogdan, 'La Paresse et la Peste', p. 158.
[954] The year 1798 inscribed in the book held by God the Father, depicted on the nave's vault, indicates the completion of a phase of the decoration. The stylistic differences point to several phases of execution carried out in the last decades of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Some scholars claim that the painting of the nave and altar is the oldest, but not older than the last two decades of the eighteenth century, and the narthex was probably painted at the beginning of the nineteenth century. See Ivan Iuraşciuc & Sabin Şainelic (1975) Monumente de arhitectură populară: bisericile de lemn din zona Codru [Monuments of Folk Architecture: wooden churches in the Codru region], *Satu Mare, studii şi comunicări*, p. 183. Others claim that the painting of the church was realised in three successive phases: the narthex and the iconostasis were initially decorated, then the nave's vault in 1798 and finally the altar. Marin I. Mălinaş Bisericile de lemn din Judeţul Satu Mare [The Wooden Churches in Sălaj County], in Godea *et. al*, *Monumente istorice bisericeşti*, p. 458.
[955] The church of Soconzel perished in a fire. The painting of the apse and the nave dates back to the end of the eighteenth century, and that of the narthex to the first half of the next. See Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 377.
[956] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 437.

turbans suggestive of the East and hats with flat crown and long, thick feathers similar to the hajduks' headdress are combined with the Roman armour; in some cases, the painter makes a complete digression from the classical to the Ottoman or Hungarian, conjuring soldiers fully dressed in the Oriental and Hungarian garb. The character pulling off Christ's mantle shows an uncanny resemblance to the hajduks (bandits; Turkish, *haydut*) of Stephen Bocskai[957], as it can be seen in an early seventeenth-century engraving (Fig. 59). The gravity of the subject matter, the fact that masked as well as conspicuous Ottomans and Hungarians take part in Christ's agony might reflect the an animosity towards them and a portrayal in which they become the enemy.

59. W. P. Zimermann. Stephen Bocksai accompanied by hajduks in Slovakia (upper Hungary), 1605. Retrieved from http://warfare.netau.net/17/Stephano_Botschray-1605.htm.

[957] In 1604, Stephen Bocskai, Hungarian Protestant nobleman and future prince of Transylvania, recruited hajduks to support him in his rebellion against the Habsburgs. See John Tolan, Gilles Veinstein & Henry Laurens (2013) Europe and the Islamic World. A History (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press), p. 199. The Hungarian hajduks emerged as a new social and political factor in the second half of the fifteenth century. After 1526 they were considered not only raiding troops, but armed groups that fought to protect their home country, and from 1552 onwards they established an independent military groups, aimed at conducting systematic battles against the Turks. See Beata Varga (2018) Role of Hajduks and Cossaks in the 16th and 17th Century Hungarian and Ukrainian Society, in Yücel Öztürk & Nuri Kavak (Eds) *CIEES. Concepts, Sources and Methodology in Eastern European Studies*, pp. 25-26. Available at: http://www.piees.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BİLDİRİ-KİTABI-ciees-2018-SONWEB.pdf (accessed 19 February 2019).

60. Jesus before Annas, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.
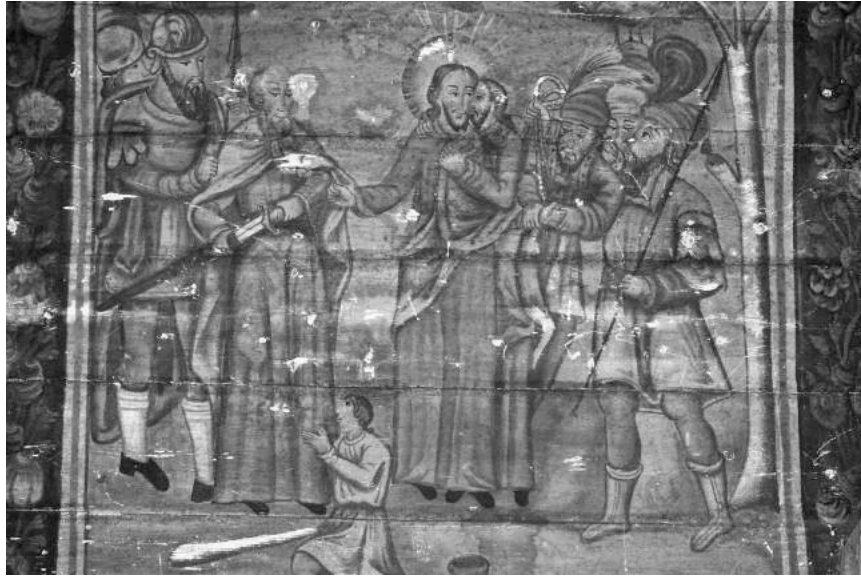
61. The Arrest of Christ, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

62. The Road to Golgotha, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

63. The Mocking of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.
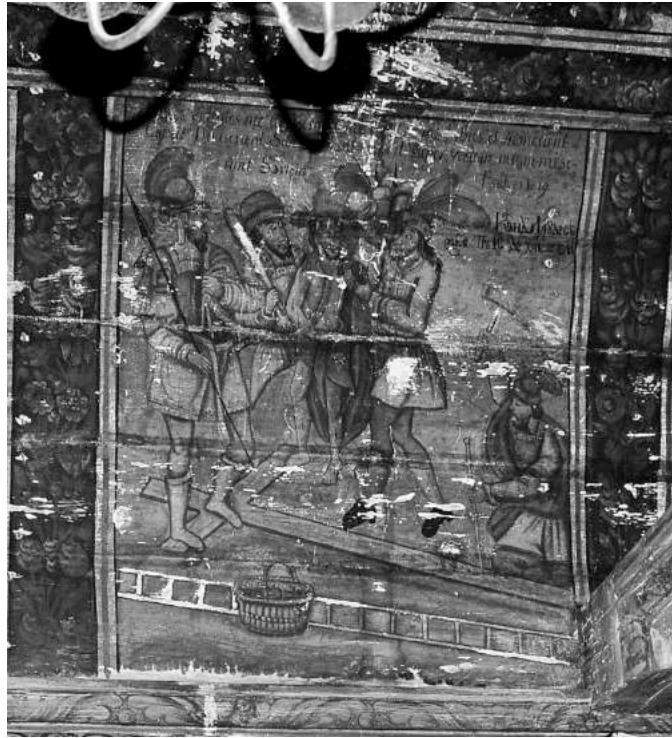
64. The Disrobing of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

Note the mirror reflection in the soldier's polished epauliere. The face reflected is neither marked by individuality nor ethnicity, it only has protruding widely open eyes looking so intensely as if to engrave into the staring figure's mind the events witnessed. The occurrence of this catoptric motif might not be accidental. We do not know for which purpose the painter ideated such an image, but it has the power to create a connection between the internal gaze and the external gaze, of the viewer, immersing him into the suffering of the Passion.

65. The Disrobing of Christ, detail. Photo: Iulv 2017.

66. The Nailing to the Cross, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

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7.7 The Ascension of the Lord Church, Bica

67. Southern view of the Ascension Church, Bica. Photo: November 2015.

The Ascension of the Lord Church in Bica (Cluj County) was built in 1765, and replaced an older edifice, whose former existence is testified by donated artworks and religious books that were part of its patrimony and are or used to be kept in the current church (a tryptich[958] in 1563, a *Chiriacodromion* from Alba Iulia in 1708, and an *Antologhion*[959] from Râmnic by Ion Ilea, merchant in Mănăştur village).[960] Carpenter Nicolae Rar, who incised his name on the entrance portal, built the church from oak and fir.[961] Its planimetry is typical: it has a rectangular shaped main body to which a recessed pentagonal apse is attached.[962] The tower has an open gallery and a parapet made of fretted planks. The porch with arcades extends on the southern side where the entrance

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[958] At present, the tryptich is part of the permanent exhibition of the Old Romanian Art Gallery, the National Art Museum of Romania. Information available at: http://www.cdep.ro/interpel/2002/r867A.pdf (accessed 20 February 2019).
[959] The *Antologhion* is an Orthodox religious book containing the services for the feasts of the Saints over the liturgical year. See Vasile Grăjdan (2016) *Oralitatea cântării bisericeşti din Ardeal* [The Orality of Transylvanian Hymns], vol. 2 (Sibiu: Editura Astra Museum), p. 42.
[960] Cristache-Panait, 'Consideraţii', p. 58.
[961] Măruţoiu *et al.* (Eds), *Biserici de lemn din Transilvania*, p. 30.
[962] Cristache-Panait, 'Consideraţii', p. 58.

is situated.[963] The semi-circular portal is decorated with haulms, geometrical motifs, and rosettes.[964]

68. Detail. The porch and entrance of the Ascension Church, southern side. Photo: November 2015.

The mural painting executed in 1774 ('18 November 1774', according to the inscription on the altar) was attributed to Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu.[965] The inscription left on the iconostasis, above the royal doors, reads: 'This holy church was painted in the days and at the initiative of the people written below: firstly master Popa Toma, [then] epitrop Lazăr Ştefan, epitrop Toşa Marian, Popşă Ilie and all his sons, epitrop Ile Andrei, Zirbo Mihaiu, Colde Simion Colnicu gave 3 mărieşi each.'[966] The narthex preserves the scene of Adam and Eve on the western wall and a full-length depiction of the myrrhbearing women. Medallions encasing the *Pantocrator*, the Holy Spirit, the 'Ancient of Days', and various prophets cover the vault of the nave. The nave's western wall retains the scenes of 'Saint George Slaying the Dragon', 'Saint Constantine and Helena', and the Holy Spirit. Above the walls, in the lower registers of the vault, scenes from the life of Jesus and the Passion are depicted. The iconostasis shows the frieze of apostles above the royal doors, the row of prophets with Mother of God in its centre in the subsequent tier, and the Resurrection in the upper tier. The apse illustrates the Holy Trinity on its vault, holy fathers on the walls, and the 'Burial of Jesus' on the altar.[967] The painting presents Baroque

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[963] Măruţoiu *et al.* (Eds), *Biserici de lemn din Transilvania*, p. 30.
[964] Ioana Cristache-Panait (1980) Decoraţia sculptată a monumentelor istorice de lemn din judeţul Cluj [Sculpted Decoration of the Historical Wooden Monuments in Cluj], *MIA*, 1, p. 46.
[965] Cristache-Panait, 'Consideraţii', p. 59.
[966] Bendea, *Repertoar biserici de lemn*, p. 32.
[967] Idem.

influences, as a result of the painter's artistic environment and instruction.
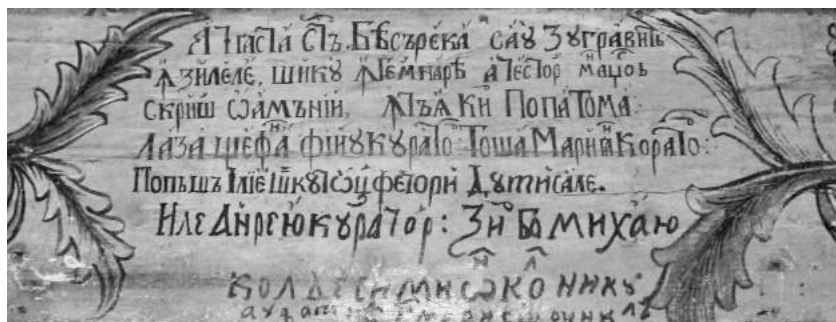
69. Inscription on the iconostasis, above the royal doors. Photo: November 2015.

The church is still used by parishioners and is well preserved. In 1996, a project was drawn up for the restoration of the painting and presented to the National Monuments Commission for approval. Due to organisational and financial reasons, the works that started in 1997 were stopped.[968] However, the painting presents itself in good conditions. Some damage was done to the painting when large portions on the nave's western wall were destroyed to practice openings for the believers in the narthex to better hear and see the service.

70. Opening made in the wall separating the narthex of the nave. Photo: November 2015.

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[968] Letter written by the minister of culture Răzvan Theodorescu to the Chamber of Deputies on 10 February 2003. Available at: http://www.cdep.ro/interpel/2002/r867A.pdf (accessed 20 February 2019).

Simion's signature on the icon at Dretea ('This holy icon was paid by the servant of God Tat Ioan to give alms to the living and the dead. Painter Siladi Şimon, apprentice of boyar B(…)dor Andraş of Cluj.')[969] introduces him as someone who did not conceal the pride and pleasure he took in his accomplishment. He might even be regarded as boastful in comparison to Dimitrie 'the humble'. Still, his haughtiness is grounded in his artistry, for which the icon at Dretea stands proof, especially in the precision with which he reproduces physiognomic details and the impression of three-dimensionality that he imprints to his figures. Christ has a tall forehead, fine and straight nose, and pronounced eyes.

Simion blends techniques and compositional devices from the Catholic iconography in his work. Influenced by Ioan Bob's theology[970], he forsook the models in the *hermeneias* that prescribed a juxtaposition of the evoked episodes for a naturalist execution that incorporated the scientific discoveries of the time (in anatomy, archaeology, botany, and geography). In so doing, he particularised the biblical or hagiographic episode in order to ease rural churchgoers into the reception of its message.[971]

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[969] Dumitran, 'Siladi Şimon, ucenicul', pp. 271-272.

[970] The bishop Ioan Bob (1739-1830) implemented the Josephine ecclesiastical policy, which professed a pragmatic enlightenment. He envisaged the role of the priests in the wider context of their contribution to the dissemination of knowledge. He placed emphasis on pastoral attributions, materialised in the obligation to carry out canonical visitations in order to determine the condition of churches and endowment of parishes, examine priests' morals, and the manner in which they fulfilled their liturgical tasks, as well as to investigate the morality and religious education of the believers. The second session of the last synod convened by the bishop (16 September 1821) depicted, in far from idyllic picture, the reality of the religious life of the diocese, and analysed the causes of impiety, corrupted morals, and decaying ecclesiastical discipline. These were found in the illiteracy of the population, the ignorance of the principles of the Christian religion, and the persistence of superstitions. It found explanations for the listed flaws in the small number of schools and the rarity of educated priests that could combat the vices of believers and cultivate their virtues. See Daniel Dumitran (2007) Un timp al reformelor. Biserica română unită din Transilvania sub conducerea episcopului Ioan Bob (1782-1830) [A Period of Reforms. The Romanian Uniate Church in Transylvania under the Patronage of the Bishop Ioan Pop (1782-1830)] (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut), pp. 102, 285, 316; Ioan M. Bota (1994) Istoria Bisericii universale şi a Bisericii româneşti de la origini până în zilele noastre [The History of the Universal Church and of the Romanian Church from Their Origins to the Present] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Viaţa creştină).

[971] Victor Cioban (2019) Simion Silaghi 'Sălăgeanu' (1760-1830), *Caiete Silvane*. https://www.caietesilvane.ro/articole/3853/Simion-Silaghi-Salageanu-1760-1830.html (accessed February 2019).
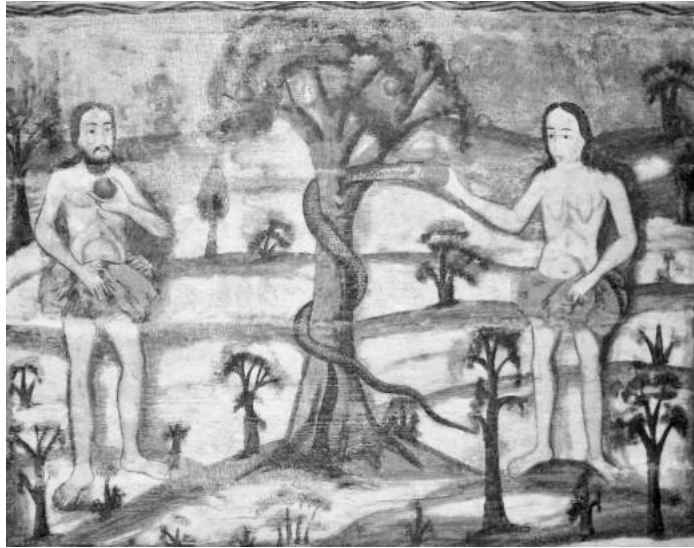
71. Adam and Eve Committing the Original Sin, narthex, western wall. Photo: November 2015.

The scarcity of reliable sources cumbered the attempts to write Simion's biography. As is the case of other painters of the epoch, the information provided by registers is ambiguous, all the more when it comes to the date and place of birth[972]. As mentioned before, the main issue is the scant number of demographic records, caused either by destructions produced by natural calamities, socio-political conflicts (wars, uprisings, pillages, and forays) or the carelessness and lack of accuracy in listing such events. Tentative ideas on his origin and lineage focus on stylistic similarities, inscriptions and parochial registers, such as the idea put forth by Dumitran or on the noble genealogy, idea advanced by Porumb and developed by Victor Cioban. His allegedly longevous career made Dumitran inquire if it involved just one person or different persons sharing the same name, inherited by paternal lineage. According to her hypothesis, there was a Simion 'the father' (that died around 1830), who married Olimpiada Moisi and settled down in Abrud, where he later established his workshop. They had several children together, amongst whom Simion 'the son', who

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[972] Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, pp. 133-134.

married the daughter of Isidor Alpini/Albini[973] and had a child by the name of Simion, 'the grandson',[974] the author of the iconostasis at Soharu (dated 1853)[975]. Moreover, she traces his roots in the county of Sălaj, relying in her reasoning on the phonetic analogy between the cognomen Silaghi/Sălăgeanu and the name of the Greek-Catholic curacy of Silvania, which in time became known as Sălaj.[976] The idea of a noble descent suggests that the painter might be a successor of the Szilágyi of Horogszeg family. Cioban believes that the patronymics of Silaghi/Sălăgeanu refer to a paternally transmitted heredity rather than to a geographic space. In this scenario, the family took over the name of the founder (who lived in the thirteenth century) or the feudal domains he owned (consisting of villages on the Sălaj Valley), but without profiting from afferent privileges. As such, it was a secondary branch separated from the main family before 1350, as a result of a multiple succession or misalliance. Cioban advances this theory by arguing that the family survived the political tensions in the second half of the fifteenth century, which caused the extinction of the direct line in the absence of male descendants; with the passage of generations it lost its noble status, but forged a confessional identity, sustaining its status through education.[977]

The semantic ambiguity disappears when dealing with the date of birth. Nevertheless, confusion regarding the genealogy and the lack of clear regulations on the recording of anthroponyms (only the baptism name was written down, and its repetition prevented the formulation of precise answers). Assumptions were made based on customary practices (celebration of feast days) and workshop rules (it is assumed pupils could enter a workshop at the age of twelve). Considering the inscription from Dretea (1773), which confirms the position of apprentice in the workshop of master Andraş, it was concluded that Silaghi was born around 1760.[978]

Simion's initial works were tributary to the Ukrainian artistic milieu, which he might have grasped through the instruction given by his master. After settling in Abrud, he adopted the Western manner

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[973] Originary from Cut (Alba County), he was the Greek-Catholic vicar of Silvania between 1828-1835 and a candidate for the position of bishop of Blaj. See *Şematism*, Blaj, 1900, pp. 71-72.
[974] Dumitran, 'Pictorul Simion Silaghi Sălăgeanu', pp. 196-206.
[975] Ibid., p. 205, illustration of a fragment from the painting of the iconostasis on p. 228.
[976] Ibid., p. 191.
[977] Cioban, 'Simion Silaghi 'Sălăgeanu', *Caiete Silvane.*
[978] Idem.

practiced by Ştefan Tenețchi.[979] The fact that Ştefan was buried in Abrud in the cemetery of the Descent of the Holy Spirit Church, which was Simion's parish church, means that they might have known each other.[980] If not, Simion definitely studied the iconostasis that Ştefan painted for the Greek-Catholic cathedral in Blaj.[981]

The stance that the painter takes against tradition is also reflected by his conception of the creation process. He dissociated himself from the fatidic approach, which implied that the precision of representation is determined by factors beyond the artist's volition and technique, and embraced an intellectualised perspective, which placed emphasis on spatial organisation (symmetry and proportions). His preparation did not resume to a set of norms of conduct and purifying rituals, but to the formation of professional skills that heeded the observation of the environment. As a consequence, he fit the typology of the career master, which used the subject matter to achieve social honours.[982] The icon becomes for him a way to advance in a portraiture career at noble courts (in the 'Mother of God' of Fodora (1775), the Virgin is portrayed as a princess, and angels seem to be part of the nobles' retinue), achieve financial stability or post-mortem distinction.[983]

His devotion to aristocracy makes him the advocate of a pacifist discourse, which finds expression in the icon of Archangel Michael (1780, unknown commissioner). Although it evokes a military saint, the image is devoid of any war connotations. The painter used his draughtsmanship and colouring skills to minimise the presence of the punitive object. The traditional sword of fire that the angel holds in his left hand is painted in a hue similar to that of wood; interacting with the background of the icon, it becomes almost invisible. The situation is quite different in the case of the cup held in the right hand, which even if painted the same, it can be easily detected thanks to its spiralling shape. Simion subverts the dogmatic representation and confers it nuptial connotations, as the portrait of the archangel evokes a rather feminine silhouette.[984]

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[979] von Achen & Dumitran, *Kissed Again and Again*, p. 58.
[980] Dumitran, 'Pictorul Simion Silaghi-Sălăgeanu', pp. 193-194.
[981] von Achen & Dumitran, *Kissed Again and Again*, p. 58.
[982] Jean Cassou (1950) *Situation de l'art modern* (Paris: Editions de Minuit).
[983] Cioban, 'Simion Silaghi 'Sălăgeanu', *Caiete Silvane.*
[984] Idem.

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The confidence in his skills allowed Simion to select a repertory of themes and figures according to his personal sensitivity.[985] Thus, he sought to avoid episodes of martyrdom, persecution or infernal feuds, which he replaced with paradisiacal reveries, permeated by a sense of intimacy and moral lessons. This optimism, particularly visible in his rendition of the Last Judgment, can be interpreted as an expression of the philosophy of the Enlightenment (the theory of natural rights urged the reduction or even the abolition of punitive legislation).[986]

The soldiers that he portrays in the Passion of Bica display the physiognomic features of the Turks. The handlebar moustaches in particular betray their ethnicity. The turbans also play an important part in constructing the image of the Turks that borrowed the semblance of Roman soldiers. Even if persecution is downplayed in his other works, the violence of the tormentors is conspicuous in the scenes of the Passion, especially in 'The Flogging'. The blood dripping on Christ's exposed body when being whipped by rods intensifies His agony.

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[985] Ionescu, 'Activitatea pictorului Simion Silaghi-Sălăjeanu', pp. 160-164.
[986] Cioban, 'Simion Silaghi 'Sălăgeanu', *Caiete Silvane.*

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72. The Betrayal and Arrest of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo:
November 2015.

73. The Sanhedrin Trial, nave, southern wall. Photo: November 2015.
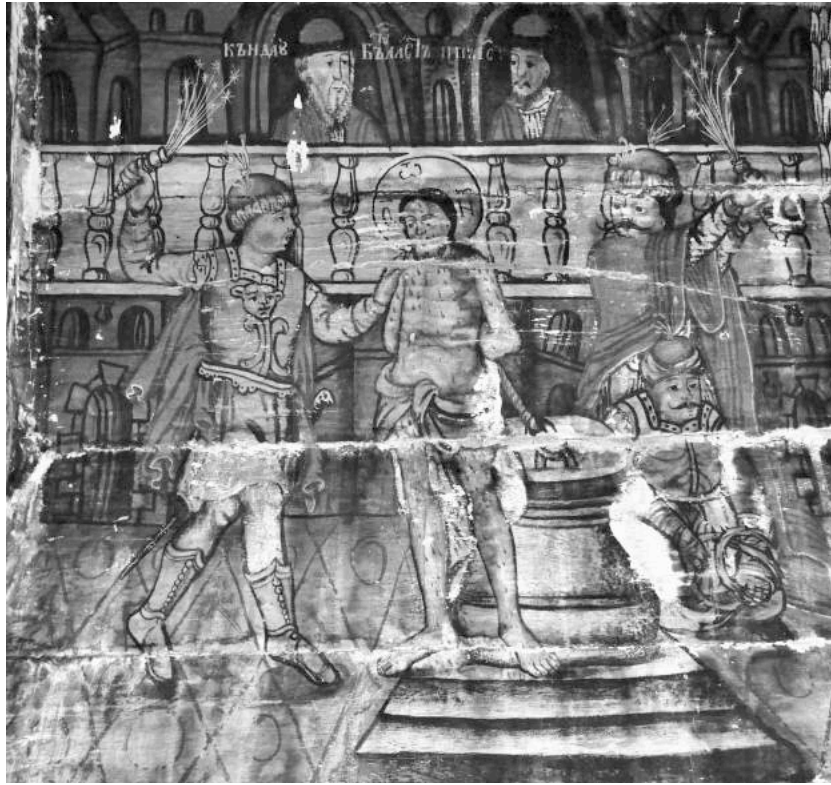
74. The Flogging of Christ, nave, northern wall. Photo: November 2015.

The image on the torso armour of the soldier on the left reveals a head with grotesque features: flap-ears, porcine nose, and a leering mouth. It seems to be the hideous face of a Jew or of the Jews as a collective. This derogatory motif used in a scene of overt violence involves the Jews as masterminds behind the torment of Christ. The ones that put their will into practice, the ones that execute their command are the Turks.

7.8 The Descent of the Holy Spirit Church, Sartăş

75. Northern view of the Descent of the Holy Spirit Church, Sartăş. Photo: July 2017.

The wooden church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Sartăş (Alba County) was built sometime during the eighteenth century, replacing an older church[987], whose existence was inferred from the data listed in the conscription of 1560 that adverted to the gold gravels on the Arieş Valley[988]. The erection date, which must have been written on the entrance portal, was lost prior to 1827 when the western side was enlarged and a new entrance was made. The church lies on a platform of stone slabs and has a rectangular body with a recessed pentagonal apse. It does not have a porch. The bell-tower mounted on the narthex has an open gallery laid on consoles and surmounted by a pointed steeple. The staircase providing access to the bell chamber is external.[989] The community's pursuit of durability is noticeable in modifications of the church fabric, less perishable materials being used to consolidate its walls and roof; the exterior walls were coated with plaster and the roof was covered with metal sheet, this renewal altering the initial appearance of the church.

The interior was painted in two distinct phases. In the first phase, the painting of the nave was executed, as the inscription above the door to the nave reads: 'This church was painted on 7 November

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[987] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, p. 49.
[988] Paul Binder (1975) Geografia istorică a Munţilor Apuseni în orânduirea feudală (sec. XIII-XVII) [The Historical Geography of the Apuseni Mountains under the Medieval Organisation (Thirteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)], *Apulum*, 13, pp. 519-540.
[989] Cristache-Panait, *Arhitectura de lemn din Transilvania,* vol. 1, p. 215.

1780 and the painters were paid from the church funds. By Gheorghe Iacovici the Painter, Ciungar Toader, and Daniil Telea, 1780'.[990] Gheorghe is none other than the son of Iacov from the painting centre of Răşinari. The painters followed an iconographic repertory of post-Brâncovan tradition. The axis of the vault is covered by medallions encasing 'Savaoph, God the Father', the *Pantocrator*, the *Oranta*, and 'Saint John the Baptist', surrounded by seraphs. The median tier shows holy martyrs inside arch frames and is divided from the lower tier, which illustrates the life and Passion of Christ inside medallions, by a border of petal rosettes. The upper register of the walls depicts warrior saints. The western wall illustrates Saints Zosima and Mary of Egypt, Adam and Eve, 'Daniel in the Lions' Den', and Saint Elijah in his chariot.[991] It is believed that Gheorghe had the greatest contribution to the painting; he is the first to take credit when claiming authorship and also left his initials on the scene of 'The Mocking' and the medallion encasing Saint John the Baptist. He is the sole author of the royal icons, which show the *Hodigitria*, the *Pantocrator*, Saint Nicholas, and the *Pentecost*. The former three were made in 1782, while the latter was made in 1783.[992] Their rich decoration, gilded backgrounds with relief patterns, foliage, and volutes recall Simion Silaghi's icons.[993] Toader and Daniil are thought to be Gheorghe's apprentices.[994] The second phase corresponds to the decoration of the apse realised by 'Nicolae Cuc of Lupşa at the expense of the whole village' in 1826 and narthex realised by the same painter in collaboration with Nicola Hisem a year later.[995] Nicolae and Nicola are painters trained in the workshop established by Simion Silaghi in Abrud.[996]

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[990] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, pp. 49-50.
[991] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 345.
[992] Ioan Opriş, Mihaela Bodea-Bonfert & Marius Porumb (2001) Monumente istorice de pe Valea Arieşului – itinerarii culturale [Historical Monuments on the Arieş Valley – Cultural Itineraries] (Bucharest: Oscar Print), p. 186.
[993] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 345.
[994] Apart from Sartăş, Toader collaborated with Gheorghe at Valea Largă (Mureş County) in 1782 and Galda de Sus (Alba County) in 1803. We are not aware of Daniil's other works. See Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', annex 1 Repertoriul pictorilor [Repertory of Painters], p. 68, respectively p. 102.
[995] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, p. 51.
[996] Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', annex 1 Repertoriul pictorilor, pp. 70-71.

76. Lady of the Sign (*Oranta*), the vault of the nave. Photo: Iulv 2017.

77. Frieze with saints, apse. Photo: July 2017.

78. The monstrous mouth of hell, narthex, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

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79. Representation of Death, narthex, western wall, near the entrance door. Photo: July 2017.

The construction of the new church named after the same patronal feast in 2005 preempted the wooden church of its daily practices and ritual. Much of the damage visited on its mural painting was caused by functional ware, dampness, and the extension to the west. Despite its darkening and small portions where it faded or suffered erosion, the painting is in good condition.

Gheorghe's first signed work is the decoration of the wooden church of Iernut (Mureş County) dated 1763; he signed it as 'Gheorghe of Cetatea de Baltă'[997] and used the same appellative in his signatures on the icon of the Archangel Michael, made together with Ion the Painter[998], and the icons of the *Pentecost* and Saint Nicholas at Mănăstireni[999]. Starting from the last two decades of the eighteenth century, he recommends himself as 'Gheorghie Boiariu' and signs under this name: the painting of the wooden church of Valea Largă[1000]; the icon of the Coronation of the Virgin at Ponor (1802)[1001]; the painting of the stone

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[997] Popa, 'Biserica de lemn din Iernut', p. 262.
[998] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 142.
[999] Ibid., p. 140.
[1000] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 448; Cristache-Panait, 'Rolul zugravilor de la sud de Carpaţi', p. 87.
[1001] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 300; Dumitran & Cucui, *Zugravii de la Feisa*, pp. 84-85.

church of Galda de Sus[1002]. His other cognomen is 'Gheorghe from Cacova Aiudului', used in the inscription of the church of Ardeova (Cluj County) in 1767: 'Gheorghe, son of Iacob Popovici, painter Râmniceanu from Aiud Cacova'[1003]. The sobriquet of Râmniceanu might be in fact an erroneous reading of the inscription, Dumitran claiming that 'Răşinăreanu' is a more plausible interpretation, since it relates to the painter's connection with the centre of Răşinari.[1004] His establishment in Cacova Aiudului (nowadays Livezile, Alba County)[1005] is also signalled by the painting on the access door to the nave of the church of Livezile executed in 1765 by Man Sântion, another apprentice of Gheorghe.[1006]

The painter also authored the icons of: 'Mother of God with Child' at Gura Arieşului (Alba County); the Archangel Michael dated 1797 at Căpud (Alba County); Saint Nicholas (1792), the *Pantocrator*, and 'Mother of God with Child' (1802) at Râmeţ-Pleaşa (Alba County); the *Pantocrator* and the Archangel Michael at Turdaş (Hunedoara County)[1007]. The painting of the stone church of Cicău (Alba County) in 1781, initially attributed to his father[1008] was reassigned to him based on the analogies with the painting of the church of Geoagiu de Sus (Alba County) realised by the painter in 1792-1793.[1009] The painting of the apse of the church of Găbud (Alba County), previously thought to be the work of his brother Nicolae[1010], was also reattributed to him, based on the similarities with the painting he executed for the church of Cojocani (Alba County) in 1771.[1011]

As mentioned before, the painter is an adept of the post-

[1002] Dumitran & Cucui, *Zugravii de la Feisa*, p. 22.
[1003] Augustin Bunea, Mănăstirea din Stobor, *Răvaşul*, 10 October 1903, no. 28.
[1004] See Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', annex 1 Repertoriul pictorilor, p. 48.
[1005] Emilian Cioran (1940) Biserica cu hramul Cuvioasa Paraschiva din Răşinari [Church of the Pious Paraskeva in Răşinari], in *Omagiu Înalt Prea Sfinţiei Sale Dr. Nicolae Bălan Mitropolitul Ardealului, la douăzeci de ani de arhipăstorire* [Hommage to His Holiness the Metropolitan of Transylvania Dr. Nicolae Bălan, at Twenty Years of Service] (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane), p. 334; Porumb, *Dicţionar*, pp. 142, 208.
[1006] Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', annex 1 Repertoriul pictorilor, p. 48; Porumb, *Dicţionar*, p. 218; Hărdălău, 'Zugravii din secolele al XVIII-lea şi al XIX-lea', p. 398.
[1007] Mihai Blăjan (1978) Biserica de lemn din Turdaş [The Wooden Church in Turdaş], in *Îndrumător pastoral* [Pastoral Compendium], vol. 2 (Alba Iulia: Editura Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române de Alba Iulia), p. 108.
[1008] Porumb, *Dicţionar*, pp. 46, 77; Dumitran, Cucui, Mihu & Pop, *Iacov Zugravul*, pp. 26, 68-70.
[1009] Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', annex 1 Repertoriul pictorilor, p. 49.
[1010] Cristache-Panait, *Biserici de lemn monumente istorice*, p. 99; Dumitran & Cucui, *Zugravii de la Feisa*, pp. 22-23, 28-29.
[1011] Dumitran, 'Pictura românească în judeţul Alba', annex 1 Repertoriul pictorilor, p. 49.

Brâncovan style, but several of his artworks give an allure of Baroque art. As pointed out before, his collaboration with Simion Silaghi for the royal icons at the church of Albac, as well as the icon of the Prophet Elijah at Întregalde and the iconostasis of Pious Paraskeva Church in Răşinari evince an affinity to the Baroque manner.

In the Passion of Sartăş, all soldiers but one are given Hungarian physiognomy and costume. They wear different types of hats (*kolpaks*; fur brimmed hats with falling top looped backward or forward, decorated with tassels and feathers; and coifs), buttoned short and long coats with round or rectangular collars and long sleeves, fastened with scarfs around the waist, mantle, narrow trousers, hose, and boots with elongated tops. They have twirled moustaches and hair that covers the neckline. The one that stands out in the soldierly array is a turbaned figure, who looms in the scene of 'The Road to Golgotha'. He is not drawn from the Gospels or pattern notebooks, but invented by the painter to act as an instigator of violence amongst Golgotha's henchmen. He dissociates himself from the cluster of soldiers on the left, coming from behind Christ and wielding a whip. His outfit reproduces that of the Hungarian soldiers; the erratic elements that diverge from the recurrent apparel and countenance are the large, slightly ovular turban and handlebar moustache. This artifice also applies to Simon of Cyrene, who is dressed the same, but is differentiated from the others by his gentle expression, short hair, beard with moustache, and the absence of a hat. Clothing seems to partly lose its capacity to articulate ethnicity, becoming more of a template; the ethnicity and identity of the personages are designated by facial appearance and headdress.

80. The Betrayal and Arrest of Christ, nave, southern wall. Photo: July 2017.

81. Jesus before
Annas, nave,
southern wall.
Photo: July 2017.

82. Jesus before
Caiaphas, nave,
southern wall.
Photo: July 2017.

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83. The Mocking of Christ, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

84. The Road to Golgotha, nave, northern wall. Photo: July 2017.

Chapter 8 Conclusions

Seen from the perspective of power structures under which the Transylvanian Romanians lived and in relation to which they positioned themselves, the iconic depiction of the holy kings of Hungary on the murals of the churches of Crişcior and Ribiţa and the scene of the fallen in war integrated in the Last Judgement of the church of Leşnic are fifteenth-century iconographic antecedents of depictions of Hungarian and Ottoman soldiers in the Passion of Christ. The collective portrayal of these saints in churches founded and decorated by Romanian noblemen constitutes an expression of their political allegiance to the king, which embodied the legitimising source of power. It also stresses their military duties, which characterised their status and ensured their social ascent. In the context of the growing Turkish menace at the southern borders of the Hungarian kingdom, the adoption of this representation can be seen as their pledge to form a common front against the Turks. The presence of the fallen warrior in the composition of the Last Judgement, which has been read as the donor's loss of a family member in a battle against the Turks, accentuates their image as a terrifying common enemy. With the increase of the contribution of rural communities, which were under Hungarian seigneurial control, to fresco and icon painting in the eighteenth century, the image of the Hungarians morphs into that of the oppressor. The peasantry's defiance of the established social order is reflected in depictions of the parable of the 'Rich Man and poor Lazarus', in which the wealthy man is dressed as a Hungarian nobleman, and of the Ressurection, in which Hungarian soldiers guard Christ's tomb. In representations of the Last Judgement, they receive the same treatment as the Turks, being subjected to the torments of hell. These images were converted into a pictorial device that allowed the Romanian peasantry to demarcate their identity and achieve unity in their beliefs.

The allegorical roles of the Ottomans Turks and Habsburgs in the Passion series were strongly shaped by the contemporary political realities. They were instrumental to the religious imaginary in creating an alleviating moral that, dissociating between right and wrong, placed the Orthodox Romanians amongst the morally righteous. This

dichotomy is rooted in their collective need for spiritual relief provided by administering justice through the imposition of punishment on the oppressive powers: having been judged and found guilty, they were subjected to the divine will, as the ultimate form of retribution. Therefore, this representation entails a hierarchical ordering that privileges the marginalised and discredits the influential, allaying the disempowered by overturning the existent positions in the social hierarchy as a form of remedial justice.

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ASA   Arhivele Statului Alba, Alba-Iulia [Alba County Directorate of National Archives], Romania.

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Abbreviations
ACMIT   Anuarul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice. Secţia pentru Transilvania
AFTAŞ   Anuarul Facultăţii de Teologie 'Andrei Şaguna'
AIEF   Anuarul Institutului de Etnografie şi Folclor 'Constantin Brăiloiu'

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AIIAC	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie Cluj-Napoca
AIIAI	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie 'A. D. Xenopol'
AIIN	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Naţională
AMET	Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis
ASUI	Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' Iaşi
AT	Ars Transsilvaniae
AUAH	Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice
BMI	Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice
BORom	Biserica Ortodoxă Română
JSRI	Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies
MA	Mitropolia Ardealului
MB	Mitropolia Banatului
MI	Monumente istorice
MO	Mitropolia Olteniei
NEMVS	Revista Asociaţiei Culturale Sarmizegetusa
RES	Review of Ecumenical Studies
RM	Revista Muzeelor
RMI	Revista Monumentelor Istorice
RMM	Revista Muzeelor şi Monumentelor
RT	Revista teologică
SCIA	Studii şi cercetări de istoria artei
SCIA-AP	Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică
SUCH	Studia Universitatis Cibiensis. Series Historica
SUH	Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Series Historia
SUT	Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Series Theologia Catholica

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