

# THE GOTHIC STYLE FRESCOES BENEATH THE WESTERN GALLERY OF THE CHURCH OF SÂNTĂMĂRIE-ORLEA

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**Keywords:** Mural painting, 1400, Saint Elizabeth, The Three Holy Hungarian Kings, Pauline Order, St. Paul

**Abstract:** The present study is intended to provide a fresh analysis of the Gothic murals in the currently Protestant church of Sântămărie-Orlea. The church and especially its precious frescoes have raised the interest of many scholars, both Hungarian and Romanian, but the poor state of conservation of the paintings allowed room for many different interpretations. A new reading of these frescoes is proposed here, based on a series of historic copies, until recently unknown, which provide the grounds to clear up some misinterpretations. Nevertheless, a certain degree of incertitude will remain for as long as these valuable paintings, dated around 1400, are not restored. The wall paintings are placed inside semi-circular frames formed beneath the vaults supporting the western gallery. Generally we can say that they represent saints important to the royal court. South of the entrance there is St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the first woman canonized from the Árpád Dynasty, who offered a new model of piety. North to the entrance there is a hardly interpretable mural with standing saints. The middle figure is supposedly representing one of the Three Holy Hungarian Kings. The scene placed on the northern wall, with the inscription *OBIT PAUPER PAULUS*, seems to be an original composition most probably connected with the Pauline order, very close to the royal court, whose important achievement was the transportation of the corpse of St. Paul of Thebes (the order's protector) in 1381 to the monastery from the Buda hills. The determination of the style and of the time when this mural was painted is hampered by the actual state of conservation of the frescoes. There is no doubt that the mural is part of the International Gothic style fresco circle, with elements from Italian *Trecento*, dated around 1400. The restoration of the murals will surely bring out new information and even show completely new valences of the Transylvanian Art.

**Rezumat:** Studiul de față are ca subiect frescele gotice de sub tribuna de vest a bisericii reformate din Sântămărie-Orlea. Picturile s-au aflat mereu în atenția cercetătorilor, dar starea lor de degradare a născut diferite interpretări. Prezentarea de față se bazează pe copii istorice inedite, necunoscute până în prezent. Cu toate acestea, incertitudinile vor persista până când frescele vor fi restaurate. Pictate în chenare semicirculare, cele trei scene prezentate aici reprezintă sfinți al căror cult a fost propagat de curtea regală maghiară. În strânga intrării, pe peretele vestic al navei se află Sfânta Elisabeta, prima sfântă din casa Arpadienilor, reprezentând un nou model de pietate. În dreapta intrării se află o frescă greu de descifrat, cu trei sfinți în picioare, cel din mijloc putându-l reprezenta pe unul dintre cei trei regi sfinți ai Ungariei. Scena de pe peretele de nord, însoțită de inscripția *OBIT PAUPER PAULUS* se pare că este o scenă originală legată de călugării paulini, foarte apropiați de curtea regală, a căror realizare importantă a fost aducerea moștelor Sfântului Paul Eremitul, protectorul ordinului, în mănăstirea din Budaszentlőrinc, în anul 1381. Picturile sunt greu de analizat din cauza stadiului lor de degradare. Este fără dubiu vorba despre o frescă aparținând cercului de picturi al stilului goticului internațional, cu elemente italianizante, databilă în jurul anului 1400. Restaurarea acestor picturi aparent neînsemnate ar putea să dea noi valențe artei gotice transilvănene.

The present study is intended to provide a fresh analysis of the Gothic murals in the currently Protestant church of Sântămărie-Orlea (Hunedoara County). The church and especially its precious frescoes have raised the interest of many scholars, both Hungarian and Romanian, but the poor state of conservation of the paintings allowed room for many different interpretations. A new reading of these frescoes is proposed here, based on a series of historic copies, until recently unknown, which provide the grounds to clear up some misinterpretations.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, a certain degree of incertitude will remain for as long as these valuable paintings, dated around 1400, are not restored.

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<sup>1</sup> The present study is a continuation of my PhD dissertation (Szabó 2008). The purpose of it was not to write a monograph of the church of Sântămărie-Orlea, but to analyse the main *fresco* layer from 1311. During the study it became necessary to clarify the essential problems of the history of the building and those of the different painting layers. One of my primary interests was to complete a study of the documents concerning the historical restorations of the church and to catalogue each representation. This catalogue includes an improved description of the images, their sources and bibliography. It also includes my analysis of the style, iconography and iconology, and also a revised interpretation of the scenes. I present the historical and artistic environment at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, too, with a special focus on the wall paintings of medieval Hungary, paying a special attention to newly discovered frescoes.



Fig. 1. The eastern wall of the nave, frescoes from 1311.

### Short presentation of the church and its frescoes

The church dates back to the last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and consists of a rectangular sanctuary, a nave and a western tower.<sup>2</sup> Dedicated to *Maria Genitricis*, it is related to the foundation of the district of Hațeg around 1270. Research proves a strong connection between the three Árpáadian royal foundations, Sântămărie-Orlea, the nearby Hațeg castle and the town. The essential features of the church and most of the stone carvings belong to this first construction phase, including the tribune of the first floor of the tower which opens to the nave through an arched opening. The oldest decorations of the walls of the church are the several elaborate consecration crosses, partly covered by later *fresco* layers.

In 1300 the Voivode of Transylvania Ladislau Kán usurped, among others, the above mentioned royal possessions, but in 1311, when the nave was painted, the church was supposedly returned to the Hungarian Kingdom. The secondary western gallery of the nave was built before 1311 (maybe in connection with the short patronage of Ladislau Kán), because the frame of the 1311 murals ends before the gallery and in the same time they cover a consecration cross (Figs. 1, 4).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For the presentation of the church and for the historical background see the following studies with bibliography: Szabó 2004, pp. 39-41; Szabó 2007a, pp. 277-280; Szabó 2008, pp. 5-13. Integral concise short presentations at Szabó 2009a.

<sup>3</sup> This theory was first published in Szabó 2004, p. 59, n. 16. See also with more details Szabó 2007a, pp. 277-278, n. 2; Szabó 2008, pp. 32-34. The dating of the western gallery was unclear in the scholarly history. Gróh was the first to notice that the gallery is a secondary, later construction (Gróh 1906, pp. 281-283). Most of the researchers connected this construction to the time when the Kendeffy family became the owner of the church in 1446 (Entz 1967, pp. 241-251, Popa 1988, pp. 232-234, Rusu 1997, pp. 309-315).





Fig. 2. The northern and western wall of the nave.

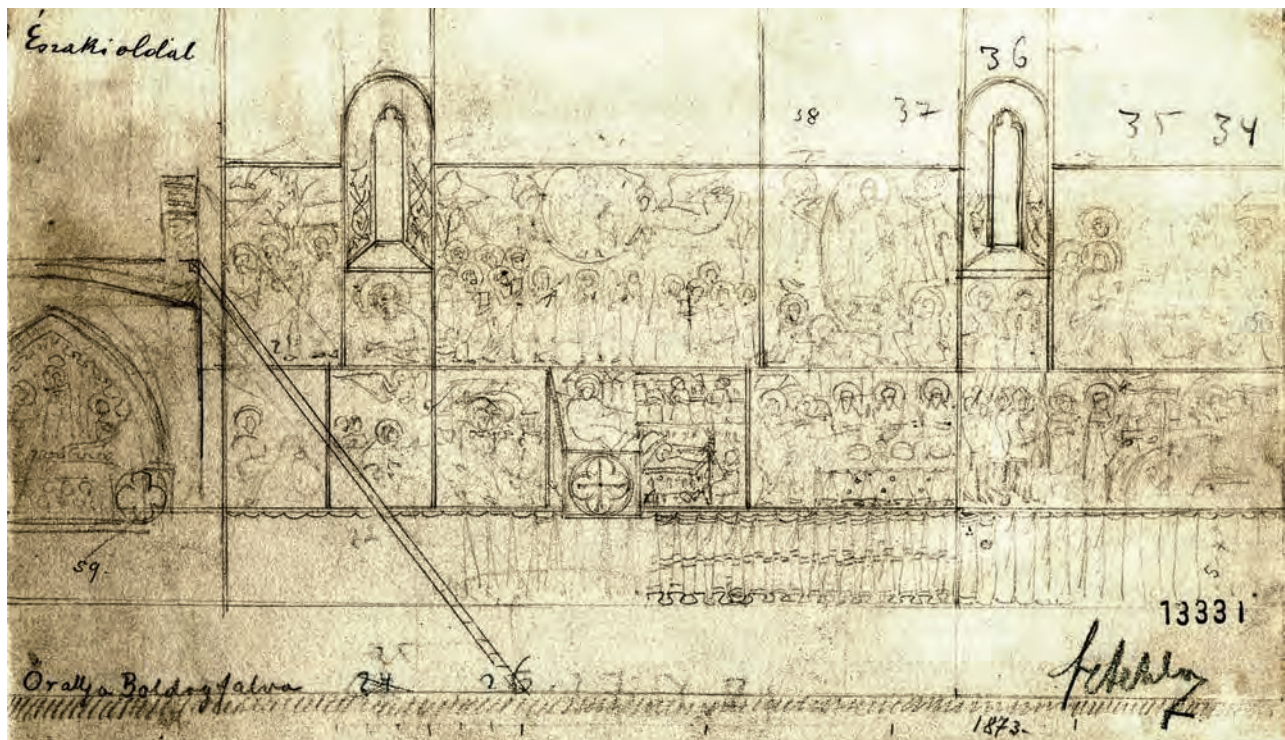


Fig. 3. The northern wall of the nave. Historical copy, Ottó Sztchlo, 1873. FGYNÖSZK Collection, Fm 575.



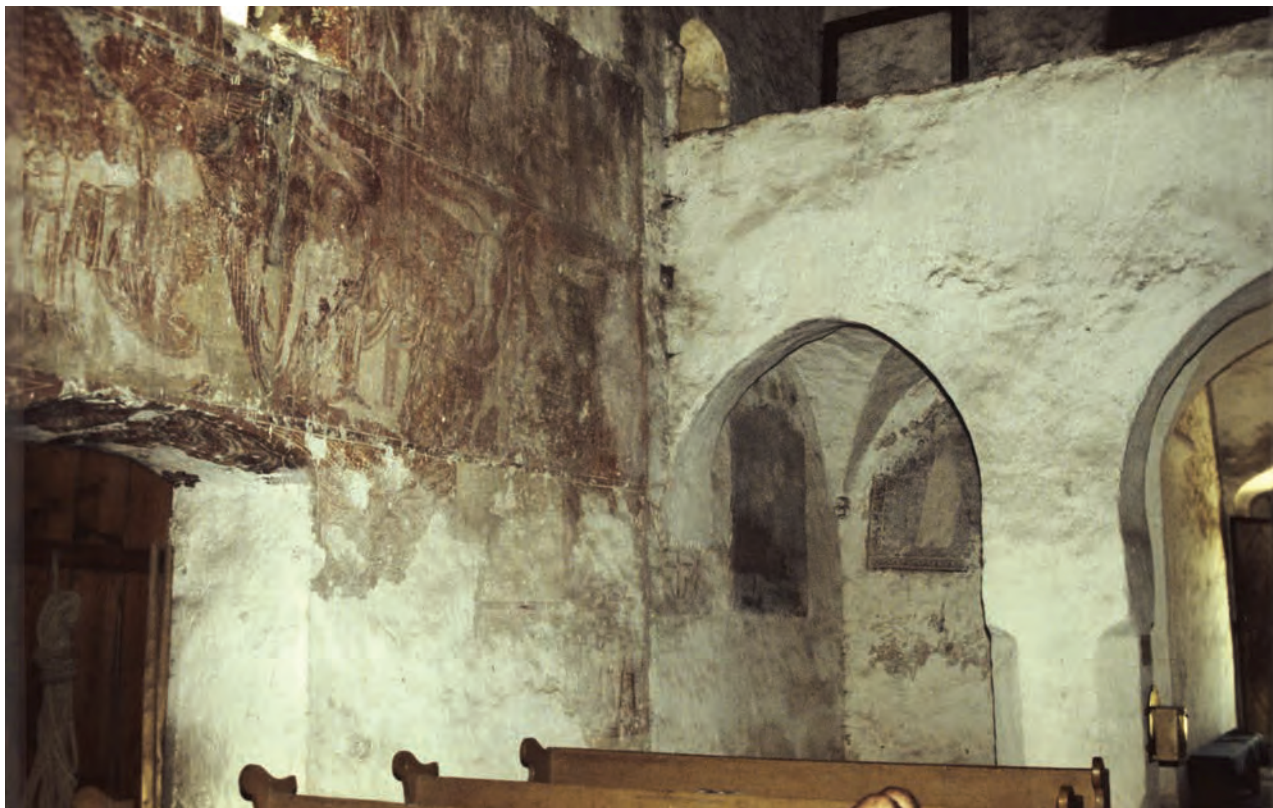


Fig. 4. The southern and western wall of the nave.

The most important *fresco* layer is found in the nave, and it represents scenes from the life of Christ and Virgin Mary (Figs. 1-5).<sup>4</sup> The ensemble is unique among the poorly preserved artworks of medieval Hungary of the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. An inscription establishes 1311 as the year of their creation. They represent a special mixture of Byzantine and Western art. The importance of the “Italo-Byzantine” style murals in Transylvania needs to be stressed out here, given the appurtenance of the paintings of Sântămărie-Orlea to this particular context.<sup>5</sup> This Byzantine influence is not that of the contemporary Palaiologan art, but the one

<sup>4</sup> For the improved identification of the scenes see first: Szabó 2004, pp. 43-44, 57-58. The lower side of the northern wall represents, from left to right, the scenes of the childhood of Mary (Annunciation of St. Anne, Annunciation of Joachim, Meeting at the Golden Gate, The Birth of Mary, Mary blessed by the Three High Priests). The Infancy of Christ is represented in the lower part of the triumphal arch with two scenes: Annunciation and Birth of Christ. The last one is continued on the southern wall with the Adoration of the Magi. The pictures emphasising the divine side of the Messiah are on the central part of the northern wall (Presentation of Christ to the Temple, Ascension of Christ, Transfiguration). The last scene of the row is the beginning of the Passion with the Entry into Jerusalem. The cycle continues on the upper part of the triumphal arch with the Way to Mount Calvary, Crucifixion (in the centre) and followed by the Deposition. The scenes of the glory of Mary, Mother of God are placed on the southern wall, close to the triumphal arch, one above the other: Ascension and Coronation. In the space right to the window a monumental Last Judgement is found. To the left, there is the representation of the Heaven (the Bosom of the Patriarchs, an Angel Leading the Saved to the Gate of Paradise; middle row: The Throne of Hietomasia; upper row: Deesis). To the right are the scenes of Hell (an Angel pushing the damned to Hell, middle row: the Seven Capital Sins). The narrative of the sacred story is interrupted under the windows by icons representing different saints (northern wall: *Imago Pietatis* and two female martyrs, southern wall: St. Nicholas). The Legend of the Holy Cross – represented on the lower part of the northern wall – is a composition incorporating both static and narrative elements.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the general features of this Italo-Byzantine fresco circle, the existence of which became clear with the discovery of new murals, see Szabó 2009b, pp. 209-230; Szabó 2009c, pp. 89-93. For the newly discovered frescoes see Unirea: Szabó 2007b, pp. 143-155; Viștea: Szabó 2008-2010, pp. 139-160; Cricău: Conference Lecture, 2012, March 23-27, Műemlékvédelem Erdélyben V. Sovata.





Fig. 5. The southern wall of the nave. Historical copy, Ottó Sztéhlo, 1873. FGYNÖSZK Collection, Fm 574.



Fig. 6. The southern wall of the nave, two kneeling donors. Ottó Sztéhlo, 1873. FGYNÖSZK Collection, K 13556.

of the Comnenian age. The latter's concise compositions were widely spread and influenced, among others, the art of the Duecento. This is the heritage of the painters who fled Constantinople after 1204 and found their new *Maecenas* in the young Balkan and Crusader states, or further away in Western Europe. That is why the similarities of the pictures are numerous, including reminiscences of the classical Byzantine works, Serbian and Bulgarian art, the provincial art of Epirus, the Crusade art and, at last, of the art of the Italian Duecento.

The subject of this study is the third *fresco* layer, with its murals preserved under the western gallery (Figs. 7-12). Stylistic considerations allow us to date these gothic style frescoes, as well as the window cut at the first floor of the western tower around 1400. Their appearance is due to the flourishing court life of this period in the Hațeg castle.

The governor John Hunyadi gave the market town of Sântămărie-Orlea to his familiars, the Kendeffys in 1447. The paintings in the choir and the representations of the kneeling donors from the southern wall of the nave under the western gallery were supposedly created during this period. A *terminus ante quem* is offered by a *Hic fuit* inscription to be dated in the 80s of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 6).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The donation of the Kendeffy family seems questionable if one considers the fact that the Hunyadis did also own properties in the city during that period. A shared donorship is also imaginable.

### **The historical church renovations**

The first renovation of the church was necessary after its burning down during the Turkish invasion of 1788. The roof and the spire were not rebuilt in the original form: the nave was heightened, as the new spire was not organically connected to the remaining parts of the tower.

The first paintings of the church were discovered by Flóris Rómer, sometime before 1869.<sup>7</sup> At that time, Ferenc Storno was sent for further investigation to Sântămărie-Orlea by the Archaeological Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His notebook contains pen and ink sketches, mainly of the building, but they also present the partly discovered frescoes.<sup>8</sup> In 1870, on July 22, the roof of the church was destroyed by a storm and consequently the layer of plaster covering of the frescoes of the northern side of the interior fell down. The minister of the church asked for the help of the Archaeological Committee. In the autumn of 1872 Imre Steindl, the architect in charge with the restoration site of the neighbouring castle of Hunedoara, was sent to make a survey of the condition of the church. His journey is documented by the records of the then newly established Interim Committee for Historic Monuments. In winter 1873 the Minister for Religion and Education approved the investigation and copying of the frescoes. The copies at natural scale and the new architectural drawings were made by Ottó Sztéhlo, Steindl's assistant (Figs. 3, 5, 6, 7a, 9a, 11a).<sup>9</sup> The restoration of the church began only in 1908, May 30, coordinated by the National Committee for Historic Monuments (MOB). Before this, István Gróh made aquarelle copies from the best preserved frescoes of the church (Fig. 11b).<sup>10</sup> The architect in charge was István Möller, who was working at the restoration of the Hunedoara castle as well. Under his lead the damaged stone blocks were replaced and the tower was re-enforced with steel and received a new spire.<sup>11</sup> In 1957 and 1974 the state institution for the protection of monuments, from Bucharest, planned the restoration of the church, but the project was not accomplished as the institution was closed down. At some point, in this period the shingles were changed with covering elements of asbestos. In 2008, the roof coverings of the nave and sanctuary were restored back to shingle.

### **The presentation of the third *fresco* layer**

The wall paintings of the third *fresco* layer are placed inside the semi-circular frames formed beneath the vaults supporting the western gallery. There are two scenes on the western wall of the nave, left and right to the entrance, and a third one situated on the northern wall, facing the later donor scene. The state of the conservation of these frescoes is very poor. First of all during the historical restoration interventions they were not completely cleaned of the covering layer of plaster. Today the interpretation of the scenes is impeded by the loss of the fresco layer, mechanical damages caused during the discovery of the fresco and heavy precipitations of calcic salts. This could be easily cleaned, as shown by the test-window opened on the frame of the scene.

There are four historical copies to refer to. The first three were drawn in 1873, during the fresco cleaning operations, by the architect Ottó Sztéhlo. They are natural scale, black and white copies made on tracing paper, and they are preserved in the MOB archive. We find on it notes of the author indicating the colours or forms (Figs. 7a, 9a, 11a). Later, István Gróh made an aquarelle copy of the fresco of the northern wall, in the time of the historical church restoration, during 1905-1907 (Fig. 11b).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For the detailed history of the historical fresco discovery see Szabó 2004, pp. 39-69; Szabó 2008, pp. 14-19.

<sup>8</sup> The Legend of the Holy Cross, historical copy, F. Storno, published Szabó 2004, 1. kép.

<sup>9</sup> For the published Sztéhlo copies see Entz 1967, 13. kép the paintings of the southern wall of the nave, authorship is not specified; with large description of the copies Szabó 2004, pp. 51-52, 10. kép Annunciation of St. Anne (before considered the Annunciation of Joachim); pp. 52-53, 11. kép Entry into Jerusalem; pp. 53-54; 12. kép Deposition; pp. 55-56, 13. kép The Throne of Hethiomasia; pp. 56-57, 14. The Seven Capital Sins, with iconographical analysis: Szabó 2009b, pp. 215-220, 1. kép Annunciation; pp. 221-228; 10. kép. Crucifixion.

<sup>10</sup> For the published Gróh copies see Entz 1967, 15. kép The kneeling donors; 16. kép Obit Pauper Paulus; 17. kép Apostles from the choir; Szabó 2004, 2. kép The two female martyrs.

<sup>11</sup> For the detailed history of the historical church restoration see Szabó 2007a, pp. 277-304; Szabó 2008, pp. 19-24

<sup>12</sup> Preserved in the collection of the former MOB, today Gyula Forster National Centre for Cultural Heritage Management (FGYNÖSZK) in Budapest.



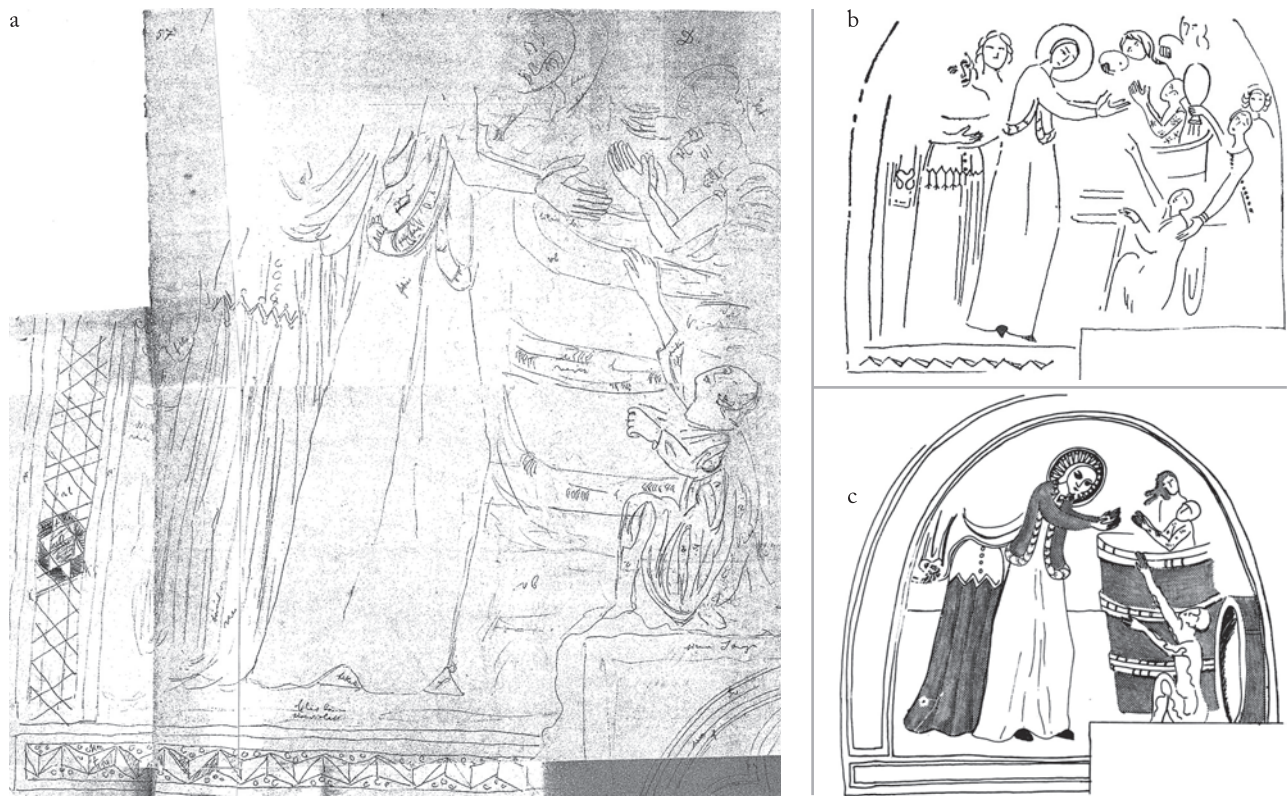


Fig. 7a-c. St. Elizabeth bathing the lepers. Historical copy, Ottó Sztéhlo, 1873. FGYNÖSZK Collection, Budapest, K. 13557. (a). Reconstruction drawing, 1983 (Cincheza-Buculei 1983), (b). Reconstruction drawing, 1985 (Bratu 1985), (c).

In the 1980s the Romanian researchers Anca Bratu and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei made reconstruction drawings of the scenes of the western wall, based only on visual analyses made on the scene (Figs. 7b-c, 9b-c).<sup>13</sup> In comparison with the actual state of the fresco, we can say that the murals were in a considerable better discernible state.

The present study relies on the original Sztéhlo drawings, as primary documents drawn more than a century ago, when more information was discernible than it is today.

#### **The scene south of the entrance. St. Elizabeth bathing the lepers.**

The scene on the western wall of the nave was copied by Ottó Sztéhlo, but not completely. There is no representation of the upper left side and of the right extremity of the scene. In this case the historical document is very similar with the reconstruction drawing made by Bratu in 1985, which indicates another barrel in the right extremity. The earlier reconstruction of Cincheza-Buculei has essential differences (Figs. 7a-c).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Bratu 1985, fig. 11-12; Cincheza-Buculei 1983, fig. 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Bratu 1985, fig. 12; Cincheza-Buculei 1983, fig. 1.

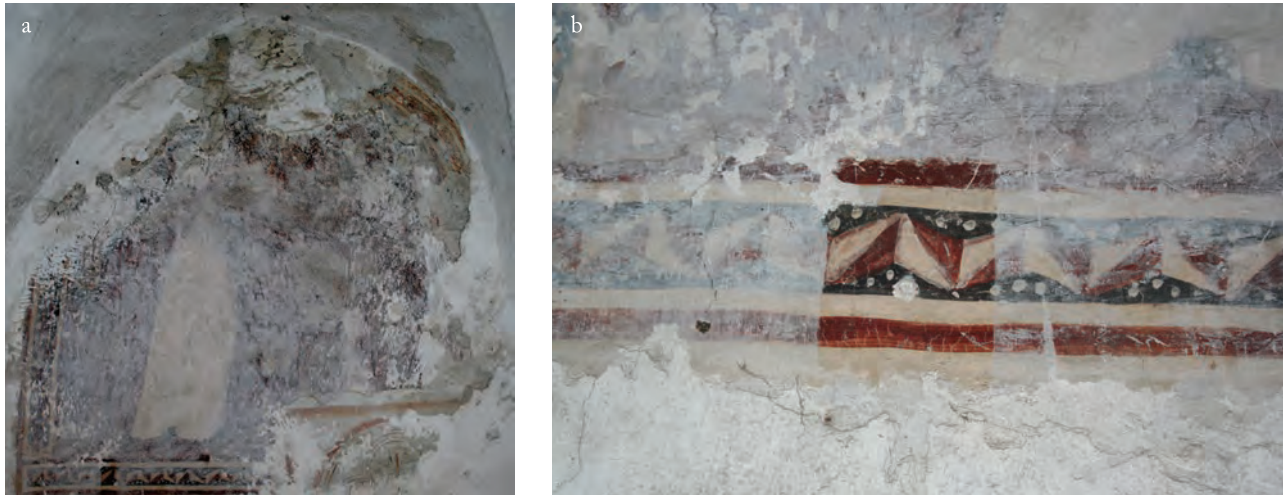


Fig. 8a-b. St. Elizabeth bathing the lepers, the western side of the nave, around 1400 (a), detail of the Cosmatesque band (b).

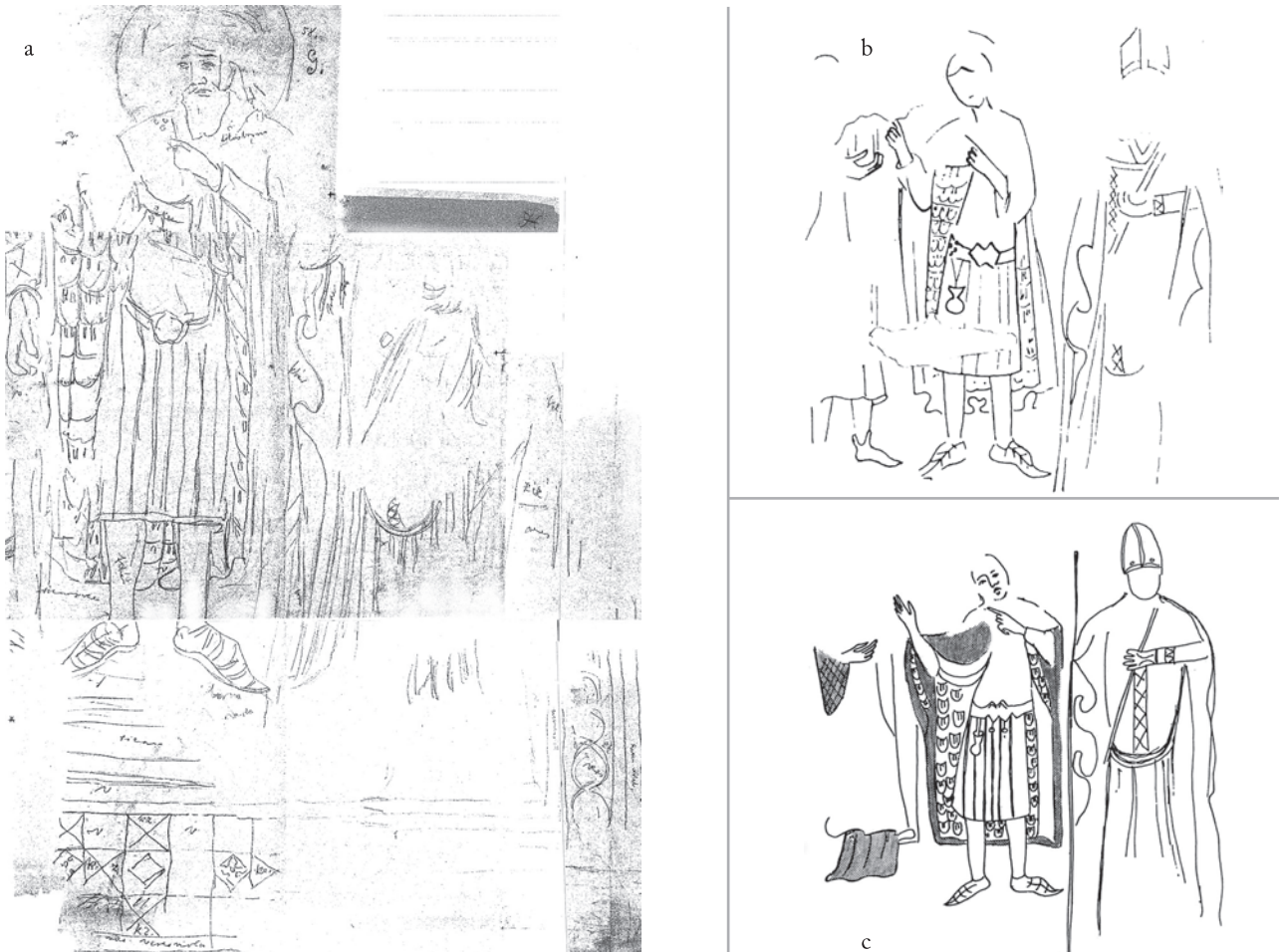


Fig. 9a-c. Three standing Saints. Historical copy, Ottó Sztéhlo, 1873. FGYNÖSZK Collection, Budapest, K. 13557. (a). Reconstruction drawing, 1983 (Cincheza-Buculei 1983), (b). Reconstruction drawing, 1985 (Bratu 1985), (c).



The scene is damaged, in the right lower part the plaster fell off, so the earlier consecration cross appeared. Today, near the Cosmatesque ornaments of the frame only very few details are discernible. Essentially we can see the main figure with a long white dress. At its left, there are just very few traces of a woman's dress. In the right section of the scene there seems to be just the figure in front of the barrel (Figs. 8a-b).

The Hungarian researcher G. Entz was the first, in 1967, to assign the scene to the cycle of St. Elizabeth's life and to recognize it as St. Elizabeth feeding the poor.<sup>15</sup> Drăguț in 1970 and 1971 took up this opinion.<sup>16</sup> Finally Cincheza-Buculei in 1983 was the one who determined the correct iconography: St. Elizabeth bathing the lepers.<sup>17</sup>

St. Elizabeth, princess of Hungary and duchess of Thuringia, was the patron saint of the Third Order of St. Francis. Symbol of the Christian charity, she was usually depicted as a princess exercising acts of mercy, or holding roses on her hips. The later iconography also refers to her acts of charity recalling the transformation into roses of the bread she intended to give to the poor.<sup>18</sup> At Sântămărie-Orlea she is exercising the sixth act of mercy, taking care of the sick, often illustrated through the bathing of the lepers, symbol of suffering Christ. A popular legend about St. Elizabeth relates that a leper whom she laid in the marital bed turned miraculously into a Crucifix.

In the murals presented here St. Elizabeth is not depicted as a princess. She wears secular clothes, a long white dress and a short purple coat bordered with black and white striped fur.<sup>19</sup> This costume was typical for people of a lower standing, as it is illustrated by the bathing lady in the scene of the Birth of Jesus, in the nearby church from Strei, or by the Hungarian girl abducted by a Cuman in the St. Ladislaus legend in Chilieni.<sup>20</sup> This is a bit different from the matron costume (long dress with a simple cloak, a kerchief with a wimple) that Elizabeth usually wears when she is not represented as princess, especially when she is painted acting charity. This way she is represented for example at Ófehértó, in Northern Hungary and at Martjanci, in Slovenia.<sup>21</sup> For comparison we can analyse the contemporary frescoes from Porumbeni Mari, where she is dressed like a princess.<sup>22</sup> The costume is very sumptuous: long brocaded dress with fur collar under a purple mantle trimmed with royal ermine fur, fixed with a rectangle shaped buckle. It is interesting to note that the crown is not a necessary attribute: only at Ófehértó it was painted. A third way of representation of Elizabeth is in the Franciscan habit or a long dress tied with a rope, which can be completed with a royal cloak or a crown.<sup>23</sup>

In Sântămărie-Orlea the number of figures in the scene is uncertain. All three reconstruction drawings indicate more than one leper, probably three. One of them is sitting dressed in front of the barrel, the other is already in it, but there seems to be one more figure in the back (a girl with long hair?). The reconstruction of Bratu is similar to Sztzehlo's copy, whereas Cincheza-Buculei proposed six persons in this part of the composition, with a maid who is helping with the bathing, set in the foreground. In the drawings of both Bratu and Sztzehlo St. Elizabeth is followed by a single person, painted in the background on a white draped curtain. She is presented in wealthier clothes than the maids helping with the bathing, unlike her usual depictions where she

<sup>15</sup> Entz 1967, p. 247. Before this in 1905 Gerecze misinterpreted the scene as the Purgatory (Gerecze 1905, p. 271); Ștefănescu 1932, p. 238: donor scene; Radocsay 1954, p. 193: unidentified scene.

<sup>16</sup> Drăguț 1970, p. 41; *Idem* 1971, p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> Cincheza-Buculei 1983, pp. 347-348; the same identification Bratu 1985, p. 207, n. 42; p. 230; Porumb 1998, p. 361; Szabó 2008, pp. 112-113.

<sup>18</sup> Braun 1943, pp. 208-213.

<sup>19</sup> The cote with a surcote over, popular around 1300 is sometimes presented in a very similar way. In the murals from Vizsoly (Hu, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County), in the scene of Annunciation, Mary seems to wear a coat bordered with fur, but in the Visitation scene (where the Virgin is painted from the side) it is clear that it's a surcoat with large armlets bordered with fur. For images, see Jékely, Kiss 2009, pp. 438-439.

<sup>20</sup> Strei (Hunedoara County): Popescu 1985, pp. 234-283, fig. 8; Chilieni (Covasna County): Jékely, Kiss 2008, pp. 278-233, figs. from p. 317.

<sup>21</sup> Ófehértó (Hu, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County): Jékely, Kiss 2009, pp. 310-333, figs. from pp. 330-333; Martjanci (Prekmurje region): Prokopp 2003, 10. kép. she is feeding a hungry.

<sup>22</sup> Harghita County: Lángi, Mihály 2002, pp. 80-81.

<sup>23</sup> For the main types of St. Elizabeth's representations see Prokopp 2009, pp. 159-167; Prokopp 2003, English text: pp. 51-65.



Fig. 10. Three standing Saints, the western wall of the nave, around 1400.

bath. At Sântămărie-Orlea (only in the reconstruction drawing of Cincheza-Buculei) in the background of the scene, one can see several figures holding round objects in their hands, maybe breads.

#### **The representations north of the entrance. Three standing Saints**

The natural scale copy made by Sztéhlo at the time of the fresco discovery is not very clear, and represents just the central part of this mural. For this reason any iconographic identification based on this record, before it is restored, would be conjectural. Both Bratu and Cincheza-Buculei made only slightly different reconstructions, based on visual investigations of the site (Fig. 9a-c).<sup>24</sup>

Today, one can still discern just the lower part of the pictures. In its left section one can clearly see part of a long dress with heavy folds on the ground. The figure in the middle is the best preserved, with a royal costume still recognizable. On the right there is a white line dividing these figures from a clerical, whose robe with part of the *pallium* is to be recognized (Fig. 10).

It is certain that in the centre of the scene there is the figure of a standing saint, dressed sumptuously. His social status is clarified by the ermine fur mantle he wears. Under it he seems to wear a cotehardie (or maybe an early gown) falling just below the knees, with fur edges and probably lining, and toed shoes, popular around 1400.<sup>25</sup> The figure with a halo, wearing a velvet court dress popular at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, had been previously noted by Ștefănescu in 1932.<sup>26</sup> An over garment is fixed with a belt on the hips, being described both by Bratu and Cincheza-Buculei with a pouch hanging from the belt.<sup>27</sup> This detail is not represented in the historical copy, but the fresco in its actual state seems to confirm it. The figure is of an aged person, with long hair and beard. In the Sztéhlo copy it is unclear if he wears a crown or not. Nevertheless, the

<sup>24</sup> Bratu 1985, pp. 229-330, fig. 11; Cincheza-Buculei 1983, pp. 348-349, fig. 2.

<sup>25</sup> For early gowns see Thursfield 2001, p. 145. The dress has some similarities also with the kings' costume from the Illuminated Chronicle (*Képes Krónika*) from around 1360. The difference is that there the over garment is shorter, and obviously it's made of a thinner material. The complete illustration and text available at: <http://www.kepeskronika.net/en.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> Ștefănescu 1932, p. 238.

<sup>27</sup> Bratu 1985, pp. 229-330, fig. 11; Cincheza-Buculei 1983, pp. 348-349, fig. 1.



other elements of his costume seem to indicate that the figure depicts a king. This might be one of the Three Holy Kings of Hungary, a frequent iconographical choice in the churches of the Hungarian Kingdom. Similar images, with the holy kings wearing less conspicuous crowns can be seen for example in Mălâncrav.<sup>28</sup>

The old saint king from the historical copy contradicts most accepted iconographical identifications of the mural, because he can't be, as Bratu thought, the husband of St. Elizabeth, Ludwig (Louis) IV, Landgrave of Thuringia, who died young at the age of 27 and was never formally canonized. Usually in the scene of their farewell they are represented embracing each other, like in the *Porta Aurea* scenes, but in our case the saints are represented frontally. For the same reasons he can't be neither St. Martin of Tours, the iconographical identification advanced by Cincheza-Buculei.<sup>29</sup> In the scene of St. Martin sharing his coat, he is always represented as a young soldier with a characteristic hat, most often on the back of a horse, but a standing variant is also known.<sup>30</sup> The most persuasive argument is the absence of the beggar. To the left of the king we can clearly see the bottom of a long dress, most probably belonging to a woman, as Bratu noted.

One shouldn't leave out the proposal made by Drăguț, seeing a military saint, St. George (?), in the representation, although the scholar saw this saint riding a horse, which is however out of the question.<sup>31</sup> This debate can possibly settle only after the frescoes are restored, still the saint painted in the Sztehló's copy is old, unusual in the iconography of military saints, although the short beard is not exceptional.<sup>32</sup>

From all the identifications proposed, the description of Entz, who appears to have been acquainted with the historical copies, including Sztehló's, seem to be most accurate: a holy knight with ermine fur mantle.<sup>33</sup>

The hand of the king was not clearly represented in the historical copy, but it does not confirm the pointing gesture from the reconstruction drawings. His right hand seems to be stretched near his body; supposedly he is holding something in it, it could be a hatchet, the attribute of St. Ladislaus.<sup>34</sup>

The right part of the composition is clearly divided with a white band. Here one can see a figure, dressed in a clerical robe with a sumptuous chasuble and a pallium. He is painted a little bit in foreground and bigger than the other two persons. This marks the possibility raised by Bratu, that here could be a different scene.<sup>35</sup> The reconstruction drawings of both Bratu and Cincheza-Buculei show a bishop. It is possible, in my opinion, to recognize here St. Nicholas. In a similar composition at Velemér St. Ladislaus is painted near St. Nicolas with the tower.<sup>36</sup> The use of the white band can be found elsewhere, such as Bădești, where the figure of St. Sigismund is separate from two standing woman saints.<sup>37</sup>

### **The scene of the northern wall. OBIT PAUPER PAULUS**

The scene from the northern wall of the nave is the best preserved from the three Gothic murals. It is the only one with a historical aquarelle copy made by István Gróh, which completed the old black and white Sztehló copies (Fig. 11a-b). This provides a clearer image of the representations that used to be seen here. However the fresco was damaged already at the time of its discovery. The lower right corner of the mural is lost, so that a consecration cross from the first painting layer came to light. The upper part of the fresco was not integrally cleaned from the covering plaster. In the foreground we can see an old man lying on a bed. In the background, on the left side an angel is holding a baby in his hand representing the soul of the old man; on the right side another angel is holding a scroll with the name of the person represented: OBIT PAUPER PAULUS. Among them, in the middle we can see Our Lady with the Child sitting on a throne (Fig. 12a-c).

<sup>28</sup> Szabó 2008, pp. 113-115. For Mălâncrav (Sibiu County) see Jenei 2007, p. 45, fig.

<sup>29</sup> Cincheza-Buculei 1983, pp. 348-349, fig. 2.

<sup>30</sup> On the iconography see Lőrincz 2000; Braun 1943, 510-519. The standing variant was used more often for sculptures.

<sup>31</sup> Drăguț 1970, p. 41; Drăguț 1971, p. 62.

<sup>32</sup> For iconography see LCI 6, pp. 365-390. St. George in the standing variant has a dragon at his feet, not represented on the mural.

<sup>33</sup> Entz 1967, p. 247; See also Gerecze 1905, p. 271: a man with ermine fur mantle.

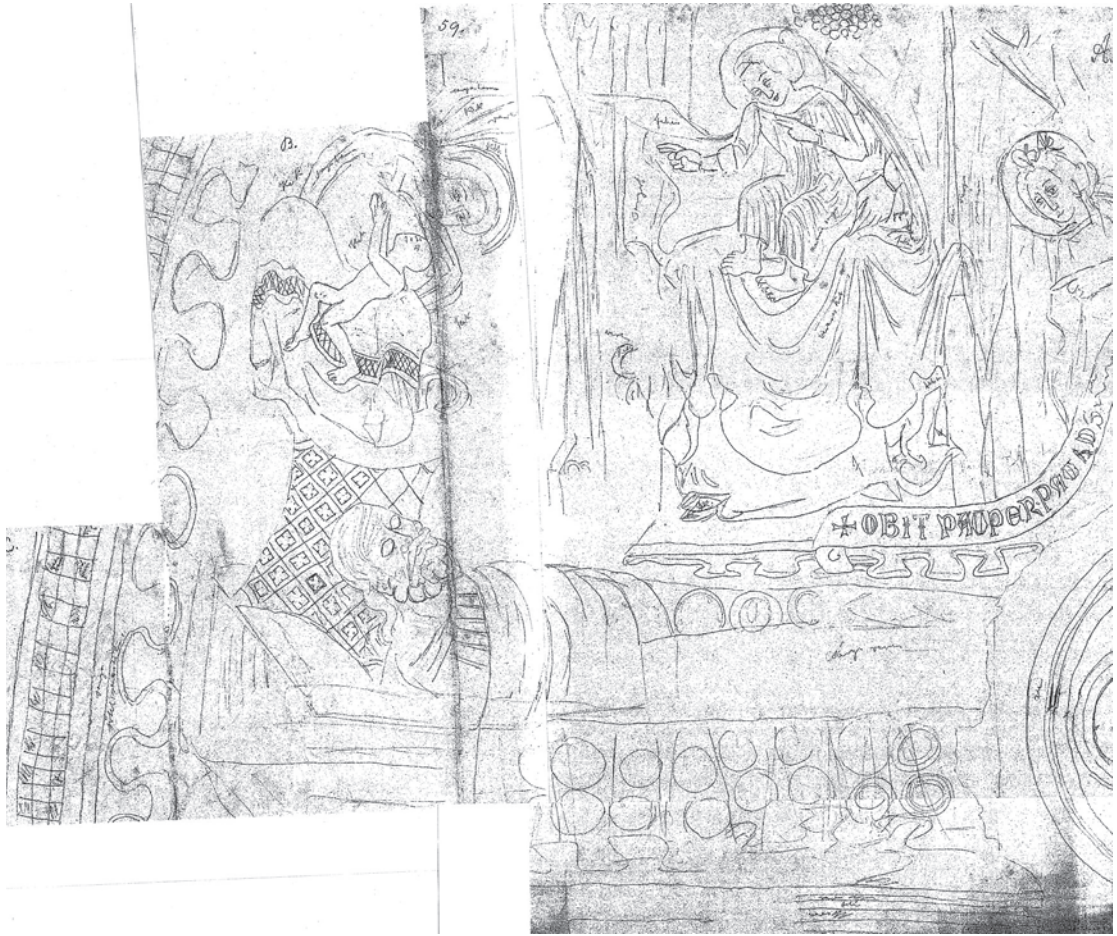
<sup>34</sup> For iconography see LCI 7, pp. 361-363.

<sup>35</sup> Bratu 1985, p. 330.

<sup>36</sup> Vas County, Johannes Aquila 1989, 24. kép.

<sup>37</sup> Bădești (Cluj County): Jékely, Kiss 2008, figs. from pp. 11-15.

a



b

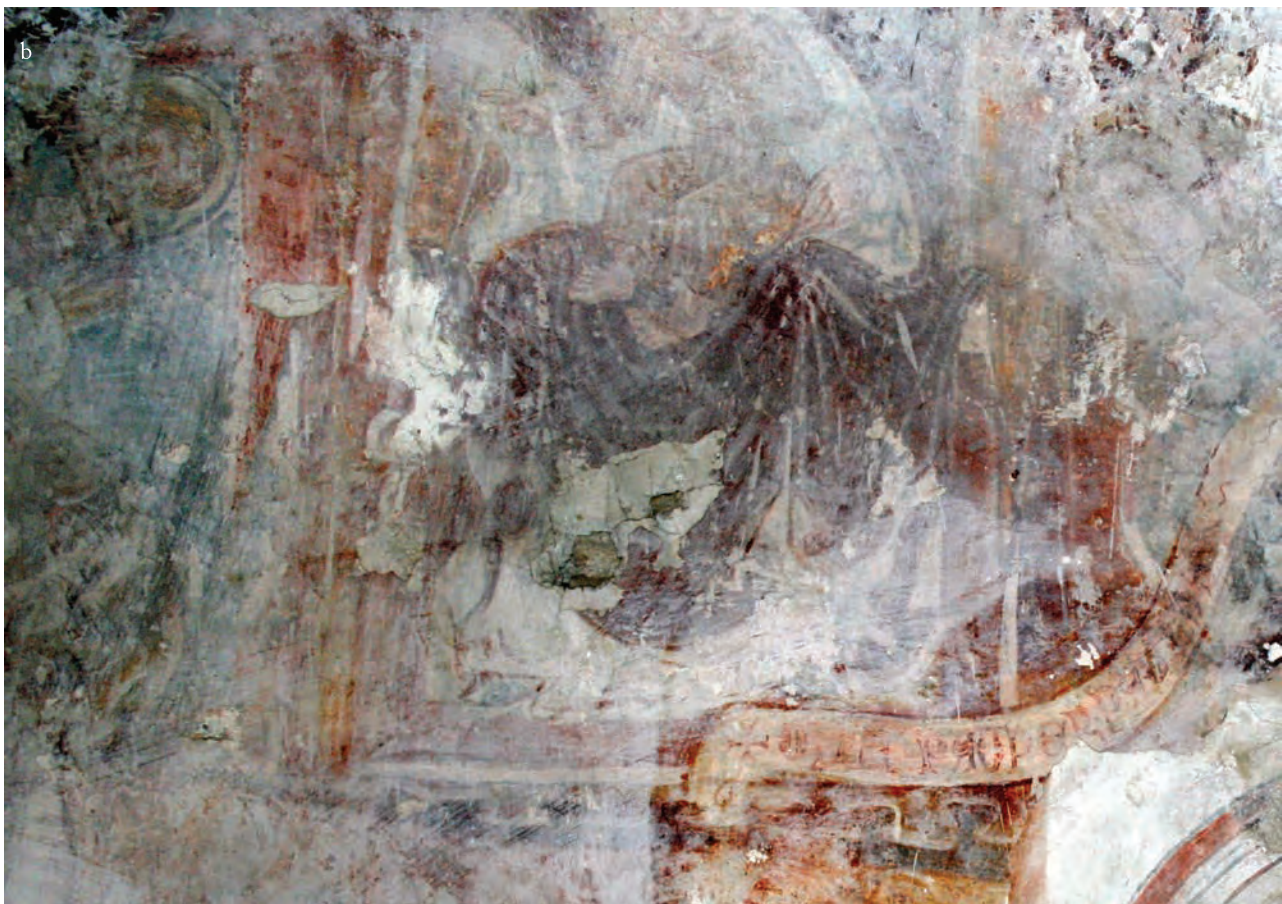


Fig. 11a-b. Obit Pauper Paulus. Historical copy, Ottó Sztého, 1873. FGYNÖSZK Collection, Budapest, K. 13554. (a). István Gróh, 1905-1909 FGYNÖSZK Collection, Budapest, Fm 456 (376). (b).





Fig. 12a-b. Obit Pauper Paulus, the northern side of the nave, around 1400 (a), detail with the scroll (b).



The iconographical identification of the scene raises many questions. It seems that we have here a special situation, a scene that composes a new iconography, taking elements from other formulations, with many different valences, reflecting the cultural history of its time. The inscription *OBIT PAUPER PAULUS* written with Gothic majuscules was identified quite early, in 1905, by the Hungarian researcher P. Gerecze, who made an inventory of the historical copies and drawings of the registry of the MOB.<sup>38</sup> Gróh, the author of the aquarelle copy, spoke about the Death of a Saint with the name Paul.<sup>39</sup>

However, the scholars for whom the historical copies remained unknown misinterpreted the inscription, the first one Ștefănescu in 1932 transcribing “*OBIT (sic!) PAUPERULUS*”.<sup>40</sup> His definition was taken up by Vătășianu in 1959.<sup>41</sup> This is why the saint’s name was not specified in that period: Ștefănescu saw it as the *dormitium* of a saint, Vătășianu as The Death of a Pauper, while Radocsay mentions only a sleeping saint.<sup>42</sup> Entz, who published the historical copy by Gróh in 1967, clarified again the inscription, and identified the scene as The Death of St. Paul the Hermit.<sup>43</sup> From this time on, the researcher used simultaneously two titles: The Death of a Pauper with the Name Paul and The Death of St. Paul the Hermit. Bratu cautiously named the scene the Death of a Pauper named Paul, but remarked that this could be automatically identified with St. Paul the Hermit.<sup>44</sup> I have twice questioned the identification of the scene with The Death of St. Paul the Hermit, mainly because of the absence of the halo of both corpse and the soul elevated to the skies.<sup>45</sup>

Drăguț was the first to start, in 1970, the theory that the image was a symbolic representation of the seventh act of mercy – the Burying of the Dead – featured through the image of St. Paul the Hermit, which explained the word pauper from the inscription.<sup>46</sup> In his article written in 1971 he spoke just about St. Paul the Hermit, but in his book on Transylvanian Gothic murals he named it again the Burying of the Death, as sign of his hesitation.<sup>47</sup> The reason of this identification was without doubt the presence of the charity acts of St. Elizabeth. The scene was compared to the Works of Charity painted at Sânpetru and with the Seven Acts of Mercy from the Minorite church of Levoča, even though there are no relations between them.<sup>48</sup> Cincheza-Buculei, in a short study about the “Allegory of the Charity”, took up Drăguț’s assumption, of the symbolic representation of the seventh act of charity. She also identified another one in St. Martin offering his mantle, which fits very well to the theory but less to the reality.<sup>49</sup> Few years later Bratu did not even mention this supposition.<sup>50</sup>

The presence of the Madonna with the Child and angels at Sântămărie-Orlea represents a guarantee of the salvation of the soul.<sup>51</sup> The lack of the aureole of the main figure, as well as the word Sanctus included in the inscription led me to believe, at a certain point, that the image could represent a donor named Paul.<sup>52</sup> Usually the scene of Burying of the Death was represented together with the other Works of Mercy, but at our mural there are neither people that perform the act of charity, nor liturgical elements referring to

<sup>38</sup> Gerecze 1905, p. 271. He also mentions an incised inscription with the date 1484.

<sup>39</sup> Gróh 1906, p. 236.

<sup>40</sup> Ștefănescu 1932, p. 238.

<sup>41</sup> Vătășianu 1959, p. 402.

<sup>42</sup> Ștefănescu 1932, p. 238; Vătășianu 1959, p. 402; Radocsay 1954, p. 193.

<sup>43</sup> Entz 1967, p. 247. I took up this identification in Szabó 2004, p. 43.

<sup>44</sup> Bratu 1985, pp. 208-210, p. 230.

<sup>45</sup> Szabó 2007, p. 278, n. 6; Szabó 2008, pp. 115-117.

<sup>46</sup> Drăguț 1970, pp. 41-42.

<sup>47</sup> Drăguț 1971, p. 62; Drăguț 1979, p. 210, n. 60.

<sup>48</sup> For the iconography see Bühren 1998, pp. 1-48; LCI I, pp. 245-252; examples around 1400 from Spiš region: Buran 2002, pp. 43-70; the Minorite church of Levoča: abb. 37; another example in the parochial church of Levoča: *ibidem*, Taff. II; for Sânpetru see the recent Jenei 2012, p. 166, fig. 4. Here the Charity Works (rich people with funeral candles giving food and clothes to the disabled) are painted in a cycle of suffrages for the souls of the departed, near St. Gregory’s Liturgy and Gifts to the Church; at Hărman (end of 15<sup>th</sup> century) all Charity Works are represented in compositions with the figure of Christ: Jenei 2002-2003, pp. 90-91; Jenei 2004, p. 26.

<sup>49</sup> Cincheza-Buculei 1983, pp. 347-350. She also mentioned the other two identifications.

<sup>50</sup> Bratu 1985 pp. 208-210, p. 230.

<sup>51</sup> Valences clarified by Romanian researcher D. Jenei.

<sup>52</sup> Szabó 2008, pp. 115-117; Szabó 2009, p. 14. The “pauper” from the inscription could be explained for example if he would be a Tertiarian.



the eventual mass offered for the soul, like candles. The iconography of the seventh act of mercy around 1400 emphasizes the deposition in sarcophagus (similar with the iconography of the Entombment of Christ), whereas at Sântămărie-Orlea the corpse is lying on a bed with sumptuous bedding.<sup>53</sup> This formulation is much more similar to that kind of new iconographies which represent the *dormitium* of the saints, taking as example the well-known scene of the Death of Our Lady, where one can see the Mother of Good lying on a bed. A similar composition is known at Martjanci, where the Death of St. Martin is painted. In contrast with our scene, we can see many people gathered to his bier, clerics and laypeople, and in the upper left side of the scene there is also an angel.<sup>54</sup>

The regular iconography of The Death of St. Paul the Hermit is also different. He is depicted lying on the desert ground surrounded by two lions and St. Anthony the Great.<sup>55</sup> According to the legend, after his repeated visit St. Anthony the Great found the hermit death. He was sad that he had no tool to dig him a grave, but miraculously two lions appeared and dug it. The absence of these elements was remarked by Bratu, who pointed to the difference between the legend and the quite sumptuous bed with an embroidered pillow and bedspread.<sup>56</sup> The story also tells of St. Anthony seeing St. Paul's soul elevated by angels, an element which can be seen at Sântămărie-Orlea as well. But there is a problem with the absence of St. Anthony and of the lions. I. D. Ștefănescu thought to see figures of monks in the lower right part of the scene, but this could be the result of the bad state of preservation of the fresco.<sup>57</sup> It is no doubt that in the historical drawing the monk figures are absent, the only possible place left for such representation being at the feet of the dead, where the painting is lost and the consecration crosses of the first fresco layer emerged. Thus, it seems less likely that Ștefănescu, who also misinterpreted the inscription of the scene, could have seen monks exactly in that part of the image where he didn't read properly the inscription. He obviously didn't know the historical copies and could confuse the monk with the figure of the angel.

The word *pauperus* in the inscription could refer to the new founded mendicant religious orders. In this approach, the mural could represent The Death of the Order's Founder, which signifies the mystical representation of the Birth of the Order. But in those scenes it was crucial to show the followers, and in Sântămărie-Orlea, in the best case we have a single disciple.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, we still don't have an explanation for the name Paul. If we analyse the cultural and historical milieu of the paintings, the scene could be the symbolic representation of the Blessed Eusebius of Esztergom, the founder of the Hungarian hermit order of the Paulins.<sup>59</sup> From humility, he didn't give his name to the new order, as in the case of the Franciscans and Dominicans, putting it instead under the protection of Paul of Thebes. This is why the iconography of his representation took many elements from the iconography of St. Paul, both depicted as hermits. The actuality of this symbolic scene represented in the royal church of Sântămărie-Orlea around 1400, is that in 1381, King Louis the Great moved the body-relic of Paul of Thebes from Venice to Hungary, at the Pauline monastery from Budaszentlőrinc. The king also placed the country under the patronage of St. Paul the Hermit, this single Hungarian order gaining a great prestige, while Budaszentlőrinc became one of Hungary's most popular pilgrimage shrines.<sup>60</sup> At Sântămărie-Orlea, the presence of the Madonna Hodegetria in the centre

<sup>53</sup> There is also one type of scene where the place is represented where the Work of Mercy has been acted, usually an open prison or an ossuary. In our scene the interior is marked just by the bed with the corpse.

<sup>54</sup> Johannes Aquila, 114. kép.

<sup>55</sup> See iconography in LCI 8, pp. 159-151.

<sup>56</sup> Bratu 1985, pp. 208-210, p. 230.

<sup>57</sup> Ștefănescu 1932, p. 238. Bratu in a remark made in a footnote contributes to this misunderstanding when she doesn't translate properly Entz's writing. This way she thought that the two kneeling donors described by Entz were the same with the monks remarked by Ștefănescu. In the original text is clear that Entz refers to the donor scene from the southern side of the nave (Entz 1967, p. 247; Bratu 1985, p. 209, n. 53).

<sup>58</sup> D. Donadieu-Rigaut, pp. 205-224. Ex. Fig.73, The death of St. Francis, Lower Church, Assisi.

<sup>59</sup> Basic information for the Pauline Order with an English summary in: Török, Legeza, Szacsvey 1996, pp. 40-46. A thorough catalogue on the order's architecture: Guzsik 2003.

<sup>60</sup> Török, Legeza, Szacsvey 1996, p. 43.

of the image could also be explained through the legend of Blessed Eusebius, which tells that he died with the words of the Virgin Mary and his Child on his mouth.<sup>61</sup> The Pauline hermits give an emphasised role to the cult of the Mother of Good. The order was under her patronage, the high altars of the Pauline churches having always an image dedicated to the Madonna. Many famous pilgrimage places dedicated to Our Lady, like Częstochowa in Poland were founded by Paulines. In our composition the lacking halo of both corpse and soul elevated to Heaven, and the absence of the word *Sanctus* of the inscription could also be explained through the mentality of the hermits. The customary law didn't allow anyone from among the members of the order to be selected for canonization, as it is the order's creed that all people need to become holy. That is the reason why the order's founder, Eusebius is not a Saint, but only a Blessed. Moreover, the beatification process that begun just in 1940 ended only recently, in 2008.<sup>62</sup>

For these reasons, despite the fact that we cannot be sure which is the precise subject of the mural represented in Sântămărie-Orlea, the key is the Pauline order.

### **The problem of style and dating**

The determination of the style and of the time when this mural was painted is hampered by the actual state of conservation of the frescoes. Despite this, we still have a few stylistic clues and proposed readings from scholars. Entz places all the scenes beneath the western gallery from Sântămărie-Orlea at the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>63</sup> Prokopp suggested that the Gothic murals could be painted in the time of Louis the Great, around 1360-1370, as a repeated proof of Italian influence in the Transylvanian Art.<sup>64</sup> Ștefănescu (1932), Drăguț (1970, 1971), Vătășianu (1959) and Cincheza-Buculei (1983) have all placed them at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>65</sup> Bratu and Porumb in 1989 dated the pictures at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>66</sup> Lately, Jenei mentioned the fragmentary murals of Sântămăria-Orlea in an article on the Sânpetru murals. She listed them together with those from Porumbenii Mari and Valea Crișului in "the common framework of provincial Gothic painting around 1400, enriched with elements from *Trecento* in composition, décor and chromatic scheme".<sup>67</sup> First in 1985 Bratu noted a few stylistic characteristics of the fresco; she remarked the heavy folds of the Virgin's clothes that accumulate at the base of the throne and the figure of the Child Jesus, drawn with heavy lines, showing the features of a mature man.<sup>68</sup> The figure of the sitting Holy Virgin, with the folds of the robe falling from her knees to the feet, seems to be similar to that of the Coronation of Mary from Sânpetru.<sup>69</sup>

The few stylistic indications that we have could be confusing, as elements from Italian *Trecento* appear in the murals dated between c. 1360 and 1420, as well. One such example is the Cosmatesque ornamental border used as the upper frame of St. Elizabeth scene, which repeats the shape of a six pointed star. This decorative frame is very common, we can find it for example on murals painted between 1360 and 1390

<sup>61</sup> Gyéressy 1938, pp. 75-79.

<sup>62</sup> It is interesting that in their interior documents, they used the title blessed for the hermits considered to have a sacred life. The Paulines also allowed for their orders members to pray and to ask the intercession of their ancestor, but only in the frames of the private piety. See Gyéressy 1938, pp. 79-81.

<sup>63</sup> Entz 1967, p. 247; in 1906 Gróh dated this scene short after the building of the church (Gróh 1905, p. 236).

<sup>64</sup> Prokop 1987, p. 477.

<sup>65</sup> Ștefănescu 1932, p. 239: the first or the second third of the 15<sup>th</sup> century; Vătășianu 1959, p. 402: the first half of the century; Drăguț 1970, pp. 41-42; *idem* 1979, note 60, and Cincheza-Buculei 1983, p. 347: the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>66</sup> Bratu 1985, pp. 207-210; Porumb 1998, p. 362; Szabó 2004, 43: second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century; *idem* 2009 a, p. 14: the 80s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>67</sup> Jenei 2012, pp.168-169. She saw the simplified manner of one of Johannes Aquila's collaborators recalled at Sânpetru, the one who was the author of the secondary figures in the scene of St. Martin's funeral at Martjanci. For the images from Porumbenii Mari see: Lángi, Mihály 2002, pp. 80-81; Valea Crișului (Covasna County) see: Jékely, Kiss 2008, fig. from pp. 334-345.

<sup>68</sup> Bratu 1985, p. 209, p. 230.

<sup>69</sup> Information offered by D. Jenei. For the image, see Jenei 2007, pp. 80-81.



(Sântana de Mureș, Bădești, Viștea)<sup>70</sup> or even in 1413 on the fresco from Lónya.<sup>71</sup> But at Sântămărie-Orlea we have an exceptional number of different Cosmatesque ornaments. The one forming the frame of the *Obit Pauper Paulus* scene is divided in more small cubes. Similar examples can be seen at Sic and Vlaha, but also at Sânpetru (c. 1400) and Mediaș.<sup>72</sup> On Sztehló's copy of the mural from the right of the entrance there are two other decorative frames. The first is divided in little cubes with inscribed floral motifs and the other has a row of circular medallions formed with intersecting undulating strips. The colours of this latter are also noted: the outside frame-band is iron violet, the inner side of circles red, the outside green-blue.<sup>73</sup> The lower frame line of St. Elizabeth scene is formed with a rare Cosmatesque band: it's a variant of the former usual zigzags, but in a plastic shape with repeated triangles. This decorative motif can be also seen at the late Gothic frescoes from Sălard, Lónya and Márokpapi dated at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>74</sup> The special cloud ornaments that occur in the OBIT PAPER PAULUS scene can be found in the fresco from Mălâncrav (1404 or 1405) and Sânpetru.<sup>75</sup>

Another Trecentesque stylistic element is the throne of the Madonna. Even though it is not completely discernible, it seems to be composed of cubical shapes shown in perspective. To imagine it we can take in consideration the more complicated formed throne on the title page of the Illuminated Chronicle (*Chronicon pictum*) painted around 1360 at the court of King Louis the Great.<sup>76</sup> Another one, maybe closer, simpler can be found in the later fresco of Sălard.

There is no doubt about the fact that the mural is part of the International Gothic style fresco circle with Trecento inspiration. The presented stylistic and historical elements support the dating around 1400 and later than 1381 when the corpse of Paul of Thebes had been transported to Hungary. The restoration of the murals will surely bring out new information and even show completely new valences.

### Conclusions

The iconographic program of this mural placed beneath the vaults supporting the western gallery is certainly connected to its position inside the church. The function served by the western gallery and even by the western complex of a church in general, is subject to controversy. Tomaszewski believed that western galleries served primarily liturgical functions as a complement to the high altars of the churches, and just secondarily, defensive or representative functions. These tribune chapels (*altaria superiora*) could have been the places where the liturgy was celebrated on special occasions, when the entire parish turned to this altar, where the donors also sit. That's why the galleries are usually open, like in our case. At Sântămărie-Orlea we could have a primary tribune chapel at the first floor of the tower contemporaneous with the construction of the church, completed with the western gallery dated before 1311, which could also offer place for an altar. They were dedicated to different saints like Our Lady, Holy Cross, St. Margareta, St. Stephen but most often they are offered to Archangel Michael who is the guardian of the place fighting against the demonic forces and as psychopompos he has a defined role in the Salvation. Szakács did not exclude Tomaszewski's interpretation, but similarly to Möbius he had another approach, emphasizing that the western complexes of the churches are

<sup>70</sup> For the general features of the group of murals dated generally between 1360 and 1390 (Sântana de Mureș, Sic, Bădești, Viștea, Vlaha), see Jenei 2007, pp. 53-54, Sântana de Mureș (Mureș County), pp. 78-77; Jékely in article about Bădești: Jékely 2009, pp. 194-208; Prokopp 1983, pp. 101-107. Szabó in a study about Viștea (Cluj County): Szabó 2008-2010, Szabó 2012, p. 156.

<sup>71</sup> Jékely, Kiss 2008, Bădești figs from pp. 11-15; Sântana de Mureș, figs. from the p. 142-143; Lónya (Hu, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County) Jékely, Lángi 2009, pp. 284-213, fig. from the p. 210.

<sup>72</sup> Sânpetru: Jenei 2007, figs. from pp. 80-81; Mediaș (Sibiu County): *ibidem*, fig. from p. 89; Vlaha: Jékely, Kiss 2008, fig. from pp. 172, 176; Sic: Lángi, Mihály 2002, fig. from pp. 192-193.

<sup>73</sup> With colours indicated in German or Hungarian, mainly abbreviated: red (v), green-blue (zk). The other Cosmatesque band with the cube motive has an extra colour: blue (k).

<sup>74</sup> Márokpapi (Hu, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County): Jékely, Lángi 2009, pp. 244-245, fig. p. 250; Lónya: *ibidem*, p. 187; Sălard (Bihar County) Franciscan church: Lángi, Mihály 2002, figs. from pp. 96-97.

<sup>75</sup> Bratu 1985, p. 209, n. 54; Mălâncrav, the mural from the choir: Jenei 2007, pp. 72-77, fig. and text; Sânpetru: *ibidem*, pp. 80-83.

<sup>76</sup> The complete illustration and text can be consulted at: <http://www.kepeskronika.net/en.htm>.

transitory places between profane and sacred.<sup>77</sup> The same author emphasized that the spaces under the western galleries were primordially entrance halls, only secondarily possible places for privileged burials (but not the most preferred ones), which indicates also their funeral role.<sup>78</sup> Szakács noted some examples from medieval Hungary.<sup>79</sup> At Felsőörs there is a tribune chapel and a document which speaks about the consecration of an altar dedicated to St. Michael. Under this, at the ground floor of the tower, graves had been found, possibly those of the donors. At Ják a console preserved on the wall indicates that once there used to be a tribune chapel at the western gallery. The pictures at the ground floor of the tower are not clearly identified, but their funeral role is almost sure, as shown by the psychopompos angels represented on the western wall, the standing laypeople on the south wall and the donors with angels on the vault. At Sântămărie-Orlea, beneath the western gallery, the scenes had been chosen to show believers the path they need to follow for redemption. And redemption is what the two kneeling donors painted later in the 15<sup>th</sup> century on the southern side of the nave, on the same wall with the monumental Last Judgement from 1311, were hoping for. The depressions which occurred in the floor of this part of the church indicate the existence of graves.

It seems more important to me that due to the royal foundation of the church and the flourishing royal court from the nearby Hațeg, they represent saints important to the Hungarian kingdom. The scene OBIT PAUPER PAULUS seems to be an original composition most probably connected with the Pauline order, very close to the royal court, whose important achievement was the transportation of the corpse of St. Paul of Thebes (the order's protector) in 1381 to the monastery from the Buda hills. It is interesting to note that Tünde Wehli in a remark about the questionable presence of an image of St. Paul the Hermit in the fresco of Turnišče found that the source of his cult and his representation were for a long time connected with the royal court.<sup>80</sup>

Elizabeth of Hungary, the only saint precisely identified in this series was the first woman canonized from the Árpád Dynasty, who offered a new model of piety. Her cult was spread generally by the Hungarian royal court (and through royal courts with dynastic connections), and also by the Franciscans. In this view, the presence of the nearby monastery of the order at Hațeg could play a role, but her cult had been generally spread for more than a hundred years. The Works of Mercy did not receive as much emphasis as previously thought by scholars, St. Elizabeth performing acts of charity appears here as the attribute of the Saint. The unidentified scene with standing saints is supposedly representing one of the Three Holy Hungarian Kings. The use of this iconography is basically meant to prove the continuity of the ruling Angevin kings by the House of Árpáds.

The high value of this seemingly unimportant fragmentary fresco is not to be ignored. Its precarious physical state could be very easily improved by conservation works. After that, it is very likely that its place in the history of Transylvanian painting is going to be reconsidered and its significance enriched with new valences.

#### Bibliographical abbreviations:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Bratu 1985            | A. Bratu, <i>Biserica ortodoxă Sfînta Fecioară din comuna Sîntămărie Orlea</i> , PVAR V/1, 1985, pp. 199–233.   |
| Braun 1943            | E. Braun, <i>Tracht und Attribute der Heiligen</i> , Stuttgart, 1943.   |
| Bühren 1998           | R. Bühren, <i>Die Werke der Barmherzigkeit in der Kunst des 12.-18. Jahrhunderts. Zum Wandel eines Bildmotivs vor dem Hintergrund neuzeitlicher Rhetorikrezeption</i> , Hildesheim / Zürich / New York, 1998. |
| Buran 2002            | D. Buran, <i>Studien zur Wandmalerei um 1400 in der Slowakei – Die Pfarrkirche St. Jakob in Leutschau und die Pfarrkirche St. Franziskus Seraphicus in Poniky</i> , Weimar, 2002.                             |
| Cincheza-Buculei 1983 | E. Cincheza-Buculei, <i>Notes en marge de «l'allégorie de la charité» de la peinture gothique de Transylvanie</i> , RRH XXII, 1983, pp. 347–350.  |

<sup>77</sup> Tomaszewski 1974, German summary pp. 397–415; Möbius 1968; Szakács 2004, pp. 71–98.

<sup>78</sup> Szakács 2007, p. 16; English summary pp. 24–26.

<sup>79</sup> Szakács 2004, pp. 83–85.

<sup>80</sup> Johannes Aquila, pp. 78–81.



- Donadiou-Rigaut 2005 D. Donadiou-Rigaut, *Penser en images les ordres religieux (XIIe-XVe siècles)*, Paris, 2005.
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