

Abstract. *The fragmentary murals on the northern wall of the choir of church in Curciu (Sibiu county) were almost completely under the lime until the years 2013-2014, when they were brought to light and restored.*

The three-naved church, which exceeds by its proportions and rich decoration the needs of a rural community, was probably built at the beginning of the fourteenth century as a basilica, and has the choir reconstructed at the beginning of the fifteenth century, with the rich original sculpted decoration.

The greater part of the nineteen painted scenes represent the Passion of Jesus Christ, between the Entry into Jerusaleme and the Descent into Hell, rendered after the Resurrection. The last five scenes apparently have a hagiographical nature, as shown by the only recognizable composition, identified presumably with the Miracle of the Black Leg performed by Sts. Cosmas and Damian, which is followed by a martyrdom scene. The change of topic is marked by the brown vertical line of the frame which – only here – overlies the grey horizontal band, at the limit between the two bays of the choir.

The fragmentary mural ensemble is probably to be dated after the ratification of the hereditary grebonem for the noblemen of Ațel in 1430, supported by Emperor Sigismund during his visit to Transylvania in 1427, providing the perfect context for the creation of these high quality murals, evidently commissioned by a discerning donor from an artist of the highest calibre.

Although the paintings in Curciu show certain formal common features with paintings from Transylvania and Slovakia around 1430, they are considerably more elevated in terms of art, and should be seen in the tradition of Thomas of Cluj's Passion altarpiece (1427), more precisely of his Carrying of the Cross, in which mainly the scene of the Harrowing of Hell in Curciu is inscribing.

Keywords: *Curciu, Transylvania, Gothic, Passion Cycle, mural painting.*

THE PASSION CYCLE AND HAGIOGRAPHICAL SCENES PAINTED INSIDE THE CHOIR OF THE CHURCH IN CURCIU / KIRSCH / KŐRŐS (COUNTY OF SIBIU)

Dana Jenei

The fragmentary mural ensemble on the northern wall of the choir of the church in Curciu, whitewashed until 2013-2014, was brought to light by the restoration team led by Lóránd Kiss and Péter Pál. During the twentieth century, Viktor Roth (1903)¹, István Ghenton (1936)², and Dénes Radocsay (1954)³ briefly referred to one or two painted scenes recovered from beneath the lime, while Virgil Vătășianu (1959)⁴ and Vasile Drăguț (1972)⁵ simply reminded the existence of the traces of painting. Following their recent restoration, the mention of the Passion Cycle of Curciu was included in an article of mine dedicated to the iconography of late medieval mural painting in Transylvania (2014)⁶, in order to demonstrate that the theme was specific to the northern wall of the sanctuary for its Eucharistic connotations, as in the ensembles from Mălâncrav (Sibiu county)⁷, and Râșnov (Brașov county)⁸. Information on the iconographic programme, style and date, was also included in my surveys of 2016⁹ and 2018¹⁰, and in the presentation given in 2017 at the Annual National Conference of the Institute of Art History in Bucharest.

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Curciu / *Kirsch* / *Körös*, a village located north-east of Mediaş, in the wine-growing region between the rivers Târnava Mare and Târnava Mică, was first mentioned in the document dated 1322¹¹, linked to the name of *Petrus de Keureus*, Elder of the Mediaş Seat in 1337¹², who led in 1345 the Saxon counts in the local war against the Hungarian Apafi noblemen of Mălâncrav, which ended with murders and destructions on the latter estate¹³. Petrus' sons were mentioned for the last time in 1372, but almost half a century later, in 1426, we hear of the nobleman *Nikolaus de Kewres* representing Ladislaus Csaki, the voievode of Transylvania (1426-1435)¹⁴.

At some point before 1331, the village was ceded by king Charles Robert of Anjou (1306-1342) to the brothers *Nicolaus* and *Martin*, the sons of one *Blawch*, identified by Gernot Nussbächer with *Blafuunz von Rotherberg*, the royal judge in Sibiu, who in 1317, together with *Henning von Petersdorf*, obtained the ratification of the Golden Charter of the Transylvanian Saxons, first issued by king Andrew II of Hungary in 1224¹⁵.

In 1359, Curciu, originally part of a noble estate, was mentioned for the first time as a free settlement assigned to the Two Seats on the royal estate¹⁶.

A document signed in 1430 by the voivode Ladislaus Csaki conferred the Curciu hereditary *grebonem* "for eternity" to *Georgius de Eczel's* sons, Nicolaus (1430), Ladislaus (parish priest în Aţel, 1423-1430) and to their brothers, in spite of the villagers' protests, who claimed that the noblemen's ancestors had never effectively exercised this function, neither *Caspar* (c. 1375), nor *Georgius* (c. 1400), his son¹⁷. In the opinion of Gernot Nussbächer, the researcher who reconstructed the history of the village, the noblemen of Aţel obtained the support of the Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437) during his visit to Transylvania, in 1427¹⁸.

It is amongst these historical figures that the founders and donors of the parish

church, built and adorned in several phases, are to be sought.

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As all previous scholars have noticed, the church at Curciu, situated on a promontory in the central-west part of the settlement, far exceeds the needs of a rural community with its impressive proportions and rich sculpted decoration. From the original surrounding fortification, only the defensive wall, the gate tower and the Gothic chapel with an ossuary level inside the precinct are preserved. The three-naved church, initially a basilica, has the sacristy with a narrow Early Gothic trefoil window, the western tower with stone frames of a similar shape at the *Zwillingsfenster*, and the big bell with the date 1310, preserved from this early phase of construction¹⁹.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the choir with two rectangular bays, a three sides polygonal apse and cross-ribbed vaults on colonettes attached against the walls was presumably rebuilt. The original typology of the stone window-frame on the southern side of the apse with its tracery delimited by a horizontal baguette, includes Curciu in the group of the churches in the area, characterized by this detail also existent at Şaroş²⁰, Mălâncrav²¹ and Ighişu Nou²², where the sacramental niche and the carved stone sedilia show similar, but not identical shapes²³. Another hallmark of the masonry workshop at Curciu is represented by the small sculpted figures randomly disposed on the buttresses outside, just as at Ighişu Nou and Bratei, while inside an imp bearing a human mask in its claws decorates the north console of the triumphal arch. Christ's face on one of the roof bosses of the choir is similarly rendered in style, whereas the pelican in her piety on another boss is in simple flat relief and roughly stylized, as is the cherub which decorates the sedilia, in contrast with its exquisite Gothic profiles.

Fantastic creatures, animals, and human masks interwoven within the Gothic *feuillage*, vine leaves and grapes, form the

frieze decoration of the colonette capitals of the western portal embrasure. The composition of the massive *avant-corps* was completed by consoles and baldaquins for the statues now lost, a horizontal band of trefoiled arches in relief under the cornice and fragmentary gargoyles on its upper corners²⁴.

The basilica was transformed in 1810-1814 into a hall church, with flat ceilings and stucco decoration. In 1913, the tower was covered with a pointed roof of zinc sheeting, the church and precinct undergoing further repairs in 1969-1971, 1995-1996 and 2013-2014.

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The ensemble of paintings on the north wall of the choir, recently recovered from under the whitewash, has important parts missing, while the colour layer is partially lost from the preserved zones, their appearance of today being of a wash painting, reduced for the most part to the under-drawing and to the first brown diluted layers; many details added *a secco* over the fresco layer have completely disappeared as well. However, the high artistic quality of the paintings goes a long way towards compensating for these losses, revealing one of the most important murals of the first part of the fifteenth century in Transylvania.

The greater part of the nineteen painted scenes represent the Passion of Jesus Christ, with the narrative developed from left to right. The first three scenes – the Entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, and the Prayer on the Mount of Olives – benefit from the generous surfaces of the tympana beneath the vaults, and are framed by decorative Gothic bands of four lobes and discs painted in *trompe l'oeil* on a black background. The other images are presented in rectangular panels disposed in two registers on the walls of the bays of the choir and on the adjacent northern wall of the apse, separated by vertical grey strips simply outlined by a white and a brown line, which also frame the lower horizontal decorative green bands, with small stepped lozenges rendered with the template.

The ensemble debuts with The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44), animated by the kneeling people spreading their cloaks and palm branches on the ground for Jesus riding on the donkey “which no one has ever ridden”, followed by six apostles (reduced from twelve), amongst whom St. Peter can be identified by his characteristic physiognomy. The apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus places in the scene Zacchaeus, the tax collector short in stature, who has climbed up into a sycamore fig tree to see Christ as he passed²⁵; the city-gate is a crenellated edifice, with a round opening, similarly represented, for instance, in Eichstatt *Biblia Pauperum* (c. 1430)²⁶.

The second image is the Last Supper, which depicts the institution of the most important sacrament of Christ’s Church, the Eucharist, with the characters disposed around a rectangular table, represented in perspective. Jesus sits behind the table, in the middle, framed by apostles who debate the announcement of his betrayal, death and resurrection. Peter is placed to his right, and John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved”, stays at his bosom, to the left, with the eyes closed, resting his head in a hand. The scene is imagined in a half-open space, with a tree painted behind Jesus, perhaps an allusion to the Tree of Life which pre-figured the Cross, as mentioned by St. Paul’s in his First Letter to the Corinthians: “The Cross of Christ, the Tree of Life” (1:18-31), both being referred to as “the tree” in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus²⁷. Jesus is blessing the bread broken in two, but the wine is missing, while on the opposite side, Judas is kneeling on one knee waiting to receive the communion in an attitude of prayer, in front of the Passover lamb on the table, the symbol of the *Agnus Dei*. He is not nimbed, and isolated from the rest of the apostles seated on benches, but as variance with the usual depiction, he does not take the piece of bread from Jesus (John 13: 26), there is no devil entering his mouth with the communion (John 13: 27), nor is he dipping his hand into the dish with the Lord

(Matthew 26:23). More than that, he wears red-green clothes, not yellow, has no coin purse, and is not represented in profile, but in three-quarters, partially turned to the viewer²⁸.

The scene of Jesus on the Mount of Olives is largely lost, but the Saviour's figure in prayer may be observed in front of the bitter cup, blessed by the *dextera Dei*, appearing from a cloud. In accordance with the New Testament account, the image includes the three apostles who accompanied him – Peter, James and John, the first figure being lost, while the last is represented frontally with his chin tucked down resting on his crossed hands, a similar posture to that seen in a contemporary embroidery executed in Vienna (c. 1425-1430, Spišská Kapitula, now Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum), related to the Master of the *Andreasretabel* (c. 1425-1430, Wien, Erzbischöfliches Dom- und Diözanischesmuseum)²⁹. John's face rendered in *raccourci* reminds the Vienna Model Book (c. 1410, Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum), a graphic source used by Thomas of Cluj³⁰, who similarly represented the apostle James frontally, with the chin tucked down, in his altarpiece of 1427 (Esztergom, Keresteny Múzeum).

In the second register of the ensemble in Curciu, the episode of Jesus's Capture is rendered, comprising the common elements of the motif: Judas (here with red hair and caricatured features) kisses Jesus who heals Malchus's ear cut by Peter, whose sword has only the hilt preserved, the guard and blade were lost, as being painted *a secco*. The upper part of the background is rhythmized by the lances kept by the soldiers, as again in the following scene, in which Jesus is presented before Herod, who is seated on a throne with canopy and trefoiled base, crowned and holding the royal sceptre. The scheme seems to reproduce in general terms one of the earliest woodcut engravings known, dated 1420-1430, which comes from Nuremberg (London, British Museum, 192 U. IO 47)³¹.

The Scourging episode which follows, shows Jesus standing with his feet on the base of the pillar, which divides the space symmetrically; two tormentors frame him, being about to hit him with the *flagrum* and probably with the bundle of rods, another lost detail, as applied *a secco*. In the next lacunar image, the Crowning with Thorns, Christ's figure is again visible in the centre, between two myrmidons who force the crown down onto his head with sticks, in the Western iconographical variant of the episode, which also takes place in an inner space of the Praetorium, marked by the trefoiled arcade above. The next scene, the Carrying of the Cross, in its general disposition and framing, is similar to Thomas of Cluj's altarpiece, with Jesus in the centre, turning his head back. As the Curciu image is fragmentary, we do not know if the crowd following him also comprised Mary, John the Evangelist and a Myrophore, or Simon of Cyrene helping Jesus to carry the Cross; in the small fragment preserved here, behind Christ, only two faces of soldiers and the contour of a third over one arm of the Cross are observable, while the upper part of the background is again rhythmized by the regular disposition of the lances.

The next two scenes are almost completely lost. Canonically, the second one should represent the Crucifixion, and here indeed John the Evangelist's green coat is at the left side of the Cross, with the Holy Virgin in the opposite side. The Crucifixion was perhaps preceded by a slightly similar scene in which Jesus is nailed on the Cross, as in Eichstatt *Biblia Pauperum*³², or with Christ's body supported by soldiers on the Cross already raised, as in the rare variant represented at Mălâncrav (in the nave), with a similar origin in the book illustrations³³; in the fragments from Curciu only the frown face of a man and the pointed helmet or cap of another one are still visible in the left upper corner.

The following image, the Deposition from the Cross, is much better preserved, with Mary holding Jesus's body in her arms, supported by St. John the Evangelist, and the two Myrophores sitting at the Saviour's feet – the Magdalene in a red *maphoryon* (as again at Mălâncrav in the nave), holds Jesus's right arm, while Mary of Cleophas (John 19:25), wearing a white scarf with the twisted corner around her head, wrings her hands; the T-Cross with the ladder leaning against it set centrally in the background, divides the scene symmetrically.

The narrative continues in the third register with the Entombment, Jesus's body being laid in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea, depicted traditionally at his head, and Nicodemus at his feet, only one red-stockinged leg being preserved. Between them, Virgin Mary's nimbed head is discernible above Jesus's shrouded body, but the rest of the image is lost.

The next scene, the Resurrection, shows Jesus emerging from the tomb, blessing and carrying the Standard of the Cross, but in the fragmentary image only one awakening soldier, his hand shielding his eyes from the dazzling light of the Resurrection beside him, may still be observed³⁴. At Curciu, Jesus's figure is more static, as in the fresco in Košice (1410-1420), but the sarcophagus is diagonally disposed³⁵, and not horizontally, as it is in the majority of the contemporary works, including Thomas of Cluj's painting (1427), with the sinuous figure of Christ similarly rendered at Ludrova (c. 1430).

The Descent of Christ into Hell, a scene originating again in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, is positioned in Curciu after the Resurrection (and not before, as it chronological should), similar to the other Transylvanian medieval Western murals known, at Unirea (Alba county) and Chilieni (Covasna county), where the Cross is rendered as "the tree"³⁶. Jesus with his wounds exposed bears the Standard of the Resurrection and is deliberately shown holding Adam by his wrists in order to release him (and not by his hands), with

perhaps Eve in prayer and Seth, their son, also mentioned by the Gospel of Nicodemus³⁷. The Limbo is imagined not as the mouth of Leviathan, but as a crenellated edifice³⁸, with a round gate wide-open, like the city-gate of Jerusalem in the scene illustrating the other triumphant entry of Jesus. The lower part of the scene is lost.

The Harrowing scene seems to conclude the Passion Cycle in Curciu, as the change of topic is marked by the brown vertical line of the frame which – only here – overlies the grey horizontal band, at the limit between the two bays of the choir.

The following three panels are almost completely lost, only a few small fragments being observable: under an arcade, the nimbed head of some saint (for it is not the cruciform halo of Christ) at which another figure points, perhaps with a sceptre with fleur-de-lys terminal, then a possibly crowned figure holding a scroll as part of a two-figure composition and, finally, one red-stockinged leg of a man dressed in green, as the single element preserved in the third image. These scenes should be of a hagiographical nature, as the final images confirm, episodes from the lives of the saints completing the Passion Cycle in other Transylvanian ensembles, as Mălâncrav (nave).

The penultimate scene of the Curciu murals, fragmentary as well, appears to illustrate the Miracle of the Black Leg performed by Sts. Cosmas and Damian. The twin brothers that would not accept fees were martyred in Cilicia during the Emperor Diocletian (284-305) and were considered the patron saints of doctors, surgeons and pharmacists, and universal protectors against the plague³⁹. In the medieval Transylvanian Western painting it is known they have been represented as effigies only, at Unirea (Alba county), Chilieni (Covasna county), Dârju (Harghita county), Strei (Hunedoara county), Mălâncrav (Sibiu county) and Sebeș (Alba county)⁴⁰. Uniquely, the Curciu mural depicts their 'signature' miracle, the only known representation of any episode from the two saints' *vitae* in Transylvania.



Fig. 1 – Curciu, the evangelical church seen from north-west.



Fig. 2-3 – Curciu, sculptures inside the choir of the church, capitel and roof boss.



Fig. 4.5 – Curciu, sedilia and sacramentary niche.

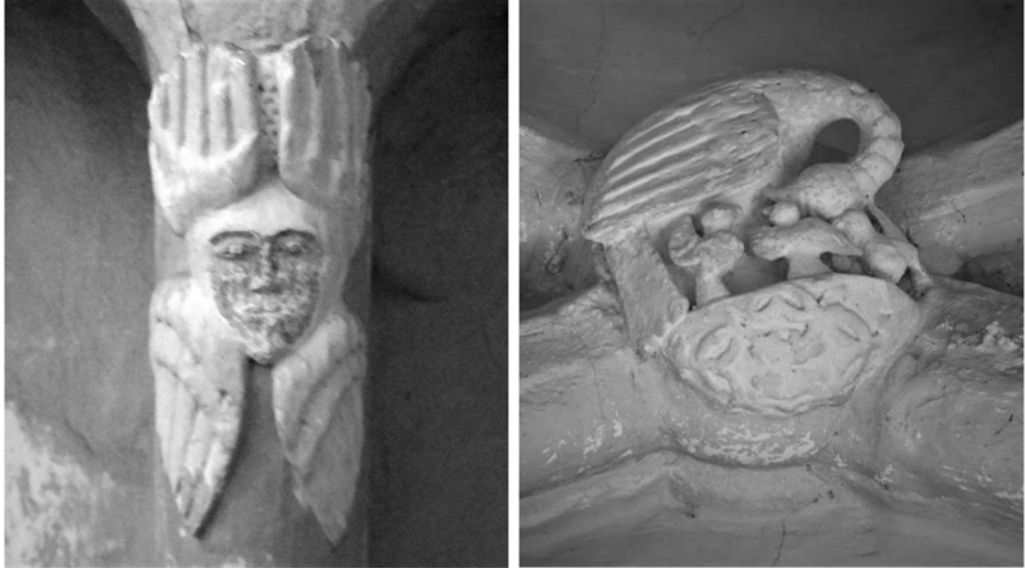


Fig. 6-7 – Curciu, sculptures inside the choir of the church, detail of the sedilia decoration and roof boss.



Fig. 8-9 – Curciu, sculptures outside the choir of the church.



Fig. 10 – Curciu, general view of the ensemble of the northern wall of the choir.



Fig. 11-13 – Curciu, The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, The Last Supper, The Prayer on the Mount of Olives.



Fig. 14 – Curciu, The Capture, Jesus presented at Herod, The Scourging.



Fig. 15 – Curciu, The Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, lacunas.



Fig. 16 – Curciu, The Entombment, the Resurrection, Descent of Christ into Hell.



Fig. 17 – Curciu, The Deposition from the Cross.



Fig. 18 – Curciu, The Carrying of the Cross.



Fig. 19 – Thomas of Cluj, The Carrying of the Cross (1427), Esztergom, Keresteny Muzeum.

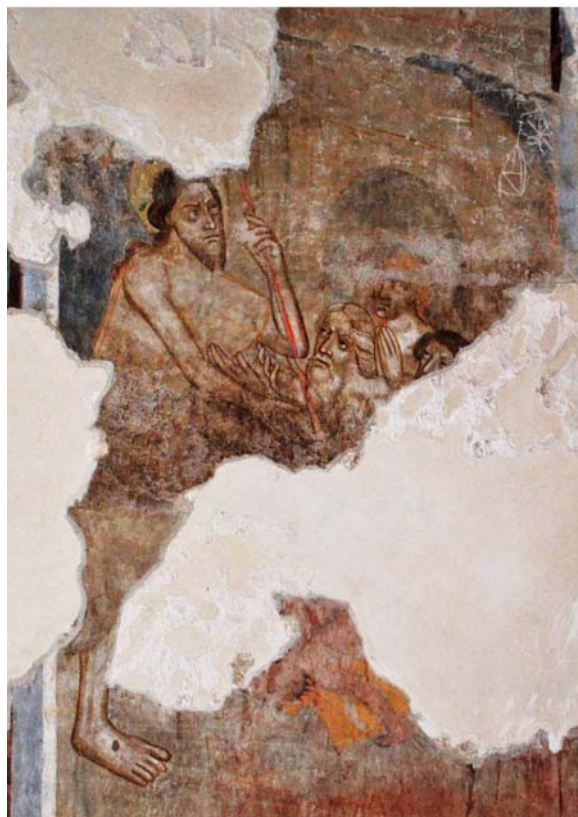


Fig. 20 – Curciu, Descent of Christ into Hell.



Fig. 21 – Curciu, The Prayer on the Mount of Olives, detail.



Fig. 22 – Vienna Model Book, 1410-1420, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. https://web.archive.org/web/20120428174845/http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=91010&image=KK_5003_28814.jpg.



Fig. 23 – Vienna, The Prayer on the Mount of Olives (c. 1425-1430, embroidery, detail, Spišská Kapitula, now Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum), Evelin Wetter, “Kirchliche Schatzkünste”, Fig. 11, p. 556.



Fig. 24 – Thomas of Cluj, The Prayer on the Mount of Olives (1427), detail, Esztergom, Keresteny Múzeum.



Fig. 25 – Curciu, scenes from the lives of Sts. Cosmas and Damian.



Fig. 26 – Curciu, inscription on the northern wall of the apse.

This posthumous miracle recounted by Jacobus de Voragine in his *Legenda aurea* (c. 1275) refers to the healing of the verger of the church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in Rome. The two saints appeared in his dream “carrying with them iron instruments and ointments”, amputated the leg consumed by cancer, and substituted it with

one taken from a recently deceased Ethiopian⁴¹. In the fragmentary scene in Curciu, the supposed verger is shown lying, with his leg amputated below the knee before the transplant operation, while two men in extravagant head-dress (but without haloes) are discussing beside his bed. One of them holds in his hand what seems to be

the kind of T-shaped double-ended chisel used in bone surgery.

The murals in Curciu close with a scene of martyrdom (also seriously lacunar) comprising the execution of probably two saints, one of them dressed up in green kneeling, with just the lower part of his body and the hands crossed in front of him visible, while the other one has the contour of his nimbus partially preserved, overlapping the lower part of the dark-haired man face in the second plane. Two officials attend the execution, one wearing a draped chaperon and the other, a yellow pointed hat. This scene may well represent the martyrdom of Ss. Cosmas and Damian, but if so, then it is chronologically out of order, as it should precede the posthumous miracle.

Sts. Cosmas and Damian's miracle and martyrdom scenes are frequently represented together in medieval art, from the earliest paintings known, such as Matteo di Pacino's panel (1370-1375, Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art)⁴², to the later ones, such as Jaime Huguet's Barcelona altarpiece predella (1459-1460, Santa Maria d'Egara, Terrassa), in which the verger's cut leg is depicted, while in the martyrdom scene, Sts. Cosmas and Damian are beheaded from behind, their throats being cut with a knife.⁴³

Near this final scene of the painted ensemble at Curciu, on the adjacent wall of the apse, is a two-line inscription in Gothic minuscules, but only partially readable: [...] *est dominus* [...].

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The fragmentary ensemble in Curciu is seriously affected by the loss of large surfaces of the murals with their support, of the upper colour layer, and of the details applied *a secco*, such as the palm branches held by a man in the Entry into Jerusalem scene, Peter's sword in the Capture of Jesus, or one of the tormenters' bundle of rods in the Flagellation scene. Paradoxically, in certain cases, the expressiveness of the portraits may be due to the visibility of the preparatory drawing deprived by the colour,

affording to the present remains a rather more powerful impact than the finished painting. Where the painting layer is still preserved, the well mastered chromatic moulding is noticeable.

The palette of colours was originally formed by vivid colours, such as copper green, cinnabar and yellow, which also characterizes certain roughly contemporary murals, such as those in Nemşa in Transylvania or Ludrova in Slovakia⁴⁴. Similarly, Christ's cruciform nimbus has bi-coloured arms in Cluj (the murals in St. Michael church, in the Schleining chapel and on the southern wall of the nave – St. Mary with Child and virgin-saints, the Crucifixion), where there also are decorative quadrilobe bands on a black background, and green bands with small stepped lozenges applied with the template, differently arranged, the latter motif also encountered at Ghelintă (exterior, on the southern wall of the nave) and Rugăneşti (inside the nave), while discs rendered in *trompe l'oeil* appear in the painted border of the Adoration of the Magi at Crăciunel (nave) and Chilieni (nave, in the construction of the canopies protecting the Virgin with the Child). Beyond the formal parallels, all these paintings dated to the third decade of the fifteenth century have not stylistic connection with the ensemble at Curciu, which is considerably more elevated in terms of art, and should be seen in the tradition of Thomas of Cluj's Passion altarpiece (1427)⁴⁵, more precisely of his Carrying of the Cross, in which mainly the scene of the Harrowing of Hell in Curciu is inscribing. The altarpiece was commissioned by Nicholas, son of Peter of Hronský Beňadik, cantor of the royal chapel at Buda castle, and its author is considered one of the most important artists in Central Europe in the third decade of the fifteenth century and king Sigismund of Luxemburg's court painter⁴⁶.

The extremely valuable murals at Curciu, with direct or indirect relations to the important Central-European art centres in Vienna and Buda, similarly echoed in

other part of the historical Kingdom of Hungary, as Slovakia, represent a further stage in the evolution of Transylvanian painting, but much enhanced in force and expressiveness. The ensemble is probably to be dated after the ratification of the hereditary *grebonem* for the noblemen of

Ațel in 1430, which – according to Gernot Nussbächer – was supported by Emperor Sigismund during his visit to Transylvania in 1427, providing the perfect context for the creation of these high quality murals, evidently commissioned by a discerning donor from an artist of the highest calibre.

¹ Viktor Roth, *Aufgabe und Ziel der siebenbürgisch-sächsischen kunstgeschichtsforschung*, in *Archiv des Verein für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, XXXII, 1903, p. 645, mentioned two uncovered *Legendendarstellungen*.

² István Ghenton, *Erdély művészete*, Budapest, 1936, p. 15.

³ Dénes Radocsay, *A középkori Magyarország falképei*, 1954, p. 166, mentioned an uncovered scene.

⁴ Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria artei feudale din România*, București, 1952, p. 774.

⁵ Vasile Drăguț, *Iconografia picturilor murale gotice din Transilvania*, in *Pagini de veche artă românească*, II, București, 1972, p. 81. Iuliana Fabritius-Dancu, *Spätgotik im Weinland*, in *Komm mit!*, 1975, p. 150, also refers to the traces of paintings in the chapel, information reiterated by Hermann Fabini, *Atlas der siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Kirchenburgen und Dorfkirchen*, Hermannstadt-Heidelberg, I, 1998, p. 216.

⁶ Dana Jenei, *Thèmes iconographiques et images dévotionnelles dans la peinture murale médiévale tardive de Transylvanie (c. 1450-1526)*, in *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux-Arts*, Tome LI, 2014, p. 29 and 35; eadem, *Goticul în Transilvania. Pictura (c.1300-1500)*, București, 2016, p. 98, with further references to the Passion Cycle on the northern wall of the choir in the churches at Ionești (two uncovered scenes), Cisnădie (as part of the Christological Cycle), Homorod (on the south and north walls of the former choir), Unirea (on the south and east walls of the apse), Dârlos (outside the choir), Mălâncrav (on the northern wall of the nave), Chilieni (the lower register in the nave). Passion scenes mixed with other representations were painted in the apses of the churches in Remetea, Ighișu Nou, Nemșa, respectively Mărtiniș and Suseni (the last two named being now lost).

⁷ Dana Jenei, *Les peintures murales de l'église de Mălâncrav. Notes avant la restauration*, in *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux-Arts*, Tome LII, 2015, p. 47-76.

⁸ Eadem, *The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, painted inside St. Matthias Church in Râșnov in 1500*, in *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Arta Plastică*, serie nouă, tom 4 (48), 2014, pp. 9-27.

⁹ Eadem, *Goticul în Transilvania. Pictura*, p. 61.

¹⁰ Eadem, *Pictura gotică*, in Răzvan Theodorescu and Marius Porumb (Eds.), *Arta în*

România din Preistorie în Contemporaneitate, București-Cluj Napoca, I, 2018, p. 255.

¹¹ *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, (Ed. Franz Joseph Zimmermann), I, No. 397, p. 368, cf. Gernot Nussbächer, *Adels- und königboden aus der Vergangenheit von Kirtsch*, in *Aus Urkunden und Chroniken. Beiträge zur siebenbürgischen Heimatkunde, Kreis Hermannstadt*, 15, Kronstadt-Heidelberg, 2014, p. 46.

¹² *Ub.*, I, No. 540, p. 490.

¹³ *Ub.*, II, No. 609, pp. 25-26.

¹⁴ *Ub.*, IV, No. 196, p. 265.

¹⁵ Gernot Nussbächer, *Adels- und königboden*, p. 46, cf. *Ub.*, I, No. 483, pp. 441-442, respectively *Documente privind istoria României*, C, Transilvania, XIII, București, 1956, p. 9.

¹⁶ Gernot Nussbächer, *Adels- und königboden*, p. 47, cf. *Ub.*, II, No. 743, pp. 157-158.

¹⁷ *Ub.*, IV, No. 2102, pp. 419-421. Rudolf Theil, *Die Hetzeldorfer Erbgrafen. Im Anhang: 13 Urkunden [1462-1521]*, in *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 30, (1902), p. 432, mentions among Georgius' sons, David, comes de Etzel (1423-1430), Petrus (1419) and Valentinus de Almas, Georg Tobiassy's father – *Georgio Thabias de Eczel filio quondam Valentinio de Almas*, *Ub.*, V, No. 3080, pp. 572-573.

¹⁸ Gernot Nussbächer, *Adels- und königboden*, p. 48-49. Other noblemen will try to take the village in their possession later, in 1444, but without success. *Ub.*, V, No. 2475, p. 127.

¹⁹ Friederich Müller, *Zur älteren siebenbürgischen Glockenkunde*, in *Archiv des Verein für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, N.F. 4, 1859, p. 228; a *piscina* inside the sacristy was mentioned by Hermann Fabini, *Atlas*, p. 216.

²⁰ Marosi Ernő (ed), *Magyarországi művészet 1300-1470 körül*, Budapest, 1987, II, p. 295.

²¹ Anca Gogăltan, *The Architecture of the Church in Mălâncrav (Sibiu County)*, in *Ars Transsilvaniae*, VIII-XIX, 1998-1999, pp. 131-132; Anca Gogăltan – Dóra Sallay, *The Church of Mălâncrav and the Holy Blood Chapel of Nicholas Apa*, in *Arhitectura religioasă din Transilvania*, Satu Mare, II, 2002, p. 189.

²² Dana Jenei, *The newly discovered murals inside the church of Virgin Mary at Ighișu Nou, Sibiu County*, in *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux-Arts*, Tome LIII, 2016, p. 49, Fig. 3.

Notes

²³ At Ighișu Nou, the tympanon of the old tabernacle, substituted by the new one from 1491, has been encased in the masonry of the church tower, under the defensive road, near the clock dial. *Ibidem*, p. 49.

²⁴ The portail and its decoration was dated at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria*, pp. 519-520. I thank Sanda Mihaela Salontai for her pertinent observation concerning the alteration of the top of the *avant-corps*, shortened when the gallery was made, the frieze of trefoiled arches being dismantled and rebuilt lower.

²⁵ Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien. Iconographie des saints*, II/II, Paris, 1958, p. 397.

²⁶ Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, 61 r, <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg148/0129>.

²⁷ “[...] who have been condemned through the tree and the devil and death, now see the devil and death condemned through the tree”, *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Part II, The Descent of Christ into Hell, Chapter 8 (24), <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/gospelnicodemus-roberts2.html>.

²⁸ Judas currently sits on a chair or bench like the other apostles, rarely directly on the ground or kneeling, as also in the illuminated manuscript from the Hague, c.1430, The Hague, KB, 78 D 38 II, Gospels, Fol. 186v. https://manuscripts.kb.nl/zoom/BYVANCKB:mimi_78d38:dl2_186v_min_, or *Speculum humanæ salvationis*, Chapter XVI. Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek Darmstadt, Hs 2505, fol. 27 verso.

https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft7v19p1w6&doc.view=popup&fig.ent=https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/data/13030/w6/ft7v19p1w6/figures/ft7v19p1w6_00184.jpg.

²⁹ Evelin Wetter, *Kirchliche Schatzkünste im Ungarn Sigismunds von Luxemburg*, in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg, 1387-1437* (Ausstellungskatalog), (ed. Imre Takács), Mainz, 2006, Fig. 11, p. 556, respectively nr. Inv. 7.74, p. 632.

³⁰ Gyöngyi Török, *Problems of Central European Art, c. 1400: The Thomas de Coloswar Altarpiece in Hungary*, in: Irving Lavin (ed.), *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity, vol. 1 (Acts of the XXVth International Congress of the History of Art)*, London, 1989, pp. 133-138; Jan Klípa, *The Migration of Artists – Transfer of Ideas. The So-Called Ambras Model Book and the Question of Influence in Central European Art around 1400*, in *Art and Architecture around 1400. Global and Regional Perspectives*, Maribor, 2012, pp. 277-278, assumes that Thomas could have access to the Vienna Vademecum in Buda, where part of the royal Prague library have been temporarily transferred by king Sigismund of Luxembourg, after the death of his son, Wenceslas IV, in 1419.

³¹ Peter Parshall and Rainer Schoch, *Origins of European Printmaking. Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and Their Public*, Washington, 2005, p. 121, Fig. 25.

³² <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg148/0238> (115v) and <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg148/0255> (124 r).

³³ Dana Jenei, *Mălâncrav*, pp. 55-56.

³⁴ Germany or Austria, the first half of the 15th century (British Library, Egerton 1122).

³⁵ In the tradition of Robert Campin's Seilern Triptych, c. 1410-1420, London, Courtauld Institute of Art.

³⁶ In the Mediaș altarpiece (Sibiu county), the Harrowing of Hell is rendered in the secondary plane of the Resurrection, as it copies Israhel van Meckenem's engraving. Dana Jenei, *Goticul în Transilvania. Pictura*, p. 111. For Chilieni, see János Mihály, *A kilyéni unitárius templom*. Kalauz. T3 Kiadó. Sepsiszentgyörgy, 2018; for Unirea, see Tekla Szabó, *A felvinci református templom középkori freskója*, in *Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából*, Új sorozat II, XII, 2007, pp. 143–155.

³⁷ *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Part II, The Descent of Christ into Hell, Chapter 3 (19). <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/gospelnicodemus-roberts2.html>.

³⁸ The Hell is represented as a building in the *Petite Heures* de Jean de Berry (before 1390).

³⁹ Louis Réau, *Iconographie*, III/ I, p. 332-338.

⁴⁰ Dana Jenei, *Goticul în Transilvania. Pictura*, p. 135.

⁴¹ Jacques de Voragine, *La légende dorée*, Paris, 1843, p. 148.

⁴² Nebojša J. Jović, Marios Theologu, *The miracle of the black leg: Eastern neglect of Western addition to the hagiography of Saints Cosmas and Damian*, in *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica*, 13 (2), 2015, p. 333.

⁴³ <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/34351>.

⁴⁴ Štefan Valášek, *The Medieval Wall Paintings in All Saints Church in Ludrová (Slovakia): Artists and Artistic Influences in Central Europe in the First Half of the 15th Century*, in *UMĚNÍ ART*, 1–2 LXIII 2015, p. 67, considers the paintings executed after 1430, when the Knight Johannes Wallenroth of Nuremberg became governor of the Liptov District, with the support of Sigismund of Luxembourg's Queen, Barbara.

⁴⁵ Dana Jenei, *Goticul în Transilvania. Pictura*, pp. 56-61.

⁴⁶ Dušan Buran, (Ed.) *Gotika. Dejiny slovenskeho výtvarneho umenia*, Bratislava, 2003, p. 698. Zsombor Jekely, *Painting at the court of Emperor Sigismund: The Nuremberg connections of the painter Thomas de Coloswar*, in *AHA*, Tom. 58, 2017, p. 72-74, considers Thomas not as trained in Prague, but in the Nuremberg workshops, strongly influenced by the Gothic international Bohemian painting around 1420.