THE PASSION, DEATH AND RESSURECTION MURALS PAINTED INSIDE ST. MATTHIAS CHURCH IN RÂȘNOV (1500)

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Résumé

L'église paroissiale Saint-Matthias de Râșnov, une basilique romane à trois nefs et tour-clocher à l'ouest, a été construite au XIIIe siècle et modifiée successivement jusqu'à la fin du XVe siècle, lorsque l'encadrement de la sacristie, avec la profilature du début de la Renaissance a été installé.

À l'intérieur**,** seulement l'ensemble peint en 1500 sur le mur nord du chœur, représentant le Cycle de la Passion, Mort et Résurrection du Christ est visible maintenant.

Des traces de couleur à l'extérieur ont été mentionnées par Walter Horwath en 1928, Virgil Vătășianu en 1959 et Vasile Drăguț en 1965, l'image très endommagée représentant Jésus de l'Eucharistie étant découverte sur le nord de l'abside. Au-dessus, dans la section où le plâtre a été enlevé, un fragment de cadre d'une peinture plus tardive a apparu aussi, tandis que l'an 1594 est écrit sur la couche supérieure.

Le Cycle Pascal, comme le motif dévotionnel *Vir dolorum* peint avant, est lié à la présence du Saint-Sacrement dans la niche du tabernacle (remplacé en 1753 par un *ex-voto*), étant intégré dans le contexte plus large de la préparation liturgique, évoquant à la fois les pratiques et les croyances du courant spirituel *Devotio moderna*. Dix images ont été peintes symétriquement sur le mur des deux baies du chœur dont la succession n'a pas été respectée pour mettre en évidence la Cène et la Crucifixion, situés dans les tympans. La Prière dans le jardin, l'*Ecce Homo*, peut-être le Couronnement d'épines et la Flagellation (le dernier, dans une variante iconographique rare, inspiré par le cycle des gravures d'Allemagne du Sud, intitulé «Les sept chutes de Jésus et les sept douleurs de Marie», c. 1480), sont en grande partie couverts de chaux. Vers l'abside, se trouvent le Portement et la Descente de la Croix, la Mise au tombeau, avec l'an 1500 peint au-dessus, et la Résurrection.

L'ensemble se rattache, comme iconographie et style, à la tradition de la peinture des successeurs sud-allemands de Hans Pleydenwurff – Michael Wolgemut à Nuremberg, Wolfgang Katzheimer à Bamberg et Hans Sienbenbürger à Vienne. Le retable de Schottenstift, ouvrage de référence du dernier réalisé avec son atelier a été vraisemblablement connu par le peintre de Râșnov, qui utilise également des motifs issues directement de l'art néerlandais, et moins les sources graphiques comme les œuvres transylvaines à dix-quinze années plus tôt, en créant des compositions originales dont, au moins, le Portement et la Descente de la Croix sont des contributions originales à la peinture européenne de cette époque de passage entre Gothique et Renaissance.

Keywords: Transylvania, Râșnov, mural painting, iconography, Passion Cycle, Late Middle Ages.

The medieval parish church of St. Matthias in Râșnov is a Romanesque three nave basilica with a western tower, built in the thirteenth century and successively modified until the late fifteenth century, when the early Renaissance stone carved door frame of the sacristy was installed[1].

From the painted decoration inside, only the ensemble of the northern wall of the choir representing the Cycle of Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, from 1500, is preserved.

Traces of colors on the exterior of the construction were mentioned by Walter Horwath in 1929[2], Virgil Vătășianu in 1959[3] and Vasile Drăguț in 1965[4]. The extremely damaged image of the Eucharistic

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[1] The first documentary mention of the church dates back in 1394, in connection with the parish priest Steven, dean of the Chapter in Brașov, *Urkundenbuch* zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen, Hermannstadt, 1902, III, p. 26. About the church, see Walter Horwath, *Rosenau*, in *Das Burzenland*, IV, *Die Dörfer des Burzenlandes, Kronstadt*, 1929, p. 134–135 and Hermann Fabini, *Atlas der siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Kirchenburgen und Dorfkirchen*, Hermannstadt-Heidelberg, I, 1998, p. 616–621.

[2] Walter Horwath, *Rosenau*, p. 135.

[3] Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria artei feudale în țările române*, I, București, 1959, p. 774.

[4] Vasile Drăguț, *Picturi murale exterioare în Transilvania medievală*, SCIA, 1/1965 p. 91. In 2002, the exterior of the monument was improperly renewed.
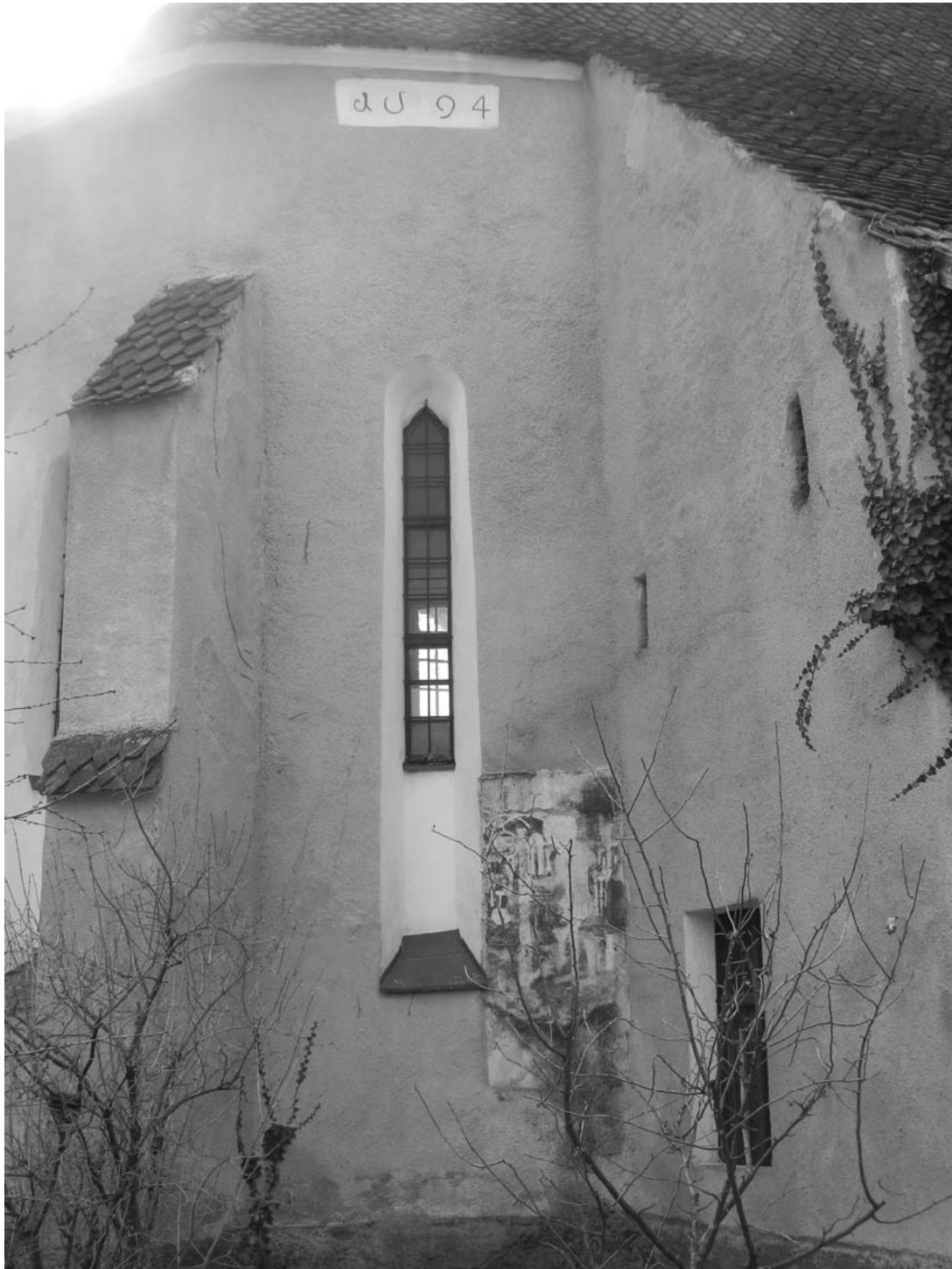
Fig. 1. *Vir dolorum* with *Arma Christi*. Râșnov, St. Matthias Church, north wall, outside the apse, mid fifteenth century.
Fragment of a later painting and the year 1594 written under the cornice on a superior layer.

Jesus was discovered on the north side of the apse[5], above which a fragment of the frame of another later painting is visible in the section where the plaster was detached, while the year 1594 is written on an upper layer (Fig. 1). In the figurative image, the Savior showing his wounds, with the blood pouring out from his side into the Chalice is represented between the Instruments of Passion, part of which are preserved only in negative, which makes them difficult to be red. The crown of thorns and the bandages hang symmetrically,

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[5] Dana Jenei, *Iconographical Problems of the Late Medieval Painting in Transylvania*, in *Regionális és európai kapcsolatok Kelet-Közép Európa Középkori falfestészetében*, Balatonfüred, 2009, due to be released.

on the arms of the Cross, the *flagrum* with the lead pieces stylized as stars, the bunch of rods, the knife, the crossed sticks, the ladder, the column, the lance, the vinegar-soaked sponge on the hyssop branch, the nails, and the lop-sided Judas bag, as painted in Bad Mergentheim, probably overlapped by a small T shaped object (hammer, drill, rope?), are decipherable around[6]. *Vir dolorum* showing his side wound between four angels wearing *Arma Christi* was also painted on the façade of the parish house in Sibiu (c. 1500) after Master E. S.'s engraving (Fig. 6)[7], while in the fragmentary image from the church in Nuşfalău[8], Mary is the one who points the wound on the Lord's side. The Man of Sorrow is schematically represented inside the choir in Sântimbru-Alba, where behind Jesus, who is flanked by two angels hands covered and wings decoratively bordered[9], the ladder, the column with the rope, the chain, the reed and the sponge, the tongs and the scourge are displayed. The purse with the thirty pieces of silver of Judas' betrayal is hanged on one of the nails fixed in the Cross, while the *titulus crucis* is represented as a gothic scroll over the crown of thorns.

In 1500, when the Passion Cycle from Râşnov was accomplished, *Laurentius, plebanus in Rosnaw, provincia (B)Vrciae*, became a member of the Holy Spirit Brotherhood in Rome[10]. The inner ensemble of the church, same as the earlier mid fifteenth century *Vir dolorum* outside, is linked to the presence of the Holy Sacrament in the Eucharist niche on the northern wall of the sanctuary that was integrated into the paintings, in the larger context of Liturgical preparation[11]. This emplacement is a constant of the iconographical program of Medieval Catholic churches, as also preserved in the Transylvanian murals from Mălâncrav (before 1405), Curciu (first decades of the fifteenth century) and Ioneşti (1522), the last two being recently uncovered by the team led by Péter Pál and Lóránd Kiss[12], or Suseni (end of the fifteenth century), known only from the water color copies of Jószeph Huszka[13]. The inferior part of the representation is still under the lime, the color layer is damaged and certain scenes are placed at a considerable distance above the ground, so that until a necessary restoration will be accomplished, the art historian's observations have a preliminary character.

The succession of the ten episodes distributed on the wall of the two bays of the choir is not respected in order to emphasis the moments of the Passion with Eucharistic connotation – the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, which are placed upside, in the semicircular lunettes. The other scenes are featured in painted rectangular panels with Renaissance frames, like those bounding the Virgin with Child between Saints inside the Black Church in Braşov or the ribs of the choir in Daia Secuiască, in Râşnov also having decorative rosettes at the corners and in the middle of each side.

The Last Supper (Fig. 2) is a remembrance of the Eucharist, when the most important Sacrament of the Church was founded (Luke 22, 27). The figures are sitting around a rectangular table with Jesus symmetrically framed by Apostles, holding at his bosom John, the beloved disciple, face hidden in his arm like in the Schottenstift altarpiece (1469, painting of reference attributed to Hans Siebenbürger and his workshop in Vienna[14]), Master of the Housebook's painting (c. 1475–1480, Berlin, Staatliche Museen),

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[6] The devotional image doesn't present the features of the rare image of Sunday Jesus – *Feiertagchristus*, but Dominique Rigaux speaks about the "scholar ambiguity" cultivated between the Instruments of Passion and the tools of the labors forbidden on feasts, whose practice actualizes Christ's sufferance even after his death on the Cross: the spear evokes the blacksmith and the combat, the dice – the gambling and so on. Dominique Rigaux, *Le Christ du dimanche: Histoire d'une image médiévale*, Paris, 2005, p. 45–46.

[7] The image flanks, together with *Maria in sole*, Wladyslaw Jagiello's coats of arms painted in a round niche. Dana Jenei, *Iconographical Problems*; eadem, *Renaşterea transilvăneană – identitate culturală în context european*, Bucureşti, 2013, p. 69; eadem, *Contributions to the Transylvanian Panel Painting at the End of the Fifteenth Century*, in *Acta Musei Brukenthal*, Sibiu, 2013, p 221.

[8] József Lángi – Ferenc Mihály, *Erdelyi falképek és festett fabrendezések*, II, Budapest, 2004, p. 107.

[9] In the linear monochrome painting, this detail is similar to the lost ensemble from Mărtiniş, known only from the water color copies and reproduced by Mihály Jánó, in *Huszka József, Székelyföldi falképmásolatai*, Budapest, 2008, p. 37.

[10] Johann Roth, *Siebenbürger Mitglieder der Bruderschaft Hospitals zum Heiliges Geist in Rom,* in *Korespondenzblatt des Vereins fur siebenbürgische Landeskundes*, XIII, 9, p. 93–94. In 1487, Laurence was a priest in Cristian/Neustadt, according to Gernot Nussbächer, for whose help I do express again my entire gratitude.

[11] The tabernacle was replaced by an *ex-voto* in 1753. About the paintings: Dana Jenei, *Pictura murală gotică din Transilvania. Ansambluri din secolul al XV-lea*, Phd Thesis, Universitatea Naţională de Arte, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 158–163; eadem, *Gothic Mural Painting in Transylvania*, Bucharest, 2007, p. 116–119.

[12] Zsombor Jékely – Lóránd Kiss (ed. Tibor Kollár), *Középkori falképek Erdélyben. Értékmentés a Teleki László Alapítvány támogatásvál*, Budapest 2008, for Ioneşti, the photos from pages 122–125.

[13] Mihály Jánó, *A marosfelfalui alku*, in *Műemlékvédelem. A magyar műemlékvédelem folyóirarta*, LVII, 2/2013, p. 71–105.

[14] Robert Sukale, *Der Maler Johannes Siebenbürger (um 1440–1483) als Vermittler Nürnberger Kunst nach Ostmitteleuropa*, in Evelin Wetter (Hrsg.), *Die Länder der Böhmischen Krone und ihre Nachbarn zur Zeit der Jagiellonenkönige (1471–1526). Kunst-Kultur-Geschichte*, Ostfildern (2004).

Fig. 2. The Last Supper, fragments of the Agony in the Garden and *Ecce homo* beneath.
Râşnov, St. Matthias Church, north wall, inside the choir, 1500.

Michael Wolgemut engraving's (1491) – with a commensal similarly seated on a X legged chair or in Dupuş retable in Transylvania (c. 1490) – having as graphic source *Biblia Pauperum* from Esztergom (1463–1470, plate XIV)[15], but with this detail differently represented. Christ's figure is profiled on the red rug from the parapet behind, the vertical element that focuses the attention on the psychological center of the image in the works influenced by the Netherlandish painting in Nuremberg, as Hans Pleydenwurf's, or in Vienna, in the Last Supper of the Schottenstift altarpiece, where is rendered as a canopy. In other paintings from the last part of the fifteenth century, the composition is centered by a door, as in Dirck Bouts' well-known oeuvre on the topic (1468, Leuven, Sint Peterskerk), by a pillar at Martin Schongauer (1470–1480, Colmar, Musée Unterlinden) or by a window, from *Biblia Pauperum* to Michael Wolgemut's engraving (1491) and Barholomäeus Zeitblom (c. 1500, München, Bayer Staatsgemäldesammlungen). The color of the rug from Râşnov symbolizes Jesus Passion which it prefigures, while Judas sitting on the opposite side to the left of the table, back to the viewer, should have worn the yellow coat, the color of betrayal, as painted by the majority of masters from the last decades of the fifteenth century: Kaspar Isenmann (1465) and Martin Schongauer, his pupil (1470–1480) – in Colmar, Hans Siebenbürger (1469) – in Vienna, Wolgemut in a hand-colored engraving (1491) – in Nuremberg. The Netherlandish full-page miniature introducing the "Seven Penitential Psalms" displays the red canopy and Jesus giving the communion to Judas, seated at the same place, with the money bag on him (Oxford, Bodleyan Library). As Émile Mâle shows, this type of image appeared in the visual arts under the influence of the religious theater, with the exact location of each character set on the schemes attached to the late fifteenth century dramatic texts[16]. On the right side of the table, one of the apostles fills a glass, an anecdotic element in the religious scene that makes a precise reference to the passage of the Gospel on the role of the Savior that he has revealed during the Last Supper: "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table?

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[15] Dana Jenei, *Contributions*, p. 219; eadem, *Renaşterea transilvăneană*, p. 68. *Biblia Pauperum. Az Esztergomi főszékesegyháyi könyvtár negyvenlapos Blockbuch Bibilia Pauperuma*, Budapest (1966).

[16] *Le Mystère de la Passion du Jesus Christ*, by Jean Michel, in Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge en France. Étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration*, Paris 1949, p. 58–60.

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But I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22, 27). The introduction in the image of this detail, with the source in the medieval mysteries too, was interpreted as an example of active theology in the spirit of *Devotio moderna*, a direct invitation addressed to the faithful to serve his God and neighbor[17]. In formal terms, the detail seems to be a *ricordo* from Schottenstift (1469, Figs. 3–4). In Kaspar Isenmann's work (1465), two servants frame the table – one with a plate, and one with a tankard in a similar posture and place, such a figure also appearing in a Wolgemut's engraving of the Mamvri Supper (1491). In the Transylvanian altarpiece from Dupuș (c. 1490), the gesture of an apostle getting out breads from a wooden tube might have an analogue interpretation, while its shape recalls the lidded punnet from Master of the Housebook's already mentioned painting in Berlin (c. 1475–1480), with Judas sitting right in front of Jesus, in the middle of the opposite side of the table.

Fig. 3. The Last Supper, detail, apostle serving. Râșnov, St. Matthias Church.

Fig. 4. The Last Supper, detail, servant. Hans Siebenbürger and workshop, Schottenstift altarpiece, 1469, Vienna, Schottenstift Kloster Museum, in Arthur Saliger, *Der Wiener Schottenmeister*, München – Berlin – London – New York, 2005, Fig. XV.

In Schottenstift (1469), the two hosts who greeted Jesus, named in the contemporary dramatic texts Urion and Piragmon by Raoul Gréban, Zacchaeus and Tubal by Jean Michel[18], are also present, this detail being probably adapted after Dirk Bouts' Last Supper (1468), where the master's self-portrait is presumed to be painted, and we might ask ourselves if the third standing figure of the Viennese work doesn't represent the same thing.

The Agony in the Garden is still mostly whitewashed, as well as *Ecce Homo*, the episode that horizontally follows. The few visible elements allow the classification of the two images among the most common schemes of Central European art from the last decades of the fifteenth century, widely spread

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[17] Jean-Pierre Suau, *La Cène de l'église Saint-Laurent de Mont-d'Astrac (Gers)*, in *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Gers*, 3/1995, p. 293–309.

[18] Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux*, p. 60.

through the German engraving. In the first scene, Jesus is praying in front of the "mountain", hand crossed on his chest, as in Pleydenwurf's Hofer altarpiece (1465, München, Alte Pinakothek), Michael Wolgemuth's Zwikauer retable (1479, Marienkirche)[19] and Master L. Cz., in mirror (c. 1475, Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum)[20], with the fence of the garden in the background and the sleeping apostles around, from which only the one behind Him is visible. The Angel of the Lord seems to be represented above, but it is not clear if he offers the "bitter chalice", as in the late works inspired by Schongauer's engraving, sometimes completed or replaced with the Cross[21]. In many cases, the angel is absent[22], or even the chalice lakes, as in the Stötteritzer Retable (c. 1473, Leipzig, Pfarrkirche) and Rueland Fruehauf the Elder's Passion (1491, Wien, Kunsthistorischen Museum). In the murals from Ioneşti (1522), the angel with *Instrumenta passionis* – Cross, column, spear, hyssop and sponge with vinegar is painted in a cloud above the scene, from which is separated by a line, and can be read as an independent devotional motive.

In the next image from Râşnov, *Ecce Homo*, Jesus is presented by Pilate to the crowd, in front of the semicircular door of the *Praetorium*, as in the works inspired by Meckenem's engraving (B 16), also used as source for the Mediaş retable[23], with other arcades closing the upper part of the composition. Christ is surrounded by three figures that should be Pilate, a soldier and a man in the crowd seen in profile, making the mocking gesture of the "fig", right in his face. This detail usually appears in the scene of Crowning of Thorns, from Schongauer's L 25 in the panel painting, as Wolfgang Katzheimer's Schlüssellfelder retabel (c. 1480), Forchheimer alterpiece, work of one of his followers (c. 1490, both in Würzburg, Mainfränkisches Museum)[24], or in Hans Holbein's watercolors (c. 1500).

The two episodes from the bottom of the bay, representing the moments of the Passion between *Ecce Homo* and the Bearing of Cross are almost entirely under the lime. The small fragments of painting, visible in the areas where the whitewash has randomly fallen, show first of all that the both scenes take place inside the *Praetorium*, as the pavement slabs drew into perspective are painted in the lower edge. The preserved elements permit to identify the rare Scourging scene with the Savior lying down next to the column, the rope tied around his neck being pulled by a soldier well propped feet in the ground, while another one bows to hit him, as shown in the cycle of "The Seven Falls of Jesus" from the South-German etching (c. 1480), entitled *Der IIII val vo der Her gaysselt war*[25]. This pattern is also present in Michael Wolgemut's sketch book[26] and, in the Transylvanian murals, in the lunette of the lateral access of the citadel church in Târgu Mureş[27], where the down-fallen Savior, scourged by two soldiers, is tied to the column by a chain, the three Crosses are visible through an opened semicircular door in the far and the coats of arms of the kingdom and painters are rendered in the lower corners (Figs. 5, 6, 7). The traditional Scourging scene, with Jesus standing near the column, is present in the Transylvanian panel painting, for instance, at Mediaş and Dupuş, with Malchus binding the bunch of rods[28].

[19] *Der Zwikauer Wolgemut-Altar. Beiträge zu Geschichte, Ikonographie, Autorschaft und Restaurierung*. Arbeitsheft 11. Landesamt für Denkmalpfelge Sachsen, Görlitz, 2008, Fig. 18.

[20] Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 1., Fig. 450.

[21] Master of the Playing Cards, Wolfgang Katzheimer's Hersbruck Retable (c. 1485, Marienkirche), Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung der Malerei vor Dürer*, Petersberg, 2009, 2., Fig. 552; Master of Angst altarpiece (c. 1490, Nuremberg, Germanisches National Museum), Peter Strieder, *Tafelmalerei in Nürnberg, 1350–1550*, Köningstein bei Taunus, 1993, Fig. 117.

[22] Meckenem (L 89I) – chalice with host, Wolgemut (H 52) – chalice with Cross, only chalice – Lorenz Katzheimer (c. 1475, Darmstadt, Hessische Landesmuseum), Holbein the Elder's Graue Passion (1496–1500, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie) and Frankfurter Passion (1500–1501, Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum), after another variant of Master A. G.'s engraving (L 106.8.II), Wolfgang Katzheimer, Schlüsserfelder retable – angel with no attributes (c. 1480, Würzburg, Mainfränkisches Museum). The different variants are frequently used by the same author, at Holbein the angel keeping the chalice appearing in Kaisheimer altarpiece (1502, München, Alte Pinakothek). Elsbeth Wiemann (Hrsg.), *Hans Holbein D. Ä. Die Graue Passion in ihrer Zeit*, Stuttgart, 2010.

[23] Dietmar Priebisch, *Der „Mediascher Meister", ein Epigone? Über die Vorlagermuster des Passionaltars vom Mediasch*, in *Südostdeutschland Vierteljahresblätter* 18 (1979).

[24] Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 1., Fig. 540 and 2., Fig. 581.

[25] James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative*. Kortrijk, 1979, Plate VIII.

[26] Richard Bellm, *Wolgemuts Skizzenbuch in Berliner Kupferstichkabinett. Ein Betrag zur Erforschung des Graphischen Werkes von Michael Wolgemut und Wilhelm Pleydenwurff*, Baden-Baden – Strasbourg, 1959, Plate XVII, Fig. 52v. Jesus' position may recall the Nailing on the Cross, scene that is set outside, not in the *Praetorium* like in Râşnov, and chronologically follows the Bearing of the Cross.

[27] Jolán Balogh, *Az erdélyi Renaissance*, 1460–1541, I, Koloszvár, 1943, il. 186.

[28] About Malchus' identity, Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux*, p. 64.

Fig. 5. The Scourging of Jesus. Târgu Mureș, the Citadel Church, lunette of the lateral access.

Fig. 6. The Scourging of Jesus. "Cycle of the Seven Falls of Jesus", South German etching (c. 1480), in James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative*. Kortrijk, 1979, Plate VIII.

Fig. 7. The Scourging of Jesus. Michael Wolgemut's sketch book, in Richard Bellm, *Wolgemuts Skizzenbuch in Berliner Kupferstichkabinett. Ein Betrag zur Erforschung des Graphischen Werkes von Michael Wolgemut und Wilhelm Peydenwurff*, Baden-Baden – Strasbourg, 1959, Plate XVII, Fig. 52v.

The pavement similarly drawn in the next image indicates an indoors episode too, probably the Crowning with Thorns, in which Jesus wearing the purple mantle of a carnival king is seated, half profile and crossed hands, with a soldier in front of him, whose legs are partially visible. This composition with Jesus positioned laterally and not in the center of the image, as in the most contemporary representations, appears in the second plan of Derick Baegart's Judgment of Pilate (c. 1490, Nuremberg, Germanisches National Museum) and in the Kalbersteinberg retable, the work of a painter from Wolfgang Katzheimer's circle (c. 1490, Reterkirche, in mirror)[29], in both the Savior sitting on a throne, and not directly on the ground.

The scenes of the eastern bay of the choir can be fully analyzed, as the whitewashed areas are more restricted. The Bearing of the Cross (Fig. 8) belongs to the late medieval iconography, being reduced to the principal characters, as in the late works of Hans Holbein the Elder, Hans Maler or Hans Leu, all painted shortly after 1500. Jesus, completely down-fallen under the weight of the Cross, leaning with a hand against the ground, and the three myrmidons surrounding him, have Schongauer's engraving as a remote prototype (B 21), filtered by paintings as Tucher-Tafel from Lorenz Katzheimer's artistic circle, dated 1485, different in style (Nuremberg, St. Sebald) (Figs. 12–13) and various graphic sources (Figs. 9–11). Christ looks back to Simon of Cyrene who helps him carry the Cross, as in an earlier work attributed to Michael Wolgemut and in Derick Baegart's painting from Westfälisches Landesmuseum (c. 1490)[30], Mediaş (c. 1485), Sântimbru (c. 1500) and, later, at Hans Maler (1500–1515)[31]. The aggressive grotesque short haired myrmidon behind him is the "evil Jew", as Stephaton "the last tormentor of Christ" was named[32], and his figure probably taken from Wolgemut, looks like the character painted in profile in front of Jesus in Mediaş (Figs. 14, 15, 16), while in Sântimbru-Ciuc he grabs Jesus from the neck opening of the robe, a gesture preserved from Schongauer's engraving in Tucher Tafel (1485), Baegart's painting (c. 1490) or Wolgemut's Zwikauer (1479) and Perigsdörfer altarpieces (1508). In Râşnov, Stephaton pulls the rope tied around Jesus neck (a chain in Sântimbru) and raises the hand to hit him with a stick, a widespread detail coming from Meckenem etching (B 17, c. 1475–1485, British Museum) (Fig. 17), being mounted on the Cross in order to enhance Christ's burden, like in the already mentioned engravings of "The Seven Falls of Jesus", wherefrom other elements seems to be taken in order to enhance the drama, as the second soldier is yodeling a fistula – diabolical musical instrument that contributes to the atmosphere of "infernal masquerade"[33]. The third myrmidon in front of Jesus (wearing a headdress similar to Wolgemut's Perigsdörfer altarpiece, 1508), pulls Christ's hair with both hands, not with one, as in Meckenem's engraving, which is more faithfully copied by the Master MSP of the Mediaş Retable[34]. Mary and John the Evangelist following the convoy, as in each episode of "The Seven falls" engravings that also picture the Virgin's sorrows (whose complete title is *Dy sieben vell Christi und dy sieben hertzenlaydt Marie*), are present in the majority of the late works from around 1500 already mentioned at Bagaert, Holbein the Elder, Hans Maler, Hans Leu or in Sântimbru-Ciuc. According to the religious sensibility of the Late Middle Ages, this episode has the strongest emotional impact and is a direct reference to the devotion of the Way of the Cross, founded and propagated by the Franciscans who had the Holy Land in their keeping. Climbing a symbolic Calvary and commemorating the

[29] Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 2., il. 597. In the late Western iconography, Christ is represented in a similar position when awaiting the Crucifixion, episode also called "Jesus on the cold stone", where the naked Savior wears only the *perizonium*, not the purple mantle as in Râşnov and the scene is placed outside, on the Calvary, like in Mediaş retable or in Sântimbru-Alba mural, and also follows the moment of the Bearing of the Cross.

[30] Derick Baegert (c. 1440 – after 1515) lived in Wesel (Nordrhein-Westfalen), less than 20 km of Bocholt, Israhel Meckenem's hometown.

[31] The soldier in front of Jesus hits him with the leg, as earlier in Mediaş, where the original position of Mekenem engraving (B 17) was altered, as Miháy Ferenc observed: *Adatok az erdélyi középkori oltárművészeti kutatásához. Készítéstechnikai, restaurálás történeti megfigyelések*, in *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 56 (2007).

[32] William Chester Jordan, *The Erosion of the Stereotype of the Last Tormentor of Christ*, in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, vol. 81, 1/2 (1990), p. 13–44. We may also identify the typology of this violent ugly mocking figure, most often dressed in yellow, in the Bearing of the Cross (Hans Siebenbürger – Schottentstift, 1469, Wolgemut – Zwikau, 1479, Wolfgang Katzheimer, c. 1480, Rueland Fruehauf, 1491), or in other "the precrucifixion scenes", as the Crowning with Thorns (Wolfgang Katzheimer, Forcheimer Master, Rueland Fruehauf). In Crucifixions he keeps the vinegar sponge on hyssop and the vessel (Hans Siebenbürger and workshop – St Florian Crucifixion Triptych, c. 1475 and Wolgemut – Zwikau, 1479), his ugliness reaching a peak in the Zisterzienserinnenkloster Meyendorf (1477), a follower of Wolfgang Katzheimer. Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 2., il 732. An example of an earlier "precrucifixion scene" with the bald yellow dressed "evil Jew", in Master of the Karlsruher Passion's Nailing on the Cross.

[33] Jean-Claude Schmitt's comment on *Psalterium Triplex* (Cambridge), in *Raţiunea gesturilor*, Bucureşti, 1998, p. 204 şi 328.

[34] Dana Jenei, *Contribution*, p 218; eadem *Renaşterea*, p. 67.

Fig. 8. The Bearing of the Cross. Râşnov,
St. Matthias Church, 1500.

Fig. 9-10. The Bearing of the Cross. "The Seven Falls
of Jesus", South German engraving, details, in James
H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, Plate VIII.

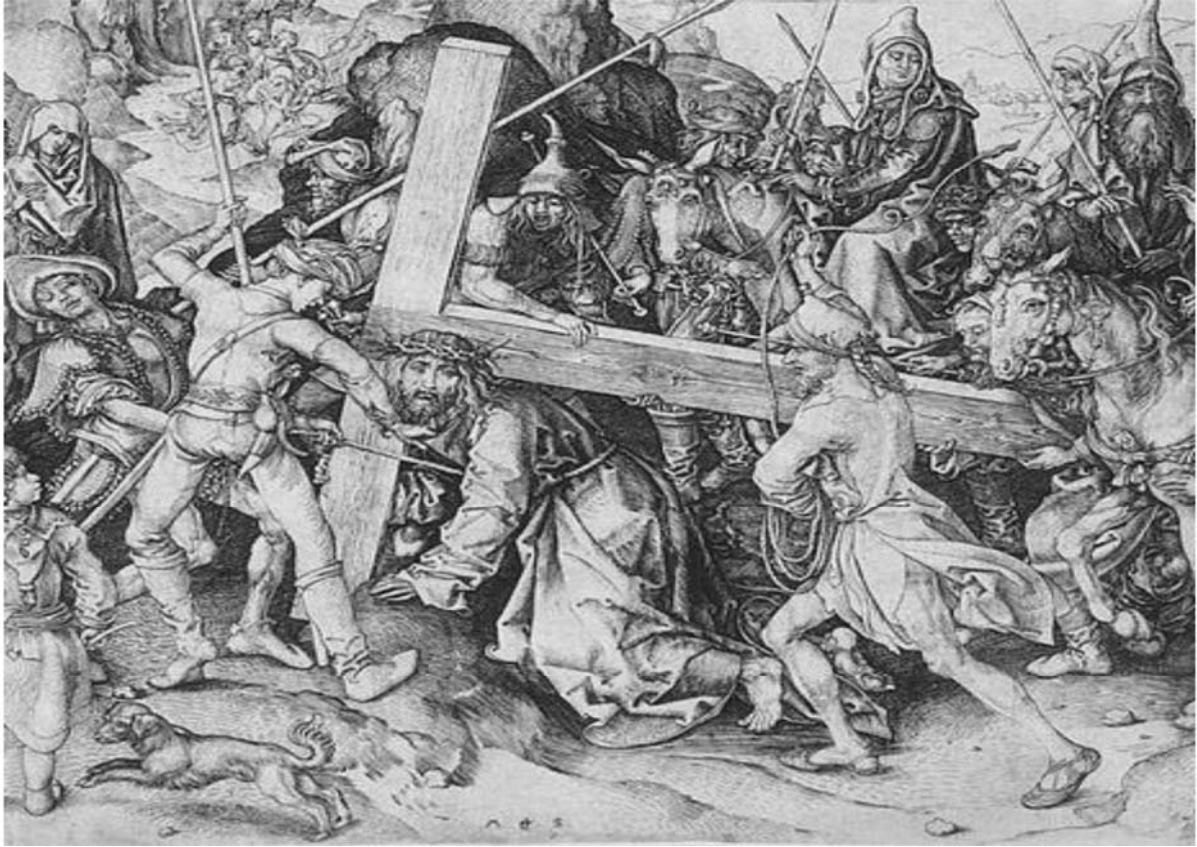Fig. 11. The Bearing of the Cross. Israhel van Meckenem, © Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 12. The Bearing of the Cross, detail. Martin Schongauer (B 21), detail. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 13. The Bearing of the Cross, detail. Tucher-Tafel, 1485, Lorenz Katzheimer's circle, Nuremberg, St. Sebald, in Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung der Malerei vor Dürer*, Petersberg, 2009, 1., p. 116.

Fig. 14. Stephaton, "the Evil Jew", detail, Zwikauer Crucifixion. Michael Wolgemut, 1479, Zwikau, Marienkirche.

Fig. 15. "The Evil Jew", detail, The Bearing of the Cross, Mediaș Retable. Master MSP, c. 1485, Mediaș, Church St. Margaret.

Fig. 16. "The Evil Jew", detail, The Bearing of the Cross. Râşnov, St. Matthias Church, 1500.

Fig. 17. The Bearing of the Cross. Israhel van Meckenem, (B 17), c. 1475–1485. © Trustees of the British Museum.

fourteen stations of the Passion of Christ through prayers and meditation in front of the images that evoke each episode[35], the Catholics still remember *Via Dolorosa* mainly on Good Friday.

The Crucifixion is painted in the eastern lunette from Râșnov, with Mary, John and the Holy Women to the heraldic right of the Cross, while the soldiers are painted on the other side (Fig. 18), in the tradition of the Nuremberg workshop, from Pleydenwurf's early works to the last oeuvre of Wolgemut, the Perigsdörfer altarpiece (1508, Johanniskirche). The upper part of the image is in a very bad state of conservation, but the "good Centurion" wearing armor, pointing with his right hand "the true Son of God" and keeping the other one on the sword guard is visible, near the "skeptical Centurion", as in Hans Pleydenwurff's Löwensteinicher Crucifixion (c. 1456, Nuremberg, Germanisches National Museum)[36], or in his less known drawing from Budapest (Szépművészeti Múzeum), published by Robert Sukale in 2009[37], from which certain parts may also be identified in the Hofer retable (1465, München, Alte Pinakothek) and to all his followers: Hans Siebenbürger and workshop – Schottenstift Retable (1469), Michael Wolgemut – Zwikauer Retable (1479), Forchheimer Master (c. 1490) from Wolfgang Katzheimer's circle, the author of one of its closer copy[38]. The character that closes this part of the Râșnov Crucifixion, same as in Mediaș Retable, also seems to come from the drawing[39]. The main difference in Râșnov is that Magdalene was not painted in the center of the

Fig. 18. The Crucifixion, fragments of the Bearing of the Cross and Deposition beneath.
Râșnov, St. Matthias Church, north wall, inside the choir, 1500.

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[35] 1. Jesus to Pilates/Jesus put to death. 2. Jesus takes the Cross on his shoulders. 3. Jesus falls under the weight of the Cross. 4. Jesus meets his mother. 5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus bearing the Cross. 6. Veronica wipes Jesus' face with her napkin. 7. Jesus falls the second time under the weight of the Cross. 8. Jesus comforts the women from Jerusalem. 9. Jesus falls under the weight of the Cross for the third time. 10. Jesus is stripped of his cloth. 11. Jesus is nailed on the Cross. 12. The Crucifixion/Jesus dies on the Cross. 13. The Descending from the Cross/ Jesus is taken down from the Cross and laid in his mother's arms. 14. Jesus' body is laid in the tomb.

[36] Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 1., Fig. 30–32.

[37] Ibidem, Fig. 172. The *Biblia Pauperum* plate XXII (1463–1470) also seems to be connected with the drawing. This eloquent gesture of the "good Centurion" also appears in the image from the north wall of the church in Maiad, where he is dressed in a long ochre brocade robe, as in the Landauer Crucifixion (1468), with similar attitude and vestment as in the Master of the Life of the Virgin from Aachen's work on the same topic.

[38] Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 2., Fig. 580.

[39] The soldier is similar to the one closing the scene of Judas kiss in Mediaș, a figure that doesn't follow Meckenem's engraving, and represents another link between the Transylvanian painting and the Forcheimer Master. Dana Jenei, *Contributions*, p. 218–219; eadem, *Renașterea transilvăneană*, p. 66.

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scene, but staying with her back to the Cross, turned to Mary who is also supported by John, as in the Hofer retable, Pleydenwurf himself using both variants (Figs. 19–26)[40]. *Theotokos*, wringed hands in her lap, same as in Mediaș, comes from Schongauer's engraving (L 27/g) and Memling's 1491 Crucifixion in Lübeck (including John and Magdalene who wears a similar pale yellow gown in Râșnov), and appears identically in the sequent scene of Deposition (Fig. 27). In this spectacular image, Mary is sustained by Martha, who also keeps the right hand of Jesus while Magdalene's kneeling figure closes the composition in the opposite side. The Cross divides symmetrically the image in two compositional fields, with Dead Jesus in the center supported with a strip of cloth by Joseph of Arimathea mounted on a ladder, while Nicodemus raises hands to catch him from the opposite side. The general disposition of the characters recalls the works from the end of the century painted under the influence of Rogier's Deposition in Prado (1435), copied and spread by the Master of Banderoles' engraving (c. 1465, San Francisco, Fine Arts Museum), combined with elements coming from Dirk Bouts by the Master of Lyversberger Passion (c. 1464, Köln, Walraf-Richardz Museum), Derick Baegart (c. 1485, Stralsund Kulturhistorisches Museum) and, most of all, by the Master of St. Bartholomew (c. 1495), in whose painting Martha kissing Jesus' hand and kneeling Magdalene flank the scene. In Râșnov, the upper part of the scheme has the roots in the Italian art, appearing in the north of the Alps, first to the Limburg Brothers and later, in a simplified scheme with less characters, in a drawing of Jörg Schweiger, Schongauer's brother (settled in 1482 to Strasbourg)[41], and in the panel painting, at the Master of Bonner Diptychon (c. 1480)[42], in the Life of Christ in Kalbensteinberg from Wolfgang Katzheimer's milieu (c. 1490, Reiterkirche, all in mirror)[43] or in Holbein the Elder Keisheimer's Retable, with Jesus' hallo similarly painted as four beams of radiating linear rays (1502, München, Alte Pinakothek) (Figs. 28–31). Magdalene, wringed hands and weeping in pain, is one of the figures of a high sensitivity and drama that systematically appears in the Passion episodes in the painting of Rogier van der Weyden descendance. She is fashionably dressed, wearing a padded roll on her head, loose hair, as in certain Pleydenwurff's and Wolgemut's Crucifixions, and a pale yellow gown with tight long black sleeves and the white underwear puffed out through the slashes at the elbow. A bold compositional element also issued from Rogier's Deposition is the oblique figure collapsed at the foot of the Cross – John in Râșnov –, a line of force opposed to the compositional diagonal of the adjacent scene of the Bearing of the Cross.

The Entombment, with year 1500 painted above (Fig. 32), has the sarcophagus with the body of the Savior also obliquely disposed, Joseph of Arimathea at his head, like in the majority of the works of the time, as *Biblia Pauperum* (plate XXIII, copied in mirror by Israhel Van Meckenem), the drawing of the Augsburger Master of 1477 entitled *Als vnser Herr begraben ward*, the side wings of the retables painted by the Master of the Life of the Virgin for Nicolaus Cusanus (c. 1464, Bernkastel-Kues, St. Nikolaus-Hospital) and Jan Joest (1450/1460–1519), Baegart's disciple, or the Jánosrét Passion altarpiece (1480–1490, Budapest, Szépmuvészeti Múzeum). Joseph of Arimathea should be at Jesus' feet, zone still whitewashed in Râșnov. Mary is embracing her son and Magdalene graciously sustains his arm with both hands, as in Wolgemut's Skizzenbuch *Pietà* (Fig. 33)[44] and Veit Stoss' central image of Perigdörfer retable, with wings painted by the same Wolgemut[45], probably inspired from Schongauer's Entombment (L 28). The general arrangement of the figures around Jesus also derives from Rogier's *Pietàs*, as in Schottenstift (1469) or Mediaș mural (c. 1500, Fig. 34). A small fragment of John's green-red vestment is visible near Magdalene from under the lime that covers the rest of the scene.

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[40] Magdalene kneeling and embracing the Cross, same as in the drawing, appears in Pleydenwurff's Löwensteieriche Crucifixion (1456 Nuremberg, Germanisches National Museum), Volkreicher Crucifixion (Bamberg, c. 1470, München, Alte Pinakothek, c. 1470), or at his disciple, Michael Wolgemut in Zwikauer Crucifixion (1479).

[41] Albert Châtelet (ed.) *Le beau Martin*: *études et mises au point*. Actes du colloque organisé par le Musée d'Unterlinden à Colmar les 30 septembre, 1er et 2 octobre 1991, Colmar, 1994, Fig. 4

[42] Hans Martin Schmidt, *Der Meister des Marienlebens und sein Kreis*. Studien zur spätgotischen Malerei in Köln, Düsseldorf, 1978, Fig. 128.

[43] Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 2., il. 597.

[44] Richard Bellm, *Wolgemuts Skizzenbuch*, Plate XXII, 65v.

[45] The South German Entombments of the late fifteenth century followed the Schongauer's model with the sarcophagus horizontally depicted, as Linhart Koenbergk from Wolfgang Katzheimer's circle (1492, Erfurt, Dominikanerkirche). Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 2, p. 347–349.
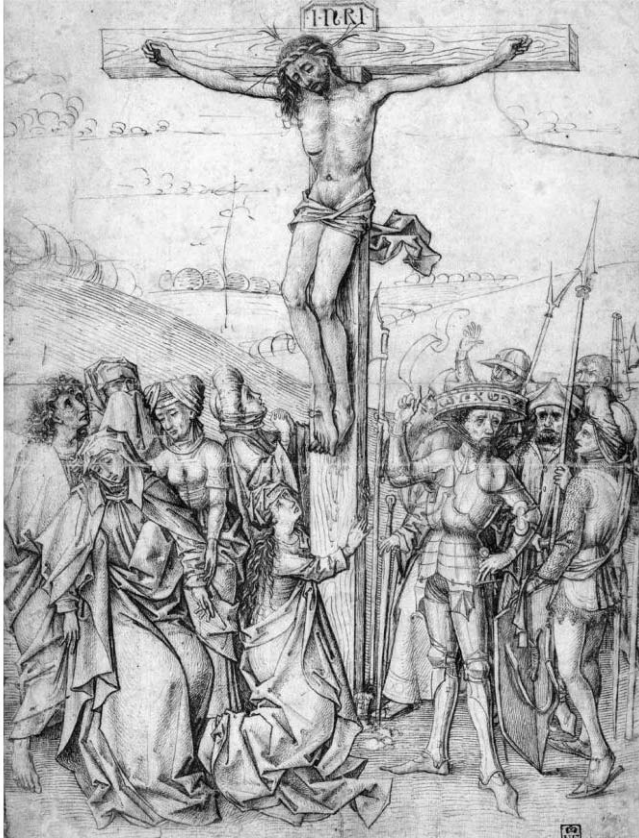
Fig. 19. The Crucifixion. Hans Pleydenwurff, drawing, c. 1460, Budapest Szépművészeti Múzeum, in Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung der Malerei vor Dürer*, Petersberg, 2009, 1., Fig. 172.

Fig. 20. The Crucifixion. *Biblia Pauperum* from Esztergom, Plate XXII, c. 1463–1470, *Biblia Pauperum. Az Esztergomi főszékesegyházi könyvtár negyvenlapos Blockbuch Bibilia Pauperuma*, Budapest (1966).

Fig. 21. Löwensteineriche Crucifixion. Hans Pleydenwurff and workshop, c. 1456, Nuremberg, GNM, in Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 1., Fig. 30.

Fig. 22. Hofer Crucifixion. Hans Pleydenwurff, 1465, München, Alte Pinakothek.
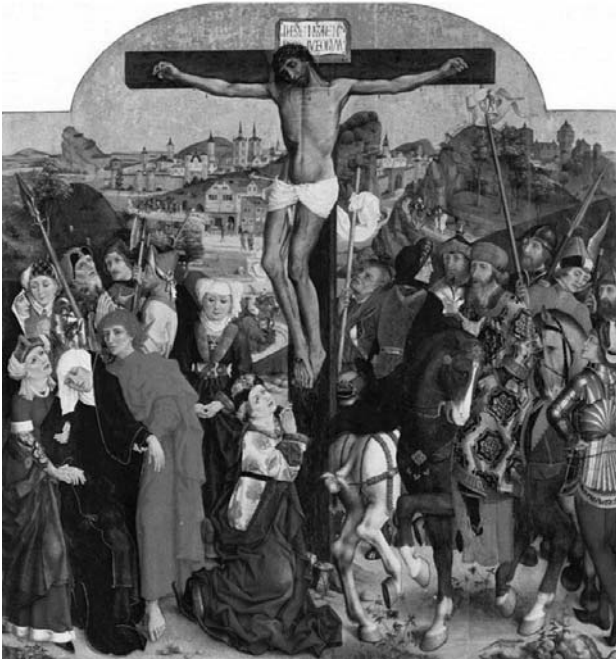
Fig. 23. Volkreicher Crucifixion, Hans Pleydenwurff, Bamberg, c. 1470, München, Alte Pinakothek.

Fig. 24. Schottenstift Crucifixion. Hans Siebenbürger and workshop, 1469, Vienna, Schottenstift Kloster Museum, 1469, in Arthur Saliger, *Der Wiener Schottenmeister*, Fig. XX.

Fig. 25. Zwikauer Crucifixion. Michael Wolgemut, 1479, Zwikau, Marienkirche, in *Der Zwikauer Wolgemut-Altar. Beiträge zu Geschichte, Ikonographie, Autorschaft und Restaurierung. Arbeitsheft 11. Landesamt für Denkmalpfelge Sachsen, Görlitz, 2008, Fig. 18.*
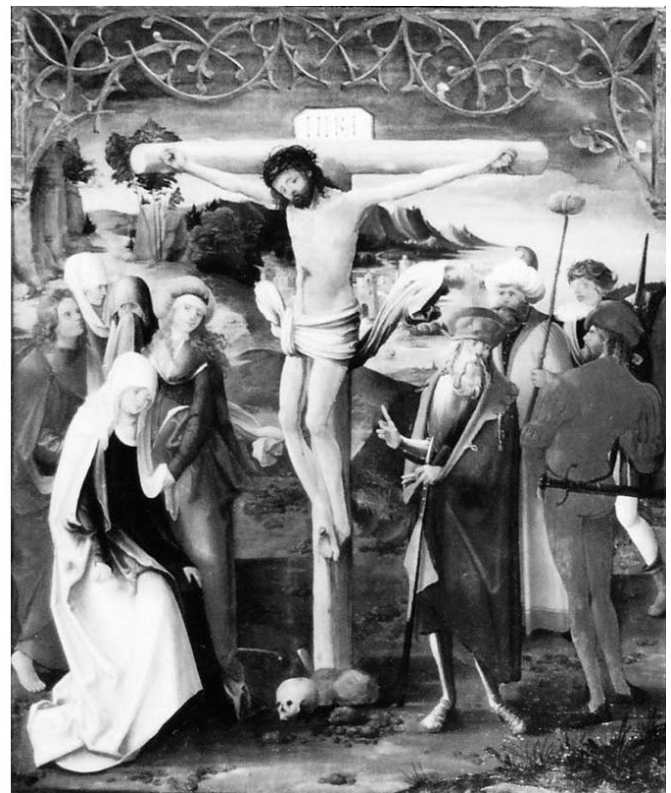

Fig. 26. Schwabacher Crucifixion. Michael Wolgemut, 1508, Nuremberg, St. Johanniskirche.

Fig. 27. The Deposition. Râșnov, St. Matthias Church. North wall of the sanctuary.

Fig. 28. The Deposition. Jörg Schweiger, drawing, Basel, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Kupferstichkabinett, in Albert Châtelet [Ed.] *Le beau Martin*: *études et mises au point*. Actes du colloque organisé par le Musée d'Unterlinden à Colmar les 30 septembre, 1 et 2 octobre 1991, Colmar, 1994, Fig. 4.

Fig. 29. The Deposition. Master of Bonner Diptychon (c. 1480), in Hans Martin Schmidt, *Der Meister des Marienlebens und sein Kreis. Studien zur spätgotischen Malerei in Köln*, Düsseldorf, 1978, il. 128.

Fig. 30. Deposition. Kalbensteinberg Life of Christ, c. 1490, Reiterkirche, in Robert Sukale, *Die Erneuerung*, 2, il. 597.

Fig. 31. The Deposition, Hans Holbein the Elder, 1502, München, Alte Pinakothek, in Elsbeth Wiemann (Hrsg.), *Hans Holbein D. Ä. Die Graue Passion in ihrer Zeit*, Stuttgart, 2010.

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Fig. 32. The Entombment, with the year 1500. Râșnov, St. Matthias Church.

Fig. 33. *Pietà*. Wolgemut's Skizzenbuch, in Richard Bellm, *Wolgemuts Skizzenbuch*, Plate XXII, 65v.

Fig. 34. *Pietà*. Mediaș, Church St. Margaret, north wall of the church, c. 1500.

Christ Resurrected (Fig. 35), unlike the figures drawn by a skilled and sure hand in the other pictures, walks awkwardly over the edge of the opened sarcophagus obliquely disposed, similarly to *Biblia Pauperum* from Eztergom (plate XXIV), the source for Jesus' figure in the scene of Transylvanian retable from Dupuș. The same confrontation of the compositional diagonal with the adjacent episode has to be noticed too. To the left of the Savior, on the opposite edge of the empty tomb, stands the angel who had removed the stone (in the Netherlandish tradition via Nuremberg), near a sleeping soldier wearing a similar round helmet with neck guard, as in the painting of a follower of the Stöteritzer Master in Marlishausen (c. 1480)[46]. The right lower corner is all whitewashed.

The Passion Cycle in Râșnov belongs, as iconography and compositions, to the South German tradition of Hans Pleydenwurff and his main disciples – Michael Wolgemut in Nuremberg, Wolfgang Katzheimer in Bamberg and Hans Siebenbürger in Vienna, to which are added free interpreted motifs of the Netherlandish painting, and a lesser use of Schongauer's and Meckenem's engravings than the ten-fifteen years earlier Transylvanian panel painting. The widespread workshop practice of reusing figures with changed identities and details taken from different sources studied during the apprentice travel was also used. The Master of Râșnov has his own compositions among which, at least, the Bearing of the Cross and

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[46] *Ibidem*, 1., Fig. 414.

Deposition are original contributions to the Late Gothic European painting. As style, his monumental vision, the strength and safety of the figures exceed the spirit of the Late Gothic art from which it asserts. Same as the ensemble of the Chapel in Mediaș, the Râșnov Passion illustrates a last moment of the medieval painting in which the language of the Late Gothic, relaunched by Rogier van der Weyden throughout Europe, meets the Renaissance. The patterns, reduced to the most important figures as the late fifteenth-early sixteenth works, are elaborated and scholarly arranged, exploiting the dialogue of diagonals. The characters are drawn anatomically correct and the volumetry is being highlighted by a well-mastered color modeling that recalls a kind of manner similar to Justus van Gent's, of North European painting enriched by the Italian features, blended in the "style of passage" from the Late Gothic to the Renaissance. The chromatic is dominated by the complementary pair of red cinnabar and green (both chrome and emerald frequently used in the murals of the age), light yellow and violet, blue and golden ochre. A necessary restoration would relieve, for sure, further details difficult to be observed by now, the contribution of the different painters of the team and will recover the high level paintings from an aesthetic point of view.

Fig. 35. Christ Resurrected. Râșnov, St. Matthias Church, north wall of the choir, 1500.

In the inferior part of the northern wall of the choir, the tabernacle for housing the Holy Sacrament existed until 1753, when it has been replaced by a Baroque *ex-voto*[47]. Jacques Foucart-Borville[48] and Jean-Pierre Suau's studies drew the attention to the significance of the Eucharistic niches integrated in the field of the Passion Cycle, as "a way the murals, the Liturgy and Sacrament of the Eucharist are very closely imbricate", the scenes being sanctified by the Jesus' Body concrete presence inside the painted wall[49]. An iconological parallel was stressed by P. Beck for the Rheinish Late Medieval sculpture, where symbolic "Layings into the Tombs" were performed, the Eucharistic Hosts being laid into the heart/cavity of the carved representations of Dead Jesus in the last days of the Holy Week, a practice linked to the Modern Devotion[50]. Within the liturgical space, the tabernacle was integrated into the painting in a similar type of

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[47] It commemorates *Lucae Colbio*, parish priest in Râșnov and dean of the Burzenlander Chapter (1680–1753).

[48] Jacques Foucart-Borville, *Les tabernacles euharistiques dans la France du Moyen Age, in Bulletin monumental*, 1990, p. 349–381, cf. Jean-Pierre Suau, *La Cène*, p. 303.

[49] Jean-Pierre Suau, *La Cène*, p. 303. When the tabernacle was part of the Last Supper, as in Mont-Astrac (Gers), the Eucharistical significance was amplified.

[50] P. Beck, *Le coeur du Christ dans la mystique rhenane. Une page d'histoire d'iconographie*, Selestat, 1978, p. 175, cf. Jean-Pierre Suau, *La Cène*, p. 304.

parallelism between "image and sacred receptacle". A carved stone tabernacle illusionistic painted on the northern wall of the apse, was integrated into the scene of the Descending from the Cross as seen in the copies of the lost murals from Suseni, in Transylvania.

The Râșnov Cycle from 1500 is one of the last known ensembles of the medieval Transylvanian mural painting fully preserved, a valuable ensemble of religious art which reflects, in the meantime, the beliefs and practices of *Devotio Moderna* that brought the art into the center of spirituality.