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Byzantine and Gothic Side-by-side: Stylistic Diversity under a Single Roof in the Churches of Late-medieval Transylvania²

During the Late Middle Ages, the territories of the *Voivodate* of Transylvania and of the south-western counties of the Kingdom of Hungary³ represented a meeting point between two religious and cultural traditions. It was here that the religious and cultural traditions of Western and Central Europe, which were Catholic and Latin, respectively, met the traditions of the East, which were Orthodox and — in this particular case — Byzantine-Slavic [45; 38]. This area was thus the place of coexistence of several ethnic and confessional groups, each of them bringing into play its own cultural and religious heritage. Under the Hungarians' Latin rule, Orthodox Romanians — or *Vlachs*, as they are called by medieval sources⁴ — lived together with Catholic Hungarians, Saxons, and Szeklers [32; 43; 44; 46]. Their long-lasting *convivencia* allowed them to frequently interact and engage in cross-cultural exchanges that have left meaningful traces in the religious art of both confessional groups.

Discussed equally in German-, Hungarian-, and Romanian-speaking scholarship, this medieval cultural and artistic heritage was approached until recently within the framework of each “national” (or “linguistic”) school of art history, being understood as monolithic blocks that were distinct from and did not communicate with each other. Generally, German-speaking scholars remained interested exclusively in the art produced by the ethnic group of Transylvanian Saxons⁵, whereas Hungarian-speaking art historians focused on the art produced by

² The results of the project *Models of Representation of the Past in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* carried out within the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2019 are presented in this work.

³ For Transylvania's political and administrative autonomy within the Kingdom of Hungary, see [54]. Between 1867 and 1918, this territory belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but as a consequence of the geopolitical changes of WWI, it was divided between modern Hungary and Romania. For the sake of brevity, I shall henceforth refer conventionally to this territory simply as “Transylvania,” even though it includes not only the Transylvanian *Voivodate* proper, but also partially the Hungarian Kingdom's neighboring counties (the so-called *Partium*), such as the historical regions of Crișana and Maramureș, and the Romanian part of Banat.

⁴ During the Middle Ages, the exonym “Vlach” designated different Romance-speaking peoples, including the inhabitants of the Romanian principalities. As there are no self-referential medieval sources produced by this people, but one can find external testimonies stressing the speakers' awareness of the Latin character of their language [39; 3], I shall henceforth refer conventionally to this Romance-speaking people in Transylvania as ‘Romanians.’ This term has nothing to do with present-day Romanian national identity.

⁵ As indicated by their titles, German-language studies designate this art as “German” [55; 57] or are dedicated exclusively to “Transylvanian Saxon” art [19; 15; 14]. Even when their titles seem to be all-encompassing, these studies refer in fact only to the medieval art produced by Transylvanian Saxons [56].

the confessional group of Transylvanian Catholics, be they Hungarian, Szekler, or Saxon⁶. In their turn, Romanian-speaking scholars paid attention to both Western (Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) art [68; 69; 72; 11; 70, pp. 89–128, 206–290, 511–646], but emphasized sometimes the alleged “Romanian” character of the latter⁷. In all approaches, however, the ethnic and confessional character of the art produced by a given group underlay each art-historical discourse, medieval religious art being thus transformed into a marker of cultural identity that distinguished — and often opposed — various ethnic and confessional categories.

Nevertheless, such assumptions are contradicted by the complex and dynamic reality of religious art in 14th- and 15th-century Transylvania, a place where painters of the Byzantine tradition often worked for Catholic patrons [36] or, conversely, painters of Western training received commissions from the Orthodox [35]. In this context, Western iconographic models were frequently adopted by the Orthodox [49; 50; 51, pp. 182–191; 52, pp. 126–140] and, sometimes, more entangled phenomena occurred, such as: the shared devotion of Catholic saints by the Eastern-rite Christians⁸, cross-credal artistic patronage, or the coexistence within the same church of bilingual inscriptions (i.e., Latin and Old Church Slavonic)⁹. Among these paradigms of “mixed” art¹⁰, there is also the issue which forms the topic of this essay, namely, the coexistence within the same church of mural decoration displaying both Byzantine and Gothic styles. In late-medieval Transylvania, such instances of *stylistic diversity under a single roof* occurred in churches that were both Orthodox and Catholic. As in none of these churches the coexistence side-by-side of Byzantine and Gothic murals is coeval, but is instead the consequence of distinct stages of decoration owed to different patrons within larger and cumulative projects of church decoration, the following examination of the particulars of each case is meant to highlight the reasons that favored stylistic and aesthetic diversity within late-medieval Transylvanian churches. Before doing so, it should be noted that this essay approaches the question of aesthetic diversity from a strictly stylistic or formal point of view, a perspective that leaves less room for equivocal interpretations. Except for minimal and general references to a church’s iconographic program that serve to orient the reader, this essay intentionally avoids to touch upon the iconographic or content-related aspect of the examined murals. This is a topic far more complex and entangled, and it would deserve separate and lengthy discussions

⁶ Even though they include the territory of Transylvania as part of medieval Hungary, a number of Hungarian-language monographs make almost no mention of the art produced by Orthodox Romanians during the Middle Ages [53; 31; 4; 30].

⁷ Despite the title’s aim to discuss 14th- and 15th-century mural painting in Transylvania generally, [9] includes only “Romanian” and/or Byzantine painting. Medieval architecture produced for Orthodox Romanians in Transylvania is often labelled as “Romanian,” despite its eclectic (Romanesque-Gothic) character; this is illustrated by both older [71; 17] and very recent studies [48].

⁸ Partially examined in [34, pp. 226–306].

⁹ As the latter two issues have not been yet explored, I hope to focus on them in the near future.

¹⁰ Generally, art-historical scholarship refers to this type of “mixed” art in a variety of ways, through terms such as “hybrid,” “transcultural,” “eclectic,” etc. Recently, Michalis Olympios has critically examined this terminology within two public lectures: “‘Eclecticism,’ ‘Hybridity,’ and ‘Transculturality’ in Late Medieval Art: A View from the Eastern Mediterranean,” International Symposium *Eclecticism at the Edges: Medieval Art and Architecture at the Crossroads of the Latin, Greek, and Slavic Cultural Spheres (c. 1300-c. 1550)*, Princeton University (6 April 2018), and “‘Hybrid,’ ‘Transcultural,’ ‘Eclectic’? Some Thoughts on Conceptualizing the Art of the Latin East,” *55th Public Lecture Series — Spring Semester 2021: Celebrating 30 Years of Research at the Archaeological Research Unit, 1991-2021*, University of Cyprus (5 April 2021).



Fig. 1. Incensing angel on the left (northern) side of the *Melismos*, lower register of the sanctuary's eastern wall. Fresco. Ca 1400. Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas in Hălmagiu. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu

highlighting the polysemy of each representation displaying a “mixed” iconography.

The Romanian Orthodox patrons of St. Nicholas Church in Hălmagiu (*Nagyhalmágy*, Arad County)¹¹, that is, *jupan* Moga and his brother, employed around 1400 a workshop trained in the West for the decoration of their church's sanctuary and triumphal arch¹² (Fig. 1). Judging by the formal features of the preserved murals (Christ in Glory with angels, Evangelists, and Old-Testament Prophets on the sanctuary's vault; holy bishops, holy deacons, and archangels flanking the *Melismos* on its sidewalls; and a fragmentary Last Judgment on the nave's eastern wall) [29; 7; 59, pp. 97–105; 35, pp. 377–384], this workshop was undoubtedly trained in a Central-European artistic milieu. This is attested to by its “regional” late-Gothic manner that derives from the so-called *School of Friul* and finds close parallels in the murals of a significant number of Catholic churches spread across medieval Hungary and decorated at the turn of the 15th century¹³. Later on, sometime during the second half of the 15th century and after a change that occurred

in the ownership regime of the settlement [13, p. 28], new Orthodox patrons commissioned the decoration of the nave of the church with new murals [33, pp. 213–214]. These included — among others — several scenes from the life of St. Nicholas (Fig. 2), a votive composition, and a funerary portrait. Fragmentarily preserved, these new frescoes are certainly the work of painters trained in the Byzantine tradition, whose exquisite manner was pervasive also to the Italian Renaissance painting of that time [7, p. 22]. Even though there are other cases when painters of Western training received commissions from Orthodox patrons — e. g., the 14th-century murals of the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas in Strei (*Zeykfalva*, Hunyad County) [35, pp. 371–376] — these seem rather exceptional, as the general pattern followed by Eastern-rite patrons was to entrust the decoration of their churches to painters of the Byzantine tradition [35, pp. 384–385]. Subsequently, in the case of Hălmagiu, after the Western experience (or better-called “experiment”) in the sanctuary, which was owed to the patronage of *jupan* Moga and his brother and probably to the unavailability of Byzantine painters in that

¹¹ Whenever a place is first mentioned, its current name followed by its German and/or Hungarian variants are given, only current names being used afterwards. However, the administrative-territorial units which these settlements belonged to during the Middle Ages refer to the medieval reality and not to the current one.

¹² For the Church Slavonic inscription attesting to the two brothers' joint patronage, see [33, pp. 209, 236]. For the settlement's history and its church, see [13; 59, pp. 97–105].

¹³ Other dating either to the second half of the 14th century [29, p. 109] or to the first half of the 15th century [7, pp. 21–22] should be discarded after the convincing stylistic analogies proposed by [51, p. 149, figs. 7.56–7.61].



Fig. 2. Three generals in prison (St. Nicholas' Life) on the nave's northern wall. Fresco. Second half of the 15th century. Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas in Hălmaġiu. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu

particular time and space, the new Orthodox patrons of the church returned to more familiar aesthetic solutions, when they commissioned during the second half of the 15th-century the nave decoration with frescoes belonging to the Byzantine tradition. This situation indicates that, generally, Orthodox patrons preferred artists belonging to their own cultural and religious tradition, provided that the patrons had a choice in the matter and that such artists were available to them.

In contrast with the isolated occurrences of medieval Orthodox churches displaying a Western-style decoration (i. e., Strei and Hălmaġiu), the number of cases of medieval Catholic churches featuring murals of Byzantine tradition is considerably higher. As it became apparent in recent years, Catholic patrons entrusted sometimes the painters of Byzantine training with the decoration of their churches, especially in those rural areas where Saxon or mixed (Saxon and Hungarian) population had lived [36]. The frescoes with Byzantine and/or “Byzantinizing” formal features in the medieval Catholic churches in Bunești (*Bodendorf/Szászbuda*), Dârlos (*Durles/Darlac*), Sântămăria-Orlea (*Liebfrauen/Őraljaboldogfalva*), Șmig (*Schmiegen/Somogyom*), Valea Lungă (*Langenthal/Hosszúaszó*), and probably Deva (*Diemrich/Déva*) and Târgu Mureș (*Neumarkt/Marosvásárhely*) are the case in point. Against the background of Gothic mural painting, which is predominant in these Catholic areas, it seems that the painting of Byzantine tradition was an alternative aesthetic solution that Saxon and Hungarian patrons could embrace occasionally, depending on the flexibility of their artistic taste and, certainly, the availability of artists with Byzantine training [36].

This seems to have been the case of the Lutheran (formerly Catholic) church in Șmig (Küküllő County), which was founded on the estate of Ban Simon of Szalók. The church served both the noblemen's family and descendants, and as a parish church for the Saxon *hospites* who were invited by the king in 1317 to settle there, near the town of Mediaș (*Mediasch/Medgyes*) [34, pp. 284, 300, 302–303; 37, pp. 116–135; 36]. The interior decoration of the Gothic church was executed in different stages during the first decades of the 15th century by various work-



Fig. 3. Holy Empress Helena and her retinue (Finding of the Holy Cross) on the nave's northern wall. Fresco. 1311. Calvinist Church in Sântămăria-Orlea. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu

shops, all trained in the ambiance of the International Gothic [37, pp.122–130]. These Western workshops embellished the interior walls of the church with both narrative and iconic images, such as: the Legends of Sts. Ladislav of Hungary and Catherine of Alexandria, the *Mater misericordiae*, the Living Cross, Archangel Michael weighing the souls, or the Hungarian Holy Kings Stephen and Ladislav. However, the outer walls of the sanctuary were instead decorated earlier (i. e., around 1400) with two other images, one depicting the Man of Sorrows between the Holy Virgin and St. John, and another showing the monumental figure of St. Christopher carrying the Christ Child on his shoulder. Even though they have been poorly preserved, these two frescoes display formal and technical features which are uncharacteristic for Western painting, but are instead specific of Byzantine frescoes [34, p.302; 37, pp.129–130] (Ill. 102). These two images were most likely the work of the same

atelier active in the neighboring Lutheran (formerly Catholic) church in Dârlos, another religious edifice where painters of Byzantine tradition worked for Catholic patrons [34, p.302; 37, pp.129–130; 36]. The commissioning of workshops trained in both Western and Eastern practices of church decoration by the patrons in Șmig points out to the flexibility of their artistic taste and their readiness to embrace different aesthetic solutions than those that were normally available to them [36]. This is especially so, if one considers the relatively short time span (i. e., a couple of decades) within which the artistic commissions took place.

The Calvinist (formerly Catholic) church (of the Blessed Virgin Mary) in Sântămăria-Orlea (Hunyad County) was built during the late-13th century by the Saxons, who were invited earlier on by the King of Hungary to settle in the proximity of the royal *castrum* of Hațeg (*Hatzeg/Hátság*)¹⁴. As indicated by written sources mentioning the settlement and its church during the 14th century, as well as by the painted dedicatory inscription in Latin preserved on the southern wall of the nave [12, p.247, fig. 14], the local Catholic community used the edifice as a parish church. In 1311, this Catholic community commissioned the mural decoration of the nave to a workshop trained in the Byzantine tradition (Fig. 3). Its iconographic program captures the essential elements of sacred history: the events in the life of the Virgin Mary prefigure the Incarnation, the Christological cycle speaks about Jesus' divine nature and his role in salvation, and the Last Judgment details the end of terrestrial history [10, pp.61–74; 5, pp.213–228; 64; 6, pp.307–312]. Modern scholars characterized the manner of the workshop responsible for

¹⁴ For the settlement's history and its church, see [5, pp. 201–212; 47, pp. 122–123; 58, pp. 309–315; 6, pp. 307–312].

this decoration as essentially Byzantine, having a formal language familiar to Serbian monumental painting — especially that of King Stefan Milutin's (r. 1282–1321) foundations — but a stylistic treatment closer to Italian Byzantine art. Given its double affinity, the origin of the workshop was assigned either to Southern Dalmatia [9, p. 16; 10, p. 72] or the medieval town of Kotor [5, pp. 206–207]. More recently, it has been hypothesized that a mixed workshop operated there, gathering different painters: some formed in the Byzantine tradition and others in the Western one, namely, representatives of the so-called *Zackenstil* (*zackbrüchiger Stil*) specific to 13th-century Lower Austria (especially Carinthia and Styria) [64, pp. 6–9]. However, due to the current precarious state of conservation of the murals, it is more cautious to await their cleaning and restoration until a reevaluation of the style is attempted [6, pp. 308, 312]. The 1311 murals in the nave, however, are not the only ones inside the church. Several independent representations (i. e., the Charity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the Death of *pauper Paulus*, and three unknown male figures) were added around 1400 below the western tribune of the nave (Ill. 103) [5, pp. 207–210, 229–231; 65; 2]. They display Latin inscriptions and Western formal features of the International Gothic style with elements of the Italian Trecento.

After 1447, when Governor John Hunyadi (1446–1453) donated the settlement in Sântămăria-Orlea to the Romanian noble family of Căndeia of Râu de Mori (*Malomvîz*) [60, pp. 141–143, doc. no. 114], these Orthodox noblemen exercised their *ius patronatus* over the Catholic church found on their newly-acquired estate [5, pp. 210–215; 58, pp. 311–313; 6, p. 312]. Subsequently, sometime during the second half of the 15th century, they most likely commissioned new murals below the western tribune (i. e., two kneeling female donors blessed by the *Dextera Domini*) and on the sanctuary walls (i. e., standing apostles with scrolls and books) (Fig. 4). All new murals display this time formal qualities belonging to the Byzantine tradition, whereas the gallery of standing apostles features inscriptions in Church Slavonic [5, pp. 210–215]. Subsequently, the aesthetic choices of the Catholic patrons in Sântămăria-Orlea could vary radically at both ends of the 14th century, when they commissioned the mural decoration of their church to workshops of Byzantine and Western training, respectively. However, the new Orthodox patrons in the second half of the 15th century proved to be more conservative and attached to their own visual and religious tradition, as they resorted to painters that were trained in the East and, obviously, had a similar cultural background.



Fig. 4. Holy Apostle Mark on the sanctuary's eastern wall. Fresco. Second half of the 15th century. Calvinist Church in Sântămăria-Orlea. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsioiu



Fig. 5. Holy Mother of God *Eleousa* or *Glykophilousa* flanked by angels on the eastern lunette of the room below the western tower. Fresco. Before 1491. Calvinist Church in Remetea. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu

A similar pattern of stylistic diversity is illustrated by the Calvinist (formerly Catholic) church in Remetea (*Magyarremete/Biharremete*, Bihar County), the nave and sanctuary of which were decorated around 1400 by a single workshop trained in the West¹⁵. Its manner displays a number of common elements with the so-called *Workshop of Dârjiu* (*Székelyderzs*) and recalls the decorativeness of the International Gothic style, which was popular in Transylvania during the first decades of the 15th century [11, pp. 230–231, 264; 27, pp. 71–74; 21, pp. 38–41; 34, pp. 398–399]. The coherent and unitary iconographic program of the church gathers in the pentagonal sanctuary representations of standing apostles with attributes, the Holy Kings of Hungary, Archangel Michael weighing the souls, and scenes of the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew the Apostle (Ill. 104). Fragmentarily preserved and recently uncovered, the nave decoration includes among others two narrative cycles depicting the chivalrous exploits of St. Ladislas of Hungary (northern wall) and the martyrdom of St. Margaret of Antioch (southern wall) [34, pp. 397–398]. Inscribed in Latin with Gothic majuscules, all these International-Gothic murals were commissioned by Catholic patrons, as the settlement was inhabited by Hungarians and owned by the Bishops of Nagyvárad starting in 1318 and until shortly after 1442 [23; 27, p. 71; 66, p. 329; 34, pp. 304–305]. However, several other frescoes inscribed in Church Slavonic and displaying this time a “regional” Byzantine style, which is encountered elsewhere in the area during the second half of the 15th century, were later added to the previous ones (Fig. 5). On the northern wall of the nave, there are the isolated scene of the Nativity of Christ and the figure of the *Mater Misericordiae* flanked by two angel-deacons and various

¹⁵ For the settlement’s history and its church, see [27, pp. 71–74; 34, pp. 398–399].

saints. Additionally, the room below the western tower — which ensured during the Middle Ages also the main access to the interior of the church — was fully decorated with murals that form a coherent iconographic program with eschatological and funerary overtones [34, p. 290]. On the vault, there are Christ Pantokrator and the four writing Evangelists separated by six-winged and many-eyed seraphs, whereas the Holy Mother of God *Eleousa* or *Glykophilousa* flanked by angels and the Entombment of Christ are placed above the eastern and western doors, respectively. [34, p. 398]. The paintings of Byzantine tradition in the nave were executed after those displaying International Gothic features, whereas all Byzantine-style frescoes in the nave and below the western tower have similar stylistic and technical characteristics [27, p. 74].

Like in Sântămăria-Orlea, this surprising coexistence not only of Gothic and Byzantine murals, but also of Latin and Cyrillic inscriptions finds an explanation in the change of ownership of the settlement after the middle of the 15th century. In 1445, the possession of Remetea was donated by the Governor of Nagyvárád Bishopric to the Romanian Voivode of Beiuș (*Belényes*) Vladislav Boț (*Bocz*) and to his brothers, as a reward for their help during the latest war against the Turks [8, pp. 214–215; 27, p. 71; 66, p. 329; 34, p. 305]¹⁶. The settlement stayed in Romanian ownership throughout the second half of the 15th century, as in 1491 it was donated again by the Bishop of Nagyvárád to Stephen Iancău of the same Boț kindred, as an incentive for this one to prove himself more zealous in the administering and protecting of the bishop's *terrae wolachales*. Stephen Iancău was granted the same rights over the settlement as the previous owner, Voivode Stephen *de Chycze* [8, p. 215; 34, p. 305]¹⁷. As the Romanian noblemen of Boț kindred were — in an exceptional manner — Catholics¹⁸, the frescoes with formal features belonging to the Byzantine tradition and their inscriptions in Old Church Slavonic were very likely commissioned sometime after 1445, but closely before 1491, that is, during Stephen *de Chycze*'s ownership of Remetea. One may assume, therefore, that it was the settlement's change of ownership before 1491 from Catholics to the Orthodox that made possible this unusual but not isolated occurrence, the new Romanian Orthodox owners of the settlement exercising their right of patronage over a local (Catholic) church [34, p. 305] and commissioning a number of frescoes of Byzantine tradition inscribed in Old Church Slavonic.

Surprising as it may seem, this situation finds its legal basis in a document issued in 1444 [34, pp. 280–281], that is, temporally very close to the patronage change in Remetea (1445) and Sântămăria-Orlea (1447). In this charter, the Hungarian king's vassal, Despot Đurađ Branković (r. 1427–1456), donated the royal *castrum* of Șiria (*Világosvár*) to Voivode John Hunyadi (1441–1446), as a reward for his efforts in recovering the lost Serbian lands from the Turks. Together with the dependent estates of the royal fortress, the ownership transfer included also its conditional noblemen (Hungarian and Romanian alike) and — most important for the cur-

¹⁶ For this donation charter, see [20, pp. 127–128, doc. no. 200].

¹⁷ For this donation charter, see [20, p. 173, doc. no. 356].

¹⁸ Vladislav Boț's direct forefather, Voivode of Beiuș *Balk Bolch*, received in 1423 a papal plenary indulgence, a sign that he was one of the few Catholic Romanians in the Beiuș area [1, p. 89]. Additionally, one of his sons — a recipient of the 1445 donation — was called "Benedict" [20, pp. 127–128, doc. no. 200], an unlikely name among the Orthodox. In 1421–1422, the estate of Beiuș consisted of 93 settlements, out of which 83 were inhabited by Romanians and only 10 by Hungarians [1, p. 86]. Except for a few isolated cases, Romanians followed the Eastern rite and no actual persecution of the Orthodox took place in the Beiuș area throughout the 14th and 15th centuries [1, pp. 88–92].

rent argument — the right of patronage over all religious institutions (i.e., town parishes, rural churches, and chapels) that were located on the estates of the royal fortress and belonged to both *Christians and Vlachs*, that is, to both Catholics and Orthodox¹⁹. Even though the donation charters concerning Remetea and Sântămăria-Orlea are not as specific as the 1444 document in what the ownership of these settlements' religious institutions is concerned, all charters specify that the settlements were donated together with everything that pertained to them [20, pp. 127–128, 173, doc. nos. 200, 356; 60, pp. 141–143, doc. no. 114]. According to medieval Hungarian law, the *ius patronatus* over a religious institution belonged to the owner of the land on which the respective religious edifice was built. The patron of a religious institution could thus differ from its actual founder, who had paid for its construction, and the right of patronage over a religious institution could be relegated to a different person together with the transfer of land property²⁰. In a contact zone such as late-medieval Transylvania, this specificity did not necessarily imply a practice that can be labeled as *cuius patronatus, eius religio*, but rather one of the *cuius regio, eius patronatus* type [41, p. 255; 42, pp. 42–43]. In other words, one cannot really speak about a change of rite from Catholic to Orthodox for the churches in Sântămăria-Orlea and Remetea, but rather about the actual exercising of the patronage right by the new owners of the settlement. By virtue of their *ius patronatus*, these patrons had a number of rights and obligations, including the duty to contribute financially to the maintenance, repair, endowment, and embellishment of the church — hence the Byzantine-tradition frescoes with Church Slavonic inscriptions in the two Catholic churches and the transgression of confessional borders by the two Romanian Orthodox noble families. Unusual as it may seem, this type of situation occurred sometimes in other medieval contact zones, such as Frankish- and Venetian ruled Cyprus [18; 22, pp. 122–131; 73] or South Italy [62, pp. 858–861, 875–879; 63, pp. 130–135], though in these cases it was normally the confessionally *dominant* Latin lords, who exercised their generosity — for either political, economic, or even spiritual reasons — towards the religious institutions of the *subaltern* Greeks. Obviously, in late-medieval Transylvania, it was the other way around and this situation was facilitated by the existence of a flexible enough legal framework, which — in the 15th century — allowed Orthodox Romanians to become not only the secular lords of Saxon or Hungarian settlements, but also the benefactors of Catholic religious institutions. What is most important for the current argument of stylistic diversity under a single roof is that these Romanian Orthodox lords remained strongly attached to their religious and visual traditions, and subsequently commissioned murals for their newly-acquired (Catholic) churches to artists who shared their cultural background and who proposed familiar aesthetic solutions.

¹⁹ “... castrum eorum Vilagosvar vocatum, cum oppidis Syri et Galsa, Mezth, Keresbanya, alio nomine Cybebanya, Kisbanya, alio nomine Medwepataka, item districtibus Kaladwa, Aranyag, Kapolna, Chwch, Feyerkeres, Halmagh, Ribiche, ac possessionibus et villis, item nobilibus Ungaris et Walachis castrensibus, semper et ab antiquo ad ipsum castrum spectantibus [...], necnon urburis in Nagybanya et Kisbanya predictis ac alias ubivis, habitis, ad predictam castrum pertinentibus, in comitatu de Zarand et Orodieni existentibus, habitum, *simulcum iure patronatus ecclesiarum parochialium* in Syri, Galza, Mezth, Keresbanya, Kisbanya, *ac cunctarum aliarum ecclesiarum et capellarum, tam Christianorum quam Walachorum, ubivis in pertinentiis dicti castrum habitarum...*” (emphasis mine. — D. Gh. Năstăsioiu) [40, pp. 379–383, doc. no. 274].

²⁰ For *ius patronatus* generally, see [26]; for the same legal phenomenon in medieval Hungary, see [24; 16; 25; 61; 28; 67, pp. 16, 19, 27].

As it could be seen during this survey of late-medieval Transylvanian cases of coexistence within the same church of mural decoration displaying both Byzantine and Gothic styles, this phenomenon occurred at different stages during the larger and cumulative project of church decoration, and the reasons for such occurrences were varied. In contrast with the more conservative Orthodox, who seemingly commissioned Western painters only when artists of the same cultural and religious tradition were unavailable, Catholic patrons were more prone to embrace the alternative aesthetic solutions proposed to them by traveling artists with Byzantine training. A special situation of stylistic diversity under a single roof is represented by those cases, which occurred when the Orthodox patrons — despite their belonging to a different confession — exercised their legal right of patronage over those Catholic churches found on their estates. This phenomenon has led to the coexistence within the same church not only of Gothic- and Byzantine-style murals, but also of inscriptions in the two liturgical languages of the two Churches, that is, of inscriptions in both Latin and Church Slavonic. What were the devotional implications of such stylistic/aesthetic and linguistic diversity within the same church, I hope to examine on a different occasion, when this phenomenon will be analyzed against the background of the cross-credal artistic patronage and shared devotion of Catholic saints by the Eastern-rite Christians. After all, it is known that Romanian Orthodox noblemen had a devotion for popular Catholic saints venerated locally, such as the Holy Kings of Hungary Stephen, Emeric, and Ladislas, whose images were included in the register of saints in the Orthodox churches in Crișcior (*Kristytor*) and Ribița (*Ribice*) [34, pp.226–306].

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Title. Byzantine and Gothic Side-by-side: Stylistic Diversity under a Single Roof in the Churches of Late-medieval Transylvania

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Abstract. This essay analyzes the cases of coexistence within the same church of mural decoration displaying both (Post-)Byzantine and Gothic styles, which occurred during the 14th and 15th centuries on the territory of the *Voivodate* of Transylvania and the south-eastern border counties of the Kingdom of Hungary. This phenomenon of stylistic diversity under the same roof occurred at different stages during the larger and cumulative projects of church decoration, and the reasons for such occurrences varied. Orthodox patrons proved to be more conservative and very attached to their own cultural, religious, and visual traditions, and subsequently commissioned Western painters with the decoration of their churches only when the artists belonging to their own cultural and religious traditions were unavailable (e.g., Hălmașiu and Strei). In contrast with the Orthodox, Catholic patrons had a flexible artistic taste and were more prone to embrace the alternative aesthetic solutions proposed to them by traveling artists with Byzantine training (e.g., Bunești, Dârlos, Sântămăria-Orlea, Șmig, Valea Lungă, and probably Deva and Târgu Mureș). A special situation of stylistic diversity under a single roof is represented by those cases, which occurred when Romanian Orthodox patrons—despite their belonging to a different confession—exercised their legal right of patronage over those Catholic churches found on their estates (e.g., Sântămăria-Orlea and Remetea). The Orthodox patrons' strong attachment to their own religious and visual traditions led to the coexistence within the same Catholic church not only of murals displaying Gothic and (Post-)Byzantine formal features, but also of inscriptions in the liturgical languages of the two Churches (i.e., Latin and Church Slavonic). Since this essay approached the phenomenon of aesthetic diversity strictly from a stylistic or formal point of view, its devotional implications will be analyzed on a different occasion, when it will be contextualized together with other transcultural phenomena, such as those of linguistic diversity under the same roof, cross-credal artistic patronage, and shared devotion of Catholic saints by the Eastern-rite Christians.

Keywords: Gothic style, Byzantine style, stylistic diversity, aesthetic diversity, hybrid art, eclectic art, transcultural art, religious and artistic patronage, *ius patronatus*, late-medieval Transylvania, late-medieval Hungary

Название статьи. Византия и готика рядом. Стилистическое разнообразие под одной крышей в позднесредневековых храмах Трансильвании²¹

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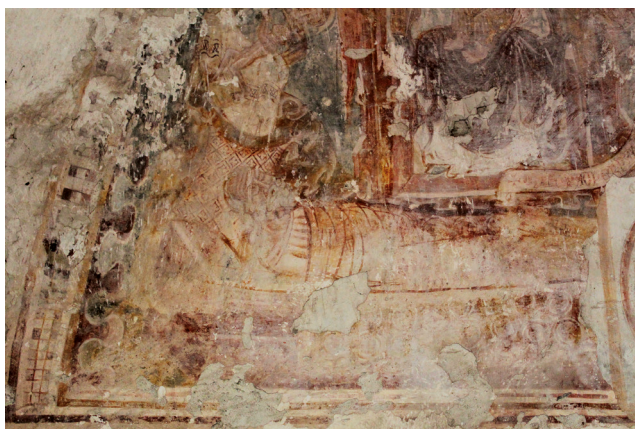
Аннотация. В статье анализируются случаи сосуществования в одной церкви фресок, в которых сочетаются византийский или поствизантийский и готический стили, что было характерно для памятников XIV–XV вв. на территории княжества Трансильвании и на юго-восточной границе Венгерского королевства. Этот феномен стилистического разнообразия под одной крышей наблюдается на различных фазах в течение длительного и многоэтапного процесса создания храмовой декорации. За этим стояли различные причины. Православные заказчики обычно были более консервативными и весьма привязанными к своим собственным культурным, религиозным и визуальным традициям. Поэтому они заказывали украшение свих церквей западным художникам только тогда, когда невозможно найти мастеров, принадлежавших к их собственной культурной и религиозной традиции (например, Халмаджу и Стреи). В отличие от православных, католические заказчики были более гибкими в своих художественных вкусах и чаще были готовы принять альтернативные эстетические решения, предлагавшиеся им бродячими художниками, работавшими в византийской традиции (например, Бунешти, Дырлос, Сынтамария-Орлеа, Шмиг, Валя Лунга и, возможно, Дева и Тыргу Муреш). Особую ситуацию стилистического разнообразия под одной крышей представляют те случаи, когда румынские православные заказчики — несмотря на принадлежность к другой конфессии — использовали свое законное право патронажа над теми католическими храмами, которые находились в их владениях (например, Сынтамария-Орлеа и Реметя). Сильная привязанность православных заказчиков к собственным религиозным и визуальным традициям вела к сосуществованию в одной католической церкви не только фресок с готическими и византийскими или поствизантийскими чертами, но и к появлению надписей на литургических языках обеих конфессий (церковнославянский и латынь). Поскольку в этой статье эстетическое разнообразие анализируется строго с точки зрения стиля живописи, конфессиональные аспекты этого сосуществования будут рассмотрены в другом месте, вкпе с другими транскультурными феноменами, такими как языковое разнообразие, иноконфессиональный патронаж и почитание католических святых христианами восточного обряда.

Ключевые слова: готический стиль, византийский стиль, стилистическое разнообразие, гибридное искусство, эклектичное искусство, транскультурное искусство, религиозный патронаж, *ius patronatus*, позднесредневековая Трансильвания, позднесредневековая Венгрия

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Ill. 102. St. Christopher carrying Christ Child on his shoulder on the sanctuary's outer wall. Fresco. Ca 1400. Lutheran Church in Șmig. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu



Ill. 103. Death of *pauper Paulus* on the northern wall below the western tribune. Fresco. Ca 1400. Calvinist Church in Sântămăria-Orlea. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu



Ill. 104. Holy Kings of Hungary (Sts Ladislas, Stephen, and Emeric) on the sanctuary's north-eastern wall. Fresco. Ca 1400. Calvinist Church in Remetea. Photo by Dragoș Gh. Năstăsoiu