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VII. 2

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THE FIGURATIVE FRIEZE OF THE CHOIR OF CATHEDRAL ST. MICHAEL, ALBA IULIA – AN ICONOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Sebastian CORNEANU*

Abstract: *St. Michael's Cathedral in Alba Iulia can be considered among the very few Transylvanian Romanesque churches whose sculptures compose a comprehensive program, as other large architectural monuments located within the European area of this style. In their present order, all the scenes placed on the friezes of the Eastern choir cornice appear not to be thematically connected. In this study, we have tried to analyze them separately, placing their subjects in relation with each other.*

Keywords: *Romanesque style, sculpture, iconography, program, Transylvania, St. Michael Cathedral, Alba Iulia*

Rezumat: *Friza figurativă a corului Catedralei romano-catolice Sf. Mihail din Alba Iulia – o abordare iconografică. Catedrala romano-catolică Sf. Mihail din Alba Iulia, construită în jurul anului 1200, poate fi considerată unul dintre foarte puținele monumente arhitecturale din Transilvania al cărei program de plastică arhitectonică este similar altor structuri arhitecturale situate în spațiul european al acestui stil. Toate scenele cuprinse în frize aflate sub cornișa exterioară a corului par să nu aibă nici o legătură între ele. În acest studiu am încercat să le analizăm separat, plasându-le în relație unele cu altele.*

Cuvinte cheie: *stil romanic, sculptură, iconografie, program, Transilvania, Catedrala Sf. Mihail, Alba Iulia*

St. Michael's Romanesque Cathedral of Alba Iulia, built around 1200 (Sarkadi 2010, 351), can be considered the singular Transylvanian Romanesque monument whose architectural sculptures compose a comprehensive program, like other large cathedrals or churches located within the European area of this style.

The actual choir of the cathedral was built in Gothic style, as an extension of the original apse which had a semi-circular disposition, operation performed by the demolition of the old Romanesque choir, extended by one bay completed with an apse with seven sides (Salontai 2008, 41). The construction of the monument had been completed before 1277, when Saxon colonists set fire to the church. Following the destruction caused by this act of arson, the roofs of the choir, of the naves and of the transept were entirely rebuilt (Salontai 2007, 145). The renovation of the choir and of its roof in the ninth decade of thirteenth century determined the reuse of the carved fragments of the initial choir,

integrated into the hooks frieze situated under the cornice. Because the original frieze was broken and all its fragments were arbitrarily relocated, the

animal and human figures appearing on the three Eastern sides of the polygonal choir have a chaotic emplacement (Fig. 1). This kind of decorative frieze is an isolated case among the Transylvanian monuments; its origin can be found in the environment of northern Italy Romanesque, from where it is taken and adapted to the Romanesque churches of Provence during the twelfth century, spreading later in the Germanic area and to the rest of France (Salontai 2008, 42). Such figurative decoration, incorporated in the frieze located under the cornice, is found in the Alsatian churches, for instance on the west facade of the church of the Benedictine nuns of Andlau that is decorated with a similar frieze carved with fantastic animals (Will 1982, 263; Salontai 2008, 42).

The singular manifestation of this carved frieze in Transylvanian environment (Entz 1958, 22; Salontai 2008, 43–44), its presence in an earlier stage of the cathedral, the diversity of figures represented, make the assembly very important in terms of architectural sculpture. In terms of the execution technique, the figures seem to belong to that moment of transition between Romanesque

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and Gothic, placed in the second half of the thirteenth century, although some researchers have been tempted to see in these sculptures forms of a mature Gothic, that have been dated around the year 1350 (Arion 1974, 8–9).

Considering the current form of the assembly, although the appearance is that of a continuous frieze, the arbitrarily layout of fragments is easily detectable because some of them were initially destined to be placed on the corners of frieze. The altered layout of the scenes corroborates that these were destined for the decoration of the original choir affected by the fire of 1277 and the remaining parts were relocated in their present emplacement. All the scenes contained in the friezes of the entire large cornice (Fig. 1) appear to have no connection with each other, which determined us to consider them separately from left to right.

The first of these friezes is located on the South-East side of the apse and it is starting with a scene decorated with two face to face dragons (Fig. 2–1). The dragons' silhouettes and their position, each forming a medallion composed by the contortion of the animal that bites its tail, is a well known decorative motif. It also appears on a fragment of sculpture located on a capital of the portal of the cathedral of Bamberg, the differences being in the treatment of curved surfaces.

The second scene depicts the torso of a male character in a frontal position, keeping the left hand at the head level with the index finger raised (Fig. 2–2). Before it there is an animal figured in absolute profile with the head turned back, which seems to be a lion combined to a dog. In the same scene there is a hand placed on the animal head, belonging to another character that is not appearing in the picture because the carved fragment is broken. The main character's hand gesture, manifested in the raised index, denotes the exercise of an authority or a control (Garnier 1982, 167–168), inducing the viewer to think about a special idea. It is difficult to identify the meaning of this scene in absence of the original context, the presented theme having probably a moralizing subject.

The third scene has a more specific subject; its central theme is the conflict between good and evil, represented here by the struggle between man and beast (Fig. 2–3). The human figure has rough proportions, staying effectively on the animal, its hand placed in the snout of the beast pulling its jaw. In terms of characteristics, the animal seems to be a lion, whose proportions are roughly correct, tail arched high ending with what

appears to be a snakehead. The subject of the scene seems to be focused on the conflict between virtues and vices, the relations between the figures prompting us to consider the theme represented as the fight of Samson with the lion.

The fourth scene could be associated with the previous one, showing in its central area a male character affronted to the viewer, having on its right side a female character and on the left a figure that seems to be a hybrid between man and lion, both figured in profile (Fig. 2–4). The subject is focused both on the man's posture placed in the central position, which is static, and on the other two naked characters and their movements, who are pulling the hair of the central figure. Our view is that we are dealing here with an interpretation of the theme Samson and Delilah, the nude woman being a variation of the subject of the sin (Garnier 1989, 269–270). The gesture of pulling the man's hair leads us to consider the subject to be the illustration of the moment when sleeping Samson lost his power, because Delilah cut his seven strands as shown in the Holy Bible: "And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him." (Holy Bible, Judges 16–19). In thematic association with the previous scene in which Samson kills the lion our opinion is that the frieze was originally an illustrative discourse, consisting in allegorical themes with moralizing character.

The scene number five is similar to the first scene, with two dragons represented face to face, but this time they are not in conflict (Fig. 2–5). Both of them are represented with bodies in profile however with heads turned toward the viewer, all details are well suggested by the carver obviously in the wings treatment and in their volumes which are well defined. The focus in the frame is the dragon's head position directed to the soil, suggesting that they are grazing, the subject in this situation is probably an allegory of peace in the garden of heaven, the beasts being valued positively.

The sixth scene probably illustrates a chapter contained in the book *Physiologus*, which appeared in the second century. Here the viewer can see three cats that are part of a larger initial frame, as evidenced by the back half of a lion placed on the right side, his body being cut when the original frieze was destroyed (Fig. 2–6). Even if the subject is not clearly indicated, details and forms of skilfully carved lions (the tail of

incomplete animal, passed through his legs and rotated around his torso, as it is mentioned in *Physiologus*) are arguments to place this theme in a direct relation with the Christian moral concepts. Moreover, the gesture of the middle lion, that put his paw on the rump of sectioned animal, probably signifies the absence of conflict.

The seventh frame is much clearer, animal figures are engaged in a conflict that designates the struggle between good and evil (Fig. 2–7). The fragment of relief depicts a standing animal, which has all the features of a lion, fighting with a dragon lying on the ground. The scene is similar to a fragment carved on the capital of the northern apse of the same monument. The differences in interpretation are noticeable; the frieze under the cornice is illustrated more naive. The guard posture of the lion, visible in the raised tail that ends in a palm, the dragon with his great wings wrapped around the body of his enemy and bites its neck, tail coiled around the lion body, are proving a carver's familiarity with the conventions of such subjects.

The eighth scene presents a dragon that seems to keep in its claws an object or a small animal, the carver sketching him sitting on its curled tail with the head turned back presenting canine features; in this posture it seems to bite its own wings (Fig. 2–8). In this scene we can see the preference of the carver for sinuous movements; the dragon's body has a turned "S" shape, very similar to decorative patterns.

The second segment of the frieze continues the previous one and is located on the median side of the main apse, its scenes presenting the same thematic spread (Arion 1974, 10; Salontai 2008, 43–44) (Fig. 1). The first one which is the ninth in the frieze shows two monkeys face to face figured in profile (Fig. 3–9). They are placed with flexed legs, the right one being naked while its partner is dressed in a sort of toga whose folds shapes reveal its body. The subject of the scene is obvious in the actions and gestures of the dressed monkey, which gives to the other a spherical object. This relation between figures leads us to the assumption that the scene is a caricature of the theme of the original sin, considered in a playful way in which the rounded object is an apple. Perhaps the theme of the original sin is here contaminated with elements of the *Physiologus* and monkeys are valued in a moral sense.

The tenth stage comprised two characters and is somewhat ambiguous (Fig. 3–10): a woman lying down with the torso bended, her hair in braided tail, wearing a dress whose folds highlight her

body. The other character is a man also dressed, who keeps head thrown back. This figure is in a listener position, illustrated by the orientation of the raised head to something, being in the same time an attitude of defiance (Garnier 1982, 140), while she raises her left hand with the index upright as if she wants to require attention. We consider that this frame illustrates a scene from Samson and Delilah cycle, specifically one of those moments when she asks him about his power source: «So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued.» (Holy Bible, Judges 16–6).

Scene number 11 continues the cycle of representation where animals are associated with no specific rule. On the fragment three animals are shown, the first one is a hybrid with the body and tail of a fish, previous member of a lizard and the head of a hippopotamus (Fig. 3–11). The other two animals seem to belong to feline species, the back one has the head turned back, as though trying to bite the tail of the hybrid which seems to surrounds its body. It is possible that in this scene we have to deal with another allegory extracted from the book *Physiologus*, whose moral meanings are missed out.

The scene number 12 seems to belong entirely to the Samson's cycle. Within this frame four characters in frontal posture are represented, both women and men, dressed in clothes wrapped around the neck, whose folds differences are associated with their sex (Fig. 3–12). Similarly to the woman represented in the scene number 10, those here have their garments folded around the neck into a "V" shape, while at the men the folding is circular. Considering the subject of this fragment, this scene probably illustrates the Philistines, presented here as a crowd.

The scene number 13 is composed of two groups of characters, symmetrically placed one against the other, each group forming a couple with the woman turned back to the other couple (Fig. 3–13), so that the women are placed in the middle back to back, and the men on the edge, creating a perfect symmetry, which is manifested in the gestures of the nude figures. Given the ambiguity, we can deduce that the scene is a moralizing theme, here being certainly illustrated the theme of the adultery, in conformity with the words of Jesus Christ to the Pharisees: "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery". (Holy Bible, Mathew 19–9). This double statement and condemnation of

adultery seem to be illustrated here by the two couples, their nudity signifying unhealthy behaviours and presence of vices, in total opposition to the virtues (Garnier 1989, 269–270; Wirth 1999, 274–277). An argument for the support of this theme is the gesture of strengthening made by the female characters, consisting of putting a hand on the breast of the male characters, in medieval iconography the placing of the hand on the other chest from behind or laterally meaning the taking into possession (Garnier 1982, 191). Moreover, to the gestures that directs the viewer to interpret the theme as a possession is added the outward attitude of male figures manifested through their arms left down, which transforms male characters into victims, in this situations the sin of false temptation is added to the sin of adultery.

The frame number 14 contains three felines combined with others animals, two of them with the top of the body covered with feathers or scales (Fig. 3–14). Technically and compositionally this scene is similar to the other ones containing feline figures.

The third and the last segment of the frieze is located on the North-East side of the main apse, the fragments of relief have larger sizes, making it possible to recompose the original scenes assembly by analogy and interpretations (Fig. 1).

The first fragment of the frieze is the scene number 15 which is a variation of the scene number 10 (Figs. 4–15, 3–10). In this fragment a female character is carved lying and the torso of a male character, which stands and listens to the woman, easily to deduce because his eyes stared at her. We are dealing with another fragment of the cycle Samson and Delilah, theme easily identifiable because of the gesture of the woman who touches the man's hair with her left hand.

The scene number 16 is a larger fragment of the original frieze and contains a number of mythological characters. One of them is a hybrid with a lion body and a woman head resembling to a sphinx (Fig. 4–16). From left to right the scene depicts a human character that has raised his arms, holding what appears to be a head in his right hand, while the left hand is placed on the head of the sphinx, followed by a centaur galloping which holds a bow in its left hand, while the right hand is raised at the face level suggesting the moment of shooting. Both fragments are probably allegorical illustrations, pointing to real and imaginary beings presented in the bestiary of Middle Age.

A group of lions are represented in the scene number 17, the first of them half cut proving that this fragment is a part of the scene number six (Figs. 4–17, 2–6). In this frame the same sequence of lions of scene number six is presented, as evidenced by the gesture of the lion represented in profile, its paw placed on the croup of the central animal, while the last lion next to the right is represented in a frontal position.

Scene number 18 is the last section of the frieze (Fig. 4–18). The figures represented are three apes which perform a series of gestures, all of them shown squatted, in full profile. The first one is looking at the others two, who are joining their hands; one of those has the torso dressed in a robe while its partner is nude. The gesture of the second monkey is to take the hand of the other in a posture that invokes a hand kissing, being a kind of caricature of the courtesy gestures. We are dealing in this situation with a scene in which the focus is on mocking the social behaviour, a licentious allegory of senses which affects the true faith, turning people into social beings but as savage as monkeys are.

By analyzing the carved fragments preserved from the original frieze we see that we deal with several thematic cycles, each with different illustrative load. The first one seems to be the frieze of lions represented frontal or in profile, the transition between elements being the gesture of the back lion that puts its paw on the croup of the front animal. In this frieze there are six scenes, 6, 14, 17 the last one can be a part of fragment number 18 which ends with a lion represented in the foreground. The main attribute of this frieze is the decorative forms of animal, associated with some thematic connotations.

The second cycle seems dedicated to symbolic representations of interaction between animals, in which these express simple concepts. In this category we include the scenes 1, 5, 7, 8, 11, most of them having as subject dragons, except the scene 11 in which a hybrid appears. The main feature of these scenes is the preference for simple statements the themes being very generic, the fragments 1, 5, 8 presenting a strong decorative aspect.

The third cycle uses allegories, placing fantastic beings or monkeys in scenes 2, 9, 16, 18. The subjects of this cycle are focused on the interpretations of concepts related to Christian morality, appealing to animals extracted from the book *Physiologus*. Probably the cycle of monkeys had in its original form more scenes, arranged in a

narrative discourse, its caricatures having a cautionary effect.

The thematic cycle of Samson and Delilah seems to be the best represented, fragments 3, 4, 10, 12, 15 being part of it. The unity cycle is evident in the treatment and folds of clothes, in the distribution of figures and characters in all the scenes supposed to be part of narrations. We believe that the original frieze included much more scenes.

Regarding the choir of St. Michael's Cathedral from Alba Iulia our opinion is that the original frieze has decorated the Eastern five sides of the

choir's apse, each one having a dedicated cycle or a decorative theme, damaged by fire in 1277. Considering this supposition, the assembly had included five friezes with distinctive scenes corresponding to each side; a purely decorative (frieze of lions), another one in which the decorative component has symbolic load (frieze of dragons) and the others three themes grouped in allegories: the frieze with monkeys and fantastic animals, the complete cycle of Samson and Delilah and the last frieze dedicated to sins and vices.

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1. St. Michael's Cathedral choir apse, Alba Iulia. Overview (Photo: Sebastian Corneanu)



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ARTISTIC EVOLUTION OF THE IMAGE OF JESUS CRUCIFIED INTERPRETED THROUGH WORKS OF EUROPEAN AND TRANSYLVANIAN ART TO BE FOUND IN SIBIU

Daniela DĂMBOIU*

Abstract: Due to its special significance for the history of Christianity and the deep symbolism which it implies, the European artists have been concerned with the representation of Jesus' Crucifixion since the early centuries of our era. The present study aims to emphasize some defining features of the evolution of this theme in European art, with works which can be seen at the European Art Gallery of the Brukenthal National Museum, and the reflection of European iconographic and stylistic influences on late mediaeval and Renaissance art in Sibiu.

Keywords: iconography, significance, fine and decorative arts, patterns, late Middle Ages, Renaissance

Rezumat: Evoluția artistică a imaginii lui Isus răstignit, interpretată prin lucrări de artă europeană și transilvăneană prezente în Sibiu. Datorită semnificației sale deosebite pentru istoria Creștinismului și a simbolismului profund pe care îl implică, reprezentarea temei Răstignirii lui Isus i-a preocupat pe artiștii europeni încă din primele secole ale erei noastre. Studiul de față își propune să sublinieze unele trăsături definitorii ale evoluției acestei teme în arta europeană, prin opere aflate în Galeria de Artă Europeană a Muzeului Național Brukenthal și reflectarea influențelor iconografice și stilistice europene care au marcat arta medievală târzie și renașcentistă din Sibiu.

Cuvinte cheie: iconografie, semnificație, artă plastică și decorativă, modele, Evul Mediu târziu, Renaștere

The importance and complexity of symbolic values of the "Crucifixion of Jesus Christ" stimulated the great and small masters of Europe to express their feelings of devotion and creative abilities through various artistic procedures, in works visually focused on the contemplation of Christian faith. Their compositions and technical methods had great impact on the Transylvanian artists and commissioners, who took or used them as models.

Theological significance of Jesus' death by crucifixion on the cross comes from the meaning of that capital punishment involved: applied only to slaves and rebels, and being the result of such a brutal torture, death by crucifixion was considered by Jews a terrible curse, and the cross – the cruelest instrument of torture.

Since the Crucifixion of Jesus, the Cross has become a key element of Christian symbolism,

and the Crucifixion scene – the central image of Christian art – gave rise to a number of adjacent topics, well represented in the European Art Gallery of the Brukenthal National Museum: *Ecce Homo* (Tiziano)¹, *The Passion of Jesus* (an Annibale Carracci², a Jordaens³, a work in the manner of Frans Franken I⁴, a 17th century copy after Grünewald⁵, a José Antolínez⁶ and those of a

¹ MNB, inv. 3186: Tiziano Vecellio da Cadore (ca. 1485–1576), *Ecce Homo* (oil on canvas, 66.5 x 53 cm).

² MNB, inv. 700: Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), *The Mocking of Jesus* (oil on canvas, 60 x 79.5 cm).

³ MNB, inv. 31: Jacob Jordaens (1593–1676), *Jesus from Caiaphas* (oil on paper on wood, 43 x 35.8 cm).

⁴ MNB, inv. 391: Manner of Frans Franken I (1524–1616), *The Flagellation of Jesus* (oil on copper, 29 x 23 cm).

⁵ MNB, inv. 222: German Anonymous, 17th century, copy after Matthias Grünewald, *The Mocking of Jesus*, 1503 (the original is at Alte Pinakothek, München).

⁶ MNB, inv. 30: José Antolínez (1639–1676), *The Capture of Christ* (oil on canvas, 205.5 x 241.5 cm, signed right down: TOLII).

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German Anonymous of the 18th century⁷), *The Raising of the Cross* (School of Christoph Schwarz, Munich, 16th century)⁸, *Vir Dolorum* (16th century Transylvanian altar panel, made in the manner of Dürer)⁹, *The Descent from the Cross* (Sambach)¹⁰, *Pietà* (sandstone statuary made in the International Gothic style around 1400, in a Transylvanian workshop)¹¹ and *The Lamentation of Christ* (a German Anonymous of the 18th century)¹² or *The Burial of the Holy Body* (two copies of Ludovico and respectively, Annibale Carracci)¹³ etc.

By accepting the Crucifixion and all the burden of suffering, with deep repentance, Jesus – the Incarnate Son of God – sacrificed Himself to redeem the sins of mankind and for its salvation, to reconcile Man with the Creator. The accounts of Jesus' Passion made by the four Evangelists in their writings were the richest sources of inspiration for visual details of various iconographic representations that changed from

one period to another, reflecting the prevailing religious climate.

Thus, during the persecution of the Christians by the Romans, the scene of Jesus' Crucifixion was symbolically represented by *Agnus Dei* (the Lamb of God) holding the Cross. Later, although Christians were allowed to practice their religion, in the time of Emperor Constantine the Great the Cross was represented without the figure of crucified Jesus. The image of Crucifixion as we know it today was attested only at the beginning of the 5th century AD (ex.: Panel from an Ivory Casket, Ivory relief probably made in Rome ca. 420–30, British Museum, London); under Byzantine influence, the representation of Jesus alive on the Cross, with eyes open, as the Saviour of humanity, prevailed in western countries, but was pretty rare until the Carolingian period, when the representation was multiplied on ivory, metal or illuminated manuscripts and breviaries. Since then, the iconographic image of the Crucifixion scene with Jesus on the Cross became increasingly frequently used, assisted by other characters mentioned in the Gospels: the Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist, the two thieves, Mary Magdalene and other women, Roman soldiers or – during the Renaissance – a multitude of characters, often displayed symmetrically on the left and right sides of the Cross. Such a composition can be interpreted as a moral distinction between “good” and “bad”; thus, the thief who repented for his actions and the Virgin Mary of Sorrows, accompanied by the group of those who deplore the crucified Jesus (St. John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Cleophas, Salome, in general) are placed on the right side of the crucified Jesus and the other thief, who didn't recognize his sins, and the whole group of the representatives of pagans (among which usually stands Marcian, the judge and Roman Emperor's envoy to condemn Christians) are placed on His left.

In the 11th century AD, the Romanesque image of crucified Jesus the Saviour was replaced with the representation of Jesus dead on the Cross, keeping His head bent in profile toward the right shoulder in an expression of kenosis – humiliation and “emptying” of the glory He had before Embodiment. Such attitude of resigned Christ is found on the processional cross of the Evangelical Church in Cîsnădie (Fig. 1), dating during the 13th

⁷ MNB, inv. 1458, 1459, 1460: German Anonymus, 18th century, *Jesus before Cajafas* (oil on wood, 46.3 x 34.3 cm), *Road to Calvary* (oil on wood, 46 x 34.2 cm) and *The Flagellation of Jesus* (oil on wood, 46 x 34.2 cm).

⁸ MNB, inv. 223: German Anonymous, 16th century (School of Cristoph Schwarz), *The Raising of the Cross* (work mentioned in the register of inventory as “The Passion of Christ”; oil on canvas, 18.2 x 26.6 cm).

⁹ MNB, inv. 1896: Transylvanian workshop, ca. 1525, *Vir Dolorum*, panel of the Ev. Church in Sibiu (tempera on wood, 172 x 112 cm). The work's composition and elaboration show signs of the South German Renaissance influences perception: the representation of Jesus seems inspired by the engraving on copper of Albrecht Dürer, „Der Schmerzensmann mit ausgebreiteten Armen”, realized by the well-known artist around 1500.

¹⁰ MNB, inv. 1013, Franz Caspar Sambach (1715–1796), *Descent from the Cross* (oil on canvas, 98 x 58 cm, signed and dated 1782).

¹¹ MNB, inv. S. 311: *Pietà*, Ev. Church in Sibiu/*Hermannstadt*, workshop in Transylvania (possibly the Cistercian workshop in Cârța/*Kerz*), ca. 1400 (sandstone sculpture; H. 92 cm, socle: 56 x 47 cm, Jesus: 67 x 42 cm).

¹² MNB, inv. 1461: German Anonymous, 18th century, *Lamentation of Christ* (oil on wood, 46 x 34.1 cm).

¹³ MNB, inv. 182: Sisto Badalocchio (1585–1620), *The Entombment of Christ*, Copy after Ludovico Carracci (oil on canvas, 132.5 x 87 cm); MNB, inv. 181: Francesco Solimena (1657–1747), Copy after Annibale Carracci (oil on canvas, 50 x 64 cm).

century and probably brought to Transylvania by the German settlers (Gündisch, Schemmel 2002, 231–233); Jesus crucified is associated on the other side of Cisnădie processional cross with the representation of the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) keeping the Cross – as reference to Jesus' sacrifice for mankind, or after other Christological opinions, related to the Paschal Lamb of Passover as a foundational message of Christianity.

The iconography of resigned Jesus dead on the cross started to be interpreted during the 14th century by progressive tightening of the body, nailing of the feet one over the other, and replacing of the aura with the crown of thorns. Some of these specific features can be analyzed on a small statue of crucified Jesus – *corpus* that was applied on the central part of a processional cross – found at the archaeological site of Miercurea Sibiului, in the place named "the White Church" (Fig. 2)¹⁴. While Jesus' head is still surrounded by an aura, His arms are caught in a deep angle overhead, the knees are visibly bent, and the piece of garment wrapping His waist falls in sharp folds (Dâmboiu 2008, 289, nr. cat. 18).

The artistic mediaeval life in Transylvania had developed over the centuries according to the relationship existing between churches and their commissioners/donors. The devotional artistic images of pre-Reformation, used for the decoration of churches' interiors or for liturgical vessels, are mostly included in the so-called "International Gothic" and emphasize the role of visual arts in late medieval spirituality. The marks of this period's style can be observed on some works of art found *in situ* in Sibiu or preserved in the Brukenthal National Museum, dating throughout the 15th century and coming from several evangelical churches in the surroundings as gifts or custodies. A relatively large number of these liturgical art works (altars, stone or polychrome wood sculptures, as well as goldsmith ware) – made by local masters (who travelled as journeymen in Central European workshops) or by foreign masters invited to this region to perform the requirements of some rich commissioners – are appreciated by art historians as masterpieces of world art.

One of the most impressive medieval Transylvanian Crucifixions is the 7.30 m high

crucifix, carved –from a single block of stone – in 1417, by Master Petrus Lantregen von Österreich, for the altar of the Dominican church (then located outside the fortified walls of Sibiu); the crucifix is incorporated nowadays into the Chapel of the Cross (built on the same place in 1755)¹⁵. Wearing a crown of thorns on his forehead, and having the legs nailed one over the other, the image of Jesus produces a particularly emphatic impact by exacerbating the visual effects: blood springing from the wounds of His chest and from the places where He was nailed to the Cross, the congested veins and His facial features are marked by endured sufferings (Fig. 3). A very similar representation of Jesus crucified can be seen on one of the two covers of the round Pyxis (of *pacifical* type) of the Brukenthal National Museum, coming from the Evangelical Church in Seliștat, cast in silver, gilded and decorated with blue-green enamel: the widely open horizontal arms and the feet attached one to the other, the bust ribs and veins strongly marked, and the dripping drops of blood on the cross (Fig. 4)¹⁶; the Crucifixion iconography and that of the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) – that decorates the other cover of the Pyxis – corresponds to the concepts of the "soft" style of the first third of the 15th century (Dâmboiu 2008, 295, nr. cat. 34).

Another remarkable work preserved *in situ* and reflecting the late International Gothic influences is the fresco painted by Johannes de Rosenaw in 1445 on the northern wall of the choir of former Virgin Mary parish church in Sibiu, the actual Evangelical Church (Fig. 5)¹⁷. The large mural composition, with a pronounced narrative meaning, discharges a deeper emotional state than the previous work: over the multitude of characters, caught in very different positions and attitudes, costumed in richly coloured and diversely patterned textures, the three very high crosses are projected against a dark blue sky,

¹⁵ On the right side of the dorsal cross there is the following inscription: „Hoc opus fecit Petros Lantregen von Osterreich, and on the left side: „Anno domini millesimo CCCXVII”.

¹⁶ MNB, inv. T. 58: Pyxis with *Agnus Dei* of the Ev. Church in Seliștat / *Seligstadt*, workshop in Sibiu, first third of the 15th century (gilded silver, enamel, 1.4 x 6.5 cm, 92 g).

¹⁷ The inscription on the upper border of the scene depicting Jesus as *Vir Dolorum* mentions the author's name and the date of his work „hoc opus fecit magister Johannes de Rozenaw Anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo xlv”.

¹⁴ MNB, inv. T. 18: Crucifix (fragment), possible workshop in Transylvania, 14th century, coming from Miercurea Sibiului / *Reussmarkt* (gilded brass, 13 x 8.3 cm, 59 g).

painted later with golden stars. The wounds of Jesus crucified are highlighted not only by the blood dripping, but also by the divine aura surrounding them, prefiguring deification of His human nature. Beyond the artistic qualities of the work itself, one can observe the accuracy of the references that Rosenaw's "Crucifixion" scene makes to the cult of the Holy Body/*Corporis Christi* (Firea 2002, 69–78). The image of Jesus on the Cross is so close to that represented on the "Crucifixion Altar" painted by Thomas de Coloswar in 1427 (Poszler 2006, 580–586, nr. cat. 7.19)¹⁸; just like the entire iconographical program of the "Crucifixion Altar", that could have been conceived only in the circle of artists from Emperor Sigismund's Court ("Elite der Intelligenz der Zeit Sigismunds", Marosi 1995, 134), so the representation of Jesus crucified used by Johannes de Rosenaw in his mural painting from Sibiu may reflect the spread of a model, commonly used already in Central-European space by masters who executed commands for the most powerful and wealthy people of their time.

An exceptional work dating around 1440 is the Reliquary-cross of the Evangelical Church in Cîsnădie, produced in a workshop in Sibiu (Dâmboiu 2008, 296–298, nr. cat. 36)¹⁹. Similarities with the iconographic representation of Jesus crucified on the cross can be traced on the silver cover of the famous Evangeliary of the Dome in Nitra, Slovakia (Wetter 2006, 647–648, nr. cat. 7.92), but also on the works described above; all these art works reflect common Central-European inspiration sources, tributary to the late International Gothic style. Very ingenious for the mediaeval goldsmith art is the way in which the goldsmith master of the reliquary-cross of Cîsnădie marked the spear wound in the breast of Jesus by mounting a big oval ruby (Fig. 6). The gilded silver statue of the crucified Jesus is caught in rivets on a tree trunk engraved – and decorated with strings of pearls – on the surface of the reliquary-cross arms. (Christ the Saviour's supreme sacrifice is enhanced by a very symbolic silver gilded statuary – mounted on the top of the reliquary-cross – representing a Pelican feeding her young with her own flesh and blood.)

The representation of Jesus crucified on a tree trunk – referring to the Tree of Knowledge – appears also on the dorsal cross of two liturgical chasubles (*casula*), one coming from the Evangelical Church in Netuș²⁰ (Fig. 7), the other from the Evangelical Church in Ghimbav²¹ (Fig. 8) (Dâmboiu 2010, 248); both dorsal crosses were most likely made in Transylvanian workshops in the second half of the 15th century, but applied to silk brocades imported from Italy (*i.e.* the golden brocade of Netuș chasuble, woven with animal motifs, was specific for the workshops active in Lucca/northern Italy during the 14th century). Noteworthy is the fact that, for manufacturing of some other liturgical vestments, there were imported from Florence to Sibiu heavy velvet silk brocades woven with the motif of the thistle flower, whose beauty associated with its thorns was seen as image of sufferings endured by Jesus Christ.

Willingly sacrificed on the Cross, Jesus determines forgiveness/redemption/salvation of mankind sins, namely the original sin of Adam, inherited by the entire humanity. Medieval writers strove to forge real, "historical" links between Eve and Adam's fall into sin and the Crucifixion of Jesus, arguing for example that the wood of the Holy Cross came from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden – the place where Adam was buried, below the Cross on which Jesus was crucified. Thus, the skull and bones often occurring at the base of the Holy Cross, not necessarily allude to Golgotha (Aramaic "skull-shaped hill", where Jesus' Crucifixion took place), but to Adam's skull. In addition, blood seeping on Jesus' Body and prolonging on the Cross was regarded as having healing and sins redemptive powers, which is a concept incorporated in the Eucharistic act. This concept lies in the representation of angels in the *Vir Dolorum* scene, holding chalices near the wounds of crucified Jesus, to ooze blood in these liturgical vessels through which is accomplished the holy communion. By such iconic representations, Crucifixion of Jesus is a reminder of Christian teachings.

¹⁸ *Crucifixion Altar*, Thomas de Coloswar, 1427, in present at Kerestény Múzeum Esztergom.

¹⁹ MNB, T. 29: Reliquary-cross of the Ev. Church in Cîsnădie / *Heltau*, workshop in Sibiu, ca. 1440 (silver, gilded, enamel, 133 pearls, 4 rock crystals, 63 x 22.1 cm, 2975 g).

²⁰ MNB, inv. AD. 237: Chasuble dorsal cross of the Ev. Church in Netuș / *Neithausen*, workshop in Transylvania, middle of the 15th century.

²¹ MNB, inv. M. 1963: Chasuble dorsal cross of the Ev. Church in Ghimbav / *Zeidenbach*, workshop in Transylvania, ca. 1500.

The Brukenthal National Museum holds a large number of art works on the topic of Crucifixion, illustrative for the major European painting schools and fine arts workshops, as for the artistic development of the scene in question. Among the most representative Crucifixions in the Brukenthal collections should be mentioned, in chronological order, the followings: a wood panel of the Italian Renaissance master Antonello da Messina²²; another panel of an Austrian workshop of the end of the 15th century, still having a late Gothic style composition, but with several architectural Renaissance elements of the big town representation in the background (Fig. 13)²³; then notable are the precious embroideries of some dorsal crosses applied to liturgical vestments, including the one realized around 1488–1490 in a Florentine workshop, after presumed drawings of Sandro Botticelli (Fig. 12)²⁴; dating from the late 16th century there are some large paintings, as that in Manner of the Flemish Mannerist painter Merten de Vos²⁵ or that of the Italian Baroque painter Domenico Feti²⁶; and last but not least to be mentioned is a small painting of the German Mannerist painter Hans von Aachen²⁷.

Very complex in terms of composition, reflecting the assimilation of the symbolic and artistic experiences of the artist's predecessors, but also

²² MNB, inv. 732: Antonello da Messina (ca. 1430–1479), *Crucifixion*, ca. 1467–1469 (tempera and oil on wood, 39,4 x 23,1 cm).

²³ MNB, inv. 221: Austrian workshop, end of the 15th century, *Crucifixion* (oil on wood, 43 x 35 cm).

²⁴ MNB, inv. AD. 221: Chasuble dorsal cross of the Ev. Church in Sibiu, Italian workshop, ca. 1488–1490. (The scene with Jesus crucified – held in the lap of God the Father – finds similarities with the painting of the 'Holy Trinity' altar / *Pala delle Convertite*, realized by Sandro Botticelli in ca. 1491–1493, for a nunnery of St. Magdalene, work now in the London Courtauld Institute Galleries. It is assumed that the preliminary drawings for that painting were originally made or used for the embroidery of the liturgical vestment today in Brukenthal National Museum, possibly commissioned by King Matthias Corvinus sometimes between 1488–1490.)

²⁵ MNB, inv. 1230: Manner of Merten de Vos (1532–1603), *Crucifixion of Jesus Christ* (oil on canvas, 224.5 x 174 cm).

²⁶ MNB, inv. 375: Manner of Domenico Feti (1589–1624), *Jesus crucified* (oil on canvas, 174.5 x 97 cm).

²⁷ MNB, inv. 390: Hans von Aachen (1552–1615), *Crucifixion of Jesus Christ* (oil on wood, 29.5 x 22.2 cm), ca. 1602 (by analogy with the author own replica of this work, sold from a private collection at Sothebey's Amsterdam).

the new technical and iconographical developments of his time, the *Crucifixion* of Antonello da Messina may provide an example of very fine artistic interpretation (Fig. 9).

The famous masterpiece of the Brukenthal European Art Gallery is the first work of a series of Crucifixions painted by Antonello da Messina, followed by the version stored in the National Gallery in London, signed and dated 147[?], and respectively, a third one in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, signed and dated in 1475. Throughout the 20th century, the art historians appreciated the painting in Sibiu dating ca. 1455–1465, while during the second decade of the next century the opinion of a little later dating was imposed, close to 1470, i.e. sometimes between 1467–1469 (Lucco, Villa 2006, nr. cat. 8, nr. cat. 24 și nr. cat. 32; Villa, 2009, nr. cat. 49). The medium size of the three panels does not diminish the monumental effect of the sacred scene representation, indicating the destination of the three panels for private worship or as portable altars.

The Crucifixion in Sibiu draws our attention to its two component plans, both sacred and profane, with a unique silent pathos, specific for Antonello. The imponderable representation of Jesus crucified (Fig. 10 – detail) over the high horizon line, puts Him literally and psychologically, over the viewer – whose optical level is that of the mourners and of St. John, looking to be caught in their concentric group. Jesus' high vertical Cross gushes among this group, based on the skull and bones of Adam – symbols of the inherited original sin –, is framed by the crosses of the two thieves crucified together with Jesus – one of them left himself in the will of the Saviour, the other refused to repent. The composition is the image of both sin and redemption revelation, Antonello managing to print dignity on Jesus' physiognomy and, in the same time, the expression of His boundless divine love. The contemplative image of Virgin Mary, with hands clasped on his chest, seems to express exactly the statement of Pope John Paul II that "Mary was united with Jesus on the Cross" (Dâmboiu 2012, 107).

The painting is a demonstration of the rich artistic context in which Antonello formed. He reached Naples soon after the expulsion of the former King René I of Anjou in 1442 and the conquest of the whole kingdom, with the inclusion of Sicily too, by Alfonso V of Aragon, Antonello was received in the workshop of his master, Niccolò Colantonio, whose disciple he was sometime

between years 1445–1455, and where he perceived the pictorial and compositional techniques of the great Flemish primitive masters. At that time, in Naples, the influences of Flemish-Burgundian art vibrated and were combined together with the Provençal, Catalan and Italian ones, signalling the beginning of the cultural transition from late Middle Ages to Renaissance.

The Crucifixion in Brukenthal Pinacoteca is a testament to the evolution and configuration of Antonello's defining style. The artist was one of the first painters in Italy who reverberated to the use of oil painting – being no doubt aware of the experimental techniques of Jan van Eyck –, in transparent layers, successively placed over layers painted with tempera, procedure that makes the charm of colour thus obtained to be outstanding. The dominant colour palette reflects almost poetically the bright Sicily, with its local stone ocher-brown tones, while the volumetric modelling of forms and the state of detachment, so typical for Antonello, come from direct or indirect knowledge of Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca's works. The new style promoted by Antonello was highly appreciated in Venice – the city where the presence of the artist is attested in 1475–1476 – and marked the evolution of Venetian painting school taste for the study of colours. The high horizon landscape background, created after the eckyan prototype, is a panoramic view over the port of Messina, with its rocky shore on the left, and respectively, some important buildings on the right, namely San Salvatore and Matagrifone fort. Surprising the viewer through his way of rendering details – sometimes intuitively, sometimes illusively –, the artist creates an extraordinary spatial depth, keeping the focus on the mystical meaning of the scene; the crowded road that winds behind the cross symbolizes the tumultuous journey of human life on earth and the image of Jesus crucified – through the power of His own repentance, suffering and ultimate sacrifice, which Jesus accepted for the reconciliation of Man with the Creator – projects the Last Judgment.

The iconographic type experienced by Antonello da Messina for the rendering of Jesus's Crucifixion became afterwards largely spread, both in fine and decorative arts. It was also found in Transylvania, in the embroidery of a dorsal cross (Fig. 11 – detail), recovered from a damaged

chasuble of the Ev. Church in Sibiu, applied later on an *antependium* (Dâmboiu 2010, 249).²⁸

A rare iconographic theme in Transylvanian fine art is "Jesus and the 10,000 Martyrs" on a large wing panel of Proștea Mare (Târnăvioara) Altar, made in ca. 1510, under southern-Poland pictorial influences (Kertesz 2004, 5–6).²⁹ The superposition of the two distinct themes – that of Jesus crucified to that of the 10,000 martyrs crucified on Mount Ararat in Armenia (a relatively common theme in Italian Renaissance art) – is unique and significant, not only in commemoration of persecution and sacrifice of some 10,000 Roman soldiers, who – guided by St. Acacius – had followed Jesus in faith, but also by suggesting infinite number of martyrs, who were subjected to torture and ultimate sacrifice for their Christian beliefs (Fig. 14).

The iconographical evolution of the image of Jesus crucified in art is very complex and full of mystical meanings, and can be followed in several other works of different collections of the Brukenthal National Museum (Prints Cabinet, Library, History Museum/Altemberger House, along the centuries till nowadays in the Romanian Art Gallery) or of other museums and churches collections in the town of Sibiu. Sibiu, once the capital of Transylvania Province, played and still plays an important role in the development of artistic life, attracting and hosting artists and valuable works from various European art centres, whose influences knew to take advantage.

²⁸ MNB, inv. M. 2193: *Antependium* (the dorsal cross was recovered from a *casula*), Ev. Church in Sibiu; silk embroidery dorsal cross: Central-European workshop (possible Transylvanian), end of the 15th century.

²⁹ MNB, inv. P. 1517: "Jesus and the 10,000 Martyrs", Altar panel of the Ev. Church in Proștea Mare (Târnăvioara) / Grossprobsdorf, Transylvanian workshop, ca. 1510 (tempera on wood, 206 x 406 cm).

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1. Processional cross of Cisnădie,
German workshop, 13th c.



2. Crucifix (fragment), “White Church”
in Miercurea Sibiului, possible
Transylvanian workshop, 14th c.



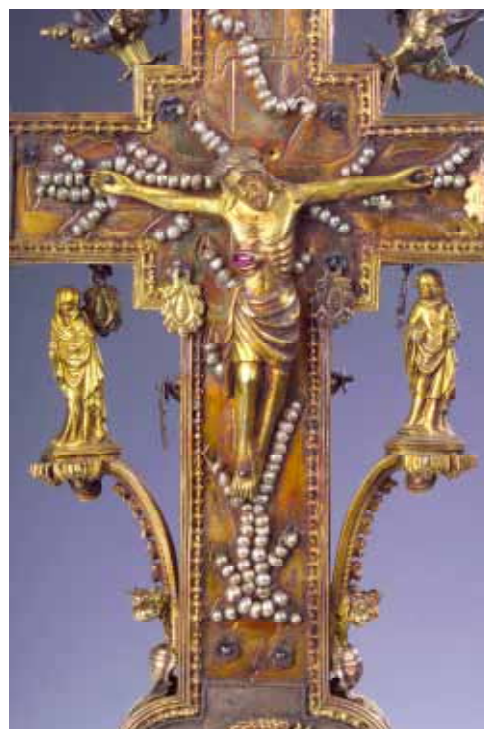
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Church in Sibiu (“Chapel of the Cross”),
Petrus Lantregen von Österreich, 1417



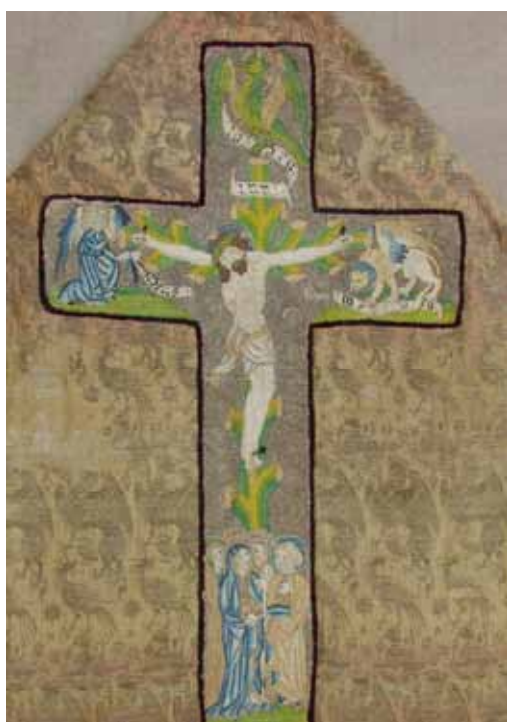
4. Pyxis with “Agnus Dei” from Seliștat,
Transylvanian workshop, first third of
the 15th c.



5. Johannes de Rosenaw, *Jesus Crucifixion*, 1445, Ev. Church in Sibiu



6. Reliquary-cross of Cisnădie, workshop in Sibiu, ca. 1440, detail



7. Chasuble dorsal cross of Netuș, Transylvanian workshop, middle of the 15th c., detail



8. Chasuble dorsal cross of Ghimbav, Transylvanian workshop, ca. 1500, detail



9. Antonello Da Messina, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1467–1469



10. Antonello Da Messina, *Crucifixion*, detail



11. Dorsal cross recovered from a Chasuble of
Ev. Church in Sibiu, Transylvanian workshop,
last quarter of the 15th c., detail



12. Chasuble dorsal cross of Ev. Church in Sibiu, workshop in Florence, end of the 15th c., detail
13. Central panel of a portable altar, Austrian workshop, end of the 15th c.
14. Altar Panel of Proștea Mare (Târnăvioara), *Jesus and the 10,000 martyrs*, Transylvanian workshop, ca. 1510



THE GREAT ALTARPIECE OF THE PASSION FROM SIBIU AND ITS PAINTERS

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Abstract: *The large altarpiece of the Passion of Christ preserved in St. Mary's church in Sibiu (Hermannstadt) is one of the most important late medieval works of art surviving in Transylvania. Nevertheless, the available literature concerning the altarpiece far from reflects its actual significance. The present study aims to fill part of this gap, revealing for the first time both the original painter, and the subsequent transformer of this outstanding work of art. The analysis is conducted by observing dissimulated or minor painted details, heraldry and written sources.*

Key words: altarpiece, late medieval painting, painters in Sibiu, prints of Dürer, Lutheran Reformation, coat of arms

Rezumat: *Polipticul mare al Patimilor din Sibiu și pictorii săi. Polipticul mare cu scene din Patimile lui Isus păstrat în biserica evanghelică din Sibiu reprezintă una dintre cele mai importante opere de artă medieval târzie din Transilvania. Cu toate acestea, piesa este foarte puțin cunoscută în literatura de specialitate. Studiul de față își propune, pentru prima dată, să identifice pe autorul picturii originale, precum și pe cel responsabil pentru transformarea ulterioară a retablului. Cercetarea se bazează pe investigarea unor detalii minore sau „ascunse” ale picturii, pe analiza heraldică și corelarea datelor cu cele ce se regăsesc în izvoarele documentare.*

Cuvinte cheie: poliptic, pictură medieval târzie, pictori din Sibiu, gravurile lui Dürer, Reforma luterană, blazoane

The altarpiece in the Evangelical church in Sibiu (formerly St. Mary's parish church) undoubtedly represents one of the most valuable late medieval works of art created and preserved in Transylvania. Its considerable dimensions, the striking eight-scene Passion cycle conceived after Dürer and Altdorfer, as well as its early and coherent transformation in order to serve the Lutheran Reformation represent but a few of the

most important features of this work of art arguing for its special significance. Nevertheless, the extant literature concerning this altarpiece is far from reflecting its actual importance. The present study aims to fill part of the gap, revealing, for the first time, both the original painter, and the subsequent transformer of this outstanding work of art. Other issues, like initial location, function, and patronage will also be considered in turn.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to provide both a description of the altarpiece and an overview of the most significant data published so far (Reissenberger 1884; Deutsch 1896; Roth 1916; Balogh 1943; Radocsay 1955; Vătășianu 1959; Fabini 1989; Kertesz 1991; Richter 1992; Kertesz 1998; Albu 2002; Firea 2002–2003; Firea 2004–2005; Firea 2005; Firea 2010; Crăciun 2010; Sarkadi Nagy 2011).

Until very recently, the retable (Figs. 1 and 2) was preserved, disassembled in pieces, in various parts of the church: the central panel (325 x 220 cm)

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was fixed on the eastern wall of the southern arm of the transept, the predella (130 x 500 cm) on the northern wall of the northern arm, and the wings (one wing was composed of two scenes superposed: 320 x 110 cm) were attached to the eastern (four scenes), and western (four scenes) walls of the same northern arm of the transept¹. Obviously, this way of displaying the pieces could hardly suggest the initial unity of the parts. The architectural frame which held together the components of the altarpiece was apparently long lost. I have argued elsewhere (Firea 2010, 301), and Sarkadi Nagy has supported (Sarkadi Nagy 2011, 144, 229, 277, endnote 598) the hypothesis, that two Renaissance pilasters preserved in the National Gallery in Budapest (inv. nr. 67.2 M), originating in Sibiu, pertain in fact to the same altarpiece (Fig. 3). Their dimensions (327 cm in height) fit perfectly with the corpus of the altarpiece in question. Further investigation of the material and decoration may confirm this assumption. In term of losses, the only part missing is the crowning (probably a painted lunette, corresponding to the date of the art work), which actually makes it one of the best preserved altarpieces in Transylvania (given the fact that now much of the local repertoire consists of fragments).

Originally, the ensemble must have been an altarpiece with a central panel, two fixed and two mobile wings, a predella and a semicircular lunette, in a Renaissance frame. Opened, the corpus showed the great central image and four scenes, and when closed it displayed eight scenes. This is a very simple, and at the same time typical, feature of late medieval Transylvanian altarpieces (Firea 2004–2005).

Nevertheless, its significant dimensions (ca. 600/700 cm high – without the *mensa*; and 500 cm wide), the fine craftsmanship invested in the work (painting, gilding, and decoration), its original location in the major church of one of the main towns of medieval Transylvania, as well as the high-ranking patronage of the altarpiece make it one of the most important survivals from the region.

The altarpiece was created in 1519. This date is marked on the (heraldic) right side of the predella, above a coat of arms (Fig. 4). The inscription

came to light after the restoration carried out in the 1980s. The last digit of the year (9) is written very much like a modern 2 (Kertesz 1991, 81 and Kertesz 1998, 115 recorded the dating of the altarpiece as 1512), which caused me to question its authenticity, given the fact that in this precise year (1512) Albrecht Dürer issued a large part of the prints on which the scenes of our altarpiece are designed (Firea 2002–2003). In fact, even though the digit in question is similar to the 2 of Dürer as marked on the prints, it actually represents a “flourished” 9. In the local epigraphic manner, the number 2 was rather similar to the letter Z. The comprehensive epigraphic study undertaken by Albu (Albu 2002, 35–36, cat. nr. 28) has indicated the correct reading: the altarpiece has to be dated to 1519.

Subsequently, the altarpiece underwent several major transformations. In 1545, at the time when the Sibiu authorities adopted the Lutheran Reformation, the iconography of the festive part (Germ. *Festtagsseite*, indicating that the altarpiece was opened for religious festivals) was largely removed, and replaced with biblical quotations. The dating appears at the base of the central panel and it is still visible today. This transformation resulted in the total loss of the original painting of the wings and the lower half of the central panel. Only the crucified Christ projected on the sky and landscape of the narrative central scene were preserved. The surfaces were overpainted in dark blue and inscriptions in golden letters were written on each panel. The eight scenes of the Passion of Christ² of the “workday-side” (*Werktagseite*, meaning that the wings were closed on the non-festive days of the liturgical year) remained untouched. The result was an “altarpiece of the Reformation”, after the inspired formula of Koerner (Koerner 2004), one of the most coherent adaptations of medieval imagery to the newly-adopted confession.

In 1701, an overall renewal of the altarpiece was carried out. The work, as attested by a lost inscription, was sponsored by Thomas Schemelius (Reissenberger 1884, 46: *1701 Renovatum per Thomam Schemelium*) and undertaken by Jeremias Stranovius (Roth 1916, 155³). It aimed to give a modern aspect (in a very provincial early Baroque style) to the antiquated altarpiece. The festive wings of the altarpiece were again

¹ In March 2012, the restorer Mihály Ferenc removed the panels from the described positions. This was necessary on account of restoration work being carried out in the church. I would like to thank my colleague Frank Ziegler for inviting me to assist in the removal operation.

² *The Last Supper, The Agony in the Garden, The Betrayal of Christ, The Hearing before Caiaphas, The Flagellation, The Crowning with Thorns, Ecce homo, Pilate Washing his Hands.*

³ A disputable attribution, in N. Sabău's opinion.

intended to carry Christian iconography and a cycle of four scenes was designed: *Nativity* and *Annunciation* on the right wing, *Resurrection* and *Pentecost* on the left wing. Due to its general coherence with the central image, some authors supposed that the scenes were the Baroque version of the original late medieval iconography (Kertesz 1998, 116). In fact, this was impossible because the 1545 inscriptions almost totally effaced the medieval compositions. Analyses with lateral lighting of panels recently carried out⁴ showed that the original layer of painting (e.g. position of saints and halos) displayed different compositions. At the time of the 1701 renewal the predella was repainted (largely respecting the iconography, but covering coat of arms and dating inscription) and other smaller interventions were made to “refresh” the eight scenes on the workday-side.

In the 1980s the altarpiece was restored, initially by Gisela Richter and afterwards by Ursula Brandsch. The overpaintings of 1701 were removed from the central panel bringing to light the hands of Mary Magdalene embracing the wood of the cross. Sections made in the four scenes of the *Festtagsseite* revealed fragments of the 1545 inscriptions but the restoration didn't go further. Thus, their present-day aspect is quite odd: Baroque compositions with scattered fragments of Renaissance inscriptions. The predella was cleaned, and the original dating and two coats of arms were brought to light. This last work was performed by U. Brandsch in 1987 (Albu 2002, cat. 28) and it seems to be the reason why this essential information (concerning dating and patronage) was not included in the 1992 volume by Gisela and Ottmar Richter (Richter 1992, 224–229).

Thus, due to its repeated transformations and restorations, the altarpiece displays today parts of different layers. 1. From the original 1519 creation, alongside the material support (wooden panels) and decoration also survives the painting of the eight scenes of the Passion (*Werktagsseite*), the upper half of the *Christ on the Cross* on the central panel, and the *Lamentation* of the predella. 2. From the 1545 Lutheran transformation there remain the two monumental inscriptions flanking the beam of the cross on the central panel as well as some sparse lettering on the festive wings. 3. From the 1701 repainting the four scenes of the *Festtagsseite* survive.

Although the object “travelled” a lot, being several times displaced between the parish church and the ex-Dominican church in the 18–19th centuries (Reissenberger 1884, 46), the literature traditionally considers that the altarpiece belonged to the main altar of the parish church in Sibiu. I questioned this provenance (Firea 2002–2003; Firea 2010, I, 77) arguing that the iconography has nothing in common with the dedication of the *altare maius* and of the entire church: St. Mary. Preserved examples (at Sebeș, Băgaciu, Biertan etc.) indicate much more obvious references in the iconography to the Marian dedications. Instead, the retable in Sibiu is evidently focused on the Passion of Christ, pointing to a specifically Christological devotion. At the same time, the monumental aspect however suggests its initial positioning in a very significant place. This location could have been, in my opinion, the altar of the Holy Cross in the parish church.

On the one hand, the preserved iconography addresses precisely such a dedication⁵, and on the other, the altar of the Holy Cross was a highly important liturgical and congregational *locus*. Mentioned already in the 14th century as a cult centre of the guild of potters in Sibiu (*Quellen Herm.*, II, doc. 12)⁶, the altar also served as the stage for a weekly sung mass for the Passion of Christ (Seiwert 1874, 352)⁷. It was a common feature of the German (and not only German) liturgical topography that the altar of the Cross usually stood in the “crossing” of the nave with the transept. When the church had a choir screen, this specific altar became the one serving the laypeople, while the main altar, hidden by the screen, remained for the use of the clergy (the choir).⁸ A choir screen existed in St. Mary's and very probably the Holy Cross altar stood in front of it⁹.

In 1519, a retable was created to adorn (presumably) this highly-regarded liturgical spot. The commissioners of the art work were equally important personalities, who ensured they had

⁵ The preserved altarpiece in Prejmer, intended for the high altar of the parish church dedicated to the Holy Cross, displays a *Crucifixion* on the central panel.

⁶ 1376: *...lutifigulorum fraternitatem... unam candelam sacris elevationibus in missis congruentem ad sanctam crucem dare teneatur.*

⁷ 1432: *Cantatur... sexta feria in ara sancte crucis de passione domini vel de sancta cruce.*

⁸ A survey of German medieval choir screens and of liturgical topography in Schmelzer.

⁹ For details, see my reconstruction of the liturgical matrix of St. Mary's church published in *Ars Transsilvaniae* 2008.

⁴ By Mihály Ferenc.

their coats of arms exhibited in front of the community gathered for divine service. The two emblems were discovered, as previously mentioned, in 1987 on the predella. The one on the heraldic right side, depicting on the “gules” (red) shield a demi-deer proper (in natural colour) salient from a crown, with his front pierced by an arrow, remains until today un-attributed¹⁰. By contrast, the one on the left side was easily identifiable (Fig. 5). The unicorn with the neck pierced by a sword was the heraldic emblem of one of the highest-ranking personalities of the *Universitas Saxonum* in the epoch: Johannes Lulay. The first to make the identification was Fabini 1989, 210, a German and updated edition of Fabini 1982. In my article (Firea 2002–2003) I was not aware of the German edition, so I was claiming the identification of the patron of the altarpiece. In this note I would like to make the necessary correction.

Lulay was entrusted by Hungarian monarchs with several official responsibilities having an impressive *cursus honorum*. His career was described in Balogh 1943, 192; Gündisch G., 1947; Fabini 1982; Gündisch G. 1987; Gündisch K. G. 1993; Beşliu 1987; Entz 1996, 406–407, 523; Fabini 1997; Machat 1999, 220–222; Firea 2002–2003; Beşliu 2006, 57. He was also involved in successful economic enterprises (administrator of the royal mint of Sibiu, gold exploitation in the mountains etc.) which made him one of the richest citizens of the town. He possessed one of the most spectacular urban residences, the so-called Altemberger house (Fabini 1997; Beşliu 2006), and a chapel in the parish church (Firea 2008, 70–72). Lulay’s coat of arms was generously displayed: on the altarpiece, on coins issued in Sibiu, on charters, on several buildings, on his gravestone in red marble preserved in the parish church. He died on 12 April 1521, as the inscription on his tombstone discloses (Albu 2002, cat. 30)¹¹.

Johannes Lulay and his partner as patrons (thus, in a joint-patronage) commissioned an impressive work of art for the altar of the Holy Cross. The quality of the painting ranks it at the top of the provincial art of the epoch. Its features reveal a well-trained master, whose style could be related

to contemporary Central-European and South-German achievements. The impulses of the Renaissance, combined with inflexions of the Danube school of painting are dominant. They are reflected in the deep landscapes with twisted crags and luxuriant vegetation, in the massive and muscular shape of the human body, in the compositions themselves. These were largely designed following available prints of German Renaissance masters.

Reissenberger was the first to point out that the scenes of the Passion were reproducing models created by Albrecht Dürer (Reissenberger 1884, 46). Subsequent authors took up the idea (Roth 1916; Hoffmann 1937; Kertesz 1991; Richter 1992; Kertesz 1998), but they did not pursue it in any great detail. In several contributions (Firea 2002–2003; Firea 2005; Firea 2010, I, 105; II, 299–307) I have analyzed the way in which the master of Sibiu used the models, identifying as well his visual sources. A short résumé will follow. *The Last Supper* at Sibiu used the upper part (the architectural setting: vault and windows) of Dürer’s woodcut from the cycle *Grosse Passion* (Bartsch 5, 1510, issued 1511), but considerably changed the position of characters. It thus became a “free interpretation” of the model. *The Agony in the Garden* has no evident graphic pattern. *The Betrayal of Christ* (Fig. 6) instead provides one of the few pieces of evidence of local painters using the work of another great master of the German Renaissance print: Albrecht Altdorfer. A second instance is on the altarpiece of Jimbor (Guy Marica 1971a; Guy Marica 1971b). The scene in Sibiu reproduces devotedly the minute woodcut (Bartsch 20) issued in ca. 1513 (Fig. 7). This reproduction also argues for the reception of the so-called Danube school of painting in 16th-century Transylvania. The next scene, *The Hearing before Caiaphas*, has a special importance for the present study, and for that reason it will be largely discussed below. *The Flagellation* follows on general lines a model of Dürer, but this time pertaining to another cycle, engraved, known as *Kupferstichpassion* (“Engraved Passion”) issued in 1507–1513. The scene in Sibiu (after Bartsch 8, 1512) also includes some personal interventions: a man in chivalric dress, and laying on the floor assists at the flagellation. The last three scenes all closely follow Dürer’s prints from the “Engraved Passion”: *The Crowning with Thorns* (Bartsch 9, 1512); *Ecce homo* (Bartsch 10, 1512) (Fig. 8, 9), and *Pilate Washing his Hands* (Bartsch 11, 1512). The *Lamentation* on the predella has no evident model.

¹⁰ Some hypothetical attributions will be made below.

¹¹ SEPVLTVRA NOBILIS AC EGREGII IOAN(N)I[S] / D(E) LVLA IVDICIS REGII AC COMITIS CAMERE CIBINIEN(SIS) QVI E MEDIO VIVE(N)CIV(M) / FATORVM VOCACIONE SVBLATVS / CVIVS ANIMA DEO VIVAT MDXXI DIE VERO XII ME(N)SIS APRILIS.

It could be noticed that the altarpiece in Sibiu was largely based on pre-existing graphic sources created by great German masters around 1512–1513. However, the models were undertaken in an inspired way and the author's personality and creativity filtered through. The resulting compositions are eloquent and impressive. In spite of this, the available literature has usually confined itself so far to some general considerations regarding the painter's affiliation to the Renaissance. In the context of the poorly documented artistic life of Sibiu in the Later Middle Ages, no attempt to identify the author was made.

There are, however, a few small details that could allow us to identify both the master who originally created this excellent art work and the one who latter transformed it for Lutheran use.

I. Symon Pictor

The scene of *Hearing before Caiaphas* (Fig. 10) represents a loose interpretation of the one included in the cycle known as "The Engraved Passion" (*Kupferstichpassion*) of Albrecht Dürer (Bartsch 6, 1512) (Concerning the devotional significance of the cycle, see: Haas 2000). In fact, the use of this source could be recognized only by observing the soldier who grabs Christ's right arm and presents him to the high priest. The position of Caiaphas on the throne and some details of his garments are also similar to the model, but not the proportions or other more conspicuous details (like hat, dress etc). The rest of the composition was designed by the master-painter in Sibiu using his own inventiveness, or finding support in some other graphic sources, not immediately identifiable. For example, the soldier in the background holding a red and white standard with the initials of the Roman state (*SPQR*) is designed after the often-represented *Landsknechte* (German mercenaries) of the epoch, and it might be inspired by the work of Lucas Cranach senior. The composition in Sibiu, even following pre-existing sources, suggests a skilful painter. However, in comparison with the model created by the great master from Nuremberg, that in Sibiu loses the power of a devotional image (*Andachtsbild*) by the simple fact that there is an abundance of detail and the group of personages are placed in the background rather than in the foreground. Nevertheless, it still remains a fair composition.

This precise scene of the altarpiece from Sibiu contains a tiny detail meant to identify the author

of this work of art. Above the head of Caiaphas, attached to the wall near what would be an architectural superstructure of his throne designed in grisaille (a pilaster crowned by the carved image of a pagan goddess) and partly covered by the aforementioned red and white standard, there is a little shield equally designed in grisaille (Fig. 11). It contains as charges three other escutcheons, ranged 2: 1, meaning two in the chief and one in the base of the shield. Although the tinctures are missing, it can be easily recognized as the widely-spread coat of arms of painters all over Europe (See, for example: Warnecke 1887). It was used especially in the German cultural area (where it was tinctured "gules" shield – meaning red in heraldic terms – and charges "argent" – silver), but also in the Netherlands and even in the French territories (where the preferred tinctures were field "azure" – blue – and charges "argent"). The origins of the arms go back to the time when painters and shield makers were members of the same guild (14th century). This association is easily understandable bearing in mind that coats of arms found their usual and preeminent place on shields, mostly painted. Restricted to a close geographical area, let us recall the coat of arms of Johannes Aquila, as painted in the church of Martjanci (Mártonhely, Slovenia, ca. 1395) (Fig. 12) (Höfler, Balažic 1992), or that of Johannes the royal painter, sculpted on his gravestone (1370) in Our Lady's Church in Buda (Fig. 13). A similarly sculpted coat of arms, (thus, in "grisaille" like the arms in Sibiu) can be found on the gravestone of *Magister Stephanus Pictor* in the Dominican Church of Buda (ca. 1500). (Lövei 2009, I, 68; III, il. 305)¹².

Undoubtedly, this dissimulated detail refers to the artist responsible for the painting of our altarpiece. If we take a closer look we can notice on the lower escutcheon a short inscription, in fact two superimposed initials. They are not very easy to decipher, but they should be read as P S, written like a B. Whom do they identify?

One year after the dating of the altarpiece, on 8 June 1520, the municipality of Sibiu, gathered in ordinary session, approved what are the earliest-known statutes of an "artistic" corporation in Transylvania, namely of the crafts of painters, joiners and glaziers (*Quellen Herm.* II, doc. 94). The way these statutes are conceived suggests that no other similar regulations had been drawn up before in the province. They make no reference to a previous model. Instead, those issued for the

¹² Other Transylvanian evidence is discussed in my article published in *Ars Transsilvaniae* 2011.

guild in Braşov some years later – a draft of 1523 (*Quellen Kron.* IX, doc. 68) and one more elaborate approved in 1532 (*Quellen Kron.* IX, doc. 76) – clearly indicate their source: the statutes of Sibiu. It can be assumed that only after the second decade of the 16th century the major towns in Transylvania reached the preconditions (a larger number of masters, numerous commissions, a competitive environment etc.) needed for the organization of artistic corporations, more than 150 years after similar foundations in Central Europe.

Having considered the artistic craft organization in the province, let us now focus on the documentary evidence provided by the statutes of Sibiu. In front of the (unnamed) *magistercivium, iudices et iurati consules civitatis Cibiniensis* in order to obtain approval for the statutes came ...*magister Symon Pictor et Georgius Mensator nomine et in persona uniuersorum et singulorum aliorum trium artificiorum magistrorum puta, pictorum, mensatorum et fenestrarum de uitriatorum...* It can be presumed that, being the first nominated and representing all the painters in Sibiu, Simon the Painter was at that time one of the most prominent masters of the craft. The same person was, in my opinion, the author of the altarpiece under scrutiny.

First of all, the initials marked on the lower escutcheon of the artist's coat of arms coincide with that of the name of the painter. *S. P.* or *P. S.* could be read as *Symon Pictor*, or *Symon pinxit*, or *Pinxit Symon*. There is a fairly similar coat of arms preserved on a large narrative *Crucifixion* painted in 1457 by Conrad Laib (Saliger *et al.* 1997) for the dome in Graz (intended to adorn, as our altarpiece, the altar of the Holy Cross in front of the choir screen) (Fig. 14). From the belt of Stephaton, in the act of giving to the dying Christ the sponge soaked in vinegar, hangs a gourd-like receptacle on which appears the coat of arms of painters, designed in grisaille. The lower escutcheon is replaced by a disk marked with the name of the painter: *LAIB*.

On the other hand, one could suppose that such an important commission as the preserved altarpiece, co-sponsored, as we have seen, by one of the highly-ranked personalities of the *Universitas Saxonum*, had rather to be entrusted to one of the most esteemed artists of the town. Taking into consideration Simon's position just one year later we might presume that the task was granted to him.

If the identification of Simon the Painter with the author of the large altarpiece of the Passion of

Christ proves to be correct, it would lead to an advance of our knowledge regarding the artistic *milieu* of this major town of the province. Despite the fact that Sibiu was far more important than Sighişoara, the documentary evidence as well as the preserved monuments belonging to the last-named centre are more informative for the reconstruction of painters' activity, workshop production and artistic irradiation. The recent book by Emese Sarkadi Nagy builds a vivid picture of Sighişoara as an artistic hub of the province (Sarkadi Nagy 2011). The only known painter from Sibiu at the beginning of 16th century remains, since Victor Roth's influential publication (Roth 1916), Vincencius Cibiniensis. Although there are few documentary sources concerning his life and career, some of his works fortunately survive to the present day (altarpieces of Jidvei 1508, Cîsnădie 1525, Moşna 1521, the fresco in Ocna Sibiului 1522), mostly signed and dated. (The best studies about *Vincencius Pictor* are: Sarkadi Nagy 2007, and Sarkadi Nagy 2011, 90 sqq.). However, the provenance of the majority of the work signed by, or attributed to, Vincencius suggests that his production was primarily intended for smaller localities in the province than for the urban centre. At the same time, in terms of artistic achievement, his works are clearly to be ranked lower than the great altarpiece of the parish church of Sibiu attributed to his fellow Simon Pictor.

Besides the cited charter from 1520 mentioning his name as representative of painters before the municipality, the name of Simon is rarely mentioned in printed sources. I could find only the following information. After ca. 1500 a certain *Simon Moler* was mentioned as indebted with 3 *lottones* to the tax-collector Stephanus Clezer (*Quellen Herm.* I, 270)¹³. The next record dates from a decade after the charter approving the statutes: in 1530 the municipality sold to the painter some stakes or maybe spears (*cuspides*) from the town hall (Roman 2007, 132)¹⁴. In 1545 Simon was already dead and the Senate adjudged a third of his house to the tailor Johannes Walldorfer (Hienz *et al.* 2007).

Obviously, the documentary evidence regarding the artist is very sparse. For this reason, his "biography" could be reconstructed by corroborating records with the visual evidence provided at this moment by the only attributed

¹³ ca. 1500: *Duodecimale domini Stephani Cleszer: Simon Moler lot. 3 debet.*

¹⁴ 1530: *Item Simoni Pictore venditi sunt cuspides centum de domo Consistorij, ff. 5.*

work. The preserved altarpiece demonstrates, as has been suggested, the formation of the painter in the artistic atmosphere of the beginning of the 16th century (ca. 1505–1510/15) marked by the South German Renaissance, the impulses of the so-called “Danube School” (*Donauschule*) and the pervasive influence of the masters of Renaissance engraving (Dürer, Altdorfer and maybe Cranach senior). Probably born around 1485 (in Sibiu or abroad, this is not clear), he served his apprenticeship in about 1505, and afterwards he could have been a journeyman. The altarpiece suggests he was trained abroad (between Vienna and Nuremberg?). Before 1515 he could have been an independent master established in Sibiu. The oldest cited record, indicating he owned a house property in the town for which he paid a tax (less than Vincencius Pictor, who is recorded in the same register) is roughly dated ca. 1500. In my opinion it is of a slightly later date, about 1510¹⁵. In 1519, Simon undertook a very important commission, the altarpiece of the Holy Cross in the parish church of Sibiu. The commissioners were, on the one side, the royal judge (*iudex regius*) and administrator of the royal mint (*comes camerae*) Johannes Lulay, and on the other an unidentified but certainly high-ranking personality of the town or province¹⁶. Clearly, at that moment Simon has become one of the most-prized painters of the town. This position was afterwards confirmed by the charter of 1520 mentioning him as the head of the craft in Sibiu. In 1530 Simon transacted business with the municipality. The precise meaning of the *cuspides* he bought for 5 florins, is not clear. Shortly before 1545 he died, aged about 60 years. His urban property was disputed by his successors, a third of the house being attributed to a tailor.

The previous paragraphs present, as accurately as possible on the basis of the available data, the

biographical details about the creator of the altarpiece. The following pages focus on the author and the mastermind of the 1545 transformation.

II. Benedictus Moler

Twenty six years after its conception the altarpiece of the Holy Cross in the church in Sibiu was decisively altered in the context of the adoption of Lutheranism by the town authorities. The transformation consisted in the removal of the saints from the festive side and their replacement with biblical quotations. As has been suggested, the object became one of the most coherent conversions of late medieval imagery in order to fit the tenets of the new confession (On this matter, see the works of Crăciun (Crăciun 2002; Crăciun 2010).. In an unusual (for the province) conformity with doctrine, the only iconic representation spared was that of the crucified Christ, alongside the narrative of his Passion on the back. On the one hand, the character of the inscriptions (written with large, conspicuous golden capitals) clearly emphasizes the importance given to the Word and to the vehicles of the Word. In a very significant way, it was transmitted that the religion of the image had been replaced by the religion of the word. But on the other hand, precisely the visual features of the inscription transformed it into an iconic item.

Due to the 1701 repainting, we don't know the entire scriptural programme. On the wings, they are partly reconstructed by Albu (Albu 2002, cat. 28).. The two inscriptions completely preserved, on each part of the cross's beam are quotations from the Bible, from the New and the Old Testaments. On the right side the text follows the Gospel of Matthew (*MATT[AEUS]: XI. / VENITE: AD: / ME: OMNES: / QVI: LABORATIS: / ET: ONERATI: EST/IS: ET: EGO: REFO/CILLABO: VOS. / ET: INVENIETIS: RE/QVIEM ANIMAB[US] V[ESTRIS]*) and on the left side the book of Isaiah (*IESA[IAS]: LIII. / IVSTVS SERVVS: / MEVS: COGNICIO/NE: SVI: IVSTIFICA/BIT: MVLTO. IB[IDEM]: / IPSE: PECCAT/VM: MVLTORVM: / TVLIT: ET: PRO: / INIQVIS: ROGAVIT*). Running on the both sides of the beam, beneath the inscription, is marked the year 1545.

The noticeable presence of the letters *MATT* at the head of the right wing inscription, pointing to the name of the evangelist Matthew, also represents, in my opinion, a transparent reference to the instigator of the transformation project. Between 1536 and 1546 the head priest (*plebanus*) of Sibiu

¹⁵ If the real dating is closer to 1500, the year of Simon's birth should also be moved back to ca. 1480.

¹⁶ Hypothetically it could be identified with the mayor (*magister civium*) of Sibiu. At that time the mayor was Petrus Wolf (Farkas/Lupinus). His coat of arms is unknown. Together with Lulay, Wolf signed and sealed a charter dated 23 June 1519 (MOL Arcanum DF 285651). I would like to thank my colleague Ioan Albu for making the effort to search for this document in the National Archive of Sibiu. Unfortunately, the quest for the seal of Petrus Wolf was unsuccessful (the impression has been lost). Another possible identification of the patron could be the contemporary *plebanus*. At that time, the parish priest of Sibiu was Matthias Colomani (1516–1521). Very little is known about him. Equally, his coat of arms is unknown.

was Matthew Ramser. He was a learned man who had studied in Vienna (Tonk 1979, nr. 1562, 293)¹⁷, then had become priest of the parish church of Orăștie, and finally was elected as *plebanus* of Sibiu (Seiwert 1874, 364)¹⁸. Probably his fame as a wise man determined this election, after the death of Petrus Woll, the last *plebanus* of the Roman confession. Ramser soon became a supporter of the Reformation, and he was the first to serve the new confession in the parish church of Sibiu. He died in 1546 (Seiwert 1874, 364)¹⁹, shortly after the town adopted Lutheranism and the altarpiece was transformed.

At this stage, it would be opportune to resume the discussion concerning the original location or positioning of the altarpiece. The above described transformation, both very early (simultaneous with the “conversion” of the municipality) and very coherent (documenting the inspired and learned instigator) indicates precisely that the altarpiece stood in the parish church and not in another location (such as the Dominican convent²⁰). At that time, the latter institution entirely lost its religious function, becoming a simple grain warehouse (Roman 2007)²¹. The altarpiece was meant to be seen by the faithful, and not to be hidden in an abandoned religious building. Secondly, as mentioned above, the most visible place in the parish church was precisely the spot in the front of the choir screen, at the intersection between transept and nave. I doubt that in 1545 the choir screen had already been pulled down in order to make the high altar and the high altarpiece visible. This change must have come later, and probably then our altarpiece was installed on the high altar, (replacing the Marian, supposedly carved and doctrinally-inappropriate altarpiece) where historiography traditionally recorded it.

I have already suggested that the instigator of the transformation programme was, most likely, the parish priest Mathew Ramser. Who then was

commissioned to carry out the transformation programme?

In the lowest left corner of the dark blue backdrop of the inscription, near the last digit of the dating year (1545) there are two capital letters (*B. M.*) which, in my opinion, indicate the identity of the author (Fig. 15).

Around the middle of the 16th century, it seems that in Sibiu there was a painter specializing in the “reformation of the images”. His name was Benedictus and earlier literature (Binder 1971, 19) mentions him on the basis of three records of the years 1554–1566. The first two provide evidence of an important commission from the municipality directed to Benedictus and another painter, namely *Cristianus de Segesvar* (Binder 1971, 19)²², the apprentice and since 1531 the heir of the workshop of the renowned Johannes Stoss, painter from Sighișoara. They had to paint the four dials of the municipal clock, for which they received the considerable sum of 70 florins (Binder 1971, 19)²³. The third piece of evidence, dating from 1566, suggests that Benedictus was already dead, because his wife (widow?) was paying the taxes for the urban property (Binder 1971, 19)²⁴.

A recent publication (Roman 2007), an edition²⁵ of the account books of the municipality of Sibiu from the first half of the 16th century, has brought to light a fair amount of data concerning the activities of Benedictus Pictor. Among them (many recording public commissions indicating a special relationship of the painter with the municipality, E.g: [Sic!] 1543: *Item Benedicto Pictori per reformation. ambas stubas domus Consistorij ff. 0, d. 70* (Roman 2007, 204); 1545.V.17: *Item Benedicto Pictori pro fenestra clatrata nova facta in balneo ff. 1, d. 12* (Roman 2007, 244); 1545.VI.14 ante: *Item Benedicto Pictore qui fenestras clatratas fecit ad balneus veteres que refecit, ff. 1, d. 35* (Roman 2007, 246); At *Consistorium novum*: *Item Benedicto Pictori qui fenestras clatratas nova et quos refendo, ff. 3, d. 73; Amplius eid [?eidem] pro coloracione fornacis ff. o, d. 40* (Roman 2007, 254); 1547:

¹⁷ *Mathias Ramasi ex Pros* is found as a student in Vienna in 1515–1516.

¹⁸ 1536.V.17: *Item Mathias Ramazi de Bros et in eadem oppido plebanus existens electus est in plebanum Cibiensem.*

¹⁹ *Mathias Ramasius... obiit dominica post Galli* (1546.X.17)

²⁰ Which had the same dedication (The Holy Cross) and where the altarpiece was displaced in the 18th century.

²¹ 3 Nov. 1543: *Relicta frumenta cubuli 112 ducta ad claustrum dominicanos* (sic !).

²² 1554.VII.15: (accounts of the town of Sibiu): *Cristiano pictore de Segesvar ducto dati fl. 1*

²³ 1554.X.21: *Cristiano et Benedicto pictoribus pro renovatione quattor circularum horologii dat. fl. 50*; 1555.IX.12 *Benedicto pictori ad id quod restabat pro pictura circularum horologii dat fl. 20.*

²⁴ 1566: *Duodecimale D. Johannis Lullay: Die Benedic Malerin lott 1.*

²⁵ Unfortunately, achieved in a very disputable way.

For this reason, each and every quotation of the source must be taken with caution.

Item Benedicto pictore fornaces linien (Roman 2007, 287); *Item Benedicto pictoris per pictura ad eadm structuras turris picto* [sc. structura circa portam consulum], f. 2 (Roman 2007, 292) etc.) there are some more informative for our particular survey.

In 1549, some time between 17 and 24 February, Benedictus Pictor (spelled in vernacular as *Moler*) together with a fellow sculptor named Servacius were charged by the municipality with removing an “image” from the monastery of the Black nuns (Roman 2007, 346)²⁶. All the evidence indicates that they had to deal with an altarpiece. How else could be explained the use of two specialized masters (a painter and a sculptor), who some decades earlier were invited to collaborate in order to create such “multimedia” art works as altarpieces? The Dominican nuns’ convent (Salontai 2002, 213–214; Florea 2011, 72–73), dedicated to Mary Magdalene, was most probably already out of use, and the authorities decided to remove the extant altarpiece. The use of specialists for such a task rather suggests that the Reformation in Sibiu was accompanied by a carefully-coordinated policy of the town government towards images and not by a random “Bildersturm”. Benedictus Moler seems to have been instrumental in this policy.

Another record of his activity, dating precisely to the year 1545, may refer to the renewal of the altarpiece which is the subject of this article. In the list of payments made for Benedictus, there is an entry mentioning a renovation (?) of some “panels”: *Amplius eid* [? *eidem*] *pro tabulis iunonandis* [sic! it may be *innovandis* or *renovandis* ?] ff. 1, d. 0. The transcription is very confusing, both concerning the language and the context²⁷. *Tabula* (sometimes *thabula*, Germ. *Taffel*) is a usual Medieval Latin term for altarpiece (E.g. in Transylvania: *Petimus vestras amicitias confidenter, quatenus thabulam in*

civitate vestra ecclesiae nostrae Albensis reformatam causa nostrae amicitiae ac amplioris complacentiae per unum currum vestrum ad festum nativitatis domini proxime venturum velitis Albam transmittere, ut ad predictum festum thabula praefata valeat locari ad locum suum. (Ub. VI, doc. 3411); ...*Ad instanciam... domine Elizabet conventus fecit capellam beati Anthonii cuius structure partem ipsa domina prompta pecunia solvit, et similiter tabulam eiusdem capelle suis expensis fecit fieri...* (Eszterházy 1866, 573) etc). but not always. It could also refer to a panel-like object, a painted board etc. Benedictus seems to have restored some „boards”, receiving for his work the sum of one florin. The amount could be enough for designing an inscription (the work proper), but surely wouldn’t cover the expenses for the material used on the golden capitals.

Regardless as to whether the record refers precisely to the 1545 transformation or not, the initials *B.M.* marked at the base of the central panel most probably point to the identity of the „calligrapher” *Benedictus Moler*. There is a fairly considerable amount of evidence surviving about his activities, by comparison with his predecessor, *Symon Pictor*. Nevertheless, at this stage of research, we may assign him only a noteworthy inscription.

The intention of this study was to survey one of the most interesting and at the same time lesser known altarpieces from late medieval Transylvania aiming at revealing its originators (both patrons and artists). A subsidiary aim was to widen our rather scarce knowledge about the artistic environment of the prominent town of Sibiu in the first half of the 16th century. If the suggested identifications are accepted, at least a part of the intention will have been attained: Symon Pictor might be the second artist of Sibiu with a recognized *oeuvre*, following on his fellow Vincencius.

²⁶ 1549: *Benedicto Moler et Servacio Schnyczer quod imaginem apud nigras moniales defregerunt dati ff. 0, d. 32.*

²⁷ The context seems however to indicate work done on the new town hall of Sibiu (which previously was the urban residence of Johannes Lulay).

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IN PYXIDE. THE PORTRAIT MINIATURES OF JOHANN CONRAD REHM AND ANNA HAUGIN

Frank-Thomas ZIEGLER*

Abstract: *A pair of miniature portraits in the Brukenthal Museum are fixed into gilded capsules. We identify the sitters as the Augsburg patrician couple Johann Conrad Rehm (1558–1632) and his wife Anna Haugin (1554–1608) and suggest the portraits and capsules to have been created in Augsburg or Ulm.*

Keywords: *portrait, miniature, painting, pyxide, Augsburg, Ulm, Johann Conrad Rehm.*

Rezumat: *În pixidă. Portretele miniaturi ale lui Conrad Rehm și Anna Haugin. O pereche de miniaturi din colecția Muzeului Național Brukenthal sunt fixate în capsule aurite. Putem identifica în portretele pendente cuplul patrician Johann Conrad Rehm (1558–1632) și soția lui, Anna Haugin (1554–1608), din Augsburg. În urma studiului celor două lucrări propunem ipoteza că portretele și capsulele au fost create la Augsburg sau Ulm.*

Cuvinte cheie: *portret, miniatură, pictură, pixidă, Augsburg, Ulm, Johann Conrad Rehm*

Among the marvels housed in the Brukenthal Museum is a notable pair of portrait miniatures which, thus far, has been left unrecorded (Figs. 1–6). A patrician couple of the dawning 17th century are depicted in two oval bust portraits in three-quarter profile. A bearded, covertly smiling gentleman, obviously in his prime, is dressed in the fashion then typical of a wealthy man: he wears a black doublet, adorned by a row of silver buttons, around his neck a quite modest ruff. His only piece of finery is the golden chain around his neck (Bock 2004 [2005]). A coat of arms to his right portrays a black bull on a yellow background, above them appear the characters “H C” – name initials, of course – and the date “1606”, letters and numbers being painted in gold. Together with the portrait, they are set against a neutral brownish background.

In equal measure, its counter piece portrays a woman beyond her first bloom, displaying a rather humourless facial expression. She wears a black embroidered robe, a ruff around her neck and a white lace bonnet. Her social position is

underscored by a triple gold chain. To the right of the portrait bust, set against the same brownish background as the husband’s portrait, one observes the character “A:” and below them a coat of arms divided into two horizontal fields in two different colours. The upper is coloured red, the lower white. A standing lion, set over both, repeats both colours in the opposite sense and holds a partisan in his front paws. The same date “1606” as on the husband’s portrait is to be found to the sitter’s left hand side.

Both portraits suffered partial losses of paint layer, though the thin copper sheets they were painted on have been protected by the two capsules into which they were mounted. Both capsules are made of brass, gilded and covered by moresque ornamentation on the outside.

Each copper sheet was clamped into its capsule by means of two metal rings. The broader one is inserted underneath the portrait copper sheet, preventing it from sinking too deeply into the interior of the capsule; the thinner, slightly flattened ring fixes it from above and serves at the same time as the portrait’s discrete frame. Two glass panels, obviously recent additions, have been inserted in between the painted copper sheet and the upper metal ring.

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A small hole was added to each capsule's rear surface, very close to one of its slim, overlapping edges. A modern ribbon of industrially manufactured green silk is threaded through each. The irregular margins of these two holes indicate that they may be, as the glass panels mentioned above, recent additions. Together with the latter, they seem to be modern measures, necessitated very probably by the owner's wish to have the portrait miniatures displayed on walls.

Originally, of course, the portraits were not intended to be hung. The closest surviving parallels to the capsules of the Rehm portraits seem to be those of the coloured wax relief portrait miniatures representing the archduke of Inner Austria, Charles II, and his wife Maria of Bavaria, both today in the Abegg Foundation in Riggisberg, Switzerland. They were created by Antonio Abondio in 1575 or shortly thereafter, are almost of the same size as the Rehm portraits, and, just like the latter's capsules, they were made of brass, gilded, and decorated with *moresques*, which indeed closely resemble the ones on the Rehm capsules. Anna Jolly suggested that they possibly were manufactured in Nürnberg or Augsburg (Jolly 2011, 50). Each of these capsules individually possesses a highly elaborated lid. The Brukenthal capsules presumably were crafted with lids, too, which unfortunately were lost in the course of time. With regard to our own assumption about the late addition of the holes and ribbons onto the Rehm capsules, it is noteworthy that Anna Jolly presumed the tags, which were mounted onto each of the Abegg capsules and thus turn them into pendants, to be subsequent 19th century additions, possibly created at the command of the Parisian art collector Frédéric Spitzer (Jolly 2011, 61).

Together with other portrait miniatures, some of them works by famous masters like Lucas Cranach the Elder, Hans Holbein the Younger and Bartholomeus Bruyn the Elder, both the miniatures in the Abegg Foundation and in the Brukenthal Museum form a special portrait category, which first made its appearance during the accelerated evolution of the portrait as an independent art genre in the 15th century: mostly small scale portraits on panel, partly mounted as diptychs, partly in capsules or boxes, designed to be kept in *armoires* and chests as intimate souvenirs (Dülberg 1990, 94–98; Campbell 1990, 62–64; Buck 2008; Hinz 1974). In historical sources, they are referred to as paintings “in pyxide” or “in a box” (Dülberg 1990, 41).

According to the inventory records, our two portraits were donated to the museum in 1933 by a member of the Transylvanian Saxons' community in Hermannstadt/Sibiu, Lina Radulovici, born as Caroline Binder. They are not the only donations her family made to the museum¹.

On the back of both copper sheets bearing the portraits, two handwritten inscriptions, today almost illegible, record the sitters' names: “Aña Haug. Ux.[or] Joh.[ann] Conr.[ad] Rehm ... Cop.[ulatus] 12 April.[iis] mort.[ua] 1608”, and “Jo[h]an[n]. Conrad. Rehm n.[atus] 29. Mai.[us] 1558 ob.[iit] 9 Mar.[tii] 163... aetat.[is] 74.”

Given this information, it was not difficult to find out more, since *Rehm* is the name of a numerous Augsburg patrician house (Weyermann 1829, 413–414). As it became part of the Augsburg oligarchic ruling class in the course of the so-called *Geschlechtervermehrung* of 1538, its coat of arms appears, for example, in the famous Augsburg *Geschlechterbuch* (Augsburg Book of Nobles) of 1545/47 (Kaulbach 2012, 83, cat. no. S. 36; 152, cat. no. A. 1). Not least, the municipal art collections in Augsburg host an impressive portrait diptych by Christoph Amberger from 1533, representing a distant relative of Johann Conrad Rehm, Afra Rem, and her husband, the furrier and merchant Wilhelm Merz the Elder (Figs. 7–9). The reverse of Merz's portrait bears, together with the coat of arms of Merz's first wife, the alliance coat of arms of Wilhelm and his second wife, Afra. Its lower field is presenting the same black bull as Johann Conrad's portrait (Dülberg 1990, 184)².

Turning to the municipal archives of Augsburg, I received extraordinary help from Mrs. Simone Herde. According to the accounts she discovered, Johann Conrad Rehm was born, in fact, on the 29th of October, 1558, as one of nine children of Adam Rehm (1526–1586), city councilor and supreme judge of Augsburg and his wife Magdalena Rehlingerin. “Hanns Conrad Rem” as he is sometimes cited in the documents, married Anna Haugin, daughter of David Haug and Judith Rehmin, on the 12th of April, 1589. After her

¹ In 1944, the heirs of Lina Radulovics donated a baroque armory to the Brukenthal Museum, new/old inv. no. M 48/15.459.

² I thank my esteemed friend and colleague, Timo Hagen, Heidelberg/Florence, for drawing my attention to Amberger's diptych in the *Städtische Kunstsammlungen Augsburg*, inv. nos. L 118 and L 119.

death in 1608, he regaled himself with marrying four more times (Seifert 1723, Stammtafel G).

After his father's death in 1586, the family's house "am Zitzenberg" in Augsburg as well as his father's complete bequest remained in his widow's possession. According to the Augsburg tax registers, it was only in 1589 – probably due to Johann Conrad's marriage – that the bequest was split among his widow and the two children, Johann Conrad and his brother Carl Rehm, who inherited 1050 guilders each (Augsburg StA, *Reichsstadt, Steueramt, Steuerbuch 1589*, fol. 61d *Steuerbezirk am Zitzenberg*).

At that time, Johann Conrad lived in Augsburg. An entry in the family's genealogy book mentions his relocation to Ulm on the 5th of March, 1606 (Augsburg StA, *HV HF 232*). However, the registers of supplementary taxes document that he paid supplementary taxes from 1604 onwards, indicating that Johann Conrad at this time did not personally reside any longer in Augsburg, and finally gave up his citizenship of Augsburg in June 1606³.

Gudrun Litz from the municipal archives in Ulm kindly informed me about the mention of "Hans Conrad Rehm von Augspurg" in the "Bürgerbuch", the burghers' register of the city of Ulm of 1605–1655, according to which he gained the citizenship of Ulm on the 28th of March, 1606 (Ulm StA, *StadtA Ulm*, A 3736, 2). In some way or the other, the creation of the two portrait miniatures might be linked to this event. However, additional details about his life and profession may yet be revealed by further research.

It is difficult to determine with certainty whether the portraits were painted and mounted into the capsules in Augsburg or in Ulm due to several factors: the family's relocation to Ulm in 1606, the uniformity of the, however remarkable, painting style, the widely distributed representational scheme, and the lack of both the painter's signature or monogram and the goldsmith's mark. Nevertheless, it is highly probable that it happened in one of these cities.

³ Augsburg StA, Steueramt, Steuerbuch 1605, fol. 102c for the year 1606 (Nr. 56): "H[err] Hanns Conrad Rem, wellicher sein burgerrecht aufgeben, z[ahl]t p[er] anno. 1605. alte verfallene steur 85 fl. [Gulden] 22 cr. [Kreuzer] 1 d [Pfennig], vnnd dann zum Abzug vermittelst gelaisten Aids drey burgerliche nauchsteuern, für Jede fl. 93 k. 10 d. 1 alles Inn Müntz geraith per Adi. 7. Junii. 1606."

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1. Anonymous painter, Augsburg or Ulm,
Portrait of Johann Conrad Rehm



2. Anonymous painter, Augsburg or Ulm,
Portrait of Anna Haugin



3. Capsule, Augsburg or Ulm, gilded brass, reverse



4. Anonymous painter, Augsburg or Ulm,
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5. Anonymous painter, Augsburg or Ulm,
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6. Capsule, Augsburg or Ulm, interior,
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VIXI DUM VOLUI. AN UNKNOWN WORK OF THE SCULPTOR ELIAS NICOLAI – THE FUNERARY PLATE OF PASTOR THOMAS BORDANNUS (†1633)

Ioan ALBU*

Abstract: *The present study aims at a detailed analysis and the attribution of the tomb-plate of pastor Thomas Bordannus to the Mannerist sculptor Elias Nicolai. The funerary plate is recessed into the wall of the evangelic church choir in Slimnic (Stolzenburg / Stolzvar) and represents the bust of the deceased in the manner and specific technique of this sculptor. The tomb plate belongs typologically to the early works of the master, like the tomb-plates of Barbara Theilesius (ca. 1627) and Anna May (†1631). The analysis of the style features and writing models of the only partially published inscription show a great similarity to later works signed by Elias Nicolai.*

Keywords: *funerary art, epigraphy, tomb-plate, pastor, sculptor, Thomas Bordannus, Elias Nicolai.*

Rezumat: *Vixi Dum Volui. O operă necunoscută a sculptorului Elias Nicolai – lespedeza funerară a pastorului Thomas Bordannus (†1633). Studiul își propune o analiză detaliată a lespedzii funerare a pastorului Thomas Bordannus și atribuirea ei sculptorului manierist Elias Nicolai. Piatra tombală este încadrată în zidul corului bisericii evanghelice din Slimnic și figurează bustul defunctului în maniera și cu tehnica specifică acestui sculptor. Tipologic, opera face parte din categoria pieselor timpurii ale meșterului, la fel ca și lespedeza funerară a Barbarei Theilesius (cca. 1627) precum și cea a Annei May (†1631). Trăsăturile stilistice și modelele de scriere sunt aceleași ca pe operele ulterioare semnate de meșterul Elias Nicolai.*

Cuvinte cheie: *artă funerară, epigrafie, lespede funerară, pastor, sculptor, Thomas Bordannus, Elias Nicolai.*

In the Evangelical Church in Slimnic (Stolzenburg / Stolzvar and later Szelindek) dedicated before the Reformation to St. Bartholomew there are two tombstones of important priests who together pastored here for more than seven decades. The funerary plates are recessed into the choir wall, being relocated here after having been taken out of the church floor during consolidation and transformation works between the years 1773–1792.

The former belongs to the priest Thomas Bomelius (Fig. 4) who received the function of a pastor in 1561, which he held until his death in 1592 (Nussbächer 2006, 140). It is a simply decorated tombstone, showing in the upper half of the field a disc on which rests a book (Bible) with metal fittings. The plate frame with the data

concerning the deceased and the panel with the funerary poem in the lower half of the tomb plate only preserves almost illegible traces of the majuscule inscriptions, caused by the heavy wear of the surface, which had been obviously placed in a highly foot traffic circulated area of the church choir.

The latter tomb plate belongs to the Lutheran pastor Thomas Bordannus (Fig. 1–3) who followed Bomelius in his function as a parish priest after 1592 until his death in 1633.

1. Dates on Thomas Bordannus

Thomas Bordannus (1556–1633), originary from Sibiu (Hermannstadt / Nagyszeben), becomes in 1589 priest in Șura Mare (Großscheuern / Nagycsúr), and after the death of Thomas Bomelius (†1592) parish priest in Slimnic. He is also documentary mentioned several times as a

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dean of the Evangelical Collegiate Chapter in Sibiu (*pastor Stolzvariensis et decanus Cibiniensis* in 1599, 1600, 1601, 1604, 1616). Thomas Bordanus was the stepfather of the Peter Besodner (1578–1616) priest in Sibiu (Seivert 1785, 32; Kemény 1839, p. 221). An anecdote is transmitted by Soterius, concerning the fact that his rector (priest and schoolmaster) in Slimnic had been judged in the Collegiate Chapter and discharged from school in 1604 for having put a lampoon (mock poem / *Spottgedicht*) against the dean on the wall (*cuius rector Stoltzvariensis scilicet vir qui caesus in Capitulo ejectus est ex Schola propter Pasquillum contra Decanum parieti affixum*. – Soterius, 96; Pölchau 2006, 65). Bordanus dies at the age of 77 years on the 28th of August 1633. (Tausch 1868, 161–162; Benkő 1781, 584–586). His chief work is *Virtus coronata, oder Ursache und Lohn Expeditionis Schirmerianae* (Kemény 1839, 219–250).

2. Iconography and stylistic analogies

The funerary plate was probably completed immediately after 1633 and belongs to the type of plates figuring the portrait of the deceased. In the upper half of the tomb plate, over the panel with the inscription of the funeral eulogy, the bust of the priest is carved in high relief (alto-relievo) under an arch supported by leaning consoles.

The carved figure of the deceased shows the person of the priest with closed eyes, long beard and mustache. He wears the usual costume of Lutheran priest, a cassock and a Protestant cloak (Fig. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14). The arms are bent towards the chest. The left hand holds the bible, whereas the right hand rests on the belt (cincture).

Over the head of the character appears a laurel wreath in the shape of a nimbus in semi vertical position. A dove on an olive tree is carved inside the laurel crown.

Two cherubims (angel heads with wings) are represented in the upper corners of the portrait panel which frame the vaulted arch. The two leaning consoles support a chalice on the left side and a book (Bible) with metal fitted joints on the right side (Fig. 2).

The dove can be interpreted as an allusion to Mount Ararat (Gen. 8, 11: “at illa (columba) venit ad eum ad vesperam portans ramum olivae virentibus foliis in ore suo”), but also as an elevation agent. It is here definitely contaminated with the symbol of the Tree of Life (Gen. 2, 8: “lignum vitae in medio paradisi; Gen. 3, 22: Ecce

Adam quasi unus ex nobis factus est, sciens bonum, et malum: nunc ergo ne forte mittat manum suam, et sumat etiam de ligno vitae, et comedat, et vivat in aeternum”; Apc. 2, 7: “vincenti dabo edere de ligno vitae, quod est in paradiso Dei mei”). The symbol is present alongside with the arch of Noah on the funerary plate of Petrus Rihelius (†1648) in the Evangelical Church of Sibiu (Fig. 5) (Albu, 2002, Nr. 181).

The laurel crown or wreath is in its turn an image of the paradise and a symbol of eternal life (Montault 1890, 43). The idea is taken over from Jacobus 1, 12 (“Beatus vir qui suffert tentationem, quoniam, cum probatus fuerit, accipiet coronam vitae, quam repromisit Deus diligentibus se”), but also from Apc. 2,10 (“Esto fidelis usque ad mortem et dabo tibi coronam vitae”).

The representation of *realia* – chalice and book – stays in direct relationship to the dignity of the deceased as a priest, and in this particular case, lacking the sand watch and the handkerchief, as on other tombstones carved by Elias Nicolai, the objects do not refer to the *memento mori* cycle. The same symbols are to be noticed at the funerary plate of Bishop Paulus Whonner (†1639) in Cincu (Fig. 6).

Gustav Gündisch considers that the deceased is represented as a living person, i.e. in his lifetime, with wide open eyes, like on the tomb plate of the priest Michael Oltard (†1623) (Gündisch 1976, 230–231). Undertaking a thorough analysis, it is to be noticed that the eyelids are sculpted in closed position, as on the majority of the funerary plates carved by Elias Nicolai. Only later deteriorations make the eyes seem open. As for the very well preserved plate of priest Oltard, it is quite obvious that the eyes are closed.

The earliest funerary plate of this type belongs to the priest Petrus Calopeus (†1569) in Gârbova (Urwegen / Szászorbó). Noteworthy are the tombstones of the priests Johann Bayer (1592, Sibiu), Franziskus Elisius (†1593, Richiş), Petrus Lupinus (†1597, Sibiu, Fig. 7), and of the Bishop (Superintendent) Lucas Unglerus (†1600, Biertan, sacristy), of the priest Georg (1603, Sibiu, Fig. 8), Petrus Molnar (1608, Sibiu, Fig. 9), Georg Hann (†1610, Sibiu, Fig. 10), Matthias Schiffbaumer (†1611, Biertan) and Zacharias Weyrauch (†1621, Biertan), the funerary plate of the priest Simon Kirtscher (†1621, Mediaş) and of the mayor Georg Jüngling (†1629, Sibiu) (Albu 2002, LXI).

This tradition of the representation of the bust of the deceased is continued in the representation of the portrait of Thomas Bordanus (†1633,

Biertan) on his funerary plate as well as in other signed or unsigned works created by the sculptor Elias Nicolai.

Two early works attributed to Elias Nicolai, the tomb plates of Barbara Theilesius (ca. 1627) in the sacristy of the Evangelical Church in Mediaş (Fig. 11) and Anna May (†1631) in the Evangelical Church in Cristian – Braşov (Fig. 12) (Gündisch 1976, 223–225) show the portraits of the deceased women in the same manner, under carved arches, with cherubims in the upper corners, with consoles on colonnettes, although they seem to be of a later style. Although strong stylistic resemblances can be noticed, the absence of the colonnettes on the funerary plate of Bordannus determined the historian Gustav Gündisch to avoid attributing the work to the stone mason and sculptor Elias Nicolai.

The tomb plate of Susanna Kamuthy, wife of Francisc Bethlen (1631–1633), in the Park of the Bethlen Castle in Criş (Kreisch, Keresd) (Lukinich 1927, 155, il. 122; Gündisch 1976, 244) seems to be the first signed work of Elias Nicolai together with M. Servatius – SCVLP(SIT): ELI[AS NI]COLAI M. SERVATIUS CIBIN(IENSIS). Nevertheless the severely damaged plate belongs to the type of the coat-of-arms plates. Other works of this type attributed to Elias Nicolai are to be found in the St. Mary Church in Sibiu, the funerary plates of Dominic Rosenauer (1636) (Albu 2002, Nr. 163), Johann Reussner (†1637) (Albu 2002, Nr. 165), Lucas Löw (†1641) (Albu, 2002, Nr. 170), Michael Agnethler (†1645) (Albu 2002, Nr. 173) and Tobias Sift (†1651) (Albu 2002, Nr. 190). The plate of Tobias Sift is signed, whereas the plate of Lucas Löw is documentary attested.

The manner, in which the look of the deceased's face is treated, with an unambiguous peacefulness of the expression, is the same as on the subsequent funerary plates sculpted by Elias Nicolai.

Nevertheless, after 1638, the social command caused the artist to render the portrait of the deceased as a whole figure. The tombstones belong almost entirely to members of the clergy – Johannes Hutter (†1638) in Csnădie (Heltau / Nagydisznó), Paulus Whonner (†1639, Fig. 6) in Cincu (Großschenk / Nagysink), Georg Theilesius (†1646, Fig. 13) in Biertan, Birthälm / Berethalom), Christian Barth (†1652, Fig. 14) also in Biertan, ordered in his lifetime in 1649, and of the mayor Stephan Mann (†1647) in Sighişoara (Schäßburg / Segesvár), or the tomb plate of

Johannes Hellwig (†1653) in Gârbova. The portraits are all carved in the same manner, not only stylistically but also in the appearance of the face expression and costumes of the Protestant age. The figures of the deceased with closed eyes, beards and mustaches wear cassocks (dolmans) and Lutheran cloaks (*krauser Mantel*). The left hand constantly holds the bible, whereas the right hand usually bears a handkerchief.

The carved bust of the pastor Thomas Bordannus strikingly resembles and reminds the figure of Moses on the funerary plate of the priest Petrus Rihelius (†1648, Fig. 5) in Sibiu (Albu 2002, Nr. 181), undoubtedly sculpted by Elias Nicolai as well. The cherubims in the upper corners of the plate are also of a similar manner and stylistic appearance.

The work belongs to Late Mannerism and it can be compared in its general composition and its handicraft details to signed or attributed works of the stone mason and sculptor Elias Nicolai, accomplished between the late 30's and early 60's of the 17th century. The tomb plate of pastor Thomas Bordannus seems to have been executed before 1640, probably immediately after 1633.

3. The inscriptions and the epigraphic commentary

The inscription in the frame (A) has not been published yet; the inscription in the field panel (B) was published by Victor Roth with minor reading deviances (Roth 1906, 126):

A:

MEMORIA^a POSTHVMA VIRI DIGNI ET
REVERENDI / ERVDITONE^a ET RER(VM)
EXPERIENTIA^a PRAECLARI D(OMI)NI
THOMAE^b BORDANNI^b CIBIN(IENSIS)^a
[DEC]/ANI [ET P]ASTORIS ECCL(ESI)AE^a
STOLZVARI[ENSIS]^a/ VIGILANTISS(IMI):^a
VITA RELIGIOSE DENATI A(NN)O^a 1633
AETAT(IS):^a 77 MINISTERII^a VERO 52

B1:

Me sanguis Christi mundat ab omni
In cuius Sancto nunc requiesco Sinu
Vixi, dum Volui, Volui dum Christe Volebas.
Nec mihi Vita brevis nec mihi longa fuit,
Ad portum Veni. Mors peccatumq(ue) facesse.
Cum Christo Vita laeticiaq(ue) fruor.

B2:

Wer Christu(m) Jesum recht erke(nn)t
Der hatt alles und ein seeligs End.

The inscription in the frame (A) is carved in Renaissance capitalis (humanistic capitalis) with bracketed serifs. It shows versals (a) which like all the letters in the name of the deceased (b) are designed in upper case letters extended beyond the two-line band. *M* has a conic form and its median part reaches the baseline of the row, nevertheless the versal *M* shows a median part which does not reach the baseline. The letter *A* has a horizontal medial crossbar. The letter *B* shows both loops (bowls) of the same size, *R* has a tail (*cauda*) starting from the lower stress of the loop, not from the shaft (*hasta*), slightly curled at its end. The spine of the letter *S* has equal bowls, and the letter *X* shows a curved right stroke.

The inscription in the field panel (B1) is carved in humanistic minuscule (*rotunda* or *antiqua*) with spurs and ears. As glyph variants, it shows *s longa* in median position, resting on the baseline without a descender extending below. The same characteristics apply to the letter *f*. The versals are in capitalis, whereas some keywords – *Sancto*, *Sinu*, *Volui*, *Volebas*, *Vita* – are designed in uppercase letters which do not reach the top of the four-line band (Fig. 3).

The last two German verses (B2) are written in *fractura* (*Fraktur*) with versals of the same type, the latter designed with beaks and swashes as decorative strokes. The tails (*caudas*) of the letters *h*, *s* and *g* are extended beyond the two-line band. The serifs are spur-shaped (Fig. 3).

The combination and intermingling of the three writing types are usual in the inscriptions carved by Elias Nicolai. The same scripts and letter forms were used with slight variations on most of the funerary plates signed by the sculptor (Albu 2002, Nr. 163, 165, 170, 173, 174, 180, 181, 185, 187, 190, 197).

The ligatures are usual for the epigraphic scripts of the time, as in the inscriptions carved by Elias Nicolai, some letters are enclosed and in lower case in order to spare the limited writing space of the frame (the two *I* in ERVDITIONE, the second *I* in EXPERIENTIA, *I* in VITA, *A* in VIGILANTISS(IMI), *I* in DENATI, *A* in AETAT(IS)). The text of the inscription B1 shows only a few ligatures, restricted to *æ*, *st* and *ct*, which are taken from the typographic scripts of the time.

The abbreviation marks (*sigla abbreviationis*) for suspension and contraction have the form of a horizontal line (bar) with an upwards empty knot / loop placed above the ascender of the letters – RER(VM), D(OMI)NI and A(NN)O. In the inscription of the Latin poem (B1) there is only one abbreviation (*q3*), whereas the German inscription (B2) shows an abbreviation mark in the shape of a horizontal line with triangular spurs. The inscriptions lack interword dividers or interpuncts (interpuncts) inserted between words, merely a double interpunct (:) is used for suspensions.

4. Inspiration sources and textual analogies

The inscription in the frame contains the deceased's dates after the usual formulary on priests' tomb-plate, like on the plate of Georgius Hann (1610, Sibiu, Albu 2002, Nr. 136). Thomas Bordannus – *vir, dominus, decanus, pastor*. The epithets are *reverendus, eruditione clarissimus / praeclarus, vigilantissimus*.

Victor Roth deduces on the basis of the I-form of the eulogy that the poem must have been written by pastor Bordannus himself (Roth 1906, 126). Even if this possibility cannot be rejected, an examination of the possible sources of the time lead to the conclusion that the poem is a mixture, a collage of sentences and passages which were in fashion in the first half of the 17th century.

Me sanguis Christi mundat ab omni

The first verse of the funerary poem – *Me sanguis Christi mundat ab omni* – is inspired from Johannes I, 1,7: „Et sanguis Jesu Christi, filii ejus, emundat nos ab omni peccato“, also known in the interpretation of Venerable Bede (Giles 1844, 272–273) commentary in John I, 1,7: „qui enim pro nobis mortem carnis indebitam reddidit, nos a debita animae morte liberavit“.

Vixi dum volui

Already present in ancient Roman funerary inscriptions – „Vixi, quem ad modum volui; quare mortuus sum, nescio“ (CIL 2.6130, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/epitaphs.html>), *vixi dum volui* is a predilect funerary sentence of late 16th century and 17th century epigraphs. The marble tomb of Jane Lady Lumley (†1577) in St. Mary's Chapel in Cheam near London (Ballard 1752, 122; Lysons 1792, 144–145) shows the

same verse, continued with references to Christ as Hope, Life, Crown and Salvation:

*Vixi dum volui, volui dum Christe volebas,
Christe mihi spes est, vita, corona, salus.*

The exact hexameter and pentameter, as in the poem for Thomas Bordannus, can be seen on the brass epitaph of Johannes Wythines (†1615), dean of the church, in the chancel of the church of Battel in Sussex (Curious 1825, 16):

*Vixi dum volui, volui dum, Christe, volebas
Nec mihi vita brevis, nec mihi longa fuit.*

Gilbert Primrose's monument (†1615) in the Gray-Friars Churchyard in Edinburgh (Monteith 1834, 21) is another variation on the same subject:

*Vixi dum volui; volui dum, Christe, volebas;
Sic nec vita mihi, mors nec, acerba fuit”.*

Ad portum veni, mors peccatumque facesse

The last distich is a paraphrase based upon Romans 5,12: “Per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit, et per peccatum mors; et ita in omnes homines mors pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt” (sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned) and Romans 5,21: “ut sicut regnavit peccatum in morte ita et gratia regnet per iustitiam in vitam aeternam per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum” (That as sin hath reigned to death: so also grace might reign by justice unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord). In the Augustinian as well as in the Protestant interpretation this passage in the Epistle of St. Paul teaches the causal connection between sin and death, and also a causal connection between the original sin and the sinfulness of all mankind, a parallel between Adam and Christ, and their symbolic relation to humanity, as in 1 Cor. 15, 45 ff.: “Factus est primus homo Adam in animam viventem, novissimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem”.

The verse „Ad portum veni, mors peccatumque facesse” was very popular in the church songs of the 17th century (Bazreuther 2005, 211–240). In funerary epigraphic texts from the first half of the

17th century the distich is present on the fragmentary epitaph of Otto and Margarethe Heusner and their son Philipp in the Evangelical Collegiate Church of St. Goar, dated in 1602 (Nikitsch 2004, Nr. 276):

In Portum veni, laetitia(ue) fruor

and in the inscription on the funerary plate of Elisabeth Schaden in the St. Blasius Cathedral in Braunschweig, dated in 1648 (Wehking 2001, Nr. 958†):

AD PORTUM VENI MORS PECCATUMQUE
FACESSE
CUM CHRISTO VIVO LAETITIAQUE
FRUOR.

Wer Jesum Christum recht erkennt

The German distich was very popular in poems and songs of the 16th–17th centuries, as in the poem of Lutheran hymnologist Nicolaus Selneccerus (Selnecker) from 1566 (<http://www.gesangbuch.org/lyrics/w0077.html>):

*Wer Jesum Christum recht erkennt,
hat all sein Zeit wohl angewandt.
All Kunst und Witz ist eitel Staub,
hoch Weisheit ist: Christum Glaub!*

The verses were taken over in protestant songs, like in the poem of the hymnologist Jakob Ritter from the first half of the 17th century (Elsner 1832, 459, nr. 1085):

*Wer Jesum Christum recht erkennt
und christlich seine Zeit anwendt,
wird sanft und selig schlafen ein,
im Himmel bei Gott ewig seyn.*

The Transylvanian funerary art, receive Mannerism and Proto-Baroque in its protestant fashion and Elias Nicolai, who had fled from Upper Hungary (Spišská Slovenská / Zips / Szepes) to Transylvania, settling in Sibiu – Cibinium manens, as he designates himself in the signature on the sarcophagus of Prince George Apafi (Merai 2005, 8), is the most important and gifted sculptor of the 17th century.

Conclusions:

The investigation of the stylistic features, the composition and craftsmanship techniques shows that they are very similar or identical to works attributed or signed by the sculptor Elias Nicolai.

The writing models of the only partially published inscription also show a great similarity to later works signed by Elias Nicolai, with identical scripts and letter forms. The combination and mixing of Renaissance capitalis, especially in the

frame, with humanistic minuscules and fractura in the field or on colonnettes, in different variations, the keywords in upper case letters and/or versals, as well as the same frequent ligatures are usual characteristics in the inscriptions carved by Elias Nicolai.

The detailed analysis of the tomb plate of pastor Thomas Bordannus allows its attribution to the Northern Mannerist sculptor Elias Nicolai.

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1. Funerary plate of pastor Thomas Bordannus (†1633), Slimnic, Evangelical Church, choir.



2. Funerary plate of pastor Thomas Bordannus (†1633), Slimnic, Evangelical Church, choir, detail.



3. Funerary plate of pastor Thomas Bordannus (†1633), Slimnic, Evangelical Church, choir, detail – eulogy panel.



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HOMES OF CLUJ DURING THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

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Abstract: *The most important cities of Transylvania developed thriving external markets, and this ensured their development since the end of the fifteenth century. Compared to such cities, Cluj developed slower, entering a phase of rapid ascension only starting with the second half of the sixteenth century when it became “Transilvaniae civitas primaria”. The present study aims at presenting homes from Cluj during the time of the Renaissance, through a typological analysis.*

Keywords: *Renaissance architecture, Cluj, sculpture, portal, carriagable entrance, window frame, keystone.*

Rezumat: *Casele de locuit din Cluj, în secolele al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea. Cele mai importante orașe ale Transilvaniei și-au dezvoltat o piață externă înfloritoare, ceea ce le-a asigurat dezvoltarea încă de la sfârșitul secolului al XV-lea. Comparativ cu aceste orașe, dezvoltarea Clujului a fost mai lentă, demonstrând o ascensiune spectaculoasă doar începând din jumătatea a doua a secolului al XVI-lea, devenind “Transilvaniae civitas primaria”. Studiul de față își propune prezentarea caselor de locuit din perioada Renașterii din orașul Cluj, prin analiza tipologică a acestora.*

Cuvinte cheie: *arhitectură renascentistă, Cluj, sculptură, portal, poartă carosabilă, ancadrament de fereastră, cheie de boltă*

The most important cities of Transylvania, Sibiu, Brașov, and Sighișoara, developed thriving external markets, and this ensured their development since the end of the fifteenth century. In comparison to such cities, Cluj developed slower. It was located at the junction of the main commercial routes inside Transylvania, at the intersection of the roads from Oradea and Sălaj, continuing southwards to Turda. The city's economy, mainly based on the inner market and toll taxes, only entered a phase of rapid ascension due to commerce and artisan production since the second half of the sixteenth century when it became “Transilvaniae civitas primaria”, the first city of the principality.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the city consisted of the Old Fortification, fortified since the thirteenth century, the New Fortification, surrounded with defensive walls during the fifteenth century, and three suburbs to the east, west and north, along the main commercial routes.

One can follow the city's prosperity through the formation of new groups of rich citizens, traders or guild masters; among them, goldsmiths were part of the upper social categories, providing most of the city's senate members, centumviri, and judges. Stone masons were part of the famous workshop of Cluj that became the most appreciated and employed workshop of its kind in Transylvania, involved in the erection of most princely buildings as well.

During this period, one can also note the multiplication of buildings erected by the newly enriched; foreign travellers were the first to document this phenomenon that developed in parallel to the introduction of Renaissance style in Transylvania, showing North-Italian influences intermediated by royal construction sites in Buda and different Central-European routes, through Poland, the Czech Lands, and Austria. Besides the new buildings, most existing edifices were transformed, extended, adapted to the new requirements, thus leading to hybrid solutions in both structure and main facades. Several buildings are thus known to have been extended, modified according to the new taste, but preserving their

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gothic door and window frames during the following centuries¹.

Until 1660, when Oradea was occupied by the Turks, the city of Cluj imposed a privilege typical to free towns, that required the nobility to renounce their prerogatives if they wanted to settle inside the city; the unification of land plots inside the city was also forbidden.

Analysis of Homes. Building materials and techniques

Stone and wood were the preferred building materials in early modern Cluj. Most researched edifices were built in roughly shaped stone blocks, connected with lime or sand mortar, of bright colour; buildings' corners were made of shaped blocks, while bricks were used later, especially during subsequent interventions.

Building stone was provided by the city's quarries, located on the valley of stream Nadăș, near the villages of Baciú, Suceag, Mera, and Viștea, and on the valley of river Someșul Mic, near the villages of Cluj-Mănăștur and Vlaha. Calcareous rocks and soft sandstone were extracted there and these could be easily carved (Balogh 1985, 106). The transportation of stone was nevertheless more difficult, since it had to be done in carts drawn by teams of oxen. In the case of the Tailors' Tower for example, besides the material recovered after the 1627 explosion, 893 carts of stone (pulled by teams of 6 or 8 oxen) were brought in from one of the city's quarries (Kovács 1984, 91). For this reason, stone extracted from Roman or medieval ruins was often utilized (Lówy et alii 1996, 13, 14).

A category of major significance consisted of elements of architectural decoration, made of stone. On the basis of preserved monuments and items kept in museum collections, one can know the types of such decorative elements used: door and window frames, corbels and keystones, fireplaces, pillars or supporting columns, balusters and, more rarely, inscribed commemorative slabs.

A significant number of buildings were entirely or partially made of wood, the most popular building

material in Transylvania. Though such buildings have not been preserved, due to wood's decay, sources such as Georg Hoefnagel's engraving of 1617, created on the basis of Egidius van der Rye's vedute of 1603, attest to their existence. Naturally, the existence of Fachwerk type building remains debated and the above mentioned depiction of the city of Cluj was probably adapted, like representation of other cities in the principality, to fit the image of cities in the Low Countries (Kovács 2003, 20). One can state that suburb buildings and house annexes were built of wood. Preserved sources indicate that during the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, among the *intra muros* quarters, numerous homes on Soap Streets and a few houses in the Old Fortification were entirely built of wood (Fig. 1–2).

Most buildings in the early modern city of Cluj were covered with wooden shingles, but some also with thatch or reed, thus the few edifices covered with tiles feature in that era's written sources under the specific denomination of "the house with roof tiles" (Kovács 1984, 94). The fact that on March 21st 1621 the magistrate of Cluj decided to forbid the building of thatch roofs inside the fortified centre indicates that by that time such roofs were still very frequent in that area as well, not only in the case of wooden houses but also on those made of stone (Jakab 1888, vol. II, 575; Sebestyén 1987, 147).

Since floors certainly dated to the early modern era have not been yet identified, one cannot have a clear idea on how they were built, but the passage way of the carriageable entrance to the Council House, paved with limestone plates, was probably not the only example of the sort in the architecture of Cluj (Kovács 2003a, 24; Flóra 2011, 22–27).

Plots and Ground Plans

Inside the historical centre of Cluj, two specific plotting areas can be identified: the Old Fortification preserved the characteristics of an older settlement, with small, irregular plots, while the New Fortification was plotted according to regular, long, ca. 10 meter parcels of lands (Sebestyén 1987, 145; Kovács 2003, 25)². These

¹ Except for churches, that underwent minor changes due to elevated costs needed for wider transformations, the following buildings preserved some Gothic window and door frames until the end of the nineteenth century: the Roman-Catholic parish house, Ferenc Balásfy's house on the northern side of the central square, Franz Filstich's house on the southern side of the same square, and the house that later became the residence of Unitarian priests located on the Inner Hungarian Street.

² Compared to Cluj, land plots in early modern Brașov were wider, measuring between 11 and 14 meters (only rarely 10), while around the square they were 15 meters wide. In depth, such plots generally extended over 40–50 m, sometimes reaching up to 50–60 m in length.

lots extended between the main street or square, where the main entrance was located, and some smaller, secondary street where household access took place.

The home, i.e. main building of a house, was placed on the main street; the short side of the plot was usually parallel to the street line, with the house extending along the length of the parcel, while stables or bread ovens were built in the far end (Sebestyén 1963, 17; Sebestyén 1987, 16). Edifices with simple, rectangular ground plans were typical for the first half of the sixteenth century. Such plans were taken over from Gothic architecture and they included 2 or 3 rooms aligned on the same axis. L-shaped ground plans started to appear in the third decade of the same century when the access way was vaulted and rooms built on top of it. One of the long facades opening towards the courtyard was usually addorsed to the neighbouring house, thus houses were paired and the courtyards delimited by relatively short walls built of brick or stone, ensuring wide sunny areas on each parcel (Kovács 2001, 60, 63)³. This type of parcel is best illustrated by the survey of houses on the Inner Hungarian Street (Fig. 3)⁴, but such examples can also be found around the Central Square⁵, along the Inner Mănăştur Street⁶, the Inner Middle Street⁷, and Bridge Street⁸.

Unlike the other cities of Transylvania, Cluj was not organized in neighbourhoods and thus neighbours did not aid in the erection of houses. It also lacked common walls between houses, frequent in other cities, but it had double walls instead, slightly distanced, in order to allow water to drain between the houses.

Elevation

Most early modern homes had two levels, the basement and the ground floor, except for houses around the Central Square and a few buildings on the main streets leading up to the square that had three floors, basement, ground floor, and first floor.

The first erection of upper floors generated vaulted gangways and the construction of rooms above the entrance, leading to L-shaped ground plans, with rooms organized according to two axes on the upper floor and to a single axis on the ground floor. The vaulting of access ways and building on top of them also resulted in continuous street fronts. In most cases, the access way was vaulted with archaic-type barrel vaults, with or without penetrations, but there are also numerous cases when different types of vaults were employed, marking the difference between different building stages, by houses extending towards the courtyard.

The first known case of a house with an added upper floor during the sixteenth century is that of the Wolphard-Kakas house in the Central Square, dated by the windows on the first floor of the main facade to 1534. Until the end of the sixteenth century, most edifices around the Square and the beginning of the city's main streets were given an upper floor. These can be dated according to the corbels inside the vaulted access way (the Filstich house on the southern side of the Central Square) and window frames on the first floor (Péter Bácsi's house on the northern side of the same square) (Kovács 2001, 66; Mihály 2008, 60–68).

The basements were mostly covered with barrel vaults made of unfinished stone blocks, rarer out of bricks, with penetrations along the axes of the entrances, having niches for candles or different recipients required by wine production. In most cases such niches were simple in shape, rectangular or with triangular upper parts. The only example of a niche with Renaissance moulding has been preserved in the Wolphard-Kakas house (Kovács 2003, p. 27). The only example of a pointed arch can still be seen in the Apáczai house on Woolf's Street (Kovács 2003b, 257)⁹. Most door frames inside basements ended with semicircular arches, with flat ridges. This simple and practical shape was probably used for

³ The best known example of paired houses is the row of houses on the northern side of the Inner Hungarian Street, demolished in the end of the nineteenth century. This manner of structuring houses is still preserved in several cases of buildings fully or partially transformed, as for example: houses on Memorandumului St. nos. 15–17, houses on Eroilor Boulevard nos. 17–19 and nos. 33–35, Regele Ferdinand St. nos. 11–13 and Piața Unirii nos. 11–12.

⁴ Today 21 Decembrie 1989 Boulevard. The houses were demolished in 1896 in order to make room for the Unitarian College, today entitled the János Zsigmond Unitarian College. Before the demolition, Lajos Pákei, chief architect of the city in the second half of the century realized a survey of the houses in question.

⁵ Today Piața Unirii nos. 11–12.

⁶ Today Memorandumului St. nos. 15–17.

⁷ Today Bulevardul Eroilor nos. 17–19 and nos. 33–35.

⁸ Today Regele Ferdinand St. nos. 11–13.

⁹ The house on Kogălniceanu St. no. 12 was demolished in 1974 to make room for the building of the Academy Library. Remains of three Renaissance windows were found on that occasion.

longer periods of time, without providing detailed indications on their possible production period.

Accessways

Inner stairs allowed people access to rooms on the upper floor and in some cases such staircases opened to corresponding rooms through an open gallery, the stairs being directly accessible either from the entrance corridor (the Wolphard-Kakas house, Petrus Filstich's house on the northern side of the Central Square), or at the connection point between the two wings part of the L-shaped ground plan. Though no Renaissance gallery is known from Cluj, several balusters and baluster fragments have been preserved, once supporting the parapet of Péter Bácsi's gallery in his house in the Central Square (Mihály 2008, 67; Fig. 4)¹⁰.

One could enter the basement of such houses directly from the street or square, or through small passage rooms, covered with barrel vaults, accessible through staircases placed parallel to the street line (Piața Unirii no. 5 and no. 25, Eroilor Boulevard no. 33 etc.)¹¹. In a few cases, the basement was also accessible directly from the house (the Wolphard-Kakas house and that on Matia Corvinul St. no. 3).

Vaulting systems

Most homes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had vaulted rooms on all levels, with the basement and access corridor usually covered with simple, barrel vaults, while rooms on the ground and first floors had penetration vaults, supported in several cases by stone corbels and marked by decorative keystones in the centre of the vaults. Though wooden ceilings have not been preserved in Cluj, the documentary mention of a contract for the making of such a ceiling in 1650, for Bálint Istvándi, testifies to their existence, since Istvándi's case could not have been singular in the city (Balogh 1935, 30; Sebestyén 1987, 21, 147)¹².

Facade

Since in Transylvania Renaissance architecture never took over elements of vertical articulation

of facades through pilaster strips, half columns, and pillars, in the case of the city of Cluj simple, sober facades were also typical, only given rhythm through door and window frames (Kovács 1984, 112–113; Sebestyén 1987, 23).¹³ The main facades were determined by full, plastered masonry, dominated by frames usually placed slightly asymmetrical (the Wolphard-Kakas house, Fig. 5, Péter Bácsi's house etc.), or even irregularly (the Basta house).

In the case of main facades from Cluj, one notes a type consisting of three axes on both levels, the ground floor dominated by the carriageable gate, placed on one of the side axes, and two windows, while the upper floor was marked by three windows (the Wolphard-Kakas House, the Rósás and Püspöky house).

A second type of facade is articulated by a row of vaulted galleries on the ground floor, opened towards the street and extending in front of the line of other facades. The only example from Cluj was located on the northern side of the Central Square and consisted of two addorsed houses, with identically articulated facades and two windows each on the upper floor facing the square. The fact that these houses are mentioned in seventeenth-century sources as "lábas ház" (the house with feet) indicates they were the only of their kind in the entire city (Fig. 6) (Sebestyén 1963, 19, 90; Sebestyén 1987, 19; Segesvári 1990, 157–218)¹⁴.

The third type of facade continued Gothic tradition, since it ended up with a gable. Gable roofs, with their ridge parallel to the street, allowed water to collect between roofs from

¹³ Though no Renaissance main façade was preserved intact, they can be reconstructed on the basis of the preserved door and window frames and of visual sources such as archive photographs, paintings, and engravings.

¹⁴ In Cluj, houses with arcades only feature in documents since the seventeenth century. Such houses have been preserved in Sibiu and Braşov, and were rather frequent at that time in the two cities; others can still be seen in Bistriţa, around the central square, the so-called "sugălete houses." The numerous houses with arcades around the central squares of Braşov, Sibiu, and Bistriţa, lacking carriageable access ways, were meant to ensure areas for merchants. In this case, the absence of carriageable access ways and corridors was due to the narrow plots on which the houses were built. In comparison to such cities, the division of land into plots inside the New Fortification of Cluj was of later date, and this allowed for wider plots, permitting in most houses, the erection of carriageable access ways, with the exception of the two mentioned houses.

¹⁰ The balusters are preserved in the lapidary of the National History Museum of Transylvania in Cluj.

¹¹ These entrances were blocked in during the town planning systematization at the beginning of the nineteenth century (B. Nagy 1977, pp. 126–129).

¹² The ceiling was contracted for the significant sum of 20 florins.

where it was evacuated through protruding gutters (Fig. 7) (Sebestyén 1987, 22). Though stepped gables are not attested in Cluj, Georg Houfnagel's engraving of 1617 depicts such a row of houses probably located on the southern side of the Inner Hungarian Street (Fig. 8). Water infiltrations probably lead to the building of the first gable roofs with their ridge parallel to the street, with water being evacuated directly to the street or courtyard (Segesvári 1990, 23, 24).

Some facades were dominated by a certain type of roof framing, opened towards the street (the two merchants' houses on the northern side of the central square, Egyed Borbély's¹⁵ and Péter Bácsi's houses¹⁶, the house owned by Jakab Méhffy (Kelemen 1982, 122.)¹⁷, the Bogner-Gellyén house (Kovács 2007, 201)¹⁸. The ridge of such roofs was perpendicular to the main facade, protruding from the latter's level, and supported by a row of wooden corbels. Such roof framing was designed as to allow for various merchandize to be elevated by pulleys directly to the attic (Fig. 9) (Sebestyén 1963, 21; Sebestyén 1987, 20; Kovács 2003, 26)¹⁹.

French traveller Pierre Lescaplier was the first to record facades painted in lively colours in Cluj, writing in 1574 that the city was "toutte peinte par les rues"²⁰. Facades were either monochrome or painted in two colours, imitating rustic-work facades, but they could also be polychrome, painted in strong colours (Kovács 2007, 201–202)²¹.

¹⁵ Specialized works call it the Rosás house.

¹⁶ Known as the Püspöky house, after the name of its owner during the twentieth century.

¹⁷ The house in which king Mathias Corvinus was born.

¹⁸ In 1830 Lajos Kelemen mentioned that the Méhffy house still had an open roof frame.

¹⁹ Though such roofs were not preserved, one can recreated them on the basis of an oil painting created in 1849 by István Sárdi, for the owner of one of the houses, János Schütz, collector and important clerk of the city. The painting is preserved in the collection of the National History Museum of Transylvania. The only preserved roof of this type covers the house on Schanzgasse St. no. 4 in Sighișoara.

²⁰ According to Lescaplier's description, in Brașov and Sibiu "houses were painted on the outside". About Sebeș the traveler only mentioned the fact that it resembled Sibiu, while in Cluj all streets are said to be lively painted (Sebestyén 1987, 23).

²¹ The only painted facade in Transylvania can be connected to the Haller house in Sibiu. During its restoration in recent years, several fragments of sitting lions painted above the windows on the first floor were

Facades towards the courtyard were more modest, articulated by Renaissance window frames, and sometimes including open walking arcades on the first floor (the Püspöky house) (Sebestyén 1963, 22, 90; Balogh 1935, 24; Debreczeni 1957, 242)²².

Room function

On the basis of written sources, inventories and property division acts, one can recreate room function inside homes. Shops were for certain frequently among the first rooms of the ground floor facing the street, but there might have been also storage rooms, the staircase room leading to the first floor – probably with a single flight of stairs –, and servants' rooms ordered along the building's long axis. The upper floor was restricted to its owners, usually including a representative room towards the street (called *palota* in reserved documents) and a smaller room, usually added later on top of the entrance corridor, followed by the kitchen and the bedrooms. One must note that the kitchen was placed at the centre of the house, most often accessed directly from the staircase leading upstairs, such as inside the Wolphard-Kakas house (Sebestyén 1963, 18; Sebestyén 1987, 18, 19, 20) and Petrus Filstich's house on the northern side of Unirii Square (Mihály 2003, 349–365)²³. The latrine was usually located on the first floor, in one of the rooms facing the courtyard (Petrus Filstich's house) (Archive of the Wass de Țaga family, loc. cit., 3; Sebestyén 1987, 20). I believe that Máté Vicei's house that included a bathroom (*feredő házacska*) was an isolated case, even among the city's richest citizens (Sebestyén 1987, 20).

uncovered. In this case, the zoomorphic figures certainly make reference to the coat of arms of the Hallers.

²² Several open arcades were preserved in Sibiu. The one in Göllner house was built of stone, had overlapping vaulted arcades supported by polygonal pilasters, resembling the preserved gallery on the courtyard facade of the Schuller house in Mediaș. Though such galleries were not preserved in Cluj, documents attest to how frequent they were. Contradicting Jolán Balogh, in the inventory of monuments from Cluj he edited in 1957 László Debreczeni argued that there is no trace in Cluj to attest galleries before the Baroque period.

²³ National Archives, Cluj County Branch, Archive of the Wass de Țaga Family, box 12., fasc. LXIII., no. 1599, document of property division after the death of István Ébeni, the previous owner, preserved in a 1718 copy.

During the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, some houses in the Central Square also fulfilled special functions at times, requiring a lot of effort from their owners. The frequent princely visits to the city required a temporary princely residence in Cluj as well, and in the absence of proper buildings, the richest inhabitants were forced to receive the princes and their retinue in their homes. Initially, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, princes were accommodated by diplomat István Kakas in the rooms of his home facing the square; the owners of the neighbouring house, towards the south, were forbidden to build an upper floor in order not to block the light of the princely residence (Szádeczky 1897, 22–23; Sebestyén 1987, 146)²⁴. The residence was probably enlarged southwards in the beginning of the seventeenth century, incorporating the rooms facing the square of two more houses, thus in 1613, when Gabriel Bethlen was elected prince, the new princely residence was identified in that era's records as connected to three houses: the Kakas house, the home of goldsmith Máté Vicei²⁵, and that of centumvir Franciscus Zeller²⁶. Unifying the rooms in question and creating a princely apartment isolated from areas used by the owners was probably ensured by opening a row of doors in the blind walls of the three houses' rooms facing the Square. For sure, the rooms of the princely residence were still being fitted out during Gabriel Bethlen's final reigning years, since on April 26th 1626, Cluj potters produced several stoves made of both glazed and unglazed (so-called "peasant") tiles²⁷. A door post and an entire door made of fir tree, painted green, were also produced in the same period²⁸.

²⁴ The Kakas house once stood on the present spot of the Rhédey palace (today Piața Libertății no. 9.). The best known event related to the house's history thus became the beheading of pro-Turkish nobles in the Square on August 31st 1594, when prince Sigismund Báthory witnessed the event from one of the windows of the Kakas house.

²⁵ Vicei was a goldsmith and a trader, and starting with 1601 he was one of the city's centumviri and senators.

²⁶ The Vicei and Zeller houses were located on the land plot of the Jósika palace. During the first years of the nineteenth century János Jósika unified and transformed the two buildings (today Piața Libertății no. 10.).

²⁷ National Hungarian Archives, City Fund R 314 (Város iratgyűjtemény), 2 / II / II / doc. 21.

²⁸ Ibidem, doc. no. 22.

Architectural Decoration

As noted in the chapters above, facades of buildings had no other artistic decoration except for door and window frames.

The simplest type of carriageable gate ends in a semicircular shape and has flat (Piața Unirii no. 18.) or moulded edges, decorated in the central axis with a Renaissance shield that contained relief inscriptions of the building year and maybe the owner's monogram (Memorandumului St. no. 15. and Roosevelt St. no. 2). Another type of carriageable gate consists of a semicircular opening framed by pilasters with grooves supporting an entablature including an architrave, an inscribed frieze, and a moulded cornice (Péter Bácsi's house in Piața Unirii no. 21, Balázs Bányai Henczel's house on Regele Ferdinand St., Figs. 10–11).

The first preserved Renaissance door frame from Cluj is part of Bernardus Piktör's house pedestrian portal on Regele Ferdinand St., made in 1514²⁹. The portal has a simple structure, with continuous moulding, and architrave marked by an inscription with ligatures engraved on a stylized *tabula ansata*, and two volutes at each end of the architrave. The owner's name and construction year are inscribed in the fields below each volute, in Roman digits placed in the same order as Arab digits (Fig. 12).

The earliest type of Renaissance window frame has two openings, continuous in-turned moulding, an inscribed frieze, and a moulded cornice. All such frames are strongly connected to the first building stages of the Wolphard–Kakas house, since they originally stood on the building's main facade; the first two frames were made in 1534 for parish priest Adrianus Wolphard³⁰, while the third was made in 1536 for primary judge Stephanus Wolphard (Fig. 13)³¹.

It seems probable that this early type lead to the development of a similar, simplified variant that became the most frequent type of architectural frame in the second half of the sixteenth century. It consisted of door and window frames with two or three openings, in-turned continuous moulding, decorated with a row of dentils and crowned with a moulded cornice (the house on Eroilor

²⁹ Only the portal's lintel was preserved (in the lapidary of the National History Museum of Transylvania, inv. no. F 2749, henceforward MNIT).

³⁰ MNIT, inv. no. F 2766 and F 2774.

³¹ MNIT, inv. no. F 2767.

Boulevard no. 13³², the former Basta house in Muzeului Square³³, Lőrinc Filstich's house in Piața Unirii no. 5³⁴, the former München house in Piața Unirii no. 21³⁵, Stephen Schorser's former house on 22 Decembrie 1989 Boulevard³⁶, Lucas Rodner's house on Matia Corvin St. no. 3³⁷, the former Apáczai house on Kogălniceanu St. no. 12 (Kovács 2003, 255–26), and the house on Eroilor Boulevard no. 27 (Fig. 14)³⁸.

The classical type of Renaissance frame spread in the same time as the above mentioned type. The first had posts decorated with pilasters or half-columns and an entablature consisting of a decorated architrave, an inscribed frieze, and a moulded cornice (Wolphard–Kakas house in Unirii square no. 31³⁹, and the former Henczel house on Regele Ferdinand St. no. 22 (Fig. 15–16)⁴⁰.) There are certainly numerous examples of frames with hybrid compositions, entablature only consisting of a frieze, an architrave, or even some types with frieze decorated with triglyphs combined with an inscription. Most numerous are frames with architrave decorated with the owner's monogram, triglyphs, acanthus leaves (the Bogner–Gellyén house⁴¹, Péter Bácsi's house⁴², the

Wolphard–Kakas house⁴³, the former Basta house⁴⁴, as well as the houses in Piața Unirii no. 4⁴⁵ and no. 18⁴⁶.) A single portal with entablature only consisting of an inscribed frieze has been preserved (on Memorandumului St. no. 3)⁴⁷, and two portals with entablature consisting of a frieze decorated with one row of triglyphs combined with an inscription (the Henczel house, Fig. 17–18)⁴⁸.

A new type of architectural frame, crowned by a broken pediment, was introduced in the end of the sixteenth century. The first examples are two frames belonging to the last building stage of the Wolphard–Kakas house, completed for István Kakas between 1590 and 1592. The type spread in the city in the first half of the seventeenth century, the final dated example having been made in 1643 (Lőrinc Filstich's house⁴⁹, the Bogner house⁵⁰, the Hensler house⁵¹, the house on Regele Ferdinand St. no. 17⁵², and the house in Piața Unirii no. 18⁵³, Fig. 20) (Mihály 2011, 89)⁵⁴.

The type of frame surmounted by an angular pediment is only represented by one window

³² The door's lintel was decorated with the PS monogram (MNIT, inv. no. F 2777).

³³ Windows on the main facade and a pedestrian portal (MNIT, inv. nos. F 2685, F 2702 and F 2757).

³⁴ The built-in door inside the gate corridor, dated 1572, lintels from two frames decorated with the CKD monogram inside the house's courtyard and in the lapidary of the MNIT (inv. no. F 2779).

³⁵ Portal of the München house, decorated with the monogram of the München family (MNIT, inv. no. F 2824).

³⁶ The lintel of the three-part window, decorated with the S[tephen] S[chorser] monogram, dated 1599 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2780).

³⁷ Fragments of a three-part window decorated with the LR monogram, later lost, and the lintel of the three-part window bearing the incised inscription LVCAS RODNER (MNIT, inv. no. F 2628).

³⁸ Built-in door inside the gate corridor.

³⁹ The portal decorated with Adrian Wolphard's coat of arms made in 1541 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2775) and two portals decorated with Stephanus Wolphard's coat of arms made in 1579 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2772), and 1581 respectively (MNIT, inv. no. F 2762).

⁴⁰ The portal decorated with the H monogram made in 1553 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2798) and two portals decorated with the HBR monogram dated 1585 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2821) and 1586 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2819).

⁴¹ The two different portals of 1569 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2746 and F 2750), and a simpler portal decorated with a row of triglyphs alternating with rosettes (MNIT, inv. no. F 2760).

⁴² The three windows on the upper floor of the main facade, of which two have been preserved (MNIT, inv. no. F 2776, F 2783). The windows consist of posts with grooves decorated with half a rosette on both upper and lower parts, architrave decorated with a row of stylized triglyphs and a shield in the central axis and a moulded cornice.

⁴³ The first two windows of the courtyard wing ordered by Stephanus Wolphard between 1570 and 1580, decorated almost identically as the windows of the Bácsi house.

⁴⁴ Portal decorated with a row of triglyphs and metopes (MNIT, inv. no. F 2805).

⁴⁵ The portal is decorated with a row of triglyphs alternating with acanthus leaves.

⁴⁶ Portal decorated with a row of triglyphs and metopes.

⁴⁷ It is one of the very few frames with Hungarian inscriptions, made in 1585 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2751).

⁴⁸ One window dated 1584 and a door made in 1586.

⁴⁹ Only the door's lintel has been preserved, above the entrance to the basement.

⁵⁰ Just one fragment of the frame's architrave has been preserved, i.e. the stone block in the central axis, decorated with the Bogner coat of arms and year 1623 (MNIT, inv. no. F 2699).

⁵¹ Portal decorated with the HB monogram (MNIT, inv. no. F 2818).

⁵² The built-in portal inside the carriageable gate corridor, made in 1643.

⁵³ Only the contour of the portal has been preserved, while its moulding and decoration were destroyed during the house's renovation.

⁵⁴ The closest analogy for this type of portal can be found in Sibiu, in the Reissenberger house's courtyard.

frame probably from the Hensler or Henczel houses on Bridge Street and no further analogies are known from Cluj (Fig. 19)⁵⁵ (Mihály 2011, 94).

In Cluj, corbels had extremely varied shapes, decorated with stepped moulding (Piața Unirii nos. 5, 22 and 32, Figs. 23–24)⁵⁶, Renaissance shields, Figurative depictions such as zodiac symbols or Saturn's relief (Universității St.), or different types of stylized vegetal motifs (Figs. 25–26).

The persistence of purely decorative keystones, placed in the centre of the vault, was typical to sixteenth-seventeenth century domestic architecture in Cluj. The earliest type of Renaissance keystone, typical to the second half of the sixteenth century, seems to be small and simple, in the shape of a Renaissance shield, with the relief depiction of basic data about the construction: the owner's coat of arms and monogram, maybe also the year of completion (Fig. 27)⁵⁷. Such keystones gained multiple functions during the final years of the sixteenth century and the first years of the subsequent century, preserving these functions throughout the seventeenth century. Besides their purely decorative role, such keystones also provided a means for fixing the lamp to the ceiling, through a circular orifice carved inside the keystone. During the first half of the seventeenth century, such keystones were given new shape, usually depicting the owner's coat of arms surrounded by a circular or oval laurel wreath (Fig. 28)⁵⁸. A similar type is preserved in judge Gáspár Kovács's house on the Inner Hungarian street in the first rooms on the ground floor flanking the gate corridor. In both rooms, the keystones are made of rectangular slabs decorated with the joined coats of arms of the owner couple (Mihály 2004, 211–277).

⁵⁵ The frame is now placed on the facade of the Pákei villa.

⁵⁶ MNIT, inv. nos. F 2768, F 354F 2763, F 2764, F 2765.

⁵⁷ The Münich, Bogner–Gellyén, and Wolphard–Kakas houses, the latter preserved by the MNIT, inv. no. F 2770.

⁵⁸ The keystone decorated with the SK monogram (1610), Iohanes Raw's monogram (1623, MNIT, inv. no. F 2630), and [...] Andras's name and coat of arms, preserved in fragments (1644), and that of the Balázs–Jánosi family on a seventeenth-century item that was later readapted in the beginning of the nineteenth (1623, MNIT, inv. no. F 2692).

Interiors

The way interiors looked like depended on the relatively low level of the vaults. The most representative rooms were decorated with frames or other architectural details sculpted in stone, such as corbels, keystones, and fireplaces.

As for the heating system of houses in Cluj, some used stoves composed of various types of tiles, others employed fireplaces, of which two specific types have been preserved: trapeze ones, adapted to the shape of the chimney, supported by corbels (the two fireplaces decorated with Stephanus Wolphard's coat of arms and monogram (Fig. 21)⁵⁹) and niche-type fireplaces, built in the thickness of the walls (decorated with rows of rosettes⁶⁰ and the one made in 1585, Fig. 22), both made of limestone from Baci. The fact that all preserved fireplaces were used inside the Wolphard–Kakas house does not allow for a more detailed analysis of the other existing types. Stoves were probably placed on stone feet (the Apáczai house, Kovács 2001, 259). Different types of stove tiles were usually employed in the same house; simple, unglazed "peasant" tiles were included in stoves on the ground floor and rooms used by servants, while tiles of better quality, glazed and richly decorated, were to be found in the representative rooms. The only relevant example of the seventeenth century is the princely residence in the Central Square, the one in the Zeller house, where in 1626, during the renovation of certain rooms, new stoves were built, composed of both glazed and unglazed tiles (Urban Series, Cluj, R 314). Until the beginning of the seventeenth century stove tiles used in Cluj were produced by local workshops that also covered demand outside the city, for princely buildings, but in the first decades of the seventeenth century local products were completed by a significant number of tiles produced in the Haban centres. A number of fragmentarily preserved polychrome stove tiles have been discovered during various archaeological excavations inside the city centre, covered with green, white, blue, and brown glazes, decorated with the typical seventeenth-century "wallpaper" motif, with acanthus leaves, palmettos, network of arches, humans masks, and winged angels (Marcu–Istrate 2004, 187–202).

The furniture of living chambers consisted of different types of chests, tables, chairs, benches,

⁵⁹ MNIT, inv. nos. F 2759, F 2794.

⁶⁰ MNIT, inv. no. F 2801 and the National History Museum of Romania.

and beds (Jakó 1957, 376–382; Sebestyén 19863, 377–384).

Tapestries were frequently employed in the decoration of living chambers; they were also used in poorer houses, while decorative carpets were rarer and restricted to a smaller social group. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, tapestries were rare, imported merchandize, but local production gradually took shape. It seems that tapestries in lively colours were preferred. That era's inventories suggest that such items were decorated with non-figural representations, while carpets were used to decorated walls, tables, benches, but also window niches (Jakó 1957, 369–374)⁶¹.

Paintings and bas-reliefs were often mentioned in property division documents. They illustrated religious and mythological subjects and paintings were usually evaluated on the basis of their material. Engravings were much more popular in Cluj than oil paintings (Jakó 1957, 374–376; Sebestyén 1963, 23; Sebestyén 1987, 25). The inventory of the Vicei house for example informs us that the walls of this valuable building were decorated with numerous oil paintings depicting apostles, certain saints, and allegorical figures of Roman emperors (Matthew the evangelist, apostles Matthias, Simon, Bartholomew, and Philip, Saint Susana, Caritas, and emperors Titus Vespasian, Maximilian, Nero, Octavian Augustus, Domitian, and Tiberius) (Jakó 1957, 374–376; Kovács Kiss 2011, 83).

Inner lightning was ensured by chandeliers (Sebestyén 1987, 25) hanging on iron rings

attached to the vault (the zodiac room inside the Wolphard–Kakas house and in the Rósás house), or, since the seventeenth century, affixed in the keystones in the middle of the vaults.

Though a public bath functioned on the Inner Middle street (Flóra 2010, 22–27), bathrooms began to be used in houses in the end of the sixteenth century, together with mirrors, wash-bowls that had been used earlier, for hand washing, and bath tubs (Jakó 1957, 388–389; Sebestyén 1987, 25, 147).

The present study aimed at presenting homes inside the fortified centre of Cluj, making only a few references to houses in the suburbs. The difference between such buildings was mainly reflected by their price, varying during the seventeenth century between 3200 florins, in the case of the Wolphard–Kakas house, and 42 florins, the value of a simple suburb house (Jakó 1957, 368).

Nevertheless, the new Renaissance style certainly made its way to the poorest houses located “extra muros” (Jakó 1957, 368; Sebestyén 1987, 26), since, for example, some wooden buildings were heated with richly decorated glazed tile stoves⁶². The fact that most poor houses were built out of perishable materials prevents further analysis, but I believe through their structure and degree of comfort they provided, they rather resembled rural architecture and are irrelevant to the analysis of the architecture of Renaissance urban houses in Cluj.

⁶¹ The fact that tapestries were sold in Cluj by the meter indicates they could not have been decorated with compact or figural representations, but rather purely decorative motifs.

⁶² In the lack of systematic or at least rescue excavations in this area, one can only draw some conclusions based on stray finds, among which stove tiles are the best preserved.

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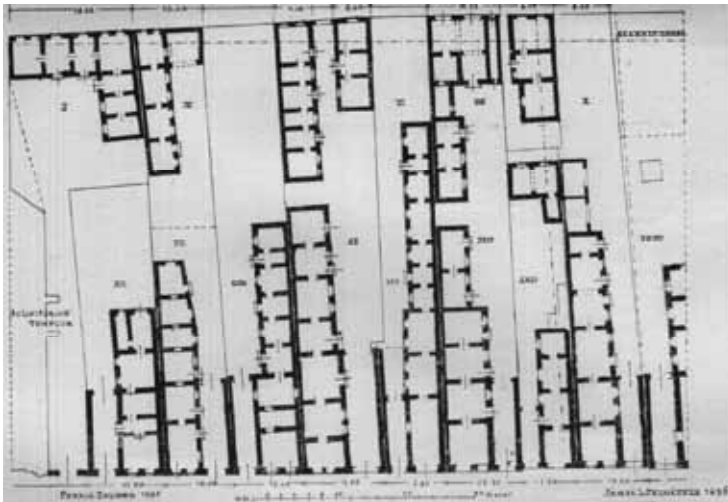
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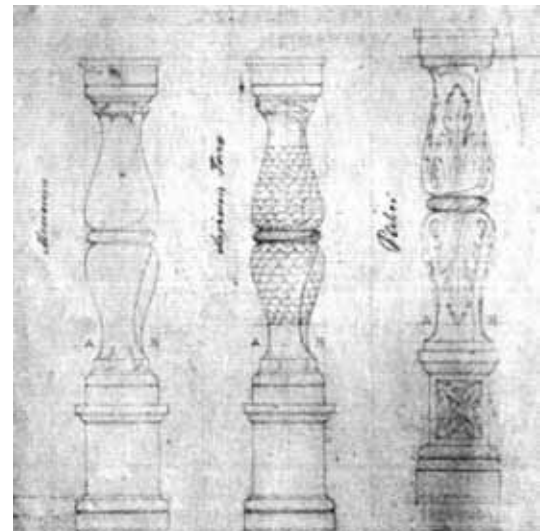
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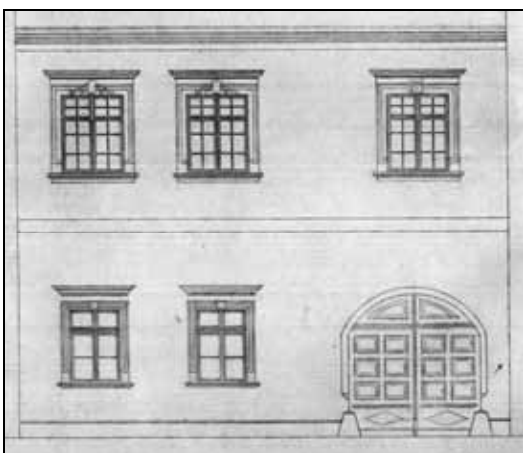
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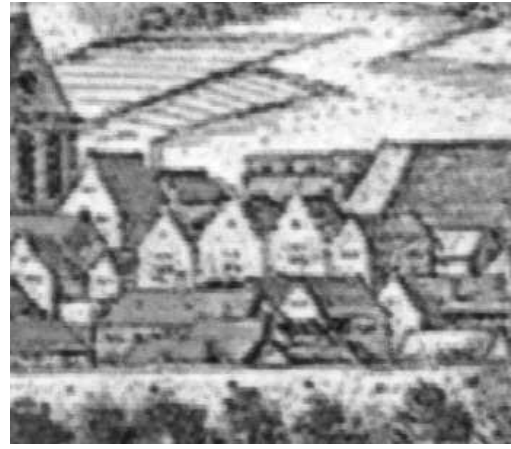
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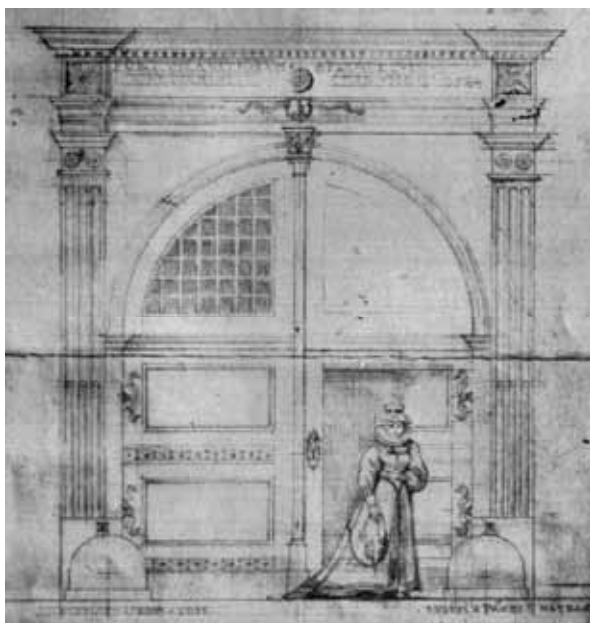
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PERFORMING ARTS IN 17TH CENTURY SPAIN: A REFLECTION UPON COMMERCIAL THEATRE AND PUBLIC TASTE

Oana Andreia SÂMBRIAN*

Abstract: *Spanish Golden Age theatre has always been closely related to day to day life, as well as to various aspects such as censorship, public taste, norms and prejudices. In 1609, Lope de Vega stated the new way of writing dramas through his New Art of Writing Plays. Our paper aims to point out the main characteristics and expectations on the 17th century Spanish public that was going to react in a nasty way if these expectations were to be frustrated.*

Keywords: *Spain, Golden Age theatre, public, commercial theatre*

Rezumat: *Teatrul spaniol al Secolului de Aur s-a dezvoltat în permanență în strânsă legătură cu viața de zi cu zi, precum și cu diversele ei aspecte: cenzura, gustul publicului, norme și prejudecăți. În 1609, Lope de Vega fixase regulile noii forme de a scrie teatru în Arta nouă de a scrie piese în zilele noastre. Lucrarea noastră dorește să aducă în prim plan principalele caracteristici și așteptări ale publicului spaniol de secol XVII, reacțiile sale în fața teatrului, făcând apel la diverse mărturii și documente de epocă.*

Cuvinte cheie: *Spania, teatrul Secolului de Aur, public, teatru comercial*

Baroque Spain and the *Comedia nueva*: towards a Commercial Theatre

Theatre is perhaps one of the best by-products of the so called Spanish Golden Age, which usually includes both Renaissance and Baroque artistic and literary movements. Ever since the Middle Ages had ended, Spanish theatre had been striving to come up with a different formula, in order to rise to the public's expectations. When reflecting upon the Golden Age we should never forget that theatre represented the major and most common form of entertainment, as most people were illiterate. Hence, the importance of theatre was huge, as different messages could be transmitted by the play's political power, putting pressure on the public opinion. Plays were never written in order to be published, but performed and so, "their consumption belonged to the realm of spectacle, and only afterwards to that of literature" (Arellano 1995, 61). And if we listen to the voice of those times embodied by Alonso López Pinciano (1547–1627), we will realize that people were aware that "theatre

teaches us many things that we ignore and, as it does it in a loud voice, it is more impressive than if we read it" (López Pinciano 2008, 413).

We can never fully understand Spanish theatre or any other kind of theatre without having some idea of the society that created it. Because, in the end, theatre represents nothing else but a society's thoughts, opinions, ideas and images that come together in order to create a cultural product. And theatre is most definitely one of them.

All in all, there are three main aspects that have to be considered when analysing Spanish Golden Age drama: the social and political background, the audience (the evolution of its tastes) and the theatrical space.

Seventeenth century Spain was an age dominated by conflict, violence and contrasts. Political and religious wars like the ones against Holland, France, Italy, the 30 year War (1618–1648), the issues in the New World, the social discontentment, the increasing taxes, the prime minister (a person closely related to the king, with whom the latter basically shared power), the increasing domestic violence, prostitution and robbery were all reflected in contemporary theatre.

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The *comedia nueva* was one of the creations that best defined the Baroque spirit, characterized by CONTRAST, and the permanent conflict of reality and illusion. Initiated by Lope de Vega through his *New Art of Writing Plays* (1609) where Lope shared some of his thoughts and ideas regarding drama techniques, it was clear that pleasing the audience was one of the main functions of theatre, apart from the moral and ethical purposes that were derived from Medieval plays: “for since it is the mob that pays, it’s right/ to act the fool to give those fools delight” (vv. 47–48). And as the mob was the one who paid, it was necessary for the play to stage its world, necessities, worries and joys: its whole universe in a drop of dramatic action.

The element of novelty introduced by Lope’s poetics aimed at a different category of public: the public of the *corrales*, the first buildings dedicated to Spanish theatre. Before the appearance of the *corral*, plays used to be represented in the backyard of a house or at the inns. But by the end of the sixteenth century, the *corrales* appeared, upgrading the play and the performance. Because of its architecture and structure, the *corral* was similar to the Elizabethan theatre: the stage was situated at one side of the yard. In front of the stage, there was the yard and at the end of it you could see the so called *mosqueteros*, a group of poor men who showed their disapproval of the play or of the actor’s performance in a loud and violent way, shouting and whistling. According to Caramuel, their name derived from the noise they made, similar to the one made by soldiers with their musket (Deleito y Piñuela 1988, 182). While Deleito y Piñuela mentions another possibility, which is that they were never seen and were like a military detachment (Deleito y Piñuela 1988, 182), Quiñones de Benavente used to call them *Spanish infantry* (Deleito y Piñuela 1988, 182).

The balconies and windows of the adjoining houses formed the *apostentos*, where both noblemen and women watched the performance. In the *cazuela*, a box in front of the stage, the middle class women were seated. On top of the *cazuela*, in another box, were the mayor and town councilors.

Because of this superposition of levels, most of the poor public had serious troubles seeing the play. Therefore, the Spanish drama was full of sounds and music that would introduce the main sequences to the audience despite their possibility of actually seeing the drama. We could very well affirm then that the seventeenth century public was more an “acoustic” generation than a “visual” one.

The public of the *corral* was, hence, extremely varied, as Pablo Jauralde shows in one of his studies

where he recalls some of the main theories on the audience of the *comedia nueva*. Subsequently, there seem to coexist two different theories: that performances were usually popular shows and that the plays united aristocracy and the poor (Jauralde 1995, 362).

Due to the variety of the audience, the Spanish play included two different levels of action: a primary one, easily detected by the illiterate public, normally represented by a love story, a military conflict, a spectacular element or divine intervention, a masked character, the last two having the purpose of keeping the public interested and intrigued with the play – Lope stated that it was recommendable to keep the public entertained throughout the play and only reveal the key elements, like the true identity of a character, just before the end of the plot – and a more profound one, for intellectuals, which could take the shape of a philosophical quest, a moral purpose, a debate of ideas.

The play was subsequently, and as stated at the beginning, a mixture of contrasts, just as the society that led to its creation. Lope affirmed that the play had to be **verisimilar**, an idea that had at first been developed by Aristotle through his concepts of *mimesis* and *imitatio*.

The *comedia nueva* had to pass the test of two very different kinds of censor: the one made by the defenders of the classic Aristotelic drama and the one of the Catholic Church that used to think that theatre altered the human spirit. López Pinciano was of the opinion that it was necessary for a commissary to see the plays before they were performed in public places, as sometimes the comedians, in order to entertain, used lascivious and dishonest movements and words (López Pinciano 2008, 419).

Fray José claimed: “How is it even possible for God to be pleased by the fact that during the most important religious sacrificial feasts, and not one using animal flesh and blood but God’s sacred flesh and blood, these impure and tarnished comedians dare come to celebrate it?”¹ (Cotarelo y Mori 1904, 433). One of the priests’ biggest oppositions was determined by the actors’ immoral conduct based on the embodiment of negative characters on stage, that could have a negative impact on the actor’s personal life, according to the clergymen. Anyway, the strong connection between charity and Spanish

¹ “¿Cómo (a Dios) le será agradable que en la fiesta mayor de los sacrificios que contiene, no carne y sangre de animales, sino la purísima carne y sangre del mismo Dios, concurren a celebrarla personas tan impuras y manchadas como son de ordinario los comediantes?”

theatre, being well known that most of the money made from the performance was afterwards donated to hospitals, as well as Aristotle's classic concept of catharsis that could be achieved by releasing both positive and negative emotions through the stage, made theatre, and especially the one played in the *corrales*, survive.

All in all, this new comedy passed the most important test of all: the one of its audience. Although no art is fully perfect. That is why, apart from the favourable reaction of the audience, the companies had to face from time to time the fury and the violent reaction on the public's part which didn't approve of the staging of the text, and got bored or hated the actors' performance. These negative reactions have been recorded by many of the contemporary dramatic texts that we are going to focus on in the next lines.

Francisco Bances Candamo (1662–1704), for example, was against popular theatre and the adaptation to the taste of the audience, affirming in *Theatro de los theatros de los passados y presentes siglos* that the venal writers "(...) received laws from the unpolished taste of the audience, adapting to it in order to serve their own interest, as well as the one of the landlords and directors of theatre companies. Is it possible then to avoid mistakes when everything you ever seek is to please those people whose applauses are determined by the coincidence of their whim, instead of the discretion of their reason?"² (Bances Candamo 1970, 52). Bances went on writing that when asking Pope John XXIII about the most distant thing from reality, the latter replied "the opinion of the mob" (Bances Candamo 1970, 81). Moreover, Bances justified the lack of respect of the Spanish comedians because they addressed "the will of the ear" (Bances Candamo 1970, 79).

About Theatre Companies and Writings on Theatre

Theatre companies represented the vertebra of Golden Age theatre (Oehrlein 1993, 21), as they staged the three main categories of dramas: popular theatre (represented at the *corrales*), court theatre and religious theatre (played during the festivities of the *Corpus*) (Oehrlein 1993, 17). Actors trained

themselves daily and they were the persons who most wanted to please the others with their job³, Juan de Zabaleta said, adding that "the day when they premiere they would give anything for the performance to turn out fine [...] One day, when there was very little public, I heard them talking (the actors, n.n.), while I was in the dressing room, saying that those were the most dangerous days, as they should not let the sadness of loneliness weaken their voice because the ones that had come to attend the play were not responsible for the ones that had not come, and without thinking that they would work with no profit, they gave it all in order to fully entertain the few people that were present".

The actor's routine was described by Agustín de Rojas in his *Viaje entretenido*:

But these performers,
before even God wakes up,
writing and studying
from five to nine,
and from nine to twelve,
are always rehearsing.
And they wish to rest,
they are called by the president,
the listeners, the mayors,
the attorneys, the regents,
and they serve them all,
no matter the hour⁴. (Rojas 1972, 289–290)

³ "Los comediantes son la gente que más desea agradar con su oficio [...]. Tanta es la prolijidad con que ensayan una comedia que es tormenta de muchos días ensayarla. El día que la estrenan diera cualquiera de ellos de muy buena gana la comida de un año por parecer bien aquel día [...] Con tan grande extremo procuran cumplir con las obligaciones de la representación por tener a todos contentos, que estando yo en el vestuario algunos días que había muy poca gente, les oía decirse unos a otros que aquellos son los días de representar con mucho cuidado, por no dar lugar a que la tristeza de la soledad les enflaquezca el aliento, y porque los que están allí no tienen la culpa de que no hayan venido más, y sin atender a que trabajan sin aprovechamiento, se hacen pedazos por entretener mucho a los pocos que entretienen" (Juan de Zabaleta, *Obras históricas, políticas, filosóficas y morales*, en Madrid: por Antonio González de Reyes, 1692, p. 298).

⁴ Pero estos representantes,
antes que Dios amanece,
escribiendo y estudiando
desde las cinco a las nueve,
y de las nueve a las doce
se están ensayando siempre;
comen, vanse a la comedia
y salen de allí a las siete.
Y cuando han de descansar
los llaman el presidente,
los oidores, los alcaldes,

² "(...) haciendo estos ignorantes escritores vennaes sus ingenios, recivan leies del bárbaro gusto del Pueblo, ajustándose a él por el maior interés suio, y de los Arrendadores o Autores. ¿Qué errores no cometerá quien va sólo a agradar a hombres cuio aplauso se manda por la casualidad de su antojo, y no por la discreción de su razón?"

So, which were the qualities that these working performers had to achieve and to exhibit in order to please the public? If we look at *Pedro de Urdemalas* by Miguel de Cervantes, we embrace the author's opinion that the actors had to be as follows:

He has to recite in order,
and with such skill and reason,
that he transforms himself into the figure
that does everything everywhere.
He has to give value
to the verses with his expert tongue,
and revive the dead fable.
He has to take out with fear
the tears from smiles
and make them return immediately
once more with sad tears,
He has to make for the face
he shows is turned upon him by
every listener, and be excellent
if the speaker does it⁵.

Anyway, the Baroque play didn't only include the actor, but also the stage machinery, used in order to reach those "spectacular" elements that the Baroque public was said to have loved so much. According to Antonio Tordera (Tordera 1989, 137), when referring to "el gusto de representación" ("the taste of performance"), Calderón de la Barca didn't have in mind pleasing the public, but reflecting upon the staging of the play. In the end, Calderón also appeals to the taste of the public, especially to the connection between audience and stage machinery, which used to produce "admiratio" and pleasure and, as the spectacular element or transformation increased, so did the pleasure of the public (Tordera 1989, 139). According to Aubrun, the ostentation

consisted more in what you could see rather than in what you could hear (qtd. in Tordera 1989, 139).

The stage and its audience were connected through what Oehrlein (1989, 28) called the "comunidad emocional" ("emotional community"). In order to support his affirmation, Oehrlein gave the example of *Lo fingido verdadero* by Lope de Vega, where one of the characters claimed that:

Imitating means being a comedian;

(...) and so if the comedian does not feel
the flames of love, it is impossible
for him, almighty lord, to represent them;
an absence, jealousy, an insult,
(...) but he will not express them if he does not feel
it⁶.

By playing with reality, the actor puts the audience under constant emotional pressure. Also, the actor could represent on stage individuals from different social classes that went completely against the rigorous rules of the rigid Spanish society (Oehrlein 1989, 28). On the other hand, this constantly breaking of the rules was being supported by Lope de Vega who had previously affirmed in his *New Art of Writing Plays* that "sometimes what is anything but right/ will for that very reason give delight" (vv. 375–376).

Illiterate people did not have the capacity to distinguish between the character and the actor that played it and that is why, sometimes and as Lope himself had observed, the mob treated the actors in their real, social life, according to the characters they embodied on stage:

And so we see that if an actor happens
to play a traitor, everyone hates him
as that when he goes out shopping they won't serve him,
and common people shun him when they meet him;
but if he plays a hero, all acclaim him,
and even men of rank bow down before him,
seek out, reward, make much of and adore him⁷ (vv. 331–337).

los fiscales, los regentes,
y a todos van a servir,
a cualquier hora que quieren.

⁵ Ha de recitar de modo,
con tanta industria y cordura,
que se buelva en la figura
que haze de todo en todo.
A los versos ha de dar
valor con su lengua experta,
y a la fabula que es muerta
ha de hacer resucitar.
Ha de sacar con espanto
las lágrimas de la risa
y hazer que buelvan con (p)risa
otra vez con triste llanto,
Ha de hazer que aquel semblante
que él mostrare, todo oyente
le muestre, y ser excelente
si haze aquesto el recitante.

⁶ El imitar es ser representante;
(...) así el representante, si no siente
las pasiones del amor, es imposible
que pueda, gran señor, representarlas;
una ausencia, unos celos, un agravio,
(...) mas no los sabrá hacer si no los siente.

⁷ Pues que vemos, si acaso un recitante
haze un traydor, es tan odioso a todos
que lo que va a comprar no se los venden,
y huye el vulgo dél quando lo encuentra,
y si es leal le prestan y combidan
y hasta los principales le honran y aman,
le buscan, le regalan y le aclaman.

Mocking the Stage: Bad Responses to the Actors' Performance

As we have come to realize, Baroque theatre was completely subservient to the taste of the mob. If you pleased them, they responded with applause. If not, a very "loud" theatre was performed, where the discontent voices of the audience shadowed the performance of the actors.

According to Agustín de Rojas, a good performance could make the author of the theatre company a very rich man; hence a poor one could even destroy a well written play⁸.

Violent episodes occurred before and during the play. As Juan de Zabaleta puts it, before the performance even started, men used to entertain themselves by going to see the actresses in the dressing room. Although most of them were in underwear, they didn't dare utter a single word, as they feared being mocked during the play. And according to Zabaleta, "a whistle, although unfair, could discredit her (the actress), because of the harm of others, everyone thinks the accusers' judgment is better than his own"⁹ (Zabaleta 1660, 40–41).

Furthermore, Zabaleta stated that, when realizing that the play was going to start late, people began talking, giving occasion to the feared *mosqueteros* to put pressure on the actors with insulting words. Zabaleta asked himself about the reason those people had to insult the actors because they didn't come out on time. Everyone that went to see the plays, Zabaleta said, was aware that they would have to wait before it started. If the actors had been sleeping in their chambers, the author claimed, the audience would have been entitled to insult them. But the real reason that they weren't coming out on time was that there wasn't enough public to do so. Subsequently, the mob mocked the actors in order

to please their violent moods, as this kind of action wouldn't have been possible in the street without a fight between the mocker and the mocked¹⁰ (Zabaleta 1660, 42).

As shown at the beginning, the space of the corral did not allow all the audience to see or to hear well. Only the people of rank were reserved the privilege of both seeing and hearing the play. The mob standing near the gate of the *cazuela* heard the actors well, but didn't see them. The women standing in the last row saw the actors, but couldn't hear them. So none of them did actually both see and hear the play, because you couldn't possibly see a play without eyes, neither hear it without ears. Most of the actions were carried out through words and if one couldn't hear them, the actions were mute. When the play ended, it was as if it hadn't even started for them¹¹ (Zabaleta 1660, 46)

And so the play began in a violent atmosphere dominated by music and sound. In his *Ortografía castellana* (1650), José Alcázar focused on the fact that none of the well educated individuals that attended the performance were its judges, but the loud tailors, shoemakers, coachmen, and others of

⁸ Traer las comedias buenas,
para el autor es ganancia,
que pues le cuesta su hacienda,
no procura que sean malas.
Sucede que compra una,
que leída y ensayada
nos parece milagrosa
y es mala representada.

⁹ (...) por aguardar entretenido, se va al vestuario. Halla en él a las mujeres desnudándose de casera para vestirse de comediantas. Alguna está en tan interiores paños como si se fuera a acostar (...) Siéntelo la pobre mujer, mas no se atreve a impedirlo, porque como son todos votos en su aprobación, no quiere disgustar a ninguno. Un silbo, aunque sea injusto, desacredita, porque para el daño ajeno todos creen que es mejor el juicio del que acusa que el suyo.

¹⁰ (...) empieza a parecerle que tarda mucho en empezarse la comedia. Habla recio y desabrido en la tardanza y da ocasión a los mosqueteros que están debajo de él a que den prisa a los comediantes con palabras injuriosas (...) ¿Por qué dicen estos hombres palabras injuriosas a los representantes porque no salen en el punto que ellos entran? Ninguno va a la comedia que no sepa que ha de esperar, y hacérsele de nuevo lo que lleva sabido es haber perdido la memoria o el entendimiento. Si los comediantes estuvieran durmiendo en sus posadas, aun tenían alguna razón; pero siempre vestidos mucho antes que sea hora de empezar, si se detienen es porque no hay la gente que es menester que haya para desquitar lo que se pierde los días de trabajo o porque aguardan persona de tanta reverencia que, por no disgustarla, disgustan a quien ellos han menester tanto agradar, como es el pueblo. Veamos ahora en fe de qué se atreven a hablarles mal los que allí se les atreven. En fe del embozo de la bulla. Saben que todo aquel teatro tiene una cara y con la máscara de la confusión los injurian. Ninguno de los que allí les dicen pesadumbres injustamente se las dijera en la calle, sin mucho riesgo de que se vengasen ellos o de que la justicia los vengase... Salen las guitarras y empieza la comedia y nuestro oyente pone la atención quizá donde no la ha de poner...

¹¹ "La que está junto a la puerta de la cazuela oye a los representantes y no los ve. La que está en el banco último los ve y no los oye; con que ninguna ve comedia, porque las comedias ni se oyen sin ojos ni se ven sin oídos. Las acciones hablan gran parte, y si no se oyen las palabras son las acciones mudas. Acábase, en fin, la comedia, como si para ellas no se hubiese empezado."

that ilk, commonly known as musketeers because of the noise they made¹² (qtd. in Hesse 1965, 47).

Viaje entretenido by Agustín de Rojas also registers the protests of the public that could almost sink the performance, as well as the changing taste or mood of the public¹³ (qtd. in Hesse 1965, 48):

Unfortunate is the author
that here comes as if a tailor,
with farces, despite being good,
and has to miss, although he doesn't .
Because if an actor doesn't speak fast enough,
the audience most likely says: Go away,
don't go, speak though, be quiet,
come in, after that, don't enter!

Along the same lines is *Epigrama contra un autor* by Pérez de Montalbán that focuses on the public as the main protagonist of the play because of their whistles and proof of discontentment¹⁴:

The theatre was full from top to toe,
yesterday at two o' clock!
Top to toe in theatre? Oh my God,
I quite don't like this.
Were there verses? So and so,
Copla? Nor big, nor little.
Whistles? For two hours and a half.
So the play had everything,
As in Pharmacies!

Lope de Vega himself in his Prologue to *Los amantes sin amor* recalls the despicable actions of the public that didn't enjoy the play, going away three by three or four by four, punishing the actors

and the author by never coming back to see them ever again¹⁵ (qtd. in Hesse 1965, 48).

Before Lope, Miguel de Cervantes had shown in *Coloquio de los perros* how the audience was abandoning the scene of a bad play that seemed written by the Devil himself to the poor ears of Cervantes' character, driving the author of the play close to insanity¹⁶.

But in the end, for what did the audience reproach the performers? Why was noise always so present during the theatrical act? According to Stefano Arata, there were two types of noisy manifestations: one that derived from the recognition of a certain dramatic scheme and a second one, focusing on the disagreement between the expectations of the public and the answer given by the play (Arata 1991, 335). Now, which was the scheme Arata was talking about? From the point of view of the Italian researcher, the Baroque spectator went to the theatre, not just to get to know, but also to recognize information, which meant that the expectation of the audience was strictly fixed. Hence, the theatrical message had to adjust itself to this structure. Otherwise, the public's reply would be negative (Arata 1991, 334).

Furthermore, in his study, Arata quotes a *loa* (short theatrical piece usually performed before the first act of the play in order to establish a contact between audience and actors) attributed to Lope de Vega, where the leading actor accused the musketeers of thinking of themselves as the keepers of the theatrical code:

Give away all those presumptions,
be quiet or quietly whisper,

¹² En el teatro no se distingue el relámpago del rayo. No son los ciudadanos más ilustres ni los maestros de las artes más nobles, los que rigen su rienda con aplauso, sino los sastres, los zapateros, los cocheros, los letrados y otros semejantes. Ellos, aun sin letras, son el juez y, por el ruido que meten, se llaman los *Mosqueteros*.

¹³ Desdichado del autor
que aquí como el sastre viene
con farsas, aunque sean buenas,
que ha de errar aunque no yerre.
Pues si uno no habla tan presto,
no falta quien dice: Vete,
no te vayas, habla, calla,
éntrate luego, no te entres ...

¹⁴ De bote en bote el Corral
se vio ayer a las dos;
¿bote y en corral?, por Dios,
que aquesto me huele mal.
¿Hubo versos...?, tal y cual;
¿copla?... ni grande ni chica;
¿silbos?... dos horas y media.
¡Con que tuvo la comedia
de todo, como en botica!

¹⁵ Solían no ha muchos años irse de mis bancos tres a tres y cuatro a cuatro, cuando no les agradaba la fábula, la poesía o lo que recitaban, y castigar con no volver a los dueños de la acción y de los versos. Agora, por desdichas mías, es vergüenza ver a un barbado despedir un silbo, como pudiera un pícaro en el caso, y otro pensar que es gracia tocar un instrumento, con que pudiera en sus tiernos años haber solicitado cantar tiples...

¹⁶ "Juntóse toda la compañía a oír la comedia de mi amo, que yo ya por tal le tenía, y a la mitad de la jornada primera, uno a uno y dos a dos, se fueron saliendo todos, excepto el autor y yo, que servíamos de oyentes. La comedia era tal que sin ser yo un asno en esto de la poesía, me pareció que la había escrito el mismo Satanás, para total ruina y perdición del mismo poeta, que yo iba tragando saliva, viendo la soledad en que el auditorio le había dejado; y no era mucho que si el alprésaga decía allá dentro la desgracia que le estaba amenazando, que fue volver todos los representantes, que pasaban de doce, y, sin hablar palabra, asieron de mi poeta, y si no fuera porque la autoridad del autor, llena de ruegos y voces, se puso de por medio, sin duda le mantearan..."

be aware that discreet ones know
that you are made of coal.
Everyone has disappeared
without a doubt we'll have attention,
if there isn't any dwarf
hidden in some corner.
But if he happened to be there,
may the discreet ones throw him away
at the first sign
and we'll play with him¹⁷ (Arata 1991, 332).

Loas were intended to make the public remain still and quiet during the performance. *Loa de Lope de Vega* doesn't contain any element that would indicate a *captatio benevolentiae* from a despicable public, important though for the success of the play (Arata 1991, 329). On the contrary, it enhances the outrageous reactions of different persons during the play, the actor on stage imitating the public for him to see how annoying he could be¹⁸. The *loa* characterizes the noisy spectators as:

a crowd of dwarfs,
people who mock and judge

¹⁷ Dejad esa presunción,
callad o hablad en secreto,
mirad que sabe el discreto
que sois hechos de carbón.
Todos se han desaparecido
sin falta que habrá atención,
si acaso en algún rincón
no hay algún duende escondido.
Pero si estuviere en él
a la palabra primera
le eche el discreto fuera
y jugaremos con él.

¹⁸ Púseme a escuchar atento
e hizo un buen argumento:
«Dios le perdone, Saldaña»
dijo aquél: «¡Qué disparate!»
Lo que se tiene que hacer
es forzoso menester
[que] el argumento lo trate
que si lo dicen de esre arte
es quebrarnos la cabeza».
Conocida su flaqueza
dejéle y fuime a otra parte.
Quitéme de allí, en efecto,
y pasé más adelante
[do]nde estaba un estudiante
que me pareció discreto.
Comenzó un Rey a decir
unas coplas redondillas
que un mármol pudo sentillas,
y comenzóse a reír
[di]ciendo: «¡Oh, traidor! ¡Cuál es
el verso tal los conceptos!»
¡No veis que aquellos sonetos
los hizo de cinco pies!» (*Loa de Lope de Vega*, vv. 42–64)

as “good”, “bad” and “reasonable”,
and with notable coldness
comment on the whole play¹⁹ (vv. 83–87).

Audience and stage were though a very dynamic duo, an idea supported by Josef Oehrlein, as his opinion was that in the Golden Age, because of the integration of the dramatic function in the superior ceremonial context, there was a unity between actors and public, at least when coming to religious theatre (Oehrlein 1993, 183). In the case of the public of the *corral*, Oehrlein quoted B. Kaufmann who rejected the character of community for this sort of audience; Kaufmann affirmed that “community” meant achieving a spiritual unity (Oehrlein 1993, 183); something quite impossible to manage, given the heterogeneity of the audience of the *corral*.

Catherine Connor referred to two categories of public: the spectator/listener as a participative subject and the receiver/sponge of the so called message of the dramatic text (Connor 2000, 3).

Taking into account all these statements and opinions, it becomes clear that the Golden Age spectator was a participative one, considering himself part of the dramatic process. Either he got what he wanted/expected, or he expressed his discontentment violently. The public taste ruled the illiterate public, as Arata shows, was the one holding on to the code of theatre, while educated persons were characterized by their discretion and patience.

The spectator is, without a doubt, the one giving meaning to the process developed on stage. Without the feedback of the audience the dramatic process would be incomplete and meaningless and that a sociocultural approach to the play is necessary and correct. If we take a look at the history of theatre itself, we will realize that plays (meaning the dramatic text, as well as the projection of the playwright's mind), actors and audience have always evolved together, since the first sparkles of dramatic innovation until nowadays ((Styam 1975, 6))²⁰. Experimental or laboratory theatre like the one practiced by Jerzy Grotowski could have at some point excluded the presence of the audience during the dramatic process and focused more on the work

¹⁹ una manada de duendes,
gente que burla y apoda
«bueno», «malo» y «razonable»,
y con frialdad notable
glosan la comedia toda.

²⁰ J.L. Styam affirmed that “the irreducible theatre event is contained in these three elements: script–actor–audience”.

of the actor with his own body, but the public was still being considered, even through its exclusion. The relation between the three elements that best define theatre: the dramatic text, the stage and the audience have evolved together since Aristotle's "catharsis" or the Greek amphitheatre, whose semicircular form, as well as open space area is said to have been the only one where tragedy could be performed, as the cosmic energy fluidly joined the energy of the public, recovering the second half of the semicircle. These same three elements that traveled through the Medieval Mystery play, *commedia dell'arte*, Golden Age theatre, have been interpreted and reinterpreted throughout twentieth century theatre, from Stanislowski, Artaud, Grotowski, Brook, Weiss, Kantor and many more, have proved their value in time.

Despite the very different perspectives of looking at this relationship that has been determined by the social, political and religious deeds of each era, the

successful development of the performer–audience binominal was due to the understanding of the dramatic code by the audience. In the Spanish Golden Age, a polarized society demanded a polarized theatre, as well as a play written and performed in different dramatic key levels. (Comm)Unity was very difficult to achieve within the plays performed at the *corrales*, and the same lack of unity determined the existence of a polarized audience and of a polarized reaction, both positive and negative, towards theatre. In the end, as Brook put it in *Open door*, theatre is life and as such, the violence present in the Spanish streets was most likely to be found in all the manifestations of individuals. Present on stage, as well as in real life through different forms (wars, beatings, cruelty, invectives), violence was part of the Golden Age *savoir vivre*.

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SOME REMARKS ON TWO ITALIAN PAINTINGS BY GIOVANNI BATTISTA LANGETTI IN THE COLLECTION OF THE BRUKENTHAL NATIONAL MUSEUM, SIBIU

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Abstract: *The author comments upon two works by Giovanni Battista Langetti, which are inspired by the narrative of the Old Testament: Joseph Interpreting Dreams and Isaac Blessing His Son Jacob. On this occasion, in relation with the Biblical narrative, new opinions concerning the identity of the characters in Joseph Interpreting Dreams are advanced. There are presented these works in relations with others with similar subject by the same painter or which could have had an iconographic influence on the painting Isaac Blessing His Son Jacob.*

Keywords: *Italian painting, Giovanni Battista Langetti, Joseph, Isaac and Jacob*

Rezumat: *Câteva observații asupra unor tablouri ale pictorului italian Giovanni Battista Langetti, din colecția Muzeului Național Brukenthal Sibiu. Autorul discută două lucrări de Giovanni Battista Langetti, inspirate de narațiuni din Vechiul Testament: Iosif tălmăcind vise și Isaac binecuvântându-l pe fiul său, Iacob. Cu acest prilej, în relație cu narațiunea biblică, sunt exprimate noi opinii cu privire la identitatea personajelor din tabloul Iosif tălmăcind vise, diferite de cele cunoscute. De asemenea, sunt tratate relațiile acestor lucrări cu altele cu subiect similar, de același pictor sau care au putut exercita o anumită influență iconografică asupra lucrării Iosif tălmăcind vise.*

Cuvinte cheie: *Pictură italiană, Giovanni Battista Langetti, Iosif, Isaac și Iacob.*

During the last three years, in the process of organizing some international exhibitions as well as the new permanent exhibition of the European Art Gallery of the Brukenthal National Museum of Sibiu, I had the occasion to study more carefully some paintings. I was interested not only in some iconological problems and in making some necessary corrections to older assertions, but also in finding possible prototypes or relevant comparative material.

Because both Italian paintings which will be commented here belong to the Catholic cultural area, the biblical quotations are from the official Catholic English translations of *Vulgata*. For this reason, it is irrelevant that there are some minor differences from *Septuaginta*, on which the Orthodox canon is based, as well as from the most frequent contemporary Orthodox and New Protestant translations of the Bible in Romanian.

1. Giovanni Battista Langetti (1625–1676), *Joseph Interpreting Dreams* (oil on canvas, 108 x 124 cm, inv. nr. 425) (Fig. 1).

Unlike some previous interpretations (Tudoran Ciungan 2007, 108), I think that Joseph is the handsome young man in expensive, blue garments, who makes a gesture of explanation, in the right side of the picture. His image is consistent with his portrayal in the Bible: "Now Joseph was beautiful in form and stately in appearance" (*Genesis*, 39:6). He must have been 28 when he was imprisoned, because two years after he interpreted the dreams of the two imprisoned servants of Pharaoh, the latter had also prophetic dreams (*Genesis*, 41:1), which were interpreted by Joseph, after which he was introduced to Pharaoh (*Genesis*, 41:1–39) and at that time, according to the narrative of the Old Testament, Joseph was 30 years old (*Genesis*, 41:46). The blue colour of his robe is not at all accidental: it is the colour of the sky, symbolizing the divine protection enjoyed by the young Jew: "But the Lord was with Joseph, and, having mercy on him, he gave him favour in the sight of the

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leader of the prison, who delivered into his hand all the prisoners who were held in custody. And whatever was done, was under him. Neither did he himself know anything, having entrusted all things to him. For the Lord was with him, and he directed everything that he did" (*Genesis*, 39:20–23). In ancient times, until the discovery of cheaper substitutes, this colour was prepared from powder of *lapis lazuli*, a semiprecious rock which was brought from Afghanistan, but its use is virtually obsolete now, because of its prohibitive price (Rodwell 1996, 8; cf. Eastaugh *et al.* 2008, 38sq., s.v. *azure*). That is why it was used almost exclusively to paint the garments of Virgin Mary and sometimes of the infant Jesus or of Jesus, King of the Universe (Pantokrator) or of characters with a high social status. His expensive clothes, which clearly distinguish him from the other inmates, allude just to his higher statute, which he had since he served as slave in the house of his future father-in-law (*Genesis*, 41:45), an eunuch, the Egyptian military leader Potiphar¹, who was also a priest of On (Heliopolis) (*Genesis*, 41:45): "And Joseph found favour in the sight of his lord, and he ministered to him. And, having been placed in charge of everything by him, he governed the house that was entrusted to him and all the things that had been delivered to him" (*Genesis*, 39:4)². It alludes also to his future position of a vizier, which, by divine protection, Joseph will reach later, interpreting also the dreams of Pharaoh (*Genesis*, 41).

The bearded old man in the foreground, represented chained (unlike the other two characters) and whose mimicry suggests a resigned tension, reminding of the iconographic model of imprisoned Socrates, is Pharaoh's miller of grain. The third character, also excited, is Pharaoh's cupbearer. They have no specific attributes and can be identified as such only by a passage referring to them: "While these things were going on, it happened that two eunuchs, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt, and the miller of grain, offended their lord. And Pharaoh, being angry with them (now the one was in charge of the cupbearers, the other of the millers of grain) sent them to the prison of the leader of the

military, in which Joseph also was a prisoner." (*Genesis*, 40:1–3). Like the other prisoners, they were put under Joseph's supervision, as the Bible says itself: "But the keeper of the prison delivered them to Joseph, who ministered to them also. Some little time passed by, while they were held in custody" (*Genesis*, 40:4). The way to represent them in opposition to the handsome young man that I believe can be identified with Joseph is meant to distinguish him from the Egyptians, namely from the heathen idolaters, of other religion than Joseph's, a monotheist Jew and, considering also the portrayal of Potiphar and of his wife, as representatives of a foreign people, which is dominated not by reason, but by instincts, which is intemperate in drinking, adulterer, perfidious and impulsive (*Genesis*, 39:6–19). To fully comply with the attitude of the biblical account, the painter alludes to the radical difference between Joseph and the Egyptian prisoners, as expression of the superiority of monotheistic Jews to the idolatrous foreigners (which is a leitmotiv of the Old Testament and marked, by its legal and social consequences, the coexistence between Jews and non-Jews (*goim*) (For this question: Shahak 1997). At the same time, he insists upon the superiority of the social status which Joseph, who out of the prison was the slave of an individual, received in the internal hierarchy of the prison (as symbolic place where the legal order from outside is suspended and where the arbitrary reigns), to the other two prisoners who, outside the prison, as servants of Pharaoh, enjoyed a big power and influence, which gave them the status of senior representatives of the state apparatus. The way in which they look, their attitude, expressing their inner tensions, their dominating instincts, their reactions which hardly support the control of the reason sharply contrast with the calm of the young Jew, who trusts in the divine guidance, all express their full inferiority to Joseph.

The accurate identification of the two imprisoned Egyptians is possible, taking into consideration the correspondence between the biblical narrative and the picture. The excitement of the Egyptian prisoner in the farthest plan, in my opinion Pharaoh's cupbearer, suggests the rush to enjoy his upcoming release from the prison and his restoration to the office that he previously exercised, which indeed occurred just three days after this conversation with Joseph, on the occasion of Pharaoh's birthday and at the same time with the execution of the other imprisoned servant, the miller of grain (*Genesis*, 40:19–22). Obviously, the rush of Pharaoh's cupbearer

¹ In *Septuaginta*, his name is Petephres. Considering the Hellenistic way of transcription of Egyptian names, it is closer to the original Egyptian form, which means "He, whom Ra gave".

² In the Romanian translation of *Septuaginta* by D. Cornilescu (1924), Potiphar is the commander of the Pharaoh's guard, what is mentioned also in the original Greek version.

reflects also this hectic character's state of mind, because it suggests also his unfaithfulness and selfishness, for he has forgotten Joseph's request (*Genesis*, 40:14–15), to remember him and to intervene in his favour to Pharaoh (*Genesis*, 40:23). His gesture with his right hand above the older prisoner's head gives the impression of a bird with outstretched wings, which is not at all accidental if we take into account the biblical narrative concerning the latter's dream: "The chief miller of grain, seeing that he had wisely unravelled the dream, said: «I also saw a dream: that I had three baskets of meal above my head, and in one basket, which was the highest, I carried all foods that are made by the art of baking, and the birds ate from it.» Joseph responded: «This is the interpretation of the dream. The three baskets are the next three days, after which Pharaoh will carry away your head, and also suspend you from a cross, and the birds will tear your flesh.»" (*Genesis*, 40:16–19). The fact that the old man is chained alludes to his tragic, inexorable fate, which is known to God the Omniscient, who reveals to Joseph the meaning of the premonitory dreams, making him in this way the interpreter of God's will, as otherwise it is said by himself, with due reverence and humility (*Genesis*, 40:8). By contrast, just like Joseph, the cupbearer is not chained, what suggests his salvation, that he is spared, how the young Jew prophesized, interpreting his dream.

In the upper left corner, gazing inside through the bars, the figure of a man can be seen, which we consider to be the leader of the Pharaoh's guard, in whose house Joseph and Pharaoh's two servants were imprisoned (*Genesis*, 40:3). The representation of this secondary character only seemingly serves to ensure the concordance with the narrative of the Old Testament, because actually he symbolizes the spectator, the outsider himself, who is contemplating the picture and must reflect on its deeper meaning, knowing that himself is only a prisoner of his condition, that of a mortal sinner, who, by this spiritual exercise which assumes the recall of the story of Joseph, must also trust in the providential power of the divine grace.

So, in any way Joseph could not be identified with the chained old man and the young man with the Pharaoh's messenger, who is telling Joseph his master's dreams, contrary to what has been said (Tudoran Ciungan 2007, 108), precisely because the chained old man is bearded and therefore does not look at all like an eunuch. However, this clearly mentioned detail, that the two servants of

Pharaoh were eunuchs, is usually ignored by artists and by people as well. In fact, D. Hrib is the first who pointed out that the traditional identification of Joseph as the chained old man is wrong (Hrib 2007, 114sq.). Therefore, Langetti does not afford any license to the biblical account which he follows very accurately. His sensitivity finds appropriate forms of expression, in full compliance with the specific manner in which the Italian society of the age of the Counterreformation received the biblical narrative.

A similar painting, considered as a variant of the picture from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu, is preserved at the Museum of Fine Arts (Szépművészeti Múzeum) of Budapest, but R. Palluchini believes that this work does not have the dynamism and the concentrated dramatic tension of the work from Sibiu, an opinion which is shared also by M. O. Tudoran Ciungan (Tudoran Ciungan 2002, 39; cf. Tudoran Ciungan 2007, 108), who remarks the superiority of the work belonging to the collection of Baron Samuel von Brukenthal in what concerns the composition, the drawing (the characters' muscle play, the expressivity of the physiognomy) and the colour palette (Tudoran Ciungan 2002, 39). There is also an important difference between the two works: that of Budapest has a vertical format, unlike the one in Sibiu, whose format is horizontal. But similar to the painting of Sibiu, Joseph is the youngest character and he wears a blue robe. The miller of grain, who is naked and chained, can be identified as a person which will be convicted to death because he is holding his red mantle over his head, unlike the cupbearer, in whose headscarf there is also a blue part, a sign that his life will be spared. Similar to the painting of Sibiu, in the work from Budapest, in the upper left corner, a person who is looking inside through the bars of the prison's window can be seen.

A third variant (oil on canvas, 136 x 181 cm) of the same painting by G. B. Langetti, is also known, which was sold first at Christie's (on July 8, 1994, lot nr. 38) and then again, at the same auction house (on January 27, 2011, lot nr. 325). Similar to the other variants, Joseph is the youngest of the three prisoners, makes an explanatory gesture and wears a blue robe, unlike the other two, who are more or less nude. There is also a person here who is looking inside through the bars of the prison window, but unlike the variants in Budapest and Sibiu, the prisoners have specific attributes, which identify them as being the cupbearer of the Pharaoh (by a golden cup on

a table, above the head of the other half-nude prisoner), respectively as the miller of grain, who is looking at the floor and holds his left hand on a bread, while with his right hand he pulls his hair out, hearing the bad destiny which Joseph prophesized him). It is obviously of a better quality than the work which is kept in Budapest. It should also be noticed in this case that Joseph is knelt and his yellow billowed mantle reminds somewhat of the wings of an angel. Researches concerning this yellow used by G. B. Langetti and by Luca Giordano, which contains lead, tin and antimony have been made and it seems typical for the Italian paintings of the 17th century being connected with the activity of the Italian glass manufactures (Sandalinas, Ruiz-Moreno 2004). The blue seems to be still made of the expensive *lapis lazuli*.

M. Stefani Mantovanelli, the author of the most recent work concerning the life and art of G. B. Langetti (Stefani Mantovanelli 2011), considers that his paintings where Joseph is represented could be dated, like other compositions with either classical (deeds of Hercules, the torture of Ixion, the death of King Darius III), or biblical subjects (Samson, Cain and Abel, Jonas), in the late '60s and middle '70s of the 17th century. According to this, they belong to the last decade of the painter's life and therefore they can be considered proofs of his mature, full-developed art. The work in the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum seems indeed the most dramatic, the most achieved and the most synthetic of all variants, showing G. B. Langetti's interest in the expressivity of the gesture and in the chromatic and light contrast, as well as in the coherence of the composition, avoiding minute and detailed description (for instance that of the specific attributes of the miller of grain and of the cupbearer).

The model which I believe to have inspired G. B. Langetti is the work *Joseph in Prison Interpreting the Dreams of the Cupbearer and of the Miller of Grain*, painted by Giovanni Francesco Guerrieri (1589–1665), who or according to whom it seems to have been also depicted (maybe in 1625–1630) another painting (oil on canvas, 171 x 243 cm), which is kept now at the Gemäldegalerie of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (inv. nr. GG 1904), where it was transferred in early 18th century from the Ambras castle in Tyrol (Swoboda 2008, 100).

In this picture (Fig. 3), the Egyptian prisoners are sitting in front of Joseph, whose gesture is more authoritative than explanatory. Similar to the

painting of Langetti in Sibiu, the gesture which gives the impression of a bird with outstretched wings, made above the head of the half nude prisoner, in this case however by his own right hand, as symbol of the tearing of his body by birds, after the upcoming execution, can also be noticed in the painting of Vienna. Similar to the painting of Langetti, Joseph's cloths are the most expensive and beautiful. The cupbearer wears similar cloths, but has no mantle or maybe it lays somewhere behind him. Unlike them, the miller of grain is half naked: it is the other kind of nudity than the heroic one, which hints the perfection of the gods, namely the nudity of the slaves, of the punished criminals and of the defeated enemies, who are deprived of all signs of their dignity and even of their few belongings. So, the rich costumes allude to Joseph's future dignity of a vizier, respectively to the recovering of the dignity which the cupbearer had before he was imprisoned, insomuch as the nudity of the miller of grain to his close execution. My opinion is confirmed by the presence of several gallows on the hill which can be seen through the bars of the prison's window. This painting is, also, the best key for the understanding of the other one, from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum. Obviously, G. B. Langetti worked much to find his own way, which led him to superior results, even if he never forgot his model and came back to the power of the symbolic gestures, in a context where their expressivity is increased by the coherence of the composition and by his skill to play with contrasts of lights and colours.

2. Giovanni Battista Langetti (1625–1676), *Isaac Blessing His Son Jacob* (oil on canvas, 113 x 127 cm, inv. nr. 426) (Fig. 2).

In the interior of a house or rather of a tent (*Genesis*, 25:27), old blind Isaac, together with his wife, Rebecca, are blessing Jacob, a somewhat effeminate, long haired youngster, reminding of Joseph in the pendant painting. This is only a convention, meant to suggest he was smooth skinned. Both parents wear mantles and headscarves. Isaac's and Jacob's left shoulders are bare, in order to suggest an ancient draped cloth. Isaac's mantle is yellow (the same colour containing lead, tin and antimony!) and that of his wife is brown-reddish, while Jacob's is red, in a strong contrast not only with the cloths of his parents, but also with his blue robe, which reminds that of Joseph's in the pendant painting, surely to emphasize the divine protection he enjoys. Indeed, his left hand, which is held by

Isaac, is wrapped in a goat skin, the way he was taught by his mother who loved him more than his twin brother Esau, who (as his name means in Hebrew) was hairy. Using this trick, she wanted to make his blind husband think that this would be his favourite son, Esau, a hunter who fed him with venison (*Genesis*, 25:28) and who sold Jacob his birthright for a dish of red lentils, when he was hungry (*Genesis*, 25:29–34). On Jacob's right side (who is Esau's younger twin brother), on a small table (or maybe rather on Isaac's bed), which is partially covered with a part of Jacob's red mantle, there is a metallic plate with a knife and some rests of food, surely meat of the two kid goats which Jacob gave to his father to eat, instead of the venison he asked from Esau.

There is no doubt concerning the iconography of this painting. I would like however to mention that a similar painting (oil on canvas, 104 x 125 cm) was already auctioned in Paris (since November 8, 2011) by Artcurial Briest – Poulain – F. Tajan, lot nr. 14, sale number 1995). From that of Sibiu, it differs only in that it is of a somewhat poorer quality, coming from the less expressive portraits and the less bright colours. In my opinion, it could be rather a workshop work than an original painting by G. B. Langetti, even if it is compared with other works of this painter

and not with the painting from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum.

A variant (Fig. 4) of the painting from Sibiu was donated in 1961 by Miss L. Aileen Larkin to the Art Gallery of Ontario / Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario (oil on canvas, 127 x 169.5 cm). The figures and the costumes of Jacob's parents are similar to those in the painting from Sibiu. Only the headscarves are bound in a somewhat different way. On the right, on a table also covered with a red tablecloth, there is a metallic plate with some meat, a knife and a metallic jug, which is decorated with a mythological relief. Here, Rebecca seems to be in a hurry and does not bless Jacob, like in the painting from Sibiu. Isaac is sitting on a bed. Unlike the painting in Sibiu, where Jacob is placed in the middle of painting, in that of Ontario he is painted in the left, kneeling before his aged and blind father. Here he is not effeminate at all and over a blue robe he is wearing a fur coat, of yellow colour at the exterior. His hand is also wrapped in a goat skin. If compared to the painting in Sibiu, the composition is more coherent, there are more details, the faces of the old characters are expressive, but not also that of Jacob. The muscles of Isaac are represented in a poorer way than in Sibiu. The colour is brighter on the painting of Sibiu.

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SHIPS AND BOATS IN THE PAINTINGS OF SOME GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN PAINTERS IN THE BRUKENTHAL GALLERY

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Abstract: *This study analyzes the presence of ships and boats in the compositional space of easel painting, stressing upon the artistic role and their significance in the rendered image. Within this theme, ships and boats of all kinds are analyzed in works by 17th to 18th century German and Austrian painters from the Brukenthal Gallery mostly in seascapes, but also in biblical, mythological and genre scenes.*

Key words: *ships and boats in paintings, 17th–18th century German and Austrian painters, biblical and mythological scene, genre scene, landscape.*

Rezumat: *Acest studiu se ocupă de prezența în spațiul compozițional al picturii de șevalet, a navelor și ambarcațiunilor, insistându-se asupra rolului plastic și a semnificațiilor lor în ansamblul imaginii reprezentate. În cadrul temei sunt analizate lucrări din Galeria Brukenthal, aparținând unor pictori germani și austrieci din secolele XVII–XVIII, care introduc ambarcațiuni de orice tip, în lucrări aparținând genului peisager, dar și în scene de gen, biblice și mitologice.*

Cuvinte cheie: *nave și alte ambarcațiuni în tablou, pictori germani și austrieci din sec. XVII–XVIII, scena biblică și mitologică, scena de gen, peisajul.*

In a lately published essay referring to the importance of rendering *architectural elements* within the painting works, I asserted that studying the role of one defining or essential detail in a painter's work, or belonging to a painting school or trend, through a particularized concretely applied analysis can highlight and uncover artistic aspects that had not been noticed or had been neglected and whose importance can thus be made clear. (Muresan 2011, 305–326). My intention is to continue the illustration of the importance of the representative details within a work of art by emphasizing the role of another environmental element that can be essential or meaningful, but can also remain at the level of a simple minor detail. In landscapes and seascapes but also in paintings belonging to other genres, *ships* of all kinds and other big or small *boats* can become essential within the composition. However, sometimes ships and boats can have only decorative-suggestive value among other environmental elements in *marinas*, harbor images or in landscapes with streams and big rivers.

This element of ambient is being analyzed in this essay in some paintings by German and Austrian artists from the 17th to 18th belonging to the European painting collection of the Brukenthal National Museum.

Although from the 12th to the 17th centuries, the *Hansa* (the Hanseatic League), the commercial confederation of the German states led by the great harbour cities Lübeck and Hamburg (Dollinger, 1964) developed intense navigation in the North and the Baltic Sea, the German painters did not prove real interest in depicting seascapes or marinas, at least compared to the frequency of these themes in Dutch and Italian painting. More than that, it seems that only under the influence of the quoted schools, some German painters approached – quite seldom and without remarkable results – the seascape, rendering different big or small ships and boats.

The painter **Josef Heintz the Young** (1590–1660) was active at the beginning of the 17th century. The Brukenthal Gallery preserves a good interpretation after his work *Venetian party* (Csaki

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1909, 165 cat. 550)¹. This painting is connected to the theme of this study only due to the two boats with oars which appear on the surface of the water that separates the palace that hosts the party and the architectures (only sketched) of the town in the background, this image being, in fact, the fruit of the imagination of the artist and not a rendering (even approximate) of the town in the lagoon (We have discussed this painting under the aspect of rendering the architectures in the above quoted study dealing with this theme, where also can be seen its reproduction: cf. Muresan 2011, 310, reproduction no. 9). The characters are dressed after Venetian fashion but the urban landscape in the background doesn't seem to have anything to do with Venice. The painting seems to be a confirmation of the statement regarding the little interest of the German artists for seascapes, ship and harbour paintings whereas in Heintz's *Venice the party* is the element that stands...

A painter from Salzburg, **Johann Anton Eismann** (1604–1698), who worked in Verona and Venice (where he also died) had a predilection for seascapes scene (he also painted battle scenes), with storms, naval warfare, harbour scenes with fishermen, significantly influenced by the Italian and also by the Dutch painters. The paintings in the Collection of German and Austrian School of the Brukenthal Museum, *The Shipwreck* (Csaki 1909, 105, cat. 345)² [Fig. 1] and *The Shipwreck near the Lighthouse* (Csaki 1909, 105, cat. 346)³ [Fig. 2], were registered as paintings *in Eismann's style*, and they are really seascapes scenes. Here were rendered some ships on the sea sailing chaotically under the strong wind, dangerously inclined to larboard or starboard, having the sails broken and the prow deep in the water as it had just hit a threatening rock coming out of the whirling water; the other one is on the verge of breaking against the rocky shore where the lighthouse stands. The brown of the rocks emphasizes the huge foamy waves of the agitated sea, while the green and white of the waters highlights the thoroughly rendered ships.

¹ *Venetian party* (oil on wood 28 x 42 cm), inv. 550. As a matter of fact the original by Heintz the Young is an interpretation after a printing reproducing a painting by Holland Dirck Barendsz (1534–1592), also named Theodor Barendszoon, who worked 7 years (1555–1562) in Rome and Venice. We want to thank our colleague, Ph. D. Maria Ordeanu from the Printing Cabinet who drew our attention upon the printing done after Barenndsz.

² *The Shipwreck* (oil on canvas, 52 x 64 cm), inv. 345.

³ *The Shipwreck near the Lighthouse* (oil on canvas, 48 x 64 cm), inv. 346.

The attentive study of these works compared to paintings signed by Eisman demonstrates distinct differences of execution, composition and chromatics, thus excluding the hypothesis that the painter of these works would belong to Eismann's circle or would have worked in his style. Thorough researches that included other specialists' opinions led to the conclusion that the two seascapes could belong to the Flemish painter Pieter Mulier the Young (1637–1701) (Mutti Prignano 2002, cat. 17, 18, repr. 377; Ciungan 2007, 146–147; Levey 1967, repr. 107)⁴ who worked in Italy at Genoa and Rome, where he got the nick name of *il Cavalier Tempesta*, due to his paintings with storms and naval dramas.

The sea, the ships and all kind of boats are essential elements in seascapes, bearing at the same time symbolical meaning. The ship and mainly the boat are metaphors of human life (Chevalier, Gheerbrant, vol. 1, 364)⁵, whether it quietly “floats” or “fights against the storm” (“the divine anger”, God's will, the faithful man and the society he lives in). From an artistic and symbolic point of view as important as the depiction of ships or boats, is the presence of the earth, ground, shores and rocks, beaches and especially, harbours. The rocks or the shore can be salvation or fatale end for the navigator; the lighthouse can symbolize the leading faith towards the Truth and God, the hope, the wise principle that guides life, while the harbour is salvation, the end of sufferance, the rest, maybe a heavenly eternal rest. These symbolical and metaphorical valences are not always meant by the artist, but they can be sensed “behind the lines”, as the main purpose of the artist is usually the rendering of the “show” of the storm, subsidiary of the human drama and finally the allegory, the symbolical metaphor and the sacred dimension. The proof may be that in these paintings the artist does not represent Gods, or divinities of waters like sea nymphs, monsters, and sea animals with symbolical and archetypal value and signification that might be considered allusions to sacrum, to journeys of initiation (Eliade 1991, 120–122).

Another painting from the Brukenthal Collection belonging to a **German Anonymous Painter**,

⁴ Ciungan considers the work as belonging to Pieter Mulier il Cavalier Tempesta, but we established some resemblances with the work by Marco Ricci: *Storm on the Sea*, in the Museum in Bassano (cf. Levey), that confirm the frequency of the theme and the many resemblances among the painters in its approach.

⁵ “She is the image of life whose centre must be chosen by man and to assure its direction”.

who probably worked at the end of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th centuries, *Storm on the Sea near a Town* (Csaki 1909, 82, cat. 257)⁶ [Fig. 3] has the theme and the style close to that of Eismann / Mulier–Tempesta, but being more influence by Dutch than by Italian painting. The storm is more violent, the sea more agitated, the waves become “mountains” of water, and the sky is darker. There are also people drowning⁷ and ships sailing aimlessly or breaking against the rocks; the dramatic atmosphere is emphasized by the colder tones of grey and bluish white. The terrestrial environment is slightly suggested by the rock in the foreground and the town / harbour that can be only perceived on the dim horizon, like a vain hope for the sailors.

Different from the point of view of the atmosphere, chromatics, and delineation, *City at the Sea* (Csaki 1909, 83, cat. 258)⁸ [Fig. 4], is the work of another **German Anonymous Painter** of the same period. Considerable differences made us reject the idea that the two paintings are counterparts, an old hypothesis based on their identical size (Before the Catalogue in 1909, M. Csaki edited another catalogue of the collection in 1901, and the works were also considered counterparts: cf. Csaki 1901, 70, cat. 242, 243). In this landscape the accent lies on the representation of the harbour, the architecture of the buildings, fortifications, and the circular massive stone tower in the centre (that could be from Naples). The emphasis of the tower might be connected to the already mentioned symbolical representation of the lighthouse in the iconography of the epoch. The landscape is more poetical, the sky is blue with clouds lighted by the sun, the sea is calm and ships and boats are sailing quietly; the characters (staffage) are meant only to animate (not agitate) the foreground of the composition (Ciungan 2007, 213)⁹. The poetical atmosphere of this “Italianate”

landscape seems to foreshadow the landscapes of Poussin and Lorrain.

In the analyzed works (belonging to some German painters or assigned to Dutch, Italian or English artists) the large ships with two or three masts are of the main interest and constitute the focal point in the assembly of the composition and of the atmosphere. Ships seemed to be the reason for which the painting was done, becoming true “characters” in different situations most of them dramatic. These big ships look like galleons, a type of ship built at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century (used mainly by the Spaniards but also by the Dutch), bigger than the famous caravel of the 15th–16th centuries (Columbeanu 1973, 11). Sailing with this kind of more stable and easily to manoeuvre ship equipped with a great arsenal based on artillery, the Portuguese made the great geographic discoveries. Even if caravels were also used after the apparition of the galleon (and galleons, with some improvements navigated till the end of the 19th century), this ship may constitute an element that helps dating the paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries, especially those by anonymous authors.

Legends inspired by the Bible and by Greek and Roman mythology are often subjects of the works of all European painting schools. They tell a lot of stories of the seas, but what is important in these paintings (as in the legends as well), is not the sea or the navigation (with all its adventures and avatars) but the characters, the heroes, Gods and saints rendered in different hypostases, depicted in their terrestrial miraculous adventures. This is the reason why ships and boats, triremes, galleys are only briefly outlined, imagined or sketched after contemporary boats.

For the artists belonging to Baroque, gestures, sometimes too theatrical, of the characters in works with mythological and biblical themes are more important and are meant to be more expressive than any other detail; in order to be more convincing and credible a great attention is given to the ambient where the events take place, imagining the background like a theatre stage conceived with scenographical elements, emphasizing the presence of the characters and their actions (Argan 1974, 166–174; Mureşan 2009, 15–16). The German and Austrian masters are no exception in the manner they treat the

⁶ German Anonymous, 17th–18th century, *Storm on the sea near Town* (oil on canvas, 109 x 145 cm), inv. 257.

⁷ Lord, Lord! Methought what pain it was to drown://What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!//What sights of ugly death within mine eyes!//Methought I saw a thousand fearful wracks://A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon://Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,//Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,//All scattered in the bottom of the sea., Shakespeare, *Richard III*, act I, scene 4, Bucuresti, 1964.

⁸ German Anonymous, 17th–18th century, *City at the Sea* (oil on canvas, 109 x 145 cm), inv. 258.

⁹ A hypothetical assignment of the painting was done by Ph. D. Maria Olimpia Tudoran Ciungan from the Brukenthal Gallery who considered that the painting

should be entitled: *View from Naples* and it could have been painted by the Italian/Dutch painter Luigi van Wittel (1700–1773), the son of the well-known Dutch painter Gaspar van Wittel (Italian Vanvitelli)

mythological and biblical themes, so that the ships in their paintings are seldom and vaguely rendered, usually in the backgrounds, among clouds, mists and fogs. In the case of the German painter **Michael Willmann** (1629–1706) only the title of the work is *The Ark of Noah* (Csaki 1909, 380, cat. 1265)¹⁰, as the composition where Noah is followed by horses, dogs, rabbits etc. coming down from the biblical ark – rather suggested than rendered –, can be assigned to the painting with animals.

The representation of ships as a background determines, due to proportionality, the diminution of the dimensions of the characters to simple silhouettes that simulate movement and give dynamics to the composition by their gestures, and diminishes, sometimes completely, the importance of human presence on the whole of the work. Bigger or smaller boats rendered fragmentally were frequently adopted in the case of these small scenes in which the people became simple staffage.

An example of the kind is *Landscape in Arcadia with Women Bathing* (Csaki 1909, 317, cat. 1056)¹¹ by the German painter **Johann Heinrich Schönfeld** (1609–1684), in the collection of the Brukenenthal Gallery. It is a strange scene of mythological inspiration, without any references to a certain character or to a known mythological story. It is an Arcadian landscape with heavenly Mediterranean atmosphere, feminine nudes and the surprising masculine indiscretion, everything in an antique scenery with ruins, where the artist places (without any special role) two boats with characters in the foreground and others, vaguely depicted, in the distant background (In the assembly the landscape dominates and the antique architectural elements completed it as an ambient, due to this fact this work was also mentioned in the study about the role of the architecture within the paintings: Muresan 2011, 309, repr. 6). Obviously the intention of the artist is to suggest neither the boat of Charon crossing the Styx, as a symbol of death, nor (the women bathing and chastely covering themselves) mythic nymphs or Nereids (About the divinities of the waters, see: Eliade 1992, 183–203; Then, some interesting consideration about the symbol of the boat: Sonoc 2006, 183).

¹⁰ *The Ark of Noah* (oil on canvas, 150 x 193 cm), inv. 1265.

¹¹ *Landscape in Arcadia with Women Bathing* (oil on canvas, 74 x 134 cm), inv. 1056.

In the scene inspired from the legends of the founding of Rome, *Dido's Suicide* (Csaki 1909, 54, cat. 161)¹² [Fig. 5] (Vergil, *Aeneid*, IV, 634–705), painted by **Rudolf Byss** (1660–1738), the gestures of the protagonist and of the other characters were essential for the painter, emphasizing the drama of Dido's abandoned by Aeneas (For different references about mythology, see: Pigler 1956). The Greco-Roman ambient, with Doric colonnades and antique cloths, is quite verisimilar and well rendered bringing its contribution to the specific atmosphere. The ship embodied of clouds and steam that takes away the Trojan fugitive who abandons Cartagena and its queen can be hardly seen in the mist of the morning, far in the background.

The Italianate manner used (with noticeable differences) by Schönfeld and Byss was also adopted by **Johann Michael Rottmayr von Rosenbrunn** (1660–1730) in the painting *The Rape of Helen* (Csaki 1909, 317, cat. 1058; Preiss 1965, 42–45, repr. 44; Preiss 1973, 18–51; Hubala 1981, 189, cat. G49, repr. 192)¹³, assigned to Rottmayr under some reserves [Fig. 6]. The theme is the abduction of Helen by the Achaeans after the conquest of Troy and her return to Sparta where, after reconciliation, she would be again Menelaos' wife (Homer, *Iliad*, VI, 321–369). Far from being a masterpiece the painting has some characteristics of Rottmayr's easel painting, a certain influence from Caravaggio and the chromatics in warm tones dominated by brown and red, but without the contrasts and nuances that were specific to the Austrian painter (Regarding the assignment of this painting to Rottmayr, see also: Mureșan 2005–2006, 120–121). The work also lacks the greatness of the composition and the rhetoric vigour of the characters' gestures – most of them rendered from backside (apart of Helen, nevertheless, her physiognomy is not clearly rendered). The drawing, the space and the volumes were quite clumsily built, quite far from

¹² *Dido's Suicide* (oil on copper plate, 28 x 38 cm). Signed right down on the step Bys-fecit, not dated, inv. 161.

¹³ *The Kidnapping of Helen* (oil on canvas, 84 x 74 cm), inv. 1058; Csaki assigned the work to Schönfeld. Pavel Preiss supposed Rottmayr as the author, commenting upon the work as a sketch by Rottmayr. More than that Preiss mentioned the work in another study about Rottmayr – the work being mentioned on page 34 with the reproduction of the work: *Abb. 19*, place where is also the date (um 1692). The one who contested the assignment to Rottmayr is the author of the 1981 monograph of the painter.

the art of the Austrian master of fresco that Rottmayr was. Similar to the approach of Byss in the painting *Dido*, the ship is not descriptively rendered, but only suggested through its sail on the mast.

Although between Schönfeld and Byss, respectively Rottmayr there are 50 years of artistic evolution of the German and Austrian painting, it is ascertained that they were all (in different epochs) under the influence of Italian painting in the manner in which they included boats and ships in the staffage meant to create a certain atmosphere. The mythological theme (as it was shown above) supposes harmonization within the composition obtained through a high reduction of the ambient elements that focuses the interest on the main mythological character, whose gestures and actions are clues and direction for the entire narration of the myth.

The tradition of the genre harbour scenes in the Dutch school persisted in the German and Austrian landscape, developing quite simultaneously with the marina landscape (and harbour) influenced by the Italian school of *seicento* and the beginning of *settecento*. Neither the sea nor the ships are the centre of interest of these works but they have a role in defining the ambient in which the scenes are presented, ships and boats constituting a necessary part of the background. Usually they join the architecture but more often they help to the building of the landscape with an important chromatic and compositional role.

The Austrian painter **Hans Graf** (1653–1710) was one of those who practiced the Dutch style, combining (in different “proportions”) the genre scene with the landscape, giving priority sometimes to the landscape-frame, some other times to the architectural frame in its assembly. In both types of paintings he preferred rendering the characters mostly as staffage with chromatic and dynamic importance, even if they would always be underlined as “collective character”, placed in the centre of the compositions (Félibien 1982, 56)¹⁴. The sea covers the smallest part in the compositions, nevertheless ships and boats are always present though with a minor part. *Landscape with Harbour* (cf. Csaki 1909, 136, cat. 439)¹⁵ [Fig. 7], in which the panorama

comprises hills, mountains and castles in the left background, and the sea in the right perspective, is flanked by powerful fortified tower, is a good example of the kind. In the centre of the composition, in the foreground the painter thoroughly rendered human moving silhouettes, emphasising them by games of light and shadow and a great chromatic diversity, suggesting this way the agitation of the harbour. Placed in the median part of the composition, the boats, somehow mixing with the characters and with quite a lot of merchandises on the shore and on the docks, are of small sizes, with a single mast and sail, being less outstanding, staying in the shadow rendered in dark tones, mostly in grey. The same ample composition, this time with a dominant landscape appears in the pendant of this painting: *Hilly Landscape with Harbour* (cf. Csaki 1909, 136–137, cat. 440)¹⁶ [Fig. 8]; the architecture are almost insignificant here, and the role and the number of boats is also diminished, the genre scene being the focus of the composition (Muresan 2011, 311).

The two harbour scenes of **Karl Eigen/Aigen** (1684–1762), Hans Graf's pupil, are also animated by staffage (people, horses, dogs etc.) better depicted than those in Graf's paintings, from a closer distance, comprised in limited areas, focused in the foreground and emphasized by the chromatic diversity, in strong, but finely harmonized contrasts. The pendant paintings: *Houses in the Harbour* (Csaki 1909, 34)¹⁷ [Fig. 9] and *Wall of a Harbour* (Csaki 1909, 34)¹⁸ [Fig. 10] from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum render genre scenes gathered among the verticals of the walls of some buildings and fortifications and those delimited by the masts with sails of the ships on the shore. These ships seem marginal within the compositions and too little emphasised by chromatic, becoming ambient presences with a passive role, meant to accentuate the scene in the foreground not to be the emphasized elements. Even the architectures are more important and more underlined in the assembly of the image than the ships (Mureşan 2011, 311–312)¹⁹.

¹⁶ *Hilly Landscape with Harbour* (oil on canvas, 35.5 x 46 cm), inv. 440.

¹⁷ *Houses in the Harbor* (oil on wood, 20 x 25 cm), inv. 98.

¹⁸ *The Wall of a Harbour* (oil on wood, 20 x 25 cm), inv. 99.

¹⁹ This is the reason why we included these works by Eigen in the same study about architecture within the easel painting.

¹⁴ “(...) taking into account that a painting is the image of a particular action, the painter must arrange the subject and to distribute the character function of the nature of the action he intends to represents”.

¹⁵ *Landscape with Harbor* (oil on canvas, 35 x 46 cm), inv. 439.

I should underline the detail that the Dutch flag on the masts of the ships is often depicted in the seascapes of the German painters from the 17th – 18th century, and also in those by Italian seascape painters. A possible explanation would be that the Dutch commercial fleet (and the war fleet) was the most active one and with the largest number of ships, omnipresent on the seas round Europe and on most of the oceanic routes. After the defeat of the “Invincible Armada” by the English (1588), the power of Spain was lowered progressively and quite rapidly while the Dutch Republic (in spite of the war with Spain) imposed itself as a great naval power of the 17th century, mainly after “the twelve years armistice” from 1609 in the Hague, which ended the first and the hardest part of it, even if the official admittance of the independence was only after the Peace Treaty in Münster (1648) that ended The Thirty Years’ War (Blin 2006, 123–210). Although in the 18th century after the wars with England (1652–1654; 1665–1667; 1672–1674) (Jones 1996, 107–215, 217–225) Holland lost the supremacy at sea, from the artistic point of view the Dutch seascape must have continued its success among the painters, supporters, and art lovers of the 17th and 18th centuries. Depict and own in the private collection seascapes *à la hollandaise* was in fashion, of *bon ton*, no matter if they were works by Italian, German or Austrian painters.

As a landscape painter of real success during his life **Christian Hülfgott Brand** (1695–1756) wasn’t truly interested in the “aquatic seascape”, and the work: *Landscape at the Sea Shore* (Csaki 1909, 37, cat. 108)²⁰ assigned to him (in the Brukenthal Art Gallery), represents an exception in the context of his creation. Though it resembles Graf’s painting mentioned above (inventory number 440), this work is of an inferior quality, because of the poor artistic effects, and landscape, genre scene, staffage and boats irrelevantly depicted. As a matter of fact (as we have seen) in many other cases the genre scene was in the attention of the painter and he imposed it to the onlooker, while the sea, the harbour, the town with its buildings and of course the bigger or smaller ships, appeared only as secondary elements of the ambient of the respective scene. The case of the German painter **F. V. Decler**, a less known artist, who seemed to have worked in Köln or Bonn at the end of the 18th century, is one of the most edifying in this respect. Two quite good works painted by him (pendants) in the

Brukenthal Art Gallery: *Harbour at Sea* (Csaki 1909, 73–74, cat. 219)²¹ and *Town with Harbour at Sea* (Csaki 1909, 74, cat. 220)²² [Fig. 11], combine the genre scene with the architecture landscape, in an animated and full of colour representation. While the monumental buildings and the fortifications were essential for the landscape of the scene, the presence of some boats at the sea shore could pass almost unobserved so the paintings were included in the study about the architecture in painting (Mureșan 2011, 311; see also repr. 11, 323, *Harbour at the Sea*, inv. 219). This type of Dutch inspiration combining the genre scene with the town architecture of a harbour were, during the 18th century, a little old fashioned for the public. This could have been the reason why the works by Declerc could be taken as ones by Sébastien Le Clerc the Old (1637–1714) (Thieme–Becker 1907–1950, vol. 220, 523–524) being quite often assigned to the latter (Thieme–Becker 1907–1950, vol. 8, 527), as with the paintings in the Museum in Sibiu, which were assigned by Theodor von Frimmel to Sébastien le Clerc (Frimmel 1894, 48).

Norbert Grund (1717–1767), a painter from Prague, came in contact with works by Graf, Eigen and Hülfgott Brand, being greatly influenced by Franz de Paula Ferg in Vienna. Later on he took over rhetorical elements of the landscape by Piazzetta and Tiepolo, and then some rococo effects of the French gallant scene. By the end of his life he adopted a gloomier and melancholic vision²³, in a manner that foresees the romantic painter, which can be recognized in his work in the Brukenthal Gallery (assigned with some doubts, to Norbert Brund): *Seascape* (Csaki 1909, 140, cat. 452)²⁴ [Fig. 12]. It is a “miniature” in dark tones, with a simple composition in which the foreground is animated by three staffage characters, a horse and a dog near some palace (or church) ruins. The centre of the composition is dominated by the silhouette of a ship with a tall vertical mast and rectangular sails fully unfolded profiling against the white greyish sky. Here is the centre of the composition, its main “character” bringing its contribution to the Romantic

²¹ *Harbour at the Sea* (oil on copper plate, 49 x 61 cm), inv. 219.

²² *Town with a Harbour at the Sea* (oil on canvas, 53 x 74 cm), inv. 220.

²³ “Its work isn’t so full of light, he chooses the hours of late afternoon and the clouds gather. He prefers the intimacy of some hidden corners...” – Jan who was the author of the painter’s monograph, wrote about this period of Grund’s landscapes

²⁴ *Seascape* (oil on wood, 20 x 27 cm), inv. 452.

²⁰ *Landscape at the Sea Shore* (oil on canvas, 53 x 74 cm), inv. 108.

atmosphere, silent, solemn, too close to the shore, without sailors, like a ghost that can call forth the “flying Dutch” to the nowadays watcher.

This new orientation in the landscape and seascape of the 18th century could be found in the works of the eldest son of Hülfgott Brand, who was also his pupil: **Johann Christian Brand** (1723–1795). He assimilated in his landscape some classical influences (Poussin, Lorrain), and adapted them to older traditions of the Dutch landscape having its origin in the works by van Goyen, Ruisdael and Hobbema; his compositions comprise a smaller number of characters, stressing on the depiction of nature, with play of light and clouds. This kind of landscape later evolved towards a kind of pre-romantic painting, inspired by the art of Salvator Rosa. Two landscapes by Johann Christian Brand²⁵, in the Brukenthal Collection: *Landscape with River and Castle in Ruins* (Csaki 1909, 40, cat. 122)²⁶ and *Landscape with a Castle in Ruins* (Csaki 1909, 40, cat. 123)²⁷ [Fig. 13] (probably from a late period of creation) are imbued with poetical contemplation, which would become specific for the romantics of the 19th century. Their entire imagistic properties that would be specific to this trend are presented here: ruins of castles, the vegetation in a gloomy atmosphere, the twilight reflected in the mirror of the water on which a boat is sailing... The entire landscape breathed an intimate atmosphere of dream and romantic melancholy to which the boat (although not of major importance), brings an important contribution.

There are few paintings in the Brukenthal Gallery belonging to the artists of the 19th century, among which one is signed by **Ludwig Hans Fisher** (1848–1915), Austrian painter and engraver, who studied at the Academy in Vienna. He worked in Rome, then travelled through Europe, Egypt and even India, painting a lot and making albums with prints of town- and landscapes. His work entitled *Rock Keys in Venice* (Csaki 1909, 40, cat. 123)²⁸

²⁵ In fact it's difficult to establish the dating because the landscapes had the atmosphere specific for the Romantic painting, but as technique they are closer to the Ruisdael's creation, by the manner of rendering the nature and by the chromatic unity obtained through applying many nuances and valour of brown, then through the effects of orange, attentively harmonized with green and grey-white of the sky and water.

²⁶ *Landscape with River and Castle in Ruins* (oil on wood, 16 x 20 cm), inv. 122.

²⁷ *Landscape with Castle in Ruins* (oil on wood, 16 x 20 cm), inv. 123.

²⁸ *Rock Keys in Venice* (oil on canvas, 42.5 x 68 cm), signed right down Ludwig Hans Fisher, inv. 377.

[Fig. 14], was bought by the Museum on the occasion of The International Art Exhibition organized in Sibiu in 1887 (Csaki 1909, 116; Mesea 2002) (year after which it can be approximately dated), for the sum of 250 florins (Mesea 2002, 302, especially the note 57, and 306, repr. 6).

The painter focuses upon the central motif, carefully and detailed rendered, while the background of the composition is less emphasized, both the line and the colour seeming covered in mist, thus conveying stronger compositional and chromatic unity.

Here, unlike the town landscapers, that continued more or less the line of veduta painters in the 18th century, Fischer didn't stress the depiction of buildings, monuments and architecture that gave personality to Venice emphasizing its picturesque. He insisted on every day life illustrating it with characters, the marina key of the town in the lagoon, not its beautiful channels flanked by palaces and famous buildings, among which some are real architectonic pearls. Even the specific gondolas remain almost unobserved among the fish boats with masts and rows that were anchored to the shore. Although suggested only like a volume, without details, the steam boat in the centre of the composition remained the main presence dominating through its massif almost threatening shape. The sea looks calm like a lake and is well rendered on the surface between the ship and the shore, unlike the foggy white of the sky that had too few nuances.

I conclude my research with the assertion that ships and boats appear in numerous representations, mostly within seascapes, being quite often in the position of “main character” of the representation. Other times, though appearing in secondary details of ambient, ships and boats are important elements within marina scenes or gender scenes. Though sometimes they are barely sketched they suggest navigation or adventure, often imbued with subtle allegorical values.

Continuing the essay dedicated to the importance of the architectural elements within the composition, this study could be resumed with future research dedicated to different details and elements that together build up the milieu / the background of the main subject of the painting, pointing to the fact that no matter the epoch, in art, as well as in life, details are often not only important but also significant.

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6. Johann M. Rottmayr, *The Kidnapping of Helen*



7. Hans Graf, *Landscape with Harbour*



8. Hans Graf, *Hilly Landscape with Harbour*



9. Karl Eigen, *Houses in the Harbour*



10. Karl Eigen, *The Wall of a Harbour*



11. F. V. Decler, *City with Harbour at the Sea*



12. Norbert Grund, *Seascape*



13. Johann Christian Brand, *Landscape with Castle in Ruins*



14. Ludwig Hans Fisher, *Rock Keys in Venice*

LUIGI MAYER AND HIS 18TH CENTURY VIEWS

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Abstract: *Luigi Mayer (1755–1803), an Italian painter born in Germany who lived for many years in Rome, was one of the artists from the 18th Century, which ventured to the East. He is a pre-Orientalist painter, known as the author of very precise views of the Middle East. For almost two decades (1776–1794) he was the official painter of Sir Robert Ainslie, the British ambassador at Constantinople. In the long return journey from Constantinople to London, undertaken on land because of the war with France, Luigi Mayer had the opportunity to capture on paper some pictures of nowadays Romania.*

Keywords: *Orientalism, travel, art, history, historical images, urban life.*

Rezumat: *Luigi Mayer și ale sale panorame urbane din secolul al XVIII-lea. Luigi Mayer (1755–1803), un pictor italian născut în Germania, care a trăit mulți ani la Roma, a fost unul dintre artiștii secolului al XVIII-lea care s-au aventurat în Est. Un pre-orientalist cunoscut ca autor al celor mai reușite vederi din Orientul Mijlociu, el a fost aproape două decenii (1776–1794) pictorul oficial al ambasadorului britanic la Constantinopol, Sir Robert Ainslie. În lunga călătorie de întoarcere de la Constantinopol la Londra, întreprinsă pe uscat din cauza războiului cu Franța, Luigi Mayer a imortalizat pe hârtie câteva imagini ale locurilor României de azi.*

Cuvinte cheie: *Orientalism, călătorie, artă, istorie, imagini istorice, viață urbană.*

By the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, two major events, one of artistic nature and the other political, produced a profound impact on book illustration. *Aquatinta*, a method developed in France and England, became the favourite method in the process of colouring books illustrations, because it imitated the watercolour painting, allowing the artist, engraver and editor to catch the beauty of watercolour and to offer it to a broader public. The revolutionary as well as the Napoleonic period, which widened the horizons of the Europeans, were of a major political effect, and also of a great upheaval in Europe. In this age of wars, the artists were those who travelled, especially to exotic regions, and depicted what they saw, thus offering an image of

the exterior world to those who were not able to travel. The success was owed especially to the skills of the engravers, who transformed these images into plates of some travel illustration books.

Even if Orientalism didn't turn out to be a rightly defined style until the 19th century (Thornton 1994, 4), its roots can be traced back starting from the general preference for the exotic in the 18th century. The oriental subjects were treated artistically through the registration of the picturesque by the travelling artists through the Oriental countries, in scenes evidently selected to suit the taste of a European public. A particular note made the work of the Swiss painter and engraver Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702–1789), who painted women, dressed in traditional Turkish costumes, giving a great deal of attention to the details, proving sensibility towards the subject. After spending four years in Constantinople, Liotard chose to keep his Turkish outfit and the beard, which he wore while he was abroad (Pre-Orientalism).

Another artist of the 18th century, who adventured himself into the Orient was Luigi Mayer (1755–

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1803), an Italian born in Germany who lived many years in Rome, where he was the student of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), one of the best artists of his time, well known for his *vedute* and *capprici*¹. A watercolour painter and drawer, the artist was for a while in the services of the Naples king, Ferdinand the IVth, for whom he painted views of Sicily (Abebooks). Luigi Mayer is a Pre-Orientalist painter, renowned as the author of the most precise illustrations from the Orient, before David Roberts, who produced the monumental volumes *The Holy Land* (1842) and *Illustrations from Ancient Egypt and Nubia* (1846) (Bernard 2007, 2).

The ambassador Robert Ainslie hired Luigi Mayer for almost two decades, the whole period of his diplomatic mandate. The artist was part of his escort in the long return journey from Constantinople to London, undertaken on land because of the war with France (Cernovodeanu 2001, 1220). Therefore he had the opportunity to capture on paper some pictures of Romanian Principalities and Transylvania lands, too.

Before taking a look at the images, let us find out whom the patron was.

Robert Ainslie (1730?–1812) was born into a family of seven children (four girls and three boys) of the nobleman George Ainslie and lady Jane, born Anstruther, Robert being the youngest son. His brothers were Knight Sir Phillip Ainslie and the infantry general George Ainslie (Grant 1885–1900).

Robert Ainslie was mentioned for the first time in the London Gazette on the 19th of September 1775 (London Gazette 1775, nr. 11598), who writes of his appointment as his Majesty ambassador at the Ottoman Porte, in the place of John Murray, deceased. On this occasion he was also knighted. He will hold the position of British ambassador in Constantinople from 2nd of October 1776 until 22nd of June 1794 (Cernovodeanu 1994, 129). It has been told, that he was Sultan Abdul Hamid I favourite and best companion (Biographical Dictionary 1842, 568–569).

Beginning with 8 September 1796 he will receive a lifelong pension and in the same month he was elected member of the Parliament (representing

Milborne Port, Somerset), a function which he kept until 1802. On the 13th of October, he became baronet, title that will be inherited by his nephew Robert Sharp Ainslie, son of general Ainslie, because his only son died on the 20th of December 1796, being the victim of violent fever.

Sir Robert Ainslie died aged 83, at Bath, on the 21st of July 1812 (Cernovodeanu 2001, 1221).

During the period he was ambassador, Robert Ainslie dedicated himself to research and collecting, accumulating an impressive number of coins from Eastern Europe, Asia Minor and Northern Africa (Cernovodeanu 2001, 1221). Domenico Sestini is the one who described the collection, in several works, the most ample of them, stretching over in five volumes, which was printed in many editions, being dedicated to Ainslie as *mecena* (Wikipedia).

Ainslie seemed to be happy with his new life in Constantinople. Unlike some of his predecessors, he adapted himself to the everyday life of the Turks. In his home, garden and at his table, he adopted the life style and manners of the rich Muslims, in short, he lived like a Turk, and this fact delighted the natives so much, that he became one of the most popular Christians of the time (Barnard, 2007, 2).

He was interested in all kinds of antiquities, natural history and the everyday life of the Orient. In consequence of these preoccupations he published – when he returned home to England – three volumes² rich in engravings after drawings made under his patronage. These are:

– *Views in Egypt: from the Original Drawings in the Possession of Sir Robert Ainslie, Taken During his embassy to Constantinople by Luigi Mayer; Engraved by and under the Direction of Thomas Milton*³; with *Historical Observations, and Incidental Illustrations of the Manners and Customs of the Natives of that Country*. London: Thomas Bensley for R. Bowyer, 1801 (other editions 1804, 1805);

– *Views in the Ottoman Empire, Chiefly in Caramania, a Part of Asia Minor Hitherto*

¹ About the illustrations of Luigi Mayer, because only few details are known about the artist's life, wrote, in chronological order: Octavian Lugoșianu (Lugoșianu 1911, 1912a, 1912b), Constantin I. Karadja (Karadja 1922, 1924), Marica Grigorescu (Grigorescu 1993), Paul Cernovodeanu (Cernovodeanu 1992, 1994, 2001).

² To be noted that the same typographer have worked all the volumes by (Thomas Bensley) for the same editor (R. – Richard or Robert? – Bowyer), but the engravers were different.

³ About the Englishman Thomas Milton (1743–1827) is written, that his works were of a special beauty and power, that the leafs of the trees and the texts of his engravings stood out through a great skill, that has never been achieved, before or after him (Wikisource; Artists Dictionary 1913).

Unexplored; with some Curious Selections from the Islands of Rhodes and Cyprus, and the Celebrated Cities of Corinth, Carthage and Tripoli: from the Original Drawings in the possession of Sir R. Ainslie, Taken During His Embassy to Constantinople. With Historical Observations and incidental Illustrations of the Manners and Customs of the Natives of the Country. R. Bowyer, London, 1803;

– *Views in Palestine, from the Original Drawings of Luigi Mayer, with an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Country, and its Remarkable Places. Vues en Palestine, d'après les dessins originaux de Luigi Mayer avec une relation historique et descriptive du pays et des lieux principaux qu'on y remarque.* Printed by T. Bensley for R. Bowyer, Gallery, Pall Mall [London], 1804.

In 1804 the three volumes were available bounded together, under the title *Views in Egypt, from the Original Drawings in the Possession of Sir Robert Ainslie, Taken during his Embassy to Constantinople. Views in Palestine. Views in the Ottoman Empire, Chiefly in Caramania*, London: T. Bensley, 1804 (Abebooks).

In total, 96 colour plates were published in these three volumes, out of which 54, respectively 71, will be published in *Views in Turkey ...*, respectively *Views in the Ottoman Dominions ...*, about which we will discuss further on. A selection of small and uncoloured engravings was printed in 1833 under the title *A Series of Twenty-four Views Illustrative of the Holy Scriptures. Selected from Sir Robert Ainslie's Celebrated Collections of Drawings in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Corinth, Ephesus, &c. &c. &c. Engraved and Coloured by, and under the Direction of J. Clarke. With a Geographical and Historical Account of each View*, printed by T. Bensley (Wikipedia, Rarebooks).

All the illustrations we are interested in, were made by the painter Luigi Mayer in 1794, and were printed for the first time in the year 1801, uncoloured, in the version published under the title *Views in Turkey in Europe and Asia, Comprising Romelia, Bulgaria, Walachia, Syria and Palestine. Selected from the Collection of Sir Robert Ainslie. Drawn by Luigi Mayer, and Engraved by William Watts*⁴, with an *Elucidative*

Letter-Press. Published March 1st 1801, by the Proprietor⁵, William Watts. No. 13, London Street, Fitzroy Square, London (with such success, that it has been reprinted in 1802, 1803 and 1807) (Grigorescu 1993, 74, note 2)⁶.

The 1810 (Grigorescu 1993, 74, note 6)⁷ edition – *Views in the Ottoman Dominions, in Europe, in Asia and some of the Mediterranean Islands, from the Original Drawings Taken for Sir Robert Ainslie by Luigi Mayer F.A.S. With Descriptions Historical and Illustrative*, London, Printed by T. Bensley for R. Bowyer, 1810, (second edition of *Views in Turkey ...*), with 32 pages of bilingual text, English and French – has those 71 engravings coloured by hand, being preceded by a historical text about the Ottoman Empire, confuse and incorrect, as a result of compilations by other authors, without direct connection with the represented scenes. But the way in which the artist perceived this area and its people is faithfully reproduced in drawings. Here and there can be found observations made by Luigi Mayer on the spot.

The print circulated also as loose leafs, a situation that often occurred in that period, the publication date being always specified on them.

The plate numbering and order differs in the two volumes.

worked in many European Countries. William Watts is also registered as “author” in plate inventories, in many special funds in which his illustrations or those after Luigi Mayer can be found. Watts also worked on the engravings from *Collection of Coloured Views in the Turkish Provinces with Descriptions in French and English*, printed in the same year, 1801, and illustrated also with images from the collection of Sir Robert Ainslie, made by Luigi Mayer.

⁵ William Watts was, probably, the “owner” of the right to use the illustrations, without being the so-called owner of the illustrations, which, by the year 1801, were sold by Sir Robert Ainslie.

⁶ One sample is kept at the Romanian National Library, Karadja fund, quote 29 – 19 / V 4 (Karadja 1922, 188; Cernovodeanu 2001, 1225). Another copy is kept at the Romanian National Art Museum – nr. inv. 23375 – but without the seven mentioned engravings. I found six out of seven inventoried plates in this institution's collection of prints: MNAR – 9891; MNAR – 11632; MNAR – 11633; MNAR – 11605; MNAR – 11623; MNAR – 11624.

⁷ One copy is kept at the library of the “Lucian Blaga” University Library in Cluj-Napoca, Album of Art fund, quote 138. At the end of the index card of the album, „N.B. Lipsă 6 tab.”, namely “N.B. Six plates are missing”, is specified. It is just about the six plates with images from our space, which were cut by Gheorghe Sion, the former owner of the book, in order to add them to his collection of prints. Parts of these are to be found in the Prints fund, quoted Stampe XVII/103, Stampe XVII/105, Stampe 19/13. Another copy has to be found at the Museum of Art in Tulcea, according to Marica Grigorescu.

⁴ Several engravers made plates after the drawings or watercolour paintings of Luigi Mayer, past Thomas Milton but all the illustrations that represent scenes from nowadays Romania were engraved by William Watts (1752 – 1851), a landscape painter, illustrator and very active engraver, who

The engravings⁸ that immortalize fragments of Romanian life are:

- *View of the Aluta*
- *Entrance to St. Mary's Convent*
- *Church & Convent of St. Mary*
- *Pitești*
- *View near București*
- *Palace at București*
- *Palace at București. Plate II.*

When I started out the documentation in order to transform a paper – presented at the National Session of the Romanian Commission of Towns History, organised together with the Museum of Brăila in 2011, on the topic “The daily urban life” – in an article, in the literature it was known about the existence of these seven images by Luigi Mayer. Different versions or editions of the plates were often reproduced, but only one original work was published in Romania, the one which was found by Constantin Karadja in a antiques store in London: *Fianco del Palazzo del Principe della Valachia nella città di București* (Side of the Palace of the Prince of Wallachia, in Bucharest) (Karadja 1922, 66 and Fig. 2)⁹.

Through the comparison of the original watercolour reproduction with different variants of prints worked after it, one can observe that in the prints hasn't been reproduced a part of the watercolour. Thus, two street lamps and a building from the left side of the bridge don't appear on prints (Karadja calls it yard) and a character – it seems to be a fisherman – painted somewhere between the two street lamps; in the watercolour painting, the four characters on the bridge are heading towards the same direction altogether, behind the carriage, but in the prints the direction of movement of the last character was changed, and the position of the other three characters inside the composition frame. Vague differences are also to be found in the representation of the characters from the foreground of the illustration or in the rendition of the architectural details.

Paul Cernovodeanu mentioned in a footnote of the article from 1994 that he knew (information given

by the English researcher Trevor J. Hope) about the existence of some “new engravings made by Mayer in Wallachia and the Carpathians” (Cernovodeanu 1994, 129, nota 2), in different collections. I didn't expected to be so lucky to trace back some of these, neither did I hoped that their number was, in fact, more than the double of the already known ones.

At the time of the writing of this article I identified eight further illustrations, six original watercolour paintings, painted by Luigi Mayer, and two engravings, made after his “original drawings”, as the source tells us. Most information about the inedited illustrations comes from the auction houses and antiques stores from United Kingdom and The United States of America. I present them below, in chronological order of their appearance on the market.

A first watercolour painting, *Veduta del villaggio di Gigesti nella Valakia presa da un casino alle sponde del fiume Argis* (The view of the Gigești village in Wallachia taken from the inn on the riverbank Argeș), was found in the catalogue of the “Leslie Hindman Auctioneers Inc.”, from Chicago-Illinois (Leslie Hindman 2009, 24–25). The text accompanying the reproduction says that it is an original watercolour painting, signed, a rare representation for the 18th century, of some Roma inhabitants of a farm near the village of Gigești in Romania¹⁰. In July 2009 it was estimated at 4000-6000 \$.

The next three watercolours, *Ballo di ragazze valacche osservato nella città di Giorsova* (Dance of the Wallachian girls in the town Giurgiu), *Dervisc ubbriaco, che predica agl'infedeli di Pitești nella Valachia* (Dervish who preaches to the unfaithful in Pitești, Wallachia) and *Spaziosa valle irrigata dal fiume Argis nella Valachia disegnata dal convito di S.M. Curle d. Argis* (The large Valley watered by the Argeș river viewed from the Curtea de Argeș Monastery), come from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. They were sold at an auction, on the 6th of October 2009, by the Irish from “James Adam & Sons Ltd. Fine Art Auctioneers & Values since 1887” (Adams 2009a, lot 539 and 541). On this occasion, besides many other objects, there were also auctioned 43 pictures of Luigi Mayer, in fact original watercolour paintings from the Robert Ainslie collection (Adams 2009b). In the presentation text

⁸ All these plates can be found at the Cabinet of Prints in the Romanian Academy Library, the first six under the quote AG IV 255 and the later, which doesn't appear in the album of 1810, under the quote Dr. – GE 18 I / Watts, W. 1.

⁹ By the owner himself, because the renowned collector bought it from an antiquarian who knew that it came from “the collection of a lord”, according to Constantin Karadja.

¹⁰ Unidentified locality, possibly vanished. It could be about Golești of Băilești or Golești of Ștefănești, or Gănești of Pietroșani, all in the Argeș County.

of this auction, we are told that even if Robert Ainslie sold his collection of paintings by Luigi Mayer in 1809, a part of the works were purchased by some members of the family and formed the basis of a new collection, to which there were added pieces collected by Charles Ainslie and P.H. Sandilands. In this structure, the collection was discovered with great surprise, by the family, but only at the time of Sir Ainslies Sandiland death (in the same year the auction took place). Even more interesting is their appearance due to the fact that the paintings were never exhibited, but were kept in portfolio: they were so fresh at the time of sale that they seemed just left the painter's brush (Adams 2009b). Perhaps from this their value, this time measured in money, not in their quality of historical documents. The 43 watercolours were sold with prices between 3000 and 30000 \$ each. The first two of the three inedited watercolour paintings, representing images from Wallachia, were sold together with 6000 \$ and the third with 6500 \$. It has to be mentioned, that on this auction there were sold (with 9000 \$ both) the two watercolour paintings representing the Curtea de Argeş Monastery – *Veduta del primo cortile del convento greco detto Curle d'Argis nella Valachia* (View of the first courtyard of the Greek Monastery from Curtea de Argeş in Wallachia) and *Veduta del secondo cortile con la chiesa del convento greco di S.M. Curle d'Argis nella Valachia* (View of the second courtyard of the Greek Monastery from Curtea de Argeş in Wallachia) –, which we already know through the reproduction prints.

The watercolour painting *Ingresso del Villaggio de Floresti nella Valachia Presa da una Collina Vicino la Fontana* (The Entrance in the village Floreşti¹¹ in Wallachia viewed from a hill near the fountain) (Bonhams 2011)¹², was sold on the 7th of December 2011, in London, by the British auction house “Bonhams 1793 Limited”, with 1876 £. This painting was probably bought by the “Abbott and Holder Ltd.” Gallery because it was for sale on its website, for 4000 £, on the list of objects, in February 2012 (Abbot & Holder 2012a; Abbot & Holder 2012b).

The representatives of “Abbott and Holder Ltd.” had the kindness to let me know, just when I was in the final phase of correcting this article, about

three new watercolours by Luigi Mayer (Abbot & Holder 2012c, nr. 72–74)¹³.

They comprise an previously unknown watercolour, *Parte del villaggio di Capociani con ponte del barche sul fiume Argis nella Valachia* (Part of the village of Capociani with bridge of boats on the river Argis in Wallachia) (Abbot & Holder 2012c, nr. 72), and the two watercolour paintings known only from prints representing the town of Piteşti – *Veduta di una parte del villaggio di Pitesti nella Valachia presa dalle sponde del fiume Argis* (View of a part of the town of Piteşti taken from the riverbank Argeş) (Abbot & Holder 2012c, nr. 73), and the view near Bucharest – *Chiesa con cimitero Greco nelle vicinanze de Bucaresti città capitale della Valachia* (Greek Church with cemetery near Bucharest, the capital town of Wallachia) (Abbot & Holder 2012c, nr. 74). Each of them can be bought for 4000 £.

In my search for works signed by Luigi Mayer I found two new plates, *Piazza nella città di Malinbok nel banato di Temesvar* (The square in the town Malinbok¹⁴ from the Banat of Timișoara), *copiato dal disegno originale de viaggio del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie nel 1794* (copied after the original drawing of the voyage of Sir Knight Robert Ainslie) (Dorotheum 2005, lot 179) and *Veduta Boscareccia tra le montagne di Transilvania sulli confini di Valachi* (The view of the forest from the Transylvanian Mountains at the frontier with Wallachia), *copiato dal disegno originale de viaggio del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie nel 1794* (copied after the original drawing of the voyage of Sir Knight Robert Ainslie) (Dorotheum 2005, lot 181), both sold by the famous house “Dorotheum” in Vienna, in the year 2005¹⁵.

With all these illustrations at hand, the route of the British, in the reconstruction of which the original numbering of the watercolour paintings can be helpful, seems to be this: in Wallachia they

¹¹ The village Floreşti is nowadays part of the commune Stoenesti, Giurgiu County, in the North West of Bucharest.

¹² Piece no. 197 of the total of 234 pieces of the auction.

¹³ The images reproduced in this article have been made available generously and promptly by “Abbott and Holder Ltd”. Renewed thanks to the “Abbott and Holder” house, especially to the director Philip Athill and to the partner Tom Edwards, who, after a short and efficient correspondence, gave me the permission to use them.

¹⁴ Unidentified locality. It is possible to be the locality Maşloc, in the Timiș County.

¹⁵ Information about prices is missing, this being accessible only for the costumers of the house (see the links).

passed through Giurgiu, Capociani¹⁶, Bucharest, Florești, Gigești, Pitești, Curtea de Argeș, they entered Transylvania through the Turnu Roșu pass and left it through the Banat in Timișoara. Accordingly, the order of the illustrations that describe settlements from Romania is the following:

– *Ballo di ragazze valacche osservato nella città di Giorsiova, Tavola no XLVII del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie* (Plate nr. 47 of the picturesque voyage of Sir Knight Robert Ainslie),

– *Parte del Vilagio di Capociani con Ponte del Barche sul Fiume Argis nella Valachia* (Plate nr. 50 of the voyage of ...),

– *Chiesa con cimitero Greco nelle vicinanze de Bucoresti città capitale della Valachia* (Plate nr. 51 of the voyage of ...),

– *Fianco del Palazzo del Principe della Valachia nella città di Bucoresti, Tavola no LIV del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie* (Plate nr. 54 of the voyage of ...),

– *Palace at Bucoresti. Plate II,*

– *Ingresso del Villaggio Floresti nella Valachia Presa da una Collina Vicino la Fonatana, Tavola no LVIII del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie* (Plate nr. 58 of the voyage of ...),

– *Veduta del villaggio di Gigesti nella Valakia presa da un casino alle sponde del fiume Argis* [plate nr. 59 or 60],

– *Dervisc ubbriaco, che predica agl' infedeli di Pitesti nella Valachia, Tavola no LXI del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie* (Plate nr. 61 of the voyage of ...),

– *Veduta di una parte del villaggio di Pitesti nella Valachia presa dale sponde del fiume Argis* (Plate nr. 62 of the voyage of ...),

– *Spaziosa valle irrigata dal fiume Argis nella Valachia disegnata dal convta di S.M. Curle d. Argis, Tavola no LXIII del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie* (Plate nr. 63 of the voyage of ...),

– *Veduta del primo cortile del convento greco detto Curle d'Argis nella Valachia, Tavola no LXIV del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere*

Roberto Ainslie (Plate nr. 64 of the voyage of ...) (Adams 2009a, lot 540)¹⁷,

– *Veduta del secondo cortile con la chiesa del convento greco di S.M. Curle d'Argis nella Valachia, Tavola no LXV del Viaggio pittoresco del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie* (Plate nr. 65 of the voyage of ...) (Adams 2009a, lot 540),

– *View of the Aluta,*

– *Piazza nella città di Malinbok nel banato di Temesvar, copiato dal disegno originale de viaggio del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie nel 1794,*

– *Veduta Boscareccia tra le montagne di Transilvania sulli confini di Valachi, copiato dal disegno originale de viaggio del Signor Cavaliere Roberto Ainslie nel 1794.*

The five illustrations, for which we do not have the original numbering of the painter, are placed in the list only provisory. The second illustration of the palace in Bucharest (with the interior scene) can be placed before or after plate nr. 54, while the illustration of Gigești was probably plate 59 or 60. Behind this argument is the geographical positioning of the locality Gigești, situated between Florești and Pitești.¹⁸

The same original numbering lets us understand that there were other watercolour paintings with topics from nowadays Romania. It seems that at least seven watercolour paintings with images from Wallachia are missing, but it is possible that there have been even more than seven, because the “borderline” view, that representing the Turnu Roșu pass, is not numbered. This argument leads to a total amount of at least nineteen watercolour paintings with subjects from Wallachia. It is very probable, that the number of illustrations from Transylvania, out of which we know only three, is much bigger, considering the large area covered and, why not, the beauty of the places through which the travellers passed.

In all of these illustrations, Luigi Mayer paid great attention not only to the architectural elements of the buildings, but local occupations, the clothes and characteristic details of the places crossed. If we watch his illustrations with great attention, we can find information of political and economical nature and also information about social and religious life. The artist portrayed sequences of

¹⁶ It must be the old village Copăceni, nowadays included in the homonymous commune from Ilfov County, situated 15 km South of Bucharest.

¹⁷ The legend of the original watercolor, from Country Collections at Slane Castle.

¹⁸ In this case, the village called “Gigești” could be Golești of Ștefănești, Argeș County.

daily life of the simple and plenty, but also aspects of the concerns of the upper class representatives.

The daily life is the focus in his original illustrations too, the ones remained unpublished out of unknown reasons and also unduplicated, because otherwise, they hadn't remain unknown: a dance scene in Giurgiu, with the coloured dresses of the girls and the characters beholding them; the sermon from the square in the town Pitești, with the dervishes and locals; the women from the foreground of the illustration at the entrance in the village Florești, spinning or washing and drying clothes, while in the background a character waters his horse and another two are in motion, on horse or by foot, heading towards the village; specific activities (the huge barrels handled by women can be noticed) in front of the Gigești inn, while the

characters from the building on the left look or supervise – in the distance, at the right of the illustration, a town can be seen, which could be Pitești, after the form and positioning of the steeples; the scenes with the travellers resting in the shadow, in a building that has a beautiful perspective over the valley of the Argeș river. It is presumed, that scenes from the category of everyday life were caught also in the two brand-new plates, images that were not yet reproduced in the place from where we obtained information about them.

With all exaggeration and inconsistencies of his illustrations, Luigi Mayer is the first artist who represented fragments of authentic Romanian life. From him, until the appearance of realistic partial urban views that the artists of the 19th Century performed, several decades had to pass.

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DIMITRIE DIMITRIU, THE PAINTER FROM WALLACHIA

Ioan Ovidiu ABRUDAN*

Abstract: Continuing the tradition of painters, from the south of the Carpathians, pilgrims through the Transylvanian lands, the artist born in Bucharest, Dimitrie Dimitriu, has marked his presence, during the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, in parts of Sibiu county and the Apuseni Mountains through an intense and, until recently, virtually ignored creative activity, performed in the field of church iconography, but also in the less explored contemporary genre painting. Endowed with plastic sense and a well mastered technique of rendering natural forms, he contributed, through icons or portraits made in places where he stopped, to the formation of the Romanian public taste for a new art, from whose horizon of spirit the dawn of modernity could be perceived.

Keywords: Dimitrie Dimitriu painter, forerunners of modern painting, portrait painters, the Church in the Pit, Sebeșul de Sus, Rășinari, Iacob Izdrail, Ioan Izdrail.

Rezumat: Dimitrie Dimitriu, pictorul din Țara Românească. Continuând tradiția pictorilor, de la sud de Carpați, peregrini prin ținuturile transilvănene, bucureșteanul Dimitrie Dimitriu și-a marcat prezența, vreme de un deceniu, cel de-al patrulea, al secolului XIX, prin părțile Sibiului și în ținutul Munților Apuseni, printr-o intensă și, până nu demult, aproape ignorată activitate, creativ desfășurată în domeniul iconografiei bisericești, dar și în cel, mai puțin explorat de contemporani, al picturii de gen. Înzestrat cu simț plastic și o tehnică, bine însușită, a redării formelor naturale el a contribuit prin icoane sau portrete executate în locurile pe unde a poposit, la formarea gustului publicului românesc pentru o artă nouă, la al cărei orizont de spirit mijeau zorii modernității.

Cuvinte cheie: Dimitrie Dimitriu zugrav, primitivii picturii moderne, pictori de portrete, Biserica din Groapă, Sebeșul de Sus, Rășinari, Iacob Izdrail, Ioan Izdrail.

Dimitrie Dimitriu was a portrait and icon painter whose known artistic activity can be tracked as it was developed over a relatively short period of time, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, in some localities in the southern parts of Transylvania and in the Apuseni Mountains region. Despite the small number of works preserved from him, Dimitriu drew the attention of certain historians, concerned mainly with the art of the "portrait painters" from early nineteenth century, who introduced in our country the new techniques and manner of Western painting, though using them only "timidly and hesitatingly" (Florea 1970, 106–107). The fact of having been noted, even if only in short, among the "pioneers" of new art is demonstrated by the fact that one of the works he has painted in this genre, namely the

portrait of a man, included in the collection of Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu, was reprinted three times: first in the volume entitled «*Primitivii*» picturii românești moderne (*Forerunners of Modern Romanian Painting*), by Andrei Cornea (Cornea 1980, il. 33), who dedicated him a brief characterization, then in the monumental synthesis of Vasile Florea, *Artă Românească modernă și contemporană* (Romanian Modern and Contemporary Art) (Florea 1982, 13) and, more recently, in a study by Elena Popescu, published in *Transylvania Magazine*, in Sibiu, entitled „Pictura românească din colecția Muzeului Brukenthal, secolele XIV–XIX” (“Romanian Painting from the Collection of Brukenthal Museum, 16–19 centuries”) (Popescu 2005, 126, il. 7).

The comments accompanying the images in the above mentioned publications unfortunately include very little detail with reference to either

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the biography of Dimitrie Dimitriu, or the circumstances in which the portrait referred to was painted. Information published so far with reference to the works produced by this artist in the domain of church painting are equally concise. This study aims to bring additional data about the Transylvanian career of Dimitriu the painter, by presenting several works identified only recently, bearing the signature of the author, as well as others, unsigned, but which may be assigned to Dimitriu, taking into account certain historical indications or based on stylistic analogies that may be established with the authenticated works by the author.

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The year of birth of the future painter is still unknown. We only know that he was born on the other side of the Carpathians, as he recommends himself as: "a Romanian from București, in Wallachia". Most certainly, Dimitrie Mitroviciu (the son of Dimitrie), or Dimitrie Dimitriu, as he used to sign, acquired his artistic skills in the capital of Wallachia as well, which he however put into practice, with virtuosity, among his compatriots from transalpine regions. By 1830, when he seems to have first arrived in Transylvania, Dimitrie Dimitriu's artistic formation was already accomplished, as demonstrated by the high quality of work performed during this period.

In the absence of direct information, we can only assume that, in the artistic formation of Dimitriu, we can identify the same stages completed by Nicolae Polcovnicu (1788–1842) or Nicolae Teodorescu (1786 or 1797–1880), painters of the same generation with Dimitriu, or by Grigorie Frujinescu, a painter from a previous generation.

Anyone who aspired to earn a living and in addition acquire some fame by practicing painting, had to spend six years as apprentice to a reputable master, then another six years working as journeyman, working with the master, in return for a salary. So, for example, happened with Grigorie, the son of the priest Tudor the painter, from Frunzânești village, near Bucharest, an artist considered today one of the forerunners of the realistic current in Romanian painting. He gained initiation into art working next to a painter he used to call "teacher Ioan", first as an apprentice, from 1766 on, and then as a journeyman, for other six years, starting in 1772 (Săndulescu-Verna 1937, 488).

For a century, between 1780 and 1880, young people could also acquire artistic instruction in a different way than individually, namely in the

schools of painting that operated in parallel, next to two monasteries in the vicinity of Bucharest (Ștefănescu 1969, 387; Oprescu 1958, 19). Chronologically, the school from Cernica was opened first, followed, shortly afterwards, by the painting class at Căldărușani Monastery, led in 1798 by lay painter Ivan Rusu and then, starting with 1803, by Matei Polcovnicu, the painter. Nicolae Teodorescu, future church painter and founder of the painting school in Buzău once joined the group of young people "who came from everywhere to acquire there the mastery of painting" (Meteș 1929, 10–11). Nicolae Polcovnicu was also among the disciples of monastic schools, and became a leading decorator, with murals and icons, of several churches and chapels, which belonged to the two monastic establishments (Georgescu, Stanciu 1973, 1290–1294).

Contemporary of Polcovnicu and Teodorescu, Dimitrie Dimitriu from Bucharest had all reasons to choose to enter, as disciple, one of the two monastery workshops. The production of these art schools, which can be found in the churches of Bucharest today, offers an interesting perspective, especially on the significance of the stylistic transfer from the ancient art of Byzantine character towards modern realism, a phenomenon that has influenced, silently, all Romanian art, once the craft of painting in oil was mastered by painters.

The system of artistic education adopted by the two monastic schools mentioned above, aimed not only at communicating the fundamentals of traditional iconography but also at helping students acquire abilities of realistically representing human figure and nature in general. In support of this assertion we could point out that the treasury of Căldărușani monastery includes at least 25 portraits of bishops and monks, made in early nineteenth century, all appearing to be works by apprentices (Ștefănescu 1969, 384) "animated by a new spirit, precisely because their authors have used the living model, studying with piety and artistic sense" (Ștefănescu 1969, 388).

Even though the works were produced in a conservative environment like that of some orthodox monasteries, such deviations from the specific processes of traditional painting should not surprise. As mentioned before, the signs indicating similarities between religious and secular art had already been recorded a quarter-century before 1800, in the creations of the master Grigorie Frujinescu. According to the findings of a commentator, Frujinescu was familiar with

rendering landscapes in perspective, which in the icons painted by him begin to replace the usual abstract background. The faces of saints "are very carefully represented by his hand in an interplay of natural light and shadow", proving that Grigorie the painter learned painting "not only by making copies, but also by painstakingly studying and understanding what he saw in reality" (Săndulescu-Verna 1937, 489–490). He was interested in the anatomy of the human body, studying it by looking at human bodies or at statues. By raccourci academic studies "on the muscles and movement of bodies, on natural shadows of bodies and on the shadow cast" Frujinescu proved that he adopted a different artistic creed than most of his fellow painters, a belief which would in exchange be adopted, with all the enthusiasm of youth, by the next generation of painters, led by Dimitrie Dimitriu.

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We do not know with certainty why Dimitrie Dimitriu chose to leave his native place and continue his life in Transylvania, for at least twenty years. However, we might assume that the decision was related to a characteristic phenomenon of the era. If, during the eighteenth century, in Bucharest and its surroundings, the building of worship places witnessed an impressive expansion, by the appearance of numerous foundations due not only to the support of rulers or members of the high aristocracy, but also to that of wealthy merchants and craftsmen, with the beginning of the nineteenth century this activity has declined sharply, which involved an almost equally strong reduction of the activity of church painting (Cornea 1980, 41). Consequently, one might assume that most fresco painters, as well as their journeymen and apprentices, could become icon painters and even "painters of portraits" (Cornea 1980, 42), by extending their qualifications and adapting to new realities. Perhaps such circumstances determined Dimitrie Dimitriu to leave Bucharest and move to Transylvania, where the frequency of orders seemed to be higher.

A first work undertaken by Dimitrie Dimitriu in Transylvania was completed, as we believe, in Sibiu, where he painted the imperial icons for the iconostasis of the Church in the Pit. This place of worship was built, as stated in the text of the inscriptions, "at the expense of Lady Stana Hagi Petru Luca... in 1788 and was committed in 1789". Destroyed as a result of the earthquake of October 26, 1802, the church was rebuilt from the foundation during the next year, "at the expense

of Hagi Consta[n]din Pop", Stana's son-in-law. Although the text of the inscriptions (Iorga 1906a, 179)¹ does not mention anything in this regard, it is known, however, that Hagi Constantin Pop, important member of the Greek merchant Company in Sibiu, contributed to the decoration of the church founded by his parents-in-law before the calamity, as he had also done in the case of another church, the so-called church of "the Greeks", in the care of members of the trading Company. Thus, in 1789, he hired the painter Constantine, "the clerk", from Braşov to paint "in accordance with the canon" four large icons for the iconostasis of the Church in the Pit in Sibiu" (Iorga 1906b, 238–9, n. V; Meteş 1929, 123). When, in 1803, the action of rebuilding the church was underway, the same merchant wrote to the abbot of Argeş Monastery, asking him to recommend "a worthy painter" to decorate with paintings the interior of the worship place (Iorga 1906b, 81). At the death of Hagi Constantin Pop², the work on the new church was still in progress, the task to carry it out being left to the merchant's descendants. In 1815, trying perhaps to recover as much as possible from the interior endowments of the church destroyed by the earthquake, Zenovie H.C. Pop sent some of the icons of the old temple to Cozia Monastery, in order to be restored by the painter Ilie, with whom his father, Constantin Hagi Pop, also collaborated (Iorga 1906b, 83).

An inscription on the railing of the mast (Iorga 1906a, 179) shows that Zenovie Hagi Constantin Pop and Maria Manicati have finished what, at the death of their parents, was still unfulfilled in the place of worship. To the pious memory of those whom they considered the true founders of the Church in the Pit, Zenovie and Maria placed, on December 26, 1831, in the nave³ (which indicates that the church was not until then painted in the

¹ Initially placed at the entrance of the church, the inscription, craved into marble, was later moved under the niche of the altar, in the main apse of the church.

² The event happened on October 30th 1808 (Iorga 1906c, 169 – 15, 17). The youngest son of Hagi Pop, Constantin (Dincă), which his father designated to take over the family business, also died soon after, at the age of only 19, on July 20th, 1809. The administration of the commercial company was eventually taken over by the eldest son of Hagi Pop, Zamfir (Zenovie H. C. Pop) and by a person close to the family, Stan Popovici. Păuna, the merchant's wife died in 1827. Except Zenovie, all family members are buried in the cemetery of the Church in the Pit.

³ In accordance with the votive inscription, on the railing of the mast.

interior and therefore there was no votive painting yet), three portraits painted in oil, representing their grandmother Stana and their parents, Constantin and Păuna, whose author, we believe, was a famous artist of the time in Sibiu, Franz Neuhauser the Younger (1763–1836).

Certainly, the endowment, with four new imperial icons, of the iconostasis partially recovered and restored, years ago, is also connected with the circumstances in which Zenovie Pop assumed the completion of works at the Church in the Pit. Artistically superior to all the other icons of the altar screen, the four imperial icons (Fig. 5, 9) bear no signature, but we are tempted to ascribe them to the painter Dimitrie Dimitriu from Wallachia.

The moment when these icons were dedicated to the Church in the Pit would be around the year 1831 when, considering that they have fulfilled their obligation to the memory of their parents, Zenovie Constantin Pop and Maria Manicati conceived the text of the votive inscription that was placed in the nave of the church, for perpetual memory. In 1836, shortly after he added his name among the benefactors of the place of worship, Zenovie left Sibiu, moving his businesses to Vienna, where he was to develop a brilliant career in finance.

The assumption regarding the paternity of the imperial icons of the Church in the Pit relies, for the time being, only on the correlation between the style in which they were painted and the artistic manner characteristic of Dimitrie Dimitriu, as it appears in the works that bear his signature. However, as we shall try to demonstrate at some point, there is another significant indication that justifies, we believe, this association. We shall only point out here that the authentication of the four imperial icons is made difficult because their original aspect has changed to quite a significant degree, when, in the seventh decade of the last century, they were committed for restoration to the painter Doina Veturia Papp (1907–1991).

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If it still remains to be demonstrated that the painting of icons in the Church in the Pit was done by Dimitrie Dimitriu, it is at least known that in 1832 the artist was present in Sibiu, where he was entrusted the execution of the imperial icons for the Orthodox Church in Sebeșul de Sus. The four icons, with frames decorated with beautiful carved ornaments, have been included in the religious art collection of the Archdiocese of Sibiu. The church in Sebeșul de Sus village, built

in 1760 and decorated with precious murals painted by Oprea Stan(ovici) of Sebis (Sebeșul de Sus), in 1774, was extended in the years 1909–1910. From the old building the narthex remained unchanged, where the corresponding segment of the original decor is preserved. When, in 1912, the painting of the church's nave and the apse of the altar was done by the painter Cabadaev, a new iconostasis being also mounted, the imperial icons painted by Dimitriu in 1832 were moved to the narthex, where they remained until 1974, when they were included in the collection of the Archdiocese of Sibiu.

Two of the icons on wood, initially placed in the church in Sebeșul de Sus, have inscriptions presenting the author's signature, date, and the indication that they had been made in Sibiu. In all four cases, the name of their donor is also mentioned.

The icon of Christ – *The High Priest*⁴ (Fig. 1, 2) was painted in tempera on wood and gold, on preparation background. The frame, richly decorated with sculptural work, is probably the work of the master Iosif Bârsan from Râșinari, with whom Dimitriu collaborated on other occasions as well. It presents polychrome work on a background of gold and silver.

The Saviour appears in the front, in His entire figure, standing on a richly decorated throne. His dress resemble the liturgical vestments worn by Orthodox bishops: a coat with golden gallon and precious stones, in which a blend of alabaster thread forms clusters of acanthus leaves; on the cloth of the omphorion, which has the colour of pearl, red crosses are applied, as well as cvadrilobes and embroidered models representing bunches of leaves, poppies and wild roses; the mitre, which is also gilded, is decorated with jewels and ornaments of pearl necklaces; the pectoral cross and the engolpion complete the liturgical ceremonial dress of the high priest, as well as nabadrennik. The Gospel, held open on Christ's knees, who blesses the pious, offers to readers the usual reading piece inspired by Matthew (Mt. 25, 34): "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"⁵.

⁴ No. 138 on the inventory list, 0.75×0.53 cm, frame with ornaments in polychrome relief. Pyrography on the back says *Nicolae sin founder*.

⁵ All biblical quotations included in this paper are taken from *The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Published by Thunder Bay Press, An imprint of the Advantage Publishers Group, San Diego, CA, 2000.

Rendered by Dimitrie Dimitriu in naturalistic key, the image of the Saviour presents fine distinct features. The slight pallor of the face blurs the shadows, making it seem devoid of relief, as in the portraits of Byzantine tradition. The distanced eyes surround one with their serene regard, contributing to feelings of confidence, communicated by Christ's gracious expression. The lively chromatic, combining tones of red, blue, green and yellow-orange, as well as the impressive accuracy of detail, especially in representing clothes, confers a deep decorative accent to the work. In this respect, although the author firmly adopted the Western manner of painting, he proved to be still attached to certain specific values of the Byzantine style.

The icon of the Virgin and Child⁶ (Fig. 3) is painted in tempera on wood and gold, on preparation fund. The frame combines geometric and floral motives. The figures are represented in their complete and natural proportions. Our Lady, like an empress, sits on a throne decorated in the Baroque style. Over the blue tunic she wears amaphorion coloured in cinnabar red, with green linen and gold gallon. The thin stem of the lily held in her left hand is in blossom, symbolizing the Virgin's untouched purity. The Saviour is protected by the arm of the Virgin, who holds Him on her knees. Clothed in white tunic and yellow cloak, Jesus blesses believers, holding the *globus cruciger* and the emperor's scepter in His left hand. Their faces, with delicate features, displaying reserved attitudes, are enveloped by the same atmosphere of serenity.

In the icon of Lord's Forerunner⁷, winged, Dimitrie Dimitriu represented the saint in his whole figure, on a landscape background, with shady trees. He is dressed in his usual red tunic of goat hair and over the shoulder he wears a robe woven in light blue thread. In his left hand he carries a frontlet that reads the well-known fragment that summarizes the essence of John the Baptist's preaching: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand... therefore every tree which

bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Mat. 3, 1–10). Under the high forehead the bright eyes are shining clear, looking right at the ones contemplating the icon and thus strengthening the urge to recollect. The noble features and the discrete attitude announce the manner in which the painters of the next generation, George Tatarescu and Nicolae Grigorescu, will portray John the Baptist.

The imperial icon of St. Nicholas⁸ (Fig. 4) actually represents the patron saints of the church and is the only one among the four that bears on its front side the author's signature (marked with white paint, against the dark background of the painting, in the left corner, down): *Sibiiu in 16 October., 1832. Dimitrie Dimitriu, painter.*

The priestly robes of St. Nicholas are similar, in every detail, with those worn by the Saviour – *High Priest*, the icon presented above. The only difference is the colour, red instead of blue, of the coat of the holy bishop, who is holding in his hands the Gospel book with its covers locked. According to the scheme established in Eastern iconographic tradition, the bishop of Myra is framed by the Saviour and Our Lady, the Mother of God, represented in the bust, symbolically handing the Gospel and the omophorion to St. Nicholas.

A detail should be mentioned here in relation to this icon, namely that the figure of the hierarch is placed in a room that opens, through the door of a terrace, to a garden with trees. The heavenly vision, in which the Saviour and Virgin Mary appear surrounded by clouds, and the decoupage of nature introduced in the background of the composition, mark an overlapping of plans that is unusual and really interesting.

The ornaments carved in frames are provided with canopies in the Baroque manner, garlands woven from flower stems. It should be noted that geometric motives, such as the torsade, are combined with elements inspired by floral shapes, especially phytomorphic ornaments. If only the rose was chosen from among flowers, the sculptor chose instead from a variety of types of leaves, from lanceolates to leaves with lobes, such as those of the oak, acanthus and laurel, just like the ones which form crowns placed around medallions painted with symbols ("The watchful eye" – in the icon of Christ and "The Holy Spirit

⁶ No. 143 on the inventory list 0.75×0.53 cm, frame with ornaments in polychrome relief. The inscription on the back, on the upper side, says: *Memory eternal. Sibiu, 4th of June 1832. Dimitrie Dim.* Below, another inscription: *Ioan Solomon and Bunea Donomețu, together with founders Onea Mateiaș and Mayor Nicolae sin.*

⁷ No. 145 on the inventory list. 0.75×0.53 cm, frame with ornaments in polychrome relief. The inscription on the back: *This holy icon was paid by Ioan Popa, Ioan Mateiaș, mayor and founder.*

⁸ No. 144 on the inventory list. The inscription, in this case painted, appears on the surface of the icon, on the down left corner: *Sibiiu, in 16 octom. 1832. Dimitrie Dimitriu zugrav.*

like a dove" – in the case of the icon of Our Lady and Child).

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The next achievement of Dimitrie Dimitriu was another set of icons that were bound for the temple of the church "St. Trinity" of Rășinari. This second church⁹, in the largest Romanian village of Mărginimea Sibiului, "located just 5 hours of traveling from the border with Walachia" (Lupaș 1928, 21), was built in a longer period of time, between 1801 and 1814, and was consecrated in 1815 by bishop Vasile Moga. In a study dedicated to the history of this monument, the archpriest Emilian Cioran explained as follows the circumstances which made the iconostasis we talk about to be installed only after two decades from the dedication of the worship place. "At the completion of the church, the altar was made of wall, until 1830, when the opinion of an engineer in Sibiu, A. Adam, was considered – the altar to be removed, because the divine service fulfilled by the priests behind that wall, could not be heard very well in other parts of the church. The engineer opined, at the request of the jury, that the wall could be removed from the altar, "as it was added among the walls of the sanctuary only after the building of the church". In the same year a contract with Petru Ștefan "sculptor" is signed, to make a temple sculpture and painting at the price of 2900 aus. fl. According to tradition, the temple was carved in the house of the "priest Dan"¹⁰. On the imperial icons we read: "They were painted in Râmnic by Dimitrie Dimitriu painter, in January 16, 1834". On the temple it is written: "These together with the cross, the sun and the moon are paid to be painted by the gentleman Coman, the son of Dumitru Isdrail, mayor, to their eternal memory 1833. Rășinari" (Cioran 1942, 167, 168). Up to the present we could identify only the autographic inscription of *Dimitrie Dimitriu painter*, placed on the imperial icon depicting Virgin Mary. In the seventy years, that passed since they were transcribed by Father Emilian Cioran, the words, written on four lines, were removed almost completely. One can still make them out in the narrow space between the frame of the painting and right leg of the chair on which Our Lady is sitting.

⁹ Known as the "new", the "larger" church, the church in the "field", in the "cross", or "Copacele", according to the name of the hill on which it was built.

¹⁰ Actually it is the priest Daniil (Dan) Popovici Barcianu (1817–1867), the paternal great-grandfather of Octavian Goga

Thus, taking into account the data mentioned up to now, we can conclude that Dimitrie Dimitriu spent one year, from the end of November 1832 until early January 1834, at Râmnic, where he worked at the iconographic ensemble that was intended for Rășinari. This includes, in addition to the four imperial icons¹¹ two other icons, mounted on the deacon doors, painted on large, oval panels¹². In addition, to each of the major icons corresponds one tondo (a work depicting an Old Testament theme¹³) arranged below, respectively, a pair of small diamond boards (with topics inspired by the cycle of Feasts¹⁴), placed on top.

Besides these, there are the two icons with circular frames¹⁵ above the imperial doors, as well as a large icon of Christ, mounted on the back of the bishop's throne (Fig. 10). The latter is very similar, if not entirely identical to the imperial icon, with the same subject, found on the altar screen of the Church in the Pit (Fig. 9), which eliminates any doubt that Dimitrie Dimitriu was, around the year 1831, the author of the paintings done there.

Unlike the assemblies executed before, the monumentality of the one in Rășinari is more remarkable. Watching it as a whole, with the wide horizontal and vertical deployment of registers with shaped ornaments, gilded with gold, by which the icons painted in animated notes become distinguished in the most brilliant way, the iconostasis of the Holy Trinity Church is part of a series of most remarkable achievements of the genre, among the entire artistic Transylvanian production of the century. Relating them to the fund of the known activities of Dimitrie Dimitriu, the panels from Rășinari are undoubtedly his masterpieces of religious art.

There is an obvious relationship, if we consider the physiognomic type, imagined by Dimitriu for

¹¹ From left to right: Saint Nicholas, Virgin Mary with Child between the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, Deisis, The Holy Trinity.

¹² They represent the right priest of the Old Testament, Aaron and Melchizedek.

¹³ From left to right there are medallions presenting the following subjects: Noah leaving the Ark, the original sin, Abraham's sacrifice, the blessing of Isaac.

¹⁴ From left to right there are the following pairs of iconographic subjects: The Feast of the Annunciation, the Assumption of the Virgin, The Birth of the Virgin, Mary's entrance into the Church, the Entrance in Jerusalem, the Transfiguration, the Circumcision, Abraham receives God at the oak in Mamvri.

¹⁵ Christ's baptism and the Resurrection are represented.

each of the saints painted by him, especially if we compare the icons in Rășinari with the ones made for the church in Sebeșul de Sus. This relation highlights a feature of his style, resulting from the effort to preserve the hieratic appearance, even in the case of some realistic representations. At Rășinari, the representation of St. Nicholas' face (Fig. 6, 7) is particularly interesting. The painter imagined him in the imperial icon as a character with serious expression and individual traits. We conclude that Dimitrie Dimitriu used, in this case as well, the procedure that became typical for his manner of painting, namely a more pronounced distance between the eyes, which thus confers the sensation of magnetism in the regard of the holy bishop. Reconstructing the physiognomy of the man that reached old age with anatomical understanding, as evidenced by the gray hair, beard and moustache, the artist managed however to attenuate the too abrupt transitions between different planes of the figure, melting the shadows, so that the signs of old age were almost removed.

In the church in Rășinari, the qualities of Dimitrie Dimitriu as portrait painter are complemented by his genuine talent as a composer of gospel scenes or of those inspired by the Old Testament, represented in miniature panels, placed above or below the imperial icons. As if aware that such small images will escape to the eye unaccustomed with artistic creations, the author, detached from the rigors of decorativism, allowed himself a surprising ease in the concise, almost rough presentation of some compositions such as, for example, that showing the original sin (Fig. 8). Two naked persons, bathed in the milky light of a meridional morning, stand out against the dark green background of a curtain of cypress and palm trees, behind which the sea seems to be perceived. The Snake coils around the paradise tree, and its scales slip so naturally that one seem to feel their frozen touch.

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As we stated earlier in this study, it seems that, once he arrived in Transylvania, Dimitrie Dimitriu first settled in Sibiu, living either in the town or, more likely, in the Romanian nearby village Rășinari, where other painters from Wallachia had lived, for certain periods of time, before him. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that Dimitrie Dimitriu painted several portraits, choosing models right from the inhabitants of that mountain village and thereby revealing an aspect of his preoccupations that placed him in the category of "portrait painters and at the same time painters of

churches" (Cornea 1980, 42). Painting portraits in the Western, or "genre"-style, as it is called, was a novelty for the Romanian Transylvanian society of that period, and therefore we can easily imagine how much interest aroused, among certain inhabitants of Rășinari, the presence in their village of a painter with such unusual skills.

The first portrait in the series completed by Dimitriu in Rășinari, appears to be a tribute dedicated to a venerable member of the Orthodox clergy. The gesture of the travelling painter may be interpreted in this case as a reward, in return for the good accommodation he enjoyed, probably in the parish house. Dean Cioran gave this information to the historian Ștefan Meteș, who considers that Dimitriu, the talented painter from Wallachia, had painted, in 1832 "the beautiful face of priest Iacob Izrail from Rășinari" (Meteș 1929, 129, n.13). According to the same historian, the portrait belonged to Goga family. Attached, it seems, to that picture, which represented his great-grandfather on the maternal side (Popa 2007, 94, n. 315)¹⁶ to whom the poet was so fond in his childhood, he took it with himself, keeping it for a while in the residence he built in Ciucea (Meteș 1929, 130).

What we could find out up to now as regards the fate of the painting is that it no longer belongs to the fine art collection in the castle, which in the meantime has become a memorial museum¹⁷. We found, however, in the old house of Goga family in Rășinari, a portrait (Fig. 12) that seems to correspond to the description given by Ștefan Meteș. We could therefore presume, at some point, that the painting was placed among the old furniture objects inside the house on the Street of Priests.

It is known that Iacob Izrail (Izdrail) was a parish priest in Rășinari, between 1761 and 1809 (Popa 2007, 94). His name was mentioned in 1815, officiating in the group of priests, led by Bishop Vasile Moga, the consecration service of Holy Trinity Church in Rășinari (Cioran 1942, 170). Son of the Orthodox priest Man (Maniu) Izdail (1733–1784), he succeeded the latter in the

¹⁶ The son of Iacob, Ioan Isdrailă, was also priest in Rășinari and the father of Maria Isdrailă, who married Ioan Bratul, a nephew of Daniil Popovici Barcianu. They gave birth to Aurelia Paraschiva, the future wife of priest Iosif Goga. These two are the parents of poet Octavian Goga.

¹⁷ See the list of mobile cultural artefacts in the collection of "O. Goga" Museum from Ciucea, classified in the Cultural National Patrimony and found in the evidence of CIMEC.

ministry, being ordained, in 1761, by Gregory, bishop of Râmnic (Iorga 1902, 89; Meteş 1928, 60). Being an old friend of priest Man, Grigorie Socoteanu, once he became bishop, in 1749, took Iacob with him to Râmnic, being careful so as the young man would get a good education and later, in 1754, married him with Stana, daughter of the Orthodox priest in Sadu, in the church of Sărăcineşti monastery (Iorga 1906a, 155, nr. 531). When he left to study at Râmnic, Iacob must have been aged about ten to fifteen years, maybe even older, considering that in 1748, he signed as Iacob deacon (Iorga 1906a, 155) on the pages of a Homily. In addition, Bishop Grigorie wrote in a letter to Dionisie Novacovici that during "the past riots", he was hosted, for half a year, in the house of priest Man in Răşinari, and that Iacob was then a small child (Iorga 1906a, 155). Historian Marius Porumb believes that the "riot" mentioned by Grigore was in fact the Russian-Austrian-Turkish war of 1735–1739 (Porumb 2003, 46, n.26). Therefore, we may fix, in relative terms, Iacob's date of birth, early in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century. That being so, in 1832, when the portrait that probably represents Iacob Izdrail is dated, the priest must have been almost one hundred years. Maybe it is worth mentioning here, to prevent any confusion about Iacob's old age, that he was not the only centenary priest of the time, as the archpriest Coman Bârsan also moved into eternity in 1804, but not before reaching the age of 105.

The painter depicted the face of the venerable priest Iacob in such a way that it resembles the features of the biblical patriarch, with beard and long hair, bleached like the wool, by the years that passed over him. The book held high on the character's chest becomes a sign of the high vocation to which he devoted seven decades of his long life. Dressed with over-cassock, padded and lined along the edges with white lamb fur, to compensate for the weakness of the body, old Iacob, following the parable of the Good Shepherd, guided his flock on the paths of justice, as right is in the picture the path that ascends the hill "from among the crosses" and leads towards the church, recently consecrated. Its proud silhouette can be seen through the open window on a wall in the room where Iacob poses. The painter created a fictional background, because, from where the house built by Iacob's father, priest Maniu Izdrail, the big church could not be seen. However, that placement has a symbolic value, corresponding to the votive attitude adopted by Iacob who, as it is known, was

concerned with completing the construction of the worship place.

The assumption that Dimitriu was hosted in the home of Izdrail family was confirmed when I was offered the opportunity to see, by the courtesy of its current owners¹⁸, another original portrait (Fig. 13), painted in oil on canvas, representing the son of Iacob, the priest from Răşinari Ioan Izdrail, the great-grandfather, as mentioned before, of the poet born in Răşinari. It was really a revelation, because the way in which the appearance of exquisite beauty and spiritual subtlety was rendered and, especially, the way in which the purity of the young priest's eyes was caught left no doubt that I beheld another work, unsigned, of the painter Dimitrie Dimitriu. On a canvas, of not more than 30 × 25 cm, the artist represented the figure, the bust, of the priest wearing a cassock and a clerical belt, cut so as to close along the chest with a long row of buttons. The left arm is left down along the body, while the right hand, slightly disproportionate in relation to the rest of the figure, holds a little book with green cover, which the character seems to have stopped reading just a moment before, to raise his head and look in the direction suggested by the painter.

On the back panel of the painting in oil there are some interesting clues. On one side of the wooden frame the figures of the year 1834 are inlaid, and on the back of the canvas two pieces of paper with handwritten notes were glued, the first containing a record of a trivial fact, while the second, with more important content, includes information concerning the identity of the character portrayed, as well as the name of the persons who inherited the painting, up to the moment of the respective recording. In the first text, written in ink, the following words can be read: "The shop started to sell to the Germans on 20/X 897 October 20 aged 15 ½ years"¹⁹. The second note reads as follows: "Father Ioan Isdrail, parish priest in Resinar in 1834 (In the same line, but on the breadth of the sheet, noted in other handwriting, probably more

¹⁸ The last owner of the painting is Mrs. Maria Răspop, the wife of Mircea Răspop (1929–2009), the son of the famous merchant from Sibiu Ioan Răspop (1892–1951) and of Aniţa Răspop (1900–1941), born Izdrailă, who inherited the painting from her maternal grandmother, Constanţa, the wife of an important merchant from Răşinari, Iacob Isdrailă (1856–1941), nicknamed "Chelaru". They are all direct descendants of the priest from Răşinari who lived during the 18th and the 19th centuries and had the name Izdrail.

¹⁹ „Început bolda (the shop) a vinde în luna 20/X897 la nemţi 20 octombrie în etate de 15½ an”

recently: Father Ioan Isdrailă deceased in 1837). [When] he died his son Nicolae Isdrailă remained but he also died in 1890, and it remained as souvenir to the son of Nicolae Isdrailă, the eldest one Ioan Isdrailu at the death of his parents, his father and his mothers, with Ioan Isdrailă who died on 2nd of August 1899 and it remained to his son Nicolaie²⁰.

The portraits of the two priests, painted by Dimitrie Dimitriu in 1832 and respectively in 1834, naturally aroused admiration, and probably made some of the village leaders to want something like that. This explains why, one year later, the artist returned to Rășinari, demonstrating again his talent as portrait painter. At that moment he painted, in oil on canvas, the face of another local (Fig. 14).

This painting (now at Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu) depicts the bust of a young person in the specific man clothes for the village in Mărginimea Sibiului. The author's signature and the date when the work was performed appear down, on the left corner of the painting, formulated as follows: "this was portrayed by Dimitrie Dimitriu, painter, on February 6, 1835". The artist's name appears inscribed once again on the wooden frame on which the canvas is stretched²¹.

As shown before, the portrait was published three times, under the title: "Herder Milaș" (Cornea 1980, il. 33, Florea 1982, 13) or "Peasant Miloș" (Popescu 2005, 126, 130, il. 7). Both names are curious and do not have, as we could see, any relation to the painting. Names such as Milaș and even less, Miloș are not currently known in Rășinari, as they were not known in the past, as one can observe reading the list of names or surnames compiled by Victor Păcală, for the village monograph published in 1915 (Păcală 1915, 133–135). Besides, the word herder (mocan) has never been common in the region of Sibiu, as the man breeding sheep was always designated there by the word shepherd (cioban).

²⁰ *Părintele Ioan Isdrail paroh în Resinar la 1834. Preotul Ioan Isdrailă [a] răposat în 1837. [Când a] Reposat au remasu fiului seu Nicolaie Isdraila și densu au reposat la A° 1890, și l[-]au luotu ca suvenire fiulu[i] lui Nicolaie Isdraila, celu[i] mai mare Ioan Isdrailu după moartea părinților a tati și mamei, cu Ioan Isdraila au reposatu în 2 August 1899 și au remasu fiul[ui] lui Nicolaie.*

²¹ The original frame being very old, it has been replaced in January 1996. The inscription that was copied includes the following words: *sculptor D. Dimitriu painter, in 1834.*

The identification of the character in Dimitriu's painting, as presented in the above mentioned publications, is probably due to an error in deciphering one of the text fragments written by the painter in different places on the surface of the canvas.

The last person in the line of the family who owned the painting, now at an advanced age, donated it to the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu in 1960. He said that his father, who lived from 1874 to 1944, inherited the portrait directly from the person represented in it, one of his great-grandfathers from Rășinari, named Șerb Jianu (Șerb being the Christian name). We know, thanks to the words marked directly on canvas by the very author of the painting that, in 1835, when the portrait was completed, his model was "aged 34 years", being therefore born in 1801.

According to the opinions expressed years ago by the art historian Andrei Cornea, the portrait by Dimitriu would correspond, on the one hand, to that type of work that reflects "a certain desire to advance socially – or even a form of upstartism – of the one who is represented. The herder appears as a peasant that managed to reach a certain flourishing condition, which makes him confident, arrogant, because, of course, he hired shepherds and had many sheep. The artist suggests this, painting a small bucolic landscape, with flocks and shepherds, seen through a window behind the character" (Cornea 1980, 97). There is, on the other hand, a point of view of the painter, who "seeks to affirm through the image, as insistently and as «demagogic» as possible, his commitment to modernism, and prefers to drive out and hide in the shadows both past and tradition ... The pictorial result of such views soon becomes obvious. From the border of a tiny canvas, herder Milaș appears in front of our eyes with the monumental dignity of a condottiere of the Renaissance, though he preferred to wear the dress of a peasant from Transylvania. This «Renaissance» air is emphasized, of course, by the beautiful view of a window with semicircular upper edge that opens behind the character, but also by the generously built figure, the proud face, of which three quarters may be seen, and finally, by the vigorous white of the garment, which contrasts with the darker background..." (Cornea 1980, 98). Andrei Cornea further notes that „in the grandiloquent «discourse» there are some «false notes», and the so inspired preaching in favour of modernism is, in fact, interspersed by... votive reminiscences. Thus, the right hand, brought over the girdle, ... seems to have been taken from the

wall of some church fresco, the sketching of the head undoubtedly resembles the design of heads belonging to founder peasants, painted on the naves of medieval buildings" (Cornea 1980, 99). The votive scheme, to which the image corresponds, is completed, we would add, by the insertion in the pictorial field of a short but significant Bible verse: *Lord feeds me and I will not miss anything*²², taken from Psalm 22,1.

Another portrait (37×27cm), almost identical to that preserved in Brukenthal National Museum, in terms of manner of layout, the character's attitude and clothing, was found by me in Rășinari (Fig. 15), and is owned by descendants of the family represented. Though it is not signed, it has the date of its completion, 1835 written on the left bottom side of the image.

The man represented wears, just like Șerb Jianu, a leather sleeveless waistcoat over a linen white shirt, though he seems older than the latter, but not much older. The black hair, cut short above the shoulders, surrounds the bright face, with firmly contoured features. According to the information provided by the holder of the portrait, the painting represents one of her ancestors, who was called Coman Mitrea. This name is linked to the tradition of the foundation, in 1883, of a triptych in Rășinari, known as "Mitrea's Cross".

More accurate information is provided by a notarized document signed in June 1833, which recorded the sale of land belonging to the village, in the place called Trăineii, near the border with Poplaca, the money obtained being dedicated to pay for the flooring of the new church altar. The certificate, published by Father Emilian Cioran (Cioran 1943, 168,169), bears the signature of mayor Petru Vidrighin and of several witnesses, including the centurion Coman Mitrea. Therefore the man whose face was painted by Dimitrie Dimitriu in 1835, occupied a leading position in the administration of Rășinari village and probably in parish council of Holy Trinity church.

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During the pilgrimage of Dimitrie Dimitriu in Transylvania, the year 1835 marked not only the separation of the painter from Sibiu county, but also the beginning of a new phase, which we could place under the sign of the intersection of his artistic activity with that of the famous painter Simon Silaghi-Sălăjeanu, founder of school in Abrud (Ionescu 2005, 160).

The meeting occurred, at least at the beginning, only through works signed by the two. For the first time their names are found together in a note written in 1836 by the very hand of Dimitrie Dimitriu on the back of the iconostasis of the church, built in the eighteenth century, from Bucium-Izbita (Alba county) (Lupaș 1926, 15; Meteș 1929, 118; Porumb 2003, 134; Cristache-Panait 1984, 87, fig. 25), a place with historic resonance and gateway to the famous Țara Moților. The text contains two paragraphs that read as follows: "In the days of the too enlightened and too gracious D[istinguished] Bishop E. Vasile Moga and former H[onest] Dean Iosif Ighian (of Zlatna, o.n.) this temple was made on the expense of fa[ther] Georgie Suci[u], Orthodox parish priest from Izbita, being began in 1835 May 17, and completed in cut and painting in September 26, 1836; Was cut in wood by Iosif Barsan, the sculptor from Rășinari and painted by Dimitrie Mitrovici, Romanian from Bucureș[t]i in Wallachia together with Simon Silaghi paint[er] from Abrud and Anton Șimon from Cluj, to their eternal memory".

From the fragments above one can therefore identify the reason of Dimitriu's arrival among the miners from Izbita, namely the command coming from this Orthodox community, to perform, together with his companion from Rășinari, the painting and the sculpture for a magnificent iconostasis. What is not written, but it can be however deduced easily if we analyze the preserved icons, is the fact that this temple was intended to replace another one, perhaps more modest, which had been installed in the church 12 or 13 years before. Some of the pieces that formed it can be still seen today, as mentioned before, being placed in various locations inside the church²³. We speak of four imperial icons and feastal icons and an icon representing the Holy Trinity, to which one can add the painted panel with the image of St. Archdeacon Stephen, mounted in the frame of the deacon door, on the right of the iconostasis. As regards the imperial icons, preserved in the apse and representing Christ – *the High Priest* and the Virgin and Child, or the one of St. Nicholas in the narthex, as well as the feast icon we have mentioned, they were repainted by "an unskillful hand" (Porumb 1998, 195) during the last century. Unaffected by the

²² Psalm 23,1: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."

²³ Until recently no less than 20 imperial icons and feastal icons were mentioned in the church from Izbita, belonging to the former iconostasis, replaced in 1835–1836, but today their number proves to be significantly reduced (Porumb 1998, 195).

rude intervention remained only the imperial icon (now in the narthex) of the Feast of the Patron Saint, the only one that actually preserves the inscription noted by the hand of the author: Simon Silaghi painter, "The Birth of the Most Pure Virgin Mary. 1823". The stylistic difference, by comparison with all other icons, of St. Stephen's image, on the deacon door, might suggest it could be attributed to that Anton Şimon from Cluj, whom Dimitriu felt morally obliged to mention in the inscription, along with Simon Sălăjeanu, even though he did not actually work with any of them. He probably felt that the time elapsed ever since the two had painted the icons of the temple of the church from Izbita was perhaps too short not to feel embarrassed to have them replaced. There was then the prestige enjoyed Simon Sălăjeanu, who led his school of painters in Abrud, just a few kilometers away from Izbita.

What can be noticed, if we look at the icons painted by Dimitrie Dimitriu in Izbita, is their resemblance, sometimes almost to perfect identification with the ones painted by Dimitriu for the Răşinari iconostasis. The order of the themes is the usual one: Jesus Christ on the cross, with St. John on the left and Virgin Mary, overlapping the iconographic register of the upper temple, consisting of circular medallions framing figures of prophets, whose sequence is interrupted, in the ax, by the icon of the Holy Virgin and Child, of the Vlahernitissa type; the immediate descendant registers are dedicated to the 12 Holy Apostles and respectively to the 12 important Christian feasts, both sequences of images being interrupted to accommodate the large icon representing the *Transfiguration of the Lord*. Two other pairs of icons flanked originally the traditional iconographic registers. Today only two are still preserved, on the right side of the temple: the one above is the representation of the Archangel Gabriel. Below it, the icon of St. George the Great Martyr is signed by Dimitrie the painter and dated: 1836. The imperial doors present medallions of the evangelist saints, all crafted by the hand of Dimitriu, framing the icon of the Annunciation. On the deacon left door was painted, just like in Răşinari, the full picture of Aaron – the priest and underneath a small painting that depicts animal sacrifice, which the same biblical priest officiates at the altar. To the image of St. Archdeacon Stephen corresponds, at the bottom of the deacon door, the representation of the murder scene of this first Christian martyr. Likewise, small images painted, fixed on the rail, present compositions on subjects related to the imperial icons next to which they are placed.

Except the icon with the celebration feast, all the other imperial icons are signed by the author and dated 1836. The *Deisis* and the *Mother of God, Queen of all* icons are almost identical to their counterparts in Răşinari. On panels attached to them are mentioned two gospel episodes: the conversation with the Samaritan woman, respectively the Flight into Egypt. On the left, the imperial icon of St. Nicholas reproduces the model of the one painted before by Simon Sălăjeanu, meaning that in the bottom field of the painting two decorative representations of memorable episodes inspired by the works of the holy bishop were added: *S. Nicholas saves three innocents of the sword* (on the left) and *S. Nicholas shows mercy to the three poor girls*. The panel on the railing complements these examples of virtue and holiness, by illustrating "the abatement of the storm at sea". In the icon of dedication, the feast presented is "The Birth of Mother of God", accompanied underneath by a composition depicting a symbolic Old Testament theme: Moses prostrated before the burning bush.

If, according to the inscription, the execution of the iconostasis was completed in the autumn of 1836, the painter's stay at Izbita was further on prolonged, at least until the next year. Probably during the winter that followed beautiful a vexillum was painted in oil on canvas, for the same local church, the chosen themes being those of the Baptism and the Ascension. On one side, the author noted that "it was painted by Dimitrie Dimitriu painter in the year 1837".

According to the historian Nicolae Iorga, another icon by Dimitrie Dimitriu, made for the iconostasis of the Orthodox church in Abrud (city) was painted in 1838 (Iorga 1906a, 28).

At the beginning of the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, the meeting between the Wallachian painter and Simon Sălăjeanu however, seems to have occurred near the Ţebea, the wooden church from Căraciu (Baia de Criş, Hunedoara county), dedicated to St. Nicholas, dating from the second half of the eighteenth century. It is, in fact, the only time Dimitriu signed a mural decoration.

Partially preserved and quite damaged, the group of images could be attributed to two painters, because of the existing narthex inscription stating that: "They painted this holy church in the days of the High Emperor Ferdinand I, of Bishop of Eastern Transylvania, of Vasile Moga, dean and / ... /of assessor Iosif Basa, of pastor Ioan Clej, on the expense of the congregation of painters Silaghi Simon from Abrud and Dimitrie from

Wallachia, in the year of the Lord 1842". From the investigations that have been conducted so far, one may at least appreciate that the work accomplished in old age represents the "reference work" of the art of Simon Sălăjeanu (Cristache-Panait 1984, 87; Ionescu 2005, 162,163). It remains however to determine the contribution of each artist in the entire work.

Information about the creative work of Dimitrie Dimitriu stops, rather abruptly, just a decade after his arrival in the Romanian parts from inside the Carpathians' arc. Perhaps the outbreak of the revolution of 1848, with the unrest that overcame the Apuseni Mountains region in particular, where he used to work together with Simon Silaghi-Sălăjeanu, might have determined him, as many others, to start for some other parts, in search of orders, or refuge from war and the persecution against the Romanians.

The artistic quality of works that Dimitrie Dimitriu made as icon painter or as "painter of portraits in oil" recommend him, as pointed out by Andrei Cornea, "as an outstanding and exemplary figure for that restless period that sometimes «crafted» its modernity, when it did not really possess" (Cornea 1980, 100) and that he chose to fructify his talent among his countrymen in Transylvania, testifies the persistence, in Transylvania, of the tradition of pilgrim painters, from the South of the Carpathians, until mid nineteenth century (Cornea 1980, 100).

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1. Dimitrie Dimitriu, *Jesus Christ – the High Priest* (detail)



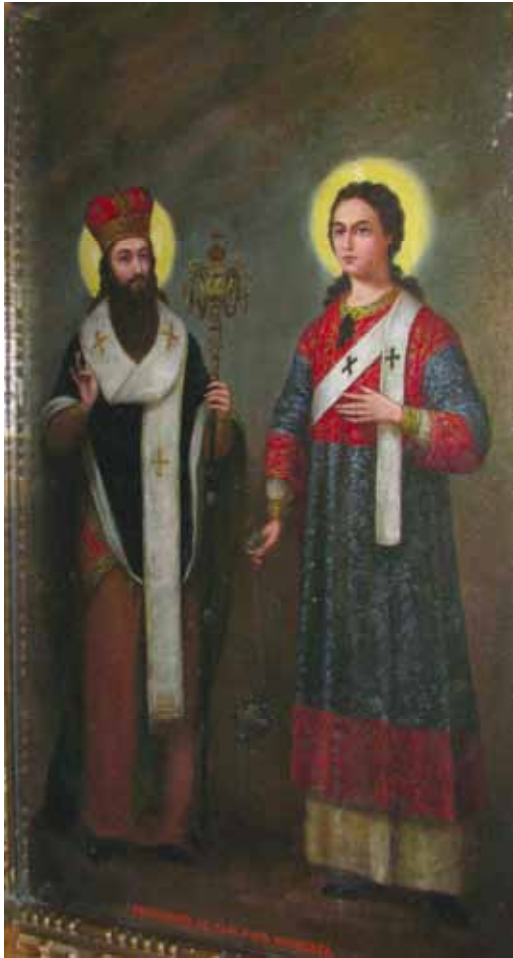
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THE QUARTET – GENESIS OF A PAINTING SERIES BY OCTAVIAN SMIGELSKI

Ioana GRUIȚĂ-SAVU

Abstract: *The present article aims at analyzing The Quartet Series, one of the numerous symbolist topics that the Transylvanian painter Octavian Smigelschi (1866–1912) approached in his artistic carrier; though researchers in the field have previously approached this topic, it has more to offer. Analyzing this cycle of works enabled me to perceive the different stages in Smigelschi's elaboration of compositions, the way the artists, just like a film director, guided his subjects to obtain the maximum effect from their association. The article establishes a development path of this cycle and in the same time tries to establish Octavian Smigelschi's place in the context of Central-European painting.*

Keywords: *Octavian Smigelschi, The Quartet, genesis, composition, contextualization, painting, Transylvania, symbolism*

Rezumat: *“Cvartetul” – geneza unei serii de tablouri de Octavian Smigelschi. Pentru acest articol am ales să tratez unul dintre numeroasele subiecte simboliste abordate de pictorul Octavian Smigelschi (1866–1912) de-a lungul carierei sale artistice. Seria de lucrări Cvartetul nu a fost exploatată pe deplin de literatura de specialitate, iar analiza evoluției compoziționale a acestui ciclu este determinantă pentru înțelegerea modului în care artistul transilvănean și-a elaborate lucrările, asemeni unui regizor de film, așezând personajele pentru a obține, prin asocierea lor, un maxim efect vizual. Cercetarea stabilește evoluția acestui ciclu de lucrări și încercă o contextualizare a creației lui Smigelschi în peisajul picturii central-est europene.*

Cuvinte cheie: *Octavian Smigelschi, Cvartetul, geneză, compoziție, contextualizare, pictură, Transilvania, symbolism*

"A painting must say something and make the spectator think, like a poem, leaving him with an impression, like a piece of music".

Arnold Böcklin

The present article is dedicated to Octavian Smigelschi's painting series *The Quartet/Cvartetul* elaborated approximately between 1891 and 1912. The series comprises seven compositional sketches, and numerous preliminary drawings for different individual characters, preserved in various private and public collections. Due to his early death Smigelschi did not have the chance to elaborate a final work for this cycle. That does not change, nevertheless, the importance of this series for the Transylvanian

artist's creation¹. The basic composition represents seven naked young boys performing a musical piece. The series was entitled *The Quartet*

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¹ Vătășianu's monograph study of 1982 includes a catalogue of Smigelschi's works, the most extensive published so far. Several of Smigelschi's works for *The Quartet* are mentioned, besides the ones analyzed here: one oil on cardboard study for *The Quartet*, one study in charcoal and grey paper (both in Victor Smigelschi's collection), one crayon on parchment sketch of a nude character with cello, in Magdalena Slușanschi's Collection, one study in Constantin Berariu's collection, and another study in white charcoal on paper in Liliana Bucea's Collection.

because the composition includes four children playing instruments (cello, violin, viola, and harp) and other three holding the scores, the entire scene being projected against a natural background. During the elaboration of *The Quartet* the composition changed several times: the number of children varies between 7 and 9, the types of instruments vary as well, children in the image are shown at different ages (as small children in the first variants and teenagers in the last), and the background grown more complex.

The present research is meant to analyze the entire series in its development, by applying the genetic/genomic theory, in order to establish the significance of *The Quartet* in Smigelschi's entire body of works and in the general artistic environment of that time².

The Genetic Analysis

The Quartet, amongst other cycles of works such as *The Spring / Primăvara*, *The Angel of Death / Îngerul morții*, or *Dance of the Fairies / Hora Ielelor*, is one of the numerous idealistic subject approached by Smigelschi and it was identified as being an hymn dedicated to nature, rebirth, spring and, at the same time, a tribute to music (V. Vătășianu 1936, 37).

Virgil Vătășianu was the first to study the artistic creation of Smigelschi from an art historian's perspective; he performed a complex analysis of the works included in *The Quartet* series³. Virgil Vătășianu's aim was to explore the entire creation of the Transylvanian artist (Simion 2002, Mândruț 2006, Gruia 2009), and he focused on the neo-Byzantine aspects of the painter's works, a topic closer to his professional interests. He had neither the time nor the interest to exploit *The Quartet* theme to the maximum, nor to go into all the details of the sketches elaborated for this cycle. Vătășianu established the basic interpretational

guidelines only to use them in his final evaluation of Smigelschi's symbolist interest.

Other researchers were subsequently preoccupied with the subject. Ferenc Matits published in Hungary a general study on Smigelschi's creation, dealing with several of Smigelschi's cycles, among which the sketches for *The Quartet* compositions that he had the opportunity to see in the Hungarian National Gallery collection (Matits 1999, 25). Art historian Gheorghe Vida also elaborated two articles including discussions on the symbolist aspects of Smigelschi's creation (Vida 2002, Vida 2007). Vida analyzed Smigelschi's symbolic compositions and tried to determine some of his inspirational sources. I noticed a similar approach in Iulia Mesea's general works on symbolist aspects in Transylvanian art, where the author mentioned Octavian Smigelschi among other painters from Sibiu (Mesea 2002, Mesea, 2004, Mesea a 2007, Mesea b 2007, Mesea c 2007).

Though the subject was previously analyzed we consider that it has more to offer. In order to re-evaluate this cycle of works and to be able to include intermediary sketches in the analysis as well, I adapted a method borrowed from literary analysis, i.e. the genetic or genomic analysis to fit with the requirements of visual research tools.

The entire present investigation of *The Quartet* series starts with Vătășianu's study and is based on the assumption that the particulars published by the art historian regarding this cycle of work, are accurate. Since this data can no longer be verified, Virgil Vătășianu's publications⁴ provide the only basis for establishing the succession of the various types of compositions employed and for following the work's genesis.

A specific mind frame of our time is to re-consider the process of artistic creation. The researchers, art historians and critics, attempt to establish new systems of evaluating visual art and are presently inclined to assign new value for preliminary artistic products such as sketches, drawings, or embosses, elevating them from the state of mere attempts, to that of works in progress. This principle, which works perfectly

² I wish to thank my colleague Ana Maria Gruia for her help in translating the text and for her helpful comments, and Anca Gogâltan for her bibliographic assistance. I especially wish to thank Sylvain Audet and Maria Găinar for suggesting the genetic theory as a possible analyzing method and for their bibliographical assistance. I express my gratitude to peers in Romanian and Hungarian museums that allowed me the access to their collections.

³ There is yet another critical mention of *The Quartet* series, in Elek Artúr's article dated 1913, where the Hungarian art critic expressed a positive opinion on Smigelschi's drawings for this cycle see Elek 1913.

⁴ The art historian established a close connection with the artist's family and by the time he started to elaborate his monographic study, in 1936, he had already gathered as much material as possible from first hand sources; he was thus able to formulate some of the fundamental assertions on several aspects related to the topic *The Quartet* and its development.

for contemporary artists, is even more appropriate for the analysis of works produced in the mid nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. During that period, finalizing an artistic product included the preparation of several compositional versions, almost finished works, in a laborious attempt to reach perfection.

In analyzing and quantifying an artistic product I believe it is essential to take into consideration also the effort behind it and the entire process which can be evaluated as an important factor in the capitalization of the final work. Genetic analysis attempts to renew the way of integrating all knowledge on a text / image in terms of intermediate manuscripts / studies, by placing the main focus not on the final artistic or literary product, but on the author / creator, the creation process, thus on all elements revealing the actual genesis of the artistic product. Genomic criticism emphasizes the temporal dimension of the artistic work's transformation. It starts from the assumption that the final product is the effect of a metamorphosis, of the work reaching its final stage, in a direct relation to time (de Biasi 2000, 9).

The genetic/genomic analysis evaluates an artistic product by analyzing and reconstructing the entire effort of its creator throughout the entire process leading to the final work. The genomic theory also focuses on continuing mechanisms behind a final work of art, defined as a finished product without further interventions. In the case of genetic analyses on texts, researchers deal with both manuscripts, and documents related to the writing process (correspondence, the author's personal library, family archives etc.). The same method can be applied for analyzing artistic works, but a painter's manuscripts are the preliminary sketches he creates in order to reach the final composition. The entire creational process is subsequently superposed to a timeline that allows researchers to observe and recreate the development of the work, with its successive chronological inner logic. An art creator's vision evolves and develops in time and allows researchers to reach different suppositions and interpretations according to all gathered knowledge about the specific work. In the case of artistic analysis one must collect as much information as possible on the subject matter and correlate all data with image analysis. The researcher must select relevant information among his sources; he must place the work in its specific context, establish and define the different stages in the work's development and if possible he must attempt to identify every artistic change

differentiating each stage from the other. In the end of the analysis the researcher should be able to better understand the creative process, the work's internal mechanisms of construction, the way the artist connects to his times, and the definitive elements that had an impact on the work. The specialist should be able to place the work in its general context, both among the same artist's complete work and the artistic scene of that time.

General Context and Influences

Similar to other artists from Austrian-Hungarian Empire, and especially from Hungary⁵ Smigelschi was mostly preoccupied with monumental compositions, historical and religious scenes, either on murals or on panels, aiming to create a national art, typical to his homeland, and to find the proper means of expression in order to elevate art level in his region to meet the standards of Western European cultural heritage. Smigelschi was tributary to his artistic education received at *Magyar Királyi Mintarajztanoda és Rajztanárképezde* from Budapest, and in what concerns the monumental compositions based on historical themes, especially to his teacher, Székely Bertalan. But in order to follow his goal of renewing art in Transylvania, he was also influenced by Symbolism and Art Nouveau and the new trends promoted by the Munich Academy (Starcky, Beke 1995; Gellér 1990, 155–160; Mesea a 2007; Mesea b 2007; Mesea c 2007; Tătaru, 2007; Sármany-Parsons 2008). Smigelschi received an important influence from Lyka Károly's work and artistic ideas expressed in numerous articles published in well-known Hungarian newspapers. One of the most famous texts, that can be considered the first Hungarian Secession manifesto, was published in the first edition of *Művészet*, dating from 1902, where Lyka Károly attested the birth of a new and radical artistic movement in Hungary, following the trends in other European countries (Ștefănuț 2008, 22).

“The way in which the artists of smaller nations selected from the pluralistic palette of the Western European art scene was decisively influenced by local artistic tradition and cultural heritage. In painting, not only the new stylistic experiments

⁵ Octavian Smigelschi studied at Hungarian Drawing School (*Magyar Királyi Mintarajztanoda és Rajztanárképezde*) from Budapest between 1885 and 1889.

had to be learned, but also new ways of looking at familiar subjects...new approaches to art and new aesthetics were phenomena parallel to the social development of urban life..." (Sármány-Parsons 2001, 221).

With these ideals in mind Smigelschi accepted modern influence in both painting topics and characteristics, but his acceptance was still moderate. He was inclined also towards rejecting the newest ideological and technical discoveries of impressionism, post-impressionism, neo-impressionism, *etc.* since he had to create for an inexperienced public. Central-European artists received an artistic education abroad, but when they returned to their own regions were forced by local society, still under the influence of traditionalism, to adapt their new style to the taste of their patrons and clients. In the case of Transylvanian society one can state that the new artistic ideas slowly made their way in, first among artists and intellectuals who further promoted them through written propaganda in the most important periodicals⁶ (Vătășianu 1982, Udrescu 2003, Mesea a 2007, Sabău, Gruică-Savu 2009, Mesea 2010).

The modern artistic context in Western Europe promoted a new way of life in which art played an essential role as a civilizing element (Mesea 2007c, 18). Smigelschi was strict in formulating his opinion on the new ways of expression, the "isms", as he put it in an article published one year after his death in *Luceafărul*. In this artistic confession, focused on the renewal of monumental art in Transylvania, Smigelschi debated the need of these new artistic tendencies to renovate art and society without a higher purpose. At the same time, perhaps unintentionally, he used some of the artistic recipes introduced by the "isms" (the same artistic language, means of expression and thematic). He started elaborating his works from the similar principle, being interested in emphasizing the decorative characteristics of the artistic object, using folk art and national mythology as inspirational sources. It was the same belief that guided the creation of Pre-Raphaelites, and especially Ruskin, and afterwards the symbolists

and the secessionists (Herschel 1968, 92–93; Gellér 1990, 161).

There are several sources of influence for *The Quartet* mentioned in the specialized literature: Vătășianu presumed that Smigelschi took inspiration from Italian art, namely from the Renaissance art – mentioning the reliefs of Luca della Robbia's representing a group of singing children⁷, that the artists must have seen during his trip to Italy in 1898–1899 (Vătășianu 1936, 38). On the other hand, Gheorghe Vida mentioned other sources of inspiration, associating Smigelschi's creation with artists such as Fritz von Uhde and Puvis de Chavannes (Vida 2002, 177) and to Max Klinger's work. The similarity between Smigelschi and Klinger can be established by analyzing their creation process. Max Klinger was first interested in sculpture, and he perceived shape as a succession of voids and volumes (Seemann 1995). Transposing his ideas on drawing paper he used in his sketches besides crayon or ink also gouache, which allowed him to enhance the contrast between void and plenitude. The same technique can be noticed in Smigelschi's work, as the artist created three-dimensional gypsum models, which he sketched, intuitively employing the same technique. I believe the treatment of volumes is the common element between the two artistic processes⁸.

In order to establish the actual sources of inspiration for this cycle of works, one must turn to the genetic analysis described above. It is clear that the artist struggled to obtain the best compositional form for *The Quartet*. He searched for the perfect composition throughout the years, but was not satisfied with the results until his trip to Rome and his affiliation to the modern concepts⁹ (For more information see Săvulescu 2008, 107–112, Sabău, Gruică-Savu 2009, 64–65).

⁷ In 1431 Luca della Robbia was commissioned to design a marble *Cantoria* over the door of the Sacristy, for the famous Florentine cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore. The artist created a series of ten reliefs depicting children praising the Lord as they dance and play the musical instruments.

⁸ Another resemblance resides in the fact that both artists were influenced by the artistic center of Rome and Italian Renaissance in general. Max Klinger lived in Rome between 1883 and 1893 and Smigelschi was there from 1908 to 1912.

⁹ His appreciation for contemporary art is revealed in his correspondence with Valeriu Braniște, a close friend of his from Sibiu and the redactor of *Drapelul*, a newspaper published in Lugoj between 1901 and 1920;

⁶ This is the case of the German artist Arthur Coulin who published a great number of articles with programmatic character in *Siebenbürgisch Deutsches Tageblatt* and *Kronstädter Zeitung* or the case of Octavian Smigelschi who published his own artistic opinions in magazines like *Luceafărul*.

Quartets, Children and Paintings

String quartets are said to represent “the accomplishment of pure music, the essence of music” (Donizeau 2000, 156). In music the term quartet is commonly employed to denote a group of four musicians playing string instruments and such pieces, also called “quartet”, are considered an important genre of chamber music. Usually a string quartet consists of two violins, a viola, and a cello (Donizeau 2000, 156). The particular choice and number of instruments derives from the registers of human voice: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The two violins play the soprano and alto vocal registers, the viola plays the tenor and the cello plays the bass. Occasionally, string quartets are written for violin, viola, cello, and double bass. Numerous composers such as Haydn with his famous *Sunrise Quartet*, Mozart and Beethoven wrote music for quartets. Seven such compositions were written during Smigelschi’s time: six by Béla Bartók and one by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *Adagio Molto*. The latter was composed for a quartet that also included a harp¹⁰. We wonder if it is possible that one of these musical pieces to have inspired *The Quartet* series.

Smigelschi was a connoisseur of classical music; his own children were playing instruments, taking intensive lessons since their childhood. Ioana Șetran, Octavian Smigelschi’s granddaughter, confessed that her father Victor played the violin and his two sisters played the piano and they often performed musical pieces for their family’s entertainment (Șetran 2007).

Following Hungarian and especially Austrian taste and trends, music was highly regarded in Transylvania in late nineteenth century. It was considered fashionable for the bourgeois families to educate their children in arts and music, and like everywhere in the Empire various theatrical events and musical concerts were organized (Coulin 2010, 52). Smigelschi portrayed his children taking violin lessons in a series of works and sketches dedicated to music entitled *Music lessons*. Many of the works from this series dated

before 1899 are hosted by the Art Museum in Cluj, while others are part of the Brukenthal National Museum’s collection. One can easily recognize his sons’ faces in various compositions for the *Music lessons* cycle, but also for the *The Quartet*.

When Smigelschi started his first sketch it was fashionable for artists at that time to represent children and their games in natural environments. In the art of late nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century children were often depicted as symbols of youth and renewal, in metaphoric association with various seasons, especially spring, as being the correspondent of youth (Vida 2007a, 55–66). There are multiple examples of such allegories, among which the works of Puvis de Chavannes, *Children in the Orchard* (1885–1889) and *Summer* (1881) where the French artist associates young adolescent bodies with nature. Another similar work is Polish artist Wojciech Weiss’s *Spring*, a creation from 1898 (Morawinska 1985)¹¹. From the German area one can mention Ludwig von Hofmann’s works, especially *The Spring*, and symbolist artist Franz von Stuck’s work *The Spring Dance*, dated 1909. In Central-Eastern European painting one should bear in mind Béla Iványi-Grünwald’s work *The Warrior Sword* (1890). The Hungarian artist, Bertalan Székely and Károly Lotz’s created symbolist paintings belonging to the rural genre, under Jules Bastien-Lepage’s direct influence. In Hungarian painting I was also able to identify another similar painting, namely Ferenczy Károly’s *Boys Throwing Pebbles into the River* dated 1891 (Sármány-Parsons 2008, 228)¹².

The beauty of young bodies was associated on more than one occasion with the harmony of music, and here I must evoke Arnold Böcklin’s work dated 1877 entitled *Children Carving May Flutes*, and also *Song of Spring*, a tribute to the season but also to music, or *Pan and Children*, 1885. Böcklin’s influence over the painters from Sibiu in general and Smigelschi’s work in particular was more than once mentioned in existing bibliography (Roth 1908, 203; Popescu 1943, 31; Vătășianu 1982, 10, note 4; Vida 2002, 176). The same idea can be found in *Orpheus*, work painted in 1894 by the Hungarian artist Ferenczy Károly (For more information on

it offered a complete perspective over the Romanian community in Transylvania, in its attempt to promote its values and to preserve national specificities. In one of the letters Smigelschi mentioned his good opinion on John Ruskin’s esthetical beliefs, recommending his writings as a mandatory reading.

¹⁰ This detail is most interesting especially because at the time a few musical pieces were written for string quartets with harp.

¹¹ <http://www.19thcenturyart-facos.com/artist/wojciech-weiss>, accessed 02.05.2012.

¹² The work is exhibited in the Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.

Hungarian artists see Șulea, Simon 2002; Bakó 2008; Beke *et al* 2002).

“The designation sign and symbol were used interchangeably in the nineteenth century, as they often are in present, but for the theorists examined here they had specific connotations. While sign referred to a conventional mark that stood for a most complex notion, in ornamental theory it shared its formal structure with the natural forms it replaced. Symbols in nineteenth-century stylistic theories, on the other hand, often referred to a concept rather than a physical object and, therefore, whether representational or abstract were not reflective of the idea they presented. Last, ornament acting as a perceptual signifier can convey the essential characteristics of a constructed object by appealing directly to the senses of the viewer. In this role, ornament stimulates optical and tactile sensations by recalling past sensory events and, consequently, helps the viewer understand the formal elements and their relationship” (Schafter 2003, 12).

I presume that all these elements influenced Smigelschi in his choice of approaching such a subject. On one hand I must mention his love for music, the opportunity of having the children playing musical instruments, always at hand to be sketched, and on the other hand his knowledge regarding European trends in art. At the same time the approach of such a subject must be related to the concept of harmony: Smigelschi connected the perfect balance in music/sound, represented by the quartet, with the naked human body, as an expression of visual perfection and the natural environment, in it's savage, in the sense of untouched by human intervention, shape: the sea, the forest, the sky.

The Quartet – First Compositional Type

Smigelschi spent more than 10 years in elaborating a composition for *The Quartet*. There are two identifiable cycles of works, one dated before 1900 and another developed during his scholarship stay in Rome (For more information about the award of Rome granted by the Hungarian bishop Fraknoi Vilmos, see Károlyi 1904). I identified six different compositional variants, diverse in the number or position of depicted characters. His lengthy preoccupation for this series allows for the supposition that Octavian Smigelschi tried to bring a different artistic approach to a daily topic, he was searching for an alternative to classical subjects, such as portrait,

landscape, genre or historical painting preferred by the Transylvanian bourgeoisie.

The first type of composition (Fig. 1) represents seven putto-like small children playing music on a flowery hill. It is interesting to note that none of them are depicted in full view, their gender elegantly avoided, Smigelschi being preoccupied more to suggest the idea of purity than to render the beauty of a naked body. Four children play musical instruments and other three hold the scores for the young musicians. One violin player and one playing the cello are grouped on the left side of the sketch. In front of them, two children are shown holding the scores, one of them on his knees, enabling the cello musician to read the musical notes on the score. The other boy holds a score too large for him, thus being forced to support it with his chin. On the right side of the sketch one can see three more children, one standing at a distance and holding the score for the other two, a violinist and a figure of ambiguous gender playing a harp (Vătășianu 1936, 38)¹³. The sky is the only background for the playing group. The clouds are painted in large brush strokes suggesting movement on the rhythm played by the quartet.

As V. Vătășianu already noticed, the composition is not well balanced and the group is not compositionally homogenous. It seems that even though Smigelschi completed this work in oil he was not satisfied with the result and therefore decided to continue and extend the topic afterwards.

Another composition dated from the same period is kept in the Astra Collection, now part of the Brukenthal National Museum¹⁴ (Fig. 2) (Mesea a 2007, 96), it differs in several details from the previously discussed painting: the composition is tighter, the children interact differently, and the background suggests a friendlier environment. The distance between the two players on the left increases and the violin player in the middle ground becomes more visible, since Smigelschi probably aimed at better revealing how the young

¹³ The character playing the harp changed several times, this work from P. Smigelschi's collection, solely reproduced in Vătășianu's monographic research from 1936, shows the harpist in semi profile; the artist highlights his/her upper leg, suggesting a feminine shape. I believe that the artist could not decide over the inclusion of the character, and whether the musician should be a girl or a boy.

¹⁴ Inv. 174 – in the Graphic Collection of the Brukenthal National Museum.

boy grasped the instrument. The children holding the scores are placed closer to the players and by doing so the artist created a better view of the cello player. The group placed on the right side changed as well: the child holding the score is represented as a smaller figure and he no longer elevates the page but holds it at chest level. The character playing the harp sits on a piece of white draped fabric, suggesting an antique context.¹⁵ There are several possible reasons for the artist to include the harpist in these two compositions: first because harp is an ancient instrument, often associated to antiquity, and he wished to suggest such a classical context, and secondly because he might have wanted to illustrate a specific musical composition. The artist changed the background and completed it. The small group is no longer depicted on a hill, but next to a cluster of trees, thus creating a more intimate atmosphere. The children seem protected and embraced by the scenery.

In *The Quartet* series Octavian Smigelschi approached a new modern subject, but he transposed it with classical artistic means of expression, this first compositions being a photographic reproduction of reality. The artist was at the beginning of the exploration of the topic, his ideas were not yet crystallized. He probably used the same model, almost certainly his older son, to embody all players, and he only seemed interested in establishing the main compositional lines. Only a few drawings can be connected to this stage, including one drawing representing children playing the violin and the harp in the collection of the Art Museum in Cluj-Napoca (Fig. 3).

This first sequence of *The Quartet* series resembles in topic another of Smigelschi's idealistic compositions, while through its artistic means of expression it can be connected to his other symbolist subjects started before 1900¹⁶. The small children depicted in this first phase are similar to the other young boys from *The Spring*¹⁷

and *Hora Ielelor* series (Evseev 1997; Ghinoiu 1997; Vătășianu 1936, 35)¹⁸. It seems that Smigelschi was preoccupied with the idea of innocence; children were the best way he found to express purity and joy.

Second Compositional Type

The basic structure is preserved also for the second compositional type for *The Quartet*, but the formal aspects change from numerous points of view. A more noticeable influence of Roman antique art can be seen, but also of German symbolism and Secessionism. This second phase of *The Quartet* becomes a compliment to antiquity: the boys are represented nude, with genitalia visible; the main character's hair is tied with a ribbon reminding of antique hair dress (see Fig. 13), and the harpist is seated on a draped fabric meant to enhance the antique appearance (as in the previous version). There is a lack of depth in the construction of each character, a characteristic of *Jugendstil*.

I was able to examine numerous sketches from the second compositional type of *The Quartet* series, among which only one was in colors (Fig. 13), for its elaboration Octavian Smigelschi using the collage technique. The characters are taken from several other drawings and glued together against an aquarelle background. Smigelschi used shades of blue, ochre, green, and dark brown. The imitation of nature is no longer dominant and the force of contour lines is emphasized, in order to create a decorative aspect, for example Smigelschi rendered the clouds in spots and dots of color, and delimited their shape with a fine line.

If in the first elaboration of this cycle the painter was more inclined towards an accurate imitation of reality, reproducing anatomical parts correctly and rendering the body volumes accurately, in the compositions of the second-stage he is more careful to obtain and augment the ornamental

¹⁵ In this composition the harpist is no longer a feminine figure and the artist chose a different point of view to portray his hands.

¹⁶ On the back of one of the sketches for *Hora Ielelor* the artist note in crayon the chronological interval 1891–1895 and this detail is relevant for dating his interest in depicting younger children before 1900; inv. no 10092, The Art Museum Cluj-Napoca.

¹⁷ For *The Spring* series the artist chose a composition with a young naked girl surrounded by small almost

putto-like children, crowned with leafs, holding hands and expressing a feeling of exaltation.

¹⁸ A more elaborated scene can be found among the drawings for *Hora Ielelor*. Iele / Fairies are associated with seduction, but also disasters, while for Smigelschi they nevertheless became playful children dancing in mid air above a lake, next to a forest. Mythological characters from Romanian folklore, *Ielele* are similar to fairies, but they have malefic attributes: they were believed to live next to water sources near forests and sometimes to kidnap the souls of humans who dared drink their water.

aspects. Color is applied on large surfaces, just to offer a background for the line. At the same time he experimented with space and depth by introducing several details in the middle ground. The result is an oneiric image, with perfect clouds and natural environment, a pretext for meditation about nature, music, humanism/humanity and harmony. It is interesting how the characters are placed on the hill's terraces just like notes on a score, and that fact is even clearer in the sketches that still preserved the perspective lines (Fig. 4, 5, 6, 13).

Smigelschi proves to be a more mature artist, trying to find his own compositional solutions. He finally chose a round composition, centered on a boy playing the violin, and constructing all his other characters around him. The figures are individualized through their bodily postures, Smigelschi attempting an anatomic exercise, praising the beauty of the human body from every possible viewpoint.

Smigelschi's work evolved and took a huge step forward under the influence of the cultural and artistic life in Rome. He first visited Italy during his student years, together with his German friends and colleagues. Later, he visited Robert Wellmann at Cervara, where the latter had brought a property and transformed it in a permanent residence for artists (Mesea 2006, 122; Mesea 2012, 21). Smigelschi also won a prestigious scholarship in 1908, offered by the Hungarian bishop Vilmos Fraknói and moved with his family to Rome (Károly 1904). At the beginning of the twentieth century Rome was an important cultural city for western but also central-eastern European artists. Whoever won the price of Rome¹⁹, consisting in a scholarship that enabled the winner to reside and exhibit in the Italian capital, gained fame and wide appreciation (Geller 1990, 159). Even famous artists like Arnold Böcklin or Max Klinger and many others lived and created in Rome, inspired by the light and the rediscovery of antique subjects (Seemann 1995, 43).

Ancient Roman mosaics and the impressive Renaissance sculptures had an impact on Smigelschi's later work but also the fervent

artistic milieu of Rome connected Smigelschi to the latest trends that put their imprint on his creation, and radically changed his vision. I believe Smigelschi found in Symbolism the liberty to express his subjective feelings and attitudes and to create a harmony between sound, shape, and colour. Since the second compositional type for *The Quartet* was created in Rome, it reflects all the above mentioned influences. His characters changed into handsome adolescents of almost perfect proportions, similar to marble statues, but as artistic means he used the tools of modernity. The composition increased in complexity, the natural background became more elaborate, reflecting Smigelschi's new and clearer ideas.

Still, he had to decide on the number of characters he needed in order to complete this compositional scheme. After the study of the sketches dated in this period we observed how the quartet became in some cases a quintet. One drawing of this category is hosted by the Brukenthal National Museum (Fig. 5)²⁰, one sketch is in the Art Museum from Cluj (Fig. 6)²¹, and another one by the drawings collection of the National Gallery in Budapest (Fig. 4)²². Two of these have the maximum number of personages: nine, five players and four holding scores. During the latest phases he already established the bodily posture of each character and experimented different arrangements, sometimes through the technique of collage, other times just through crayon sketches.

The sketch from the Brukenthal National Museum (Fig. 5)²³ includes all nine characters but the composition has major balance problems²⁴. Smigelschi placed his characters in a composition that lost its internal logic. There are even bigger problems with the character's proportions: the kneeling boy is too large in relation to the other

¹⁹ The price of Rome was a prestigious award created in 1904 by the Hungarian archbishop Fraknói Vilmos, consisting in a stipendium and lodging for one year in Rome and it was created to help Hungarian artists, painters and sculptors, to create and exhibit in the Italian capital. Smigelschi won the price three consecutive times.

²⁰ Inv. 62, The Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu, Romania.

²¹ Inv. 10190, The Art Museum, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

²² Inv. 420/154333, The National Gallery, Budapest, Hungary.

²³ Inv. 62, The Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu, Romania.

²⁴ The presence of the kneeling boy is not necessary, since the cello player is already using another score. At the same time, the boy that should hold the score for the central character is placed too far from the violinist and the act of reading is not possible from that position. There is also supposedly one score for the sitting violinist and the harpist, but it is obvious that they can't both read from it at the same time.

boys and he looks like he was artificially collated there from another composition²⁵.

I have mentioned all these examples in order to underline the amount of effort the artist paid for this cycle and his pedantry in the elaboration of each character. Even if he didn't use the kneeling character at all in his final product, he did numerous sketches of him, one of them in the National Gallery in Budapest (Fig. 7) (Vida 2002, Fig. 2)²⁶.

Smigelschi tried other variants by including or excluding some of the characters²⁷, or just by changing their position, which were ultimately abandoned. For example, in the Budapest variant (Fig. 4) the entire composition was in danger of falling apart, because its center was disputed between the violin player and the boy holding his score. Besides this conflict of focus, a recurrence affected the drawing's inner logic: two of the characters had the same bodily posture again endangering the balance of the composition.

Because the artist decided to extend the natural background and give the composition more depth by including a lit road that enters a dark forest the presence of the harp raised some problems. He visually opened the right hand side of the composition, another of Böcklin's influences, but the upper right corner was hidden by the harp player. The last variant (Fig. 14) (Vătășianu 1936,

Fig. 14)²⁸ included the harpist²⁹, but revealed the path through the harp's strings, Smigelschi thus played with transparencies and, proposing a mysterious place, managed to alternate the different plans. The mystic side present in the last compositional schemes lacks from the firsts, the setting was thus transformed: the forest became darker and deeper, Smigelschi tried to conduct the viewer around the musical group, and on the rhythm of the music, to uncover what was hidden in the background.

Conclusions

Smigelschi's great efforts to depict in detail children playing various musical instruments indicates both his personal interest in music and the general Transylvanian newly acquired taste for chamber music, displayed by members of the elite who had traveled abroad. Besides searching for perfect compositional harmony, one can also infer that the artist studied people playing instruments and their different attitudes, which are usually in a perfect concordance to the interpreted musical genre. He tried to show the amount of effort involved by learning how to play an instrument and the diligence with which children dedicated themselves to playing the correct notes. Smigelschi shows a marked interest in depicting each musician and each instrument, selecting the most difficult poses in order to emphasize the idea of equilibrium, delicate balance and coordination necessary required by playing in a quartet.

The Quartet is not only a tribute to music, but also an expression of the purity of artistic production (either in music or painting). The perfection of human body is associated to the purity of nature and music, reminding of God's primordial creation of all things. Smigelschi's own artistic creation aimed at involving the viewers' senses through more than sight. Just like a movie director he uses his symbolical associations of elements in order to create a scene with multiple layers. First he transfers the viewer into a natural environment, and then he suggests the presence of harmonious sounds. Second, he represents children as symbols

²⁵ In this case the kneeling boy turns his head towards the viewers, inviting them to approach the group, as if disturbed from his duty by some sound that came from outside the work.

²⁶ I believe that in order to make this character more visible Smigelschi had to change the position of the other two boys and he would have lost the balance of the arrangement. Probably, for this reason he decided to reject such a variant.

²⁷ Another character that was often included or rejected from the scene was the sitting boy with the violin from the left side of the painting. In most of the sketches he is present, hidden behind the main character, the artist had problems determining the positions and finally he was removed completely as well. The third boy that holds the score for the main violinist is represented in several different bodily postures. In the first compositional scheme, the boy completely turns away from the viewer, holding the score against his chest, and in other compositional types his posture is dramatically changed. Only in the Budapest variant he is totally turned toward the violinist. Smigelschi did a great number of preparatory individual sketches also for the main character, the violinist placed in the centre of the composition (Fig. 8, 10, 12), that constitute another cycle of works entitled *The Violinist*.

²⁸ Vătășianu identified this composition as being the final work due to the perfect harmony created between characters and I tend to accept his suggestion.

²⁹ Smigelschi decided also over the gender of the harpist, he might have associated the sinuous lines of the harp with the round curves of a woman's body, and found it useful to close the composition in the right side, by using such a character.

of purity, not yet affected in their innocence by social rules and taboos. The aimed result was to conceive a pure artistic act about the purity of human creation.

By choosing to paint nude children, the artist intended to emphasize the equilibrium of proportions, which can also be found in nature, art, and music, as another sign of that era's rediscovery of antique aesthetical paradigms (Vida 2002, 177)³⁰.

Though not all sketches for *The Quartet* have been preserved or are available to research and none are precisely dated, the present analysis attempted to establish their order and compositional development by applying the genetic theory with the purpose of reevaluating the heritage left by Octavian Smigelschi. For this cycle I identified two different stages, which can be separated temporally and spatially. The first one dates from before 1900, when the artist elaborated his first two compositions for this series. Smigelschi used his children as models. At that time, his two sons depicted were small children and they were represented according to their age. The second stage was elaborated in the beginning of the twentieth century, when the artist resided in Rome. The models had become adolescents, and this had an impact on the formal aspect of the work. Smigelschi's new artistic

vision developed along with his children and his personal life affected his artistic creation. At the same time my analysis employs all data I was able to collect about the different compositional types, previous articles written on the subject, Smigelschi's personal correspondence and his family's declarations on the subject. These sources were correlated with detailed comparison of the compositional sketches. The result consists of a chronological ordering of the preparatory sketches, following the inner logic of the series. I thus established the main reasons that drove the artist to change the second compositional type numerous times and by examining the entire series I was able to suggest a chronological succession for the sketches.

The Quartet remains a studio project: it never reached the market but remained a testament to the artist's extended involvement in creating a modern painting, a manifesto alternative to traditional painting in Transylvania. The present detailed analysis and new method will hopefully provide new keys to the interpretation of the cycle, in the same time placing Smigelschi and his lay paintings next to other valuable European artists. *The Quartet* reveals the artist's reception of the latest tendencies in modern art and his intention to follow the new interests of his generation.

³⁰ I favour this interpretation over the one professed by Gheorghe Vida suggesting a connection between this cycle of works and the platonic myth of the androgen. We can agree with Gheorghe Vida on the idea of Eden, but not as indication of man's banishment from Paradise but rather as recreation of a pure, idyllic place where everything is in harmony.

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1. First variant of the first compositional type,
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2. Second variant of the first compositional type
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3. Sketch for the second compositional,
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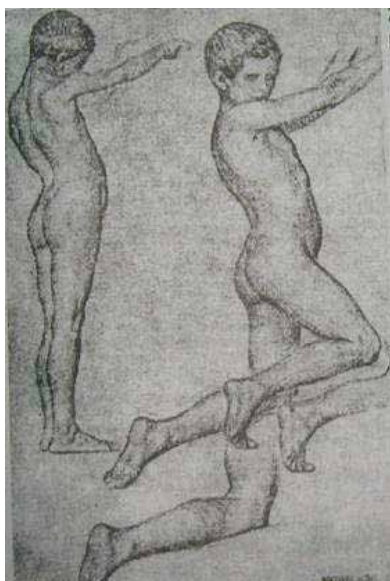
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**8. Detail sketch for the second compositional type,
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7. Detail sketch for the second compositional type, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest



9. Detail sketch for the second compositional type, Brukenthal National Museum



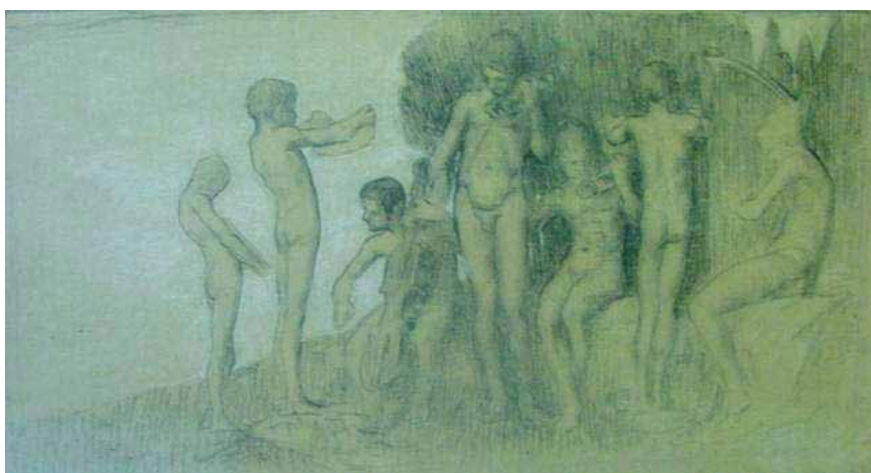
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**13. Second compositional type,
Brukenthal National Museum**



**14. Second compositional type
Brukenthal National Museum**



BNM

HNG

AMC

BM

BM

BM

15. Boy holding the score I (BNM=Brukenthal National Museum, HNG=Hungarian National Gallery, AMC=Art Museum Cluj-Napoca)



BNM

HNG

AMC

BM

BM

BM

16. Boy holding the score II (BNM=Brukenthal National Museum, HNG=Hungarian National Gallery, AMC=Art Museum Cluj-Napoca)



17. Children playing the violin, Brukenthal National Museum

ASPECTS OF ROMANIAN ART AS REFLECTED BY EARLY 20TH CENTURY PRESS (1900–1914)

Bogdan Ioanițiu BOȘOTEANU*

Abstract: At the beginning of the last century, the Romanian press had a major social impact and a positive influence on the development of plastic arts, through reviews signed by judicious critics. Within a few years new art societies emerged, such as *Tinerimea artistică* (The Artistic Youth) and there were numerous personal or collective exhibitions.

Key words: art, art criticism, modern press, social issue, national style, art societies.

Rezumat: Aspecte ale artei românești reflectate în presa de la începutul secolului al XX-lea (1900–1914). La începutul secolului trecut, în spațiul românesc presa a produs un impact social major și a influențat într-un mod pozitiv dezvoltarea artelor plastice, prin cronici semnate de critici pertinente. În doar câțiva ani au apărut societăți artistice noi, precum Societatea „Tinerimea artistică”, și s-au organizat numeroase expoziții personale sau colective.

Cuvinte-cheie: artă, critica de artă, presa modernă, problematica socială, stilul național, societăți artistice.

Art Societies

The early years of the last century were a period of rapid and profound changes in the society, from the mass production of motor cars to the use of electricity in every house. Therefore, modern art could not remain focused on tradition and it grew in an organic, natural manner, in keeping with that age. Thus, according to a renowned collector and critic, K. H. Zambaccian, in Romania, *Tinerimea artistică* (Artistic Youth) (Fig. 1) was founded in response to the *Salonul Oficial* (Official Salon), dominated by the painters George D. Mirea, Costin Petrescu, Constantin I. Stăncescu, Petre

Alexandrescu, Juan Alpar and other leaders of the School of Fine Arts, who did not tolerate new trends. Gheorghe Petrașcu, Ipolit Strâmbu, Kimon Loghi, Virgil Cioflec and the poet Ștefan Iosif, who accompanied Cioflec in his journey abroad, took the initiative in Paris. (Zambaccian 2004, 11). He also believed that *Tinerimea artistică* had a significant echo among art lovers at the time.

Annual exhibitions aimed at measuring up to the standards of art events such as *Secession* in Vienna (Zambaccian 2004, 11). Another very proficient critic of the turn of the 19th century reported that “at the beginning of the 20th century, secessionists had the fortunate idea of gathering – as much as possible – the works of an artist on the same panel in an exhibition and *Tinerimea artistică* adopted this method. Thanks to such display, one could easily see how talented each artist was” (Bachelin 1909, 387). Romanian enthusiasts and art collectors, as well as journalists and critics of exhibitions in the European capitals, noticed the new methods of setting off works of art. “(...) The English seem to have found this a long time ago: there is a clear space of almost a metre around each painting, thus, the painting stands out and becomes an important figure, while in a French exhibition it

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would be a mere number...” (Kostaki 1913, 259), and they were even conducting comparative studies on this subject.

Before World War I, private views organised by *Tinerimea artistică* became a trendy event as important as the Romanian derby or the ball of the *Obol* aristocratic society (Zambaccian 2004, 11). *Tinerimea artistică* was even more prestigious as Her Highness Princess Mary had accepted to be the patron of the society. Oscar Späethe was the one who persuaded Princess Mary, as he was overwhelmed, in his turn, by Princess’s interest in idealistic and mystic art. Moreover, some of his best works of art were either commissioned or purchased by the Princess: *Sfântul Ioan Botezătorul* (Saint John the Baptist), *Sfântă bizantină* (Byzantine Saint), *Fiat lux, Florentina* and the bust of *Princess Elisabeth* (Șotropa 2009). Probably the most inspired description of this Romanian society, so important from an artistic point of view, belonged to C. Sp. Hasnaș: “Oh, *Tinerimea artistică*! – a group of poor artists who are not blessed with the gains of stock jobbers...” (Hasnaș 1914, 47).

Nevertheless, not everyone was thrilled with the society’s exhibitions, seen from the point of view of visitors, of art enthusiasts, less than from the point of view of the actual works. The *Critic of Dâmbovită* (publisher of *Flacăra, literară, artistică, socială* / *Literary, Artistic, Social Flame* magazine) noticed with great humour and irony that the public in Bucharest lacked the art knowledge they claimed they had and that was the reason why he believed that “not everyone had to have a good eye for painting (The Critic 1914, 230). A story told by the critic in *Flacăra* magazine seemed to be written by Caragiale himself: «A whole family [...] was in rapture over a painting they liked very much, but could not understand. Hence the quarrel. There were strange swirls of colours, dominated by blue and yellow. The young man, who had a degree in natural sciences, said that the painting had to represent some kind of exotic plant; the father thought the artist had painted the belly of a Japanese who performed *harakiri*. The mother accidentally read the title of another canvas and exclaimed: “Stop arguing over nothing! Here, it says in the catalogue: *In insula Proti* (On the Island of Proti). You can clearly see that these swirls are actually snakes from the Proti island!”; “Snakes, yes, that works too!”; approved the father! “What snakes?!”; the daughter interfered, after having looked into the catalogue. “You misread, maman. It’s *Pescari la Balcic* (Fishermen in Balchik)!

Look, it says right here, black on white!”; “That’s it!”; exclaimed the young man, the botanist. “Fishermen in Balchik! Oh, fishermen are something else! There’s so much you can learn from an exhibition!...”» (The Critic 1914, 230). Painting, like any art in general, is similar to life: “it is enough to like it, one does not need to understand it” (The Critic 1914, 230). Naturally, the contrast between the two kinds of art – *art for the senses* and *art for the soul* – was not found in painting alone. What the author described as artistic *creation* was not consistent with the trend at that time, but with what art enthusiasts or “fine intellectuals” demanded. Instead, *kitsch* or *fabricated* works were a “hit” with the public simply because they fitted the contemporary demands and patterns: “Ever since I have started losing my strength, I have tried to provide security to my family... I have recently built a house; I had some of the money, while some I borrowed, free of any policy, from an admirer and friend of mine who is a banker – and there is nothing more cumbersome than a debt without a policy... You know I usually get good deals; but I do not sell good works for high prices, I sell the poor ones that also go for cheaper prices. This is why when I cannot *create*, I am *fabricating*...”, (H. 1911, 408–409). But both *original* works, as well as *fabricated* ones, were providing satisfaction to an artist: the former, spiritual satisfaction, and the latter, financial. However, in terms of real art, the scale of values was completely wrong. Nicolae Tonitza also noticed the shallowness and amateurism in appreciating works of art. His conclusion in *Arta Română* (Romanian Art) magazine, in 1908, was the following: “We have very few *critics* who do not say stupid things on a work of art and we definitely need debates in which to talk about beauty in an honest and competent manner, taking the heat out...” (Tonitza 1908, 88–90).

Around 1908, there were seven art societies – in the Romanian capital alone – namely: two patron societies (*Domnița Maria* / en.: *Princess Mary* and *Arta românească* / en.: *The Romanian Art*, three societies of architecture, sculpture and painting (*Cercul Artistic* / en. *The Artistic Circle*, *Tinerimea Artistică* and *Societatea generală a Artiștilor din România* / en. *The General Society of Romanian Artists*)), and two more architecture societies. In addition to these seven plastic art-related societies of interest to us, there also were three or four music and literature societies. *Viața Românească* / en. *Romanian Life* reported a noteworthy number-quality ratio concerning these

art societies in Bucharest. Thus, on the one hand, the large number of societies was encouraging, because it was a proof of a real artistic effervescence, but on the other hand, it was a wake-up call regarding the low production and number of artists with genuine talent, thereby “diminishing their social action” (Strîmbulescu 1908, 88). In other words, the low artistic creation in Romania did not justify the high number of art associations and societies. The main cause of the separation of artists into several societies, found by the art critic, was the little encouragement from the Romanian officials: “Indeed, given the absence of material support for works of *intense labour* and the lack of a place large enough to display all the works at the same time, artists see themselves forced to separate in order to show their many and small works in the unspacious hall of the Athenaeum, one by one [...] there is no doubt that the state should be held responsible for some of these faults, more precisely for the scarcity of our art galleries...”; (Strîmbulescu 1908, 89). A few solutions, which the authorities had omitted until then, were identified for the development of artistic creation: raising the money necessary to build a place to accommodate exhibitions and studios, to set-up scholarships, to subsidise an art magazine, or to buy the most noteworthy works for the state galleries (Strîmbulescu 1908, 90).

Art also became a “fashion” and this could not be overlooked by the press. Referring to art-related press, several significant publications before World War I are worth mentioning: *Literatură și artă română* / en. *Romanian Literature and Art*, with its subtitle *Idei – simțire – formă* / *Ideas – feeling – form*, edited by N. Petrașcu, founded on the 25th of November 1906, with monthly issues until the 25th of December 1910; *Arta Românească* / en. *Romanian Art* magazine, founded in Iași, from January to February 1908, with the subtitle *Revistă pentru pictură, sculptură, arhitectură, muzică, artă dramatică, literatură* / en. *Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music, Drama and Literature Magazine*, which in March 1908 changed its title to *Arta română* / en. *Romanian Art*¹, while keeping its subtitle, published monthly and edited by A. D. Atanasie; *Facla* / en. *The Flame*, a weekly magazine (from the 13th of March 1910 to the 15th of June 1913, from the 5th of October 1913 to the 5th of March 1914, from the 1st of August to the 2nd of

November 1914 and from the 1st of January to the 7th of August 1916), which published the art reviews of critics in the know, such as N. D. Cocea and Tudor Arghezi, and included beautiful drawings by Jean Al. Steriadi, Iosif Iser, Camil Ressu, F. Șirato, I. Steurer, etc.; *Furnica* / en. *The Ant*, first published in 1904, which featured caricatures by A. Murnu, F. Șirato, Tojo, C. Ressu, Iser, Mantu; the painter P. Bulgăraș wrote articles on art subjects for *Ilustrațiunea Națională* / en. *The National Depiction* (from September 1912 to June 1914), while Jean Al. Steriadi worked with *Ilustrațiunea Română* / *The Romanian Depiction* (from the 1st of May 1911 to 1916); *Arta, revistă literară, artistică, teatrală* / en. *Art, Literary, Art and Drama Magazine*, published in Bucharest starting from the 1st of January 1912 and *Buletinul Societății Arhitecților Români* / en. *The Journal of Romanian Architects’ Society* and *Curierul Artistic* / en. *Art Courier* (publication for all art fields, with texts in Romanian, French and German) were first published also in 1912, and many others (***, 1969).

Another aspect was the mutual dependence between artists, as producers of work of art, and the connoisseurs and buyers, dependence that supported the need for association. In this respect, the art historian and critic Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș (fig. 2) explained how works of art, unlike literature, did not have the same dissemination possibilities. “Once published in a magazine or a book – he asserted – a piece of literature becomes public domain and, depending on its value, it brings fame to its author. But things are different for works of art. Because they cannot be reproduced in thousands of copies. It is a one-time creation. And only when that very original is bought by the state and displayed in a museum, then and only then it becomes somewhat of public domain. But, if from the studio it goes to some private collection, it remains unknown to the crowd. And the fame of the artist does not go beyond a small group of amateurs” (Tzigara-Samurcaș 1908, 620). These were the reasons pointed out by the critic pleading for the establishment of art exhibitions as large as possible, which could be the subject of press articles written by competent critics and the explanation for the artists’ wishes for greater autonomy and support.

¹ There is a slight difference in the “word Romanian”, which is untranslatable.

Artists and Social Issues

The uprising of 1907 was preceded in 1904–1906 by a series of social turmoil and unrest. Among artists, Octav Băncilă and Ștefan Luchian are worth being closely examined. The former, in *Luceafărul* / en. *The Morning Star*, was seen as a “rebel” because “his canvases suggest so much hate and rebellion against social conventions, that you leave the exhibition under the impression you have assisted at a claim meeting” (Iov 1914, 212). “Our peasants, our ordinary peasants, not the comedians brought by force at various national celebrations, are best depicted by Octav Băncilă. The companionship between the peasant, taking the black polenta to his mouth, and the master’s fat and beautiful oxen, with which he ploughed the field of another, is so painful and well illustrated in *Pâinea cea de toate zilele* / en. *Daily bread. Propagandistul* / *The Propagandist* is extremely vibrant with truth and life and it shows the means by which the 1907 mutinies spread. *Pribeagul* / en. *The Wanderer* tells the story of a landless peasant who, tired of struggling to make a living, rests on a rock, with his hoe and empty bag for friends” (Iov 1914, 212). The capital city, Bucharest itself, with its slums and misery, inspired Luchian in particular, who dedicated it several canvases (Giurescu 1979, 145). Both Luchian and Băncilă, “portray, just like the left-wing literature of the time, characters such as “the disappointed”, “the depressed”, “the one tired of life”, burdened with suffering, at crossroads between living as a person and living as part of the society. [...] Such correlations are identifiable only in the final moments of Symbolism or even in post-symbolism and its turn to a lyrical realism with romantic accents, which established themselves especially in Central and South-East Europe” (Pavel 1990, 137).

At the time, the press widely discussed on social classes and wealth issues as determining factors of artistic creation. *Noua Revistă Română* / en. *The New Romanian Magazine* analysed Ruskin’s artistic and social view on aesthetics and impact of capitalism on art and art creator. Thus, capitalism was deemed to be the main cause of the artistic “reflux” that inevitably led to the moral decay of society: “There was no beauty left behind capitalism, where there was no beauty, there were no morals either. All that was left behind was an idle and luxurious class, doing nothing and showing no interest in art, and a poor class, exhausted by work and suffering, lacking the time or the spiritual freedom needed in order to understand and love art” (Petică 1900, 43). In

the opinion of the author writing in *Noua Revistă Română*, wealth and luxury had nothing to do with true art, despite the misconception according to which “wealthy people maintain luxury and luxury is necessary for the development of art” (Petică 1900, 43). On the other hand, poverty and misery were destroying beauty, making it impossible to completely understand an aesthetic work: “By destroying beauty, morals are also destroyed and thus, lower classes are in danger of losing any hope for a spiritual life”. (Petică 1900, 43). Therefore, both luxury and poverty, for totally different reasons, were destroying beauty and morals, namely the very attributes of artistic creation. An artist’s life was one of hardships and financial difficulties in general throughout Europe. All the more so in Romania, where missing commissions from collectors or the absence of state support led, more often than not, to an “artistic suicide”.

In 1901, the column *Note și discuțiuni* (*Notes and Discussions*) of *Noua Revistă Română* raised the alarm regarding the critical state of plastic arts and the social environment where Romanian artists lived. The author of the article, C. Ionescu, asked rhetorically: “Has anybody walked into the studio of a Romanian painter? In that room that bears the pompous name of studio, a painter must sleep and often cook. In addition, not even the happiest of painters has a studio that rises up to current requirements. Because of poverty, his palette is often forgotten and the paints on it dry up and with them, talent also fades away; forced to struggle and teach calligraphy or linear drawing, he wilts and one day he realises he cannot do anything” (Ionescu 1901, 475). He further continues, with sadness: “The unfortunate artist is reduced to starvation, looking at his paintings that only serve as rat food, at best” (Ionescu 1901, 476). In order to improve the situation of artists, Ionescu suggested to increase customs duties on works from abroad, which were cheaper, but which also, in his opinion, had a lower quality than the local ones: “Today, a painting brought from Austria, is 50 lei, at the most, in any store in Bucharest. It is true that it has a beautiful frame, but that is all, while a painting that meets all art requirements should be at least 200 or 300 lei, without the frame. It is only natural that X or Y, rich men of Bucharest, would rather buy imported goods, which are cheaper and have the great advantage of being brought from abroad. [...] Parliament, especially at this time of crisis, could vote enormous duties on everything that is art brought from abroad, thus

protecting Romanian art. Artists have every right to demand it...” (Ionescu 1901, 476). Unfortunately, 10 years later the financial situation of art creators was almost unchanged. Another magazine, *Viața Românească*, published the following similar remark in 1911, during an exhibition of *Tinerimea Artistică*: “devoting yourself to fine arts in a country like ours means giving up not only the joys of life, but also giving up many ideals, which is even sadder” (*** 1911, 114). The lack of ideals inevitably led to a fading of the view on *beauty*, because quantity and quality became ambiguous notions in the judgment of art collectors. Works of art were the only material survival means for artists and as a result they were subject to the rules of the age in which they were created.

Polemic on the National Style (Neo-Romanian)

In 1906 the grand General Romanian Exhibition in Bucharest, Carol Park, was held, celebrating twenty-five years from the declaration of the Kingdom, forty years under the reign of King Carol I and eighteen hundred years from the conquest of Dacia by the Romans. The architects appointed to build the exhibition halls, Ștefan Burcus and Victor Ștefănescu, “used the entire vocabulary of the *national style*: the Royal Hall was a mix between the Mogoșoaia Palace and Văcărești Monastery, and the architect Nicolae Ghika-Budești built a replica of Sfântul Nicolae (Saint Nicholas) church in Iași (which, together with the Roman Arena, is still preserved today). The exhibition played a major role in the official recognition of the *national style* in architecture, making the public aware of the style and proving to be appropriate for all kinds of architecture approaches. In the following years, administrative buildings – town halls, prefectures, ministries – libraries, cultural centres, museums, banks, individual or collective houses, etc. kept the same style” (Ștefănuț 2008, 98–99). At the same time, the awareness regarding the value of the national architecture and a revived interest in historical heritage were also translated into the organisation of the institutions in charge of monitoring and protecting it: the Commission for Historical Monuments was set up in 1909 and over time its members included great figures of Romanian culture and architecture (Revnice 2008, 28). The protagonists of this period were Petre Antonescu, Grigore Cerchez, Nicolae Ghika Budești and Cristofi Cerchez.

Nevertheless, nationalism in art brought about intense debates among critics of the time. Antonescu’s architectural designs were severely criticised. Thus, the specificity of the Romanian art current in architecture was exemplified by descriptions such as the following: “heavy mouldings that stifle the building and have no use whatsoever [...], masonry buttons that contribute to a costly and inconvenient architecture [...], balconies that look like bellies outside the windows, while claiming, in mockery, to be Byzantine [...], a roof twice the size of the building, a Chinese invention by Romanian architects” (Maniu 1913, 303). The design of the capital town hall (fig. 3) was even more severely attacked, with humorous accents every now and then (“the tower looks like a candle on a cake for the dead (koliva) and there are ten different styles of windows on the same façade decorated with national sausages”; Maniu 1913, 303).

The director of the Ethnographic Museum in Bucharest, Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș, also wrote a broad review on Antonescu’s design, in *Luceafărul*, but not at all favourable to the architect: “The façade is monotonous, in a straight line, spanning 120 metres, and in the middle, out of the blue, an 180 metre-high tower rises, at the base of which there are several ramparts. What for?... This design, or better yet, the sketch of the design, takes us centuries back, to the age of the feudal castles in the west... The architect replied: “...The greatest town halls built in Europe in recent years, all have towers. The city halls in Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Leipzig, Stuttgart, Vienna etc.” (*** 1913, 132). Tzigara-Samurcaș advocated in *Convorbiri literare* (en. *Literary Dialogues*), in 1907, in favour of objectivity and balance of art, given the “strange phase in the appreciation of national art. We have been completely oblivious to it for a long time, and now, on the contrary, we are determined to exaggerate its national significance. We are making one mistake after another” (Tzigara-Samurcaș 1907, 80). The critic pointed out his views on the exaggerated use of terms like *national* or *national art*. In his opinion “special attention is given to everything that is bearing such pompous label. Just a little while ago there was no such thing as Romanian art, and now some of us work hard and write eloquent pages to convince us that the monuments at the borders of the country are genuine products of the Romanian brilliance” (Tzigara-Samurcaș 1907, 80). Those who defended the originality and uniqueness of the Romanian national art put forward the

argument of “the necessary ethnic vast background, like none other”: “This land and the people who live here have their specific features and cannot be mistaken for the land and people of other countries. Our mountains and hills and especially our plains have their own poetic feel and colour, different from those of other countries; the people here have their own well-defined peculiarities in terms of aspect, clothing and language” etc. (Tzigara-Samurcaș 1907, 81). This exaggeration of the *ethnic background* peaked when nationalists concluded that “Giotto, Orcagna or Taddeo Gaddi, great predecessors of the Italian Renaissance and contemporary with our master painter, did not manage to depict the divine grace of the holy figures...like the anonymous author of Cozia frescoes” (Tzigara-Samurcaș 1907, 83), who came from who knows where or who might as well have been Romanian. Tzigara-Samurcaș believed that the historian Nicolae Iorga was on his side in this polemic, although they usually had contrary opinions, considering that he, a nationalist, had to admit the obvious, namely the absence in history of a creative art genius with a specific Romanian background (“...before 1496 there had been no architectural style in its own standing in Wallachia to find its final form in certain buildings”; (Tzigara-Samurcaș 1907, 86).

The counterargument of traditionalists and those looking to the past with nostalgia was that the western architectural development was not proper for the capital city, inconsistent with our art tradition: “In today’s capital, which has recently been subject to a western development, tearing down the inn of Șerban-Vodă, the inn of Brâncoveanu and Saint John Preditici Church, monuments without any connection whatsoever with our art past, such as the National Bank, the Post Office or the Savings Bank, have been built instead and one can hardly guess what former Bucharest looked like” (Haneș 1909, 203). In this respect, Ion Mincu was seen as a true “apostle of art” (D. 1913, 46). At his death in 1912 he was included in the same gallery as the great Romanian artists “alongside Grigorescu”, considering him to be the father of neo-Romanian style in architecture, but at the turn of the 19th century, discussions around the new style created by him were quite heated: “Mincu was understood by very few people; he lived in isolation, always immersed in the research of old Romanian art” (D. 1913, 46). Moreover, the master himself admitted that: “I have always thought of myself as a loner and I have said to myself: I can live alone,

if this is my fate. But today I can see I was not alone and for that I thank you”. (D. 1913, 46). He bitterly remembered the lack of support from the Romanian state and the scarcity of material resources, but said he was optimistic about the future of Romanian art: “In my job, I have learnt nothing from any Romanian school. The little that I know I have learnt while away, in my journeys through the world. And today, in my old age, I realise that all that has caught on, has sprouted and it is going to be carried on”. (D. 1913, 46). N. D. Cocea, an immoral, but talented character (Oprea 1973, 65), correctly noted that progress and the transformations the society was going through took place, to the same extent, in art and the conservative majority proved to be reluctant to any attempt to overturn social conventions: “In art, just like in social life, the majority will be in favour of obsolete art forms, of clichés they have been accustomed with since primary school for everything that satisfied the human aesthetic needs, without too much effort to think or understand”. (Cocea 1909, 74).

Art Trends in the Press

Modern researchers believe that “the profession of specialised art critic did not exist before the last third of the 19th century when art reviews were first published and it did not actually exist at the beginning of the 20th century either, in the years before World War I” (Pavel 1996, 71). However, we ought to mention the important role in the support of art societies played by the art association of Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești, who signed the reviews published in *Ileana* (en. *Helen*) magazine under the pseudonym Ion Duican, and the help given to distinguished artists, such as Luchian. The general tone of reviews was set, with few exceptions, by critics who had made a name in the field few years before and were working with large newspapers: Léo Bachelin, B. Brănișteanu and D. Karnabatt (Oprea 1982, 9–20). This respected trio was doubled at the time by Virgil Cioflec, Apcar Baltazar and Theodor Cornel. Arghezi, their successor, contributed to the affirmation of authentic values through his reviews: “Endowed with unflinching insight, the critical spirit of the great poet knew what to choose in terms of artistic validity, and also knew to interpret the individuality of art phenomena that he felt obliged to judge” (Enescu 1964, 207). Alongside them, Gala Galaction, N. Pora or N. Tonitza were also valuable representatives of plastic discourse a century ago and they

contributed to uncovering and understanding the new European art trends.

Between 1900 and 1914, art review was, as further shown, a topic tackled by a wide range of publishers with different theoretical training, from historians to art collectors, plastic artists and even poets. Each publication attempted an approach to art from objective standpoints and, more often than not, they succeeded. But since they had divergent doctrinal points of view, some magazines tried to justify their own ideological trend (*sămănătorism* in Bucharest or *poporanism* promoted by *Viața Românească* magazine in Iași) through art. For instance, *Sămănătorul* (en. *The Sower*) was going to prefer the pastoral representation through Grigorescu's *plein air*, associating the images and feelings of the master's admirers with the cultural current promoted by the magazine. The direction specific to *sămănătorism*, residing in the worship of nature and idyllic, rural life, found its most beautiful expression in impressionist paintings in general and in Grigorescu's works in particular, who transposed onto his canvases the idealised/ideal image of the land of this country. The very first issue of the magazine announced Grigorescu's exhibition, which was going to take place on the 15th of December, at the Athenaeum, while the works on display were "the highest and most powerful artistic manifestation of the Romanian people" (** 1901, 7). One of the two editors of the magazine, Al. Vlahuță, believed that Grigorescu's creations were in perfect consonance with the specificity of nature, where the great artist had retired to work and which had unveiled all its mysteries: "...in silence, the trees, the waters, the sky and the vastness of the lands revealed their mysteries and whispered to him words unknown to us and it was there that he secretly worked for the glory of the Romanian people – it was there that he wrote, using colours and rays of the sun, the most inspired poem to our beautiful country" (Vlahuță 1901, 49). In fact, N. Grigorescu's popularity determined the founders of the magazine to choose one of the master's paintings as cover. George Sfetea, Coșbuc's brother-in-law, proposed a cover sketch made by Nicolae Grigorescu. Eventually, they accepted for cover the image of a peasant girl who was spinning, on the right of the sower, having the same symbols that the painter had had in mind for her clothing: "Barefoot, symbolising country life, with a black skirt covering her knees, wearing a white blouse and a white headscarf, the black and white combination being specific to rural clothing

worn around Sibiu, and red undergarment and girdle, the red girdle motifs being common in the sub-Carpathian area of the kingdom". (<http://www.semanatorul.ro/istoric/samanatorul.htm>).

In the following years, Grigorescu was the admiration of journalists with *Sămănătorul* magazine and many eulogistic articles were dedicated to him by notable critics, such as V. Cioflec, Barbu Șt. Delavrancea or N. Iorga. The latter considered the great painter to be the necessary link between the Romanian people and nature, aiming at rediscovering the long-forgotten, but truly magnificent, past. The historian attributed three essential qualities to Grigorescu's creation in order to achieve said aim: "truth", "poetry" and "wealth" ("...this painter comes to show us, while so many others are scrawling from memory or imagination, that our country, where our people live have *this* sky, *this* light, *these* views and that its truest sons have, underneath their tough cloths, when they are happy, *this* smile and *this* meaning in their deep eyes when they are in awe of the mystery of life or nature [...] There is a fabricated poetry, a manufactured poetry, which takes shape easily outside the things that exist, a poetry of cardboard settings and rare, foreign, old and fantastic subjects. But there is also another one, a great and shy one, for the discovery of which it takes the courage, the patience and the innocence of Prince Charming. [...] Grigorescu is prolific, *abundant* – infinite in this trait of his. He is almost as diligent in his old age as in his younger years...". (Iorga 1904, 33–35). In 1907, after Iorga left, in the article *Nature in Grigorescu's Paintings*, Gh. G. Murgoci also pleaded in favour of the *sămănătorism*-related feel in N. Grigorescu's work. In his opinion "(...) nature reflected in Grigorescu's famous paintings is the one in which we are living, which surrounds us, enchants us and absorbs us when we take the time to study and admire it" (Murgoci 1907, 694), and he also identified three elements in one of the master's landscapes that gave the painting its value: "the sky with its air, the vegetation (or the cover of the earth) and the soil itself" (Murgoci 1907, 695). By putting the man (the peasant) and the three elements together in the painting, the work of art was truly perfect ("When people in a painting are in consonance, even if poeticised, with nature, then that work has unity and harmony, it is exquisite and consummate"; (Murgoci 1907, 695), representing in a plastic manner the very essence of the current promoted by *Sămănătorul* magazine, summarised in the

following lines: "(...) and that peace that dominates Grigorescu's sky and air we see again in the characters that he portrays in his paintings: the oxen go slowly, the peasants daydream in their wagon, shepherd girls spin, shepherd boys barely wiggle at the head of the flock or lay on their bellies or lean on their club. Peace and meditation are all over, on people's faces and on nature's face. Grigorescu is in particular the *poet of tranquillity*, according to his very way of being" (Murgoci 1907, 695).

As one of the most celebrated painters of the early 20th century, N. Grigorescu was a reference point, a standard to judge by at the exhibition at the Athenaeum in 1900 for the followers of national specificity in art: "Graduate of the French school, familiar with all the procedures of his craft, the master won a special place in today's painting, becoming – with as much passion as talent – the painting poet of his beautiful country. His manner, apparently very simple, is in fact one of the finest and, of course, bears the mark of those later years when the artist, disgusted with old clichés, tired of academic vanities, naively returns to nature, to immediate love for true things, seen and spoken in honesty, transcending all conventional forms". (Bachelin 1900, 231). Although Grigorescu enjoyed an immense prestige at the time, there also were those who questioned his art. Zambaccian mentioned in this category his rival, also a collector, "that comedian and paradoxical pamphleteer, Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești, who used to say: "You won't find any Grigorescus in my collection, but works by Luchian, Ressu, Pallady, Iser, etc." (Zambaccian 2004, 11). The eccentric collector Bogdan-Pitești justified his preference for the painters above referring to the support he intended to give to young artists and modern art (which was, nevertheless, praiseworthy). However, the role of Bogdan-Pitești was of the essence in the Romanian art movement around 1900. He encouraged artists, painters and sculptors, stimulated them, bought many works from them (he owned the largest art collection at the time), invited them to work at his mansion in Vlaici. Luchian's career in particular cannot be separated from his name (Boia 2010, 190). Going back to Grigorescu, probably the closest characterisation of his work belonged to N. Iorga, who wrote in 1904, in *Sămănătorul*: "(...) yet his art, so intensely personal, given his long-time labour, his sacrifices of a lifetime due to which he managed to master it, reaches a point that is reserved for the few chosen: impersonality". (Beneș, Jianu 1957, 15).

One aspect in which, unfortunately, the magazine failed to excel was the quality and number of pictures offered to art lovers. But there was one exception, in 1906, when the magazine was accompanied by an *Art Supplement*. In the programme *What is Sămănătorul?*, signed by N. Iorga, who defined the new direction of *Sămănătorul* magazine, since the 1st of January 1906, the historian and editor of the publication promised that in the future, among other things, the weekly newspaper was going to include pictures in order to clearly show the Romanian people that they too had "real art", thereby seeking to fill the void left by the decline of *Literatura și arta română* magazine: "So far no illustration has been included in this poor paper, and yet Romanians need illustrations to constantly remind them that they have, as a people and in their past, real art. Such illustration was featured, indiscriminately and without any explanation, in *Literatura și arta română* magazine, which today is completely morally depraved" (Iorga 1906, 3).

Unlike *Sămănătorul*, *Viața românească* did not aim at "sowing". Its format and appearance were not similar to any popular large magazine. From the very beginning it spoke to cult readers. In terms of aesthetics, G. Ibrăileanu's recommendations were few and eventually they were limited to the necessity imposed on creators to observe life in an inexorable and "indifferent" manner, but not any life, but the life of the nation, the life of Romanians" (Bulei 2005, 112). The articles by Spiridon Antonescu (Apcar Baltazar) delighted art lovers through the sharpness and frequency of attacks against certain artists and especially against art critics, whom he considered to be "uninformed" and lacking the proper art knowledge they should have had considering their role.

The journalists of *Noua Revistă Română* argued in favour of a moderate and tolerant nationalism in art. Starting from the premise that, in most cases, the committees in charge of evaluating works of art were made up of intellectuals and experts educated abroad, they concluded that an objective reference to national specificity could not be achieved under the circumstances, because the Romanian elite "is still drinking from the fountain of foreign culture, they no longer feel, they cannot feel Romanian, they no longer understand art as did the true Romanian in Dealul Spirii or elsewhere..." (Stan 1900, 31). Although the stated purpose of the editorial staff was not necessarily to promote plastic arts and the majority of review writers were occasional art critics (e.g. Th.

Speranția was an anecdote writer, V. V. Haneș and A. Maniu were writers, etc.), nevertheless, in time, *Noua Revistă Română* managed to gather real opinion makers on art and aesthetics, such as Leo Bachelin, V. Cioflec or Al. Tzigara-Samurçaș. For example, over time, the opinions of Tzigara-Samurçaș on the artistic creation of Constantin Brâncuși (fig. 4) were inconsistent. The historian and art critic who knew the value and sensibility of his former student, aware that he mastered “perfectly all the secrets of human figure and sculptural technique”, still said about *Cumințenia pământului* (en. *The Wisdom of the Earth*) that it was “in clear contradiction with the entire aesthetic tradition”! According to Tzigara-Samurçaș, it was “a bad joke, a mistake, a deliberate denial of art, which should not be accepted”, but rather “deserved to be disapproved of”; and, *ex catedra*, the professor solemnly and rhetorically demanded the jury of *Tinerimea artistică* to “at least in the future reject such attempts meant to trouble the thoughts”...(Tzigara-Samurçaș 1910, 251). Years later, in Paris, during the Universal Exhibition in 1937, Tzigara-Samurçaș would admit his error and proved to be a flexible art critic. Such objective art critics like Tzigara-Samurçaș contributed to the fame of the magazine, standing out in the preferences of fine art lovers. In its art reviews, the publication edited by Rădulescu-Motru did not seek to promote a direction of its own, maybe because review writers were not the followers of a uniform trend and, more often than not, their opinions on the same subject were divergent. In general, art reviews were made starting from international art events (universal exhibitions in which Romania participated as well, for instance exhibitions in Paris, Munich, Rome, etc.), national events (exhibitions organised by *Tinerimea artistică*, *Salonul oficial*) or local events (personal, individual or collective exhibitions in Bucharest or in the province). Adjacent subjects were the unveiling of historical monuments of public interest or the death and commemoration of Romanian or foreign artists (N. Grigorescu, M. Munkacsy, etc.). *Noua Revistă Română* was also different from *Sămănătorul* in the sense that it did not try to justify some of its preferences for a certain line of development of the country, capitalising on the propagandistic role of art, and this was rendered evident by art reviewers who published their articles in this magazine.

Immediately after 1906 things changed at *Convorbiri literare*, which had passed into

obscurity, when Simion Mehedinți became editor of the magazine. He managed to draw new art critics and the quality of the publication improved. Between 1907 and 1914, the new employees of the prestigious publication were Al. Tzigara-Samurçaș (a very active and prolific historian and art critic, as previously shown), who wrote numerous articles and signed the *Art Review* column, Apcar Baltazar, painter and art critic, Al. M. Zagoritz, architect and art historian, and I. D. Ștefănescu, art historian and Byzantinologist. The former was the flame that fuelled the love for art and its study. He relentlessly argued in favour of appreciating true art, of saving folk art works and of making art societies and manifestations in Romania free of any political interference. S. Mehedinți brought the reviews published in *Convorbiri* magazine to a whole different level, they were no longer merely literary reviews, but “art reviews”, and completed the magazine contents with a section increasingly demanded by loyal readers. And last but not least, he improved the appearance of the publication, with reproductions of important Romanian art works. Neither him, nor the main contributor to the magazine, Tzigara-Samurçaș, were indifferent to the poor organisation of the domestic art education system. They sounded the alarm with respect to the interference of politics in art through the article *Art and Politics* in 1910. Their anger was justified because “the appointments of teachers were not in compliance with the Regulation and not in accordance with any of the requirements provided, the only purpose being to employ party members (political party members, *our note*) who were completely alien to the academic subjects they were in charge of ” (Tzigara-Samurçaș 1911, 100). The examples provided in this regard by the journalist in order to make his point spoke for themselves: “...for instance, the aesthetics and art history teacher is required to talk to first year students, among other things, about: „political parties, political fights; their passion and violence; their decisive significance” (Tzigara-Samurçaș 1911, 100). In conclusion, the director of the Ethnographic Museum in Bucharest showed that “serious guidance of our entire art education system still remains to be attempted, by reconsidering first the reckless measures taken lately”. (Tzigara-Samurçaș 1911, 100).

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The turn of the 19th century was a watershed of Romanian art life. The establishment of *Tinerimea artistică* society was one of the milestones of art

segregation in our country and the press contemporary with the events was quick to note the progress in moving away from the obsolete academic dogmas and traditions. In architecture, the prompting of the neo-Romanian national style especially after 1906 brought about heated discussions among the Romanian art critics and historians, but the phenomenon proved to be irreversible.

Another aspect worthy of consideration for the 20th century was that the journals subject to analysis (in particular *Convorbiri literare*, *Noua Revistă Română*, *Sămănătorul*, and *Viața Românească* – highly appreciated at the time and genuine opinion makers) encouraged young local talents. The more or less competent reviews determined nevertheless a constant deepening of the knowledge and appreciation of art styles, despite the conservative and reluctant attitude of the Romanian society to new trends. On the other hand, this kind of critic did not damage the artistic environment, on the contrary, it aroused natural interests and divided artists into groups which

had, more often than not, opposite points of view in terms of style. Although the press reported many irregularities in the organisation of art education, state measures and support were long in coming and the artists (with few exceptions) led a tough life, dependent on commissions from collectors. In spite of all these disadvantages, by reflecting art in the pages of dedicated magazines in the form of articles, exhibition reviews, reproductions and illustrations, Romanian art made visible progress; just a few years later, our art works rose up to the quantity and quality standards of European modern art and this was demonstrated in the period between the wars by an exceptional generation of artists, educated and developed *at that very moment*, in the first and a half decade of the previous century. Moreover, in Transylvania, in Sibiu, *Luceafărul* magazine made up the link necessary in order to gain knowledge of the art values across the mountains and a much-needed support to the few Romanian talents.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Jury of the exhibition "Artistic Youth": Luchian, Artachino, Spaethe, Strâmbulescu, Verona, Petrașcu, Loghi, Storck. Source: "The Morning Star" magazine, no. 7 from 1905
2. Alexandru Tzigara-Samurçaș. Source: "The Morning Star" magazine, no. 9 from 1914
3. The sculptor Constantin Brâncuși. Source: "The Morning Star" magazine, no. 4–5 from 1907
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1. Jury of the exhibition "Artistic Youth":
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3. The sculptor Constantin Brâncuși.

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POLITICAL VERSUS OCCULT: “THE STORY OF VICTOR BRAUNER’S EYE”

Valentina IANCU*

Abstract: *The study Political versus Occult: The Story of Victor Brauner’s Eye presents a range of plausible new interpretations for the famous painting Self Portrait with Enucleated Eye. The medium-size oil on wood, painted by Victor Brauner in 1931, was given a premonitory interpretation due to a dramatic accident which took place in 1938, when the artist was hit in the face by a randomly thrown glass. It is considered to be one of the most famous controversies in art history. This study provides new perspectives for deciphering Victor Brauner’s painting in relation to his biography, the political ideologies and the racial persecution faced by European Jews at the time.*

Keywords: Victor Brauner, art, Surrealism, politics, Anti-Semitism

Rezumat: *Politic versus ocult: „Povestea ochiului” lui Victor Brauner. Studiul prezintă o serie de noi interpretări plauzibile pentru faimoasa pictură Autoportret cu ochiul enucleat. Uleiului pe lemn de dimensiuni medii, pictat de Victor Brauner în 1931 i-a fost dat un caracter premonitory, din cauza unui dramatic accident din 1938, când artistul a fost lovit în față de un pahar aruncat la întâmplare. Aceasta este considerată una dintre cele mai celebre controverse din istoria artelor. Cercetarea de față oferă noi perspective de interpretare în citirea artei lui Victor Brauner în conformitate cu biografia sa, pusă în relație cu ideologiile politice ale vremii și persecuția rasială a evreilor din Europa.*

Cuvinte cheie: Victor Brauner, artă, Suprarealism, politică, anti-semitism

The connection between art and politics entailed debates and studies developed by a large number of researchers throughout the 20th century, and it remains of interest today, as well. A general conclusion was that there is a relation of interdependence between art and politics: “I do not consider the relationship between art and politics in terms of separately constituted fields, art on one side and politics on the other, so that a connection should be established between the two. There is an aesthetic dimension in politics and a political dimension in art. This is why I think it is not useful to distinguish between political and non-political art” says Chantal Mouffe in the volume she dedicated to the analysis of political art, *On the Political*, published in New York, in 2005.

Based on texts by Raymond Williams and Donald Drew Egbert on the Avant-garde and politics, I set

1931. This work, exhibited at Centre Pompidou in Paris, is one of his most controversial masterpieces, which were attributed occult meanings after a later incident.

I shall start from the general background to the particular, distinctive features of Brauner's work, using strong arguments in my demonstration, such as the social reality of the time, the biography of the artist and an assessment of other interpretations of the work, provided in time. The permanent connection of the Avant-garde movements to the ideologies of the time is considered one of the most relevant factors in the development of the interdependence between art and politics. The left or right wing ideologies found followers among artistic groups, and activism became an important issue in art. Except for Futurism, which sided with the right-wing and whose representatives (with very few exceptions) supported Mussolini's policy during the fascist period, other Avant-garde groups sided with the left-wing political discourse. In *Politics of Modernism against the New Conformists*, the

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**Translated by George Weiner

British critic Raymond Williams devoted a chapter of his work to the direct connection between Avant-garde artists and the political movements of the time, having equaled the Avant-garde discourse and the political ideology.

The author identified the political stand made by each current, considering the Avant-garde as a "cultural and political campaign". Being clearly interested in the ideologies affiliated with the right-wing, Raymond Williams occasionally mentioned the relations between the Avant-garde currents and left-wing ideologies. His analysis is focused on the late period of Italian Futurism.

Unlike Williams, Donald Drew Egbert analyzed the discourse of the left-wing, leftist or anarchist groups in art history, in his book, *Social Radicalism and the Arts. Western Europe*, Egbert made a full panorama of the Western artistic left-wing, defining its origins, subtle differences and directions.

The relation of artists with politics was determined and conditioned by the existing political system and socio-economic context of each state. "In countries where no radical changes in state policies took place, at the time, the effects of political thought were as complex, but less dramatic," noted Williams. The success of the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917 was a decisive factor for the confidence enjoyed among the intellectuals of the time by Leninist communism. The option for social activism and militancy became natural, given the context of state policies radicalization in many European countries affected by World War I, nationalism being one of the policies that had aggressively violated the human rights. Given this context, plus the Great Depression which began in 1929, Marx's writings, which proposed an egalitarian utopia, were gaining more and more followers.

Of all the Avant-garde currents, except for Russian Constructivism, the Surrealists developed the most active and coherent movement linked to politics. The Surrealist image was essentially oniric and built according to the rules of automatic dictation theorized by Freud. Differently, the artistic discourse was ideologized and had an assumed and direct relationship with politics. From the very beginning, the movement was politicized, as its followers were Bolshevik militants. Many of them were supporters or even Communist Party members. In literature, ideology transpired clearly: the eulogy of the Red Army, of socialism, the critique of colonialism and

imperialism, the famous call to *liquidate the scientist bears of social democracy*, they all became leitmotifs of the Surrealist discourse. In painting, the situation was different. Fine arts, being somewhat marginal in the movement, was apolitical, it seemed. Helena Lewis, one of the most important contemporary theorists of the movement, just like Egbert, who is a classic by now, demonstrated, step by step, the opposite of the discourses that tended to exclude the political factor from the analysis of Surrealistic plastic arts. Starting from the principle of unity of this current, she provided precise arguments that the interest in the militant sphere of art represented a constant *mise en scène*, including the fine arts.

In the Romanian area, unlike the other Avant-garde currents, Surrealism took over an exclusively international language, which supported no compromise, transformations and local adaptations. Being synchronized with the ideas of the French Surrealists, the group in Bucharest identified itself with the Communist ideology, subordinating their artistic discourse to the political militancy. "One cannot overlook the close relationship, be it direct or indirect, with the movement of the left wing (the Communist Party of Romania, the French Communist Party and the Comintern) (Tănase 2008). Most Jewish artists had temporary or lasting ties with Communist Party of Romania, which was unlawful at the time, having participated in various subversive activities or even organizing them. Under the motto "Art in the service of the Revolution", they triggered a visible journalistic insurrection. This brought them to the attention of the State Security Agency and they were charged with communism, "pornographic expression" or "indecent behavior". In time, however, the aberrations of the Stalinist model, with its new propaganda and the socialist realism, forced them to take a step back. Most of them understood that their ideal was perverted into a totalitarian regime and chose exile; their art could not be "the banner of the new world", as they had hoped. Their revolutionary vision, expressed by an innovative visual language and an absolute creative freedom, had momentous implications in the development of European art after the Second World War" (Enache 2010, p. 28).

One of the leaders of local Surrealism, also connected to the French group, was Victor Brauner (Piatra Neamț, 1903 – Paris, 1966). Today considered the most authentic representative of Surrealism in Romania, Victor

Brauner was a strong promoter of the revolutionary ideas launched by both the French and Belgian Surrealism. His work shows the mark of the multiple influences from which European Surrealism originated. The fame of the artist all over the world started from the debates upon an ambiguous event. A strange coincidence was given occult interpretations over the years. Was Victor Brauner a prophet or a socially committed artist, concerned and influenced by the political reality of his time?

Brauner's first period of activity, in Romania, was marked by multiple transformations and influences. His work evolved from cubism and expressionism to the famous picto-poetry, being influenced by the ideas of the Dadaists who had returned from Zurich and finally stopping to Surrealism, after 1927. This change was possible due to his travels to Paris, in 1925 and 1927, where he met Brâncuși, Delaunay, Giacometti, Tanguy and Chagall. Tanguy introduced him to the theorist of Surrealism, the poet André Breton. In Paris, Brauner created a surrealism-oriented "Romanian circle" under the influence of Breton's ideas, along with Ilarie Voronca, Benjamin Fondane and Claude Sernet. In 1929, he came back to Bucharest, where he opened the *Introviziuni* (Introvissions) exhibition, in the Mozart Hall, his works having spun from Surrealist imagery. In 1930, he stated he was determined to immigrate to France. There were many reasons for this decision: his marriage to Magrit Kosch, the rapid rise of anti-Semitism in Romania, certain financial problems and his recent interest in Surrealism.

In 1931, while in Paris, Victor Brauner painted his famous *Self-portrait with Enucleated Eye*, which is now found in the collection of the *Centre Georges Pompidou*. This is a vigorous, carefully constructed representation in which the left eye is pulled out. There is a striking contrast inside the portrait, which is distinguished by the precise anatomical details. The range of colors is dominantly dull, consisting of shades of ocher. The color is spread in large, relaxed and sure touches, and the plucked eye, the only spot of color, was framed into the image proper without compositional effects meant to show a positioning into surreality. It seems to be painted in front of the model, which emphasizes the impact of the image on the viewer. That same year Victor Brauner also painted a portrait of Benjamin Fondane in a similar plastic and semiotic language. Blood pours from the poet's torn head, as well as from his right eye. Gradually,

mutilation gained a place in his works, and this theme would later become an obsessive leitmotif. The artist's interest is specifically focused on the eye, blindness or the brutal absence of the eyes. The symbolism of the theme has two essential meanings. A positive one, based on the connection between blindness and wisdom, the speculation being that there is an association between physical blindness and spiritual ascent. The second connotation of this tempting theme is pejorative: ignorance equals blindness and even divine punishment.

The moment when the Jewish artist became interested in mutilation, blindness and sacrifice coincided with the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. The obtuse, blind society, hardened by war and crisis, was being radicalized in a fast pace and the first to be affected were the ethnic and religious minorities. Given this context, because of his Jewish origin, Brauner inevitably had the feeling of a frail, excluded and persecuted condition. The strong impact of this aspect upon the young painter was explicitly assumed in two works in which the artist portrayed Adolf Hitler. His drawing in black ink, made in 1933, is a "strange work, a double representation: Hitler is drawn on a piece of paper whose edges were burned, thus creating a second portrait of the Führer" (Stern 2011, 118). In his other work, an oil on canvas made a year later, Brauner drew Hitler as being pierced by various objects, all of them appearing there for a reason and especially having his eyes out of their sockets. Clearly, that the situation in Germany in 1933–1934 did not yet herald the dramatic events of the Holocaust, which began with *Kristallnacht* (1938) and peaked with the massacre and deportations in Nazi concentration camps.

However, the radical attitude against artistic internationalism, against the "degenerate art" books that were burned in public squares, did not announce anything good! Heinrich Heine's dramatic reply in *Almasor* became true during the Nazi regime: "Where they burn books, they will ultimately burn people". Almost all of Europe became an unstable area. Very soon, the Romanian government officialized, once again, after a brief democratic liberalization of 15 years, the anti-Semitic policies which had been implemented since the nineteenth century. In December 1937, the Goga – Cuza government passed the first anti-Semitic laws. Jews, being deprived of citizenship and rights, faced various attacks and insults in the media, as well as in the streets, from ordinary citizens.

These are known cases, analyzed by many authors, so that I do not think it is relevant here to detail on the policy of the Romanian State in 1937 – 1945. I just wanted to point out that serious Anti-Semitic attitudes existed in the Romanian territories for many years before the Holocaust (Iancu 2006).

Given this context, Victor Brauner immigrated to Paris (1938). That year, he lost his left eye in a tragic accident. On the night of 27 to 28 August 1938, painters Óscar Domínguez and Esteban Francès, both of them Spaniards, had violent fight. Domínguez threw a glass towards Francès, but Brauner was there, in the trajectory of the glass, so that his eye was permanently injured. Many years later, Brauner recalled: “This mutilation is still vivid in my mind today, as in the first day; in time, it became an essential fact of my life”. This tragic moment led to the development of a strong myth that focused on self-portrait without an eye painted by Brauner in 1931.

Pierre Mabilie, in his essay, *L'œil du peintre*, published a year later, in 1939, in the “Minotaure” Magazine, analyzed the incident, giving it a fantastic aura by connecting it to Brauner's obsessive interest in the eyes. The analysis is performed from a double (Surrealist) perspective: a psychoanalytical analysis (the eye as a sex organ) and an anthropological analysis (the eye as a sign of divine authority that one cannot hide from). Interestingly, the author points out that the man [Victor Brauner] he had met before the incident was “pessimistic and demoralized after his last stay in Romania”! Ernesto Sabato had a major contribution to building the myth around the story of Brauner's eye. In one of his novels

“[...] That night, there were very many of us who had gathered together as never before, and no one was in a good mood. (...) Many of my friends were already gone and Domínguez was visibly overexcited as he discussed with E. But, since it was all in Spanish, the others did not get much of the discussion. All of a sudden, turning all red and trembling with rage, they flung themselves at each other so violently that I had never seen anything like it, before. Having an unexpected premonition of death, I hurried to stop E. Nevertheless, at the same time, S. and U. sprung at D., while many others were leaving the place, as it was turning ugly. Domínguez finally escaped from the struggle, but I could hardly see him for a few seconds, when I was thrown down by

a terrible hit in the head. (...) I was taken away by friends who were still there. There was a great pain and anxiety I could see upon their faces, but I only understood what had happened when, as I was being taken in front of a mirror, I saw that my cheek was full of blood and, instead of my left eye, there was a huge wound”.

Because of this incident, Brauner's obsession about the eye, also fueled after that moment, was interpreted as a premonition. Actually, a large number of specialists considered the premonitory character of his early works, projecting multiple hidden meanings upon Victor Brauner's surrealism. The explanation that turned the incident into a premonition is probably based on some of the artist's childhood experiences, which are touched by mysticism. Deborah and Herman Brauner, his parents, were always interested in occult experiments and their children often attended séances. Later on, during his first years as a teenager, more precisely in 1916, Brauner began painting inside the Bellu cemetery, being attracted by Iulia Haşdeu's mausoleum. The interest in the occult demonstrated by scholar Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu, of whom it is said to have been able to contact the spirit of his late daughter, rendered an ambiance of mystery to that vault, with its strange architecture, where Iulia's body was still visible in a glass coffin. Later, in 1921–1923, Brauner was marked by an encounter with a sleepwalking woman, this being another strange element that often appears in his work. Thus, at least up to a point, mystical obsessions are present in the artist's biography. However, they do not prove the occult nature of his work's analysis, by the mysticism of premonition.

As far as I am concerned, the reason why Brauner used mutilation and self-mutilation, respectively, is entailed by the political meanings of his art. It was the period when the artist, being deeply affected by the economic crisis and anti-Semitism in Romanian society of the time, became interested in the meanings of existence, political philosophy and human equality. Victor Brauner found his own ideals in communist ideas conveyed by French Surrealism, whose leader, André Breton, was a member of the French Communist Party since 1927. In 1925, they published the manifesto *La Révolution d'abord et toujours* (*The Revolution, First of All and Always*) and, in July 1930, the Surrealist magazine *La Révolution surréaliste* significantly changed its title into *Le surréalisme au service de la Révolution* (*Surrealism in the Service of the*

Revolution). During this period, Victor Brauner's paintings and graphics presented a decadent world, an obtuse society that was alienated by the capitalist "schizophrenia".

Similarly, in 1928, Georges Bataille published *The Story of the Eye*, a Surrealist text written by automatic dictation, which is also a reflection on the writings of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud on infantile sexuality. His much criticized work circulated in the Surrealistic circles in France that included Brauner, as well. A possible influence of Bataille upon Brauner's obsession for the eye would once again confirm the introspective background of this obsession's premises. *Ex video lux* (vision) is denied: because reality appears to be negative and dominated by *Ex video nox*, *nox* being considered to be blindness, darkness, spiritual alienation or blindness / opacity.

Thus, I consider it is relevant to "read" the famous self-portrait as being mystically interpreted in a profound political sense, namely that of an assumed social criticism. Self-injury is a critique of the contemporary society by the artist, a political gesture that can be interpreted by itself as a protest. The body became an area of expression, a source which was stigmatized by the personal drama. The artist's inner, oversensitive world is duplicated in his work, like the inscription engraved on the artist's tomb, in the Montparnasse cemetery: "For me, painting is life, real life. My life." For Victor Brauner, the image is connected to life, and one of the reasons why the sacrifice in the painting cannot be interpreted as having sacred meanings is the fact that the artist stated being an atheist, on several occasions. And truth is always connected to the present time, to current beliefs, present moments and circumstances. Truth does not include the future, or a lived,

known time. Therefore, Brauner's painting refers to the condition of the artist at the time of representation. In 1931, Victor Brauner was marginalized and lived in the deepest poverty. His biographer and friend, Sarane Alexandrian, believed that: "For Brauner, terror exists because the world exists, as well. In Brauner's work, terror results from three sources: the reality of the object, the other's existence and self-awareness." (Sarane 2005, 43). He identified an inner pressure caused by external factors.

His closeness to Breton, as well as the subversive meetings organized in his home in Bucharest, confirms his connection to communism. Radu Stern states in the artist's biographical sketch published in the exhibition catalog *From Dada to Surrealism. Jewish Avant-garde Artists from Romania, 1910–1938*, that For a short time, Brauner, became a member of the clandestine Romanian Communist Party, but left after the Stalinist trials in Moscow, in 1937 (Stern 2011, 131).

As I said at the beginning of this text, Surrealist painting only seems to be apolitical. Basically, it can be precisely decoded in relation to the political activities of the members of this current.

As a conclusion, Brauner's art reflects the society, as well as his feelings at that moment and the ideology that he was affiliated to. Despite mystical events he experienced in his childhood, Victor Brauner became interested in the surrounding world by the 1930's, being also involved in the discourse of socially committed art. Thus, prescient or not, the Self-portrait with Enucleated Eye or rather his obsession with blindness, are primarily an assumed social criticism.

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2. Victor Brauner, Drawing of Hitler

TECHNIQUE AND INSPIRATION IN A WORK OF ART. A SCHELLINGIAN PERSPECTIVE ON CONCEPTUAL ART

Dorina-Angela KUN*

Abstract: *In trying to develop an “a-temporal system of art”, Schelling addressed issues that still survive his own late-romantic epoch. One of this is his balanced vision on the proper combination of technique and inspiration in the production of a work of art. This antagonism remains a permanent tension within the field of art, dividing institution (instruction) from individual (talent). My thesis is that inspiration is something we do not decide about, that is why abandoning criteria of technique cannot guarantee anything, except capriciousness and eccentricity.*

Keywords: *technique, art, inspiration, poetry, conceptual art, Schelling.*

Rezumat: *Tehnică și inspirație în opera de artă. O perspectivă schellingiană asupra artei conceptuale. În încercarea de a dezvolta “un sistem a-temporal al artei”, Schelling abordează probleme care supraviețuiesc propriei lui epoci târziu-romantice. Una dintre acestea este relația între tehnică și inspirație în produsul artistic. Acest antagonism rămâne sursa unei permanente tensiuni în domeniul artei, despărțind instituția (instrucție) de individ (talent). Teza pe care o propun, este că nu putem decide asupra inspirației. În consecință, abandonarea criteriului tehnicii nu poate garanta nimic, decât capriciu și excentricitate.*

Cuvinte cheie: *Tehnică, artă, inspirație, poezie, arta conceptuală, Schelling.*

Technique and Inspiration – a relationship with a long tradition, but still unsolved. The line of difference seems to oscillate between opposition and identity. We shall outline that the perspective of approaching this relationship represents a pivotal role in understanding art. It should be pointed out that this paper does not pretend to categorize the particular works of conceptual art as not substantial. We shall only be concerned with the claims of Conceptual Art, which sustain that the idea and the technique are just contingently connected.

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Schelling as Milestone Philosopher Regarding Art and Poetry.

In tracing a solution to the issue whether there is an opposition or an identity between technique and inspiration (or idea), Schelling develops a complex and deep dimension of the relationship between these two elements, grounded in his philosophical system.

In F.W.J. Schellings *System of transcendental Idealism*, the concepts of *technique* (“art”) and *inspiration* (“poetry”)¹ are fundamentally opposite. The only have in common the fact that both represent irreducible activities of the Ego.

Although the concept “art”² can be clearly defined and understood, as consciously produced, through

¹ We shall use the concept of *technique* instead that of “art”, and the concept of *inspiration* for that of “poetry”, considering that there is the same meaning, and for the sake of avoiding further confusions.

² Mind that “art” is used here in the sense of Greek *techne* or Latin *ars*, as technique and form giver.

technique and reflection, “poetry”³ is firstly described only as a negation of the first. It has to be understood as something, which cannot be learned, acquired through tradition. Consequently, it cannot be but natural born, or a result of a natural favour.

Even though, idealistically, we credit the *poetic* (“inspired”) dimension as brilliant and superior native part, this cannot be externalized or brought to actuality without the qualifying and the informing contribution of the “artistic” (“technical”) skill. Poetry (natural gift) without art (acquired capacities) is brutish, amorphous and blind. Quite the contrary, highly instructed artists, although “uninspired” can, by means of thorough, enduring and insistent study of the great masters, somehow compensate the primal lack of objective talents – even if their burnished works will never display the irreducible depth that is the real seal of an authentic work of art. These have survived within the modern distinctions between intuition and reflection, technique and inspiration, vision and making. (Jähnig 1966, 145).

Interdependency of the Two Elements as Evaluative Criterion for the Work of Art

The structure of this inter-conditioning is explained by Schelling as follows:

“It is self-evident [...] that it would be utterly futile to ask which of the two constituents should have preference over the other, since each of them, in fact, is valueless without the other, and it is only in conjunction that they bring forth the highest. For although what is not attained by practice, but is born in us, is commonly regarded as the nobler, the gods have in fact tied the very exercise of that innate power so closely to a man’s serious application, his industry and thought, that even where it is inborn, poetry without art engenders, as it were, only dead products, which can give no pleasure to any man’s mind, and repel all judgement and even intuition, owing to the wholly blind force which operates therein. It is, on the contrary, far more to be expected that art without poetry should be able to achieve something, than poetry without art; partly because it is not easy for a man to be by nature wholly without poetry, though many are wholly without art; and partly because a persistent study of the thoughts of great masters is able in some degree to

make up for the initial want of objective power. All that can ever arise from this, however, is merely a semblance of poetry, which, by its superficiality and by many other indicators, e.g., the high value it attaches to the mere mechanics of art, the poverty of form in which it operates, etc., is easily distinguishable in contrast to the unfathomable depth which the true artist, though he labours with the greatest diligence, involuntarily imparts to his work, and which neither he nor anyone else is wholly able to penetrate.” (Schelling 1978, 224)

What we have here is Schelling’s realistic rejection of an idealized image that Romanticism purported regarding “inspiration” as unilaterally “divine” as opposed to contemptible academism and mannerism. In truth, he argues, it is the “gods” that have already conditioned the actualization of this innate gift with a thorough exercise that should somehow render man worthy of this gift in the process of its realization.

It is worth pointing out that Schelling highlights the deeper connection between art and technique, linking it with the correlation/identity of consciousness and unconsciousness. He integrates the opposition, as well as the identity of the concepts, and develops the deeper meaning of the necessity of fusion, according to the idea of art as a “world in itself” (F. Schelling 1989, 85), an identity of unconsciousness and consciousness.

In order to better elucidate not the individual concepts, but the *relation* between the two elements, Dieter Jähnig associates the conceptual couple “art”-“poetry” with the one composed of “madness” (*Wahnsinn*) - intellect (*Verstand*) advanced in Schelling’s *The Ages of the World* (1813).

“[There is no greatness] without a continual solicitation to madness which, while it must be overcome, must never be completely lacking. One might profit by classifying men in this respect. The one kind, one could say, are those in whom there is no madness at all. These would be the spirits which are uncreative, incapable of begetting anything, those who call themselves sober and are the so-called men of intellect [“*Verstandesmenschen*”] whose works and deeds are nothing but cold works and deeds of the intellect. [...] But where there is no madness there is, to be sure, also no real, active, living intellect (whence the dead intellect, dead intellectuals). For wherein is intellect to prove itself but in the conquest, mastery, and ordering of madness? Hence complete lack of madness leads to another extreme, to imbecility (idiocy), which is an

³ Mind that *poetry* is here used by Schelling in the wide original Greek sense of *poesis* as creative power and plasticity.

absolute absence of all madness. But there are two kinds of the other [type of people] in whom there really is madness. The one kind rules madness and shows the highest strength of intellect just in this conquest. The other is ruled by madness people who are really mad. One cannot strictly say that madness originates in them; it only comes forth as something which is always there (for without continual solicitation to madness there would be no consciousness)" (Schelling 1942, 228–229)

This "inspired" madness (to put it this way) is here, just like poetry in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* that unconscious fundamental force (*Grundkraft*) that can only be contained, restrained by the opposite conscious force of the intellect (that corresponds to the sense of the art in STI).

The force of the intellect is superior to the elemental one as far as it succeeds in dominating it. Thus, the intelligence is only alive and effective where there is a measure of "insanity", because it is solely within this kind of relation that it can assert itself as intellect. It is about an intellect that can only acknowledge its essence as long as it is opposed by a counter-force. Conversely, the elemental drive cannot be productive unless it is opposed in its turn by the limitative intellect. Consequently, the elemental force is the limited force and the intellect is the limitative force (Jähnig 1966, 150).

The dynamism of the two forces is better put into evidence in Jörg Jantzen's description Schelling's concept of "indetermination": the *Indeterminate* is thought of as an activity resembling a "flow". In order for something finite to be created, this amorphous active "flow" must be contained and limited. This is how a vortex is created, a constant dynamic of form and content that does not stop the water flow, but rather makes it become real. In short, reality is created through limitation (Janzen 2001, 17).

In this antagonism of opposites, it is important to mention that we do not face a confrontation in which the limited element is annihilated or put into passivity, but, on the contrary, is transformed, brought into reality. The purpose of limiting the unconscious form is not the complete, one-sided victory of the intellect and reflection, but a *realization* (*Verwirklichung*) of this unconscious. Nietzsche will later develop this dynamic-combative structure of the art (Jähnig 1966, 157).

One must not forget that what matters, in Schelling's view, is not the opposition of the two concepts, or their mere description in itself, but

that unity, absolute Identity of their tension. That is why, in view of their Identity the two cannot be forced into a hierarchy.

The Contingent Relationship of Idea and Technique in the Conceptual Art

The necessity of this fusion, as equilibrium between inspiration and technique, is founded in the interdependence and non-hierarchy between the two: the acquired compositional technique and the inspiration received. This is visible in the works of the greatest masters, where poetry and art are supremely intertwined and they mutually support themselves. The technique of these masters is so specific that copies can be easily recognized by specialists. Their inspiration and vision is likewise, irreducibly individual.

Fig. 1 In Picasso underlining and decomposing natural beauty is carried out with a specific and very personal artistic technique. This time it is clear that a huge amount of work, instruction precedes the actual meaning of the work. Particular emphasis will be given to *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907. Here, Picasso develops a specific kind of figure fragmentation, a disintegration of the organic to expose the fracture of the person by means of a fracture and rearrangement of the substance of objects.

The "I could have done this to" syndrome.

The idea of a fusion between technique and inspiration is considered by J. Kossuth to be a nothing but a convention. "According to Joseph Kossuth, the essence of art is to be self-referential. Art becomes art, through an artist affirming that his or her particular work is a work of art." (Crowther 1997)

Fig 2: Joseph Kossuth claims that *all* artworks are tautologies:

"Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, viewed within their context – as art – they provide no information what-so-ever about any matter of fact. A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, he is saying that that particular work of art *is* art, which means, is a *definition* of art. Thus, that it is art is true *a priori* (which is what Judd means when he states that "if someone calls it art, it's art")". (Kossuth 1969, 134–137).

Therefore:

1. The relation of poetry with the technique is no more an interpenetration, but there's a completely contingent relation. The exigencies of rigor and instruction are minimal in this case. This is what triggers the syndrome "I could have done that

tool!”. Duchamp could have very easily “ask a friend” to assemble the bicycle and thrust it into the chair (Fig. 3) or draw a mustache on Da Vinci’s Mona Lisa painting (Fig. 4). Van Gogh or Picasso could never have done so, because their respective technique was of a very high level and already perfectly adjusted to their own unmistakable vision, belonging to their personal poesis.

2. The non-hierarchy between *poesis* and *art* is not respected anymore. Consequently, avant-gardes alternatively privilege:

i) The *art* (technique) – and develop a *formalism* (unilateral accent on form, aesthetics and ornament), falling into mechanic repetition and lifeless experiences.

ii) Or the *poesis*, the idea, and then develop a *conceptual art* (with Duchamp as a champion), as opposed to formalism, but equally one-sided, as the other extreme – that of ready-made, where the idea that subordinates pre-manufactured objects to a message matters. In this case, the technique can be completely absent. The presence of inspiration cannot be confirmed. P. Crowther delivers notably arguments for the thesis:

“The subjective formalism of Conceptual Art is an unrecognized affirmation of the shallowest aesthetics of genius. It holds the artist’s “intentions” and creative wit to be paramount, allowing extremes to be self-indulgent. To discern the real “meaning” of the work, one must make obeisance to the supreme authority of the artist. Art has absolute autonomy” (Crowther 1997, 178). “It may seem that the contingency of this relation between idea and embodiment is exactly what is worth in Conceptual Art. It defetishizes the art object (and overturns its commodity

status), and it democratizes art by freeing the creator from having to learn specialized, craft-like skills” (Crowther 1997, 179).

In concluding, we think Schelling’s insightful analysis of the properties of the work of art clearly brings about a profound and coherent explanation as to the limits of what people had been already accusing in avant-garde experiences.

Results

In trying to render effective a fundamental distinction, established in a classical aesthetics, we have applied it to very contemporary problems and solutions. It is obvious that the way classical aesthetics treated the solidarity between technique and inspiration, form and content, it avoided unilateral experiments that are just different disjunctive sides of avant-garde expression.

Formalism, on the one side, and the conceptual art, on the other, have always encountered objections from both sides precisely because they have arbitrarily chosen one particular side against the other. In a way they are nothing that members of an artificial opposition that has resulted from an original dismemberment of the classical ideal, and there’s not much innovation here, basically. They are thus simply *half of art*, a dissociative experiment. The work of art worthy of this name is more than this. The form (execution) has to perfectly match the idea (the inspiration). Otherwise, the work of art is not complete, and it is pure caprice to isolate one side and to present this as an advance just because no one thought of it so far. This is perhaps good marketing, but no one can eliminate the feeling of incompleteness.

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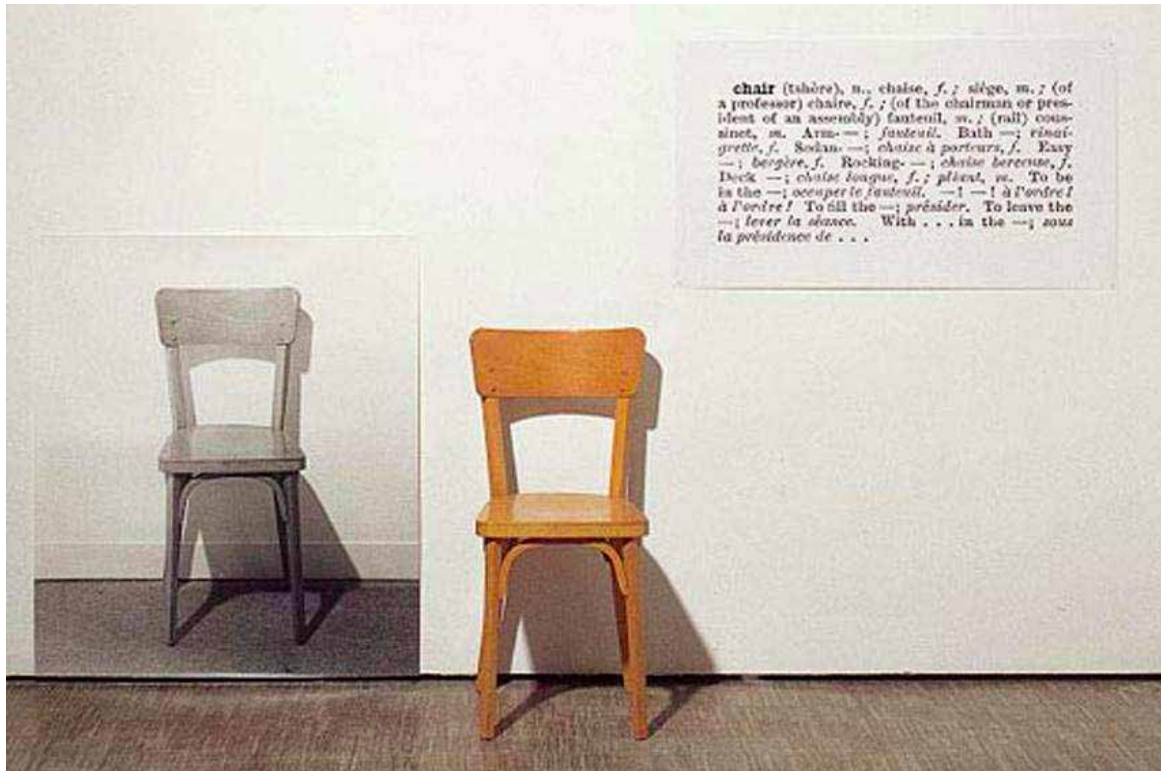
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THE MYTH OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE “FILMS WITH OUTLAWS”, A PLACE OF MEMORY IN ROMANIAN CULTURE DURING THE COMMUNIST REGIME. ASPECTS

Mihaela GRANCEA*

Abstract. *Crime and action-adventure films, able to conserve an uncontaminated mythical speech were the favoured genres during times of oppression. Films about outlaws, as productions which mixed up different genres (historical drama, adventure film, local western), prevailed in the '60s and '70s, and evolved especially during the 8th and 9th decades of the 20th Century due to: the radical changes in Romanian society, the ideologisation of film discourse as a means of justifying national-communism, the need of exporting Romanian made films.*

Thus, outlaws are reinvented, in the Romanian collective imaginary nowadays, as individuals who defy and provoke the oppressive system in the name of the people. However, at the same time, concentrating on these films which exploited political imaginary and conspiracy theories and indirectly promoted a nationalist-egalitarian ideology formed a distorted and Manichean perception of the foreign world; creating a negative image of the foreigner lead to a rejecting of the Other, one of the goals of Romanian national-communism. Interesting is the fact that today, this genre, and especially outlaw films are broadcasted to reform the Romanian identity tainted by post-communist transition.

Keywords: *film, outlaws, national-communism, ideology, other.*

Rezumat: *Mitul dreptății sociale. Filmele cu haiduci, loc al memoriei în cultura română din perioada regimului comunist. Aspecte.* Filmele de acțiune-aventură și cele cu crime, capabile de a conserva un discurs mitic necontaminat, au fost genurile favorizate în perioadele de opresiune. Filmele despre haiduci, ca producții ce amestecau genuri diferite (drama istorică, filmul de aventură, westernuri locale), au prevalat în anii '60 și '70 și au evoluat mai ales în deceniile 8 și 9 ale secolului 20, ca urmare a schimbărilor radicale din societatea românească, a ideologizării discursului de film ca mijloc de a justifica național-comunismul și din necesitatea de exporta filme românești.

Astfel, haiducii sunt reinvențați, în imaginarul colectiv românesc de astăzi, ca indivizi care sfidează și provoacă sistemul opresiv în numele poporului. Totuși, în același timp, concentrarea pe aceste filme, care exploatau imaginarul politic și teoriile conspiraționiste și care au promovat o ideologie naționalist-egalitară, au format în mod indirect o percepție distorsionată și manheistă a lumii externe; creând o imagine negativă a străinului, a condus la respingerea Celuilalt, unul dintre obiectivele național-comunismului românesc. Interesant este că astăzi, acest gen și, în mod special, filmele despre haiduci sunt difuzate pentru reformarea identității românești afectate de tranziția post-comunistă.

Cuvinte cheie: *film, haiduci, national-communism, ideologie, Celălalt.*

Regarding from a critical perspective the communist mythologies built and taking into consideration the contribution of feature films, it is necessary to have further analysis of the role of a “local cinematographic genre” (Țuțui 2009, 156–176), specific for Central and Eastern

Europe, namely “the film with outlaws”. It was not only an ideological ingredient, but also a manifestation of the popular taste for justice *hic et nunc*, the ultimate escape. This subgenre of interference was inspired by popular and fiction literature, the western film (movie), the adventure film and the historical film, as the application of the official discourse about social and ethno-cultural identity; especially the latter aspect has

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made the “film with outlaws” into a “place of memory”. Not incidentally, the subgenre under discussion prevailed in the ‘60s and ‘70s, when intellectuals became aware that within the social space leisure was to be stimulated as well, that leisure management should result into and satisfy the need for evasion (Durand 1960, 438–439). Film production thus functioned also as de-frustrating fiction (Steriade, Câmpeanu 1985, 71), for film, more than other arts, is multifunctional, performing a compensatory function. The schematic specific to popular culture, the cult of justified violence and the standardization of typical western film characters therefore ensure the newcomer “film with outlaws”, an obvious longevity. Furthermore, the emotional involvement of moviegoers and the illusion of three-dimensionality transform films of this type into a substitute for life: “the film offers an alternative life [...], one's favourite films are his un-lived lives” (Durgnat 1967, 136).

A bandit is, by definition, a classic outcast of the rural environment. Eric Hobsbawm established the criteria according to which an individual was integrated into the mythology of popular justice: before becoming a criminal, he must have been a victim of the system; “the noble thief” “stole from the rich and gave to the poor”; he would only kill in case of self-defence or just to fulfil revenge; he was a “champion” of the community, fighting for the rights of the crowd; his qualities made him invulnerable (ubiquity, unusual physical strength, empathy, *etc.*); the betrayal of one of his close friends lead to his death (Hobsbawm 1972, 5–6; Blok 1972, 495–504). The integral character of the “outlaw” is an archaic motif; thus, while in ancient Greece villains represented expressions of virility and of being closer to the gods’ condition (Mirabello 2009, 129), in the turbulent times of modern civil wars, the villains on the defeated side were perceived, in a downright fetishist manner, as avengers of the abuses committed by the conquerors (see Jesse James, Pancho Villa, Rózsa Sándor *etc.*) (Fojas 2008, 6). In modern times, the hero-outlaw became a vestige of exemplary times, being patrimonial as such; he served as a pretext for the permanent appeal to memory, the experiences from his epoch often constituting an a-historical time, of the beginnings (Mihalache 2008, 177–184).

The western, for instance, has been, since its debut, a form of popular culture that fictionalized

the misty history of the West¹. This re-imagining will replace, in many situations, the authentic history, the birth and affirmation of the “films with shooting” being determined by nationalist nostalgia and the mechanisms of expression (Astre, Hoarau 1973; Szántai 2011; Chapman 1968; Rakes 2009). Cult films of the genre², with their escaping “happy-end” tax evasion and the myth of the legitimate use of violence will influence the “auto-chthonisation of the western”, namely the proliferation of European productions of the genre; hence the long career of “the film with outlaws”³, which took up many of the above-mentioned themes.

“The Film with Outlaws”, a Subgenre?

Specialized Romanian critique from the national-communist era classified “the film with outlaws” within the historical film genre; thus, making an assessment of the ‘60s, it was considered that it was precisely then that “the historical film reappeared in various species, formulas and levels [...] With all the tribute paid to the onset, differences of taste and still undefined stylistic formulas, <Tudor>, <Neamul Șoimăreștilor> (*The Șoimărești Kin*), the outlaws series and especially <Mihai Viteazul> (*Michael the Brave*) [...] helped us discover the Middle Ages – whose dynamism and colour provided many film schools with their most significant achievements in the historical genre – clear opportunities for cinematographic achievements in which to see the vibrating glamorous essential dimension of our spirituality, the affirmation of our national being, the

¹ Theodore Roosevelt in *The Winning of the West* (1889–1896); Owen Wister in *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains* (novel) (1902) and the film *The Great Train Robbery* / *Atacul trenului* (script, directed and image: Edwin S. Portret, 1903)

² *Stagecoach* / *Diligența* (directed by: John Ford; main actor: John Wayne; 1939), the first „mature” western film, where the genre clichés are presented systematically. The hero, like the prior picaresque characters, has the mission to settle / restore order and justice, even if this implies the use of violence (drawing a gun, fighting, murder).

³ Most often, the final scene presents the outlaws (at least in the case of the first films of the ‘60s) riding towards far lands, forests in the mountains or towards the infinite horizon, “a commonplace” borrowed from the western movies; this is why such a scene becomes a parody in the comedies from the ‘60s and the ‘70s; see *The Good Guys and the Bad Guys* (script: Roland M. Cohen, directed by: Burt Kennedy, cast: Robert Mitchum, George Kennedy; 1969).

uniqueness of our foundations and the flavour of our popular epos" (Sava 1971, 14). Ignoring the easy nature of some of the films "with outlaws" – see the omnipresent Oriental dance regarded as a diversion and out-fashioned leisure – some of the Romanian film critics claimed that these productions were films in which "manhood was tested in wrestling, where justice was defended with muskets [...], toughness acquired an ardent cause, the violent gesture – the justification of defence" (Faur 1971, 17). The species under discussion was included in a larger category, namely the adventure film which, as a form of popular culture, was together with the comedy the most highly enjoyed genre in Europe in the '70s. Moreover, Romanian film critics reached the conclusion that the western genre was still popular among Romanian moviegoers as "we all cherish the golden age nostalgia. The western was our paradise lost, the perpetual fairy tale [...]. Therefore, it was not the formula that mattered, but the essence of our aspiration. It evolves by inventing new genres [...]. The classical western epic has now become a psychological drama or a music ballad" (Mănoiu 1970, 74).

The comparative analysis of the "films with outlaws" shows that the saviour hero archetype (in fact, specific to folk epos) survived in the representation of the outlaw as a justice man and, at the same time, a man outside the law. Similar socio-economic systems, almost identical methods of oppression and similar reactions towards oppression were realities that favoured the preservation of old oral creations and their recirculation under a processed form. That is why, the film production preserves "a heroic behaviour pattern, with features such as physical strength, courage and grandeur, determination, honour and pride, skill and a certain aesthetic sense of armed struggle; this heroic code was essentially a system of values and a way of thinking and conceiving human existence" (Lajos 2003, 14–15). The above-mentioned ethical canon, with specific aesthetic "variations", was derived primarily from poetic cinema. Thus, in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, the subgenre of the "film with outlaws" was noted in several films which capitalized the outlaw epic within the "anti-feudal" series. Perhaps the most convincing in this respect is *The Horse, the Rifle and the Wife* (director V. Ioviță, 1975, black and white film)⁴.

This production was the result of political circumstances, as, starting with the '70s, the multinational Soviet cinema gave up the norm enforcing character of socialist realism and approached popular genres discussed time – the adventure film, the melodrama, the comedy. Thus, they met the general need for entertainment and the mercantile orientations of the system (See *Filma Bulgares* 6/1970, *apud* Filme Noi / New Films, no. 1, 1971, 31. Regarding the Romanian communist interest for commercial films, see also Popescu 2011, 123–133)⁵. At the same time, the communist propaganda tried to give the impression of diversity and freedom of expression. The specialized press wrote about "the film of socialist humanism", "the film of a new type of justice hero", "the author film", "the meditation film", "the literature-inspired film" (i.e. screening), the present-day film, "the film of a new code of ethics", the detective film, the historical film, "the youth film" (i.e. adventure film). The word "adventure" was prohibited; therefore even the productions inspired by the famous works of Karl May and Mark Twain were only considered "youth films"⁶. We should

directed by: M. Kalik, B. Rîțarev, O. Ulițkaia, image: V. Derbeniov, music: D. Fedov; 1958) – a successful interpretation of the outlaw epic – announced the emergence of a new cinema universe, with a strong mytho-poetical vein. Unfortunately, the Stalinist discourse regarding social "missionarism" leaves its marks in the film, which is transformed into a egalitarian propaganda tool.

⁵ In 1969, in Bulgaria, a "film production frequency decrease" phenomenon was registered and the solutions were approaching new cinematographic genres, acknowledging the differences in cultural tastes of the wide public and more film awards (150–200 movies a year).

⁶ See the Germanian and Romanian films: *Das Vermächtnis des Inka / Zavetăt na inkata / Testamentul incașului / The Inka Legacy* (Spain – Italy – R.F. Germany – Bulgary, directed by: Georg Marischka; 1966), *Le dernier des Mohicans / Ultimul Mohican / The Last of the Mohicans* (directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, Jacques Dreville; 1968), *Aventure en Ontario / Aventuri în Ontario / Adventures in Ontario* (directed by: Jacques Dreville, Sergiu Nicolaescu; 1968), *La Prairie / Preeria / The Prairie* (Germany – France, directed by: Pierre Gaspard-Huit, Jacques Dreville, Sergiu Nicolaescu; 1968), *Les Aventures de Tom Sawyer / Aventurile lui Tom Sawyer / The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Moartea lui Joe Indianul / The Death of Indian Joe* (Romania – France

⁴ A prior production – *Balada haiducească / The Outlaw Ballad* (script: S. Moldovan, O. Pavlovski,

however mention one thing: even though some of them depended entirely on Western “recipes”, starting with the '70s, the films of the communist area represented meta-languages of national cultures. The Moldavian film mentioned above is not epic, like most “films with outlaws”; *The Horse, the Rifle and the Wife* highlighted heroism by confrontation with a multiplied opponent. The folklore sources of the film were the *Novăcești* ballads and the heroic songs *Badiul*, *Corbea*, *Mihul și Ștefan-Vodă*, *Codreanu*, *Chira-Chiralina* (Vrabie 1983). The nature of information, the ethnographic episodes (popular ritualistic, the union with death) and the poetic dimension of the narrative resulted in a film plastically influenced by other outstanding achievements⁷. Heroes are usually recruited from the rural world, being tall men with an aquiline profile, expressions of virility; at least this is the male prototype from Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, Albanian, Serbian and Moldavian films⁸. The discourse in *The Horse, the Rifle and the Wife* advances, similarly to the Romanian films “with outlaws” consecrated semantics of the time’s historiography (see the paradigm “foreign invaders” – “local boyars”), the outlaw being imagined as an exponential character, defender of the people; despite its lyrical character, the film is explicit and synthetic on a discursive level: outlaws are divided by a quarrel aiming at applying the outlaw code without exception: “Between two battles, man needs time, to drink a cup of wine, to eat some polenta, some bread, to love his wife, to have a child and to play a dance. “Specifically, the narrative was based on the quarrel between the

boyar Manea, an “exploiter”, and the punisher Badiu, who had robbed him and seduced his daughter, Garnița. The two lovers took refuge in an idyllic cottage, a sort of a house of dwarfs, Badiu’s place; but their new life softened the outlaw, so he was easily captured and then tortured by the Turks disguised as merchants. The punisher Badiu would be released by his former comrades, formerly scattered throughout the world since he gave up outlawry for the sweetness of love⁹; Novac Ungureanu, Manea, Alimoș, Constantin, Marcu, Cosma, Ochișel were alerted by Garnița, but not saving Badiu and the community is only possible through the intervention of the peasants armed for insurrection. Thus, the producers “confirmed”, according to the rhetoric of the time, the idea that social movements had been founded on outlaws’ actions.

Another Moldavian film, *The Fiddlers* (directed by Emil Loteanu; image: Vitalie Calășnicov; music: Isidore Burdin and Eugene Doga, lead actors: Serghei Lunchevici, Galina Vodniatkaia, Grigore Grigoriu playing the outlaw Radu Negostin, Svetlana Toma; 1971) is a romantic drama about Toma Alistar’s life – “God’s trumpet” and “chief musician of all the mountains” – the head of a band of fiddlers from Bessarabia and Bukovina, sometime in the 19th century. Toma Alistar’s life was marked by his passion for music (brilliant violinist, he went about the world playing at noble courts) and his obsession with the Gypsy Leanca, his childhood love. Symbolically related to the bandit and to all kinds of *outlaws*, the Gypsies in the film sing of all things, walk with the bear, “they are the last to free themselves from sins” and are buried on the edge of cemeteries, next to the suicides. In their wanderings, the fiddlers often meet Radu Negostin’s outlaws (“Satan’s of the Lord”), their leader being a great lover of orgies and passionate for the music of the fiddlers who, by inventing songs for him, were a sort of “chroniclers” of the outlaw deeds. The outcasts presented in two autonomous narrative sequences – *The Outlaw* and *The Three Guns Inn* – go to death like going to a wedding; Radu Negostin decided to surrender to the authorities so that they release his brother, but, with a presentiment of death, he asks the fiddlers to play for him. The soundtrack of the film was a combination between authentic music

– R.F. Germany; directed by: Mihai Iacob and Wolfgang Liebeneiner; 1968).

⁷ See the Russian-Ukrainian drama *Tini zabutykh predkiv / Umbrele strămoșilor uitați / The Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors* (script, directed by: Sergei Parajanov, based on a text by Mihail Kociubinski; image: Iuri Ilienکو; music: Miroslav Sorik; The Soviet Union, 1964); The action takes place in the autarchic, almost atemporal, Guzul world from western Ukraine. The story, structured in episodes, presents the tragic love between Ivanko and Marichka, marked by social difference and hazard (the girl’s accidental death); unable to recover after the loss, the young man falls apart and brutally disappears. The film uses primarily body language, suggestion, the magical nature, stylistic freedom, the direct relation between the image chromatics and the inner life of Ivanko, the main character.

⁸ The main character was inspired by the hero from the outlaw ballad called *Badiul*, from the 18th century.

⁹ Forgetting about his “outlaw duty”, Marcu had been obsessed with the idea of flying, Cosma had become a priest and Constantin a shepherd.

and the sounds of nature. We should appreciate the way in which, through lyricism, they built the dramatic narrative, the character's emotions and violence of those times, without being explicitly shown. In this respect, the scenes with the outlaw's death seem relevant: the white horse – a psycho-pomp symbol – held by the bridle by Radu Negostin and cry of the beloved who, hidden in the forest, watches Negostin being shot. These are the elements that suggest the typical end of the outlaw forever (beat-ridden by the number of the police or defeated through the betrayal of a companion), exemplifying through his own death the popular epos of heroism. Thus died Radu Negostin, nicknamed "the Wrath of God" a lordly outlaw with four guns to his waist, "a highwayman," of whom fiddlers talked as playing "three pistols and a cold iron", "slaying boyars and drinking their blood" dealing out "justice to all" (i.e. peasants and marginals).

The concessions made for adventure in "the film with outlaws" in Romania were so many that the script was often implausible. An example could be the plot of *The Outlaws of Șaptecai* (script: Ion Barbu; directed by Dinu Cocea; lead actors: Florin Piersic, Magda Barbu, Toma Caragiu, Colea Răutu, 1970), where the numerous escapes of the unharmed outlaws seem an end in itself. Besides, for a few years now, commercial television stations excessively present Romanian films "with outlaws", all of which were of course made in the '60s-'80s. There are several reasons for this policy: the current need for social justice, low cost copyright, the contemporary appetite for mediaeval and pre-modern history, their popularity in our age as well, personalities in open conflict with the system. Thus, the outlaws are reinvented as deserving individuals, valued precisely because they defied authority. This preference expresses a passive popular rebelliousness, a proof of silent hostility towards post-communist political elites, often criticized for extreme corruption and for robbing the country. Therefore, it is not by chance that Romanian films are now preferred, whereas, during the relative quiescence of the communist regime, were sought particularly the films about the Wild West and the historical co-productions of the '60s and '70s. Moreover, the proto-chronology specific to this genre of the '80s somewhat compensates for one of the current frustrations: the non-attendance of the eschatological register of the imaginary. In this context, the outlaws of Pintea and Iancu Jianu, otherwise pantheon

personalities, became characters in films that turned them into rescuing eponymous heroes. Thus, although in real history the last outlaw died of natural causes in 1842, in the film *Iancu Jianu, the Outlaw* (directed by Dinu Cocea, starring Adrian Pintea, 1981) the hero dies in sacrifice much earlier, in 1821 in a highly metaphorical film scene: Iancu is wearing a white shirt (frequently mentioned in folklore as "the death shirt"), reddened by his wound given with a penny cut in four, used in a musket as an "arranged" / bewitched projectile from the Albanian villain; with a revelation smile on his face, the dying hero continues to urge the peasants to fight alongside Tudor Vladimirescu for "deliverance", i.e. "social and national emancipation". The directing solution chosen by Dinu Cocea is not characteristic only of Romanian cinema, the same allegorical ending being also preferred in Central European and Balkan cinema of that period.

The films of the older series (*The Outlaws*¹⁰, *The Revenge of the Outlaws*¹¹, *The Virgins' Kidnapping*¹²) insists on the anti-feudal, anti-Phanariot / anti-Ottoman discourse and on peasants' involvement in the fight against all exploiters. In this view, the outlaws are disinterested and legitimate representatives of national and class identity: they do not die or, if they allow it, moviegoers do not attend the actual death; the heads of the outlaws are invincible, at least on an ideational level, their struggle being perpetuated by the close-ones ensuring their immortality by respecting "their will". For instance, at the beginning of the film *The Outlaws of Șaptecai*, Anița, the beloved of the outlaw Amza Scorțan¹³, the hero of the series *The Outlaws*, *The Revenge of the Outlaws*, *The Virgins' Kidnapping*, as well as the survivors of his band, reminds only fugitively about the brave having been killed by the police.

¹⁰ Script: Ion Barbu; directed by: Dinu Cocea; cast: Amza Pellea, Ion Besoiu, Toma Caragiu, Magda Barbu; 1966.

¹¹ Script: Ion Barbu, Dinu Cocea, Mihai Opreș; directed by: Dinu Cocea; cast: Emanoil Petruț, Magda Barbu, Olga Tudorache, Toma Caragiu; 1968.

¹² Script: Ion Barbu; directed by: Dinu Cocea; cast: Emanoil Petruț, Magda Barbu; 1968.

¹³ Amza Scorțan had been an outlaw for a long period, a feared individual in the region of Dolj, he had fought against all those that represented the Power during the 19th century. He was murdered by a lawman.

In the interwar period, the few films developed the romantic-traditional dimension of the outlaw¹⁴, perpetuated by the literary

¹⁴ The outlaw was a Romantic result in Romanian literature as well. Thus, the Romanian Romantics, as well as Western and central-European, being determined by the need for an identity, established folklor as their main source. Forghy-eighty intellectuals (especially Vasile Alecsandri and Alecu Russo) started gathering folklore literary productions and edited magazines (*Dacia Literară*, *Albina*, *România literară*) in order to promote the specific Romanian popular cultural axes, and also to be able to create a system of national solidarities based on the attachment to this mutual, archaic and natural cultural background. They systematically promoted “outlaw songs”, considering that the outlaw was determined by a deeper motivation than economics, and that he was, in fact, a manifestation of a Romantic type of social sensibility, marked by the idea of a collective salvation. Due to the times they lived, the outlaws manifested their vocation and empathy in the area of social justice, experiencing intensely all the pleasures envisioned by the rural world; endless feasts and generosity towards those in need are, thus, manifestations of an ego different from his original social statute. The popular memory did not retain isolated events, but images and archetypes, always telling the same historical story and dealing with the same themes, conflicts and endings. Beyond this tradition, being an outlaw, a noble brigandage, meant defying every wordly authority. This is the reason why these films were centered on the idea of rebellion and had symbolical endings. We consider that the central-European films about outlaws excel in this type of approach – see especially *Szegénylegények / Sármanii flăcăi / Poor Lads* (directed by: Jancsó Miklós; 1966) and *Jánošík/Pravdivá história o Jurajovi Jánošíkovi a Tomášovi Uhorčíkovi / Povestea adevărată a lui Juraj Jánošík / The True Story of Juraj Jánošík* (directed by: Agnieszka Holland and Kasia Adamik, Jánošík; actor: Václav Jiráček; 2009). Obviously, the fastidiousness of the collective memory play a role. More importantly, banditism, as it was perceived and imagined by the European and American folklore tradition, as well as in its cultural modern variants, was a form of personal power, a power based on charisma. This is the case of the American outcasts Jesse James (it is our opinion that out of the rich film production dedicated to his memory, *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*, directed by Andrew Dominik, casting Brad Pitt, 2007 stands out), *Bonnie and Clyde* (see *Bonnie and Clyde*, directed by: Arthur Penn, 1967), the Romanian outlaws Gligore Pinte, Amza Scorțan, Ionică Tunsu, Iancu Jianu, Anghel Șaptecai and Radu Anghel, the Hungarian outlaw Rózsa Sándor (the middle of the 19th century) and the Slovakian Jánošík (the beginning of the 18th century); out of the many films about Rózsa Sándor, the best known was the television series *Rózsa Sándor*,

transformation of ballads in a manner approved by all social classes (Crăciun 2005, 331–335). This approach would be established in Romania only in the 60s, through a series of films having mainly social themes. And to avoid historiographical ambiguities and risks, the first “films with outlaws” produced during communism chose as representative heroes the outlaws from the Phanariot period. As we already know the romantic and then militant nationalist interwar historiography and the historiography of the first two communist regime decades were dominated by the black legend of the “Phanariot century”. Thus, the outlaws from the first productions of the genre, in the '60s, were characters of the early 19th century; they emerged in a dramatic historical context for the Romanians of the extra-Carpathian space. The narrator's message from the beginning of the film *The Outlaws! Revenge* (1968) defined the period as “a time of turmoil [...] a page of tumultuous history” and the country, “a land without Law”; only outlaws were “defenders of the oppressed, the avengers against injustice and humiliation”, standing tall against “the plague which struck the villages”. Romanian outlaws from the 60s films were built in accordance with the inherited image of the romantic culture, being saviours and visionaries. From a narrative point of view, films do not continue each other, but are somewhat complementary, repeating and developing especially social themes. Thus, from the very beginning of the film, we learn that outlaws are engaged in an anti-Phanariot and anti-Ottoman fight, being expressions of popular justice. Even the script, contaminated by the chronicle-like rhetoric, as well as by the semantics of the communist ideology, presents the outlaws as “punishers of injustice”; furthermore, they explicitly and rhetorically express their social beliefs, the outlaw Amza saying that “my enemy is the evil in this world, robbery and oppression” (see *The Outlaws' Revenge*).

directed by Szinetár Miklós in 1971. Other productions tell the story of characters such as *Sobri Jóska* (see *Sobri*, directed by Novák Emil, 2002) or the former military from *Hajduk / The Outlaw / Haiducul* (historical drama, directed by Aleksandar Petković, operator: Tomislav Pinter, 1980) who, after returning from the battlefield at the end of World War I, deals with the inadaptation and hostility of the authorities; the latter, as well as *Szegénylegények*, are critically acclaimed as representative artistical films within the East-European cinematography.

In westerns and in the films that had seduced American and European filmography, such as the Japanese ones, the collective character is embodied by the group or crowd involved in conflict episodes specific for westerns or historical dramas. The collective character is animated by vivid feelings: it may be the crowd maddened with fear (see *Shichinin no samurai* / *The Seven Samurai* / *Cei șapte samurai*, directed by: Akira Kurosawa; playwrights: Hideo Oguni, Shinobu Hashimoto, Akira Kurosawa; lead actors: Toshirō Mifune, Takashi Shimura, 1954 and its American imitation *The Magnificent Seven* / *Cei șapte magnifici*, 1960) or the community that celebrates life (see the anthological scene from the previously mentioned Japanese film in which the village celebrates the victory by gathering the harvest, and their victory against the 40 bandits, as a result of their collaboration with the samurai). By contrast, in the Romanian films from the '60s, "the people" is amorphous, serving only as a folklore background. However, once nationalism-communism emerged, the crowd became co-participating and vindictive, being the one encouraging the reluctant outlaws. In all the films of this period, the anticlerical attitude of the positive characters is a constant, corresponding to the atheistic rhetoric promoted in the official discourse; in this regard, it would be relevant to note the trivialization of the outlaw Ioniță Tunsu (the Ordained) becoming Răspopitu (the Unfrocked), the "strongest" character of the Romanian films with outlaws, making a ridicule of the Eastern Church ritualistic, the Orthodox piety, the fasting). In the year when Dinu Căcea was filming *The Outlaws* (1966), a mediocre adventure film with a social theme, only rescued by its uniqueness and the colour of certain secondary characters (see the character Răspopitu (the Unfrocked) played by Toma Caragiu), the Hungarian director Jancsó Miklós won the admiration of specialized critics for his film *Szegénylegények* / *The Round-up* / *Sármanii flăcăi* (directed by: Jancsó Miklós; script: Gyula Hernádi, Luca Karall; image: Tamás Somló), being nominated at Cannes for the Palme d'Or" (1966)¹⁵. The Hungarian film does not mimic classic American westerns, as many Eastern European cinema productions often clumsily do. In this case, Jancsó's unique visual style is shown,

defined by long camera shots over the vast Hungarian puszta, following the characters led, in their turn, by the whims of a hostile history. The failure of the rebellion is thus shown from a tragic perspective, the film's subtext "talking" about the futility of heroism. The prisoners, ex-revolutionaries still having the nostalgia of the 1848 identity-building project are the certain victims of the industrial revolution and of urbanism; retreating from the great trends of the 19th century, the outlaws tacitly admit their defeat, becoming outcasts, fugitives, as well as robbers, horse thieves, murderers. Obviously, the film is an indirect echo of the suppression of the anticommunist revolution in 1956. *Szegénylegények* / *The Round-up* can therefore be considered a memorial and an episode of resistance through culture in Hungary. The action is limited to a few episodes developing in the rhythm of daily life, the camera slowly shooting a certain gesture routine. What shocks and fascinates the spectator is the contrast between the cruelty of the authorities towards prisoners and its slow and often silent incarnation. Although the director does not use specific film props (music, noisy altercation, cynical simulations), but only a shooting "at length" with natural sounds (song of crickets at noon, song of the lark), with long silences and condensed dialogues, the pressure is overwhelming the victims, as well as the spectator, left in the midst of unpredictable development of actions. The frameworks require a certain symmetry, black and white appearing a complementary or, conversely, suggesting certain antitheses. There is a constant oscillation between the claustrophobic environment of the prisoner's cell, the austere white of the interrogation room and the endless grey puszta; they are all "effects" that do not allow the individual to feel any hope, making him feel increasingly vulnerable.

The Romanian film could not attain such performance, although the subject matter was ready for such achievements that we could have today placed in the category "resistance through culture". Predictably, we could now say, since our directors shared the traditional view of justice, enemies, stranger / foreigner, woman. More specifically: in the American western the law defeats the bandit with the help of a skilled gunman serving it, whereas in the Romanian film there is a totally different perspective, the punisher succeeding in doing right precisely because he voluntarily stood outside the law. A classic case was the captain Iancu Jianu originally

¹⁵ Historical drama, black-and-white film, 1966; cast: János Görbe (playing the role of traitor Gajdor), Zoltán Latinovits (as outlaw Veszélka).

a boyar, later to become an outlaw. In the Romanian films of the 60s, the outlaws were buried alive in the darkness of prison and they would miraculously come back to light as a *sui generis* resurrection. At that time, the idea of sacrifice had already been abused by the propagandist film; death had nothing dramatic, because, usually, it was the Other's death. We should however emphasize a few nuances: whereas in the films of the 70s the purpose of the outlaw was primarily a social one, in the national epic movies, the outlaw sacrificed himself in order to fulfil his identity (Pintea, Jianu), his death being strongly metaphorical and brought close to "cosmic weddings" (see the "choreography" of Pintea's death).

With respect to the outlaw's typology in Romanian films, beyond political pressure and biographical accidents, the choices of directors, especially those of Dinu Cocea, went in the direction of the ballad portrait of the popular "brave". Nevertheless, with only two exceptions, the figures of the actors are rather common, close to the ordinary human physiognomy – see actors Emanoil Petruț (the outlaw Amza), Ion Besoiu (who replaced Emanoil Petruț), Amza Pellea (the treacherous outlaw), Toma Caragiu (the best choice for the character Ioniță Tunsu¹⁶). In our opinion, the exceptions are Florin Piersic – who plays Anghel Șaptecai¹⁷ and the outlaw from Maramureș, Gligore Pintea – and Adrian Pintea, the actor chosen to play successfully the most interesting outlaw of Wallachia, Iancu Jianu. We should also mention that the popular actor Florin Piersic was, through his *macho* appearance and his egotist posture, closer to the profile of the generic invincible brave from the ballads. The films of the '70s, and especially the series dedicated to Anghel Șaptecai are dominated by adventures, complicated plot and are seasoned with ingredients from westerns and the cape-and-

sword films, such as *Fanfan la Tulipe*, frequently broadcast in Romania (director: Christian-Jaque; lead actors: Gérard Philipe, Gina Lollobrigida, 1952). The occult transformation of the historical truth had thus become preferable to the sententious discourse of the '60s. The relative ideological relaxation created the impression that entertainment seized, to the detriment of propaganda, the film's narrative and purpose. Moreover, a euphoric, holiday atmosphere, have dominated the "film with outlaws", since the late '60s. Generally, the Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish and even Soviet were contaminated by the new way of transforming the historical material into fiction, the influences of adventure film combining, however, with the rules of the social rhetoric film.

While he is always betrayed by a "brother" of the same "blood" (an envious outlaw from his band), the super-hero suffers most because of the character at antipodes. In ballads, he is Turkish, Albanian, Gypsy, in films, there is a collective enemy, especially a class enemy. Only in the outlaw series revolving around the charismatic Anghel Șaptecai, there are personal enemies: Mamulos, the natural father become Aga, the Phanariot painter and boyar Ianulea, Prince Caragea, some outlaws from the band. Minimizing the enemy is visible also in the manner in which the court of the Prince (see the court of the Phanariot Prince Caragea in Bucharest) is the expression of the *kitsch*, not of cultural syncretism (even the presence of the fool, leaning on the cello or parodying the status of the Prince of Wallachia, seems to confirm mimicry and cultural provincialism of Phanariots). The outlaw Șaptecai from *The Outlaws of Șaptecai* (1970), *The Fools' Week*¹⁸ and *Princess Ralu's Dowry*¹⁹ transform the historical context into a pretext for adventure, the excessive conflict episodes diminishing the chance of other approaches in the field. The excessive epic character leaves no room for reflection or the possibility of prospecting the inner nature of the character. The paranoia of the ruler and the eternal skirmishes with the Albanians are the only things visible.

In the Western drama of the '70s, popular mythology overcomes historical truth. The

¹⁶ The unfrocked encountered in all the "outlaw movies" was, in fact, the leader of an outlaw band, feared in Craiova and Bucharest. He was called Ioniță Tunsu, The Unfrocked or The Sexton, as he had been one in Bucharest, in the St Voivodes Monastery. Being trapped in an ambush ordered by general Kiseleff, he dies of the wounds from the battle. He is only a secondary character in Romanian films, however he is very colorful, bright, charismatic and highly humorous.

¹⁷ Anghel Panait zis and Anghel Șaptecai or "Anghel de la ocnă" ("Anghel the Invicted") was from Vâlcele, Olt county. An outlaw in the forest of Strehareț and then in the entire county of Olt and in Muntenia, before the regulation period.

¹⁸ Directed by: Dinu Cocea; cast: Florin Piersic, Magda Barbu, Aimée Iacobescu; 1971.

¹⁹ Directed by: Dinu Cocea; Cast: Florin Piersic, Magda Barbu, Toma Caragiu; 1972.

characters metamorphose contradictorily; the individual statute in relation to the Law is unpredictable: the gunman is allowed to become a bounty hunter or sheriff while the sheriff, in a certain context, can easily become a villain. The main feature of the Western hero – in contrast to the antihero – is individual courage, while, at the opposite point, the enemy lacks it, and is often described as a numerous and coward group. These films present a Manichean point of view; there are always only two sides in the dialectics of the fight between the brutal, chaotic force and the Law that brings order. If evil manifests itself through the irrational and sometimes sadistic power of the outlaw, or through the arbitrary of the landowner, the law is represented by a diverse human typology. From the moment the individual is invested with the insignia of the mission to restore Order, like all eschatological heroes, he becomes a symbol-figure for the community he saved. The cowboy becomes justice itself, a fact which transforms him on an individual level, like in the case of Sheriff Wyatt Earp. The character of these films is usually a loner, a taciturn, but also a loyal comrade, the Romanian character to fit the profile being the lonely Mărgelatu. In western movies, in general, though this is also applied to the Romanian and Hungarian productions, the hero is seldom very young. Such preference derives from the belief that only an experienced individual, hardened in previous confrontations, is able to commit to social justice, he usually must have been a villain in the past, he must be a cowboy (The Cinema Almanac 1971, 38–41)²⁰ or a wandering man beyond this condition: usually, the sheriff or the justice-making gunman is a repentant villain, a "converted". Instead, excepting Iancu Jianu, all the outlaws have a linear fate, their physical portrait being more inspired by the American western rather than the popular tradition. Anghel Șaptecăi and Mărgelatu, all the Albanian, Serb and Hungarian outlaws have an impenetrable face, a harsh look that suggests self-confidence and masculinity, austere

if not plain dirty clothing, a coded body language, always keeping the hands close to the body, ready to draw the gun. It is a clear fact the "films with outlaws" imitate the gestures of Gary Cooper, John Wayne, Henry Fonda and, last but not least, Clint Eastwood. In the outlaw series from the '70s, Anghel Șaptecăi is a cheerful and relaxed hero – also due to Florin Piersic's acting –, a kind of reincarnation of Gruia of Novac. However, in the adventure film series from the '80s²¹, where he plays Mărgelatu, Florin Piersic imitates Clint Eastwood's characters from *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966), *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976); Piersic took the tense look of the American actor, the infatuation and calm of an experienced man; also, while the characters played by Eastwood are phlegmatic in a less picturesque manner, Mărgelatu eats sunflower seeds and cleans his gun with anise liquor; Mărgelatu's slow moves are also part of his "pose", highly contrasting with the energy showed during his fights in taverns or fairs (some of the fighting scenes are parodies of the cape-and-sword films, popular during the previous decade, suffocated by stunts and demonstrations) or during his confrontations with the occult forces of conservatism and counter-revolution²². Similarly to the characters from the age of Westerns or from the European films with outlaws from the '70s, Mărgelatu is ubiquitous, he is present in ambushes in the passes, present in the

²⁰ Types of cowboys : the pioneer cowboy (Tom Mix), the calm and reconciled cowboy (Glenn Ford), the cowboy who fights for justice (the sheriff interpreted by James Stewart), the quiet and meditative gunman (Henry Fonda), the native cowboy (Robert Mitchum), the chivalrous cowboy (Gary Cooper), the tenebrous cowboy (Anthony Quinn), the careful cowboy (Burt Lancaster) – a parallel owed to Alexandru Racoviceanu's essay, "Un saloon, un Colt, o diligență" ("A Saloon, a Colt, a Coach").

²¹ Drumul Oaselor / The Road of Bones (directed by: Doru Năstase; cast: Florin Piersic, Magda Barbu; 1980), Trandafirul Galben / The Yellow Rose (the same director, the same actors, 1982), Misterele Bucureștiului / The Mysteries of Bucharest (the same main participants; 1983), Colierul cu turcoaze / The Turquoise Necklace (directed by: Gheorghe Vitanidis; the same actors; 1985), Masca de Argint / The Silver Mask (the same, 1985), Totul se plătește / Everything Has a Cost (directed by: Mircea Moldovan; the same actors, 1986). In Martori dispăruți / Lost Witnesses (directed by: Dan Mironescu, Szabolcs Cseh; 1988) and in Lacrima Cerului / The Tear on Heaven (directed by: Adrian Istrățescu Lener; cast: Mircea Anghelescu, Marga Barbu, Constantin Codrescu; 1989), Florin Piersic was not present.

²² The universe of these films is populated by the Ottoman and Austrian foreign services, characters such as Agatha Slătineanu, double agent and queen of a "gang of paupers" in a sort of "miracle court" (see Strigoaica); Aga Vilara also contributes to this atmosphere, the fake Pater Fortunatus, the antiboyarn rebellions and many marginals who remind of those from Eugène Sue, Victor Hugo, Charles Dickens.

underground city, in the marginal area of the gangsters, assiduously cultivates his personal mystery, highly fitting into a wonderfully variegated world, hardly separated from Eastern hedonism. Unlike Clint Eastwood's characters, Mărgelatu offers misleading clues regarding his life. The stranger who solves the mysterious and risky affairs of Brotherhood stated that he used to be an adventurer, a Habsburg army deserter, an Eterist (a Greek revolutionary) in his youth, an outlaw living in the forest, a convict in Istanbul, a horse thief, a quarter slot, a jolly tavern man, an arms dealer and Mason²³ who became involved with conspirators by chance. "I have the honour to get into the most terrible trouble", he says in *The Mysteries of Bucharest*, Mărgelatu to Bibescu, the leader of Wallachia. The last movie of the series, *Everything Has a Cost*, while talking to Hare-Lip Mărgelatu admits that he often lies about his complicated past: "I tell fiction, just to pass my time". The films with Mărgelatu represented a pressure valve for the '80s – with the jokes and tacit acceptance by the communist authorities of illicit viewing of television programs from neighbouring countries –, a world of compensation, all the more useful as it had no connection with the socialist actuality.

While in the films where Florin Piersic played the outlaw Șaptecai or Mărgelatu, adventure dominated the genre, through the films dedicated to Iancu Jianu, director Dinu Cocea resumed the rhetoric of the "films with outlaws" as a war or social drama. Iancu, the young boyar from *Iancu Jianu, the Captain* (directed by Dinu Cocea, starring Adrian Pintea, 1980), believed the Phanariot law to be tributary to an essentially mediaeval loyalty; furthermore, boyar Calafeteanu, his future father-in-law, is a model through his opportunism. The inner conflict of the captain is related to two episodes: the first one is his conversation with Tudor Vladimirescu, when he exposed his anti-Phanariot belief and condemned Iancu's blindness, and the second episode, which is more dramatic since this crisis of conscience which Jianu experiences as a lawman after he realizes that justice was on the "criminal" Mereanu's side, outlaw and benefactor of the many. His meeting with Ionica, the daughter of the horse merchant Vârlan, and his getting close to ordinary people determined him to take the side of the oppressed. The young girls'

words are suggestive regarding Iancu Jianu's metamorphosis: "Last night, if you thrust a knife in me, no blood would have been spilled", as, apart from the fact that he was disgusted with his own class, he also hated himself (as Iancu was obliged to marry Tincuța, the daughter of the steward of Romanați, in order to save his brother from ruin) and felt "the desire to wander". However, chance ends everything: a spy revealed to Calafeteanu that Iancu played a double role, as he sympathised with Vladimirescu; thus, the action gains a more rapid pace: the alleged father-in-law dies from heart failure, Iancu is chased by the Albanians and manages to escape them, although they punish Vârlan, the story being ended with the saving of a weapon transport for the revolutionaries and the reconciliation between Iancu and old Mereanu, the latter transferring to the former captain the leadership of the outlaws. The course of action was resumed in *Jianu Iancu, the Outlaw* (1981) by the same filmmaker's team. The film opens with a relevant scene regarding Jianu's new statute: he attacks and robs the chariot of a gentleman who, like any social exploiter, respects the cliché and can only be overweight; then he gave stolen amounts to those in need, astonishing them, for he was known as a man of authority. The unforgiving outlaw Iancu Jianu, "wears a wolf fur waistcoat and chased" the boyars, among the robbed being also his godfather, the leader of Craiova. Iancu dies in this film – but this is just a setup – while asking the peasants to join Tudor Vladimirescu's army together with him. In other words, along with the Jianu series, the new cultural policy indications inaugurated by the Romanian Communist Party Congress XI were also applied to the "film with outlaws" genre. Through his ordeal of spiritual turmoil, and especially his sacrificial death, the outlaw from Oltenia became exponential for the official discourse on the peasantry, class struggle and patriotism. Thus, this hero's real anti-Ottoman actions, his spectacular escape from prison, his participation to the revolution from 1821, as well as his return to a quiet boyar life, remained ignored.

Outlaw Pintea Gligor from Maramureș experiences a similar "resurrection". After discovering that his family was murdered, and also being strongly impressed by the fact that peasants suffered the hard law of the feudal rigors of the Hungarian boyars and the harsh Austrian tax authorities' rules, the former imperial soldier gathers a band and together they rob local nobles' castles. *Pintea the Brave* (directed by Mircea

²³ The word is not mentioned in the film, as censorship was still a practice in communist Romania.

Moldovan, lead actors: Florin Piersic and Maria Ploaie, 1976) includes memorable scenes: for example, the impressionist feature of the “mute table”, when the outlaws unchain the serfs and make them feast at the Hungarian boyar’s table, but they remain immobile, lacking the desire to live; a shorter important sequence is that of the fleeing of a rural community who abandons the home village. However, the film does not insist on Pintea’s social project, or on his famous outlaw’s blows, but on the intention of raising an army and joining the Kurucs to send the imperials away; after that, Pintea would allegedly pursue, through “a small steps policy”, the emancipation of the Romanians, their “liberation”. The role of secondary characters was to represent different human types, some of them also established in other film genres – the dismissed priest, the double-faced innkeeper, the rival in love matters who becomes an informer, the sturdy peasant struggling heroically with the club; thieves who had become outlaws providing and the Jew barber ensures, instead, the physiognomic colour of the cast. The geographical contextualization is given by the soundtrack (traditional folk music from Maramureş), by the dialect used by the characters and regionalist folklore scenes (village dances, winter habits). However, the historical climate is more difficult to reconstruct. The same director had succeeded in his series with Wallachian outlaws to expressively represent the atmosphere of fairs and inns from the early 19th century. Although victorious in the confrontations with the Habsburgs – as he conquered Baia (today known as Baia-Mare) – Pintea falls into an ambush planned by the Loyalist nobles, being shot while trying to drink water from the river of Iza. His death is filmed in slow motion, capturing the last frame representing a neutral serene winter landscape: being integrated into the generous rhythms of *nature* through his death, the brave man overcomes posthumously the petty times of *history*.

We can see how Iancu Jianu and Pintea, as actors in the national epic, become victims of a new mythologization. The films that we refer to are the result of complete political control, i.e. the process of sublimation, turning them into mythological, sacrificial and eponymous references. Outlaws are, in communism, personalities of the national pantheon, evidence of the historicity of the social struggle. By sharing the axiologies to the “masses”, they could be more

effectively instrumentalized as emblems of the egalitarian rhetoric.

Location, Nature, the Other

The social scene for the “movie with outlaws” is *the inn*: from the side of the road, the centre of town, from the village, from the middle of nowhere or at the crossroads; the inn is the European equivalent of the western *saloon*; while in the Romanian tavern you can listen to fiddler music, Greek and Turkish, and fierce parties; in the inns from the Hungarian films there is a type of solitary drunkenness, the sound is that of a lonely violin song of longing, there are often spontaneous brawls with a cathartic role. It is also true that the inns of the Romanian films happen to be the scene for quarrels that usually degenerated – just like in the silent movies comedy era – into generalized collective confrontations. At the inn, the outlaws ask and find out about opportunities for new “hits” or the most recent movements of those who are following them; on the other hand, it is also the place where the lawmen pick up information about the bandits; in the same transitory perimeter, foreign agents and conspirators plan major plots, designed to overthrow empires (see the series of adventure movies about the adventurer Mărgelatu). It sometimes happens that the outlaws and the Albanians eat and drink in the same inn, the powerful people and their opponents. Most of the inns are places of lively, orgiastic parties, places with no room for censorship; others, like the inn *Talpuk alatt fűtyül a szél*, are “dirty” places, where suicides and murders often take place.

Most times, innkeepers (male or female) are involved in the horse theft business, in illegal transactions, in planning “hits” aimed at wealthy travellers, money transports or mansions. Often, the female innkeeper seems “available” by definition, engaging in romance stories with the famous outlaws; thus, Anita is Amza’s lover, and after his death, Anghel Şaptecai’s. Dinu Cocea’s films defined the Romanian inns as the typical scene for the genre. A variegated and multicultural place, the inn provides couleur and credibility to the developing intrigues and events: in contrast, the mountain is a frame (including from a folklore point of view) only used for short sequences, although essential in film economy. However, in *The Lucky Mill*, Ghiţă represents the drama of the innkeeper forced to maintain a fragile balance between family, authorities (Pintea

the policeman, who used to be a horse thief in his youth) and the villain Lică Sămădău, who rules the region. His inn was a way to escape poverty; unfortunately, due to the presence of Lică Sămădău and his companions, the place became the reason for Ghiță's marriage failure instead, but in the same time a place where wealthy would often stop. The image of the three crosses near the inn, in the background, is very impressive, as they witness and clues for some serious facts, ignored until then. The mill had not been lucky at all, but was under a bad sign. Even so, Ghiță participates to the suppressing of the villains' gang, but is still contaminated with the fatal touch of evil: he ends up killing his adulterous wife and then setting alight the cursed inn. Thus, the traditional moral of the novel satisfies the anti-capitalist morality of the film.

In *The Inn between the Hills* (written and directed by Cristiana Nicolae; image: Nicu Stan, music: Adrian Enescu, actors: George Buruiană, Dana Dogaru, Gina Patrichi, Valentin Popescu, Alexandru Repan, 1988), the shadow of the outcasts is only suggested. The story was inspired by *Mânjoală's Inn*, a novel by I. L. Caragiale, a narrative spiced with folk episodes and popular religious "heresies". In order to strengthen his social status and become a part of the traditional elite, colonel Iordache, newly enriched, hopes for a misalliance with a young nobleman from the old impoverished family of Dudești; this family name would give him prestige and would help him get rid of the stigma, as Chira had gotten pregnant, and her lover, a rebel, had been killed by the mercenaries; young Stephen (boyar (conasu) 'Fane), otherwise arrogant and lacking any true qualities, agrees to become Iordache's son-in-law. However, on his way to the colonel's mansion, he stops at the young Mânjoală's inn, at the crossroads, between the hills from the woods, where he discovers a magical universe and a passionate hostess. The people around the inn – a primitive form of public space – are dominated by the powerful men of the day, by upstarts such as Iordache, but also by the thieves and the "rebellious". Although the storm started out of the blue, Ștefan leaves the inn, but wanders through the forest covered by storm, going in circles and ends up back at the inn, falling into the hostess' nets; Ștefan is trapped for five days in the area of love, the forest and witches. It will therefore be difficult for the colonel's Albanians to recover him, whose had ordered him to be beaten and abandoned in a ravine. The hostess finds him, cures him, and hides him. Now is the moment

when they really fall in love and decide to run far away from the colonel. Furthermore, the hostess tries to make lord Ștefan a responsible man, as Toma Mânjoală, the former innkeeper, had been, who was involved with outlaws, rebellions and weapon supplying for the riot. But things do not evolve in this manner, because Ștefan is again caught by Iordache's Albanians and taken to a hermitage where was the subject of exorcism techniques; he is then married to Iordache's daughter, Chira. The film seems unaffected by the last years of Ceausescu's ideology as a discourse; still, a certain Manicheist view is manifested because the colonel is designed as an image of social evil, a repressive force; he ordered to the Albanians to burn the inn down, considering it the abode of the "witch". After Mânjoală's inn burns, Stephen is alienated: he lives a parasite life, in a compromised household, far from his initial love story.

The interiors and exteriors of Phanariot habitat areas have been relatively easy to reconstruct, but the elite lifestyle, the mansion (usually a tower from Oltenia), pre-modern Bucharest, inmates' mine, royal palaces (usually, the interiors were filmed in Mogosoaia or at the royal palace complex in Sinaia) were more difficult to be questioned. And the monastery, as a refuge for outlaws, will be accepted only in films from the national-communism period (see *Iancu Jianu, Outlaw*). There is too much talking in the Romanian films, the characters being thus very talkative. Thus, directors Dinu Cocea, Doru Tănase and Andrei Blaier did not give too much credit to silent images as being very expressive. Dan Pița was the exception, with his film *Justice in Chaires* (1983). However, the moments of significant silence are exploited by the modern Western drama; these scenes reach decisions and crucial episodes. Therefore, Piersic alias Mărgelatu paraphrases the silence and scarce gestures of the characters played by Clint Eastwood. Hungarian films pay their tribute to John Ford's work; especially Miklós Jancsó introduces his productions, especially in *Szegénylegények*, the focused look, the heavy silence, eye confrontations, and general mental pressure.

Usually, in folklore, the outlaw's relations with nature are deep, as it offers him protection. Paradoxically, in the Romanian films, despite the beautiful shots such as those tourism pictorials, nature has an empathic relation with man. Only in *Brave Pintea* nature saves in a miraculous fashion the outlaws caught in a trap: having no alternative,

the brave ones from Maramureș cast into the abyss, and in addition to that, the musical background of this scene is a dynamic traditional dancing music; the outlaws, like Icarus, seem to fly and to fall on the less dangerous side of the mountain, surviving only with a few and superficial wounds, which start their Homeric laugh. In the Romanian films "with outlaws", nature is passive and decoy, in the Hungarian and Slovak ones, being indifferent, withdrawn towards its own cycles. In the American western drama, the natural scenery helps the birth and assertion of the film narratives; the wind, the wildlife, the dust, the water, the swarming domestic creatures strengthen the authenticity of the scenes and characters. Desolate landscapes, stagnant ponds, grass, ruins, and, very rarely, trees and other impressionist frames, in the case of the Romanian filmography of the theme, are only offered by director Dan Pița, the before mentioned earlier Justice in chains.

In times of oppression, film genres that satisfied the need of evasion most were detective and adventure films, which preserved and unaltered language of totalitarian ideologies (Lafon 2001). However, preference for such cultural products that promote a nationalist and egalitarian message more or less subliminal also resulted in the polarization of the perceptions on the *extramuros* world, therefore, the easiest form of alter transformation was the identification with the Other "the wicked" or "the villain" of our Middle

Ages or "the enemy amongst our ranks" of the '50s of the last century. In most cases, however, the traitor is a close companion, another outlaw, even a "brother" in rivalry for the leadership of the band or for the heart of a beloved – see Hamza, the traitor of the outlaw Amza in the film The Outlaws (1966) – such a conflict is also to be found in Terente, the King of Lakes (directed by Andrei Blaier, 1995), when the journalist Basil Ionescu, who popularized the image of the bandit, plans his "betrayal". Typically, the traitor is the sly villain by definition, hedonistic, envious, pervert, serving to indirectly characterize the positive character, thus placing him in a positive light.

In the European filmography, especially the Central European one, the tradition of the films with outlaws still continues. In Romanian culture, "the film with outlaws" was dropped in favour of cinematographic productions with more recent themes, responding to external market demands interrogations of the post-Ceaușescu actuality. The superiority of the "miser" film is the expression of the concern for this confusing present time and drift. Thus, the only historical films produced between 1995 and 2010 only propose the reconsideration of personalities ignore by the national-communist discourse (see, especially, Charles I, King of Romania) or the mythologizing of Romanian anti-communist resistance.

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GHEORGHE DINICĂ (1934–2009), A CINEMA ACTOR

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Abstract: *The present work synthesizes the great artist's evolution in the Romanian film along the chronological and historical coordinates that mark his career: the communist epoch (1963–1989) and the post-communist democratic period (1990–2009). His artistic production is made up of positive parts – activists and kind-hearted people, on the one hand, and negative, complex, sometimes rough parts, on the other hand; it is the latter that brought about the actor's fame. In qualitative terms, we believe that the defining parts played by Dinică in film are that of the failure lawyer Stănică Rațiu in *Felix și Otilia* ("Felix and Otilia", 1971), and Pepe, the shady in *Filantropica* (2002).*

Key-words: *Romanian actors, great roles in the Romanian films, the history of Romanian cinematography, communist and post-communist Romanian culture.*

Rezumat: *Gheorghe Dinică (1934–2009), actor de cinema. Lucrarea sintetizează traiectul evoluției interpretative a marelui artist Gheorghe Dinică apelând la segmentele temporal-istorice care i-au divizat cariera: anii comunismului (1963–1989) și cei ai democrației post-comuniste (1990–2009). Creația actoricească este împărțită între roluri pozitive, de activiști, și cele negative, complexe, ce i-au adus consacrarea. Din perspectivă calitativă personajele definitorii pe care le-a interpretat Gheorghe Dinică în film au fost Stănică Rațiu („Felix și Otilia”, 1971) și Pepe („Filantropica”, 2002).*

Cuvinte cheie: *actori români, roluri memorabile în filmele românești, istoria cinematograției românești, cultură românească comunistă și post-comunistă.*

The present work is meant to synthesize the track of the great artist's performing evolution, along the two chronological and historical coordinates that undergo and mark his career: the communist epoch (1963–1989) and the post-communist democratic period (1990–2009). We are aware that this is just one of the possible approaches to the subject under research. At the same time, we believe that it might be the beginning of an in-depth analysis of the creation work by the great cinema and theatre actors and actress in Romania.

Gheorghe Dinică, unlike other artists of his own, and the following generations, made his cinema début at a pretty late age (he was almost 30 at the time), with the role of the party activist by the name of Jurcă, in the film "*Străinul*" („The Stranger”, 1963), based on the homonymous novel by Titus Popovici. This positive character is the first of the fairly long series of party activists

that marked his artistic career throughout the communist years: Zamfir, in „*Comoara din Vadul Vechi*” („The Treasure in the Old Ford”, 1964); Dumitrana, in „*Procesul alb*” („The White Trial”, 1965); Marin, in „*Tatăl risipitor*” („The Prodigal Father 1974); Savin, in „*Zidul*” („The Wall”, 1974); the party prime-secretary in „*Marele singuratic*” („The Lonely One”, 1976); Matei, in „*Pe malul stâng al Dunării albastre*” and „*Figuranții*” („On the Left Bank of the Blue Danube”, 1983, and “The Figurants”, 1986) and Oprescu, in „*Zbor periculos*” („Dangerous Flight”, 1984). These characters, typical for the new social system established by communism, are prevalent during the years when the actor made himself known as a distinguished artistic personality; unfortunately, the screenplays are plain and staging, rather sketchy. Even if these parts seem to have been party commands, they opened up the way to his future valuable performance.

Along the first years of his cinema career, in the 1960's, Gheorghe Dinică seemed sentenced to receive secondary parts only and belong to the

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middle or back ground cast that sustained the main parts. Even if the positive *coloratura* scores that he played were properly conceived, they allowed no place for the actor to reveal his huge dramatic talent, treasure that was made use of, at the time. A first change in this respect took place in 1967, when the stage-director Alexandru Boianu offered him the title role in the detective film “**Maiorul și moartea**” („The Major and Death”), based on a short-story written by Ion Băieșu. As the joint work of the scenario written and stage director lacked inspiration, and the psychological creation in the field suffered from sketchiness, the actor’s part was far from being generous, so that the militia major Tache does not count among his main artistic achievements. The position of a defendant of the existent social system, either in the bourgeois variant, such as Călărețu, working for the State Security, in “**Bariera**” („The Barrier”, 1972) and Meseșan, in „**Trei zile și trei nopți**” („Three Days and Three Nights, 1976), or in the communist variant – although it was also presented during the post-communist years¹ – did not match structurally with the artist’s personal data; he was more inclined to embody strong „negative” personalities, in conflict with the law and their time, which permitted more subtle nuances of interpretation, rewarded by several prizes.

The first part which fully revealed the actor’s true, unequalled innate talent was that of Bastus, the traitor in the historical film „**Columna**” („The Column”, 1968). Apparently insignificant as concerns its dramatic importance in the film economy, reduced to just a couple of short scenes, the part of the shameful noble Dacian, painfully living the drama of having betrayed his fellow-countrymen to the Roman conquerors, showed the actor’s impressive chameleon transfiguring capacity. All the humiliation that the character experienced after he was captured by the Dacian ruler Gerula turned into an example: Bastus had to go on his animal surviving outside the human community that rejected him. The spectator could hear the traitor’s self-incriminating litany long after the movie was over; chained up, carried around by his mother and fed on meal remains, he was supposed to confess his sin again and again: „In my meanness, like a rabid dog, I showed to the Romans the way to Decebalus’ treasure...”.

From this decisive moment on, it was obvious to everyone, and first of all, to the artist, that he was meant to deal with complex roles, and not to

continue playing sketchy proletcultist parts. In the 1970’s, he would come to the forefront of the Romanian cinema landscape and would be confirmed as an intricate-role actor. A first chance that he made use was the part of the failure lawyer Stănică Rațiu, in the film on George Călinescu’s novel „**Felix și Otilia**” (Felix and Otilia”, 1971). The director Iulian Mihu masterly intuited the actor’s qualities as a perfect match for the parvenu specimen and the fresco of the inter-war Bucharest society. A trialless lawyer, an unnatural father, a sentimentalizing fraud and swindler who would refrain from nothing in order to hit his target: laying hands on the money hidden by Moș Costache, Stănică Rațiu interpreted by Dinică outshone the film protagonists² and won fully deserved national appreciation for the whole production. The actor’s outstanding performance (on which even the exigent author of the book must have agreed) was rewarded by the A.C.I.N. prize the next year and opened up the way to a remarkable gallery of “problem” characters.

Another decisive role, that made an important contribution to the actor’s impressive career, was that of the „Diplomat” in the film on Zaharia Stancu’s prose entitled „**Prin cenușa imperiului**” („Through the Empire’s Ashes”, 1975), directed by Andrei Blaier. A snaky, ambiguous character, combining nobleness and vileness, the „Diplomat” leads the innocent Darie on an initiation trip through the ruins of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, under dissolution at the end of World War I. For his artistic performance, Dinică was awarded the most valuable foreign prizes³ in his career, being, at the time, at the top of his glory during the communist years.

There followed a period in which the actor’s career in repetitive aggregation, as he was called for giving birth to some „correct” parts, unfortunately lacking the voltaic charge of genius. He was unanimously appreciated for his masterly roles. Gică Salamandă, the fireman, in the film „**Explozia**” (Blow-up”, 1972); the iron-guardist Paraipan, in the detective films directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu: „**Un comisar acuză**” („A Commissar accuses”, 1974) and „**Revanșa**” („The Retaliation”, 1978); the sectarian N.N. Siseanu, in „**Secretul lui Nemesis**” („Nemesis’ Secret”, 1986).

² The impossible love story was interpreted by Radu Boruzescu (Felix) and Julieta Szonyi (Otilia).

³ The interpretation prize at the Karlovy-Vary International Film Festival and the special mention for a youth film at the 1976 Cannes Festival.

¹ Mention should be made of the prize-winning part of the cross-examiner in “Faimosul paparazzo” („The Famous Paparazzo”, 1998).

The actor – like many of his guild fellow-members – was saved out of this repetitive state of mind, with negative tinges, by the December 1989 Revolution. The old cinema producers, converted to the requirements of the new social reality, as well as the young ones, who would make up the „new wave” of the Romanian cinema, appealed to the stage masters, to whom they offered the chance of challenging interpretative recitals. Dinică played a lot after 1989, maybe too much, but he was not always allotted parts worthy of his talent. Nevertheless, he was able to adapt his acting so as to cope with the demands of the artistic market and make the best of the characters he interpreted after 1990.

Owing to the director Ioan Cărmăzan, the actor discovered the incomparable world of Fănuș Neagu’s prose – a fortunate discovery, we would say. The part of the peasant Chivu Căpălău is profound and difficult, if we take into account the script and the tragic register of the character’s evolution. It is, undoubtedly, the best rural character in the actor’s film work; his playing technique and interpretative intelligence helped him to successfully get through this unique creative experience. We might add that competitive context was ensured by the director’s highly catalytic cast – especially by the actress Maia Morgenstern (playing the daughter-in-law’s part), who stood up Dinică as a worthy partner.

The film „**Patul conjugal**” („The Marital Bed”, 1992) placed the actor within the raving post-communist world as the director Mircea Danieliuc imagined it. The district cinema-hall manager Vasile Podoabă and his spouse Carolina (whose part was masterly performed by the actress Coca Bloos) is faced with the madness of the beginning „democratic” transition to the market economy. All his turmoil proves to be in vain and finally, the character makes an extreme rebellious gesture: he hangs himself beyond the screen and spoils the Original Democracy Party’s fest taking place in the performance hall. Is it actually one of the few films in which the script makes the actor Dinică „die”.

The year 1993 presented him with the un hoped for chance to interpret two completely different roles that had him act along new creative artistic coordinates. The director Sergiu Nicolaescu, with whom he had collaborated a lot and fruitfully in the communist years, entrusted him the part of the politician Mihai Antonescu in the film entitled „**Oglinda – începutul adevărului**” („The Mirror – the Beginning of Truth”), Dinică faced the challenge and did his best (although not always successfully) to draw the complex personality of the

Romanian prime-minister during World War II, tried – together with marshal Ion Antonescu and the other personalities of the bourgeois regime – for his criminal deeds against the people. The party activist Puzderie in the film „**Crucea de piatră**” („The Stone Cross”) was Dinică’s last role pertaining to characters serving and imposing the communist policy. The devils of the past are exorcised in a parodist manner, Titus Popovici’s last script (but not his best) proposing a historic parallel between the liberation from „Good Old” Stalin and the liberation from Ceaușescu’s communism. Dinică had to improvise, to emphasize the parodist touches imposed upon all the parts and – finally – fail in his performance of the main role.

The opening years of the third millennium brought about the fulfilment of the cinema career. Dinică went on receiving parts and playing in a lot of films (perhaps even too many, which was detrimental to his work quality), embodying over-demanding negative characters. Such a part of that of Pepe, one of the Bucharest underworld shadies after 1990, the owner of the charity establishment „Filantropica”, the sponsor of the mediocre high-school teacher Ovidiu⁴; it got recorded by the film fan’s memory by its perfect blending of strength and persuasion, cynicism and a false understanding of one, fellow-citizens. In a certain respect, this role is the actor’s swan song, and not that of the upright, enduring gypsy in the TV serial „**Șatra**” (The Gypsy Camp”). The parts that followed this instant of genuine cinema glory were just variations on themes previously approached by the great actor: the ex-prisoner and collaborator of the „Securitate” Franz Țandără, in „**După-amiaza unui tortionar**” („The Afternoon of a Torturer”, 2002); the investigator Dumitrache, in „**Examen**” („Examination”, 2003); the ex-prisoner and killer Paraschiv, in „**Dulcea saună a morții**” („The Sweet Sauna of Death”, 2003) and the businessman Manasia, in „**Magnatul**” („The Magnate”, 2004) – a return, on a different time and interpretation level, to the role of Stănică Rațiu, which we do not hesitate to appreciate as the masterpiece of the actor Gheorghe Dinică’s entire cinema career of over four decades.

As a conclusion, we would say that the master’s interpretative labour was carried on along the natural route of an authentic creation: it had its ups and downs like any human creation does; it had instants of great inspiration, as, at times, it simply answered the epoch’s social command, with good and weak spots. We consider it really important that

⁴ A part that revived the actor Mircea Diaconu’s career spectacularly. Later on, he became a political man and, little by little, moved away from genuine artistic creation.

Dinică the Man always comes out from beyond the mask of each and every interpreted character (both in theatre and cinema), which he ennobles with his natural gesture of an artist who has achieved everything by toil, sacrifice and patience, not

always properly rewarded. Moreover, Dinică was able to avoid the trap of excess, even if he may have played in too many films, interpreting his own role on and on, referring himself to the most successful instances of creative inspiration in his career.

Annex / Anexă

Parts Played by Gheorghe Dinică / Lista filmelor în care a jucat Gheorghe Dinică

Străinul / The Stranger (1963), directed by Mihai Iacob, screenplay: Titus Popovici, the part of the communist Jurcă.

Comoara din Vadul vechi / The Treasure from Vadul Vechi (1964), directed by: Victor Iliu, screenplay: V. Em. Galan, part: Zamfir.

Procesul alb / The White Trial (1965), directed by: Iulian Mihu, screenplay: Eugen Barbu, part: the communist Dumitrana.

Golgota (1966), directed by: Mircea Drăgan, screenplay: Nicolae Țic and Mircea Drăgan, part: the sergeant.

Maiorul și moartea / The Major and Death (1967), directed by: Alexandru Boiangiu, screenplay: Ion Băieșu and Alexandru Boiangiu, part: major Tache.

Columna / The Column (1968), directed by: Mircea Drăgan, screenplay: Titus Popovici, part: Bastus, the traitorous.

Prea mic pentru un război atât de mare / Too Little for such a Big War (1969), directed by: Radu Gabrea, screenplay: D.R. Poescu, part: the veteran warrant officer.

Atunci i-am condamnat pe toți la moarte / Then I sent them all to Death (1971), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, screenplay: Titus Popovici, part: the actuary.

Felix și Otilia / Felix and Otilia (1971), directed by: Iulian Mihu, screenplay: Ioan Grigorescu, part: lawyer Stănică Rațiu (male performance award, ex-aequo, ACIN 1972).

Cu mâinile curate / With Unstained Hands (1972), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, screenplay: Titus Popovici and Petre Sălcudeanu, part: Lăscărică (male performance award, ex-aequo, ACIN 1972).

Bariera / The Barrier (1972), directed by: Mircea Mureșan, screenplay: Teodor Mazilu, part: Călărețu (male performance award, ex-aequo, ACIN 1973).

Explozia / The Explosion (1972), directed by: Mircea Drăgan, screenplay: Ioan Grigorescu, part: Salamandă (male performance award, ex-aequo, ACIN 1973).

Dincolo de nisipuri / Farther the Sands (1973), directed by: Radu Gabrea, screenplay: Fănuș Neagu, part: major Ionescu.

Frații Jderi / The Jders (1973), directed by: Mircea Drăgan, screenplay: Profira Sadoveanu, Constantin Mitru and Mircea Drăgan, part: Dumitru.

Un comisar acuză / The Commissar Accuses (1974), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, screenplay: Sergiu Nicolaescu, Vintilă Corbul, Eugen Burada and Mircea Gândilă, part: the legionary Paraipan.

Tatăl risipitor / Prodigal Father (1974), directed by: Adrian Petrigenu, screenplay: Eugen Barbu, part: Marin.

Nemuritorii / The Immortals (1974), directed and screenplay by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, part: Butnaru.

Zidul / The Wall (1974), directed by: Constantin Vaeni, screenplay: Dumitru Carabăț and Costache Ciubotaru, part: Savu.

Ilustre cu flori de câmp / Postcards with Field-flowers (1974), directed and screenplay by: Andrei Blaier, part: Marin.

Filip cel bun / Philip the Good (1974), directed by: Dan Pița, screenplay: Constantin Stoiciu, part: Lupu.

Nu filmăm să ne-amuzăm / We Do not Shoot Films for Amusement (1974), directed by: Iulian Mihu, group screenplay, part: Aposu.

Evadarea / The Escape (1975), directed by: Ștefan Traian Roman, screenplay: Francisc Munteanu, part: captain Stoian.

Mastodontul / The Mastodon (1975), directed by: Virgil Calotescu, screenplay: Ioan Grigorescu, part: Micu.

Prin cenușa imperiului / Through the Empire's Ashes (1975), directed by: Andrei Blaier, scenplay: Zaharia Stancu, part: the Diplomat (male performance award at Karlovy-Vary, 1976, special jury prize for young actors, Cannes 1976).

Osânda / The Conviction (1976), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, scenplay: Anușavan Salamanian and Sergiu Nicolaescu, part: the gendarme Ion.

Premiera / Premiere (1976), directed by: Mihai Constantinescu, scenplay: Aurel Baranga.

Trei zile și trei nopți / Three Days and Three Nights (1976), directed by: Dinu Tănase, scenplay: Alexandru Ivăsiuc, part: Meseșan.

Cuibul salamandrelor / Salamanders' Nest (1976, Romanian-Italian production), directed by: Mircea Drăgan, scenplay: Ioan Grigorescu, Part: George „Salamander”.

Marele singuratic / The Lonely One (1976), directed by: Iulian Mihu, scenplay: Marin Preda, part: the prime-secretary.

Acțiunea „Autobuzul” / Mission: “the Bus” (1977), directed by: Virgil Calotescu, scenplay: Ioan Grigorescu, part: Baronul / the Baron.

Trepte pe cer / Steps in the Sky (1977), directed and screenplay by: Andrei Blaier, part: Vîtcu.

Doctorul Poenaru / Doctor Poenaru (1977), directed and screenplay by: Dinu Tănase, part: Voican.

Revanșa / The Retaliation (1978), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, scenplay: Sergiu Nicolaescu, Vintilă Corbul, Eugen Burada and Mircea Gândilă, part: the legionary Paraipan.

Totul pentru fotbal / Everything for Football (1978), directed by: Andrei Blaier, scenplay: Mircea Radu Iacoban, part: the referee.

Drumuri în cumpănă / Crossroads (1978), directed by: Virgil Calotescu, scenplay: Ion and Alexandru Brad, part: Onișor.

Ultima noapte de dragoste / The Last Night of Love (1979), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, scenplay: Titus Popovici and Sergiu Nicolaescu, part: Costică.

Bietul Ioanide / Poor Ioanide (1979), directed by: Dan Pița, scenplay: Eugen Barbu, part: Gonzalv Ionescu.

Rețeaua S / Network S (1980), directed by: Virgil Calotescu, scenplay: Tudor Negoită and Mircea Gândilă, part: th spy (Panai)t.

O lume fără cer / A World with no Sky (1981), directed by: Mircea Drăgan, scenplay: Nicole Țic, Eugen Mandric and Mircea Drăgan, part: the gendarme sergeant.

De ce trag clopoțele, Mitică? / Why do Bells Ring, Mitica (1981, directed and screenplay by: Lucian Pintilie.

Concurs / Contest (1982), directed and screenplay by: Dan Pița, part: Mitică.

Întunericul alb / White Darkness (1982), directed and screenplay by: Andrei Blaier, part: the Saxophone Player.

Pe malul stâng al Dunării albastre / On the Right Bank of the Danube (1983), directed and screenplay by: Malvina Urșianu, part: Matei.

Un petec pe cer / A Spot of Sky (1983), directed and screenplay by: Francisc Munteanu, part: Grozea.

Secretul lui Bachus / Bachus' Secret (1983), directed by: Geo Saizescu, scenplay: Titus Popovici, part: Cercel.

Zbor periculos / Dangerous Flight (1984), directed by: Francisc Munteanu, scenplay: Mihai Vasilescu, part: Oprescu.

O lumină la etajul zece / A Light on the Tenth Floor (1984), directed and screenplay by: Malvina Urșianu, part: the lawyer Mitrana.

Râdeți ca-n viață / Laugh as You Do (1984), directed and screenplay by: Andrei Blaier, part: the chief engineer.

Vară sentimentală / Sentimental Summer (1985), directed by: Francisc Munteanu. Scenplay: Vasile Băran, part: Coman.

Cuibul de viespi / The Wasp Nest (1986), directed and screenplay by: Horea Popescu, part: Georges.

Figuranții / Figurants (1986), directed and screenplay by: Malvina Urșianu, part: Matei (jury special award 1987).

Secretul lui Nemesis / Nemesis' Secret (1986), directed by: Geo Saizescu, scenplay: Titus Popovici, part: N.M. Siseanu (jury special award, ex-aequo, ACIN 1987).

Să-ți vorbesc de mine / Let Me Tell you about Myself (1987), directed and screenplay by: Mihai Constantinescu, part: doctor Liviu Runcan.

Momentul adevărului / Moment of Truth (1989), directed by: Andrei Blaier, scenplay: Titus Popovici.

Lacrima cerului / Tear of the Sky (1989), directed by: Adrian Istrătescu, scenplay: Eugen Barbu and Nicolae Paul Mihail.

Casa din vis / House of the Dream (1991), directed by: Ioan Cărmăzan, scenplay: Fănuș Neagu and Ioan Cărmăzan, part: Chivu Căpălău (male performance award, ex-aequo, UCIN 1992).

Divorț din dragoste / Love as Ground for a Divorce (1991), directed by: Andrei Blaier, scenplay: Titus Popovici, part: Flaviu Prună.

Patul conjugal / The Marital Bed (1992), directed and screenplay by: Mircea Daneliuc, part: Vasile Podoabă (male performance award, UCIN 1993).

Privește înainte cu mânie / Look ahead in Anger (1992), directed by: Nicolae Mărgineanu, scenplay: Petre Sălcudeanu, part: Dimos.

Liceenii în alertă / Colleague Students in Alert (1992), directed by: Mircea Plângău, scenplay: George Șovu and Mihai Opriș.

Oglinda – Începutul adevărului / The Mirror / Beginning of Truth (1993), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, scenplay: Ioan Georgescu and Sergiu Nicolaescu, part: the prime ministre Mihai Antonescu.

Crucea de piatră / Stone Cross (1993), directed by: Andrei Blaier, scenplay: Titus Popovici, part: activist Puzderie.

Această lehamite / Disgust (1993), directed and screenplay by: Mircea Daneliuc, part: the doctor.

Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni / The Most Beloved on Earth (1994), directed and screenplay by: Șerban Marinescu.

Terente – regele bălților / Terente – King of Ponds (1995), directed by: Andrei Blaier, scenplay: Fănuș Neagu and Lucian Chișu, part: the journalist Bazil Ionescu.

Craii de Curtea Veche / Kings of Old Times (1995), directed by: Mircea Veroiu, scenplay: Ioan Grigorescu and Mircea Veroiu, part: Arnoteanu.

Faimosul paparazzo / Famous Paparazzo (1998), directed by: Nicolae Mărgineanu, scenplay: Răsvan Popescu, part: the investigator (extraordinary performance award, UCIN 1998–1999).

Război în bucătărie / War in the Kitchen (2000), directed and screenplay by: Marius Th. Barna, part: father.

Patul lui Procrust / Procrustes' Bed (2001), directed and screenplay by: Viorica Meșină and Sergiu Prodan, part: Nae Gheorghidiu.

Filantropica / Philantropica (2001), directed and screenplay by: Nae Caranfil, part: Pepe (special award UCIN 2000–2001).

După-amiaza unui torționar / A Torturer's Afternoon (2002), directed and screenplay by: Lucian Pintilie, rolul Franț Țandără.

Turnul din Pisa / The Tower of Pisa (2002), directed by: Șerban Marinescu, scenplay: D.R. Popescu, part: Gigi.

Examen / Exam (2003), directed and screenplay by: Titus Muntean, part: Dumitrașcu.

Dulcea saună a morții / Sweet sauna of Death (2003), directed by: Andrei Blaier, scenplay: Petre Sălcudeanu, part: Paraschiv called „Blade”.

Orient Express (2004), directed by: Sergiu Nicolaescu, scenplay: Sergiu Nicolaescu and Ioan Cărmăzan, part: Costache.

Magnatul / The Magnate (2004), directed by: Șerban Marinescu, scenplay: Bogdan Ficeac, part: Gheorghe Manasia.

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DOCUMENTATION: RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE ART COLLECTIONS OF THE BRUKENTHAL NATIONAL MUSEUM (July 2011–October 2012)

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Abstract: *The author introduces the works of art which became part of the collections of the Brukenthal National Museum between July 2011 and October 2012. These works, donated to the museum, are concisely analysed, the acts of donation documented and completed with details about the donors. In the above mentioned interval, the following creations became part of the collection: the sculptures in bronze “Pistil”, “Parcae (Fates)” and “Mother” and the graphic work “The Birth of Venus” by Borsos Miklós, “The Thought that Swallows You” by Robert Strebeli, “The Discophor Crucifix” by Nicolae Cațavei, and “Walk through the Forest of the Singing Mirrors” by Geanina Alina Ionescu.*

Keywords: *Brukenthal National Museum, donations, Borsos Miklós, Robert Strebeli, Nicolae Cațavei, Geanina Alina Ionescu.*

Rezumat: *Autorul prezintă lucrările care au intrat în colecția de artă a Muzeului Național Brukenthal, în perioada iulie 2011 – octombrie 2012 sub formă de donații. Operele sunt analizate succint, actul de donație fiind documentat și prin informații referitoare la donatori. Au intrat astfel în colecție: lucrările de sculptură în bronz: „Pistil”, „Parce” și „Mama”, precum și grafica „Nașterea Venerei” de Borsos Miklós, „Gândul care te înghite”, de Robert Strebeli, „Troică discoforă”, de Nicolae Cațavei și „Plimbare prin pădurea oglinzilor care cântă”, de Geanina Alina Ionescu.*

Cuvinte cheie: *Muzeul Național Brukenthal, donații, Borsos Miklós, Robert Strebeli, Nicolae Cațavei, Geanina Alina Ionescu.*

The documentary section of the BRUKENTHAL. ACTA MUSEI magazine, presents every year, the works of art that became part of the collections of the Brukenthal Art Gallery in the previous year. In the lines to follow we will focus on the works which came to complete the collections of painting, graphic arts, sculpture and decorative arts between July 2011 and October 2012.

Miklós Borsos (1906–1990) was a Hungarian sculptor and medallist, born in Sibiu, who settled in Győr in 1921. Within the frames of modernity, his style implements elements of archaic and classicist art. Borsos made his debut in art as a painter, as early as the 20's, but became interested in sculpture in the fourth decade of the 20th century. Fülöp Ö. Beck, Béni Ferenczy and Ferencz Medgyessy were the Hungarian artists who influenced him most. Both his style and his technique single him out as an innovative artist. He is considered one of the most representative sculptors of 20th century Hungarian art.

In 1979, the artist opened The Miklós Borsos Art Gallery, in Győr, which later became the Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation, administered by the Charity Service of the Maltese St. John's

Knights Hospitalier Order, president Father Kozma Imre O.H.

Two decades after the artist's death, The Hungarian Cultural Association in Sibiu, which is an official partner of the Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, initiated in the town that Borsos had been so profoundly attached to, a cycle of events dedicated to the famous artist, meant to insure his place in contemporary art. In order to make the creation of the artist well known, the two mentioned institution (namely the Foundation Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona through the Hungarian Cultural Association in Sibiu) donated to the Brukenthal National Museum three works of art: the sculptures in bronze *Pistil*¹, *Parcae (Fates)*² and *Mother*³ and the graphic

¹ Borsos Miklós, *Pistil*, bronze, 18 cm, 1964, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.

² Borsos Miklós, *Parcae (Fates) / Parce*, Bronze, 42 cm, 1965, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.

³ Borsos Miklós, *Mother / Mama*, bronze, 20 cm, 1984, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.

work *Birth of Venus*⁴. The works bear testimony for the diversity of styles, genres and techniques of the artist, from an expressive realistic to a symbolic approach.

Most of the works that have recently enriched the art collections are donations were first on display in contemporary art exhibitions organized in the Brukenthal National Museum. The project to open the rooms of the Museum for contemporary art exhibitional events that had been launched just a few years ago and seems to fully answer the desire of the institution to strengthen the relationship with many categories of visitors, proves also to be an important source of increasing the collections. The exhibitions of contemporary art have also brought a large number of visitors, whose understanding, appreciation and taste for modern art have developed in the past years.

Robert Strebeli (b. 1977), artist from Baia Mare, expresses his artistic emotions in painting, graphics, sculpture, and photography. He studied at the „George Enescu” University, in Iasi, and obtained a Ph.D. at the University of Salamanca. The most important and profound sources that inspired his art are Antique cultures, as well as Christian myths and mythology. The essence of his painting is the symbol. He discovers and unveils symbols in all the forms, contents and colours around, and using them and inventing others, he creates and recreates a symbolic archetypal world.

The painting *The Thought that Swallows You*⁵ was donated by the artist after the exhibition *Between Sky and Earth*, organized in the temporary exhibition rooms of the Brukenthal Palace between the 9th and the 28th of November 2011. At the opening, speaking about the works on display, the curator Alexandru Sonoc stressed the profound spiritual content “inspired by the sensibility and forms of late Romanesque mostly of the direction developed in the Iberian Peninsula, style that synthesises traditions coming from late Roman art, paleo-Christian art, barbarian local art and that of the Germanic migrators overlapped by Oriental influences, and by hermetic and mystical doctrines of early Middle Age...”.

Fish are the expressive forms used in this symbolic figurative painting to signify the artist’s message, to imbue the state of his soul, and to challenge the viewer to think, think over, meditate, and introspect. The scarce chromatic options are counterbalanced by the strength of the colour applied on large surfaces in strong nuances and emphasised contrasts, and by its symbolic strata. Red is blood, is passion and life, but it is also loss, oblation or death, while blue is noble blood and “together express man’s passion and nobleness”, the artist explained. The art critic Corneliu Antim characterized Strebeli’s painting as being: “...under a permanent interrogative tension and introspective questioning”, made of the magma of the post-expressionist chromatics.

The interest in symbols and archetypes also characterises the creation of another artist born in Baia Mare, Nicolae Cațavei, who exhibited in the Brukenthal Museum between the 1st of December 2011 and the 7th of January 2012. The 50 paintings on display were gathered under the title *Archetypal Structures and Images. The Column of the Sky – the Crucifix / Structuri și imagini arhetipale. Coloana Cerului – Troița*, and the artist dedicated the exhibition to his daughter.

The deep study of archaic forms and of Christian symbols generated works like the *Discophor Crucifix*⁶, now in the Brukenthal painting collection, which strengthens the connections that true faith generates between man and his inner self.

The Brukenthal National Museum hosted, between February and March 2012, the painting exhibition *Walk through the Forest of the Singing Mirrors* by Geanina Alina Ionescu, curated by Dr. Valentin Mureșan. The author, born in 1977, is a young artist from Sibiu, graduate of „Lucian Blaga” University, and she has already made her name. She is a member of the Romanian Artists’ Association, and coordinates the group of young artists gathered in „Workshop 35” Sibiu. The painting Geanina Ionescu donated is the one which gave the name of the exhibition: *Walk through the Forest of the Singing Mirrors*⁷. The work bears testimony to the artist’s interest in non-figurative painting, with emphasis on a certain poetical – metaphorical message. The

⁴ Borsos Miklós, *Birth of Venus / Nașterea Venerei*, graphic, 50 x 66 cm, 1976, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.

⁵ Robert Strebeli, *The Thought that Swallows You / Gândul care te înghite*, oil on canvas, 85 x 42 cm, donation of the artist, August 2012, inv. 3218.

⁶ Nicolae Cațavei, *Discophor Crucifix / Troița discophoră*, oil on canvas, 150 x 100 cm, donation of the artist, January 2012, inv. 3217.

⁷ Alina Geanina Ionescu, *Walk through the Forest of the Singing Mirrors / Plimbare prin pădurea oglinzilor care cântă*, acryl/canvas, 100 x 130 cm, donation 2012, inv. 3219.

unexpected game of surfaces suggests the innumerable reflections shiny surfaces can offer. It always comprises the sense of multiplicity, but the reason of mirroring can be only guessed. The painter uses rich chromatic displays, sometimes intimate and soft, but often in surprisingly spectacular contrasts. The cold nuances of blue vibrated on large surfaces are warmed with the interventions of ochre and of some reddish touches. In establishing stylistic filiations, Dr.

Valentin Muresan mentioned at the opening speech, Braque's incipient cubism, and Mondrian's neo-plasticism, also identifying an original, post-modern content.

All the above mentioned works represent an important source for the future contemporary exhibitions the Museum will organize in the years to come.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Borsos Miklós, *Pistil*, Bronze, 18 cm, 1964, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.
2. Borsos Miklós, *Parcae / Fates*, Bronze, 42 cm, 1965, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.
3. Borsos Miklós, *Mother*, Bronze, 20 cm, 1984, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.
4. Borsos Miklós, *Birth of Venus*, graphic, 50 x 66 cm, 1976, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.
5. Robert Strebeli, *The Thought that Swallows You*, oil on canvas, 85 x 42 cm, donation of the artist, August 2012, inv. 3218.
6. Nicolae Cațavei, *Discophor Crucifix*, oil on canvas, 150 x 100 cm, donation of the artist, January 2012, inv. 3217.
7. Alina Geanina Ionescu, *Walk through the Forest of the Singing*, acryl/canvas, 100 x 130 cm, donation March 2012, inv. 3219.

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1. Borsos Miklós, *Pistil*, bronz, 18 cm, 1964, donația Fundației Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona, Budapesta, octombrie 2012.
2. Borsos Miklós, *Cicatricea*, bronz, 42 cm, 1965, donația Fundației Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona, Budapesta, octombrie 2012.
3. Borsos Miklós, *Mama*, bronz, 20 cm, 1984, donația Fundației Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona, Budapesta, octombrie 2012.
4. Borsos Miklós, *Nașterea Venerei*, grafică, 50 x 66 cm, 1976, donația Fundației Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona, Budapesta, octombrie 2012.
5. Robert Strebeli, *Gândul care te înghite*, ulei pe pânză, 85 x 42 cm, donația artistului, august 2012, inv. 3218.
6. Nicolae Cațavei, *Troița discoforă*, ulei pe pânză, 150 x 100 cm, donația artistului, ianuarie 2012, inv. 3217.
7. Alina Geanina Ionescu, *Plimbare prin pădurea oglinzilor care cântă*, acril pe pânză, 100 x 130 cm, donația artistei martie 2012, inv. 3219.



1. Borsos Miklós, *Pistil*, 1964, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.
2. Borsos Miklós, *Parcae / Fates*, 1965, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.
3. Borsos Miklós, *Mother*, 1984, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012.



4. Borsos Miklós, *Birth of Venus*, 1976, donation of Borsos Miklós – Kéry Ilona Foundation in Budapest, October 2012



5. Robert Strebeli, *The Thought that Swallows You*,
donation of the artist, August 2012



5. Nicolae Cațavei, *Discophor Crucifix*, donation of the artist, January 2012



7. Alina Geanina Ionescu, *Walk through the Forest of the Singing*, donation March 2012

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMC	Art Museum Cluj-Napoca / Muzeul de Artă Cluj-Napoca
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice, București
BMI	Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice, București
BNM	Brukenthal National Museum / Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu
HNG	Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest
KVSL	Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde
MNIT	Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei / National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca
RRHA	Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, București
SCIA	Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei, București

