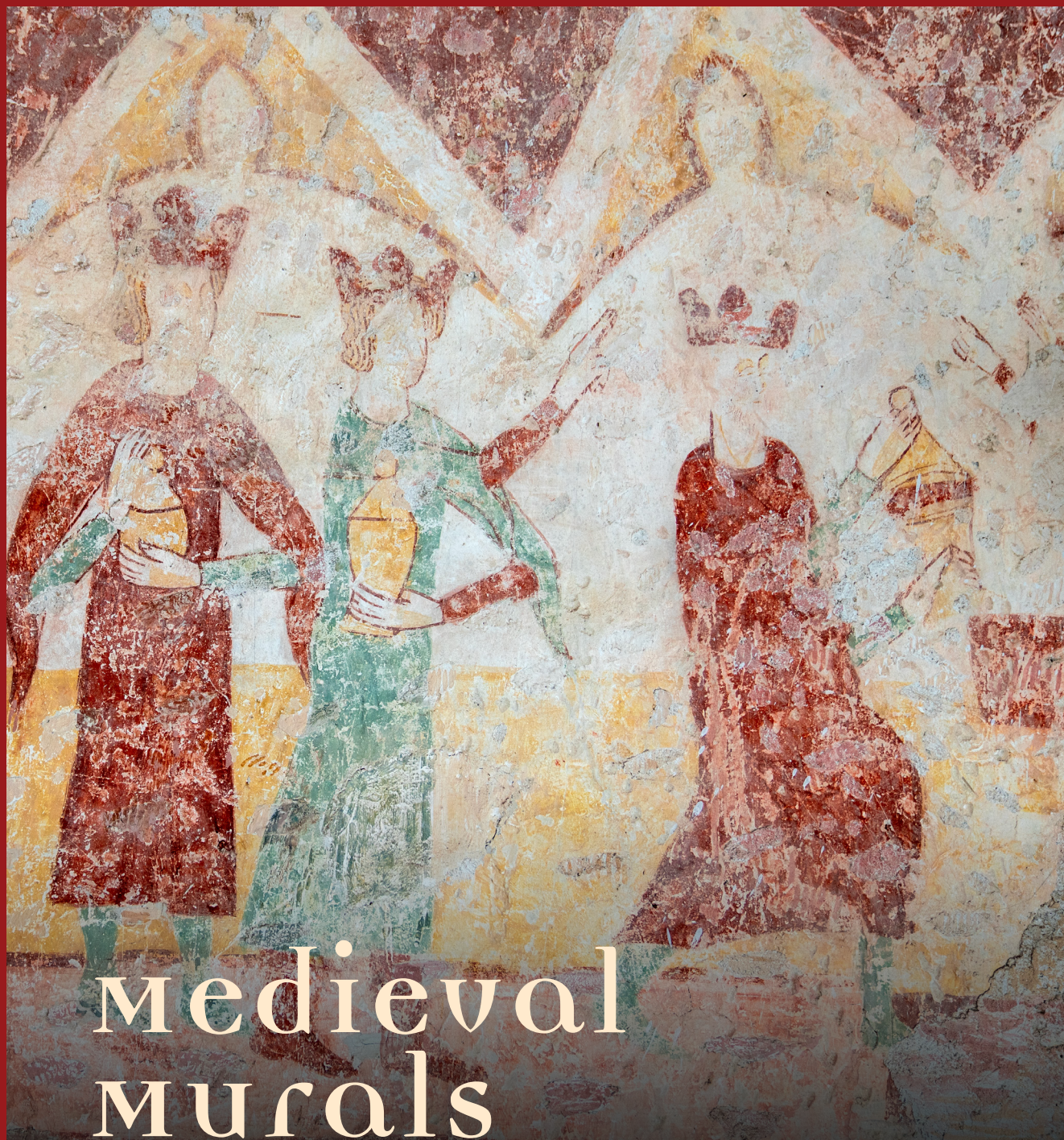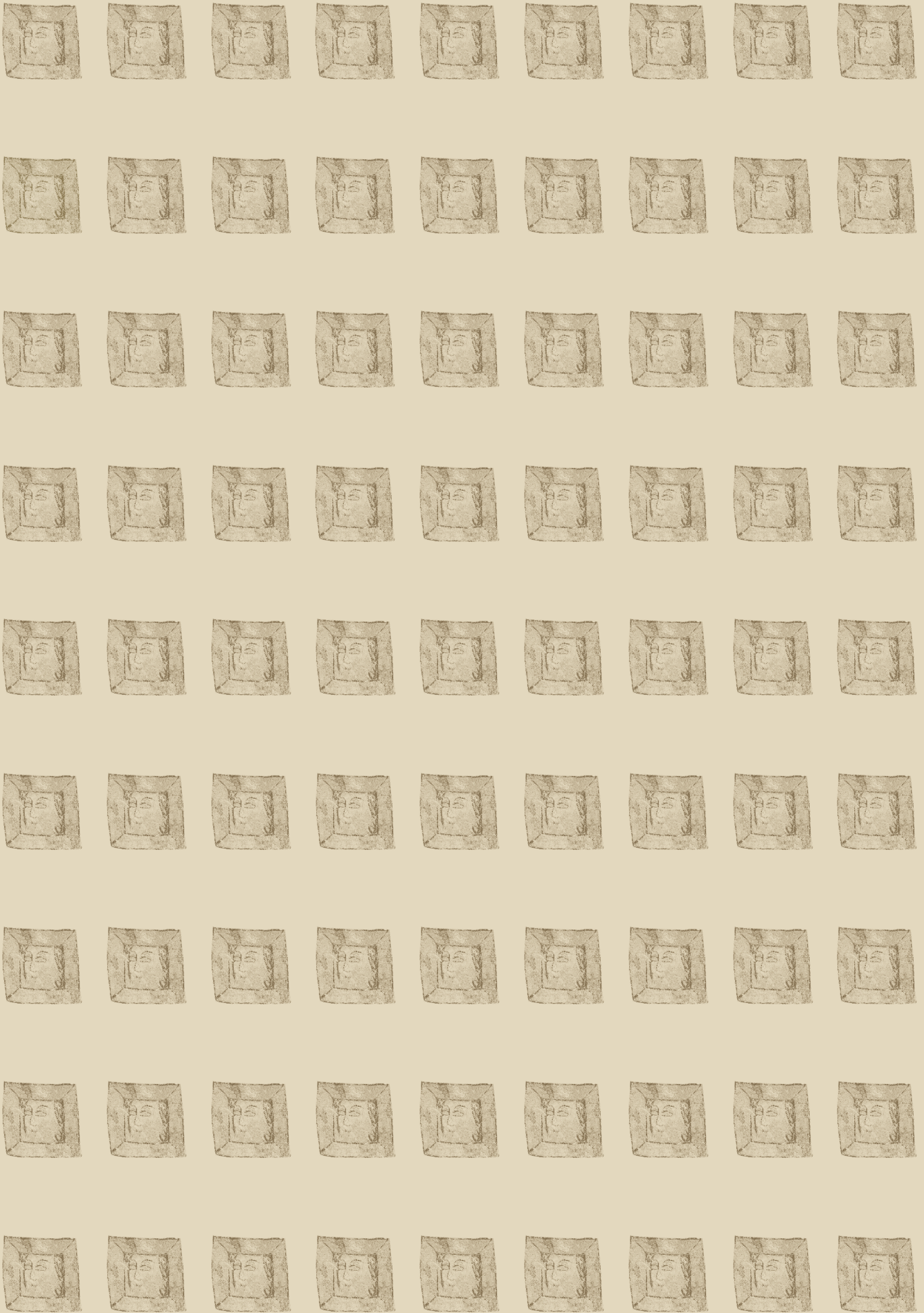Edited by
Mija Oter Gorenčič

medieval murals

new perspectives
and research approaches

Opera Instituti Artis Historiae

Medieval Murals
New Perspectives and Research Approaches

Edited by Mija Oter Gorenčič

Cover photo: Procession of the Magi, detail, church of St Cantianus in Vrzdenec, Slovenia (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)

Medieval Murals

New Perspectives and Research Approaches

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Mija Oter Gorenčič

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MEDIEVAL MURALS

NEW PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH APPROACHES

PREFACE

The monograph at hand is one of the results of the national programme titled *Umetnost na Slovenskem v stičišču kultur* (Art in Slovenia at a Cultural Crossroads, P6-0061) and the research project *Transformacije – iz materialnega v virtualno. Digitalni korpus stenskega slikarstva – nove razsežnosti raziskav srednjeveške umetnosti v Sloveniji* (Transformations – from Material to Virtual. Digital Corpus of Mural Painting – New Dimensions of Medieval Art Research in Slovenia, J6-2587), financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency. Medieval mural paintings represent one of the most precious parts of artistic heritage and a crucial source for studying the culture of the relevant times and places, everyday life, and beliefs. They are also helpful for the reconstruction of religious practices and sometimes even historical events. Even the most fragmented remains of medieval murals make for a crucial methodological tool for reconstructing the buildings' architectural history.

Ever since the beginnings of discovering and researching medieval mural paintings in the territory of today's Slovenia, a close connection between the preserved materials in the neighbouring countries as well as in more distant art centres has been recognised. New discoveries and research advances have only confirmed this, with more and more masters, artistic directions, and workshops being identified and defined. Nevertheless, most of the research has only been published in Slovenian, making it difficult for foreign researchers to understand. Thus, one of the goals of the research project *Transformations – from Material to Virtual. Digital Corpus of Mural Painting – New Dimensions of Medieval Art Research in Slovenia* was to create a bilingual, Slovenian-English digital online database with an overview and presentation of all known mural paintings in Slovenia until circa 1380. In the coming years, we hope to expand this database with a digital corpus of murals until around 1500. Although the creation of digital databases is currently also taking place elsewhere in the broader European area, no representative corpus of medieval murals for an entire country exists for now. In this regard, the project group sees two significant advantages of the Slovenian territory. The first advantage stems from the fact that in geographic terms, Slovenia is a small country, relatively manageable in terms of an overview of the preserved mural paintings. Due to the country's modest size, it is possible to explore its entire territory and re-analyse the already known medieval murals relatively quickly while simultaneously

systematically recording new discoveries and presenting everything in a comprehensive digital corpus. The second advantage is Slovenia's exceptional geographical location. The country lies at the heart of Europe and represents an area where knowledge and cultures have been exchanged at the crossroads of the Germanic, Slavic, and Romance worlds. This has resulted in a unique artistic heritage, further supporting the rationale for creating such a corpus, as it will be of profound significance for the broader European territory. We have given the digital corpus a universal title, *Corpus picturarum muralium medii aevi*. The choice of the Latin language was deliberate, supporting the vision of ultimately creating a global online database of medieval mural paintings. Such a database would not only facilitate comparison and reveal many temporal, iconographic, stylistic, commissioning, and other connections but also provide a better overview of the possibilities for collaborative research into medieval murals in the broader European area. Moreover, digital corpora are also advantageous because they represent crucial research tools for extracting previously overlooked patterns and phenomena and are widely accessible to interested professionals and the general public.

Joint publications are one of the ways of bringing together medieval mural painting researchers. The present monograph includes twelve studies by researchers from the broader European area on the selected medieval mural paintings from the end of the 12th to the middle of the 15th century, and it also focuses on the reception of these murals in the 20th century. The contributions provide several new datings and attributions and reveal many new discoveries in the fields of iconography, stylistic connections, models, mobility of artists and workshops, commissioning backgrounds, and reception. They also raise new questions and describe the modern methodological approaches to studying these precious art materials. Some of the research also extends to the technical analyses of medieval murals and their restoration and conservation.

Five studies focus on selected art monuments and resolve concrete iconographic and stylistic issues. Consequently, they also address the question of the temporal placement of the chosen murals. Sara Salvadori dedicated her work to a series of scenes from the Virgin Mary's childhood, painted in the church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Bas-Poitou, France). Although these are probably the earliest depictions from the apocryphal gospels in today's French territory and simultaneously the earliest iconographic cycle of this kind in Western European painting outside Italy, the murals in question have so far only been examined sporadically in the relevant literature. The author identifies the textual and visual sources, searches for iconographic models, and offers reflections on the dissemination of Marian iconography. Sara Turk Marolt's contribution focuses on the mural paintings in the church of St Maurus in Arcano Superiore (Friuli, Italy). After the 1976 earthquake, three layers of murals were discovered in the church. Based on the depicted donor, stylistic and iconographic features, dress culture, and comparative analysis, the author establishes that the second and third layers of murals were created much earlier than suggested in the earlier literature. Gorazd Bence focuses on the mural paintings in the nave of the old Church of

the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Turnišče, considered one of Slovenia's most notable painted medieval sacral interiors. He analyses the portrayal of a hunt, as this motif's iconography has not yet been completely resolved. Bence's contribution examines whether the depiction truly involves the hunt for the miraculous stag in connection with the legend of the origin of the Hungarians, as suggested by the earlier literature, or whether the preserved scene could be identified as a part of the legend of St Giles. Mija Oter Gorenčič discusses the previously completely overlooked mural in the Romanesque chapel at Turjak Castle (Slovenia). Her contribution provides the first iconographic and stylistic presentation of the preserved painting, featuring several peculiarities while simultaneously revealing a remarkably high quality of execution, which can even be associated with the so-called Viennese Ducal workshop. Meanwhile, Katarina Richter discusses two medieval churches located in Camporosso in Valcanale, Italy – the smaller church of St Dorothy and the larger parish church of St Giles – as, to date, the relevant literature has been quite unclear in this regard. The author resolves some of the open questions, especially regarding the age and function of the church of St Dorothy, drawing on the recent discovery of several layers of medieval mural paintings.

Anna Kónya addresses a unique topic by exploring late Gothic murals that imitate winged altarpieces. She mainly focuses on examples from medieval Transylvania but also includes comparative materials from the broader Central European area, while examining the ways of adapting and transferring three-dimensional objects into the painting medium.

Two studies raise the question of national or regional corpora of medieval mural paintings. Susanne Kaun and Elisabeth Andersen investigate the medieval murals in Norwegian stone churches. 159 of these have been preserved, of which at least 33 feature preserved fragments of medieval paintings. The authors present the frequency of iconographic and decorative motifs and address the issues of style and temporal placement. They also raise the question of the authenticity of the murals after the restoration works, which, in many cases, make the correct interpretation of these paintings difficult. Meanwhile, in her contribution, Patrícia Monteiro explores the reasons for the missing inventory of medieval mural paintings in Portugal and the lack of interest in this sort of artistic heritage and its preservation. She also presents some of the oldest Portuguese medieval murals.

Three articles focus on the technical aspects of mural paintings. The complete understanding of an artwork requires not only its iconographical and stylistic evaluation but also an insight into its material reality. The materials and painting processes employed can be identified using invasive and increasingly also non-invasive analytical techniques, which are being rapidly developed worldwide. The latter are based on various chemical and physical principles. Some of these techniques may be used *in situ*, while others require small samples that are subsequently analysed in a laboratory. The acquired information is vital for restorers, conservators, and art historians, as it enables them to more realistically evaluate the state of the murals and make more informed decisions regarding

their preservation and restoration while simultaneously facilitating the discovery of the stylistic connections between the painters and/or workshops. Anabelle Križnar, Katja Kavkler, and Sabina Dolenec present the results of the technical analyses of medieval mural paintings in Slovenia until the year 1380, carried out to date. They researched the pigments, painting techniques, and painting processes used for everything from preparatory drawings to final modelling. In their contribution, Mateja Neža Sitar, Ajda Mladenović, Vlasta Čobal Sedmak, Martina Lesar Kikelj, Simona Menoni Muršič, and Anita Klančar Kavčič address a highly problematic aspect of the evaluation and exploration of medieval murals based on visual assessment alone. The present-day appearance of medieval mural paintings results from degradation processes, ageing materials, and historical interventions. Therefore, any analysis urgently requires an assessment of the original and subsequently added elements, which can only be achieved by investigating the material and technical aspects of the murals. Based on many years of experience, the authors clearly demonstrate that collaboration between art historians-conservators and conservators-restorers is essential to ensure the correct interpretation of mural paintings. In her contribution, based on the example of the church of St Cantianus in Vrzdenec (Slovenia), Anita Klančar Kavčič reveals that the many conservation and restoration interventions that have been carried out have made a crucial contribution to the evaluation, interpretation, and perception of the preserved murals. The selected example clearly demonstrates the need for thoughtful, analytical, and restrained approaches, which, on the one hand, allow for the preservation of the original mural and, on the other hand, ensure a clear distinction between the new and the authentic. The author also raises the question of re-restoration.

The monograph's final contribution focuses on the issue of reception. Katarina Mohar discusses copies of frescoes from Slovenia at Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions during the 1950s. In Yugoslavia after World War II, medieval art became an essential foundation on which the new state based its ideology and geopolitical position. The more notable means of cultural diplomacy included the major exhibition titled *L'art médiéval yougoslave*, organised in 1950 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, followed by several further exhibitions where the Yugoslav organisers sought to present the shared history of the Yugoslav republics to the global public during the Cold War while simultaneously legitimising their position within the bloc division of the world. By analysing the selected exhibitions and the context of their organisation, the monograph thus also brings significant insights into the previously often overlooked question of the interpretation and instrumentalisation of medieval art in the 20th century.

Mija Oter Gorenčič

Srednjeveške stenske poslikave

Nove perspektive in raziskovalni pristopi

Predgovor

Pričujoča monografija je eden od rezultatov nacionalnega programa *Umetnost na Slovenskem v stičišču kultur* (P6-0061) in raziskovalnega projekta *Transformacije – iz materialnega v virtualno. Digitalni korpus stenskega slikarstva – nove razsežnosti raziskav srednjeveške umetnosti v Sloveniji* (J6-2587), ki ju financira Javna agencija za znanstvenoraziskovalno in inovacijsko dejavnost Republike Slovenije. Srednjeveško stensko slikarstvo predstavlja enega najdragocenejših sklopov umetnostne dediščine in je izjemno pomemben vir za študij kulture časa in prostora, vsakdanjega življenja, verovanj, rekonstrukcijo religioznih praks in včasih celo zgodovinskih dogodkov. Še tako fragmentarni ostanki srednjeveških stenskih poslikav so poleg tega tudi pomembno metodološko sredstvo za rekonstrukcijo gradbene zgodovine stavb.

Že na samem začetku odkrivanja in raziskovanja srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva na ozemlju današnje Slovenije je bila prepoznana tesna vez ohranjenega gradiva tako s sosednjimi deželami kot tudi z oddaljenejšimi umetnostnimi centri. Nova odkritja in napredek v raziskavah sta to samo še potrjevala, prepoznanih in definiranih je bilo vse več mojstrov ter umetnostnih smeri in delavnic. Kljub temu pa je večina raziskav ostala objavljena le v slovenskem jeziku in s tem težko razumljiva tujim raziskovalcem. Cilj projekta *Transformacije – iz materialnega v virtualno. Digitalni korpus stenskega slikarstva – nove razsežnosti raziskav srednjeveške umetnosti v Sloveniji* je bil tako koncipirati dvojezično, slovensko-angleško digitalno spletno bazo s pregledom in predstavitvijo vseh znanih stenskih poslikav v Sloveniji do okoli leta 1380; v naslednjih letih jo želimo nadgraditi z digitalnim korpusom poslikav do okoli leta 1500. Čeprav je v širšem evropskem prostoru ustvarjanje digitalnih baz v delu, reprezentančni korpus srednjeveških stenskih poslikav za neko celotno državo vendarle še ne obstaja. Projektna skupina vidi na tem področju za slovenski prostor dve veliki prednosti. Prvo predstavlja dejstvo, da je Slovenija geografsko majhna država in je z vidika pregleda nad ohranjenimi stenskimi poslikavami precej obvladljiva. To majhnost lahko izkoristimo prav v prid temu, da v relativno kratkem času raziščemo celotno ozemlje in na novo analiziramo že znane srednjeveške poslikave, hkrati pa sistematično evidentiramo tudi nova odkritja in vse skupaj ponudimo v celovitem digitalnem korpusu. Druga prednost pa je njena izjemna geografska lega. Slovenija leži v samem centru Evrope, ki je območje transferja znanja in kultur na preseku germanskega, slovanskega in romanskega sveta. To je botrovalo svojevrstni

umetnostni dediščini, kar še dodatno govori v prid smotrnosti izdelave tovrstnega korpusa, saj bo le-ta velikega pomena za širši evropski prostor. Digitalnemu korpusu smo dali univerzalni naslov *Corpus picturarum muralium medii aevi*. Namenoma smo izbrali latinščino z vizijo, da se v prihodnosti ustvari globalna spletna baza srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva. Ta bi omogočila ne le lažje primerjanje in razkrivanje časovnih, ikonografskih, slogovnih, naročniških in drugih povezav, marveč tudi boljši pregled nad možnostmi skupnih raziskav srednjeveških stenskih poslikav v širšem evropskem prostoru. Prednost digitalnega korpusa je poleg tega ne samo v širši dostopnosti zainteresirani strokovni in laični javnosti, temveč je tudi pomembno raziskovalno orodje, preko katerega je lažje izluščiti prej spregledane vzorce in pojave.

Ena od poti povezovanja raziskovalcev srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva so tudi skupne objave. Pričujoča monografija prinaša 12 študij raziskovalcev iz širšega evropskega prostora o izbranih srednjeveških stenskih poslikavah od konca 12. do sredine 15. stoletja, posveča pa se tudi njihovi recepciji v 20. stoletju. Prispevki ponujajo več novih datacij in atribucij, številna nova odkritja s področja ikonografije, slogovnih povezav, vzorov, prehajanja umetnikov in delavnic, naročniškega ozadja in recepcije, odpirajo pa tudi nekatera nova vprašanja in razkrivajo sodobne metodološke pristope k raziskovanju tega dragocenega umetnostnega gradiva. Nekaj raziskav sega tudi na področje tehničnih analiz srednjeveških stenskih poslikav ter njihovega restavriranja in konserviranja.

Pet študij obravnava izbrane umetnostne spomenike in razrešuje konkretna ikonografska in slogovna vprašanja, posledično pa se ukvarjajo tudi z vprašanjem časovne umestitve izbranih stenskih poslikav. Sara Salvadori se posveča slikarskemu ciklu s prizori iz Marijinega otroštva v cerkvi Naše Gospe v cerkvi v Vieux Pouzaugesu (Bas-Poitou, Francija). Čeprav gre verjetno za najstarejše upodobitve iz apokrifnih evangelijev na ozemlju današnje Francije in hkrati najzgodnejši tovrstni ikonografski cikel v zahodnoevropskem slikarstvu zunaj Italije, je bila poslikava v literaturi doslej obravnavana le sporadično. Avtorica identificira pisne in vizualne vire, išče ikonografske vzore in ponuja tudi razmislek o širjenju marijanske ikonografije. Sara Turk Marolt je svoj prispevek posvetila analizi stenskih poslikav v cerkvi sv. Mavra v Arcanu Superiore (Furlanija, Italija). Po potresu leta 1976 so v cerkvi odkrili tri sloje stenskih poslikav. Avtorica na podlagi upodobljenega donatorja, slogovnih in ikonografskih posebnosti, oblačilne kulture in primerjalne analize razkriva, da sta drugi in tretji sloj poslikav nastala precej prej, kot je predlagano v starejši literaturi. Gorazd Bence se posveča obravnavi stenske poslikave v ladji stare cerkve Marijinega vnebovzetja v Turnišču, ki velja za eno najpomembnejših poslikanih srednjeveških sakralnih notranjščin v Sloveniji. Osredotoča se na ikonografsko še ne dokončno razrešen motiv upodobitve lova. V prispevku preverja, ali gre pri tem res za lov na čudežnega jelena v navezavi na legendarno izročilo o izvoru Madžarov, kot je predlagala dosedanja literatura, ali pa bi ohranjeni prizor lahko prepoznali za del legende sv. Egidija. Mija Oter Gorenčič obravnava doslej povsem spregledano poslikavo romanske kapele na gradu Turjak (Slovenija). Prispevek prinaša prvo ikonografsko in slogovno predstavitev ohranjene poslikave. Ta kaže več posebnosti,

hkrati pa razkriva izjemno visoko kvaliteto izvedbe, zato jo morda lahko povežemo celo s tako imenovano Zgornještajersko vojvodsko delavnico. Katarina Richter pa obravnava srednjeveški cerkvi v Žabnicah v Kanalski dolini (Camporosso in Valcanale, Italija), in sicer manjšo cerkev sv. Doroteje in večjo župnijsko cerkev sv. Egidija, o katerih je v literaturi precej nejasnosti. Avtorica razrešuje nekaj odprtih vprašanj, zlasti o starosti in funkciji cerkve sv. Doroteje, pri čemer se naslanja na nedavno odkritje več plasti srednjeveških stenskih poslikav.

Svojevrstno tematiko odpira Anna Kónya, ki v svojem prispevku raziskuje poznogotske stenske poslikave, posnemajoče krilne oltarne nastavke. Osredotoča se predvsem na primerke iz srednjeveške Transilvanije, vključuje pa tudi primerjalno gradivo iz širšega srednjeevropskega prostora. Ob tem raziskuje načine prilagajanja in prenosa tridimenzionalnega v slikarski medij.

Dve študiji odpirata vprašanje nacionalnih oziroma regionalnih korpusov srednjeveških stenskih poslikav. Susanne Kaun in Elisabeth Andersen se posvečata srednjeveškim stenskim poslikavam v norveških kamnitih cerkvah. Teh je ohranjenih 159, od tega jih ima vsaj 33 ohranjene fragmente srednjeveških poslikav. Avtorici predstavljata pogostost ikonografskih in dekorativnih motivov, posvečata pa se tudi vprašanjem sloga in časovne umestitve. Pri tem izpostavljata še vprašanje avtentičnosti poslikav po izvedenih restavratorskih posegih, saj ti marsikje otežujejo pravilno interpretacijo. Patrícia Monteiro pa v svojem prispevku raziskuje razloge za manjkajoči inventar srednjeveških stenskih poslikav na Portugalskem in pomanjkanje zanimanja za to umetnostno dediščino in njeno ohranitev. Ob tem predstavlja nekaj najstarejših portugalskih srednjeveških stenskih poslikav.

Trije članki se posvečajo tehničnim vidikom stenskih poslikav. Za celostno razumevanje umetnine namreč ni dovolj le njeno ikonografsko in slogovno ovrednotenje, marveč tudi vpogled v njeno materialno realnost. Uporabljene materiale in slikarski postopek je mogoče spoznati prek analitičnih tehnik, tako invazivnih kot vse pogosteje neinvazivnih, ki so v velikem razvoju povsod po svetu. Te delujejo na različnih kemičnih in fizikalnih principih, nekatere se lahko uporabijo *in situ*, za druge so potrebni manjši vzorci, ki se naknadno analizirajo v laboratoriju. Pridobljene informacije so potrebne tako za restavratorje in konservatorje kot tudi za umetnostne zgodovinarje, saj omogočajo realnejše ovrednotenje stanja poslikav in ustreznejše odločanje o načinu njihovega ohranjanja in prezentiranja, hkrati pa omogočajo tudi lažje odkrivanje slogovnih povezav slikarja in/ali delavnice. Anabelle Križnar, Katja Kavkler in Sabina Dolenec predstavljajo rezultate doslej opravljenih tehničnih analiz srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva v Sloveniji do leta 1380. Raziskovale so uporabljene pigmente, slikarske tehnike in slikarski postopek od pripravljalne risbe do končnega modeliranja. Mateja Neža Sitar, Ajda Mladenović, Vlasta Čobal Sedmak, Martina Lesar Kikelj, Simona Menoni Muršič in Anita Klančar Kavčič v svojem prispevku obravnavajo izjemno problematičen vidik vrednotenja in obravnave srednjeveških stenskih poslikav zgolj na podlagi vizualne presoje. Današnja podoba srednjeveških stenskih poslikav je namreč rezultat degradacijskih procesov, staranja materialov in historičnih posegov. Pri

obravnavi je tako nujno pridobiti tudi oceno o originalnih in dodanih partijah, kar omogoča le raziskava materialne in tehnične plati poslikave. Avtorice na podlagi večletnih izkušenj jasno pokažejo, da je za pravilno interpretacijo stenskih poslikav nujno tudi sodelovanje umetnostnega zgodovinarja-konservatorja in konservatorja-restavratorja. Anita Klančar Kavčič pa v svojem prispevku na primeru cerkve sv. Kancijana na Vrzdencu (Slovenija) razkriva, da so številni izvedeni konservatorsko-restavratorski posegi ključno prispevali k vrednotenju, interpretaciji in percepciji ohranjenih stenskih poslikav. Izbrani primer jasno kaže nujnost premišljenih, analitičnih in zadržanih pristopov, ki po eni strani omogočajo ohranjanje originalne poslikave, po drugi strani pa tudi jasno distinkcijo med novim in avtentičnim. Pri tem odpira tudi vprašanje re-restavriranja.

Zadnji prispevek v monografiji sega na področje recepcije. Katarina Mohar obravnava kopije fresk iz Slovenije na jugoslovanskih razstavah srednjeveške umetnosti v petdesetih letih 20. stoletja. V Jugoslaviji je po drugi svetovni vojni srednjeveška umetnost postala pomemben temelj, na katerem je nova država utemeljevala svojo ideologijo in geopolitično pozicijo. Eno od pomembnih sredstev kulturne diplomacije je predstavljala leta 1950 v Palais de Chaillot v Parizu organizirana velika razstava *L'art médiéval yougoslave*, ki ji je sledilo še več nadaljnjih, s katerimi so jugoslovanski organizatorji želeli v času hladne vojne globalni publiki predstaviti skupno preteklost jugoslovanskih republik, hkrati pa legitimirati svojo pozicijo znotraj blokovske delitve sveta. Z analizo izbranih razstav ter konteksta njihove organizacije monografija tako prinaša pomemben vpogled tudi v doslej večkrat spregledano področje interpretacije in instrumentalizacije srednjeveške umetnosti v 20. stoletju.

Mija Oter Gorenčič

Reconsidering the Frescoes in the Church in Vieux Pouzauges (Bas-Poitou, France)

Sara Salvadori

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The church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Fig. 1) today has a single nave Latin cross shape and fragments of frescoes are visible on the counter-façade and parts of an entire cycle on the northern wall of the nave.[1] Its construction began in the 11th century: there is no scholarly consensus on the exact chronology of the phases, but three main ones can be detected.

A first phase dating back to the 11th century saw the construction of the church, ending with a semicircular apse and with a simple wooden trussed roof. In the second phase in the mid-12th century, structural modifications were made: the nave was enlarged and vaulted, the transept and a bell tower were built, giving the church a Latin-cross shape. It is during this period that the church's walls were painted. Finally, in the 14th century the apse was restored, the choir was lengthened, and a chevet with Gothic windows was built.[2] Other modifications are documented in later centuries. However, the complex events that marked the life of the church, including the devastation brought about by the 16th-century Wars of Religion, make the reconstruction of the original internal decorations difficult.[3] The building was added to the Historical Monument List of France on 7 March 1939.

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[1] The church is in Vieux Pouzauges, a small village halfway between Nantes and Poitiers, in the Vendée Department. The village of Pouzauges, whose first settlement dates to Celtic and then Roman times, developed during the Middle Ages. The first nucleus of the village developed in the area where Notre Dame church is located and today is known as the "old" (Vieux) Pouzauges. The small village later extended towards the hill, where the remains of a fortification were found, probably dating back to the settlement first by Zacharie of Pouzauges in 1050, and then by the Viscount of Thouars in the 12th century. The construction of the castle, located 245 metres above sea level, led the population to settle the hillside and then to build a second church, dedicated to St James, in the centre of the new village. The settlement also houses the Prieuré de Saint Jean de l'Aumonerie, whose foundation, dated 1212, is attested by a Latin charter (preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France) at the behest of Guillame de Chantemerle, lord of Paredes, who dedicated the new foundation to the sheltering of the poor and sick. The castle was one of the most important in the Bas-Poitou. In the first years of 13th century, the castle passed to Guillaume de Chantemerle, and his daughter passed it to her husband Guy de Thouars in 1239; the castle remained in the possession of the Thouars family until the mid-15th century. Cf. BAUDRY 2001, p. 324.

[2] For a different interpretation of the construction phases, see DILLANGE 1976, pp. 26–27; DAVY 1993, pp. 93–94.

[3] Between 1047 and 1066 the church was allocated to the abbey of Saint Nicolas d'Angers by Zacharie de Pouzauges,

*1. Exterior, view from
north-west side,
church of Notre-Dame in
Vieux Pouzauges
(Photo: Sara Salvadori)*

The northern-wall frescoes were discovered by the historians and scholars François Cha-mard and Jean Challet in 1948.[4] After that, the restorations began, revealing other fragments on the western wall. The surveys carried out between 1991 and 1992 revealed the existence of seve-ral pictorial campaigns extending over the walls of the nave and the choir.[5] Today, two layers of painting can be detected: an older layer dating to the end of the 12th century on the western wall, and a second layer dating between 1210 and 1225 on the western and northern walls. The dates suggested by the scholars are based on the writing and the style of the costumes represented.[6]

The western wall is divided vertically by the portal and a window, along with rectangular frames containing scenes from the Old Testament. Starting from the top left, we can see the

with the support of the bishop of Poitiers, Isambert II. The donation was long disputed by Maurice, Zacharie's son, and the dispute ended in 1118. In the end, the church and other estates returned to the abbey. The church had an internal and external cemetery (used until 1856), evidenced by the presence of innumerable burial stones with sculpted figures revealing the social status of the dead. The church was looted by the Protestants in 1568, during the Wars of Religion. The church building was bought in 1799 by Houdet-Dugravier, who sold it the following year to four people of the Bulteau, Souchet and Proust families. The building has been classified thanks to the efforts of the general secretary of the department who used a state-subsidy to repair the frame. The clearing of the earth, which had risen to a height of more than two metres along the north wall, was undertaken at the same time. However, following a request for a subsidy to repair the roof, the church of Notre-Dame was downgraded on 13th September 1872, due to the supposed minimal artistic interest of the building. In 1919, the church became a parish church in its own right after a century of dependence on Saint-Jacques de Pouzauges. See DAVY 1993, p. 93.

4   DILLANGE 1976, pp. 26–27; DAVY 1993, p. 94.
5   THIBOUT 1950, pp. 185–186; DAVY 1993, p. 94.
6   FERRARO 2012, p. 193. For a stylistic discussion, see also DAVY 1993, pp. 98–99.

2. Murder of Abel by Cain and Samson's Fight with the Lion of Thamma, western façade, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

3. Sacrifice of Isaac, Banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and Rejection of Joachim's Offering, western façade, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

representation of the *Murder of Abel by Cain* (Gen. 4:8).[7] Below this scene we have the *Fight of Samson with the Lion of Thamma* (Judg. 14:5–6) (Fig. 2).[8] To the right, we can see the *Banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden* (Gen. 3:11–19). Above this scene there is another, the *Sacrifice of Isaac* (Gen. 22:10–12; Fig. 3) a pendant to the *Murder of Abel*.[9]

The cycle on the northern wall begins in the lower register on the western façade. A narrative scene and a piece of a frieze are recognizable. We can also see a small part of the frieze near the south wall: it can be supposed that the southern wall also used to host a narrative cycle starting in the lower register on the western wall. Returning to the surviving cycle, the wall is divided into a sequence of registers of unequal heights.

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[7]   Davy transcribed the inscription of the scene: CAIM Q[u]I OC[cidit] ABEL; see DAVY 1993, p. 94.

[8]   Another of Davy's transcriptions: [v]IRTUS SA[n]/SON[is]; see DAVY 1993, p. 95.

[9]   The scene is almost illegible and has been identified by Christian Davy; see DAVY 1993, pp. 94–95.

4. Rejection of Joachim's Offering, west façade, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

The narrative section, containing scenes of particularly interesting iconography, depicts the story of the Virgin Mary. The first is the *Rejection of Joachim's Offering* – part of which was removed and transferred elsewhere[10] – and it is the only one depicted on the western wall (Fig. 4). Starting from the right, we can recognize an altar surmounted by a canopy and covered by a white tablecloth whose folds are dashed in red. In front of the altar there is a figure wearing a white robe, the priest. Of the person making the offering – Joachim – only the feet remain. The procession following him is composed of female and male characters, with the city in the background acting as a frame whose presence will function as a motif throughout the course of the narrated story.

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10   Pseudo-Matthew 2:1; *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae* 2:1.

5. Apparition of the angel to Joachim, northern wall, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

The second is the *Apparition of the angel to Joachim* (Fig. 5).[11] The scene is inscribed within two trees and a blue band with white waves, located in the upper area, outlining the sky. The ground plane is indicated by horizontal bands of different shades of ochre brown. Starting from the left there is a sheep (or goat) feeding on the tree. The rest of the cattle are grazing at Joachim's feet, who is facing upwards and listening to the angel of the Lord, who is emerging from the coloured bands of the sky. Joachim is dressed in a red cloak, a green-blue tunic, and tight trousers which cover his legs. He is wearing a Phrygian cap, a detail that suggests his retreat to the mountains with other shepherds, following the refusal of his offerings because of the infertility affecting him and Anne.[12] Two other shepherds, playing instruments and dancing, accompany Joachim. They, too, are wearing a cloak with a headdress, a tunic of different colours and tight trousers.

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11   Pseudo-Matthew 3:1–3; *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae* 2:2.
12   Pseudo-Matthew 2:1.

6. *Meeting at the Golden Gate, northern wall, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)*
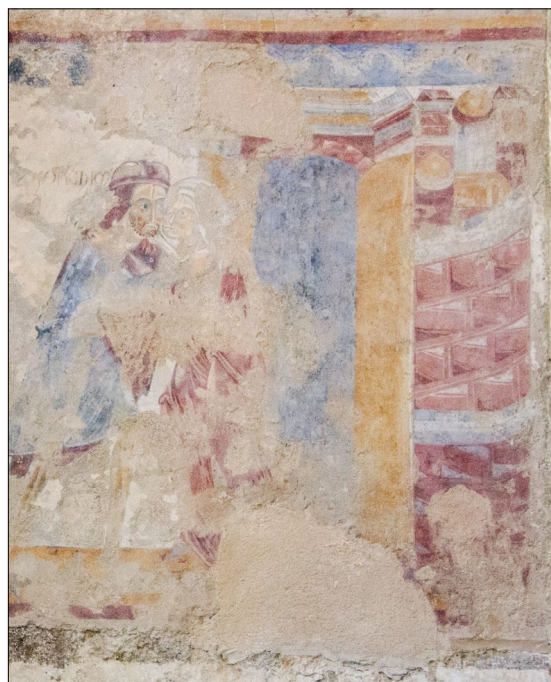
7. *Meeting at the Golden Gate, northern wall, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)*

The third scene is the *Meeting of Anne and Joachim at the Golden Gate* (Figs. 6–7).[13] As already mentioned, the scene is separated from the previous one by a tree: we are in front of the Golden Gate of Jerusalem, highlighted by a wall within which a series of buildings, which are also present in other scenes, are painted. The presence of vaulted yellow buildings is noteworthy and is perhaps a suggestion of the existing buildings of the Holy City. Anne, dressed in a red cloak and a white veil, awaits Joachim, whose name is still legible: his headdress is changed, indicating his change in status. The two characters embrace: both have their hands encircling each other's necks and their cheeks touch, suggesting a kiss.

The fourth scene is the *Presentation of Mary in the Temple*, which follows the interruption due to the presence of a window (Fig. 8).[14] The scenic space of this section is divided in two by three columns that delimit it and seem to support the frame or entablature that represents Jerusalem.

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[13] Pseudo-Matthew 2:5; *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae* 3:1, 4. In the Protoevangelium of James the place indicated is generically referred to as "Porta Aurea", while only in the *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae* is the location of this gate indicated: Jerusalem.

[14] Pseudo-Matthew 4:1.

8. Presentation of Mary in the Temple, northern wall, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges
(Photo: Sara Salvadori)

Starting from the left, we find the procession accompanying the Virgin to the Temple, an event that occurred when Mary was three years old. Along with Joachim and Anne, two other male characters participate in the procession. In front of them is the child Mary, whose young age would be indicated by her white dress and red-brown hair, ready to climb the first step of the staircase placed in front of her. The Temple is suggested by the two columns and bricks that form a staircase made up of four steps.[15] We then find Mary on the last step, facing the altar: she is older, with golden hair and a halo around her head. The altar is identical to the one depicted in the scene of *Joachim's Offerings*. The absence of the priest in the scene agrees with the description in the text of the Pseudo-Matthew. The repetition of the figure of Mary makes it possible to represent not only her entrance into the Temple, but also constitutes a kind of anticipation of her behaviour and life in the Temple.

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[15]   For a description of the temple architecture, see FERRARO 2012, pp. 195, 213.

9. Mary fed by an angel, northern wall, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

Nevertheless, the presence of the little girl led some scholars to formulate other hypotheses: either that she was one of the other virgins who would live with Mary in the Temple or that she was the sister of Mary, the second child Anne conceived with Joachim after the birth of Mary.[16] My suggestion is that we can lean towards a condensing of different episodes within the life of the Virgin in the same stage space, as in fact also happens in other sections. Further, the staircase strongly links the two figures: the child is about to enter it, while Mary is about to leave it. Therefore, the Temple may indicate a change in the status of the Virgin, with this scene acquiring a

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[16]   This hypothesis was proposed by LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 165–166.

(new) symbolic dimension. This reading is also proposed by Séverine Ferraro.[17] She also underlines the rarity of the images of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple where Mary is shown alone in front of the sanctuary, even though the presence of the priest is not mentioned in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. Three examples of this iconographic motif have already been listed and all belong to the French cultural area, with the example in Vieux-Pouzauges being the oldest one; the other two murals are housed in the Notre-Dame church in Kernascléden (Morbihan) and in the Notre-Dame chapel in Châteaumeillant (Cher).[18] It can also be noted that this iconography may closely relate to the narrative given by the *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae* 6:1, 2: here, while the parents accompany the Virgin child, she reaches the altar without the need for a guide – the absence of the priest in the episode is noteworthy.

A real column, painted with fake marble veins, interrupts the cycle. Unfortunately, the last surviving scenes are of doubtful interpretation. After a tree we see Mary, indicated by the titulus, dressed in royal robes: her head is surrounded by a crown resting on a white veil that hides her hair, while she wears a purple cloak with white embroidery and a green tunic with a golden hem. Again, the Virgin's change of dress could symbolize a change in her status. She is kneeling on a natural protuberance and turns with folded hands towards the angel, who appears from heaven. The scene takes place outside and is separated by a small column supporting an entablature/city that frames the next scene, the subject of which unfortunately has not yet been identified (Fig. 9).

Scholars have proposed different interpretations of the surviving scene. While Crozet and Thibout proposed to read it as *Mary fed by an angel*,[19] Lafontaine-Dosogne envisaged the Second Annunciation.[20] Davy identified the Annunciation of the Virgin's Death, which he inferred from the palm of paradise as a token of Mary's imminent assumption into heaven.[21] The iconographic scheme, along with what remains legible of the missing part, seems comparable to that used in the altarpiece of the Madonna di San Martino (1281–1295), kept in the National Museum of San Matteo in Pisa, even if the latter represents a different part of the story. Perhaps, in the case of Vieux-Pouzauges the two scenes could refer to chapter IV of Pseudo-Matthew Gospel, which describes the life of the Virgin in the Temple: her maturity made her look like an adult, she dedicated herself to weaving and prayers and received nourishment directly from the hand of an angel.

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[17]   FERRARO 2012, pp. 193–194. For other reflection on the two figures, see DAVY 1993, pp. 96–97, 100 (n. 27).

[18]   FERRARO 2012, p. 203 (n. 107). Ferraro says that Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne attributes this iconographic detail to the Western art – except for Italy, a place where the ancient and byzantine traditions were spread and interrelated.

[19]   THIBOUT 1950, p. 183; DAVY 1993, p. 100 (n. 28).

[20]   LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 128–134.

[21]   DAVY 1993, p. 97.

10. Frames with Months and fishes, northern wall,
church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

Above the narrative section, there is a continuous strip (interrupted only by the column lean-ing against the nave, but not by the window) with a meandering ornamental decoration with alter-nating swastikas and figured panels between two red-and-yellow ochre bands. The first one consists of a human-like torso and a fish-like lower part, possibly holding a horn. The second features the same figure with slightly different details and holding different objects. The first two figures are mirrored and separated by a swastika. The third is a fish very similar to the zodiac sign (Fig. 10).

In the window's sector there is a figure consisting of a gorgon head with a headdress flanked by wings, and the second is a naked human figure riding a dragon (Figs. 11–12).[22] It continues with a figure riding a dragon, two faced harpies and then another pair of faced harpies (whose heads are unfortunately detached). In the last surviving part are a sleeping dog, a shepherd, and a sheep (Figs. 13–14).

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[22] A mandorla (whose figure is not possible to identify) is painted in the pointed arch of the first window. It is interesting to note that there are also refined imitations of marble: the veins of the marble in the capital of the column show different faces on each side.

11. Frames with Months and creatures, northern wall,
church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

12. Window sector, northern wall,
church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

13. Frames with Months, creatures and Holy City, northern wall,
church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

14. Frames with Months, a shepherd, a dog and the flock, northern wall,
church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

15. May and June, northern wall, church of Notre-Dame in Vieux Pouzauges (Photo: Sara Salvadori)

In the uppermost frieze, the representations of the Months inscribed in circular medallions are clearly recognizable. March is signalled by the pruning, April is depicted as a young man with a branch (or perhaps a sceptre) (Fig. 10), May as a knight next to his grazing horse and in front of a lady handing him an object, June is depicted by means of mowing (Fig. 15), July and August are represented respectively as the harvest and its end (Fig. 14).[23]

Angelique Ferrand has suggested a connection between the meander frieze and the Months cycle: she thought that certain zodiac signs might have been evoked in the median frieze, where geometric patterns (a Greek-type frieze) and small quadrangular panels alternate.[24] However, the fact that just the sign of Pisces has been recognized so far and also the non-correspondence between the medallions and the squares do not allow us to confirm this hypothesis, in particular considering the incomplete legibility of the cycle.

The Months cycle relates to the idea of Time, while the representation of human activities is connected to the idea of freedom: work frees us from the needs to which our body is subjected following the Fall. The Zodiac and the Occupations of the Months constitute mediators between the terrestrial and celestial spheres, crossing different temporalities while falling within different spatial

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[23] For more details on the month of May and its iconography in the Vieux-Pouzauges cycle, see D'ONOFRIO 2007, pp. 267–277. In Vieux-Pouzauges for the first time a woman appears together with the knight.

[24] FERRAND 2017, p. 191 (n. 815).

scales. The inclusion of the Zodiac signs within the church's monumental decoration during the 11th century seems to have preceded the insertion of the Occupations of the Months, which often took precedence during the 12th century to the point of being more frequently represented without their celestial counterpart. The tension between the Occupations of the Months and the Zodiac signs is thus crystallized chronologically in the first half of the 12th century as a pivot in the development of these two iconographic themes, and topographically in the relationship between exterior and interior. Essentially linked to agricultural work with references to courtly life (particularly in May), the scenes of the Occupations of the Months, inscribed in the ecclesial place and associated with the Zodiac signs, reflect the intertwining of social rhythms in the time of the Church – the liturgy – and the order of Creation – whose "formula" is codified through the Zodiac signs.[25]

The narrative cycle represents scenes taken from the Life of the Virgin and her parents, an apocryphal subject not that common in Western mural painting before the 13th century (except for some Italian mural paintings: in Santa Maria de Gradellis in the end of 9th century, San Giovanni in Porta Latina at the end of 12th century and in Santa Maria *foris portas* in Castelseprio, even though this can be considered as an oriental cycle).[26] The surviving scenes seem to agree perfectly with Western texts, especially with the Gospel of Pseudo Matthew. The text appeared in the early 9th century in a form that suggests an 8th-century original, as a "Latin" version of the oriental Protoevangelium of James (written around the middle of the 2nd century),[27] and with another Latin version of the *Libellus de nativitate Sanctae Mariae*, which is a kind of synthesis of legendary history with Carolingian theological reflection (dating to around the year 1000, according to recent studies).[28]

The 10th and 11th centuries witnessed the transformation of Carolingian liturgical materials through the creation of substantial numbers of new elements for Mass and the Divine Office. In France, the homilies of Fulbert of Chartres played an important role in the diffusion of the cult of the Virgin Mary both in liturgy and popular veneration.[29] Indeed, towards the end of the 12th century, vernacular poetic compositions on the life of the Virgin multiplied, based on the stories handed down by the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew and the *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae*. They gained momentum in the liturgical sphere from the 13th century onwards. The cult of Saint

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[25]   For a complete discussion of the topic, see FERRAND 2017.

[26]   LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 23–25; LEVETO 1990.

[27]   FERRARO 2012, pp. 147–152; FASSLER 2000, p. 397; VILLANO 2020, pp. 87–93.

[28]   We know that from the Carolingian Period, several theologians frequently made reference to the figure of the Virgin, for example Alcuin (735–804), Hymo of Halberstadt (778–853) and Hincmar, archbishop of Reims (845–882), who between 845 and 849 commissioned the *Libellus de ortu sanctae Mariae*, a text in-between the Gospel of Nativity and the Pseudo-Matthew. See LEVETO 1990, p. 406; FASSLER 2000, pp. 400–402; FERRARO 2012, pp. 147–152; VILLANO 2020, pp. 93–94.

[29]   LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 16–21; LEVETO 1990, p. 406.

Anne, the mother of Mary, also developed in this period, especially in Chartres:[30] the genealogy of Mary acquired great importance and started to be visually represented.

Given the provenance and diffusion of key textual sources of Life of the Virgin in Chartres, it is pertinent to study possible visual references to them in religious art in the area and to investigate in particular possible connections to the sculptural cycles of the cathedrals of Chartres and Notre-Dame de Paris as well as to the stained-glass windows in Chartres. The frieze of the Royal Portal in Chartres hosts a representation of the Life of the Virgin and her parents,[31] inspired by the text of Fulbert:[32] it is the most ancient narrative cycle of the theme north of the Alps.[33] However, the iconographic details present in the capitals and in the later-executed stained-glass windows show a strong adherence to Byzantine models, whose narration follows the Protoevangelium of James.[34] Equally, a direct connection to the Parisian sculpture must be excluded, as it is dependent on the sculptural apparatus of Chartres Cathedral.[35]

The second category of artifacts of interest for the present research comes from English manuscripts. The first is the Winchester Psalter (London, BL, Cotton Nero C.IV), executed between 1145 and 1155.[36] The folio 8r contains some interesting scenes: the *Annunciation to Anne*, the

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[30] The cult of the Virgin and St Anne in Chartres would have been boosted by the acquisition of the relics by Louis, Count of Blois. For more details, see FASSLER 2010, pp. 323–346.

[31] The Portal Royal was made between 1145 and1155 and it hosts: *Rejection of Joachim's and Anne's Offerings*; *Joachim and Anne turn back in distress*; *Joachim sitting with his flock is approached by an angel announcing that Anne will give birth to a daughter*; *Joachim and Anne embracing, seated on a bench*; the *Bath of the Virgin*; a *group of two seated figures conversing*; *Anne and Mary walking to the Temple,* and *scenes of Mary and Joseph*. In the choir window (1215) the following scenes are depicted among others: *Refusal of Joachim's gifts*, the *Annunciation to Joachim*, the *Annunciation to Anne*, the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, the *Nativity*, the *Bath of the Virgin* and other episodes about the education of the Virgin and her marriage with Joseph. See LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 35–46; HEIMANN 1968.

[32] Fulbert was bishop of Chartres from 1006 until his death in 1028. The church was burnt down on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin and the relic – the Virgin's birthing robe – was associated in Chartres with miraculous powers, able to save the town from war and destruction. Fulbert worked hard to promote the cult of the Virgin in Chartres, enhancing the very feast at which the church was destroyed. He wrote several sermons and songs which became known throughout Europe. Fulbert tried to dispel the early problems relating to the legends of the feast he was working to promote. His focus on the ideas of the birth and the relative transformation of time through Mary's birth added emphasis not only to the feast of Mary's Nativity, but also to the cult of her robe. The liturgical renewals of the 10th and 11th centuries were again transformed by the religious reformers of the late 11th and early 12th centuries: they wished to explain the sacraments, comment on liturgical action, and find new ways of translating and proclaiming the sacred mysteries and their complex modes of exegesis. See FASSLER 2000.

[33] LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 35–46.

[34] See HEIMANN 1968 for a complete analysis of the visual sources of the Chartres's Capital Frieze.

[35] In the Saint Anne Portal in Notre Dame in Paris there are: the *Rejection of Anna and Joachim's Offerings*, *Joachim prepares to leave with his companions*, *Joachim in the desert and the annunciation to him*, the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, the *Annunciation to Anne*, the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, and the *Marriage episode*. Also, in Saint Lazare cathedral in Autun there are scenes in the capital of Gislebertus (1130 ca): the *Annunciation to Anne*, *Joachim retreats to the desert*, the *Annunciation to Joachim*. See LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 35–46.

[36] The private devotional psalter includes canticles and prayers to Christ and the Virgin with numerous miniatures

Meeting at the Golden Gate, the *Nativity of Mary*, and the *Presentation in the Temple*. However, because of iconographical differences it is evident that these scenes do not match our frescoes: the presence of the *Annunciation to Anne* (not attested or not surviving in our frescoes), the different interpretation of the *Meeting* (they are in front of each other and there is no trace of the kiss described in the Pouzauges frescoes), the presence of the *Nativity of Mary*. However, the *Presentation in the Temple* has details in common: Joachim and Anne accompany Mary, who stands alone before the altar.

A second manuscript is the Book of Hours (British Library Add MS 4999) composed by William de Brailes in 1240, therefore a little later than our frescoes.[37] The manuscript has histo-riated capitals which portray a greater number of scenes. In folia 1v, 3v, 5v and 9r, certain scenes could be found to share some iconographic motifs with the frescoes: the presence of the accom-panying procession to the *Offering scene*, the two shepherds and the position of the angel in the *Announcement to Joachim*, the hug, and the representation of the kiss in the *Meeting at the Golden Gate* (even if the position of the two is reversed). Nonetheless, the manuscript offers a divergent interpretation of the *Presentation in the Temple*.

The final comparison is with the Wernherlied von der Magd manuscript (Jagellonian Li-brary, Kraków, Ms. Germ Oct. 109), an illuminated version of the Pseudo-Matthew, executed around 1225 and therefore contemporary to the frescoes analysed here.[38] The frescoes differ styl-istically from the miniatures of this codex, which includes a greater and more complete number of scenes. However, the scene of *Mary being fed by the angel* appears separately from the scene of the *Presentation in the Temple*, an element that could help us to better understand the scene of Mary and the angel. There are further points of comparison in the scene of the *Presentation in the Temple* in the absence of the priest, the presence of a companion with the parents of the Virgin, and in the *Rejection of the Offering*.

The iconographic combinations proposed here confirm that the textual source used are Latin texts, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew and the *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae*, while the com-parison with contemporary miniatures suggests some point of contact, despite differing from each other. The textual sources thus show evolving iconographic solutions with details that change over time. In a period of textual re-elaboration of the lives of the saints such as the 13th century, when different texts drawing together and synthesizing traditions were produced – such as the Golden

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with scenes from the Old and New Testament. There is an emphasis on the life of the Virgin and close connections with Byzantine culture for the iconographic choices can be observed. See WEYL CARR 1997, pp. 474–475 (n. 312).

[37] The manuscript is one of the earliest known Books of Hours to survive and it was produced c. 1240 in Oxford. It is a small portable manuscript and contains the signature of William De Brailes, a painter active in England between 1230 and 1260. For more information, see https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_49999.

[38] https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/publication/167687/edition/159362/content.

Legend of Jacobus de Voragine (later than our frescoes) or the *Speculum maius* of Vincenzo di Beauvais (1190 ca–1264),[39] and a vernacular poem of Robert Wace (1115–1183)[40] – we can see a similar process occurring in artistic production. In fact, in the 13th century, various artifacts were produced with a strong focus on the childhood stories of the Virgin and her parents. Each of these has its own peculiarities and this allows us to see the Pouzauges cycle not as a simple isolated case, but as one of the first examples of this new phase of experimentation. On the other hand, the loss of most of the frescoes means that it is not possible to offer a complete reading of the cycle. The question therefore remains: what was depicted on the north wall? Was there a representation of the "missing" scenes from the life of the Virgin or the childhood stories of Christ?[41]

The second conclusion concerns the unity of the ideation underlying the pictorial cycle: the scenes drawn from the Old Testament reveal themselves to be complementary to the various levels of symbolic meaning attached to the Marian cycle as well as to the infancy of Christ. We can suppose a sort of correspondence and contrast in the figures represented: the disobedience of Eve was countered by the obedience of Mary, so the result of the former's disbelief was "resolved" by the latter's faith.[42] This can be seen also in the representation of the figure of Cain, a bad example in clear contrast to the figure of Christ, prefigured in Samson overcoming death.[43] Read through this lens, Abel's death prefigures the Passion of Christ: Abel is comparable to Jesus, since Cain represented the ancient people of God as Adam's firstborn. So, the themes could be sin (Eve, Cain), sacrifice (Abraham, Joachim), redemption (Mary and Christ) and prefiguration (Samson). The possible chronological distance between the cycles proposed by some scholars due to their stylistic differences does not exclude *a priori* a unified conception, which certainly took place after the first renovation of the church.

Finally, we can also envisage a unique element underlying the conception of this cycle, which was completed in a period characterized by a renewed and complex political (and ideological) relationship with the Holy Land. The representation of the Holy City in the frames and the evident desire to represent the parents of the Virgin could be related to the Crusades. The explicit reference to Jerusalem is evident in the insistence in depicting the city which acts as a background for the story. That presence could be more than a simple iconographic reference. Many questions

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[39] The third part of the *Speculum maius*, the *Speculum Historiale*, relates to the world and Christian history and includes parts of the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew and the *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae*; see MÂLE 1986, pp. 228–230.

[40] *The Conception Nostre Dame*, a vernacular poem in old French, is divided into three distinct parts: the first focuses on a legend that is said to be the origin of the establishment of the feast of the Conception of the Virgin, the second recounts the youth of Mary and the episodes relating to the Incarnation of Christ, while the last is devoted to the death and glorification of Mary. See FERRARO 2012, p. 157.

[41] The hypothesis about a Mariological theme was proposed by LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1965, pp. 35–46.

[42] TRAVAINI 1997; cf. KESSLER 2023, pp. 111–116.

[43] DAVY 1993, p. 35.

remain open, however: who is the patron behind the cycle? Who developed the compositional scheme?

Iconographic references to the Holy Land are not an exceptional case in French territory. An interesting case is undoubtedly that of the chapel of Saint Jean in Liget, where many scenes relating to the life of the Virgin appear, such as the *Dormitio Virginis*; moreover, we see the same city-frame as that used in the Pouzauges cycle (another detail used in French territory and in contemporary examples).[44] However, a lack of a close correspondence of the scenes does not allow us to establish a direct connection between the Liget and Pouzauges cycles, but it is still an interesting suggestion which also helps to better contextualize our frescoes, capturing their exceptional nature without treating them in complete isolation. In conclusion, the peculiarities of the pictorial cycle make the church of Notre Dame in Vieux Pouzauges a stimulating case-study that deserves to be considered a major artistic contribution in the cultural context of the time.

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[44]   Saint Jean in Liget is a circular chapel and contains mural paintings of particular interest. They include: the *Nativity of Christ*, the *Presentation in the Temple*, the *Descent from the Cross*, the *Virgins at the sepulchre*, the *Death of the Virgin* and the *Jesse's Tree*. See PICHARD 1966, pp. 168–169; LELONG 1977, pp. 255–267.

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Vnovičen razmislek o freskah v cerkvi
v Vieux Pouzaugesu (Bas-Poitou, Francija)

Povzetek

V cerkvi Naše Gospe v Vieux Pouzaugesu so ohranjeni pomembni fragmenti slikarskega cikla, datiranega v čas med koncem 12. in prvo četrtino 13. stoletja. Cikel velja za posebej zanimivega, saj prikazuje prizore iz Marijinega otroštva. Gre za najzgodnejši primer širjenja te ikonografije na Zahodu izven Italije. Po kratki razpravi o stanju ohranjenosti cerkve in njenega slikarskega cikla članek opisuje stenske poslikave, pri čemer se osredotoča zlasti na njihovo ikonografijo. Poslikava je ohranjena na zahodni in severni steni ladje. Poleg prizorov iz Stare zaveze so tu tudi prizori, ki prikazujejo zgodbo Marijinih staršev in njeno otroštvo po apokrifnih evangelijih. Pripovedni cikel je obdan z bogato paleto figuralnih in ornamentalnih motivov. Na enem od treh frizov je upodobljena mestna pokrajina Jeruzalema, na drugem je meander, ki ga prekinjajo kvadrati z upodobitvami fantastičnih bitij, na tretjem pa so v seriji medaljonov naslikane personifikacije mesecev. Kljub svoji edinstvenosti in dejstvu, da so freske verjetno najstarejše upodobitve iz apokrifnih evangelijev na ozemlju današnje Francije, je cikel doslej pritegnil le malo znanstvene pozornosti. Članek se osredotoča na identifikacijo pisnih in vizualnih virov za ta cikel in analizira ikonografske vzore za posamezne prizore. Prinaša tudi razmislek o položaju te poslikave v okviru širjenja marijanske ikonografije med lokalnimi kulti in njihovi povezavi s Sveto deželo. Ta razmišljanja odpirajo pot za nadaljnje raziskave.

Overlooked Aspects of Wall Painting Evaluation and Treatment

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The present article[1] explores some overlooked aspects of wall painting evaluation. This is an issue that members of the Workgroup for the Protection and Preservation of Wall Paintings at the IPCHS have regularly encountered in their years of active work. We have learned that the final presentation[2] of a wall painting, that satisfies both the requirements for correct art historical

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[1] The article is based on the later findings of the mentioned authors. Some of them have been published in *Prezentacija stenskih poslikav. Pogledi, koncepti, pristopi/The Presentation of Wall Paintings. Views, Concepts, and Approaches*, Ljubljana 2020 (Res., 7).

[2] *Presentation* or *aesthetic reintegration* (retouching) are terms used to describe the conservation-restoration process which restores the aesthetic potential of a work of art. They are part of a reintegrative intervention, in which damaged parts of the plaster and colour layers are filled in. The material applied to the damaged areas is either plaster and/or paint, which makes the damage less noticeable. Reintegration thus restores the unity of the image and enhances its artistic impression (re-establishing the aesthetic whole). The term *colour reintegration* is also used to denote restoration of damage to the colour layer, and various reintegration methods are used to carry out this intervention. The term *aesthetic reintegration*, as a term with a broader meaning in modern professional restoration practice, is preferred over the traditional term *retouching*, which means dealing only with damage to the colour layer, but *retouching* is still predominantly used in the literature.

interpretations and the requirements of the ordinary viewer, can be achieved only by rethinking our goals and starting points, through extensive dialogue and reflections on past practice, by carrying out field inspections of different monuments and by comparing different perspectives.

Wall paintings are an inherent part of the architecture of a monument and are rarely preserved intact.[3] Due to their almost unmanageable quantity, the delicate nature of the source materials (especially the thin coats of paint layers) as well as exposure to human and environmental factors, they decay before our eyes. Damage erases the expressiveness of the scenes and hinders the viewer's understanding. The visuality of a wall painting is most clearly defined by the manner of its presentation, especially retouching.

In Slovenia, interventions such as the meticulous cleaning, infilling, extensive retouch-

1. Vera Icon from the Studenice monastery, preserved intact (Photo: Vlasta Čobal Sedmak, 2018)

ing, and full reconstruction (meaning *invisible reintegration, deceptive retouching*) of wall paintings were or are still popular. The specific topic of retouching and presentation of wall paintings was almost completely ignored in the Slovene professional circles.[4] The complexity of presentation dilemmas reflects the dual – aesthetic and historical – nature of a work of art. Striving for a balance between these two dimensions of a work of art turns out to be much more complex in practice than it at first glance appears. Although conservators-art historians and conservators-restorers are constantly confronted with the problem of the presentation of wall paintings, there are no existing professional guidelines or established decision-making protocols in Slovenia to address this challenge.[5] While there has been progress in this area in the past decade, the reality of daily practice is

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[3] KLANČAR KAVČIČ 2020, p. 168; MLADENOVIĆ 2020b, p. 17.

[4] On the subject of *aestheticism* vs. *aesthetics*, see SITAR 2020. For contemporary conservation issues and ethical principles, see MUÑOZ VIÑAS 2005; MUÑOZ VIÑAS 2020.

[5] Medieval wall painting presentation issues, conservation-restoration theory, professional ethics and the history of retouching in Slovenia are addressed in MLADENOVIĆ 2021. For more general discussions of restoration and restoration ethics, see *Die Restaurierung der Restaurierung* 2002; CONTI 2004; *Die Kunst der Restaurierung* 2005; *Conservation Ethics* 2019.

that the responsible conservator-art historian and conservator-restorer are under great pressure from the investors, who dictate how the restored work of art should look.

When dealing with medieval (sacred) wall paintings,[6] it is important to remember that their essence is spiritual;[7] their ideational iconographic world transcends their formal style and its comprehension. To a believer, medieval frescoes were mystical images with deep messages which they comprehended in their religious and liturgical context. They awakened and spoke to people's spiritual world in a specific time in the past and can also do the same today if we are able to preserve this essence (Fig. 1). Therefore, the first condition for appropriate conservation-restoration intervention is an understanding of a painting's spiritual tradition. This should not be removed, deformed or diminished by artistic aestheticizing or falsification.

Historical Circumstances[8]

We begin with a historical perspective, that is with a historical overview of conservation and restoration interventions in Slovenia[9] and of the approaches and principles that have guided professional decision-making and which have shaped the local conservation-restoration profession. The earliest interventions were carried out under the first heritage protection service at the beginning the Austro-Hungarian, later the Austrian *Central Commission for the study and preservation of art and historical monuments* that was established in 1850 in Vienna.[10] It covered the large majority of Slovenian territory (Koroška/Carinthia, Štajerska/Styria, Kranjska and Primorska). After 1918, the Slovenian coast, the Karst and Istria came under the Italian monument protection service[11]

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[6] For medieval wall paintings, see for example STELE 1972, especially the series of publications *Srednjeveške freske v Sloveniji* by Janez HÖFLER published in 1996, 1997, 2001, 2004; BALAŽIC 2009; BALAŽIC 2012; BALAŽIC 2020.

[7] MENONI MURŠIČ 2020.

[8] This outline is based on SITAR 2016, pp. 262–361; SITAR 2020 (quoting the most relevant publications and written sources); SITAR 2022. Because of the importance and general lack of awareness of these historical facts, we consider it pertinent to highlight them again here.

[9] An important example of research in the history of restoration interventions on wall paintings is FELDTKELLER 2010.

[10] Originally *k. k. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung von Baudenkmalen*, later *K. K. Zentral-Commission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und historischen Denkmale*; see BAŠ 1955.

[11] In 1918, most of the Slovene regions became part of the new state (later kingdom) of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Slovenian territory in Istria, Notranjska and Goriška was occupied by the Italian army at the end of the First World War. The Governorate of the Julian March was established in Trieste, which also included the protection of cultural heritage in the new regions and which was then taken over by the Superintendency in Trieste established in 1923 (*Soprintendenza alle opere d'antichità ed arte*, today *Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio*): STOKIN 2014, p. 54; cf. HOYER 1997; KOVAČ 2014, p. 48.

and the north eastern region of Prekmurje under the Hungarian monument protection service.[12]

Medieval wall painting was one of the central topics of art historical research in the 19th and first half of the 20th century in Slovenia, and during this time numerous wall paintings were uncovered. Uncovering is the first interference with an image which can affect its final visuality, and the same applies to subsequent cleaning and consolidation interventions. In practice, renovators with varying degrees of skill and experience[13] followed different trends. First, there was a period of purism, the so-called 'stylistic restoration', which radically rejected and stigmatised inpaintings which altered the aesthetics of the whole. Experts focused on Romanesque and Gothic wall paintings that were hastily uncovered and '*then in the name of reconstruction, overpainted but first documented them by means of aquarelle copies of the current state*'[14] as standard heritage protection practice. The growing number of uncovered wall paintings brought to light the poorly developed restoration methodology. Due to limited knowledge of, for example, secco technique, extensive paint layers were irreversibly lost. At the beginning, *unqualified craftsmen* executed the work, and some caused the very first damage to the monuments. The renovators restored the wall paintings following the instructions and guidelines of the art history elite, the general conservators and the important figures at this initial stage: Alois Riegl (1858–1905) and Max Dvořák (1874–1921). Because of the low-quality interventions, the *Central Commission* decided that an expert opinion had to be given on all proposed restoration projects. Honorary conservators had to '*limit themselves to the cleaning and removal of the unoriginal, harmful additions to continually preserve the existing state*' (*Instruktion für die Konservatoren* from 1853).[15] The *Central Commission* thus set the first standards of restoration. Manfred Koller wrote that the debate on restoration methodology could be summarised with the motto '*the original is sacred*', which, alongside the new approach '*conserve, do not restore*', anticipated the well-known maxim of Georg Dehio some thirty years later.[16] At the first international art history congress in Vienna in 1873, it was explicitly stipulated that '*education-wise measures should be taken to professionally and technically educate restorers*'.[17] They primarily focused on uncovering and documenting, and criticised improperly conducted uncovering.

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[12]   During the period of the Monarchy, an 'autonomous' administration for monument protection in Hungary was established. *The fall of the monarchy in the years 1918/19 meant an end of the primary stage of the Institutional protection of monuments in Central Europe, but the "Viennese" legacy became a basis for heritage administration in the various successor states: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and Italy*: ELKH, *From the K. u k. Central-Commission to the European Heritage Label*, https://mi.abtk.hu/en/17-esemenyek/650-from-the-k-u-k-central-commission-to-the-european-heritage-label-2.

[13]   Mostly different executers, such as decorative painters, artisans, artists, etc. who had no formal education or experience. The *Central Commission* names them *unqualified craftsmen*: KOLLER 2002, p. 114.

[14]   KOLLER 1991, p. 80; translated by Mateja Neža Sitar.

[15]   Translated by Mateja Neža Sitar. For more, see FRODL 1988; KOLLER 2002, p. 103.

[16]   KOLLER 2002, p. 104.

[17]   KOLLER 2002, p. 104; translated by Mateja Neža Sitar.

This trend started to shift at the end of the 19th century. The manner of wall painting uncovering and restoration resulted in a white veil, salt coatings, and, consequently, in an unclear image. The *Central Commission* approved the 'konservierende Restaurierung' approach.[18] This could be interpreted as restoration (allowed in the name of conservation) entailing visual interventions on wall paintings. What followed was a period of refreshment, beautification, overpainting and excessive retouching. Renovators developed the procedures of consolidation and so-called regeneration. Since wall painting technology was underdeveloped, they applied a methodology from oil painting restoration.[19] The biggest problem was a lack of training,[20] for which there was neither time nor money. Unsuitable materials and methods for wall paintings began to be applied on a large scale. According to Koller, wall paintings were impregnated with water in combination with other substances. Pettenkofer's method, 'deemed revolutionary', of regenerating 'blind' oil paintings (faded, yellowed layers of old varnish) with alcohol vapours was extremely popular, and this contributed to a large expansion in the restoration of oil paintings across Europe.[21] His method of direct impregnation with copaiba balsam (a natural resin) was also used on wall paintings during the consolidation (regeneration) phase. Various combinations with oil-resinous varnish and wax were tested, all of which brought horrific results.[22] At the time, the official method for the final presentation was retouching with thick casein tempera used for overpainting. As a result, the paint layers of the wall paintings started to develop mould and fall off, which accelerated the paintings' decay and posed new challenges for the heritage protection experts.

Two particularly relevant practical heritage works were published in this period.[23] With his *Denkmalkultus* in 1903, Riegl finally introduced the principle of 'going beyond historical recreation'.[24] The other was Dvořak's proposal for radical reform of restoration practice in 1910, advocating, among other things, a systematic formulation of restoration work plans[25] which is still today considered essential groundwork for interventions.

An example that reflects these broader historical circumstances in Slovenia is the medieval wall paintings in the Church of St Primus (cerkev sv. Primoža) near Kamnik, known because of Franz Kurz zum Thurn und Goldenstein unsuccessful restoration intervention (Figs. 2, 3).

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[18] HARNONCOURT 1999, p. 93; pointed out by KOLLER 2002, p. 107.

[19] The curator and restorer Engerth from the Gemäldegalerie was rather reserved: KOLLER 2002, p. 107.

[20] For further information, see KORTAN 1984; OBERTHALER 1996.

[21] KOLLER 2002, p. 107.

[22] KOLLER 2002, p. 107.

[23] RIEGL 1903 and DVOŘAK 1918 are fundamental works that defined the concept and values of a monument, set the theoretical starting point and foundation for conservation, and outlined the way monuments should be treated and the way that a monument protection service should work and be organized.

[24] RIEGL 1903a; RIEGL 1903b; cf. RIEGL 1995, pp. 13–48.

[25] BRÜCKLER 2009, p. 354.

2.–3. Sv. Primož nad Kamnikom, the Church of St Primus; photos from 1912 with Goldenstein's overpaintings (Mary's bare breast is covered) and from ca. 1930 by France Stele, detail (© Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Heritage Information and Documentation Centre, Ljubljana (INDOC Centre); image processing: Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute of Art History, Ljubljana (ZRC SAZU, UIFS), Andrej Furlan).

*4. Church of St Andrew in Gosteče;
photo by France Stele, probably 1911.
One of the oldest photographs of the freshly
uncovered medieval wall paintings that were
discovered and restored between 1902 and
1911 by two important restorers of that time,
Hans Viertelberger (on Austrian territory)
and Matej Sternen (on Slovenian territory)
(© INDOC Centre, photolibrary; image
processing: ZRC SAZU, UIFS, Andrej Furlan).*

He overpainted the original frescoes in 1840 with tempera colours that caused mould to form. Against the wishes of the conservator Ivan Franke (1841–1927), who wanted to preserve the overpainted wall paintings in the name of a policy of 'conserving, not restoring' ('konservieren, nicht restaurieren'), Matej Sternen (1870–1949), established his reputation as a restorer in the monument protection profession field by removing Goldenstein's overpaintings in 1912.[26]

The restorer Matej Sternen can justly be regarded as the initiator of the development of restoration in the first half of the 20th century in Slovenia.[27] At the time, a restorer developed from position of a *craftsman* into a not-yet-fully-qualified restorer, acting as an assistant to the art historian.[28] For a long time in Slovenia, this leading art historian was France Stele. As the chief of the Heritage Protection Office in Ljubljana in 1913, Stele (first as a regional, then from 1919 as a state conservator) adapted the basic Austrian doctrine to Slovenian needs. He advocated a tailored conservation approach to each individual monument and performing a consistent inventory of the condition of work of art and the prior interventions, as well as maintaining accurate

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[26]   By removing overpaintings and cleaning, the original painting and date of creation was established. Together, France Stele and Matej Sternen defined a technological procedure for cleaning: STELE 1940, p. 481; MOLE 1965, pp. 53–59; STELE 1965.

[27]   For more information on this topic, see MLADENOVIĆ 2022.

[28]   For the monument preservation tandem art historian-conservator and restorer, see SITAR 2020, pp. 52–56.

5.–8. Wall paintings in the cloister of the former Dominican monastery in Ptuj (photo by France Stele between 1920 and 1930). An important conservation project began in 1928 and is evidenced by a series of photographs by Stele from around 1930. Sternen, too, carried out the interventions in the cloister, uncovered the paintings, or directed the work of other contractors. In the image of the angel from the Annunciation from the northern section of the cloister we can observe the incisions in the painted surface caused by the uncovering (© INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

documentation (an inheritance from the *Central Commission*). Like the *Central Commission*, Stele chose a select few academic painters to be his restorers. Slovenian restoration in the first half of the 20th century was particularly marked by the Stele-Sternen tandem. Additionally, Stele collaborated with the painters Franjo Golob (1913–1941), Peter Železnik (1902–1974), and the eminent architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957). In keeping with the *Central Commission* tradition, art historians were the only professional authorities who determined the approach, procedures and presentation, since *restorers* had no formal education or experience. The restoration of wall paintings was simply their livelihood. The restorer's professional education and practical experience were the first prerequisites for quality interventions, as it was only possible to acquire education at private art schools, foreign academies, and with masters during fieldwork.

In the following section, we discuss some important cases of team conservation-restoration work on medieval wall paintings by Matej Sternen in cooperation with France Stele in the former

9.–10. The most successful Slovenian monument preservation tandem, conservator France Stele and restorer Matej Sternen, in 1929, in front of the freshly uncovered wall paintings in the chancel of the Church of the Assumption in Turnišče (© INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

Dominican monastery in Ptuj (Figs. 5–8), in the Church of the Assumption in Turnišče (Figs. 9–14), and in the Minorite Church in Ptuj (Figs. 15–17).

The wall paintings in the chancel of the parish church of the Assumption of Mary in Turnišče are a classic example of the typical protocol of the *Central Commission* guidelines: uncovering, restoration, recording, and documenting, even detaching the top layer of a fresco. In the Workgroup, we have surveyed the wall paintings in Turnišče.[29] The paintings are in good condition: the past procedures have not impaired the expressiveness of the scenes, so new interventions are not necessary.

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[29]   The first uncovering of wall paintings is documented in 1863. From the 1920s, France Stele was involved in the monument protection work in Turnišče and in the uncovering of the wall paintings in the chancel with Sternen, probably as late as 1935. During the Second World War (1942–43), the Hungarians removed the secondary nave vault and carried out the restoration work. Between 1970 and 1980, conservation-restoration interventions were carried out by Ivan Bogovčič.

11. Donor's image from Turnišče on the photo by Matej Sternen, around 1928 (© INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

12. Fragment of the mural of Virgin Mary with Jesus from the Church of the Assumption in Turnišče, which Stele and Sternen detached in 1926 and transported to the Heritage Protection Office in Ljubljana. In 1957, it was handed over to the National Gallery in Ljubljana (Photo by France Stele; © INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

13. Watercolour made by Matej Sternen in 1930 (44.5 x 42.5 cm; probably after restoration) depicts the chancel in Turnišče with the uncovered wall painting of the apostles by Master Johannes Aquila (© INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

14. Detail of the apostles on the north wall of the chancel in Turnišče before the intervention in the 1970s on the left (presumably Sternen's retouches are still visible; STELE 1972), and in 2020 on the right (Photo: Vlasta Čobal Sedmak)

15. Watercolour of the Lamentation of the Dead St Francis from the Minorite Church in Ptuj, made by Matej Sternen for the Heritage Protection Office (© INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

16. Photograph of St Francis from the Minorite
Church in Ptuj (© INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

17. Photograph of a fragment with the head of
Christ, discovered in 1931 behind the northern side
altar in Minorite Church in Ptuj (© INDOC Centre,
photolibrary; image processing: ZRC SAZU, UIFS,
Andrej Furlan).

One of the documentation techniques (besides photographs, drawings, and written observations) was also making watercolours of the original wall paintings (Figs. 13, 15). The watercolour of the non-preserved wall painting of the *Death of St Francis* from the former Minorite Church in Ptuj (Fig. 15) is particularly precious. It was part of the painting on the triumphal arch (right nave side) from around 1280 and was one of the oldest medieval wall paintings in Slovenia. A drawing was also made by Sternen after its uncovering.[30] The original painting was destroyed in the 1945 bombing of Ptuj.[31]

It should be stressed that Slovenian heritage protection was closely integrated into wider European practice in the field from the end of the 19th and well into the 20th century. After the

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[30]   STELE 1931, p. 14.
[31]   STELE 1931, p. 14. In his list of restoration sites for the year 1931, the restorer Peter Železnik recorded: 'the discovery of frescoes from c. 1260; the restoration of the entire interior of an important Gothic architecture'; document from the private collection of Peter Železnik: SITAR 2016, p. 305.

Second World War and the resulting extensive damage to monuments, the conservation principle was adapted. Following Ferdinand Forlati's thesis 'do not make anew but restore',[32] the restoration of monuments and not simply their conservation was permitted. This contributed to the development of the restoration field (methodology, technology). Stele's early professional principle, inspired by the *Central Commission*, was quite rigorous and was later transformed into the so-called Stele 'creative conservation'.[33] He allowed restoration in 'terms of completion of the damaged work of art but limited it so that the documentary value of the monument is not jeopardised. Most of all, it must not alter the visual aesthetics or harmony of the whole, which means certain artistic restoration'[34] of monuments. We can observe the consequences of 'creative conservation' also in the aesthetic reintegration of wall paintings.

We presume that Stele had connections with Cesare Brandi (1906–1988), the most important European figure in conservation-restoration theory.[35] Brandi's intimate caricature drawing of Stele in Ohrid testifies to their relationship and the ties Slovenian conservation-restoration had with the rest of Europe (Fig. 18). At the time, contemporary approaches (for example, those of the Roman

18. Caricature drawing of the first Slovenian conservator France Stele made by Cesare Brandi in Ohrid in 1951 (KLEMENC 2000)

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[32] '*Non si tratta più di rifare, ma di restaurare*': HOYER 1997, p. 33.

[33] STELE 1955, p. 8.

[34] PESKAR 2014, p. 238; translated by Mateja Neža Sitar.

[35] Cesare Brandi is known worldwide mainly for his influential *Teoria del restauro* (1963), which laid the foundations for conservation-restoration procedures on works of art not only in Italy but also in Europe and the rest of the world. The influence and relevance of Brandi's theory were re-evaluated in 2006, commemorating the centenary of his birth. Numerous activities, such as professional gatherings, conferences and seminars took place as part of the joint European project *Cesare Brandi. Il suo pensiero e il dibattito in Europa nel XX secolo*, which examined his contribution to the theory of conservation and restoration from different perspectives. Even today, the fundamental concepts of the *Teoria del restauro* are still relevant, as many articles in conservation ethics show. Unfortunately, the commemoration seems to have passed the Slovenian conservation-restoration profession by; we did not note any reactions to the project. The reason probably lies in the fact that Slovenian monument protection profession is rooted historically in the principles of the Austrian doctrine, so Italian theories were largely overlooked.
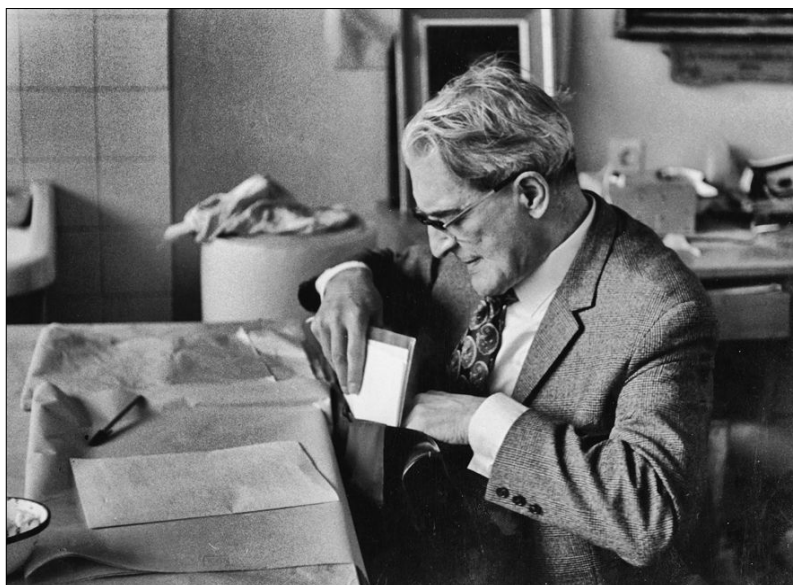
*19. Photo of the first
independent authority
 of Slovenian restoration,
Mirko Šubic
(© Institute for the Protection
of Cultural Heritage of
Slovenia, Restoration Centre,
Ljubljana (IPCHS, RC))*

Institute) were known and practiced in Slovenia. What's more, some of the practice cases were independently implemented (as the detachment of frescos, the retouching etc.). When examining the approach to retouching in this period, it should be noted that Stele and Sternen 'were the first in our practice to opt for the so-called *tratteggio*, promoted and widely used by Brandi in Rome after WW2 when reconstructing wall paintings destroyed by bombing.'[36] This type of distinctive retouching with lines was used on the newly-discovered and severely damaged lower layers of the paintings in Vrzdenec.

Slovenian restorers acquired their first formal education either at the Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1945 in Ljubljana, by working at the Slovenian Institute restoration workshop from 1950 on, or through a specialised postgraduate academic programme after 1954. The new heritage protection law prescribed 'scholarly and popularizing' work for conservators (art historians) and 'artistic and technical' work for restorers.[37] The first independent restoration authority was Mirko Šubic (1900–1976; Fig. 19),[38] who established the quality-focused foundations of the professional field and set the critical restoration approaches and standards in accordance with the European

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[36]   STELE 1966, p. 22. If we use the term *tratteggio*, we should stress that this retouching technique would be a very early application of the Roman Institute methodology outside of Italy. Colleague Gorazd Živkovič kindly pointed out that the paintings in Vrata (Thörl) from 1969 are one of the first cases of *tratteggio* in Austria; already published in SITAR 2020, pp. 55, 56. MLADENOVIĆ 2021, pp. 233, 234, points out that instead of the term *tratteggio* in the example of Vrzdenec, we should use the term distinctive retouching.

[37]   BAŠ 1951, p. 275.

[38]   BOGOVČIČ 2009.

restoration profession. The restorers increasingly relied on their own restoration colleagues and worked more and more as independent heritage protection experts. In their atelier, where they set up their own laboratory, the development of restoration practice started first in the area of canvas painting restoration. Already in the first year of the newly founded restoration workshop, they considered restoration courses (including on wall paintings), which some would attend in Zagreb at the expense of the Institute. In the first decade of the atelier, in the 1960s, the restorers, who were increasingly more qualified and equipped thanks to the knowledge they had gained training abroad, were becoming equal participants in the heritage protection tandem (with conservators).[39] European restorers are not of one mind when it come to the final aesthetic presentation of restored works.[40] The basic principle of retouching should be 'total submission to the original – regardless of the quality or charm of the work of art.'[41] Restoration theory and practice evolved with the rise of the natural sciences and the foundation of the Restoration Centre (1982; from 1999 under the IPCHS). Restorers became more independent and self-sufficient, and their ties with art historians loosened.

In the 1980s and 1990s, during the post-socialist period, we observe a decline in the development of the restoration profession. This decline broke the continuity of master workshops and apprenticeships, and 'a less worthy past' was thus denied and erased. It brought an end to the tradition of specific skills and crafts, such as gilding, marbling, stucco-lustro, pasar work, silver work, wallpapering, carpentry, the roofing of historical buildings, decorative painting (e.g., stencil painting), façade work and so on. This was an era of less critical writing and fewer connections to foreign institutes. The Heritage Protection Institute was concerned with reorganisation, changing the structure as well as legislation in the area, which resulted in a bureaucratization of the conservation profession.

These facts explain why art historians (academic and art historian-conservators) during the period of the development of conservation in Slovenia (for bureaucratic reasons and also because of a lack of interest in the material aspects) came to be less involved in the process of conservation and restoration of wall paintings and left the decisions to more and more technologically and methodologically trained restorers.

In the 21st century, the development of conservation-restoration has strengthened due to the important conservation-restoration projects of the Restoration Centre, which has facilitated

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[39]   Also 'in close connection with co-workers – conservators', for art historians, see DEMŠAR 1972, p. 38. For restorers between 1945 and 1975 but only for the restoration atelier of the Ljubljana SRS Institute, see KOMELJ 1972, p. 47; KOMELJ, FATUR 1976. For restorers across Slovenia, see Restavratorstvo (documentation inventory), Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, archive of the Heritage Information and Documentation Centre (INDOC Centre), and local regional archives of IPCHS.

[40]   DEMŠAR 1972, p. 39. The text was written c. 1967–1968.

[41]   KVAS 1972, p. 97.

RECEPTION OF THE PAINTING
(viewer's eye)

OBSERVATION, STUDY, ENJOYMENT

enables

PRESERVATION
of intact substance
content, appearance
as much as possible

enables

**HERITAGE-PROTECTION APPROACH
= RESTORER'S PRESENTATION**
(semi-important field)

THE PAINTING
matter & content
(the most important field)
documentation
is the foundation of the original
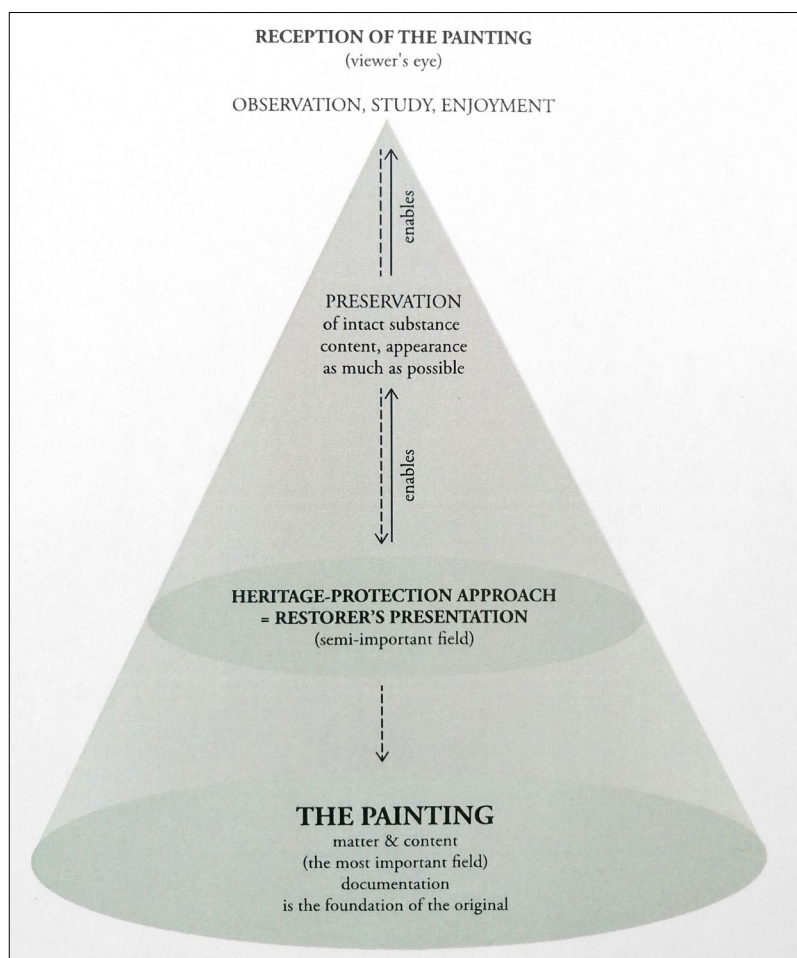
20. Graphic illustration of the three levels in the shape of a cone: at the top is the viewer's eye, which represents our reception of the painting; in the middle is the restoration presentation, the filter which we look through; and at the bottom is the painting in its material substance as well as its contextual and documentary aspect (SITAR 2020)

and encouraged cooperation as well as the sharing of experiences with experts from outside Slovenia. The conservation-restoration field has continued to develop and a new, interdisciplinary approach in conservation-restoration has been established.

Decision-Making

At the end of the 19th century and in the first half of 20th, art historians were the only professionals with the authority to determine the restoration approach. In the second half of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st, this became the role of a qualified and technically skilled restorer. Today, the Workgroup strives to reach joint decisions made by an interdisciplinary professional tandem of an art historian – for example, a medieval wall painting specialist – and a restorer. The

art historian focuses on the meaning, iconography, style, while the restorer focuses on the material, technical and technological aspects. Each perceives the wall painting differently, so their role in the restoration process is extremely important. A simple cone diagram (Fig. 20) illustrates three basic levels and relationships towards a work of art that help us understand what we are looking at.[42] It shows the importance of a full and holistic understanding of the monument, on the one hand, and the importance of conservation-restoration treatments, on the other.

Overlooked aspects – a restorer's view

In the last 20 years, the attention of professional work has been focused on methodological, material, and technical issues, while the artistic and symbolic aspects of works of art have been partly neglected. The importance of comprehending a work of art as a material and expressive whole in conservation-restoration has diminished somewhat, as has the question of retouching as the last hand in a restoration intervention. In practice:

- interventions are often carried out routinely under short deadlines, lacking the critical opinion of a wall painting specialist;
- the final presentation has become routine and generalized, not taking into account the fact that interventions on Gothic wall paintings require a different approach than on those Baroque or 19th or 20th century ones (the implementation of retouching does not depend on the painting's specifics, but mostly on established retouching practice);
- we observe a lack of critical evaluation and restraint concerning the necessity of retouching, regardless of whether a proper retouching can be properly performed given the project time constraints;
- restorers often forget about the connotation, meaning, and cultural dimension when preparing the final presentation. Thus, the importance of planning the final presentation at the beginning of each treatment should be emphasized, since each of the interventions (cleaning, consolidation, infilling, and reintegration – retouching) visibly marks the monument.

Overlooked aspects – an art historian's view

Art historians base their interpretation of a work of art on the visual image, which can be the result of changes in artistic style, an assistant's hand or those of an entire workshop, or, often not recognised or acknowledged, the consequence of prior restoration interventions and natural degradation processes. The art historian:

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[42]   SITAR 2016, pp. 62–64.

21.–23. Passion of Christ from St Nicholas' church in Selo. On the top, a detail from a photo by France Stele (perhaps before 1918 or around 1925; © INDOC Centre, photolibrary); in the middle and at the bottom, photos by Vlasta Čobal Sedmak (2020). Next to the tratteggio (Fig. 23), we can observe some black outlines which do not follow the original forms completely. In some places, the 'retoucher' misrepresented the drawing, which has given rise to anomalies.
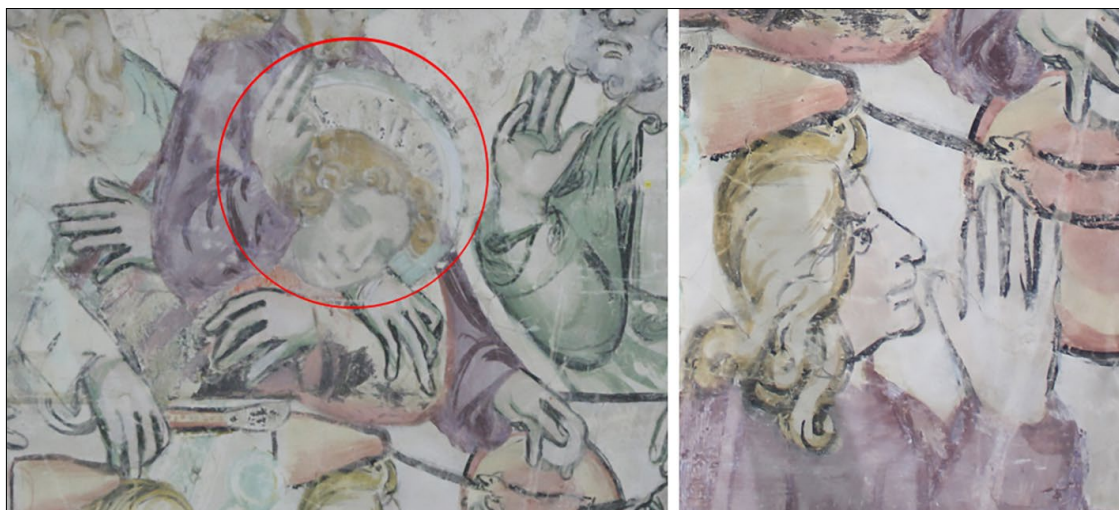
24. Figures and scenes are originally perfectly modelled in colour and light, and reveal a highly skilled painter (on the left) in St Nicholas' church in Selo, but some parts of the figures are lined with a rough black contour, which does not seem original (on the right) (Photos: Vlasta Čobal Sedmak, 2020)

- cannot correctly assess the condition and characteristics (e.g., artistic features, such as colours, composition, light, and strokes), style, authorship, and recognisable features of a period, artist, or a workshop, if they ignore the broader aspects of a painting's history and attributes. Such information is gathered by researching past conservation and restoration interventions (documentation from heritage protection archives), combined with the findings of scientific and technical investigations (technical art history), and by legal-administrative conservation documentation (cultural heritage protection conditions and consensus).

Objectives of the Workgroup and Practical Examples

In order to establish the most reliable understanding of the state of wall paintings and to be able to distinguish between the original, on the one hand, and the additions, on the other, we must investigate their material state. An evaluation can only be made by researching the material and technical aspects of wall paintings and their historical restoration. As exemplified by recent research on the rotunda in Selo, the extent of the traces of the historic interventions, especially those from the 19th century, is not yet fully known (Figs. 21–24). There is an presumption that the wall paintings in Selo which we look at today are not necessarily the original painter's style, the lines of the artist's brush, but the consequence of the past restoration interventions – more precisely, the retouching: some contours of figures, of faces (Fig. 24 on the right), lines of draperies and areas of *tratteggio*

25.–26. Workgroup activities – fieldwork, discussion, symposia (© IPCHS, archive)

(Fig. 23).[43] The wall paintings in Selo are full of abrasions. In many fragments today, we may see the underdrawing, the basic fresco scene meant to be finished by the painters' final retouches. Future research in archives, also abroad, scientific analyses as well as comparisons with examples of medieval wall paintings from neighbouring territories are necessary.[44]

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[43]   More information on this topic: ČOBAL SEDMAK 2021, p. 143.

[44]   Wall paintings in Selo have undergone many interventions, of which those publicised until now are: BALAŽIC 2020, pp. 90, 91, which mentions interventions by Hungarian restorers in the 19th century, restoration work by Izidor Mole (1956), by Bine Kovačič in the 1980s (1981–1983 after ČOBAL SEDMAK 2021, p. 143) and by Irena Čuk (December 2015 till April 2019). The latest conservation-restoration interventions and monitoring were carried out by Vlasta Čobal Sedmak (2018–2020). With the kind help of colleague Tomáš Kowalski, we have received additional historical publications also from abroad that acquire further investigation of the historical restorations that includes research of the archives in Hungary.

In the Workgroup, we highlight two main concerns. The first is the urgency of simultaneous comprehension of both aspects, or, as Brandi calls them, *istanzas*[45] of the monument. This is only possible through close interdisciplinary work, for example, by means of a technical art history research strategy.[46] The second is the up-to-now neglected but absolutely necessary research and documentation of the history of conservation and restoration in Slovenia. Both these concerns have ultimately helped foster a constructive dialogue and the formation of the IPCHS Workgroup for the Protection and Preservation of Wall Paintings (Figs. 25–26).[47] Its main tasks are:

- the promotion of dialogue, reading, and education, producing more professional publications in the field, the research of conservation-restoration documentation, the theory and practice of Slovenian conservation and restoration, the critical evaluation of past and contemporary approaches in Slovenia and beyond;

- laying the theoretical and practical foundations necessary for the preservation and presentation of wall paintings as well as setting the basic standards and principles;

- reviewing past methodologies to understand the development of art-historical perspectives, heritage protection guidelines, and restoration methods;

- obtaining information on historic restorations to understand their influence on the original substance of and thus potential visual changes to wall paintings;

- advising on individual cases in Slovenia, focusing on the final presentation, since different types of retouching strongly affect the visuality of a wall painting.

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[45] Historical instance (*istanza storica*) and aesthetic instance (*istanza estetica*). Both instances are authorities that require restoration in accordance with historicity and aesthetics. See BRANDI 2005, pp. 47–50; BRANDI 2006, p. 164.

[46] Knowledge of the original painting techniques and materials (for medieval wall paintings KRIŽNAR 2006) and also of the materials and techniques used in historic restorations. On Technical Art History we point out three online sources: Maryan Wynn Ainsworth, From Connoisseurship to Technical Art History. The Evolution of the Interdisciplinary Study of Art, https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/20_1/feature.html; *The University of Glasgow, Art History*: Technical Art History, Making & Meaning: http://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/technicalarthistory/; *Looking through art*: https://lookingthroughartblog.wordpress.com/2019/05/15/technical-art-history-unravelling-the-secrets-of-making/.

[47] Active since 2015, the Workgroup was officially designated in 2018. For more about the Workgroup, see MLADENOVIĆ 2020b; cf. LESAR KIKELJ 2020; MLADENOVIĆ 2020a. The first results were presented in symposia held in 2016 and 2017, followed by a publication based on the symposia papers in 2020. The seventh issue of the interdisciplinary, scientific periodical of the Restoration Centre of the IPCHS, called Res., was entitled *The Presentation of Wall Paintings. Views, Concepts, and Approaches.*

27. Indentations filled with light plaster in
St Paul's Church in Podpeč pod Skalo overshadow
the fragmented image, creating the snowstorm effect
(Photo: Ajda Mladenović, 2013)

28. Examples from St Martin's Church
in Šilentabor on the left and St Stephen
in Zanigrad on the right show how
the excessive hatching retouching
creates its own patterns on the painting
(Photos: Ajda Mladenović, 2019)

29. A grossly overpainted scene
in the Church of St Peter and Paul
in Spodnja Slivnica that has since been
re-restored; photo taken right after the
removal of the overpaintings during
the re-restoration
(Photos: Jerneja Kos, 2018)

30. Due to the excessively retouched background, the figures in the poorly preserved scene from the cloister of the Cistercian Abbey in Stična come across as cutouts
(Photo: Ajda Mladenović, 2017)

31. Because of the extensive loss of the paint layer during the uncovering, the retouching of all the damage in monochromatic tones flattens the scene from St Margaret's Church in Gradišče pri Lukovici
(Photos: Matevž Remškar, 2012, 2017)

32. Detail with Faronica from the north facade of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Police near Cerkno before and after the reconstruction
(Photos: Simona Menoni Muršič, 2018)
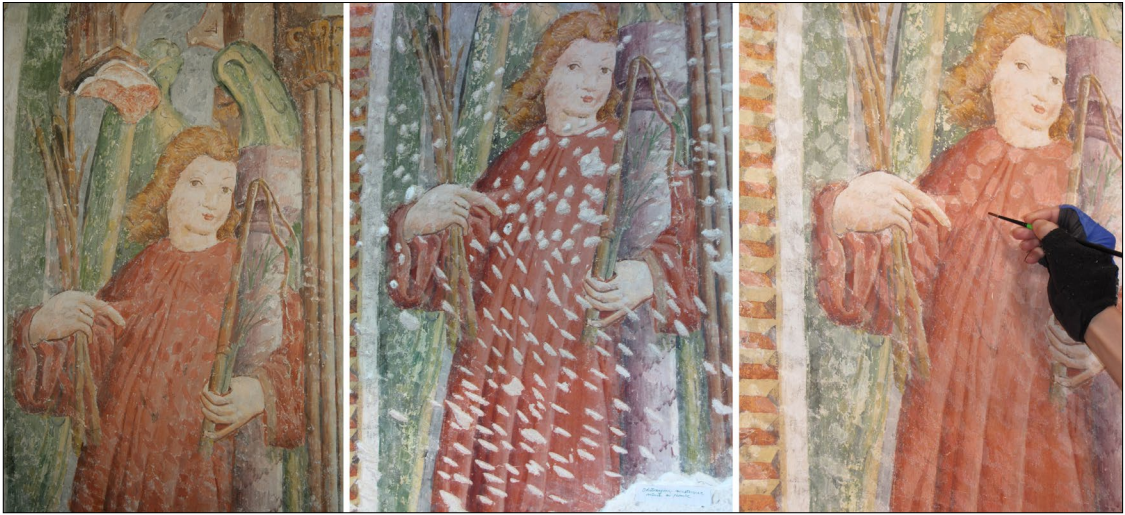
33. Church of the Assumption in Bled is an example where all the losses (from the abraded paint layer to indentations) have been retouched and reconstructed (left before re-restoration, middle after the removal of old retouching and infillings, right during the final retouching) (Photos: Jelka Kuret, 2016)

34. Restrained retouching, simulating painted plaster (intonaco) on the infillings and with colour glazes ('abbassamento di tono') on abrasions represents the conservation approach in the Church of the Assumption in Bled (Photos: Jelka Kuret, 2016)

Changing Aesthetic Presentation Practices into Individually Tailored Approaches

From the last quarter of the 20th century to the first decade of the 21st, we have observed less well-thought-out, generic solutions and even inadequate presentations that show a greater tendency towards aesthetically pleasing solutions to the detriment of historical testimony. The result has been numerous 'polished' wall paintings. In the previous examples, we can observe how the

35. The detail before and after the simulative retouching in the parish church of the Elevation of the Holy Cross in Križevci. The retouch has harmonious and connecting qualities. The original is in the foreground, easier to read, and still discernible from the retouched parts. The example shows a restrained retouch that halts at the edge of an assumption, helps clarify the scene, and simultaneously maintains the authenticity of the original (Photos: Nastja Nylaander, 2019)

conservation-restoration intervention and final presentation affect the painted surface and our perception of a wall painting (Figs. 27–32). In these striking examples of medieval images, we note a diminution of a contemplative dimension, as the intervention was executed without the cooperation of a specialist in medieval wall painting or taking into account the perspectives of different experts who can help us understand the spiritual context of the painting.

As a result of the activity of the Workgroup in close collaboration with the IPCHS and the Slovene Society for Conservation-Restoration, the awareness of the more restrained and conservation-based approaches with minimal retouching intervention has begun to gain importance. In presentations, scientific symposia, and professional workshops by Slovenian and foreign experts on the use of materials and technologies, the knowledge of clearly defined retouching methodologies has also been disseminated.[48] By examining case studies of medieval wall painting presentations in the wider European area and researching the theoretical and practical influences

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[48] For example, the retouch in the undertone '*abbassamento di tono*' that was presented at the workshop *Retouching on wall paintings – methodological approaches, techniques and materials* led by the Florence restorer Alberto Felici, which took place from 31 August to 4 September 2020. The principle of undertone retouching is clearly defined and used exclusively where the original paint layers have suffered abrasion or on small damaged areas which are disturbing for the viewer. By applying glazes, the damaged areas are visually muted and melt into the background, making the original more readable.

36. Šentjošt nad Horjulom, church of St Judoc. The prominent damage and cracks are infilled with mortar, which contains different colour aggregates and is thus already tonally adapted to the tone of the intonaco. In this way, the image is assembled into a whole without retouching with colour (Photo before the intervention: Marija Eva Fras, 2020; photo after the intervention: Anita Kavčič Klančar, 2021)

on the domestic practice, we have set the position of the Slovenian profession in its broader Western European context. In this way it has been possible to evaluate past and present approaches to aesthetic presentation in Slovenia and, based on the findings, outline a methodology for planning aesthetic reintegration interventions on medieval wall paintings. The methodology is based on generally recognised professional ethical principles as well as specific instructions for the protection, preservation and conservation-restoration of wall paintings, and are complemented with practical guidelines. The recommended approaches are being successfully implemented in practice. The first examples are the wall paintings in the Church of the Assumption on the Island of Bled, in the church of the Elevation of the Holy Cross in Križevci pri Ljutomeru, and in the Church of St Judoc in Šentjošt nad Horjulom, (Figs. 33–36). One of the solutions is so-called

37. Detail of the Journey of the Magi from Ptuj shows a computer simulation of retouching in grey, achromatic tones. The disturbing puttied areas (on the left) have become unobtrusive (on the right). The retouches are adjusted to the surrounding in quality but differ in colour. The original is perceptible and distinguishable from the retouches and is, therefore, clearer and more expressive (Photo and computer simulation: Vlasta Čobal Sedmak, 2018)

simulative retouching,[49] a method used on puttied areas in which a retouch simulates the damage of the surrounding surfaces, including abrasions, smaller cracks, patina, and similar (Fig. 35).[50] This method allows us to the avoid unclear details that a *tratteggio* or *selezione cromatica* would convey as field, a cloud of 'rain' or an undefined, blurred area.

Conclusion

The final aesthetic presentation of the medieval wall paintings requires careful consideration. Unfortunately, in Slovenia, the pace of restoration work is frequently dictated by short deadlines. To avoid this, a professional standard should be set to prescribe that all the conservation work should be done within the required deadlines, while retouching would be carried out after consideration and over a longer time (for example, after a year). This would give the experts sufficient time for research, analysis and deliberation in order to be able to decide on an appropriate final presentation based on the characteristics of an individual wall painting. The next standard needed and made possible by modern technology would be computer simulation (virtual retouching; Fig. 37) by means of which we could test several possibilities and choose the best solution before physically interfering with the original.

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[49] Isabelle Brajer's deliberation is based on the works BRAJER 2009a; BRAJER 2009b; BRAJER 2015.

[50] The execution of the simulative retouching method (as a test of possible good solutions that restorers need in practice) was carried out on the fragments of the wall painting of the chancel in the Church of the Elevation of the Holy Cross in Križevci.

The main future goal of the Workgroup is to educate lay and professional audiences by teaching them how to observe wall paintings and changing their expectations in relation to fully restored conservation-restoration outcomes. By establishing a consultation Workgroup, we have enabled the exchange of views and opinions between conservators-art historians, and conservators-restorers, looking for common ground and seeking to strike a balance between conserving the artistic and spiritual qualities of the monument and achieving its most appropriate visuality. Our next important goal is also the preparation of an inventory of Slovenian wall paintings and ensuring that they are regularly monitored. We further promote the critical evaluation and treatment of each individual wall painting and encourage the early planning of a final presentation, as it affects all stages of the restoration procedure from beginning to end. As case studies and professional experience have shown, a restrained approach to all restoration procedures is best and all decisions should be justified. The aesthetic presentations of wall paintings can be deemed successful if they have enhanced their aesthetic potential and at the same time have not tampered with their historical identity, which means that by preserving all the qualities of the wall paintings, the meaning of the building as a whole is also strengthened.

Today we are aware that complete retouching is not needed to preserve the whole artistic (form) and meaning of the painting in its primary essence. Our aim is to perform retouching that is distinguishable from the original, thus respecting the historical identity of the image while at the same time enhancing its aesthetic potential. We prefer to tone down the damage, bringing the original into focus, that is into the foreground. In this way, despite the damage, our eyes are able to appreciate the original artistic creation and expressiveness of a painting.

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Spregledani vidiki vrednotenja in obravnave stenskega slikarstva

Povzetek

Redko se srečamo s stenskimi poslikavami, ki še niso bile restavrirane. Pogosto pri slogovnem vrednotenju poslikave umetnostnega zgodovinarja nehote zavede podoba, ki je lahko rezultat degradacijskih procesov ter staranja materialov in historičnih posegov. Pravilno presojo o avtentičnem stanju poslikav in razlikovanje med originalom in dodatki je mogoče opraviti le z raziskavo materialne in tehnične plati poslikav. V zavedanju te problematike na Zavodu za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije deluje Delovna skupina za varstvo in ohranjanje stenskih poslikav, katere delo je usmerjeno v reševanje strokovnih problemov ter v oblikovanje teoretskih in praktičnih izhodišč za ohranjanje in ustrezno prezentacijo. Temelj vsakega posega je poznavanje izvirnih tehnologij in materialov, vzrokov njihovega propadanja in pogojev njihovega ohranjanja. S poznavanjem historičnih restavratorskih praks lahko razumemo njihov vpliv na tehnično sestavo poslikav in vizualne posledice, ki so morda s tem nastale. Za pravilno razumevanje materialno-tehnične in humanistično-simbolne plati umetnine ter odločitev glede njene obnove je nujen dialog med umetnostnim zgodovinarjem-konservatorjem in konservatorjem-restavratorjem. Danes je glavni namen etičnega in zadržanega konserviranja-restavriranja izboljšati berljivost oblike in vsebine ob spoštovanju prvotne stvaritve in njene zgodovine. Pomembno je poudariti, da se pričujoči prispevek osredotoča na srednjeveško slikarstvo, zato se tudi metoda in pristop obravnave primarno nanašata na tehnike in problematiko tega obdobja.

The Wall Paintings in the Church of St Cantianus in Vrzdenec, Slovenia

Past Conservation-Restoration Interventions, Conservation Challenges, Interpretation and Evaluation

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Introduction

The frescoes in the church of St Cantianus in Vrzdenec are somewhat of an 'icon' of Slovenian medieval painting. At the time of their discovery, they were considered to be some of the oldest paintings in Slovenia, which is why the leading Slovene conservator and art historian France Stele devoted a considerable amount of attention to them (both at the time of their discovery in 1925 and subsequently later) in articles on and art-historical surveys of Slovenian medieval painting. He declared the uncovering of all three cycles of the Vrzdenec frescoes the greatest post-war effort of the then Heritage Protection Office (Spomeniški urad).[1] This important discovery also reverberated more widely, since it was published in the national newspaper of the time.[2] At the same time, the frescoes in Vrzdenec symbolise the development of conservation-restoration and protection of cultural heritage in Slovenia over a century, as they have undergone numerous interventions since their discovery in 1925. The detachment of the wall paintings in the nave, the transfer of the fragments to different locations and institutions, the creation of a copy of St Christopher on the façade, the reconstruction of the Gothic windows, the discovery and restoration of the paintings in the chancel – these are the interventions that have crucially shaped the present state of the monument and its wall paintings.

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[1]   STELE 1928, p. 117.
[2]   The uncovering of the paintings was published in: Varujmo 1926; Iz Vrzdenca 1925; Dnevne vesti 1925, where the Art-Historical Society invites on a trip to Vrzdenec to see the newly uncovered paintings.

The Vrzdenec case and its complexity opens up many ethical, aesthetic, documentary and art-historical questions, dilemmas and challenges which are interesting and relevant for restorers and art historians, art connoisseurs and the general public alike. As an aesthetic presentation of the paintings is very strongly connected with their perception and evaluation, I would like to discuss three main issues. First, how does restoration alter and affect the final presentation of the wall paintings? Second, and critically, are the experts and the general public aware of its effects? Without being able to identify and interpret past interventions, the viewer's perception, understanding or interpretations may be mistaken. Third – a question primarily for restorers – what kind of artistic

1. Retouching St Joseph's face from the Birth of Christ on the northern wall of the chancel, the work of Master Leonard from the beginning of the 16th century (© Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Restoration Centre, Ljubljana (IPCHS, RC), photo: Anita Klančar Kavčič, 2017)

reintegration is appropriate for the frescoes in order to respect their aesthetic, documentary and art-historical value? In Vrzdenec these interventions were so fundamental that they altered the image of the monument and at the same time erased the original condition and extent of the paintings.

I will discuss the paintings and past interventions as a conservator-restorer, since I led and carried out the uncovering and restoration of the paintings in the chancel between 2006 and 2017. During the conservation-restoration work, I encountered the problem of the impact past interventions up closely and in a very tangible way. This article, thus, presents my observations, reflections and evaluations.

The Church of St Cantianus and its Gothic Wall Paintings[3]

In order to be able to understand the issue in the round, let me first briefly present the history of the church and the paintings in it.[4] The church of St Cantianus stands in sheltered and slightly

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[3]   The history of the church building and the description of the paintings are summarised according to HÖFLER 2001, pp. 219–224.

[4]   The description of iconography has been omitted since we are providing basic information on the history of the church and its wall paintings.
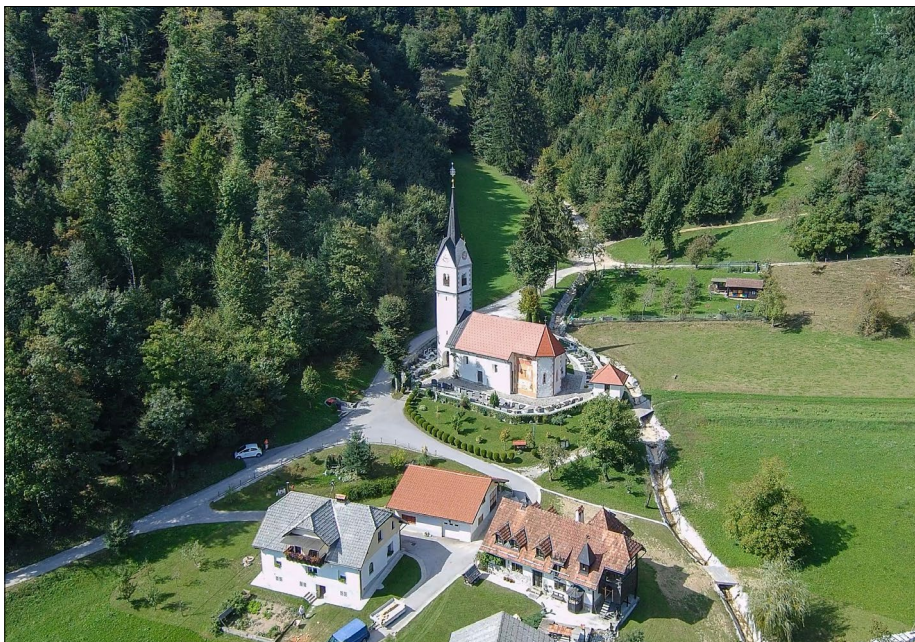
2. Church of St Cantianus in Vrzdenec (Photo: David Mrvar, 2021)
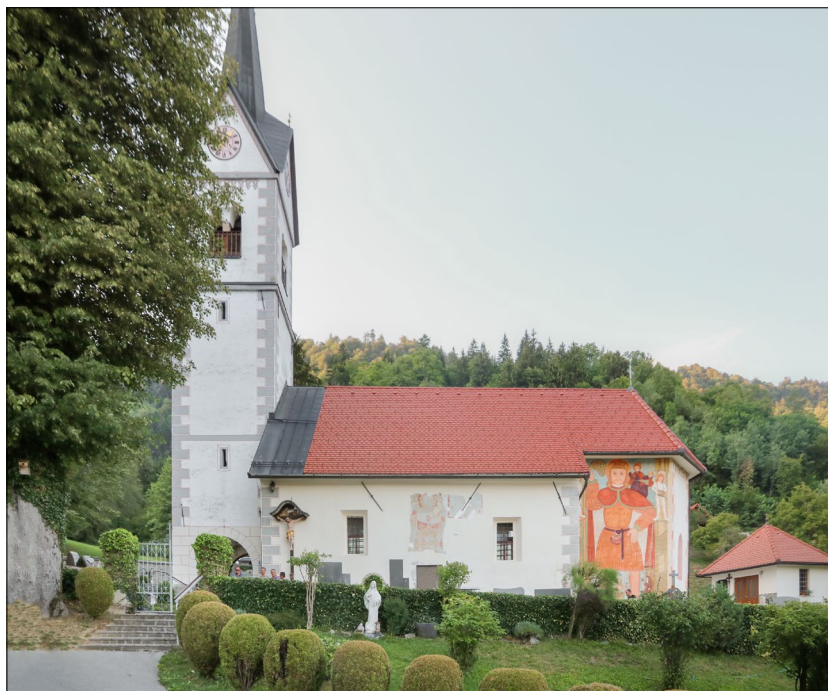
*3. The exterior of the church after conservation-restoration interventions
and the renovation of the façade (Photo: Vid Klančar, 2022)*
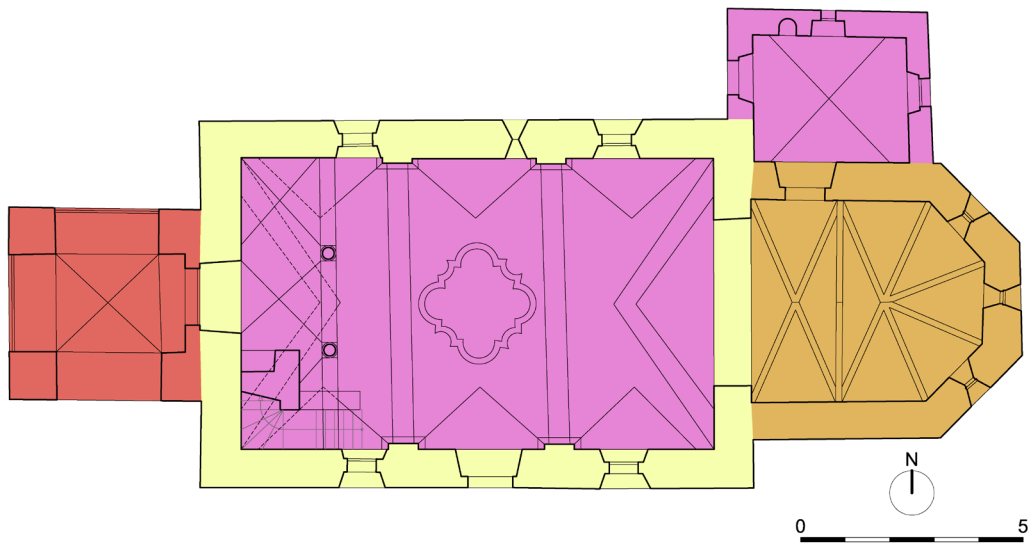
4. Floor plan of the church with colour scheme to show historical renovations: yellow – the Romanesque nave, orange – the Gothic chancel, red – the bell tower from the 16th century, pink – the arched ceiling of the nave and a vestry from the 18th and 19th century (floor plan: © Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute of Art History, Ljubljana (ZRC SAZU, UIFS), Nejc Bernik; colour scheme: Vid Klančar, 2022).

elevated position, at a remove from the settlement of Vrzdenec. Around the church there is a walled cemetery next to the course of a stream. The back of the church on the northern side is sheltered and overlooks steep wooded hills. The church is mentioned for the first time only in 1526, but its Romanesque nave suggests an older origin. According to archival data, a Romanesque ossuary once stood here, and in the wall of the chancel there was a tabernacle cabinet, which means that in the Middle Ages the church was not an ordinary succursal church, but probably already had a permanent priest.

The nave and its Romanesque walls were first painted in the first half of the 14th century. Less than a century later, around 1400, the older painting was covered by Friulian painters (or paintings). In the first half of the 15th century, the church acquired a Gothic chancel, where once there had been a Romanesque apse. The chancel was painted about a hundred years later, at the beginning of the 16th century, by Master Leonard. Three interior cycles are complemented by two representations of St Christopher on the southern exterior walls of the chancel and nave. The first originates in the 15th century and coincides with the younger (Friulian) layer of the nave paintings. The second dates to the second half of the 16th century.[5] It was then that the western nave wall was joined by a belfry, which was decorated with paintings in the middle of the 17th century,

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[5]   This fresco has been replaced by a copy. The original has been on display in the chapel of rest since 2019.

along with the rest of the church exterior.[6] In the 18th and 19th centuries, the nave was arched, and a vestry added, and a reconstruction of the windows in the nave and the chancel probably took place, which partially damaged and destroyed the Gothic paintings.

A Brief Overview of Past Conservation-Restoration Interventions

During the Gothic period, the church was painted as many as four times, which is why it is deemed one of the most important monuments of medieval art in Slovenia. Perhaps not surprisingly given the church's art-historical significance, the wall paintings have been the subject of extensive conservation and restoration work for very nearly a century, from their discovery to the present day. These works include the uncovering of the paintings, the detachment of fragments and their dislocation/transfer, the repeated restoration of the paintings inside the church, the reconstruction of Gothic windows, the transfer of a monumental painting from the façade to the chapel of rest and its reconstruction. These are the critical interventions that have together shaped the present state of the wall paintings, altered their presentation, perception and context, which in turn affects the substantive, aesthetic and spiritual interpretation and evaluation of the works of art. The following is a brief overview of past conservation and restoration interventions:

1925/26: Uncovering of two layers of Gothic paintings in the church nave, detachment of fragments of the upper, younger layer, restoration of the lower, older layer, partial uncovering and partial restoration of the chancel wall paintings (France Stele, Matej Sternen, Heritage Protection Office).[7]

1958: Restoration of the detached younger fresco with a negative print of the older one. A restorer separated the negative from the younger painting (Emil Pohl, IPCHS).[8]

1968: Restoration of the St Christopher fresco on the southern façade of the chancel (Miha Pirnat IPCHS, RC).[9]

1997: Probing of the façade (Rado Zoubek, IPCHS, RC).

2000: Preliminary protection of the deteriorating St Christopher fresco on the southern façade of the chancel (Rado Zoubek, IPCHS, RC). Analysis, photogrammetry, computer simulated reconstruction of the wall painting. The expert committee agrees that the fresco

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6   Rustication and hemmed edges, the year 1658 is inscribed on the belfry.
7   STELE 1925, pp. 183–185.
8   ŽELEZNIK 1960, pp. 76–79.
9   PIRNAT 1970, p. 248.

should be detached and treated in an atelier for museum presentation; a copy is to be made on the façade.[10]

2003: Detaching of the St Christopher fresco and production of a copy in situ. Temporary treatment of the detached fresco in an atelier (Rado Zoubek, IPCHS, RC).[11]

2004: Interventions on the church exterior: conservation and retouching of the decorative parts and fragments of the wall paintings; partial reconstruction of the Gothic windows in the chancel, refilling and reconstruction of the damaged ribs and consoles (Martina Kikelj, IPCHS, RC).[12]

2006–2017: Uncovering and restoration of the chancel wall paintings (Anita Klančar Kavčič, IPCHS, RC).[13]

2009–2011: Identification and conservation of small detached fragments of the Friulian paintings from the nave (Anabelle Križnar, Department of Art History, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Professor Blaž Šeme with his students, Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana, Department for Restoration).[14]

5. Matej Sternen and France Stele during the detachment of the younger layer in the nave in 1925 (© Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Heritage Information and Documentation Centre, Ljubljana (INDOC Centre), photolibrary)

2015: Re-conservation of the detached fragment of the Friulian paintings from the nave (the Procession and Adoration of the Magi), now exhibited at the National Gallery in Ljubljana (Jelka Kuret, IPCHS, RC).[15]

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10   ZOUBEK 2002, pp. 4–20.
11   ZOUBEK 2017, pp. 280–282.
12   KIKELJ LESAR 2004.
13   KLANČAR KAVČIČ 2021, pp. 67–70.
14   KRIŽNAR, ŠEME 2011.
15   URBANC, KURET 2017, pp. 279–280.

6. The younger and detached
layer is marked orange, the rest
is an older painting
(© INDOC Centre, photolibrary)

2019: Reassembling and placement of the detached conserved St Christopher fresco inside the Vrzdenec chapel of rest (Rado Zoubek, IPCHS, RC).[16]

In the following section, the various wall paintings and their conservation-restoration interventions are presented and the dilemmas, different viewpoints, debates and questions associated with the conservation and restoration work are discussed.

Past Conservation-Restoration Interventions on the Wall Paintings in the Nave

Two layers of the Gothic paintings were discovered by the conservator France Stele and the restorer Matej Sternen in 1925.[17] The discovery was important, since the lower older layer was then regarded as the oldest wall painting in the territory of Slovenia. Due to its status, they decided to detach the upper younger layer. This led to the first documented detachment of wall paintings in

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[16]   ZOUBEK 2019.

[17]   Matej Sternen, better known as an Impressionist, was one of the first restorers who worked according to the modern principles of conservation-restoration. As a restorer, he worked closely with France Stele.
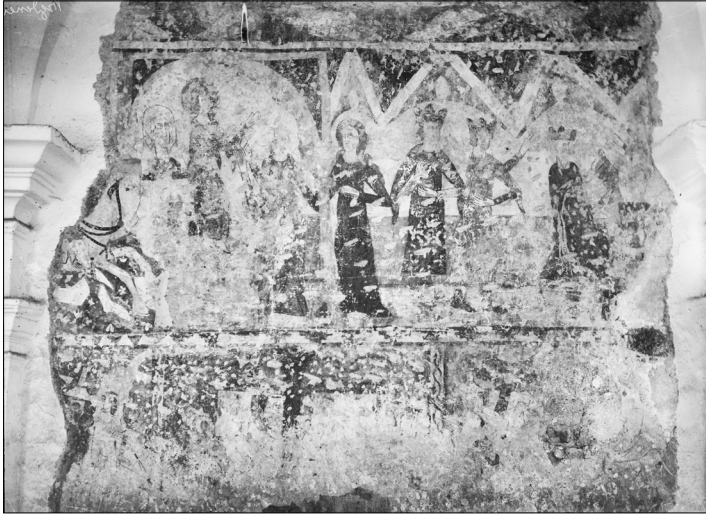
7. Southern wall after detachment
of the younger layer and before
restoration of the older one, 1925.
There is visible damage in the plaster
and on the paint layer (© INDOC
Centre, photolibrary)

8. The present state of the wall
painting on the southern wall after
Sternen's intervention in 1925. Sternen
puttied damaged area using mortar
and then retouched missing parts of
the paint layer (© IPCHS, RC, photo:
Tine Benedik, 2013)

our lands.[18] The detachment was a major technical, aesthetic as well as substantive intervention on the frescoes, which today would not be carried out. At the time, it was considered a technical innovation and was also considered justified in order to uncover and present the lower, older layer of the painting.[19]

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[18]   ŽELEZNIK 1960, p. 75.
[19]   STELE 1925, p. 184.

The Lower, Older Layer of the Paintings in the Nave

After the detachment of the younger layer, Matej Sternen restored the older one, which remained in the church. He treated the damaged parts of the plaster by filling them in with lime mortar, taking no particular care to seal off the edges of the fillings, so the rough surface of the fillings differs from the original surrounding plaster. If we examine his work, we cannot help but feel that it was done quickly and with a kind of 'impressionistic' painting approach. Quick brushstrokes and quick, somewhat superficial plaster applications are visible. His interventions do not enhance the paintings, he merely preserved the appearance of a damaged painting as a result. He left some fillings uncoloured, while overpainting others. He did the smaller ones in *tempera a secco* and the larger ones *in fresco* on freshly applied plaster. As early as 1925 he used the so-called *tratteggio* retouch but in very simplified way so the viewer could discern the difference between the original and the additions. Conservator France Stele wrote that 'the missing areas in the paintings were retouched using the technique of hatching to not insult the viewer, and yet are still clearly discernible to the expert as an addition'.[20] The first use of so called tratteggio technique is mentioned also by Stele in 1965,[21] where he writes that Cesare Brandi started using that technique only after the Second World War.[22]
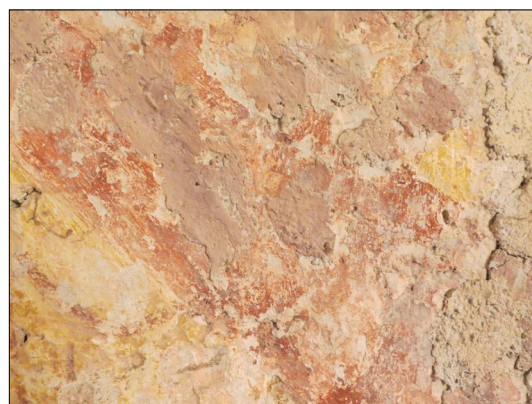
9.–10. Sternen filled losses in the plaster with lime mortar, taking no particular care to seal off the edges of the fillings, and so the rough surface of the fillings differs from the original surrounding plaster. He left some fillings uncoloured (left), while overpainting others (© IPCHS, RC, photos: Anita Klančar Kavčič, 2017)

[20]   STELE 1925, p. 184; translated by Tanja Dolinar.
[21]   STELE 1965, p. 29.
[22]   Cesare Brandi was a leading Italian art critic and historian, an expert on conservation-restoration theory. Based on his theories, the *tratteggio* method was developed at the Instituto Centrale del Restauro by his students Paul Phillipot, Paulo and Laura Mora between 1945 and 1950.

11.–12. As early as 1925 Sternen used the hatching retouching technique, so the viewer could see the difference between the original and the additions (Photos: Vid Klančar, 2021, 2017)

13. The present state of the wall paintings after Sternen's interventions, southern wall of the nave (Photo: Vid Klančar, 2022)

14. Wall painting with digital highlighting of Sternen's interventions. Green marks the puttied areas, which were later retouched, orange marks the areas with Sternen's inpainting on the original plaster, on areas of the abraded paint layer (Photo and graphic editing: Vid Klančar and Anita Klančar Kavčič, 2022)

15.–16. Photographs taken in raking light and with Sternen's interventions marked to illustrate how little of Christ's face is in fact preserved. A large part of painting was puttied and then repainted
(Photos and graphic editing: Vid Klančar and Anita Klančar Kavčič, 2022)

All Sternen's interventions were compatible with the painting since he had used inorganic materials, such as lime, sand and pigments. In areas of lesser damage, he retouched using reversible and removeable tempera, while using fresco technique on freshly applied plaster in areas of greater damage.

Nowadays, we understand that Sternen's interventions, in accordance with Stele's doctrine on the establishment and recognition of Slovene medieval painting, were mostly intended for uncovering. The procedures that followed the uncovering were mainly carried out as urgent protective measures. In this way, they stopped the deterioration of the paintings, and the retouching they

enabled the motifs to be recognised. Two things that are important for the development of contemporary restoration should be emphasised: Sternen used compatible materials and a distinguishing retouch that enables the viewer to distinguish it from the original. Even today, we strive for such a principle, but after hundreds of years, we have established different standards, which Sternen could not have imagined or have been able to implement given the large number and wide range of uncovered and restored frescoes he had to work on. The state of these paintings has remained basically unchanged since the 1925 restoration, therefore the paintings also represent a historical example of conservation and retouching practice.

The Upper, Younger Layer of the Paintings in the Nave

Nine fragments of the younger painting were detached in 1925, leaving only two in the church. The detached fragments ended up at various locations and institutions in the next decades. To explain the situation, we use the restorer Anja Urbanc's digital schematic reconstruction.[23]

As noted above, the first two fragments remained in the church. The next two were restored and are displayed in the permanent exhibition of the National Gallery. Two fragments are in the National Gallery depot. The one on the right was restored in 1958, when the two layers were separated. The other one has not undergone any restoration after Sternen's provisional interventions. Two fragments are kept by the Faculty of Arts at the Department of Art History. They were restored between 2009 and 2011 by the Department of Wall Paintings of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design. One fragment is kept and presented at the Restoration Centre. The last two fragments are considered lost. Since the bottom left fragment never later reappeared, we assume it was not successfully detached. Perhaps the upper has, due to its attractiveness and size, ended up in somebody's home? The question remains unanswered.

Nine fragments are currently stored at six different places. It is worth mentioning that these fragments have been differently restored over different periods, using different materials, frames, pigments and so on, with the result that there is no unified, systematic restoration. What value do these fragments then hold and for whom? Or – as our colleague Alberto Felici put it – who do the frescoes belong to: to the church, the institutions, conservators, art curators, general public, art historians? Can all these institutions understand the need for a common interpretive thread, conservation strategy and indeed home for these fragments? They call for order, systematization, a common source, maybe for a return to where they came from. An interesting digitalisation project for the detached wall paintings has emerged, developed by Anja Urbanc. Many articles have been written on the restoration of the Vrzdenec frescoes. We are considering a symbolic return of

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23   URBANC 2018.

17. A digital reconstruction of the detached fragments of the younger layer (Digital scheme: Anja Urbanc, 2008)

18. When Sternen detached a fragment of the younger layer (1a), a paint layer of the older painting (1b) imprinted on its back. In 1958 restorer Emil Pohl successfully separated both layers. The upper part with heads (2) is a complete reconstruction by Sternen. Moreover, the detached fresco, now in the National Gallery, is presented in mirror image (Photos and colour scheme: Vid Klančar, 2022)

one of the restored fragments to the church as well as a continuous programme of writing, raising awareness and publicity about the church and its works of art. Digitalising or producing a copy of the detached fragments are also possible solutions. These are some of the outstanding questions and challenges we face as experts and institutions.

Wall Paintings in the Chancel

The wall paintings in the chancel were partially uncovered and restored by Matej Sternen between 1925 and 1926.[24] He left parts of the paintings behind the altar under the whitewash, as they were harder to reach. He also left the paintings on the chancel ceiling uncovered. Because they were pressed for time, the wall paintings were imprecisely and sloppily uncovered. Several whitewash fragments remained on the surface of the painting, and during the retouch Sternen simply painted over them. Fortunately, he used reversible and water-soluble tempera for smaller inpaintings and overpaintings. He used coarse lime mortar to putty the larger damaged areas before reconstructing the missing parts of the painting using the fresco technique. The condition of the paintings after Sternen's restoration did not change until 2004.

In 2004, a major intervention was carried out in the chancel.[25] It affected both its interior and exterior. Gothic windows replaced the former Baroque windows which had been part of the chancel since the rebuilding of the church in the 18th century. A committee of experts also stipulated in 2004 that, based on the preserved Gothic openings, a reconstruction of Gothic windows should be carried out.

Between 2006 and 2017 a final uncovering and restoration of the wall paintings in the chancel was undertaken.[26] In 2006, first the ceiling paintings of the chancel were uncovered and restored, then we began intervening on the wall paintings, encountering the problem of preserving and presenting the past interventions. During our work, we came across a painted built-in niche from 1632 that we decided to restore and present. We have also preserved, restored and presented the original (decoratively painted) plasters from the time when the chancel was built. During the restoration, we faced the problem of preserving Sternen's interventions from 1925/26. We removed some of his interventions for technical reasons: his paint layer was smudged and water-soluble and the plaster unstable, partly brittle and coming off. At the same time, some of the interventions were also aesthetically and art historically obtrusive because in parts they covered the original Gothic painting and substituted it with unsuitable inpainting. But in some cases, the Gothic painting under Sternen's inpaintings was so poorly preserved that the removal of the latter would cause the motif to be undecipherable. Which is why we compromised, keeping these inpaintings on the wall.

During our interventions, some of Sternen's unstable plaster was replaced with new plaster, on which a reconstruction of the painting was carried out. Today, instead of a reconstruction,

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[24] On 23 August 1926, the conservator France Stele issued a short, handwritten note on the restoration of the frescoes in the chancel for the Heritage Protection Office in Ljubljana in which he stated that the painter Sternen completed the uncovering and restoration of the said frescoes in the past two years.

[25] The restoration was carried out by the IPCHS, RC, and the project manager Martina Kikelj.

[26] Uncovering and restoration of the chancel wall paintings was carried out by the Restoration Center, project was managed by Anita Klančar Kavčič, IPCHS, RC.

19.–20. Photo of the chancel in 2006 shows that Sternen (in 1925/26) uncovered only the paintings on the walls. The paintings on the ceiling were uncovered and restored between 2006 and 2017 (© IPCHS, RC, photos: Anita Klančar Kavčič)

we would have probably only made a neutrally toned plaster, but at that time the owner's expectations were taken into account. The complex situation of the chancel poses several dilemmas concerning the preservation and presentation of the past interventions. Today, the new findings would require rather different solutions.

After the interventions in the chancel, a photo brochure of the wall paintings was made (Fig. 28). It marks the historical alterations and reconstructions, and displays the current presentation of the chancel paintings.

21.–22. In 2004, the reconstruction of the Gothic windows was carried out in the chancel.
This intervention affected both the interior and exterior (Photos: Martina Lesar Kikelj)
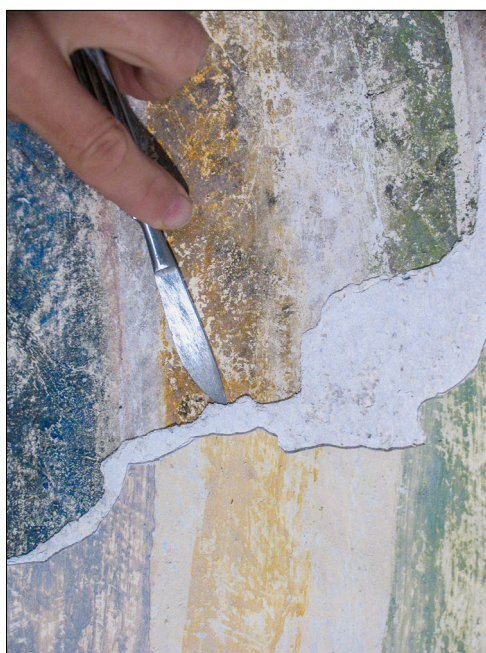
23.–24. Removing Sternen's infillings and inpaintings which covered the Gothic painting.
They were removed for technical and aesthetic reasons (© IPCHS, RC, photos: Anita Klančar Kavčič, 2014, 2006)
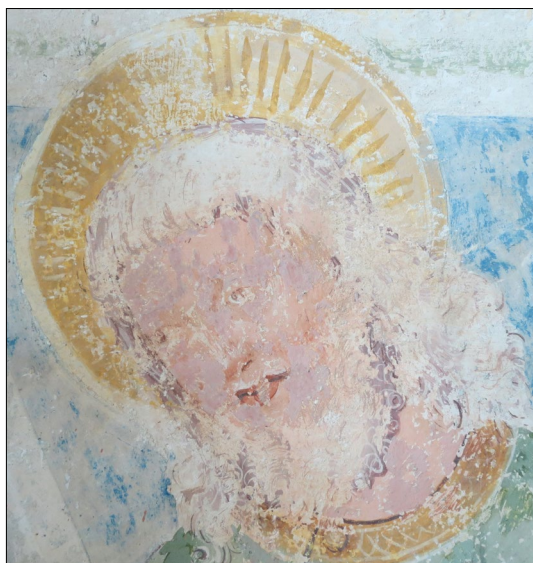
25.–26. Detail of the painting after Sternen's interventions (from 1926, photographed in 2014) and after the last interventions in 2017. Sternen's paintings were partially removed, retouching was carried out on the damaged areas (© IPCHS, RC, photos: Anita Klančar Kavčič)

27. Ceiling of the chancel after the uncovering and restoration in 2017 (© IPCHS, RC, photo: Anita Klančar Kavčič)

The original plaster with the fragmented wall painting from the first half of the 15th century

The painted niche of 1632

The former Baroque windows

The damage on Gothic wall paintings caused by installation of Baroque windows

Reconstruction of the Gothic windows (2004)

28. Orthophoto of the wall paintings in the chancel after the last conservation-restoration treatment in 2017. Past historical interventions are marked in different colours (Photo and graphic editing: Vid Klančar, 2020)

Wall Paintings on the Southern Façade of the Church

The final, fourth section of this article concerns the paintings on the southern exterior walls of the church. The detachment of the monumental painting of St Christopher was a major procedure endorsed by an expert committee of art historians, conservators, restorers, and locals due to the poor condition of the painting. Based on archival photos and the remains of the painting, a copy in fresco technique was made in 2004. The original was conserved and returned to the newly built chapel of rest in Vrzdenec in three transferable pieces. The detachment of the painting, production of a copy, placement of the detached painting in the chapel of rest are all again major substantive, technical and aesthetic interventions. Changing the location also means changing the meaning and context. The monumental painting of St Christopher usually appeared on façades along the road so anyone passing by could see him – be it travellers, worshippers, the ill. It was also believed that any ill person who sees St Christopher, lives to see another day. But it is questionable whether there could be any other, better solution for this painting. In the worst-case scenario, the detached painting would end up in a depot.

Which Christopher is more authentic? The damaged original painting before detachment, the copy of Christopher on the facade or the detached and restored painting in the chapel of rest?

29. Exterior of the chancel with the original,
poorly preserved painting of St Christopher
and the Baroque window
(© IPCHS, RC, photo: Valentin Benedik, 2001)

30. Exterior of the chancel after a copy was made
of the monumental painting of St Christopher and
after the reconstruction of the Gothic windows
(Photo: Vid Klančar, 2008)

31. The detached and restored painting in
the chapel of rest (Photo: Vid Klančar, 2022)

32. An example of retouching by tonal adjustment on the Gothic wall paintings in the church of St Judoc in Šentjošt. It is very minimal retouching, that pushes the damaged areas into the visual background (Photo: Vid Klančar, 2021)

Conclusion

The past Vrzdenec interventions discussed here are rather radical and aggressive from a present-day perspective. However, they need to be understood in context, as society's attitude towards heritage preservation changes over time. By studying, systematizing, examining and evaluating the past interventions much can be learned, which can in turn provide insights into how to proceed with current and future conservation and restoration work.

This overview of the past practice and exchange of opinions between restorers, conservators, art historians as well as the general public leaves many open questions. To find answers, a special Work Group for Protection of Wall Paintings has been established by the IPCHS,[27] which organises symposia and workshops pertaining to the topic.[28]

In 2020, an international workshop on retouching was held at the church of St Judoc in Šentjošt, where we practiced the esthetic reintegration (retouches and infillings), which is more respectful of the authenticity and documentary value of the artwork.[29]

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[27] The Working Group for the Protection and Preservation of Wall Paintings was officially designated in 2018.

[28] Already before 2018, the same group of art-historian conservators and conservator-restorers organized two symposia under the auspices of the IPCHS and the Slovenian Society for Conservation-Restoration. *Retouching and the Issues of Wall Painting Presentation* was held on 27 Oct 2016 in Škofja Loka, while the second international symposium with title *The Aesthetic Presentation of Wall Paintings – Problems and Solutions*, took place on 3 and 4 Oct 2017 at the Slovenian National Gallery in Ljubljana. Following these two symposia, a monograph *The Presentation of Wall Paintings – Views, Concepts, and Approaches* was published by IPCHS, Restoration Centre.

[29] The international workshop *Retouching on wall paintings. Methodological approaches, techniques and materials* was organized in 2020 by the Working Group for the Protection and Preservation of Wall Paintings, IPCHS and

Meetings, talks, symposia, and workshops led us to be more sensitive and cautious during interventions. Restorers, conservators and art historians alike are probably insufficiently aware that all interventions, from uncovering, cleaning, consolidation, plastering to retouching, are not only technical but also visual. That is why we focus on more restrained, analytical, systematic and interdisciplinary approaches, which should enable us to establish and maintain best practice in the art-historical and documentary presentation of our wall paintings.

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the Slovenian Society for Conservation-Restoration. In addition to presenting and debating the theoretical basis and historical examples of retouching, the workshop also included practical work sessions, including puttying and retouching on the Gothic wall paintings in the church of St Judoc in Šentjošt. The workshop was led by internationally renowned conservator-restorer Professor Alberto Felici from Florence.

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Anita Klančar Kavčič

Stenske poslikave v cerkvi svetega Kancijana na Vrzdencu
Izvedeni konservatorsko-restavratorski posegi, konservatorski izzivi, interpretacija in vrednotenje

Povzetek

Cerkev sv. Kancijana na Vrzdencu se s štirimi cikli gotskih poslikav uvršča med pomembnejše spomenike srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva v Sloveniji. Vse od odkritja poslikav leta 1925 pa do danes so se na njih zvrstili številni konservatorsko-restavratorski posegi, ki so vplivali na njihovo današnje stanje in izgled. Obseg odkritih poslikav, način obdelave ometa na poškodbah, izvedba retuš in doslikav, izvedba kopije in rekonstrukcije ter snemanje poslikav, njihova dislokacija in s tem sprememba njihovega konteksta so posegi, ki so stoletje sooblikovali končno prezentacijo in posledično percepcijo vrzdenških poslikav.

Interpretacijski, metodološki, tehnološki in prezentacijski modeli pristopov konserviranja in restavriranja so se skozi zgodovino restavratorstva razvijali in spreminjali. Sodobno konservatorstvo in restavratorstvo skušata vzpostaviti kritičen in analitičen odnos tako do preteklih kot do sodobnih posegov. Vrzdenec kot primer raznolikih preteklih konservatorsko-restavratorskih praks in pristopov poziva konservatorje in restavratorje k bolj premišljenim, analitičnim in zadržanim pristopom, ki stremijo k ohranjanju avtentičnosti umetnine in omogočajo jasno razločevanje med izvirnikom in dodanim. V tej smeri je bila leta 2020 v organizaciji Delovne skupine za stenske slike in Zavoda za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije izvedena mednarodna delavnica o retušah, ki s primeri estetske integracije predstavlja nova strokovna izhodišča in rešitve za nadaljnje delo na stenskih poslikavah.

Mural Paintings from the 14ᵗʰ Century in the Church of Saint Maurus in Arcano Superiore (Friuli, Italy)

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The small church of St Maurus in Arcano Superiore in Friuli houses one of the best preserved though, unfortunately, poorly known fresco cycles in Friuli from the first half of the *Trecento*. The murals were discovered during conservation and restoration works after the devastating earthquake of 1976 and have not yet been systematically discussed in the literature. Until now, the cycle has been dated to the end of the 14ᵗʰ or the beginning of the 15ᵗʰ century, but (as we shall see later) elements in the frescoes seem to suggest an earlier date.

The church of St Maurus is located in Arcano Superiore on the banks of the river Corno. It was probably connected to the family de Corno or Tricano (later d'Arcano) at the time of its construction and it served as the family chapel from at least the 13ᵗʰ to the 15ᵗʰ century. The family is thought to have come to Friuli at the beginning of the 11ᵗʰ century, in the time of Patriarch Popone (1019–1042), who granted them their first fief.[1] Between the 11ᵗʰ and the 13ᵗʰ centuries different variants of their family name appear in documents.[2] The first securely identifiable members of the family can be traced from the second half of the 12ᵗʰ century onward, where two brothers are mentioned: Bertoldo (+1211) and Ropretto (better known as Roberto, alive 1186/1214), the sons of Leonardo di Corno (alive 1161), who was probably the first owner of the land where the church of St Maurus is located.[3] It is presumed that Bertoldo kept his father's residence on the

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[1] The origins of the family are not entirely clear. According to one theory, the first members of the family came to Friuli from Bavaria, and according to another, from the royal family of Croatia (as supposedly indicated by the coat of arms with a red and white checkerboard fields). For different hypotheses, see MANZANO 1858, p. 304; BURBA 1969, p. 21; VENUTI, VENUTI 1998, pp. 113–116.

[2] Tricano or Darcano. For more on this, see mostly VENUTI, VENUTI 1998, pp. 117–118, with older literature.

[3] For more on the family d'Arcano and its first three known members, see DEGANI 1897, pp. 17–18; BURBA 1969, pp. 21, 25–29; DE VITT 1997, pp. 267–271; VENUTI, VENUTI 1998, pp. 118–123. For the family tree, see City Library "Vincenzo Joppi", Udine, Fondo del Torso, Genealogie nobiliari, Arcano d e Grattoni dArcano, d'Arcano I, d'Arcano V; Libro d'Oro della Nobiltà Mediterranea: Genealogie delle famiglie nobili del Mediterraneo, d'Arcano (http://www.genmarenostrum.com/pagine-lettere/letteraa/d'Arcano/arcano1.htm).

banks of the river Corno (along with the family name de Corno), while the other son built a castle half a kilometre away and was called Tricano.[4] Since Bertoldo had no successors, he left his estate to his brother and his brother's sons in a will in 1211.[5]

The first known mention of the church of St Maurus dates to 1238, when Ropretto's son Bertoldo II di Tricano granted permanent liberty to the "Cortina" of the church and established a free market there.[6] The next known information comes from 1390, when Bertoldo's great great grandson Odorico d'Arcano founded and endowed the chaplaincy of St Maurus,[7] which was relocated to the church of Santa Maria della Neve in the upper castle already in 1420.[8] The church of St Maurus, however, still keeps its medieval frescoes as a reminder of its primary function.[9]

The frescoes were found after the earthquake of 1976 when a part of the roof and the upper part of the triumphal arch collapsed (Fig. 1).[10] The restoration works began shortly afterwards and led to the discovery of three different layers of mural paintings: two smaller fragments of older layers on the south wall (Fig. 2) and a 14th century fresco cycle covering all four walls of the nave. The two fragments of fresco paintings preserved on the triumphal arch were detached due to the danger of collapse[11] and restored to their original position in 1988,[12] while the murals on the north, south, and west nave wall were cleaned and restored *in situ*.[13] Besides their artistic

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[4]   DEGANI 1897, p. 17; BURBA 1969, pp. 22–24. For more information on the two residences, see mostly MIOTTI 1978, pp. 39–48. More recently, Giovanni Melchior published two more popular publications on Rive d'Arcano, on its churches and the upper castle. For more on this, see MELCHIOR 2009; MELCHIOR 2011.

[5]   VENUTI, VENUTI 1998, p. 118.

[6]   MANZANO 1858, p. 328; BIANCHI 1877, p. 9; DEGANI 1897, p. 17. For the information obtained on the church of St Maurus and its description, see BURBA 1969, pp. 55–56; MARCHETTI 1972, p. 87; VENUTI, VENUTI 1998, pp. 162–163; MELCHIOR 2009, pp. 207–214.

[7]   DEGANI 1897, p. 21.

[8]   This was supposedly due to the devastation of the primary residence; see BURBA 1969, p. 23 (as his source he cites Ferdinando BLASICH, *Cronachetta dei paroci di Rive d'Arcano*, Udine 1882). On the appearance of the primary residence around the church of St Maurus, see also MIOTTI 1978, pp. 39–48; VENUTI, VENUTI 1998, pp. 162–163. It is still unknown when the residence on the banks of the river Corno was destroyed. For different theories, see ANTONIUTTI 1922, pp. 15–16; BURBA 1969, pp. 22–23, 55; MIOTTI 1978, pp. 39–42; VENUTI, VENUTI 1998, p. 162.

[9]   For more on the parish of St Martin in Rive d'Arcano and its succursal churches, see mainly DE VITT 1997, pp. 271–274, with older bibliography.

[10] CASADIO 1983.

[11] For more on the restoration works and the removal of a wall paintings from the triumphal arch, see the restoration reports from 1978 held in the Superintendency for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Udine, Historical-documentary archive, Rive d'Arcano, Chiesa di S. Mauro, Rep. 1588, Impresa Seravalli-Gemona del Friuli; Stacco affreschi della chiesa di S. Mauro di Rive d'Arcano.

[12] The restauration works began after the roof leak in 1984 and lasted until 1988. For the restoration works in the church after 1988, see the restoration reports held in Superintendency for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Udine, Historical-documentary archive, Rive d'Arcano, Chiesa di S. Mauro, 7/281. Cf. also CASADIO 1991a.

[13] RIZZI 1978, p. 23; BONELLI 1983; CASADIO 1983, p. 80.

1. Church of St Maurus after the earthquake of 1976,
Arcano Superiore (© Superintendency for Archaeology, Fine Arts
and Landscape of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Udine)

2. South nave wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore, 1978
(© Superintendency for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Udine)

3. The donor Pantaleone d'Arcano, south nave wall,
Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

4. Female donor figure, entrance wall,
Church of St Francis, Cividale del Friuli
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

value, the three fresco layers which were discovered also indicate the church's approximate time of construction as well as its dimensions. The oldest fragment found on the south wall has been dated to the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century, which would be more or less the time of the construction of the primary building.[14] Its original size for now remains unknown but it seems evident that the church acquired its current dimensions at the latest in the first half of the 14th century. In that period all four walls were painted with a fresco cycle. According to Giovanni Burba, the elevation of the ceiling, and the enlargement of the windows and doors was carried out in the 16th century, and since then the nave has not changed its appearance.[15]

While the oldest layer reveals a figure of the *Young Christ*, the second layer shows a small fragmentary figure (Fig. 3), a typical Trecento representation of a donor. Similar examples can be found in many different locations in Friuli: the kneeling female figure on the entrance wall of the church of St Francis in Cividale (Fig. 4), a male figure located below the scene depicting Odoric of Pordenone in Asia with St Leonard, a Holy Bishop and Madonna Enthroned in the south transept of the same church[16] or a portrait representing Lodovico della Torre and his wife in the north transept of the Basilica of Aquileia.[17] Since the church of St Maurus was a family chapel of the

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14   Cf. BURBA 1969, p. 55; CASADIO 1983, p. 80.
15   BURBA 1969, p. 55.
16   For the scene with Odoric of Pordenone, see VESCUL 2011, pp. 110–111, 116–118, with older bibliography.
17   For the fresco painting in the Basilica of Aquleia, see NARDINI 2010, p. 527. For the identification of the donor, see MURAT 2021, p. 214.
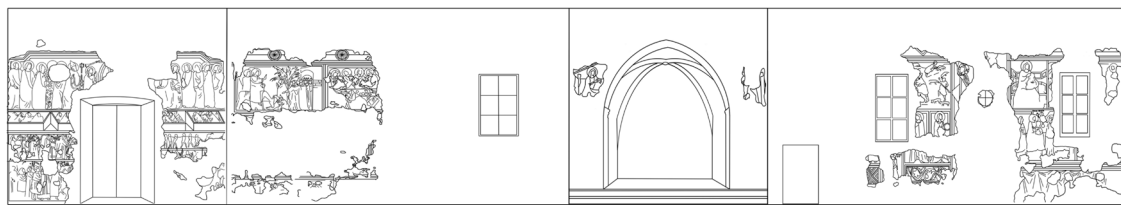
5. Interior with mural paintings, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Drawing: Sara Turk Marolt)
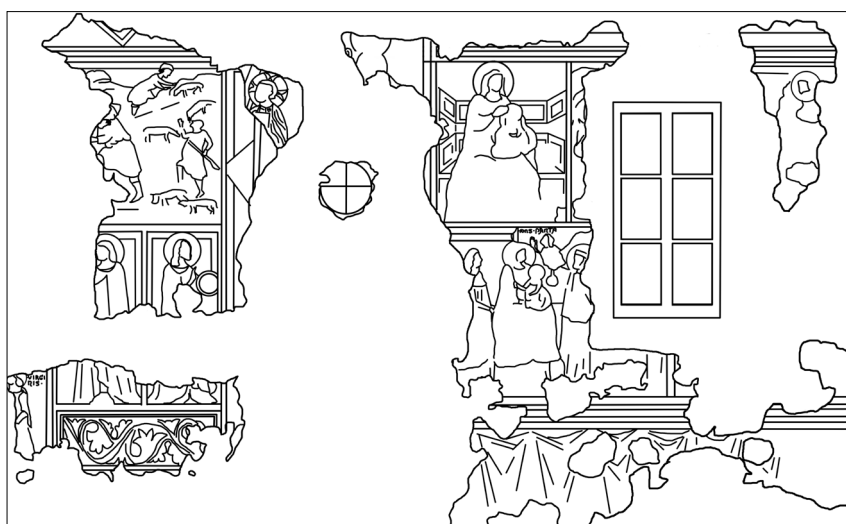
6. South nave wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Drawing: Sara Turk Marolt)

noble family d'Arcano, it is not surprising that the preserved inscription in gothic script reveals the donor as Pantaleone d'Arcano – the great grandson of Bertoldo II di Tricano – documented in historical sources between 1324 and 1334.[18]

The other murals, covering all four walls of the nave, belong to the third layer (Fig. 5). They include the *Last Judgement* on the entrance wall, the cycle depicting scenes from the life of Christ and figures of saints on the lateral walls as well as the two fragments on the triumphal arch (Figs. 5–8).[19] The frescoes of this layer are poorly preserved, mostly due to the holes made to roughen the surface in preparation for new plaster. Focusing on the iconography, the south wall murals (Fig. 6) represent episodes from Christ's infancy and different figures of saints. In the upper

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[18]   The donor was recognised as Pantaleone d'Arcano already by CALIARI 1994, pp. 28, 65–68. For the information on Pantaleone, see City Library "Vincenzo Joppi", Udine, Fondo del Torso, Genealogie nobiliari, Arcano d e Grattoni dArcano, d'Arcano V; Libro d'Oro della Nobiltà Mediterranea: Genealogie delle famiglie nobili del Mediterraneo, d'Arcano (http://www.genmarenostrum.com/pagine-lettere/letteraa/d'Arcano/arcano1.htm).

[19]   On the iconography, see also RIZZI 1978, p. 23; CASADIO 1983; CALIARI 1994, pp. 12–53.
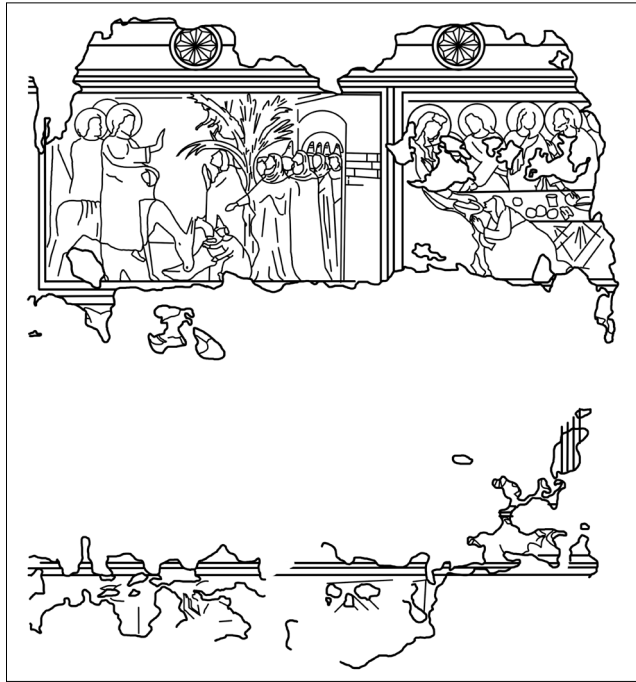
*7. North nave wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore
(Drawing: Sara Turk Marolt)*
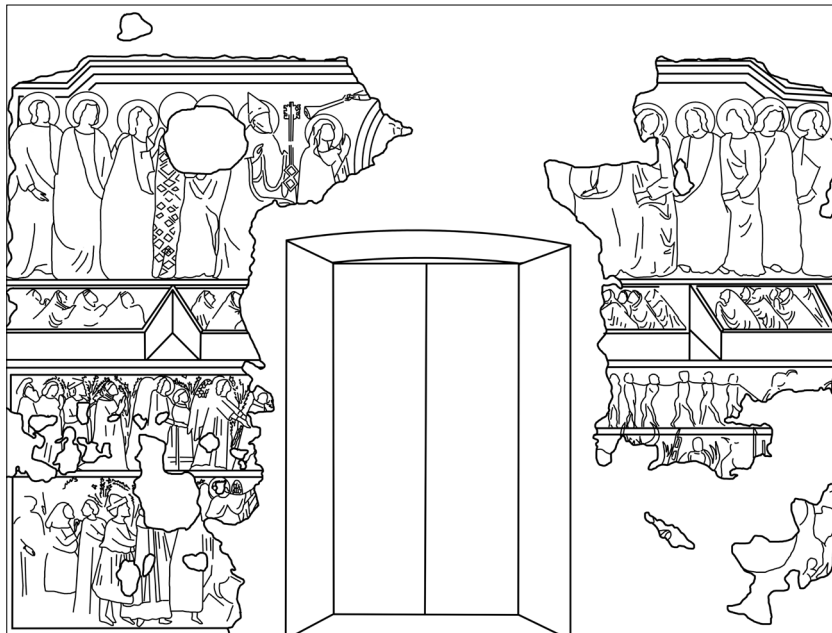
8. Entrance wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Drawing: Sara Turk Marolt)

level, starting from the left, there is a partially preserved *Annunciation to the shepherds* (Fig. 22), followed by a monumental, fragmentarily preserved St Christopher, and a *Madonna and Child Enthroned*. In the last scene of the upper level, the remains of a throne and some fragments of standing figures of saints are visible. Moving to the lower level and starting from the left, there is an unidentified female saint and St John the Baptist, followed by the St Christopher and a *Flight into Egypt* scene. The latter was first identified by Alberto Rizzi and Paolo Casadio as the *Coronation of the Virgin* and later as the *Virgin and Saints*.[20] However, Barbara Caliari correctly concluded that the scene depicting the Virgin seated on a donkey with the Christ Child on her lap clearly suggests a *Flight to Egypt*.[21] In addition, the same motif in a similar composition can be found on the south wall of the church of St Mark in Basiliano.[22] The last scene of the lower level unfortunately remains unrecognizable. Moving to the lowest level, starting from the right, there is a motif of painted curtains, frequently used to adorn the dadoes of Christian sanctuaries of this period.[23] The painted curtains motif is then followed by figures of two saints, a short decorative band with floral elements, a fragmentarily preserved figure of a female saint with the inscription *VIRGINIS* (Fig. 26), and a smaller decorative area with a yellow geometric pattern above which the lower part of an unknown figure can be seen. The murals on the north wall (Fig. 7) depict two motifs from the life of Christ in the upper register: *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* and the *Last Supper*.[24] The scenes of the lower level have unfortunately not been preserved. There are, however, some fragments in the dado, depicting imaginary creatures.[25] The entrance wall presents a well-preserved *Last Judgment* (Fig. 8) depicted in four registers. In the upper register, there is a gathering of Saints with an (unfortunately missing) Christ in Mandorla in the centre. The only two discernible saints in the group are Virgin Mary and St Peter on Christ's left (Fig. 17), while the others do not seem to have any classifying attributes. The register below (on both sides of the door) depicts a very interesting *Resurrection of the dead*: the figures are illustrated in their coffins in white shrouds, turning their heads towards Christ. The third register depicts the saved in a procession accompanied by angels (on the left) and the sinners with a rope around their necks, held by the devil (on the right). Finally, the fourth register offers more or less the same

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[20]   RIZZI 1978, p. 23; CASADIO 1983, p. 80; CASADIO 1991a, p. 272.

[21]   CALIARI 1994, pp. 26–27.

[22]   For the frescoes in Basiliano, see CASADIO 1991b.

[23]   In Friuli curtains adorn the *zoccolo* of almost all painted sacral spaces. We can take for example the main choir chapel in the church of St Francis in Udine, the church of St Catharine in Pasian di Prato, the church of St Ursula in Villorba, the church of St Mark in Basiliano and others.

[24]   CASADIO 1983, p. 80, thought the motif depicts *Dinner in the house of Simon*, but later he recognised the scene as *Last supper* (CASADIO 1991a, p. 272). The figure leaning on Christ's breasts, however, cannot be any other than the apostle John, and the figure on the other side of the table, the only one without a halo, is Judas.

[25]   Recognised by CASADIO 1991a, p. 272, as dragon and harpy, while CALIARI 1994, pp. 42–44, recognised them as a man in a prayer in front of the deceased and a monstrous creature.

iconography: an angel is showing the saved ones the way up to heaven (on the left), while the sinners are sent to hell (on the right).[26] The two remaining fragmentary scenes on the triumph arch (Figs. 8, 15) depict the *Madonna Lactans* (on the left side) and a fragment with Christ as a child, seated in his mother's lap and leaning forward (on the right side). The latter shows a lower part of the Virgin's garment and a part of the architecture (maybe a door) in the background. The scene was identified as the *Adoration of the Magi* by Paolo Casadio, and this seems to be the most likely hypothesis for now.[27]

The first scholar to mention the newly discovered frescoes in the church of St Maurus was Alberto Rizzi (1978). He dated the fragment of the oldest layer on the south wall to the 12th or the 13th century and the other paintings on the same wall to the 14th century. The frescoes on the entrance wall including the *Last Judgment* and those on the north wall were dated to the 15th century.[28] In 1983, in the catalogue of the restoration works carried out by the Superintendency of Friuli Venezia Giulia between 1976 and 1981, Paolo Casadio discussed the frescoes of St Maurus.[29] He agreed with Rizzi on dating the oldest fragment to the late 12th or early 13th century. The figures of saints in the lower level and the traces of the motif with the Virgin and Saints below the window near the choir on the south wall as well as the two fragments on the triumphal arch were dated to the second half of the 14th century. The *Last Judgment* on the entrance wall, the two episodes from the life of Christ on the north wall, and all the other scenes on the south wall, however, were recognized as a homogenous cycle.[30] He dated them to the beginning of the 15th century and attributed them to a local master or a workshop, still strongly linked to 14th-century pictorial concepts.[31] In 1991 Casadio reconsidered his thesis, defining as a part of the homogenous cycle also the paintings on the triumphal arch and dating them to the end of the 14th or the beginning of the 15th century. According to Casadio, the fragmentary figure of a donor belonged to the third layer of paintings and was dated more or less to the same period as the fresco cycle (recognized by him as the second layer).[32] A more detailed analysis of the murals in the church of St Maurus was carried out by Barbara Caliari in her diploma thesis (1994) written under the

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[26]   The saved ones could also depict members of the d'Arcano family, but for now we do not have enough information to support this thesis.

[27]   CASADIO 1991a, p. 272; cf. also CALIARI 1994, pp. 13–14. Another option could be the Madonna Enthroned with a Child, Saints, and a donor towards whom Jesus is leaning. We have a similar example on the north wall of the church of St Anastasia in Verona (COZZI 1992, p. 356) or on the entrance wall in the church of San Giovanni dei Cavalieri in San Tommaso di Majano (CADORE 1983), but as has already been noted, the *Adoration of the Magi* seems more likely.

[28]   RIZZI 1978, p. 23.

[29]   CASADIO 1983.

[30]   CASADIO 1983, p. 80.

[31]   CASADIO 1983, p. 81.

[32]   CASADIO 1991a.

supervision of Fulvio Zuliani.[33] She correctly recognized that the figure of the donor (recognized by her as Pantaleone d'Arcano) represents the second (not the third) layer of paintings and that all the other murals (excluding the 13th-century fragment) belong to a single cycle, painted by different masters or a workshop.[34] Caliari, like Casadio and Rizzi, dated the third layer of paintings to the end of the 14th or the beginning of the 15th century and concluded that they must have been commissioned around 1390, when Odorico d'Arcano (son of Pantaleone d'Arcano) founded and endowed the chaplaincy of St Maurus.[35] According to Caliari, the second layer, being stylistically close to the third, had been painted just a few years before and was also commissioned by Pantaleone's son, Odorico, to honour his father.[36]

However, the murals in St Maurus do not really match the style of late 14th or early 15th-century painting in Friuli, and there do not seem to be any other indicators to support such a late date. As Casadio already observed, the frescoes seem to be strongly linked to 14th-century pictorial concepts.[37] Perhaps the reason for this could simply be an earlier date of their execution.

Focusing on the stylistic features of the third-layer frescoes, it can be observed that the figures are painted mostly in three-quarter profiles on monochromatic backgrounds. Their bodies are defined by a line, but the colour shading already indicates their volume and drapery folds. The placement of the figures is deft, they are depicted realistically, in correct proportions, and their movement is calm. Their facial features are defined by a thin black line that indicates a broad nose, the middle line of the mouth (while the upper and lower part of lips is shown only by a red colour), the eyebrows, and almond-shaped eyes with highlighted eyelids and bags under the eye. Flat halos and clothes were decorated with pearls in lead white (a remnant of the 13th-century painting) and the forms of the thrones stick to simple, classic shapes. The individual scenes are separated by simple bands in red, white and yellow. All of these features are characteristic of Friulian painting of the first half, or more specifically second quarter, of the Trecento. In that period the tradition of 13th-century painting had already coalesced with elements of *Giottism*, which came from Padua and spread in the Friulian area through an important *Giottesque* workshop in Sesto al Reghena (1316). The same stylistic features were recognized by Enrica Cozzi (1985) and Clara Santini (1997) in some of the murals in the church of St Francis in Udine, in the *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale, in the church of St Cecilia in Spilimbergo, the church of San Giovanni dei Templari in San Tommaso di Majano and in Udine Cathedral.[38] The frescoes in St Maurus also seem to be a part of the same culture. The similarities in style, iconography, and clothing culture can be found in many of

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33   CALIARI 1994.
34   For the second layer, see CALIARI 1994, pp. 65–68, and for the third layer CALIARI 1994, pp. 65–76.
35   CALIARI 1994, pp. 65–76
36   CALIARI 1994, p. 67.
37   CASADIO 1983, p. 81.
38   Cf. COZZI 1985, p 161; SANTINI 1997, pp. 93–97.

9. Figure of a saint, entrance wall,
Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

10. St Cecilia, Church of St Cecilia, Spilimbergo
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

the above locations. The almond-shaped eyes with marked eyelids, a broad nose and wavy hair that is slightly shaded at the edges, characteristic of the third-layer murals in St Maurus (Fig. 9), can be found, for example, in the church of St Cecilia in Spilimbergo (Fig. 10), in San Tommaso di Majano (Fig. 11) or on the fragmentary fresco, detached from Casa Binfar in Venzone, depicting St Eligius (Fig. 12).[39] Facial feature resemblance can also be seen in the *Enthroned Madonnas* in St Maurus (Figs. 13, 15), Spilimbergo (Fig. 14) and the church of St Francis in Udine (Fig. 16) or in the female figures in the church of St Maurus (Fig. 17), the church of St Francis in Udine (Fig. 18) and the *Tempietto Longobardo* in Cividale (Fig. 19).[40] Additionally, similar sty-

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[39] Clara Santini ascribed both frescoes, the one in St Cecilia and the one in San Tomaso di Majano, to the same master. For more on this, see SANTINI 1997, pp. 93–94. For more on the fresco in San Tomaso di Majano, see also WALCHER 1978, pp. 43–51. For the fragmentary fresco from Casa Binfar in Venzone (now saved in the Town hall), see COLLEDANI 2010.

[40] The latter two were definitely painted by the same master.

11. Virgin of Mercy (detail), Church San Giovanni dei Templari, San Tomaso di Majano (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

12. St Eligius, Town hall (from Casa Binfar), Venzone (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

13. Madonna Enthroned, south nave wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

14. Madonna Enthroned, south nave wall, Church of St Francis, Udine (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

15. *Madonna lactans, left triumph arch,*
Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

16. *Enthroned Madonna and Child,*
Church of St Cecilia, Spilimbergo
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

17. *St Peter, Virgin Mary, entrance wall,*
Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

18. *Female figure, entrance wall,*
Church of St Francis, Udine
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

listic features have been noted in a fragmentarily preserved cycle in the church of St Francis in Cividale (Fig. 20). The first element indicating a connection is a decorative band consisting of two-coloured ribbons with acanthus spirals and round fields with geometric flowers in white and red (Figs. 6, 20, 21) that is not very common in Friuli. The scene recognized as the *Annunciation to the shepherds* in Cividale also shows a strong resemblance to the same scene painted in Arcano Superiore (Fig. 22), specifically in the painting of the background (with the rocks or the sheep grazing in the field). Despite the difference in quality, if we compare the shepherds in Cividale (Fig. 21) to the ones in Arcano (the latter were probably painted by the workshop and not by the leading master himself), the quality of the painting of the shepherds in Cividale appears to be on a par with, for example, St Peter on the entrance wall in St Maurus (Fig. 17). Another element indicating some kind of connection between the two locations is the architectural forms in one of the scenes in

19. Annunciation (detail), Tempietto Longobardo, Cividale del Friuli (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

Cividale (Fig. 20, especially the lower part of the left architecture) which strongly resemble the architecture of one of the thrones (Fig. 13) in St Maurus. In addition, the similar pattern of the shading with dark colour, used for the upper parts of the architecture, and white colour, used to indicate the lower parts, can be seen in both. Based on the comparison, there is a strong possibility that the same master worked in both locations.

Other elements of the third-layer murals in St Maurus seem to indicate an earlier date as well. In terms of clothing culture, it can be observed that most of the figures are wearing floor-length clothes (*gonnella*, *guarnacca,* a coat) (Fig. 25), typical of early Trecento fashion. The only exception is the shepherds in the scene *Annunciation to the shepherds* on the south wall (Fig. 22) and two male figures in a procession in the fourth register on the entrance wall (Fig. 23), whose clothes go down to their calves and are thus suggestive of the fashion of around 1340. At tha

*20. Fragmentarily preserved scenes from Christ's life, south nave wall, Church of St Francis, Cividale del Friuli
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)*

*21. Annunciation to the Shepherds, south nave wall, Church of St Francis, Cividale del Friuli
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)*

time, male clothes begin to shorten, firstly reaching the calves and later on the thighs.[41] This type of male clothing can be found for example in the murals on the north wall of the church of St Catherine in Pasian di Prato (Fig. 24), dated to the 1340s by Enrica Cozzi.[42] Another important

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[41] BELLOSI 1977a, p. 25. At approximately the same time, a type of male hat with a long, hanging finial, worn by a second left figure appears. See SANTINI 1997, p. 94 (n. 28).

[42] For more on the frescoes in Pasian di Prato, see COZZI 2009.

22. *Annunciation to the Shepherds,*
south nave wall, Church of St Maurus,
Arcano Superiore (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

23. *The Last Judgment (detail), entrance wall,*
Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

date indicator of the Trecento fashion is the size of a collar, especially in women's dresses.[43] At the beginning of the century, the collar fits the neck closely, as it does in frescoes in the Cappella degli Scrovegni which Giotto painted between 1303 and 1305. Later on, it becomes wider and around 1340 reaches almost to the shoulders.[44] The collars of the dresses, worn by figures painted in the church of St Maurus, are not completely up to the neck but already a bit wider, which indicates the fashion between 1320 and 1340. Further, in relation to women's dresses, it is important to point out the type of sleeve (*manicottolo*) most clearly seen in the female figure with the inscription VIRGINIS (Fig. 26) on the south wall of the church of St Maurus.[45] The sleeves of women's clothes (especially *guarnacca*s) at the beginning of the century are of normal width, closer to the body, regardless of their length. At the beginning of the thirties, though, sleeves started to get longer and became pendulous, as it is in our case.[46] We can find similar examples in the church of St Catherine in Pasian di Prato (Fig. 27), in the chapel of St Nicholas in Udine Cathedral (the St Agnes figure), or in the Basilica of Aquileia (St Elisabeth in the left transept), all of which can be

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[43] This important indicator was pointed out by Luciano Bellosi in the two of his referential studies on clothing culture in the early Trecento Italy. See BELLOSI 1977a; BELLOSI 1977b.

[44] BELLOSI 1977a, pp. 25–30.

[45] The sleeves were often detachable, for which the term *manicottolo* became established. See BELLOSI 1977a, p. 25.

[46] Towards the middle of the century, they could reach almost to the ground. See BELLOSI 1977a, p. 25.

24. St Lucy resisting efforts to move her (detail), Church of St Catherine, Pasian di Prato (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

25. Theory of saints, entrance wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

dated between 1330 and 1345.[47] Regarding iconography, parallels with early 14th-century painting can be seen in the manner of the depiction of St John the Baptist, who is holding a disc with the image of a lamb in his left hand (Fig. 28). This iconographic motif is quite common in early

[47]　For Pasian di Prato, see COZZI 2009. For the earlier layer of the frescoes in the chapel of St Nicholas in the Udine cathedral, see TURK 2021, with an older bibliography. For the female saint in the Basilica of Aquileia, see NARDINI 2010, pp. 534–536. The author dated the female saint to the second half of the century, comparing her to the female saint (St Ursula?) on the south wall of the church of St Francis in Cividale. But in terms of her central composition, facial features and dress type, a more suitable dating would be to the 1330s.

26. *Female saint, south nave wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)*

27. *St Lucy before the Judge (detail), Church of St Catherine, Pasian di Prato (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)*

Trecento Friuli painting and can be found in the chapel of St Nicholas in Udine Cathedral (Fig. 29), the church of St Michael in Biljana, or inside the Basilica of Aquileia complex.[48]

To summarise, the analysis and comparison of style, iconographic elements, and dress culture of the third-layer mural paintings in Arcano Superiore suggest that the frescoes were created somewhere around 1340. They were probably painted by a local workshop – as suggested by varying quality and style – the leading master of which had a fairly degree of expertise. In this case, the time of realization of the third-layer murals probably still corresponds to the period of Pantaleone d'Arcano (documented in 1324 and 1334), depicted as the donor on the second layer.

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[48]   There are two such examples in the Basilica of Aquileia complex. See NARDINI 2010, pp. 524–527. For Biljana, see TURK MAROLT 2022, pp. 25, 28–29.

28. *St John the Baptist, south nave wall, Church of*
St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

29. *St John the Baptist, St Nicholas chapel,*
Church of St Francis, Udine
(Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

His portrait was most likely part of a smaller votive painting given that no other fresco fragment of the same layer was found on the walls. He was certainly the patron of the second-layer fresco and most probably also the third-layer cycle. The decision to decorate the entire church shortly after the murals with his portrait had been painted would not have been unusual at a time when families were gaining in importance and consolidating their role in society. The commission could have also been related to some major or sudden event, perhaps even the death of Pantaleone's wife, Chiara, daughter of the noble Giovanni di Villalta, around 1336.[49]

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[49] City Library "Vincenzo Joppi", Udine, Fondo del Torso, Genealogie nobiliari, Arcano d e Grattoni dArcano, d'Arcano V. Libro d'Oro della Nobiltà Mediterranea: Genealogie delle famiglie nobili del Mediterraneo, d'Arcano (http://www.genmarenostrum.com/pagine-lettere/letteraa/d'Arcano/arcano1.htm).

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Maria WALCHER, Il pittore trecentesco Nicolò da Gemona a S. Tomaso di Maiano, *Studi su San Daniele del Friuli*, 1978 (Antichità Altoadriatiche, 14), pp. 43–51.

Sara Turk Marolt

Stenske poslikave iz 14. stoletja v cerkvi sv. Mavra v Arcanu Superiore v Furlaniji

Povzetek

Cerkev sv. Mavra v Arcanu Superiore je bila zgrajena na ozemlju, ki je že od konca 12. stoletja pripadalo družini d'Arcano. Med 13. in začetkom 15. stoletja je imela funkcijo družinske kapele, nazadnje pa je bila po vsej verjetnosti predelana v 16. stoletju. Po potresu leta 1976 so v cerkvi odkrili tri sloje stenskih poslikav; starejša sloja sta zastopana z manjšima fragmentoma na južni steni, tretjemu sloju pa pripada freskantski cikel na vseh štirih ladijskih stenah. Fragmentarni portret donatorja z delno ohranjenim napisom, ki razkriva, da je upodobljenec Pantaleone d'Arcano, v dokumentih izpričan med letoma 1324 in 1334, pripada drugemu sloju. Tretji sloj zajema upodobitev Poslednje sodbe na zahodni steni, prizore iz Jezusovega otroštva (Oznanjenje pastirjem, Beg v Egipt) in upodobitve različnih svetnikov na južni steni, dva ohranjena prizora iz Kristusovega življenja (Jezusov vhod v Jeruzalem in Zadnja večerja) na severni steni ter fragmentarno ohranjena prizora Poklon sv. Treh kraljev in Marija z Detetom na prestolu na slavoločni steni. Poslikave je prvi omenil Alberto Rizzi (1978), natančneje pa sta se z njimi ukvarjala Paolo Casadio (1983, 1991) in Barbara Caliari (1994). Strinjala sta se, da so morale freske drugega in tretjega sloja zaradi slogovne sorodnosti nastati v kratkem časovnem razmaku; datirala sta jih v konec 14. oziroma začetek 15. stoletja. S piscema se je mogoče strinjati glede slogovne bližine drugega in tretjega sloja, ne pa tudi glede datacije fresk. Upodobitev donatorja na drugem sloju poslikav, natančnejša slogovna analiza, ikonografski elementi in oblačilna kultura obeh slojev namreč sugerirajo precej zgodnejšo datacijo. Poslikave karakterizirajo v tričetrtinskem profilu upodobljene figure na monokromnih barvnih površinah. Njihova postavitev je suverena, umirjena in realistična, protagonisti so upodobljeni v pravilnih proporcih, njihov volumen pa je nakazan z barvnim toniranjem. Obrazne poteze svetnikov so začrtane s tanko črno linijo, ki definira širok nos, srednjo linijo ust (medtem ko sta zgornji in spodnji del ustnic obrobljena le z rdečo barvo), obrvi in mandljaste oči s poudarjenimi vekami in podočnjaki. Ploščate avreole in oblačila so okrašeni z belimi biseri (reminiscenca slikarstva 13. stoletja), oblike prestolov pa sledijo preprostim klasičnih formam. Posamezne prizore ločujejo preproste enobarvne rdeče, bele oziroma rumene bordure. Vsi našteti elementi so značilni predvsem za furlansko slikarstvo druge četrtine 14. stoletja, ko se je slikarska tradicija 13. stoletja spojila z elementi novega padovanskega giottovskega sloga, preoblikovanega z delavnico, delujočo v kraju Sesto al Reghena (1316). Poslikave v Arcanu Superiore lahko slogovno vzporejamo s prvim slojem poslikav kapel *Corporis Christi* in sv. Nikolaja v videmski stolnici, s poslikavami severne in južne ladijske stene v cerkvi sv. Katarine v Pasianu di Prato, prizorom Marija z Detetom na prestolu s sv. Cecilijo v cerkvi sv. Cecilije v Spilimbergu, prizorom Marija Zavetnica s plaščem v cerkvi San Giovanni dei Templari v San Tomasu di Majano in z nekaterimi prizori v čedadskem *tempiettu* ter v videmski in čedadski cerkvi sv. Frančiška. Tako datacijo potrjujejo tudi posamezni ikonografski motivi (npr. upodobitev sv. Janeza Krstnika v tričetrtinskem profilu z diskom, na katerem je upodobljeno jagnje), elementi oblačilne kulture pa kažejo na nastanek okoli leta 1340, ko se začnejo moška oblačila (prej segajoča do tal) krajšati in dosežejo dolžino meč, ovratniki niso več povsem zaprti, ženske *guarnacce* pa dobijo daljše viseče rokave. Poslikave tretjega sloja so torej nastale najverjetneje okoli leta 1340 in so delo lokalne slikarske delavnice. Pantaleone d'Arcano je bil zagotovo naročnik freske, ki pripada drugemu sloju, zelo verjetno pa tudi nekoliko poznejše poslikave celotne cerkve. Slednja bi bila lahko povezana s smrtjo Pantaleonove žene, Chiare di Villalta, okoli leta 1336.

Analysis of the Materials and Painting Techniques Used in Medieval Mural Paintings in Slovenia up to 1380

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Introduction

Scientific analytical methods are becoming increasingly more important for a truly comprehensive understanding and better-grounded interpretation of visual works of art. Until recently, the study of artworks had been narrowly focusing on stylistic classification, on resolving open questions of iconography and on establishing stylistic links between particular mural cycles using the traditional means of stylistic analysis, since these are the principal tasks of art history. But not all information can be gathered by this approach only, considering that artists also expressed themselves through their selection of materials and the mastering of painting techniques, which in turn affects the modelling (which is softer or rougher as a result), as well as the subsequent conservation of the artwork in later centuries. Therefore, art historians need to collaborate with natural scientists, principally chemists, physicists, geologists, biologists as well as with conservators and restorers in order to fully understand a given monument not only in terms of its artistic form but also in terms of its material structure and execution technique. Such an interdisciplinary approach can inform intervention procedures and enable a perdurable conservation of monuments.

The present project focuses on mediaeval mural paintings in Slovenia to 1380. Over 60 mural cycles have been systematically studied including from a material and technical perspective and in close collaboration with art historians and restorers. The murals included in this study can be found throughout the territory of present-day Slovenia. During the late Middle Ages, this geographical area was – along with the neighbouring territories – criss-crossed by busy supraregional trade routes and became as a result a paradigm example for studying cultural exchange between the continental European North and the Mediterranean South. This exchange is also reflected in painting style and in painting techniques. Most of the murals have been previously studied by Slovene and foreign art historians,[1] but there are several new discoveries that have not been investigated yet. All mural paintings up to 1380 (old and new discoveries alike) have been now re-evaluated and had material analysis carried out on them. Before this, only a few material studies had been made in Slovenia to date,[2] which makes this research even more pertinent.

Objectives

The present research project, which is still ongoing, has two primary objectives. First, it aims to significantly supplement the results of earlier art-historical research and, secondly and more importantly, it seeks to identify by scientific methods the painting materials and techniques used by individual late mediaeval mural painters and their workshops. The material analyses focus primarily on: (a) the characterization of supports (plasters), including their composition (binders and aggregates), impurity, consistency, varieties of sand (colour, granulation), the number of layers and the application of *giornatas*; (b) the use of lime-wash; (c) the identification of selected pigments and their possible degradation; (d) the identification of binders; (e) the sequence of colour layers; (f) the colour modelling; (g) the painting process from the preparatory work (under-drawings, incisions, pouncing, under-paintings) to the final colour modelling (shades, highlights); and the painting technique (*a fresco, a secco*, lime technique or combined). A comparison of obtained results enable us to recognize an artistic process or technique, a characteristic brushstroke, helping to identify an artist or a link to a workshop, and thus supporting or rejecting specific art-historical hypotheses.

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[1]   STELE 1935; STELE 1969; RADOCSAY 1977; PROKOPP 1983; HÖFLER 1985; ŽELEZNIK 1993; HÖFLER 1996; ZIMMERMANN 1996; HÖFLER 1997; VODNIK 1998; HÖFLER 2001; HÖFLER 2004; BALAŽIC 2008.
[2]   POHL 1966; PIRNAT 1972; MOLE 1984–1987; BOGOVČIČ 1995; NEMEC 1995; KRIŽNAR 2006.

Analytical Methods and Techniques

After a precise visual examination of the paintings *in situ*, non-invasive techniques are applied where possible, such as digital microscopy (DM), ultraviolet fluorescence (UVF), VIS spectrophotometry and portable X-ray fluorescence (XRF). However, in many cases the paintings are too high and thus inaccessible with the equipment, and the interior of the churches is generally too bright for UVF. Therefore, small samples of ca. 2–4 mm³ must be extracted from several areas of interest (as few as possible), including support, pigments or colour layers. Different laboratory techniques can be used, among which the most common ones are optical microscopy (OM), scanning electron microscopy with energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (SEM-EDX), stationary X-Ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (XRF), X-ray powder diffraction (XRD), Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) and Raman Spectroscopy. Samples are therefore prepared according to the analytical procedure implemented; raw samples can be studied by OM, SEM-EDX, XRF or Raman, but they are mostly embedded in resin to elaborate cross-sections (analysed by OM, SEM-EDX or Raman) or prepared as KBr pellets (FTIR), while plasters are crushed into powder (XRD).

UVF reveals later interventions, based on the characteristic fluorescence of specific materials under UV light that can distinguish between older and newer materials.[3] VIS spectrophotometry, applied in reflectance mode for the study of mural painting, helps us to identify and classify colours using surface measurements that can quantify visible effects depending on the colouring materials used, i.e. pigments.[4] XRF offers an elemental analysis of the irradiated point, characterizing the chemical elements and in turn the materials applied (pigments, support). The results are, however, limited, since it detects only elements with a higher atomic number such as those above 14 (Z>14), which means that only inorganic materials can be identified using this method. Further, different materials characterised by the same chemical element such as copper greens or lead pigments, cannot be distinguished.[5] OM is the basic technique for the analysis of paint layers. Through different magnification under reflected light it enables us to recognise the composition of the support (plaster), the sequence of colour layers and thus the painting procedure, and also to identify certain pigments according to their characteristic granulometry as well as possible pigment changes; it can even discern the painting techniques used.[6] SEM offers much higher magnification of the sample studied compared to OM, and is generally used in combination with EDX for elemental analysis. Black-and-white SEM images enable us to visualize the morphology

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[3]   DE LA RIE 1982; MATTEINI, MOLES 1984, pp. 171–177; ALDROVANDI, PICCOLO 2003, pp. 67–84; STUART 2007; CONSENTINO 2015.

[4]   BACCI 1995; OLTROGGE 2008; ARTIOLI 2010, pp. 46–47; *Spectroscopy* 2021, pp. 103–131.

[5]   MATTEINI, MOLES 1984, pp. 133–139; APPOLONIA, VOLPIN 1999, pp. 30–33; SECCARONI, MOIOLI 2004; ARTIOLI 2010, pp. 34–37; *Analytical Chemistry* 2017, pp. 77–128.

[6]   MATTEINI, MOLES 1984, pp. 37–55; APPOLONIA, VOLPIN 1999, pp. 20–27; ARTIOLI 2010, pp. 64–66.

of the sample and distinguish between light and heavy elements present in the material. The high magnification helps at selecting specific areas or individual particles for chemical analysis, offering very precise results.[7] The XRD technique is generally used for plaster characterization in the study of mural paintings. It identifies compounds (minerals, phases) and can give us a good insight into a plaster composition (binder, aggregate types) and weathering products.[8] FTIR and Raman are two of the most frequently used molecular techniques in art that are also suitable for the identification of organic materials such as colorants or binders. Both methods use different physical processes such as absorption, emission and vibration for identification of molecular structure of the analysed material.[9] Recently, the emphasis has been on non-invasive techniques which do not require sample extraction. Therefore, most of the equipment required for the above techniques, including XRF, XRD, FTIR and Raman among others, have been developed as mobile units in order to be to use them *in situ*.[10] Nevertheless, high quality results, especially for FTIR and Raman, are difficult to obtain outside the laboratory due to various non-controllable factors. No portable equipment was available for this research.

For extracted samples prepared according to the analytical technique, OM, XRD and Raman were primarily used. FTIR and SEM-EDX were applied only on certain selected samples. Other techniques will be added if necessary. The optical microscopy of cross-sections was performed in visible (VIS) and ultraviolet (UV) light to obtain information on the stratigraphy of the selected samples. Cross-sections were examined with an Olympus BX-60 microscope and SC50 (Olympus) digital camera in reflected light at 50x to 200x magnification. XRD was selected for plaster characterization. Cross-sections and raw samples were analysed using a Raman spectrometer LabRAM HR800 (Horiba Jobin-Yvon) connected to an Olympus BXFM microscope, with a 785 nm wavelength laser and CCD detector in the range between 80 cm^{-1} and 1800 cm^{-1} at a spectral resolution of 1 cm^{-1}. Calibration was performed using Si crystal. The time and filter were adapted to each sample. The phase composition of the raw plaster samples was determined using a PANalytical Empyrean X-ray diffractometer (Malvern Panalytical, Malvern, UK) equipped with CuKa radiation and a PIXcel 1D detector. The samples were ground to a particle size of less than 63 μm. They were put in zero diffraction plate. The samples were measured at 45 kV at a current of 40 mA, in the range of 4 to 70° 2q, at a step size of 0.013° 2q with a scan step time of 68s. The analysis of X-ray diffraction patterns was performed with the X'Pert High Score Plus diffraction software v. 4.9 from PANalytical using PAN IICSD v. 3.4 powder diffraction files. Some selected

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[7]   MATTEINI, MOLES 1984, pp. 75–86; APPOLONIA, VOLPIN 1999, pp. 38–41; ARTIOLI 2010, pp. 66–68; *Spectroscopy* 2021, pp. 71–102.

[8]   MATTEINI, MOLES 1984, pp. 125–132; APPOLONIA, VOLPIN 1999, pp. 33–38; ARTIOLI 2010, pp. 50–52; *Analytical Chemistry* 2017, pp. 77–128; *Spectroscopy* 2021, pp. 161–207.

[9]   MATTEINI, MOLES 1984, pp. 107–110; *Analytical Chemistry* 2017, pp. 129–211; *Spectroscopy* 2021, pp. 45–69.

[10]   *Analytical Chemistry* 2017, pp. 41–75.

raw samples were analysed by FTIR with a Spectrum 100 spectrometer connected to a Spectrum Spotlight 200 (PerkinElmer) microscope. Layers were separated with a scalpel and in some cases solvents of different polarity were used to extract materials form the mixtures. All samples were analysed in transmission mode, compressed in a diamond anvil cell. Spectra were scanned using a MCT detector in the range between 4000 cm^{-1} and 600 cm^{-1} with a spectral resolution of 4 cm^{-1}, averaging 32 scans for each spectrum. For SEM-EDX analysis, the stratigraphic sections had been previously metallized with a thin layer of gold (Au) and then studied with a JEOL JSM 5400 SEM instrument coupled to an Oxford Link EDX analyser with a Si(Li) detector, Be window, at 20 kV.

The combination of all these techniques provides more reliable (and fully verifiable) data concerning the composition of plasters, their impurity and consistency, the possible use of lime-wash, the selection of pigments and binders, as well as offering other important insights into the painting techniques used by a number of late-mediaeval artists – in particular with respect to painting on fresh mortar (*a fresco*), lime-technique (painting on a fresh layer of lime-white), painting *a secco*, or (the most common practice) a combination of these. Such scientific results combined with the stylistic characterization of artworks enables a deeper understanding of an artist/workshop and can even establish authorship or workshop connections between mural cycles. This project represents ongoing research and not all analyses have been carried out yet (such as SEM-EDX), while FTIR has been used only in a few selected samples so far.

Painting Materials and Techniques

1. Plaster

Plaster is generally made as a mixture of lime as a binder and of sand as aggregate. Images made by optical microscope (OM) reveal different aggregate granulation and colour, which varies from light, almost transparent, to intense red and almost black, indicating different mineralogical-petrographic and chemical compositions (Fig. 1). Mostly, the aggregate grains have an angular form, however in some cases they can be rounded. They can also vary in their sphericity, for instance being elongated or isometric. Rounded grains can indicate a river or lake provenance of the aggregate, since the water smooths the angular forms. For a good painting surface, the sand must be thoroughly cleaned; if it is not, its impurities can cause damage over time, affecting also the painting surface. As for the binder, a slaked lime (Ca(OH)$_2$) is used, which should be properly cleaned and rested before its use, if not, white lime lumps can form, which can be observed under an optical microscope. Depending on the sand and binder type or possible mineral additives, the plaster can have whiter or darker tonality. Mineralogical composition was determined mainly using an XRD that identified the principal materials in a plasters, such as calcite, dolomite and quartz, while in some plasters also feldspars, illite/muscovite or plagioclases were detected. Their
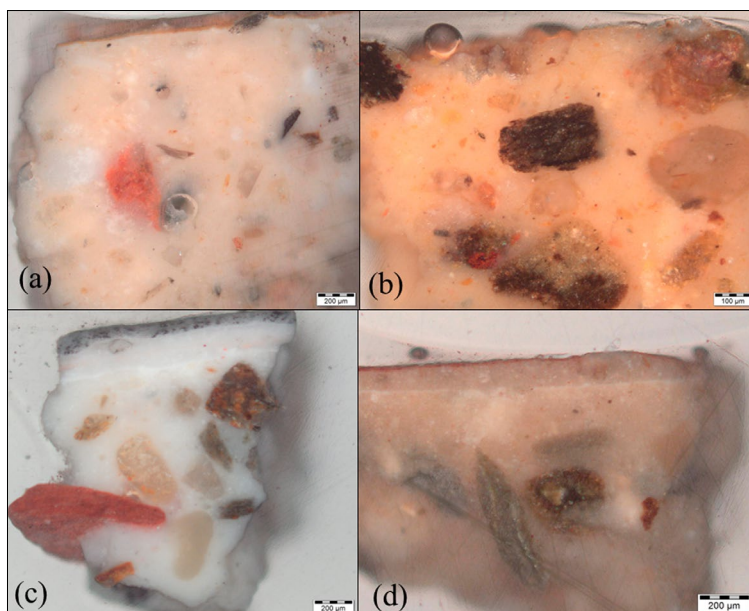
1. Microphotographs of plaster samples and colour layers using optical microscopy in reflected light from the following locations: (a) St Peter's church in Ribičje, (b) St Thomas's church in Štomaž pod Štjakom, (c) St James's church above Potoče, and (d) the church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica. All plasters consist of lime and sand. The samples (c) and (d) reveal a thin layer of limewash under the colour layer (© Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Restoration Centre, Ljubljana (IPCHS, RC), Scientific department).
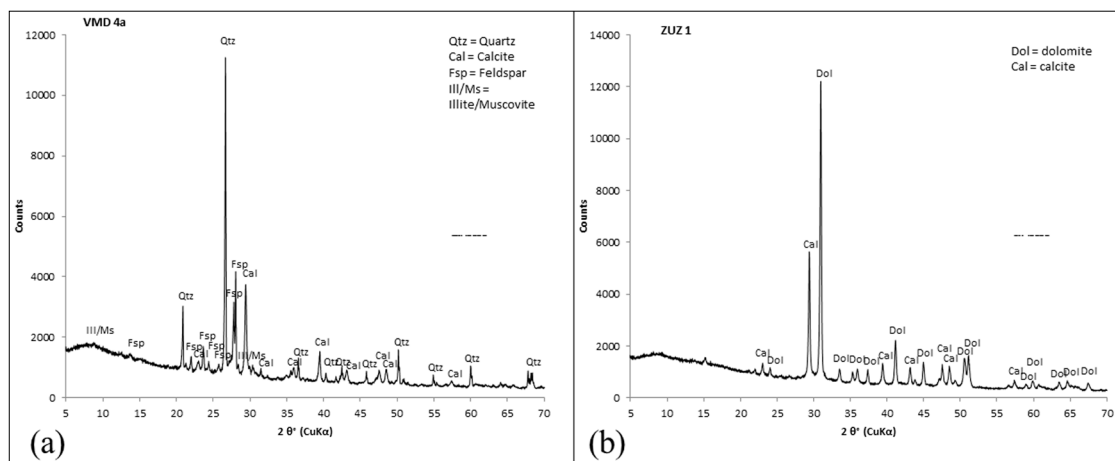
2. XRD patterns reveal different plaster compositions, as observed on two samples: (a) plaster made of lime and sand with mineral additives, the church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica; (b) plaster made of lime and crushed calcite, St Nicholas's church in Žužemberk (© Slovenian National Building and Civil Engineering Institute, Ljubljana, Materials Department, Laboratory for cements, mortars and ceramics).
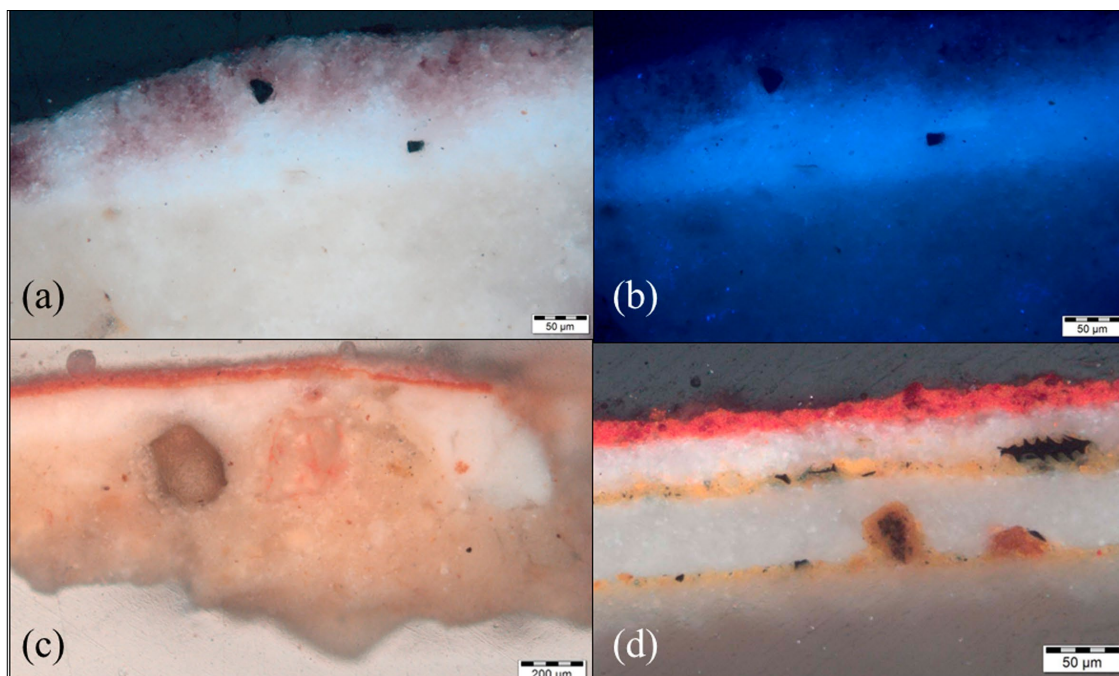
3. Microphotographs of plaster samples and colour layers using optical microscopy in reflected light from the following locations: (a) St Thomas's church in Velike Poljane, (b) St Thomas's church in Gorenja Straža, and (c) St Michael's church in Biljana. All plasters are white and consist of lime and crushed calcite (© IPCHS, RC, Scientific department).

relative quantity varies from mural to mural, and the main interest lies in the quantity of calcite, i.e. binder. The lowest quality of plaster with a low amount of binder (calcite) and predominant silicate aggregate (mostly quartz) was found in the murals in in the church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica (Fig. 2a), resulting in bad consistency of these plasters which tend to pulverize, also affecting the colour layers.

In rare cases, instead of sand, a crushed coarse-grained calcite (calcite) was used for Slovene medieval mural paintings (as is indicated by the angularity of the grains), sometimes with the addition of transparent quartz grains, resulting in a bright, white plaster (Fig. 3). Such plaster is a perfect support for painting on a fresh mortar (*a fresco*), since it generally includes little or no impurities, while the binder and the aggregate are chemically almost the same. It is a typical support for Italian Trecento *a fresco* painting,[11] which could indicate the Italian origin of the artist or a material influence. The analysis discovered such composition in the church of St Thomas in Velike Poljane, in the church of St Thomas in Gorenja Straža, on the northern interior wall of the church of St Michael in Biljana, in the church of St Oswald in Zgornje Jezersko, in the church of St Nicholas in Žužemberk (Fig. 2b), and in the cloister of Stična monastery (in a coat of arms and votive image). For the most part, the presence of dolomite in these plasters is quite high; part of it could also be present as dolomitic lime, not only in the aggregate. No other materials such as brick or straw was found in any of the mural paintings to 1380 studied so far. These additives could have been used to strengthen the plaster and make it more resistant. For *a fresco* technique, the plaster

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[11]   *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, p. 31; MORA, MORA, PHILIPPOT 2001, pp. 146–149; PECCHIONI, FRATINI, CANTISANI 2008, pp. 143–145, 148. Already Cennino Cennini in his treatise *Il libro dell'arte* (III, 66) speaks about the quality of the plaster for mural painting: BROECKE 2015, pp. 98–101.

4. Microphotographs of plaster samples and colour layers using optical microscopy in reflected (a, c, d) and UV (b) light from the following locations: (a, b) St Thomas's church in Štomaž pod Štjakom, (c) the church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica, and (d) St James's church above Potoče. A layer of limewash is clearly visible between the plaster and the colour layers (a, b, c) or between the colour layers (d) (© IPCHS, RC, Scientific department).

was generally applied as *pontantae*[12] or *giornatae;*[13] only rarely, however, we can distinguish them, mainly due to the fragmentary state of the murals.[14]

In some cases, cross-sections reveal a layer of lime-wash between the plaster and the colour layers (Fig. 4). This technique is more common for Central- and North-European painting and

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[12] *Pontata* is a long horizontal application of fresh plaster that can run along the entire length of the wall and includes several scenes. It is more common for Romanesque and early Gothic painting. See *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, p. 64; MORA, MORA, PHILIPPOT 2001, p. 149; KRIŽNAR 2006, p. 23.

[13] *Giornata* is a smaller portion of a fresh plaster to be painted in one day, generally in 3–5 hours as long as it takes to the plaster to dry. It can have a rectangular shape of covering the entire scene, or it can be divided into individual figures or groups. See *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, p. 64; MORA, MORA, PHILIPPOT 2001, p. 14; KRIŽNAR 2006, p. 39. Already Cennini (III, 66) writes about *giornatas*: BROECKE 2015, pp. 98, 101.

[14] We can distinguish plaster portions in very few cases, such as, for example, in the murals of the triumphal arch and the presbytery triumphal wall in the church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica and on the exterior western wall of the church of St Nicholas in Žužemberk.
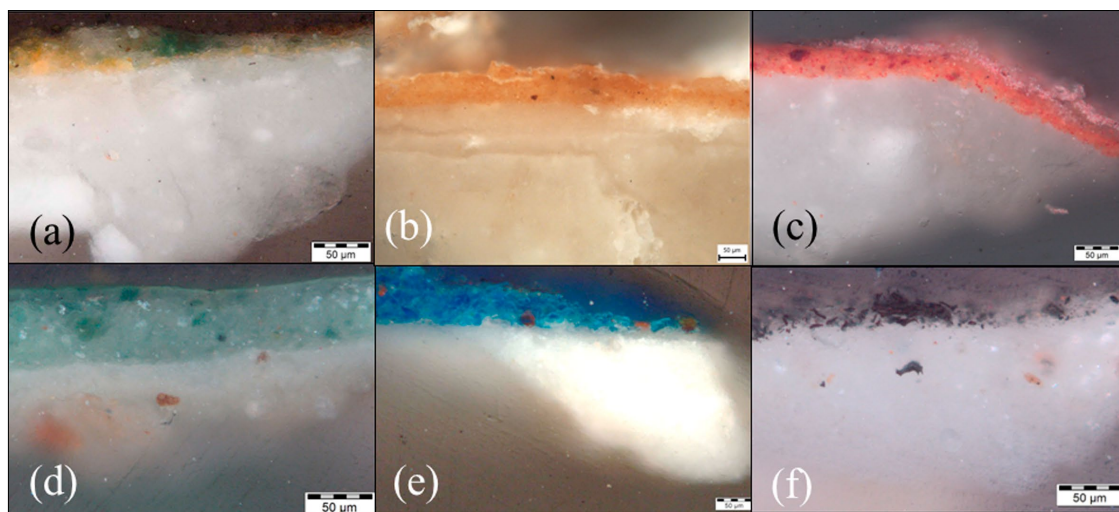
5. Microphotographs of plaster samples and colour layers using optical microscopy in reflected light show various pigments: (a) yellow earth (goethite) and green earth, St Ulrich's church in Tolmin, (b) orange earth, St Oswald's church in Leskovec nad Višnjo Goro, (c) red earth (heamatite), cloister, Stična monastery (coat of arms); (d) green earth, St Thomas's church in Štomaž pod Štjakom, (e) azurite, St Pancras in Stari trg pri Slovenj Gradcu, and (f) carbon black, St Helen's church in Gradišče pri Divači (© IPCHS, RC, Scientific department).

can be used as primary or auxiliary technique.[15] In our research, we found that it was mostly used as auxiliary technique to freshen up the already dry plaster, though it was applied as the principal painting technique on the oldest paintings of the triumphal arch and the eastern part of the south wall of the church of St Nicholas in Pangrč Grm. In the church of St James above Potoče, a white layer of lime was found also between some colour layers (Fig. 4d).

2. Pigments

The pigment palette is mostly limited to natural inorganic pigments, such as lime white, yellow, orange and red earths (identified by Raman as goethite and haematite) (Fig. 5a–c), green earth (Fig. 5a, d) and in few cases also minerals as malachite and azurite (Fig. 5e). To obtain a black colour, organic pigments were selected, mostly lamp or carbon black (Fig. 5f). All these pigments are suitable for *a fresco* or lime technique, as they are stable in humid and alkaline environment.[16]

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[15] *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 71–73; MORA, MORA, PHILIPPOT 2001, pp. 140. The first mention of lime technique can be found already in the mediaeval text by the monk Theophilus, *Schedula diversarum artium* (I, 15): THEOPHILUS PRESBYTER 1979, pp. 23, 24.

[16] *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 41–50; MORA, MORA, PHILIPPOT 2001, pp. 69–84; KRIŽNAR 2006, pp. 30–54; *Artists' Pigments* 2012; BROECKE 2015, pp. 56–94.

6. Colour darkening due to pigment degradation, observed on the sample microphotograph (a) and in situ (b, c, d) in the following locations: (a, b) Pb pigment (?), St Peter's church in Ribičje, (c) Pb and/or Cu pigments, St James's church in Ormož (central nave), and (d) malachite, St Nicholas's church in Žužemberk (St. Erasmus) ((a) © IPCHS, RC, Scientific department; (b-d) photos: Anabelle Križnar).

In a few cases, lead pigments were detected, mostly on the basis of their black appearance on the wall as a result of chemical degradation forming black plattnerite (PbO_2) or lead sulphate ($PbSO_4$). This could happen due to oxidizing agents in the atmosphere or due to microbiological activity.[17] Such an example can be found on the presbytery wall of the church of St Peter in Ribičje (Fig. 6a). Raman analysis confirmed the formation of platternite. An interesting case are the paintings that cover the upper layer of the triumphal arch and the presbytery triumphal wall in the church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica, that have blackened in many areas of the draperies (Fig. 7a) or even faces, which points towards a hypothesis of lead-pigment degradation. However, no conclusive results have been obtained so far. FTIR can confirm the use of lead white pigment only in one sample (Fig. 7b, c), while in the other samples only silicates (earths) have been detected. Raman did not produce any conclusive results. Darkening can be observed also for green malachite and/or blue azurite. When exposed to heat in an alkali environment (such as fresco painting), black copper oxides can form as tenorite (CuO).[18] A clear example of it is, again, the mural in Ormož (Fig. 6c), where the transition from green/blue to black can be observed even with the naked eye. The darkening of green malachite is strongly present also on St Erasmus's coat in Žužemberk (Fig. 6d).

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[17]   COCCATO, MOENS, VANDENABEELE 2017, pp. 17–19.
[18]   COCCATO, MOENS, VANDENABEELE 2017, pp. 12–14.

7. Colour darkening due to pigment degradation, observed on (a) the saint's figure, triumphal arch, church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica, (b) the dark colour layer on the sample microphotograph taken from the marked location (reflected light), (c) the FTIR spectrum of the analysed sample, indicating possible lead white together with calcite, silicates, potential acrylic or natural resin, gypsum, and calcium oxalate ((a) photo: Anabelle Križnar; (b, c) © IPCHS, RC, Scientific department).
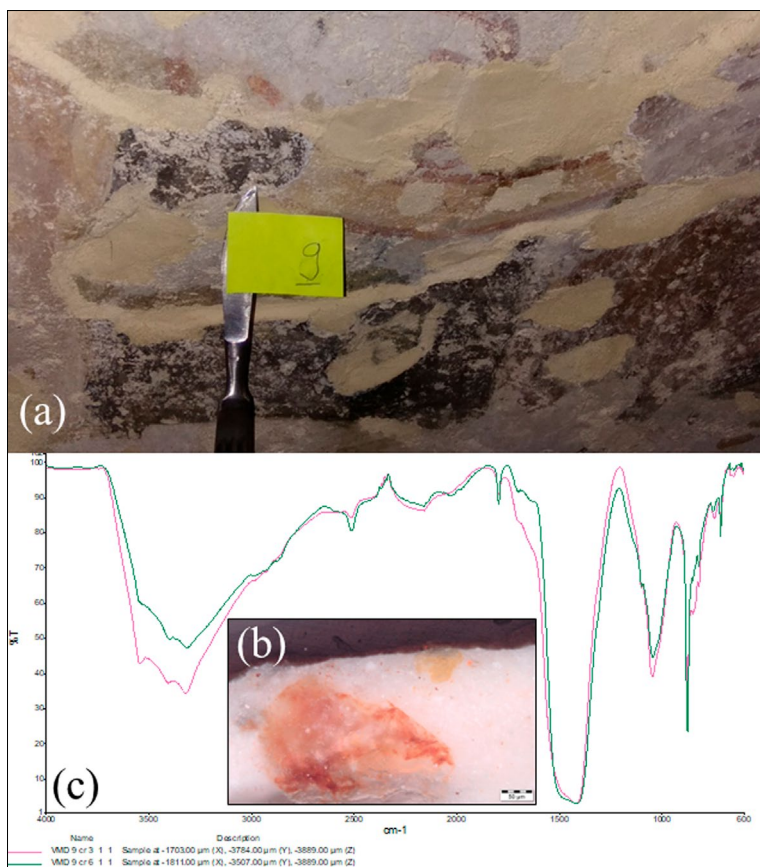
3. Painting technique

The study of cross-sections under an optical microscope can reveal the painting technique used by the artist: *a fresco*, *a secco*, lime technique or, what is generally the case, the combination of two or three of them.[19] This can be determined through the form of the contact between the support and colour layer(s) which can be smooth and blurred (indicating painting on a fresh support) or straight and defined (painting on a dry surface), and a layer of lime-wash can be easily identified. Thus, according to the cross-section findings, the high presence of calcite in most of the painting layers identified by Raman Spectroscopy and the predominance of calcite in most plasters as shown by XRD results indicate that the principal painting technique was *a fresco* with pigments applied on a humid mortar. The cross-sections reveal a smooth transition between the support and colour layers (Fig. 8a), due to the carbonatization process through which the lime in the plaster moves up to the

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[19]   Microscopic Analysis 2018.
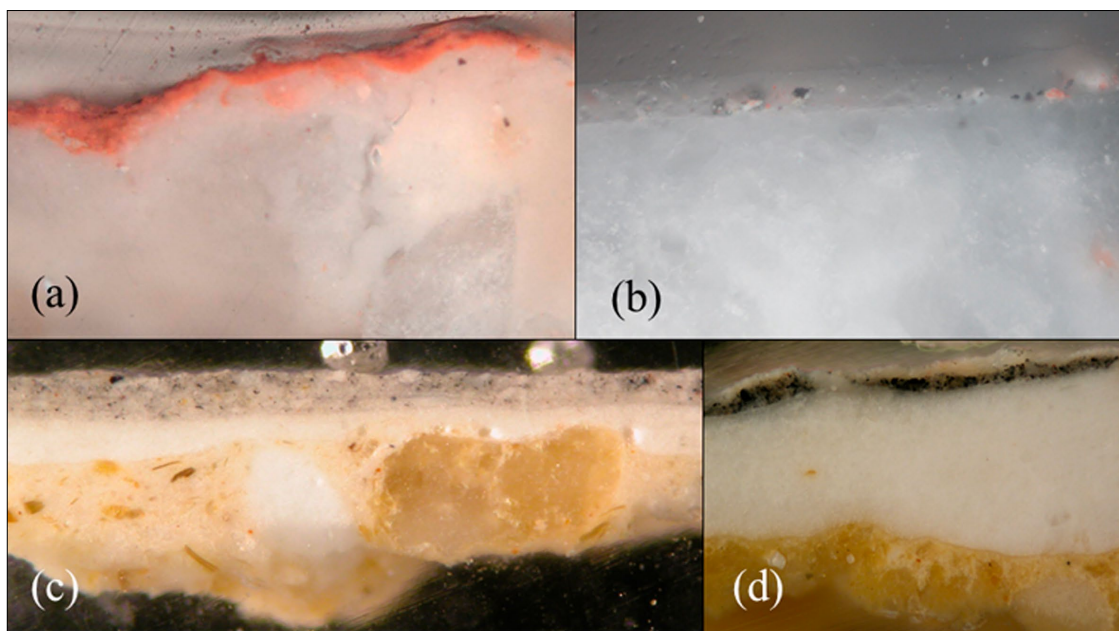
8. Microphotographs of plaster samples and colour layers using optical microscopy in reflective light reveal various painting techniques: (a) a fresco, St Michael's church in Biljana, (b) a secco, St Thomas's church in Gorenja Straža, (c) auxiliary lime technique, St Agnes's church in Brdinje pri Kotljah, (d) principal lime technique, St Nicholas's church in Pangrč Grm (the older layer) ((a, b) © IPCHS, RC, Scientific department; (c, d) photos: Anabelle Križnar).

surface, involving pigment grains and thus serving as binder.[20] When the plaster had dried too much and the lime could no longer serve as a binder, *a fresco* painting was combined with *a secco* and sometimes with lime technique, the latter mostly as auxiliary procedures. Painting on a dry plaster can be clearly distinguished in cross-sections as a very clear line between the plaster and the colour layer since the lime is not transiting anymore (Fig. 8b). In this technique, the pigments must be applied mixed with an organic binder, egg yolk, casein, or animal glue.[21] Organic materials have not yet been analysed. The ration of *a secco* to *a fresco* painting depends on the size of the *giornata* and, of course, on the dexterity of the painter and how quickly he can work. Painting on a dry surface was mostly used for the final details or for backgrounds and secondary figures. In some cases, the plaster was refreshed with one or several layers of lime wash, which can be also clearly distinguished on cross-sections as a white layer between the plaster and colour layers (Fig. 8c) or between colours (Fig. 4d). Only in Pangrč Grm was the lime technique used as the principal one, creating a thick white support of lime wash which peals from the wall together with colour layers (Fig. 8d).

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[20]   *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 32, 61–62; MORA, MORA, PHILIPPOT 2001, pp. 63–64; PECCHIONI, FRATINI, CANTISANI 2008, pp. 32–40.
[21]   *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 51–58.

Painting Procedures

Painting procedures reveal an artist's way of working and can characterize them, thus helping in the authentication of a painting. These procedures include preparatory drawings, incisions, pouncing, underpaintings, modelling, and final details.

Preparatory drawing carried out on the lower plaster layer (*arriccio*) is known as *sinopia*, and that on the upper plaster layer (*intonaco*) as underpainting.[22] *Sinopia*, generally traced in red colour, can be only seen where the upper plaster layer has fallen off, therefore only in rare cases. We must bear in mind, though, that many painters did not use it, especially if they were working only on one layer of plaster; it is a painting procedure more common in Italian art. In our research, we have found *sinopia*, for example, in the church of St Francis of Assisi in Koper, on the oldest 14th century scene representing the *Madonna and child*, where the lower part of the mural is damaged. A thin red line is visible, as shown in Fig. 9. An underdrawing can be distinguished more easily, especially where the colour layers have fallen off or where the final contour does not cover it completely. Artists could use different colours: yellow, pink, red, black, though only rarely green.[23] On murals up to 1380, yellow, red, and black have been found (Fig. 10). A ruler could have been used to trace auxiliary straight lines (scene bordures, architectural elements), though in most cases

9. A red line of sinopia, drawn on arriccio in a red ellipse. St Francis of Assisi church in Koper (Photo: Anabelle Križnar).

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[22]   *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 79–84; KRIŽNAR 2006, pp. 26–27; BROECKE 2015, pp. 97–98, 100–101.
[23]   *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 83–84.
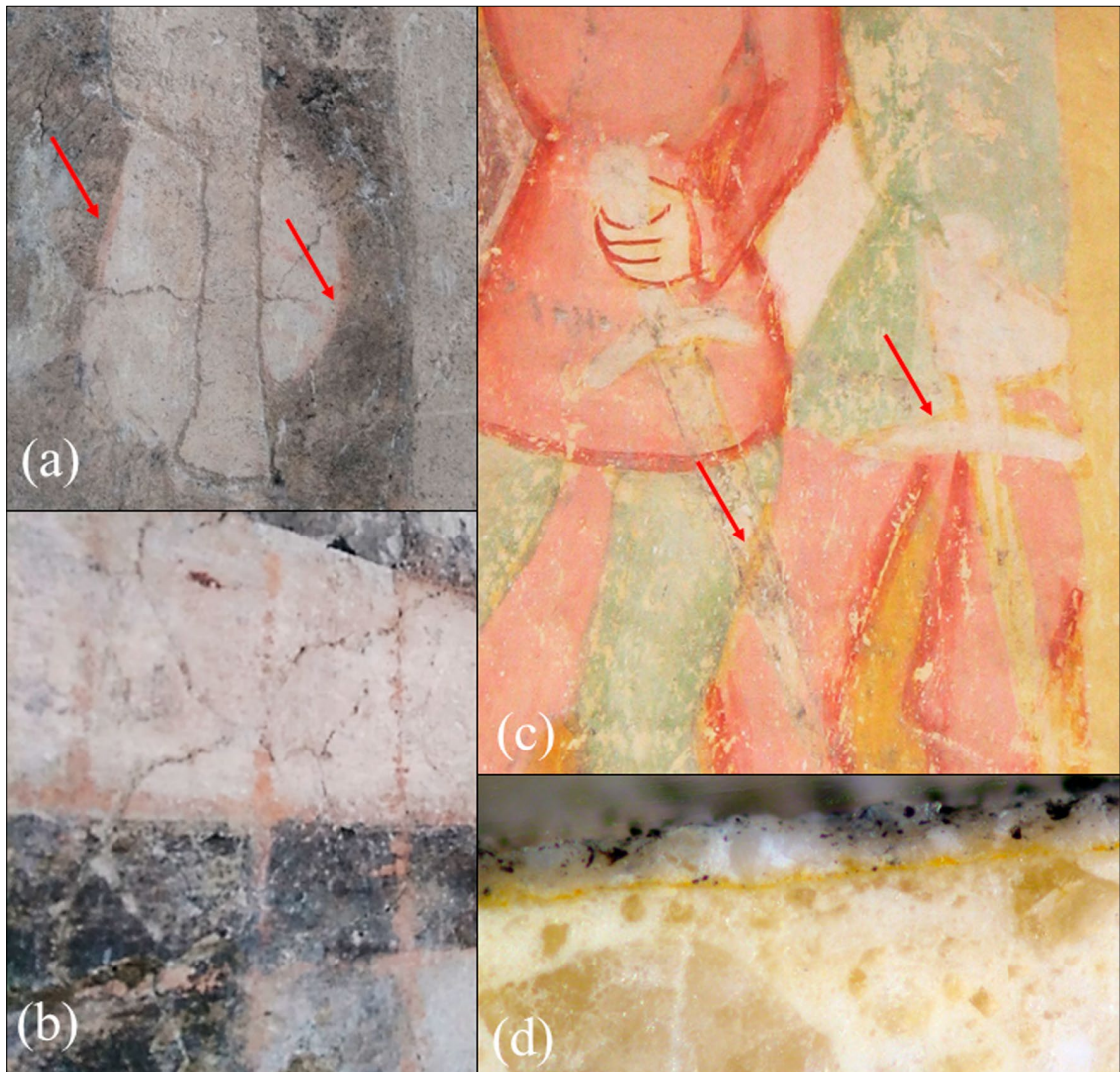
10. (a) A red underdrawing and (b) straight red lines traced with a wet rope, both from St James's church in Ormož (the central nave). (c) Yellow underdrawing observed on figures and swords, also revealed on the (d) sample microphotograph (reflected light), St Nicholas's church in Pangrč Grm (the younger layer) (Photos: Anabelle Križnar).

artists chose to use a rope, impregnated in red colour and pressed on the wall.[24] A characteristic point-like line marked by the rope can be clearly distinguished in several murals, as we can see on the paintings in the main nave of the church of St James in Ormož (Fig. 10b). Sometimes, the underdrawing can also be discovered by means of cross-sections, revealing a thin colour layer

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24   *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 76–78.
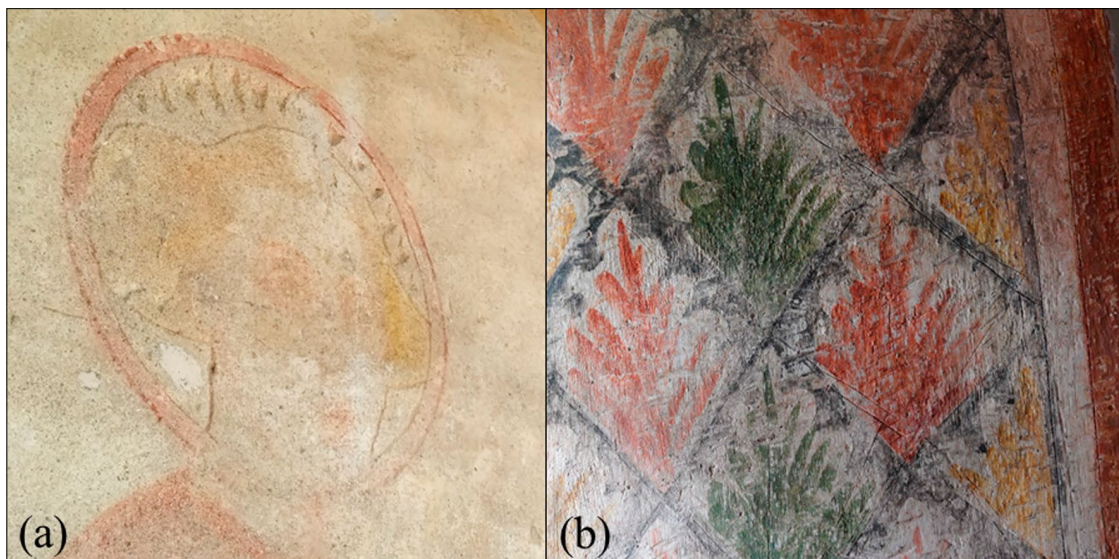
11. (a) Deep incisions and pouncings for the halos and head contours, St Trinity church in Knežja Njiva. (b) Straight, thin and shallow incisions, traced with a sharp object and a ruler; many mistakes can be observed, St Ulrich's church in Tolmin (Photos: Anabelle Križnar).

in yellow (Fig. 10d), red or black under the principal colour layer, especially if the sample was extracted from the area of a contour, where such underdrawing can be expected. Sinopia and underdrawing are generally well preserved since they are done on fresh plaster.

Incisions and pouncing are made into a fresh mortar as well, leaving thin or wide, shallow, or deep lines or forms. They are very common in Slovene medieval murals and used principally for saints' heads and halos (Fig. 11a), but also for other, mostly decorative elements such as crowns, belts, swords, or even entire figures, especially when transferred from a pattern, or for straight lines when rope was not used (Fig. 11b).

Underpaintings are uniform colour layers applied under another colour to give it a desired, generally more intense or darker tonality.[25] For the most part, expensive pigments such as blue azurite or green malachite were underlaid in order to use less pigment and still obtain a deep colour hue. The underpainting could be grey, known as *veneda*,[26] or dark red, known as *morello*.[27] The first one was generally common in the painting North of the Alps and the second in Italian Trecento

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[25] *Reclams Handbuch* 1990, pp. 89–96.

[26] The terminology was first employed already by Theophilus in his treatise for a mixture of black pigment and lime, suggesting that a painter underlays malachite or azurite with it (I, 6, 15, 16): THEOPHILUS PRESBYTER 1979, pp. 18, 23, 25.

[27] Cennini in his treatise (III, 83) writes about a reddish underlayer, made as a mixture of black pigment with red ochre and suggest using it under blue azurite: BROECKE 2015, pp. 119–121.
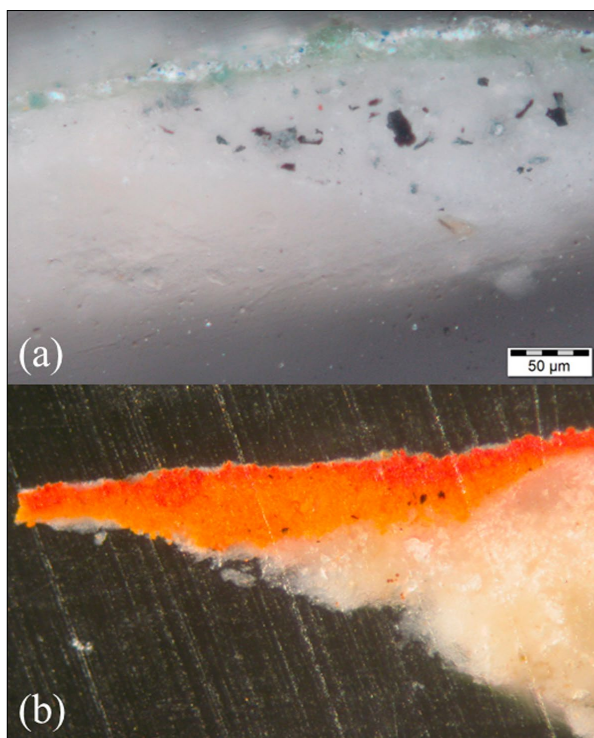
12. Sample microphotographs of plasters and colour layers using optical microscopy in reflective light reveal underpaintings: (a) grey under green malachite, cloister, Stična monastery (Votive scene), (b) orange minium under red cinnabar, St George's church in Ptuj ((a) © IPCHS, RC, Scientific department; (b) photo: Anabelle Križnar).

painting. We find both in Slovene territory, thus confirming the area as a meeting point of northern and southern painting techniques as well as place of collaboration of artists of various provenances. Sometimes, these underpaintings can be discerned even with the naked eye through the upper painting layer, if it is very thin, or on areas where the colour has fallen off. Mostly, though, it can be revealed through cross sections by observing a thicker grey (Fig. 12a) or reddish colour layer between the plaster and the upper colour layer. *Veneda* and *morello* used to be applied *a fresco*, malachite and azurite *a secco*. Both pigments could have also been applied directly on the plaster (Fig. 5e), which is often the case in pre-1380 murals. Other pigments could have been applied as underpaintings as well, such as yellow earth under green or minium under cinnabar (Fig. 12b), however, it is rarely found.

Colour modelling reveals the dexterity of a painter through his brushstroke and colour transitions. The brushstroke can be wide and coarse or thin and precise, resulting in rough or smooth transitions between shades and highlights, creating plane surfaces or round volumes. The oldest paintings are rather flat with predominant line (Fig. 13a), while the more recent ones already show soft modelling and a combination of wide and thin brushes (Fig. 13 b, c). In mural painting up to 1380, the line takes precedence over the colour, observed as strong contours that delimitate an object or figure. We can study in this way the form of the head and hair, eyes, nose, lips, hands and fingers, feet, if the figures are barefoot, and drapery folds. The accuracy of the final contour with the underdrawing, when visible, can also be compared. Such study allows us in many cases to determine if several scenes were carried out by the same painter or not. Such are the cases in Vuzenica and Žužemberk, where the specific form of the faces as well as the very characteristic shading (for example, eyelids in Žužemberk) allow us to attribute it to the same hand or close circle. Therefore, the figures on

13. Colour modelling: (a) flat, with a predominant contour, St Oswald's church in Leskovec nad Višnjo Goro; (b, c) creating volumes with a soft transition between light and dark tones, St Thomas's church in Štomaž pod Štjakom (© Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute of Art History, Ljubljana (ZRC SAZU, UIFS), photos: Andrej Furlan).
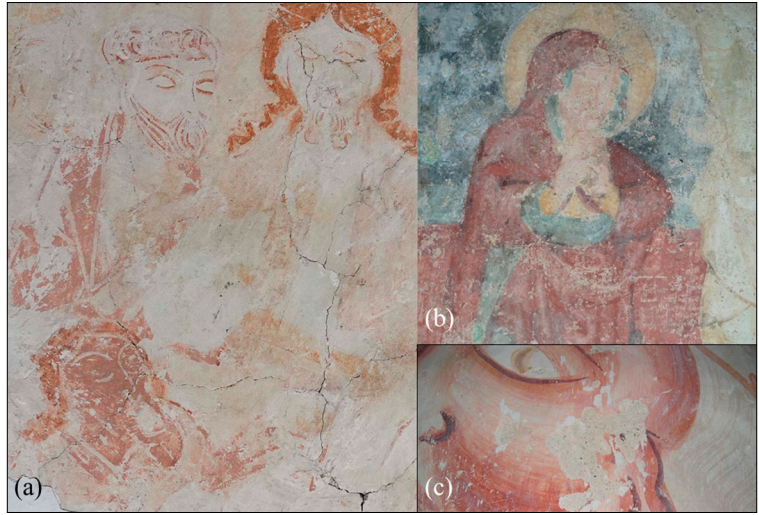
14. Colour modelling can contribute to the characterisation and authentication of an artist, comparing the manner of face forms and shading: (a, b) faces of the donor on the chancel triumphal wall and the saint on the triumphal arch, the church of Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica. (c, d) Faces of the saint on the Storm scene on the exterior western wall and St Erasmus on the interior nave triumphal wall, St Nicholas's church in Žužemberk ((a, b) © ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photos: Andrej Furlan; (c, d) photos: Anabelle Križnar).
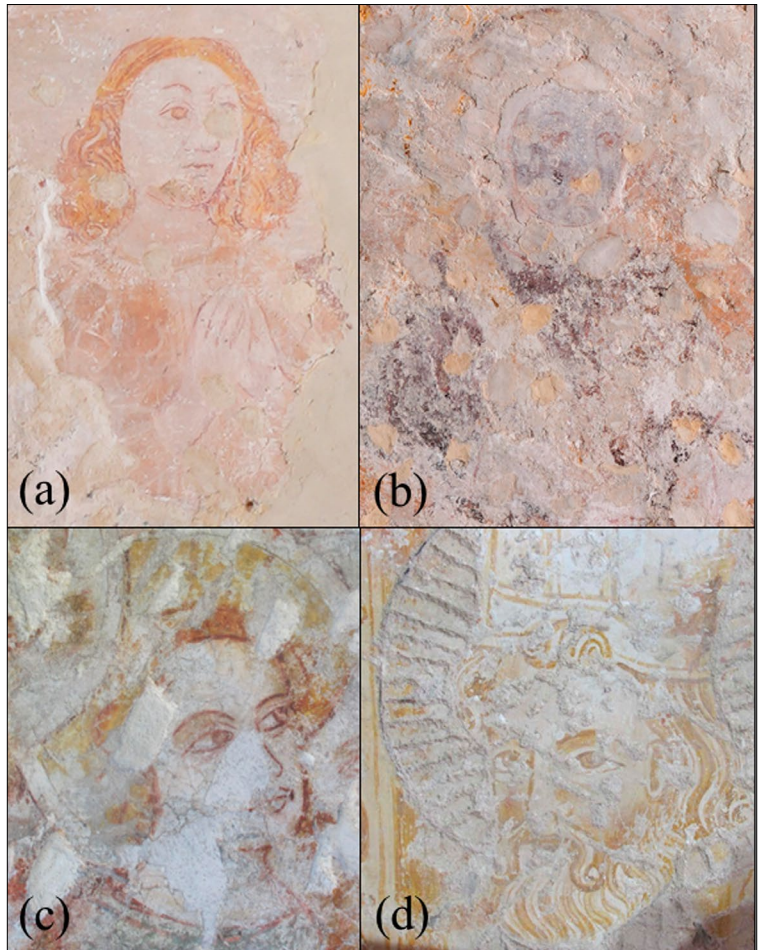
the upper layer on the triumphal arch and interior presbytery wall in Vuzenica (Fig. 14a, b) must have been painted by the same master or a very close disciple. Similarly, the figure of *St Erasmus* on the interior wall and the figures in the *Storm scene* on the western outside wall of Žužemberk church (Fig. 13c, d) are the work of the same workshop, though probably not by the same painter, portraying *St Erasmus* with a much better and softer modelling and showing his flesh-tone with brighter colour palette.

Conclusions

This still ongoing research involves the analysis of plasters, pigments, painting techniques and painting procedures of Slovene murals up to 1380. Paintings were first studied *in situ*, then small samples of support and colour layers were analysed using different analytical techniques (OM, SEM-EDX, XRF, XRD, Raman spectroscopy and FTIR). We still do not have all the results, but those obtained so far enable us to characterize plasters as a mixture of lime and aggregate: the latter is composed mostly of silicates, but in some cases crushed calcite was also used. The pigments are mostly natural inorganic: lime white, yellow, red and green earths, rarely malachite and azurite, while the blacks are organic, mostly carbon or lamp one. In several cases, lead pigments were also applied, but due to their degradation, they have turned black. Black areas can be found also in some areas of azurite or malachite, while we often find degradation from blue azurite to green (para)tacamite. The principal painting technique is *a fresco* combined with *a secco*. The proportion of the dry-painted parts varies, depending on the mural cycle and the dexterity of the artist. Lime technique was sometimes applied as auxiliary technique under colour layers. Only in Pangrč Grm was it used as the principal painting technique. The study of painting procedures has revealed *sinopia* only on one mural, while underdrawings have been easier to discern and were traced with yellow, red or black colour. Incisions and pouncing are very common but can vary in the depth and width of the line/form. For straight lines, mostly a rope soaked in red colour was pressed against the wall. Underpaintings were rarely found under malachite, azurite and, in just one case (Ptuj) they were found under cinnabar. In modelling, the line takes precedence over the colour, therefore we find mostly flat figures and objects. However, in later murals, greater volume and a softer modelling can be appreciated. This is, of course, also dependent on the quality of the artist. The material and technical study of mural paintings can thus make an important contribution to our understanding of an artwork or an artist, as well as informing conservation-restoration work.

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Analiza materialov in slikarskih tehnik srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva v Sloveniji do leta 1380

Povzetek

Sodoben pristop k preučevanju umetniških del zahteva tudi raziskovanje materialov in postopkov, ki so jih uporabljali umetniki pri njihovem ustvarjanju. Na področju stenskega slikarstva to vključuje znanje o uporabljenih pigmentih, razlikovanje med slikanjem na svež in na suh omet, apneno ali mešano tehniko in študij slikarskega postopka od pripravljalne risbe do končnega modeliranja. Te informacije skupaj z umetnostnozgodovinsko študijo omogočajo popoln vpogled v umetniško delo in umetnikov način ustvarjanja, kar omogoča boljšo primerjavo med različnimi deli, umetniki ali delavnicami. Osnovni pristop je analiza materiala, ki je lahko neinvazivna ali invazivna; slednja temelji na odvzemu majhnih vzorcev, ki se nato analizirajo z različnimi laboratorijskimi tehnikami, kot so optična mikroskopija (OM), skenirna elektronska mikroskopija z energijsko disperzno rentgensko spektroskopijo (SEM-EDX), rentgenska fluorescenca (XRF), rentgenska difrakcija (XRD) ali ramanska spektroskopija, ki so najpogostejše. Doslej je bilo raziskanih več kot 40 izbranih srednjeveških fresk po vsej Sloveniji, ki so potrdile ozko, praviloma naravno paleto anorganskih pigmentov, primernih za fresko poslikavo, v redkih primerih so bili najdeni tudi svinčevi pigmenti, ki pa so večinoma potemneli. Glavna slikarska tehnika je freska, večinoma v kombinaciji s *secco* ali apneno tehniko, slednja je v nekaterih primerih tudi glavna. Postopek slikanja se od poslikave do poslikave razlikuje in razkriva umetnike različnih slikarskih in tehničnih spretnosti. Delo še vedno poteka.

Medieval Murals in Norwegian Stone Churches

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Introduction

In Norway, it was not common to build churches from stone in the Middle Ages. It is estimated that of approximately 2,300 churches only around 320 were made of stone.[1] Today, this ratio is reversed and of the 191 surviving medieval churches, 159 are churches made of stone.[2] At least 33 of these contain preserved remains of medieval murals. These are painted on lime-based supports and differ from wall paintings in the wooden churches both in terms of painting technique and the associated preservation and conservation issues.[3] This article focuses on medieval murals in Norwegian stone churches.

Centuries of rebuilding, deterioration and overpainting, followed by 20th-century restorations, have left their mark on the murals. An analysis of medieval murals thus requires the cooperation of art historians and conservators, in part because of the often poor or fragmentary condition of the works, which can frustrate efforts to interpret scenes or figures. Furthermore, historical restorations regularly included extensive additions, alterations and reconstructions. As a result, it is frequently difficult to differentiate between material from different periods. Only recently has

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[1] Riksantikvaren, Kirker. Stavkirker, https://www.riksantikvaren.no/arbeidsomrader/stavkirker/, 2022 (first published 2020).

[2] The medieval churches in the Swedish counties Jemtland, Härjedalen and Bohus Len, which were part of Norway until the 17th century, are not included in this article.

[3] Of the 32 preserved medieval wooden churches (27 of them stave churches), seven have medieval murals. Except for the canopy in Hopperstad and the baldachin in Torpo stave church, the preserved murals are in very fragmentary state; see OLSTAD 2016, 75.

an interdisciplinary perspective been brought to the documentation and interpretation of these Norwegian paintings.[4]

During the 19th century, all Norwegian murals were whitewashed. In the early 20th century, however, attitudes to historic churches changed, and murals were uncovered and restored. Today, what remains of medieval murals is typically fragmentary, and consists of figurative motifs, ornaments, signs, and single images. The colours have faded, leading to a loss of detail. Moreover, during earlier restoration work, conservators may have embellished the motifs, sometimes leading to a misinterpretation of scenes and figures or hindering a reliable evaluation of the original decorations. In many cases, there are now murals from different periods on display side by side, works not intended to be viewed together. These amalgamations hamper efforts to distinguish motifs and date them.

This article discusses information about mural restoration and conservation in the form of stratigraphy, painting techniques and conservation treatments together with art historical studies to yield new knowledge about the medieval murals in Norwegian stone churches. It addresses the following questions: when were murals first painted in Norwegian stone churches, and what was the extent of these paintings? What motifs and ornaments remain? Is it possible to identify any workshops?

In an effort to answer these questions, we present a survey of the restoration history of the murals and examine murals with figurative motifs from the 12th to the 15th century. In addition, we review some of the ornamental murals, including the borders, architectural designs and drapery as well as individual symbols and images, such as ships and labyrinths.

Previous Research

Although there has been no comprehensive technical and art historical overview of Norwegian medieval murals, there is previous work on which our research has been built. Two art historical studies on Norwegian medieval murals provide an overview of larger figurative motifs; they do not, however, include ornamental and minor murals. The first is Erik Oddvar Dæhlin's 1956 master's thesis "En studie over norsk monumentalmaleri fra middelalderen" (A Study of Norwegian Monumental Murals of the Middle Ages). Dæhlin addresses medieval murals in stone and wooden churches in Norway, focusing on figurative motifs. He divides the murals into stylistic groups: murals from the 13th and 14th centuries bear influences from England and France; murals

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[4]   Research project "Norske kalkmalerier fra middelalderen til 1850" (Norwegian Murals from the Middle Ages until 1850), Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research, 2018–2020, https://www.niku.no/prosjekter/norske-kalkmalerier/.

from the 15th century have common European features. He also stresses the difficulty of studying Norwegian murals given their often fragmentary condition and poor state of preservation. In the years since this 1956 publication, more medieval wall paintings have been discovered.

The second study is a 2017 master's thesis by Katharina Ursula Refsahl: "Middelalderens monumentalmaleri i Norge" (Medieval Monumental Murals in Norway). Refsahl describes different groups of motifs and places them in a Scandinavian context. She also examines their function and use.

Most descriptions of medieval murals are found in texts about the churches in which they are located. Frequently they are art historical in nature, lacking any technical analysis from conservators, with the focus on iconographic interpretations of the pictorial programme, such as Wenche G. H. Lamark's master's thesis "Tanum kirkes kalkmalerier" (Tanum Church's Frecoes, 2009); Margrethe Stang's chapter "Interiøret i senmiddelalderen: Noen spor" (Late Medieval Interiors: Some Traces) in *Tingvoll Kyrkje* (Tingvoll Church, 2006); and Lisen Bull's short text on the murals in Mære Church in *Den iconographiske post* (1974).

The documentation project *Norges Kirker* (Churches in Norway, 1949–2013) has gathered scholarly material on churches and their interiors in seven of the former 19 Norwegian counties. This includes documentation on ten medieval stone churches with medieval wall paintings, providing descriptions of murals from an art historical point of view.

Lars Hauglid's 1974 study on Tanum Church is one of the few publications addressing the technological conservation and restoration of medieval murals, including pigment analysis. His restoration report must be considered the most comprehensive publication in this field.

Correspondence between conservators and *Riksantikvaren* (Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage) together with restoration reports serve as the primary source of information concerning conservation treatments. However, restoration reports earlier than the 1970s may be incomplete. In his 1953 book, *Tre lag kalkmalerier i Dale kirke* (Three Layers of Wall Paintings in Dale Church), the Norwegian conservator Ola Seter discusses his findings regarding the uncovering work in Dale Church in Luster.

More recent restoration reports, from around 2000 onwards, usually provide the most thorough findings on the extent and condition of Norwegian murals. These contain archival studies and observations on painting techniques. A recent article considers non-programmatic murals of images and inscriptions, often referred to as graffiti, and connects them to memorial functions.[5]

The study of murals requires the marrying of art history and conservation, including layer structure (stratigraphy), materiality, and restoration history. This article attempts to fill in much-needed documentation in these areas.

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[5]   Images and Inscriptions 2022.

Medieval Murals in Stone Churches: Recovery and Restoration

The oldest preserved Norwegian medieval stone churches date from the first half of the 12th century, while most of the preserved medieval stone churches in Norway were built between 1150 and 1300. During the first decades of the 14th century, there was a dramatic decline in building activity in Norway.[6] This suggests that the population decline had started several decades before the Black Death, and thus the demand for new parish churches decreased. The combined effect of this earlier population decline and the devastating consequences of the plague on the population in the mid-14th century was that few new churches were erected until the 17th century.[7]

Of the 159 surviving medieval Norwegian stone churches, most are rural parish churches. With some exceptions, they are *long churches*, with a rectangular nave and a small square or apse chancel. Town churches of the Middle Ages were larger and more complex, such as Trondheim Cathedral, Stavanger Cathedral, Bergen Cathedral, and St Mary's Church in Bergen.

At least 33 of these 159 stone churches have murals that can be dated to the medieval period, the majority of them occurring in parish churches (Table 1). St Mary's Church in Bergen and Stavanger Cathedral are town churches that have preserved medieval murals with figurative motifs, and Trondheim Cathedral has only minor surviving ornamental fragments.

At the beginning of the 20th century, none of the medieval murals in these churches were visible. Owing to new interpretations of Protestant piety in the 19th century, a simple, whitewashed church interior was preferred. Additionally, a growing population and more buoyant economy in the mid-1800s, together with a new Church Act in 1851, led to a building boom. Many small, dilapidated medieval churches were enlarged and refurbished. As a result, often colourful and sometimes redundant inventory was removed, replaced or overpainted. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a new interest in historic churches developed and with it a new awareness and concern for historic building preservation. The *Fortidsminneforeningen* (The National Trust of Norway) was founded in 1844, and then in 1912, seven years after Norway's independence, the National Heritage Board was established. Thereafter began a large restoration programme of numerous medieval churches, which gave a new impetus to the search for medieval buildings and gave rise to the concept of medieval inventory. Through these efforts, murals were rediscovered and uncovered between mainly the early 1900s and 1980, with the exception of two recent discoveries in 2020–2023.

Because there are few murals on stone walls in Norway, few restorers specialize in this medium. In the first half of the 20th century, only a handful of conservators worked on church interiors and inventory. Trained as artists or craftsmen, they normally worked on a wide range

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[6]   THUN, SVARVA 2017, p. 23.

[7]   Only 20 churches were erected in Norway between 1537 and 1600 (none of them preserved today); see STORSLETTEN 2008, p. 45.

1. Dale Church in Luster.
Medieval wall paintings, (A) covered by
a 16th century mural, (B) partly exposed
(Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2016)

of different materials, such as easel painting, wooden sculptures, painted wooden inventory and murals.[8] The craft was usually learned via internships in Denmark, where mural conservation has been practiced since the middle of the 19th century; back in Norway, masters taught apprentices.[9] In keeping with other European countries, the conservation field together with the associated scientific approaches developed in Norway from the 1960s onwards. In 1963, a training programme for painting conservators was established, where the focus was on easel paintings and polychrome sculptures. Even though the conservation of murals on lime-based supports was not included in the programme, a few (two to three) painting conservators worked on murals.[10] Today, there is still no academic education for mural conservation in Norway.

The process of uncovering of murals always puts great stress on the support surface. Because rendered walls and paint layers are fragile, the procedure can lead to physical losses; in many cases, rough tool use has left marks. As a result of these potential physical risks, decisions have had to be made: is uncovering justified, or would it entail too much stress for the painting? And in cases where there are several layers of murals, which period should be prioritized and displayed?

As an example, in the 1960s, three layers of murals were discovered in Dale Church (Sogn og Fjordane). The conservator decided to remove an 18th-century mural of biblical figures in painted niches to uncover an extensive figurative mural of biblical scenes dating from the 1560s.[11] The third layer, medieval murals, is still untouched and just partly uncovered (Fig. 1). In other churches,

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8 BRÆNNE 2012, p. 98.
9 ANDERSEN, KAUN 2021, pp. 138, 145.
10 BRÆNNE 2012, p. 102.
11 HOFF 2000, pp. 48–58.

2. Tingvoll Church. Three layers with paintings side by side, partly uncovered, fragmentarily preserved and affected by decay: a consecration cross, a medieval figurative motive with inscriptions and a painted drapery from the 17th century (in red colour) (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2021)

though, such as Tingvoll Church (Fig. 2), murals from different periods have been uncovered and are on view side by side, without any explanation or visual guidance to help understand the art historical contexts and periods to which they belong. This can be confusing and give a misleading impression of the murals.

Other problems have arisen owing to previous conservation treatments.[12] For example, after the uncovering of late medieval murals in St Mary's Church in Bergen, in the 1930s, the motifs were quite legible, but 50 years later, owing to a conservation medium that darkened over time, the paint layers have partly vanished and the surface has also darkened. During the 1981 restoration, the background was painted white around darkened figures to provide a contrast. A comparison of the murals after the 1930s uncovering and today reveals that much of the motif has been lost; we now have only a vague idea of what the painting may have originally looked like (Fig. 3).

In addition to the issues connected with the materials used in conservation treatments, the different approaches employed by conservators in historical restoration also need to be taken into

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[12] *Conservation* is a consolidating and preserving treatment to countermeasure further decay.

3. St Mary's Church in Bergen. (A) The Pentecost scene after uncovering in the 1930s (Archive of the Directorate for Cultural Heritage in Norway), (B) the same scene today (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2021)

account.[13] At times, historical restoration is characterized by extensive retouching and reconstruction, as can be seen in the murals in Nes Church, Telemark. Carried out in the 1930s and 1950s by the same hand, the restorations resulted in what can be described as over-restored murals, meaning that, owing to the conservator's extensive and interpretative additions, it is difficult for even an expert to identify the original medieval painting. These methods were typical in the first half of the 20th century and need to be considered when evaluating the murals' appearances today and our choices on how to treat them.

In Nes Church (Telemark), the recurring ornaments and borders that frame the figurative scenes were retouched by the conservator. The restoration of the figurative motifs has been carried

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[13]   *Restoration* is the treatment that aims to reveal the aesthetic value of a historic object.

4. Nes Church in Telemark. (A) Murals on the vault depicting Christ in Majesty surrounded by symbols of the four evangelists. The murals have been heavily restored, with repainted frames, (B) figurative additions and (C) repainted contours (Photos: Susanne Kaun, 2014)

out in a more restrained manner; nonetheless, figure contours have been freshened or repainted (Fig. 4). Most likely, the murals were fragmentary when they were uncovered and could not be easily read. Other examples of conservators making generous additions to poorly preserved murals, probably with the aim of making them more legible, can be found in other churches, as well.

However, because of these restoration practices, the authenticity of murals is at times completely called into question, such in the Trondenes and Ringsaker churches. Both churches have some fragmentary, apparently medieval ornamental and figurative motifs, and it is suspected that a conservator was responsible for painting the bulk of them.[14]

Other historical restorations are characterized by a more restrained approach, where the preservation of the original material was considered to be paramount. This principle guided the conservator who restored the murals in Rygge Church in 1925. Here, the mural fragments of the Trinity have been preserved without additions or retouches.

Often, in general, a more restrained method was employed for figurative motifs versus architectural or recurring ornaments because figurative motifs were considered to have more "artistic" qualities, and ornamental elements were easier to reconstruct. The restored architectural ornaments, on the other hand, can serve as a framing device for fragmented murals. Today, academic restoration practices are very restrictive, with the rare additions always carried out under the supervision of a trained eye with respect for the original materials.[15] Original paint layers are never interfered with, and any additions must be integrated "harmoniously into the whole, but at

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[14] This needs a closer examination.
[15] MORA, MORA, PHILIPPOT 2001, pp. 329–345.

the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence."[16]

As already noted, the painting techniques of Norwegian medieval murals have not been studied thoroughly, with little pigment or binder analysis performed. On the basis of visual observations, we can assume that the medieval murals in Norway were most likely painted using a secco technique or – like Danish medieval wall paintings – in a combination of fresco- and secco-technique, applied on a lime slurry or, less commonly, on a render.[17]

The identified pigments in Norwegian murals are red iron oxides, probably red ochre, cinnabar, red lead (minimum), azurite, green copper pigments, and charcoal black.[18] The instability of some pigments has resulted in colours changing or vanishing, and with them the motifs – for example, azurite that has turned green over time,[19] red lead that has turned black,[20] and organic pigments that have faded.[21] These are typical pigments from medieval times, which are also found, for example, in Danish medieval murals. In Danish murals, the exclusive blue pigment lapis lazuli, lead white and the arsenic-based pigment orpiment are also found.[22]

Knowledge of layer structure, materiality, and the restoration history are therefore crucial to understanding mural remnants.

12th-Century Murals: Consecration Crosses (Non-Figurative Motifs)

Most of the medieval stone churches were built between 1150 and 1300 and the earliest surviving murals have been dated to the middle of the 13th century, with the exception of consecration crosses, some of which date from the 12th century (Fig. 5). When a church was built, it would be consecrated by the local bishop prior to being put into use as a place of worship.[23] The church was sanctified and made into a sacred space. Purification and consecration by the bishop included blessing the building and anointing it with holy oil, twelve times outside and inside. Each of the places anointed with oil would then be marked with a cross, today called a consecration cross. Twelve crosses, symbolizing the twelve apostles, were painted or marked on the walls in the nave and chancel. Consecration crosses are extant in 19 of the surviving medieval stone churches. The

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[16] The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, 1964, article 12.
[17] TRAMPEDACH 2007, p. 130.
[18] HAUGLID 1974, p. 26.
[19] Observed in Nes Church in Telemark.
[20] Observed in Tanum Church in Viken.
[21] Observed in Alstadhaug Church in Trøndelag.
[22] BØLLINGTOFT 2007, p. 31.
[23] ANDÅS 2012, pp. 94–100; ANDÅS 2021, pp. 314–318.

surviving Norwegian crosses have four arms of equal length, enclosed in a circle, and were usually designed using a compass and often painted in red or black.[24] They were incised and painted on fresh render, on a lime slurry, or even on the surface of a non-rendered, raw stone wall.[25] In some cases, the hole for the armature which was meant to hold a candle has survived. It is also common to find several consecration crosses painted on top of one other.[26]

An analysis of painting techniques and stratigraphy indicates that consecration crosses were applied after the initial erection of the churches on the first render while it was still fresh, and in some cases even before the

5. Tanum Church. A well-preserved consecration cross (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2011)

church interior was lime-washed. This last piece of information indicates that the churches were not always painted from the outset. Moreover, the repainting of consecration crosses constitutes evidence that they were a part of the church's decoration over a long period.

It is especially interesting that all the preserved consecration crosses seem to have been painted on a monochrome wall (raw or whitewashed) and not together with other ornamental or figurative murals. However, during the medieval period it was not uncommon for consecration crosses to be overpainted with figurative murals, as in the Tanum, Tingvoll and Dale churches.

13th- and 14th-Century Murals: Figurative Motifs

The majority of preserved figurative murals can be dated to the 13th and 14th centuries. The most complex figurative programme preserved in a stone church in Norway is found in Nes Church (Telemark), where the entire chancel is painted. Nes Church was built around the middle of the 12th century and is one of few examples of a chancel with a vaulted brick ceiling.[27] The chancel walls and vault are covered with murals which can be dated to the late 13th century and the first

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[24]   Black paint may in some cases be blackened red lead.

[25]   For example, in the Enebakk and Hurum churches.

[26]   For example, in Lade Church.

[27]   There is also a wooden vault with medieval paintings in Slidre Church, which is a stone church.

6. Alstadhaug Church. (A) The Passion of Christ above the chancel arch, (B) detail of St John the Evangelist (Photos: Susanne Kaun, 2017)

half of the 14th century.[28] Even though some parts have been heavily restored, the former quality of the paintings is evident.

In the ceiling there is a *Majestas Domini*, Christ in Majesty, surrounded by symbols of the evangelists (Fig. 4). The lives of the church's patron saints, St Peter and St Paul, along with Simon Magus, are depicted on the north and south walls.[29] Red, blue, and green predominate in these colourful murals. The images are framed in frieze-like rows and were originally accompanied by a descriptive text underneath each scene; today, only a few text fragments are preserved. Medallions (imitating textile *refil*) and draperies decorate the lower parts of the walls.

Behind the altar, on the east wall, the Coronation of the Virgin Mary is portrayed, and on the opposite wall, above the chancel arch, the Crucifixion. Christ hangs on a green tree with branches shaped as a cross. He is flanked by a soldier (possibly Stephaton) and three other figures: the Virgin Mary, St John, and the final figure may be Mary Magdalene, who is often included among those by the cross, as in this scene.[30]

Another large and partly well-preserved mural, skilfully painted and rich in detail, is in Alstadhaug Church (Trøndelag), in the octagonal chancel. The church was built in the middle of 12th century, and around 100 years later, the octagon was added as an extension of the chancel and was subsequently decorated with murals. The Passion of Christ is depicted over the chancel arch: the Flagellation, Road to Calvary, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. There were further scenes that are no longer decipherable (Fig. 6).

In the octagon cross rib vault there is a Christ in Majesty flanked by two seraphs. On the south side of Christ, the Intercession of the Virgin Mary can be seen, and on the north side, John

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[28]   DÆHLIN 1956, p. 107; REFSAHL 2017, p. 32.
[29]   FETT 1941, p. 31–62; DÆHLIN 1956, pp. 91–102.
[30]   DÆHLIN 1956, p. 93.

7. Tanum Church. The Calvary group above the chancel arch in the nave (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2022)

the Baptist. Around the walls of the apse there are fragments of a city with buildings, towers and arches. On the north side there is a fragment of a ship with two seated passengers and a standing figure adorned with a halo. The rest of the boat is no longer visible, making it difficult to interpret the original motif. However, judging by some typical boat scenes in murals, it could represent St Olaf's sailing race, St Nicholas saving a ship, Jonah and the Whale or Noah's Ark. Since Alstadhaug Church is dedicated to St Peter, Refsahl suggests that the boat motif depicts Christ rescuing Peter from drowning.[31] In the six window niches there are traces of figures, which, it has been suggested, may represent the apostles.[32] The restoration of the murals in Alstadhaug Church seems to have been restrained, making it possible to differentiate between the original elements and any additions.

In Tanum Church (Akershus), the whole east wall of the nave, including the southern altar niche, has large murals which are fragmentary in places. The church was built in the second half of 12th century and the murals date from around 1300.[33] Right above the chancel arch, there is a Calvary group with Christ on the cross flanked by the Virgin Mary and St John (Fig. 7). On the north and south sides of the arch there are architectural frames. In the south frame, the Coronation of the Virgin is discernible, but in the north frame, no traces of motifs have been detected. It is likely that the north side once depicted a scene from the life of the Virgin Mary, the patron saint of the church, possibly the Annunciation, Nativity or the Death of the Virgin.[34]

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[31]   REFSAHL 2017, p. 53.
[32]   DÆHLIN 1956, p. 119.
[33]   CHRISTIE 1996; LAMARK 2017, p. 8.
[34]   CHRISTIE 1996. LAMARK 2017, p. 74, argues that the scene could have been Annunciation.

8. Botne Church. Devils on the north wall in the nave (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2020)

The altar niche on the south side of the arch has fragments of murals from the Passion of Christ. Today murals on the south side are visible: Christ in Majesty (above) and Christ in Limbo (below), where Christ reaches out to Adam and Eve in the gaping jaws of Hell. On the back wall of the niche, there is a wooden sculptural Calvary group set against a painted background with the sun and the moon. The murals have been documented and restored in accordance with current conservation principles.[35] All retouches have been carried out in such a way that the original paint can be distinguished from any lines and paint applied later. Since the restoration techniques have avoided adding material or significantly altering the original matrix, the images of the preserved mural are decipherable, even in their fragmentary condition.

In Botne Church, which was built during the second half of 12th century, there is another variation of Hell which, due to heavy restoration, is difficult to date.[36] On the north wall of the nave, there is a scene depicting a devil riding a man into the flames of Hell (Fig. 8). To the right of this pair, there are two standing figures, a devil and a man, the latter strongly repainted, making it difficult to determine his original intended identity.[37]

In Rygge Church, which was built in the first half of the 12th century, there is a fragmentary remnant of a large mural of the Holy Trinity, where, in the apse vault of the chancel, God the Father holds his crucified son in his lap. The scene is set in a mandorla held by an angel. The mural has been

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[35] HAUGLID 1974.
[36] REFSAHL 2017, p. 32, dated the murals to the 15th century, but they could as well be from the 14th century, or even more recent, such as from the 16th century, as Susanne Ørum has suggested (ØRUM 2018).
[37] Only the lower part of the garment of the man is original, while the hands and face are later additions.

9. Kinsarvik Church. (A) A bishop on the south wall in the nave, (B) St Michael on the north wall, both around five metres tall (Photos: Elisabeth Andersen, 2020)

dated to the first half of the 14th century.[38] Originally, there may have been four angels or the four evangelists supporting the mandorla, though today the only preserved figure is an angel, also the symbol of St Matthew. The scene is so faded and fragmented that it is difficult to discern the style.

The largest figures portrayed in a Norwegian church are in Kinsarvik Church, which was built around 1200. On the north wall of the nave, there is a figure of the archangel Michael five metres in height weighing souls on scales, while two small devils, a fraction of Michael's size, attempt to pull the scales in their favour (Fig. 9B). Opposite this mural, on the south wall, stands an unknown bishop, who is as tall as the archangel (Fig. 9A). Both works have suffered decay and only the ground layers have been preserved. The contours and ornaments have been partly repainted.

In 2023, two censing angels on the chancel vault in Stavanger Cathedral were discovered which could be dated to the 14th century.[39]

Many medieval murals are difficult to date. In Mære Church, which was built in the 12th century, there are surviving mural fragments in the altar niche on the south side of the chancel arch. These include, on the back wall, the fragments of a person one metre in height, dressed in a mantel and cloak. On the south side of the niche, there is a scene depicting three people in a container flanked by two figures. Two possible interpretations of this scene have been proposed: Shadrach,

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[38]   CHRISTIE, CHRISTIE 1959, p. 262; ANDERSEN 2019, pp. 158–159.

[39]   At the time of writing this article, the murals were being restored by the Museum of Archaeology in Stavanger, with the work scheduled to be completed in 2024.

Meshach and Abednego in the furnace, from the book of Daniel (3:16–18); or the legend of St Nicholas miraculously restoring to life three children killed by a butcher.[40] According to the legend, the butcher had pickled the children in a barrel, planning to pass them off as ham for sale. Having travelled to the area to provide famine relief, Nicholas saw through the ruse and is said to have resurrected the children from the brine. If the altar was dedicated to St Nicholas, the latter interpretation would be the most plausible.

15ᵀᴴ Century to the Reformation

At least four stone churches have preserved murals with figurative motifs dating from the late medieval period, which in Norway ended in 1537 with the advent of the Protestant Reformation.

In Slidre Church, which was built in the second half of the 12th century, a late medieval mural has been preserved on the upper east wall of the chancel, now partly covered by the altarpiece. It is of high quality, and the upper section depicts the Coronation of the Virgin flanked by angels playing instruments; below this register, there is an Assumption of Mary (or Ascension of Christ) flanked by the 12 apostles, each holding his attribute (Fig. 10).

Dæhlin argues that there are affinities between this mural and those painted by the Union Master in Fogdö Church and Strängnäs Cathedral in Sweden.[41] However, the murals in Slidre Church resemble

10. Slidre Church. (A) The Coronation of the Virgin, flanked by angels playing instruments. Underneath, the Assumption of Mary (or the Ascension of Christ) – covered by the altarpiece – flanked by the Twelve Apostles; (B) detail of three apostles (Photos: Susanne Kaun, 2022)

even more closely those in Tensta Church in Uppland, Sweden, which are signed by Johannes Rosenrod and have been dated to 1437.[42] Rosenrod was active in the middle of the 15th century,

[40]   BULL 1974.
[41]   DÆHLIN 1956, p. 135.
[42]   *Katedralen* 2015. Thanks to Anne Braun for making us aware of the similarity.

11. (A) Tensta Church, Sweden. Detail of an apostle (Photo: Lars Johnson). (B) Slidre Church. Detail of an apostle (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2022)

and he may also have worked in Danmarks Church outside Uppsala. It is unknown if he travelled to Slidre, but the similarities between the paintings are so striking that it is tempting to believe that he or one of his pupils created them (Fig. 11).

In Tingvoll Church, which was built from 1170 to the 13th century, several murals dating from the late 14th or first half of the 15th century decorate the nave.[43] Although the murals are fragmentary, a depiction of St George fighting the dragon can be discerned on the south wall, accompanied by the text "…riddare scte jurian drekan" ("the knight St George [slays] the dragon") (Fig. 12). This is the sole surviving mural of St George in Norway. On the north wall, there are fragments of figures, including a group of three: a seated man, another seated man with a bowed head, and a standing man holding a long stick (Fig. 13). These figures may represent a saint's martyrdom or the Flagellation, as Stang suggests.[44] A further group of three figures portrays a man with a prominent hat and a bishop (with both men holding scrolls), as well as a peasant wearing a gugel. There are also traces and fragments that suggest there were other figures, but these are in such poor condition that they are difficult to interpret.

In St Mary's Church in Bergen, which was built in the second half of the 12th century, there are figurative murals dating from the first half of the 15th century.[45] They are preserved in four arches

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43   STANG 2006, p. 294.
44   STANG 2006, pp. 291–297.
45   DÆHLIN 1956, pp. 136–137; LIDÉN 2000, p. 54; REFSAHL 2017, p. 37.

12. Tingvoll Church. St George and the dragon on the south wall in the nave
(Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2018)

13. Tingvoll Church. Partly uncovered wall paintings, depicting a prominent man and a bishop
on the north wall in the nave (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2022)

14. St Mary's Church
in Bergen. (A) The
Flagellation and (B) a
detail. Today this mural
is covered by the pulpit
(Photos: Susanne Kaun,
2010)

15. Stiklestad Church.
Part of a frieze with
fragmentary figurative
scenes surrounded by
reconstructed painted
frames on the north
wall of the nave (Photo:
Susanne Kaun, 2020)

between the vault and triforium as well as above the chancel arch. In the eastern vault in the north aisle, there are further fragments of figures. In the four arches, there are figures of Peter and Paul, a *memento mori* motif, a Pentecostal motif (Fig. 3), the Ascension of Christ, and in the vault, an unidentified man with his right arm outstretched in a gesture of blessing. Fragments of the Last Judgement can also be seen above the chancel arch. In 2005, the restoration of the pulpit revealed a well-preserved mural of the Flagellation that had been hidden behind it (Fig. 14).[46] Because the

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[46]   HEGGENHOUGEN 2010, p. 20.

mural had been covered by the pulpit since 1676, it had never been overpainted or restored. It is likely that a larger programme of the Passion of Christ ran along the pillars on the southern arcade, and perhaps the life of Christ ran along on the north side.

In Stiklestad Church, which dates from the second half of the 12th century, 15th-century murals line the north and south walls of the nave. Nicely reconstructed painted framework surrounds traces of figurative scenes. Because images have been left fragmented, it is impossible to make determinations about their style; however, the remaining details suggest that they were scenes from the life and death of Christ (Fig. 15).

Ornamental Murals

Figurative scenes are often embedded in ornamental elements, such as linear or foliage borders, drapery and painted frameworks with architectural elements. In many churches, such preserved ornamental decoration is, however, devoid of any figurative motifs.

Typical architectural ornamental painting includes ashlar stone imitations and dogtooth- and zig-zag borders placed in and/or around window openings, altar niches, and chancel arches, as well as running along the walls or ceilings (Fig. 16). Borders are frequently shaped as hearts, lilies (*fleur de lis*) and clover.

16. Murals with architectural ornament. (A) Chancel arch in Nes Church, Telemark. (B) Chancel walls in Siljan Church (Photos: Susanne Kaun, 2020)

17. Romnes Church. Drapery painting in the chancel (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2021)

Three churches have examples of painted drapery, all in the chancel and all from the county of Telemark: the Romnes (Fig. 17), Seljord and Nes churches. In Seljord (1150–1250), drapery has been preserved behind the altar in the apse, below the traces of figures. It falls from the middle of the wall and vanishes 1.5 metres above the floor. In Nes, it runs along the lower part of the murals on the chancel walls and also from the middle of the wall, but ends one to two metres from the floor. The drapery is connected to a frieze of medallions with animal motifs, which evokes the pictorial structure of the textile *refil*.[47] In Romnes Church (1150–1250), on the other hand, the drapery is not connected to any figurative motifs, but starts at the upper edges (i.e. not in the centre) of the north and south walls at the back of the apse and ends about two metres above the floor. These draperies imitate textiles commonly used to cover medieval church walls, either for practical insulation reasons or for aesthetic, decorative purposes.[48]

These ornamental murals have often been heavily restored and repainted, probably because it was "easier" and therefore justifiable for the conservator to reconstruct recurring patterns and architectural murals. Because of the lack of documentation, though, it is not always clear to what extent reconstructions are based on original fragments. In some cases, the conservator's reconstructions may not faithfully represent the original border and ornamental decoration.

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47   ENGELSTAD 1952, pp. 21–22. As seen on a *refil* from Hvammr Church, Island.
48   WALLEM 1909, pp. 25–29; NØDSETH 2021, pp. 339–342.

Signs and Single Images

18. Siljan Church (1150–1250). A single image of a medieval ship in the chancel (Photo: Susanne Kaun, 2020)

19. Seljord Church. Exterior wall paintings on the west wall. (A) The image of a ship and (B) a labyrinth (Photos: Susanne Kaun, 2020)

In addition to the murals and decorations discussed above, single painted images can also be found on interior and exterior church walls, such as coats of arms, labyrinths, ships, individual letters as well as some unidentified signs.[49] These are often painted in monochrome red or black, using a simple painting technique and a less artistic style, and as such, they have been regularly mislabelled as graffiti.[50] However, these images are not unauthorized, informal, or unplanned, but were executed with a purpose and a meaning connected to the church.[51]

Ship images are widespread and are found in churches and other types of building all over Europe, and also from several different periods.[52] These are frequently difficult to date. In Norway, many of them depict typical medieval ship types, as in the Kviteseid and Siljan churches (Fig. 18). Given that ship images are widely found, they must have had a known symbolic meaning, for example representing salvation or a votive function.[53]

Seljord Church is a unique example of an exterior mural with images depicting ships, a labyrinth, and unidentified figures, extending from the north to the south side of the western entrance (Fig. 19). At Slidre Church, there is a labyrinth on a door on the south side of the building. The location of these labyrinths suggests that they may have served some kind of apotropaic

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[49]   Craftsmen's and other marks sometimes found painted on the exterior are not considered to be murals, and have therefore not been included in that list.

[50]   Images and Inscriptions 2022.

[51]   Images and Inscriptions 2022.

[52]   FELBO 1992; ARTZY 1999; CHAMPION 2015.

[53]   Images and Inscriptions 2022, pp. 81–82.

or protective purpose.[54] But labyrinths could also symbolize a physical pilgrimage to the church as well as a spiritual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[55]

Conclusion

The number of medieval murals in Norway is limited: one in five medieval stone churches, in total only 33 churches, have surviving fragments. They are found in naves and in chancels, on walls and on ceilings, and consist of figurative motifs, ornamental murals, and signs and single images. Two of these churches retain exterior wall paintings from the medieval period.

Due to the often poor or fragmentary condition of the murals, it can be difficult (and sometimes impossible) to determine their date. Nevertheless, one can assume that more than half of the remaining figurative motifs date from the 13th and 14th centuries and the rest from 1400 to the end of the medieval era (1537). These most often depict New Testament stories and saints' lives. They differ in style, their state of preservation and of restoration as well as in their condition: in many cases they are fragmentary, have lost significant amounts of their original colours and have often been heavily restored, thus making it difficult to make determinations regarding dates, style and iconography.

In addition to figurative scenes, there are many ornamental murals, such as linear or foliage borders, drapery and painted frameworks with architectural elements. These can be linked to figural scenes or they can surround windows, altar niches, portals or run along walls and ceilings. There are also several churches with signs and single images that had symbolic meanings or votive functions.

Although nothing indicates that the same workshop was active in different churches, a connection to a Swedish workshop is strongly suggested for the murals in Slidre Church. It could be that the poor condition of many of the works has obliterated details that could be used to identify similar styles and techniques.

Interestingly, apart from consecration crosses, there is no evidence or any surviving fragments of wall paintings or even written sources mentioning wall paintings from the 12th century. On the basis of analyses of painting techniques and stratigraphy, it can be concluded that consecration crosses first emerged on bare or whitewashed walls, prior to the appearance of the first figurative murals in medieval churches. We may therefore infer that the church interior in Norway in the 12th century may have been without murals in the first period and that it was not until after decades or centuries that colourful murals with ornamental or figurative motifs appeared in Norwegian stone churches. We do not know either if all churches had murals.

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[54]   KRAFT, SAWARD 2005, p. 2.
[55]   CONNOLLY 2005, p. 286.

There is a general lack of in-depth studies on medieval mural painting techniques and no pigment or binder analyses from the past half century. Thus far, pigment analysis has been conducted on medieval murals in only one of the 33 churches.[56] Therefore, it is crucial that more research is conducted on Norwegian murals, especially technical analyses, to identify which pigments and binders have been used, the layers they are painted on (stratigraphy), and the extent of restoration treatments and additions. Furthermore, in cases where murals from different time periods are displayed, information is needed to help viewers navigate and contextualize the visual material; this applies to art historical matter, painting techniques, and conservation studies, within both a national and wider European context.

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[56]   HAUGLID 1974.

*Map 1. Locations of Norwegian stone churches with documented medieval murals
(Susanne Kaun and Elisabeth Andersen, 2023)*

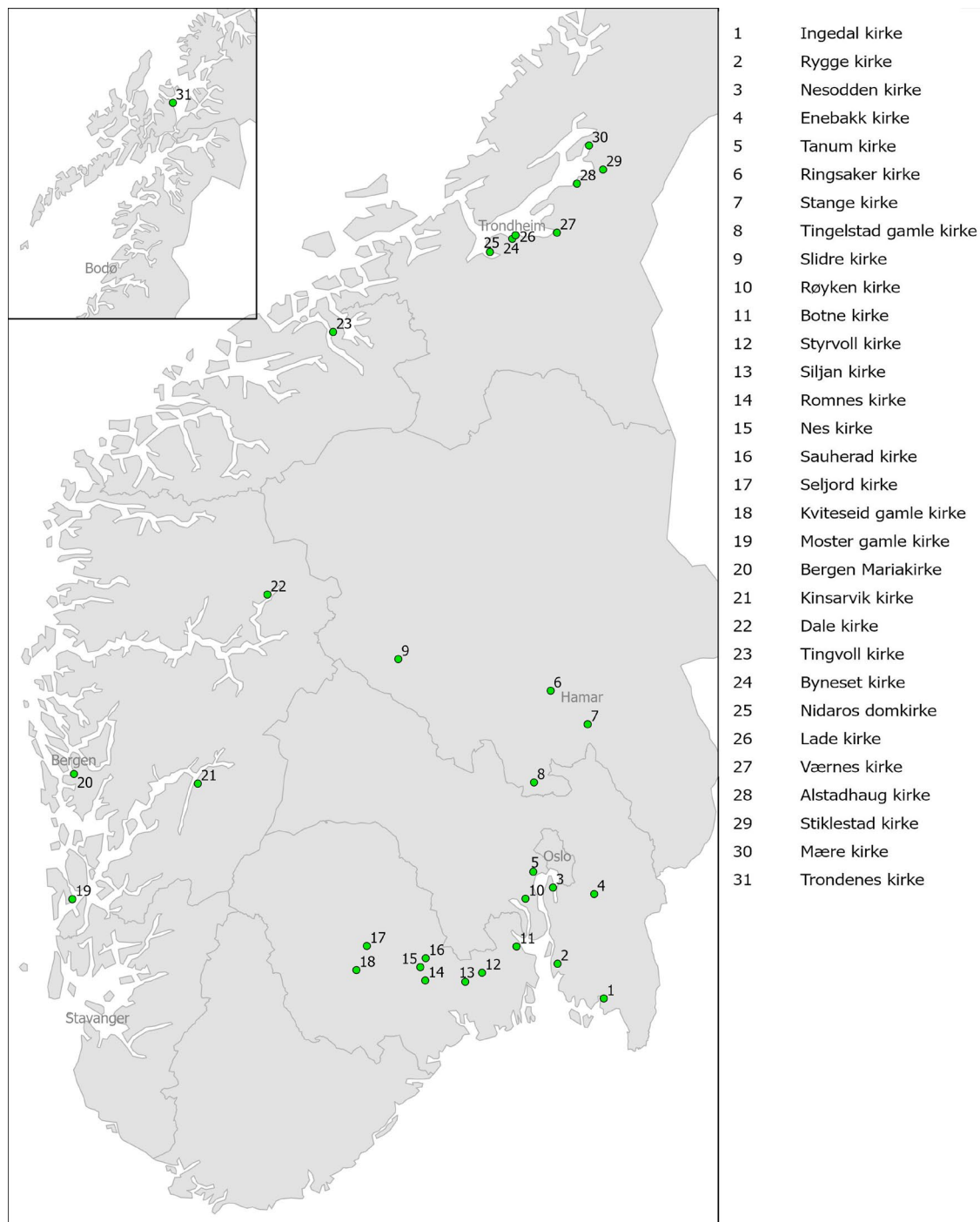|	
1	Ingedal kirke
2	Rygge kirke
3	Nesodden kirke
4	Enebakk kirke
5	Tanum kirke
6	Ringsaker kirke
7	Stange kirke
8	Tingelstad gamle kirke
9	Slidre kirke
10	Røyken kirke
11	Botne kirke
12	Styrvoll kirke
13	Siljan kirke
14	Romnes kirke
15	Nes kirke
16	Sauherad kirke
17	Seljord kirke
18	Kviteseid gamle kirke
19	Moster gamle kirke
20	Bergen Mariakirke
21	Kinsarvik kirke
22	Dale kirke
23	Tingvoll kirke
24	Byneset kirke
25	Nidaros domkirke
26	Lade kirke
27	Værnes kirke
28	Alstadhaug kirke
29	Stiklestad kirke
30	Mære kirke
31	Trondenes kirke

Table 1. Medieval murals in Norwegian stone churches in alphabetical order of locations (Susanne Kaun and Elisabeth Andersen, 2023)

Church	County	Bulit in	Dating mural	Description of the mural
Alstadhaug Church	Trøndelag	1100–1200	1100–1200/ 1280–1350	Consecration crosses, Passion of Christ, Christ in Majesty, apostels, buildings.
Bergen St Mary Church	Vestland	1140–1180	1400–1450/ 1400–1537	Flaggelation, Peter and Paul, Christ Ascension, the Triumph of Death, Pentecost, Doomsday, unidentifiable figure, ornamental, foliage from several periods.
Botne Church	Vestfold	1150–1200	Medieval	Devils, unidentifiable figure, Hell.
Byneset Church	Trøndelag	1100–1200	1100–1200	Consecration crosses.
Dale Church	Vestland	1250–1300	1250–1300	Consecration crosses, unidentifiable figures and buildings.
Enebakk Church	Viken	1100–1200	1100–1200	Consecration crosses.
Hurum Church	Viken	1150	Medieval	Consecration crosses.
Ingedal Church	Viken	1150–1250	Medieval	Border.
Kinsarvik Church	Vestland	c. 1200	Medieval	Consecration crosses, St Michael, bishop, foliage and border.
Kviteseid Old Church	Telemark	c. 1150	Medieval	Consecration crosses, ships images, signs and inscriptions.
Lade Church	Trøndelag	1150–1250	1150–1250/ medieval	Consecration crosses, unrecognizable decor.
Moster Old Church	Vestland	1100–1150	Medieval	Unrecognizable decor.
Mære kirke Church	Trøndelag	1140–1180	Medieval	Consecration crosses, three people in a container, a saint (St Nicolas?).
Nes Church	Telemark	c. 1250	1250–1350	Story of St Peter and St Paul, Coronation of the Virgin, Crucifixion, Christ in Majesty, drapery, architectural ornamental and foliage connected to the figurativel scenes. Iscriptions connected to figural scenes.
Nesodden Church	Viken	1150–1250	Medieval	Architectural ornamental.
Nidaros Cathedral	Trøndelag	1100–1300	Medieval	Foliage.
Ringsaker Church	Innlandet	1100–1150	1100–1150/ medieval	Consecration crosses, St Michael, architectural ornamental, borders, inscriptions, unidentifiable signs.
Romnes Church	Telemark	1150–1250	Medieval	Drapery.
Rygge Church	Viken	1100–1150	1100–1150/ 1300–1350	Consecration crosses, Holy Trinity, foliage and borders connected to the figures.

Røyken Church	Viken	1150−1250	1150−1250	Consecration crosses, architectural ornamenal.
Sauherad Church	Telemark	1150−1250	1150−1250	Consecration crosses.
Seljord Church	Telemark	1150−1250	Medieval	Unidentifiable figures, border and drapery connected to the figures, labyrinth, ship images, unidentifiable images (exterior).
Siljan Church	Telemark	1150−1250	Medieval	Consecration crosses, architectural ornamental, borders, ship images.
Slidre Church	Innlandet	1150−1200	1150−1200/ 1400−1450	Consecration crosses, Coronation of the Virgin, angels and apostles. Borders and inscriptions connected to the figures, coat of arms, labyrinth (exterior).
Stange Church	Innlandet	1230−1250	Medieval	Architectural ornamental, border.
Stavanger Cathedral	Rogaland	1100−1150	1300−1400	Angels swinging censers.
Stiklestad Church	Trøndelag	1150−1200	1450−1500	The life and death of Christ, borders and architectural ornamental connected to the figures.
Styrvoll Church	Vestfold	1100−1200	Medieval	Borders, architectural ornamentals.
Tanum Church	Viken	1150−1200	1150−1200/ c. 1300	Consecration crosses, Crucifixion, Coronation of the Virgin, Passion of Christ, Christ in Majesty, borders, foliage and architectural ornamental connected to the figures, inscription.
Tingelstad Old Church	Innlandet	1200−1250	Medieval	Architectural ornamentals, signs.
Tingvoll Church	Møre og Romsdal	1170−1250	1170−1250/ 1350−1450	Consecration crosses, St. Georg and the dragon, Flagelation? Bishop, peasant and a prominent man. Inscriptions connected to figural scens.
Trondenes Church	Troms	1350−1400	1350−1400	Consecration crosses, bishop, unidentifiable figures, borders, foliage, ship images.
Værnes Church	Trøndelag	1150−1200	1150−1200	Consecration crosses.

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Susanne Kaun, Elisabeth Andersen

Srednjeveške stenske poslikave
v norveških kamnitih cerkvah

Povzetek

Na Norveškem je 159 srednjeveških kamnitih cerkva, od katerih jih ima vsaj 33 fragmente stenskih poslikav iz srednjega veka. Te poslikave najdemo na stenah in obokih v ladjah in prezbiterijih, v nekaterih primerih pa tudi na zunanjščini. Srednjeveške stenske poslikave vključujejo figuralne in dekorativne motive. Figuralne motive najdemo v petnajstih cerkvah, v katerih so najpogostejši hagiografski prizori in novozavezne zgodbe. Poleg figuralnih prizorov so pogoste tudi dekorativne poslikave, kot so linearni ali vegetabilni robovi, draperije in bordure, poslikane z arhitekturnimi elementi. Stenske poslikave se razlikujejo po slogu, stanju ohranjenosti in restavriranosti. V mnogih primerih so fragmentarne, izgubile so veliko količino prvotnih barv in so pogosto močno restavrirane, zato je težko razbrati njihov slog in ikonografijo ter jih datirati. Z izjemo posvetilnih križev ni znanih stenskih poslikav iz 12. stoletja. Več kot polovica ohranjenih figuralnih motivov izvira iz 13. in 14. stoletja, preostali pa so iz obdobja od leta 1400 do konca srednjega veka (1537).

The Hunt for the Miraculous Stag or St Giles's Hind?

On the Iconography of the Mural Painting in the Nave of the Old Parish Church in Turnišče, Slovenia

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In terms of the richness of its paintings and the size of what is now, unfortunately, only a fragmentarily preserved composition, the nave of the old parish church in Turnišče occupies the most distinguished place among Slovenian monuments.
STELE 1935, p. 17.

Almost a century has passed since the art historian and conservator France Stele wrote these words in his pioneering study of medieval mural painting, and though much has been revised, updated, and newly discovered since then, the nave of the old parish church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Turnišče (in Slovenia's Prekmurje region) still represents "the most magnificent medieval painted interior in Slovenia".[1] The mural is a part of the extensive *oeuvre* of the painter Johannes Aquila from Radkersburg in the province of Styria, who worked with his workshop in Turnišče under the patronage of Bánffi family (from the Hahót-Buzád kindred). As indicated by the inscription on the southern part of the triumphal arch wall, the painting in the nave was finished in August 1389.[2] Although the collection of remarkable motifs in the church's

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[1] HÖFLER 2004, p. 233.

[2] Immediately after the architectural Gothicisation of the original church, by 1383, Aquila had already painted the chancel as well. Among the preserved murals in the chancel, the following paintings stand out: the depiction of

nave has been well synthesised by now,[3] a few unsolved iconographic puzzles nevertheless remain among the painted scenes. In this regard, I would like to draw attention to an otherwise modest and only partially preserved scene painted on the lower part of the nave's southern wall. Ever since Stele, the researches considered this motif a narrative depiction of a deer hunt,[4] while its context and meaning remained undefined. Already some time ago, I suggested that the scene might depict the legend of St Giles,[5] though the relevant findings have not yet been published[6] and will therefore be presented more extensively below.

The Hunting Scene

On the lower part of the nave's southern wall, two partially preserved scenes that depict the Calling of St Peter and Mary with the Child on her lap and are clearly separated from each other by a vertical decorative band, follow from the point of contact with the triumphal arch wall. In the second scene, the kneeling donor, in the company of a holy monk, is calling upon the Virgin and the Child, and it seems that the depiction of the hunt that follows is directly related to it (Fig. 1).

the Apostles on the northern wall, the fragmentary scenes from the Jesus and Mary cycle on the areas beneath the vaults on the northern and southern wall, and the depiction of *Maiestas Domini* in the apse calotte, complemented by the symbols of the Evangelists and angels on the vault. About the chancel murals, see especially HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, pp. 30–34, 117–119 (with a scheme); BALAŽIC 1994a, pp. 47–59. A monumental donor portrait of Ladislaus I Bánffi's family, located on the chancel's northern wall in the area of the painted curtain below the Apostles, was destroyed in 1928 during its unsuccessful removal from the wall, see STELE 1951; BOGYAY 1951. About the extent of the cycle dedicated to the Virgin Mary on the chancel's southern wall, which can be reconstructed based on the removed fragments of the mural, see BENCE 2009a.

[3]   The mural in the nave is designed in several horizontal bands. On the northern wall, it comprises, starting from below, the Old Testament story of Susanna; above, St Anne (*Ana Selbdritt*) between St Catherine of Alexandria and St Barbara with their legends, and a separate depiction of the Stigmatisation of St Francis of Assisi, placed at the junction with the triumphal arch wall. The entire third band on the northern wall depicts the Last Judgement. The murals on the northern part of the triumphal arch wall are thematically complemented by the depictions of scenes from the legend of St Nicholas, while the Coronation of the Virgin Mary is painted above the side altar. Meanwhile, the southern part of the triumphal arch wall is covered with events from the lives of Saints Peter and Paul. The scenes with St Paul continue in the higher bands on the southern wall of the nave, where a separate scene of the martyrdom of St Lawrence is added in the lower part. Below that, the mural discussed in this article is located. On all three walls of the nave, the fourth and highest band features a cycle of scenes from the Ladislaus legend. For a detailed description, see HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, pp. 34–38, 119–120 (with a scheme); BALAŽIC 1994a, pp. 60–88. The nave murals also included the partially removed portrayal of St Christopher from the southern exterior wall, see BENCE 2009b, p. 52.

[4]   STELE 1935, p. 17; BOGYAY 1951, p. 130; BOGYAY 1986a, p. 249; BOGYAY 1986b, pp. 151, 154; LANC 1989, p. 75; MAROSI 1989, p. 50; HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, p. 120; BALAŽIC 1994a, p. 83; LANC 2002, p. 27 (Textband); KERNY, MÓSER 2010, p. 44; BALAŽIC 2018, p. 78.

[5]   BENCE 2012, pp. 43–46.

[6]   So far, my position has only been summarised by Janez Balažic, who remains reserved, see BALAŽIC 2018, p. 78.

1. Mural painting in the lower part on the nave's southern wall in the old parish church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Turnišče, 1389 (© Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute of Art History (ZRC SAZU, UIFS), photo: Gorazd Bence)

A horizontal inscription band separates the mural in question from the scenes painted higher on the southern wall. Underneath this mural, on the ground floor as elsewhere in the nave, a decorative curtain was painted into which a wall niche was placed already during the Middle Ages to serve for the southern side altar. To the west, the mural necessarily concluded at the former medieval southern portal of the church. During the Baroque period, one of the nave's original windows, located above this portal, was replaced by a rectangular aperture that was cut out and thus absorbed into the upper part of the mural in question. The presentation of the mural we can see today has resulted from the extensive conservation and restoration works carried out in the church during the 1970s.[7] The removal of the nave's Baroque barrel vault during World War II undoubtedly contributed to the comprehensive perception of the medieval space. Although the mural paintings in

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[7]   Between 1971 and 1980, the restoration works were overseen by the restorer Ivan Bogovčič, see BOGOVČIČ 1981.

Turnišče had been known to the professional public ever since Flóris Ferenc Rómer's discovery in 1863 and first mention in 1874,[8] most of the scenes were only uncovered during the research carried out by the Hungarian monuments service before the new church was erected next to the old one's southern wall in 1914–1915. István Gróh's preserved watercolour sketch from 1912 indicates that the mural on the nave's southern wall was also discovered at this time (Fig. 2).[9]

The motif in question came to France Stele's attention already when he first inspected the church as a conservator in the summer of 1920.[10] He also made the only attempt so far to decipher its substantive background[11] but has not elaborated on it anywhere. When describing the mural painting in the nave, he merely mentioned it in his 1935 work *Monumenta Artis Slovenicae*. Because of the importance of the context in which Stele placed the hunting scene, I shall quote the paragraph in full: "Among the narrative paintings, the legend of King Ladislaus the Holy occupies the highest band. However, despite extensive inscriptions, the contents of the events depicted in the remaining four bands remain unclear. The inscription about Saul and Ananias in the second band from the top on the southern wall proves that these scenes at least partly originate from the Bible. Meanwhile, the deer hunting scene and the distinctive headgear depicted on the southern wall suggest that these may be scenes from the chronicles of the origin of the Hungarians."[12] The matter deserves a more thorough examination.

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[8]   RÓMER 1874a, pp. 213–214; RÓMER 1874b, pp. 24–32

[9]   Gróh's watercolour is now kept in the Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center, Budapest, Monument Protection Department, Print & Drawing Archives, inv. n. FM 40. A summary of the completed interventions and the associated documentation was published in ZAKARIÁS 1989, pp. 146, 157–167; see also KERNY 2015.

[10] Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute of Art History, Ljubljana (ZRC SAZU, UIFS), Terenski zapiski Franceta Steleta, V, fol. 32r, 19 September 1920: "/…/ a landscape with trees and archers (very unclear). We can see the rear end of the galloping horse"; and then in XLII, fol. 52v, 28 July 1926: "a painting depicting a deer or doe hunt in the woods"; LIV, fol. 5r, 26 January 1935: "a scene in the woods with a deer"; CXXVI, fol. 38v, 6 August 1937: "a picture of a deer hunt"; and LXXXVI, fol. 32v, 6 September 1947: "a scene of hunting in the woods".

[11] Cf. footnote 4. Among the interpretations that deviate from Stele's initial evaluation, presented in the continuation, it is worth mentioning Damjan Prelovšek's entry in the catalogue of monuments from Stele's 1972 monograph on mural painting from the Ars Slovenica collection, where, next to the scheme of individual scenes, Prelovšek identifies the fragment on the nave's southern wall as the scene with a lion, which is probably merely a lapse, see STELE 1972, p. XLVII. Meanwhile, in his diploma thesis, Janez Balažic took the view that as a peripheral motif, the hunting scene could probably be related to some other more iconographically extensive scene, for example the Procession of the Magi, see BALAŽIC 1994b, p. 182. The fact that such conceptions can also be found in the rest of Johannes Aquila's *oeuvre* is evident from the depiction of the Procession of the Magi on the nave's northern wall in the church of the Holy Trinity in Velemér from 1377–1378, which also includes the motif of dogs hunting a deer, cf. RÓMER 1874a, pp. 207, 213; LANC 2002, p. 27 (Textband). However, the hunting scene in Turnišče is designed separately, while the Procession of the Magi can be found among the murals in the chancel (HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, pp. 32, 118; BALAŽIC 1994a, p. 49). Thus, it is unlikely that the same scene would be duplicated in the nave.

[12] STELE 1935, p. 17.

2. István Gróh: watercolour of the mural on the southern wall of the nave in Turnišče, 1912
(© Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center, Budapest)

3. Hunting scene on the southern wall of the nave in Turnišče around 1928
(© Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Heritage Information and Documentation Centre
(INDOC Centre), photo: Matej Sternen)

France Stele hypothetically associated the deer hunting scene with the medieval chronicles of the origin of the Hungarians, which he also mentions several times in relation to the depiction of the legend of St Ladislaus in the nave of the Turnišče church.[13] As explained in the continuation, Stele was referring to the so-called *Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle* (*Chronicon pictum*),[14] created at the royal court of Louis I of Anjou in 1358, which could also have been illuminated later. The manuscript is a remarkable example of the representational aspirations of the new dynasty. The constructed historical continuity it presents was supposed to contribute to the legitimisation of the Anjou rule in Hungary. The Latin text of the richly illuminated codex is a compilation of several older works and recounts the history of the Hungarians from their mythical beginnings to 1330, and there is no lack of instructive accounts of heroic warfare, terrible massacres, and hunting adventures. Naturally, we wanted to establish which specific part of the *Illuminated Chronicle* France Stele could have referred to in his interpretation of the hunting scene portrayed in Turnišče. A hint is provided by Stele's Hungarian colleague Támas Bogyay, who was also intrigued by the context of the painted hunting scene. In his in-depth article from 1986,[15] Bogyay discusses the depiction of the legend of the Hungarian King St Ladislaus in the nave of the Turnišče church in the context of the Anjou royal court. In his efforts, he draws on the donor portrait of Ladislaus I Bánffi's family in the chancel, which had been destroyed in 1928.[16] Comparatively, he also underlines the donor portrait and the hunting scene on the southern wall of the nave. Somewhat less prominently, in a footnote, he equates Stele's elaboration on the deer hunt with the Hungarian origin myth of the pursuit of a hind.[17] In my opinion, this is even more evident from France Stele's notes from the year 1932,[18] where he quotes this very myth. Under the heading "Deer Hunt", he refers to a longer paragraph from the first printed edition of the codex from 1867, edited by Ferenc Toldy.[19] The paragraph, copied into Stele's notebook, discusses the beginnings of the expansion of the Hungarian ancestors in the eastern parts of Scythia. A part of this account is the famous tale of the brothers Hunor and Magor, who, during a hunt, chased

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[13]   E.g. STELE 1935, pp. 17–18; STELE 1969, p. 86.

[14]   The same also in STELE 1969, p. 37. Nowadays, the codex is kept in the manuscript collection of the National Széchényi Library in Budapest under the signature Cod. lat. 404. The references to the codex in the continuation are summed up after BORECZKY 2018, pp. 294–295.

[15]   BOGYAY 1986a.

[16]   For more information about the donor portrait, see also footnote 2.

[17]   BOGYAY 1986a, p. 249 (n. 63).

[18]   ZRC SAZU, UIFS, Terenski zapiski Franceta Steleta, XVII A, 1932, fols. 13v–15r. The notebook entries are not specifically dated but include various notes and extracts from books about Hungarian history, art history, and monument conservation. Cf. table of contents in the same notebook, fol. 46r.

[19]   Cf. MARCUS DE KALT 1867, p. IV. This is also the part of the text from Toldy's edition that STELE 1935, p. 18 (n. 66), quotes in a footnote in *Monumenta Artis Slovenicae*, though only when elaborating on the legend of St Ladislaus, which the stated passage does not mention.

a fleeing hind to the Maeotian Swamp by the Sea of Azov, where they temporarily made a new home. The relevant passage from the beginning of the fifth chapter of the *Illuminated Chronicle* states:

> *It happened that one day they* [Hunor and Magor] *had gone out hunting, and in a deserted place there appeared before them a hind, which they followed into the Maeotian marshes as it fled before them. When it disappeared completely before them, they could not find it in any way though they sought it for a long time. Having finally searched the said marshes thoroughly, they found the place was suited for feeding herds. Thereupon they returned to their father and having obtained leave they went with all their goods to the Maeotian marshes, there to dwell and to raise herds.*[20]

Many versions of the tale of the miraculous stag or hind are widespread in the traditions of Eurasian peoples from Japan to the British Isles, and it can be encountered in ancient mythology as well as in Christian legends. Basically, they are stories in which one or more hunters chase an escaped deer only to find a place or land where they can settle down and create a family or establish a religious institution. The characteristics of these stories can also be identified in the myth of the origin of the Hungarians, as recounted in medieval chronicles and ancient oral tradition.[21] The hind (female deer, doe) that features prominently in this myth was probably adapted into the tale of the miraculous stag (Hungarian: *csodaszarvas*) only later, under the influence of Christian tradition.[22] As ancient forefathers, the brothers Hunor and Magor represent the close relationship between the Huns and the Hungarians (Magyars). This is therefore a myth of the eastern, Scythian ethnic origin of the Hungarians before their permanent settlement in the Carpathian Basin.[23] Another version of this deeply rooted myth is also reflected in the legend of the establishment of the Vác Cathedral, which the princes from the Árpád dynasty, Geza I and his younger brother, later King Ladislaus I, had constructed in the spot where a stag appeared to them as an angel of God.[24]

Already in the late Middle Ages, the legendary tradition of the Hungarians' origin was widespread among the nobility. France Stele probably recognised a part of this Magyar prehistory in

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[20]   *The Illuminated Chronicle* 2018, p. 15.

[21]   MÁTÉFFY 2012, pp. 941–942, 944. This is discussed at length in BERZE NAGY 1927.

[22]   On the significance of gender ambivalence, see BERZE NAGY 1927, pp. 73, 76; cf. the totemic meaning of the mother-doe in SICARD 1971, pp. 267–268. For the distinctions between the Hungarian traditions, see Ilona Dobos, Tekla Dömötör, Csodaszarvas; Magyar néprajzi lexikon, https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Lexikonok-magyar-neprajzi-lexikon-71DCC/cs-72291/csodaszarvas-72366/. The Hungarian tale of the miraculous stag is available at: https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Szoveggyujtemeny-szoveggyujtemeny-1/a-magyar-oskolteszet-emlekei-2/magyar-mese-es-mondavilag-29/a-csodaszarvas-A67B/.

[23]   MÁTÉFFY 2012, pp. 944–945; *The Illuminated Chronicle* 2018, p. 13.

[24]   BERZE NAGY 1927, p. 74; *The Illuminated Chronicle* 2018, p. 233. For the image in the *Illuminated Chronicle*, see MAROSI 2018, p. 42, repr. 13. This legend should not be confused with Ladislaus' erection of the basilica in Várad (Oradea, Romania) after his victory against the Cumans, which is also depicted in Turnišče, cf. STELE 1935, p. 18; BALAŽIC 1994a, p. 87, table XXXII; KERNY, MÓSER 2010, pp. 52–53.

the depiction in the nave of the Turnišče church.[25] The iconographic interpretation of the scene in the nave of the church in Turnišče, which had not yet been fully uncovered and was difficult to discern at the time, was not an easy task. This is evident from a photograph taken in 1928 by Stele's faithful collaborator, painter and restorer Matej Sternen (Fig. 3). France Stele might have based his assumption also on the study of Gróh's detailed watercolour, partly drawn with a pencil (cf. Fig. 2), which Stele was familiar with already as early as 1932.[26] Notably, Toldy's edition of the codex was accompanied by a facsimile of a richly decorated folio from the beginning of the *Illuminated Chronicle's* fifth chapter[27] – i.e., the very part of the transcribed text that Stele based his notes on. In the upper left cor-

4. Facsimile of an illuminated initial A with the hunting scene from the Illuminated Chronicle (MARCUS DE KALT 1867)

ner of the folio is an illuminated initial A,[28] directly illustrating the text (Fig. 4). Although the facsimile was lithographically improved, it is mostly faithful to the original from the manuscript. The ornamented initial on a gold background features a picturesque hunting scene against a simple landscape backdrop. A group of hunters and their dogs is portrayed on the right side, with their leader – either Hunor or Magor – standing out in the foreground. Their attention is focused on the hind standing on the left and about to flee into the small woods in the background.[29] At this point, it is sufficient to note that at first glance, the miniature hinds indeed correspond to the composition of the Turnišče hunting scene, though it is also fundamentally different from it. To highlight

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25   Just as a curiosity: allegedly, the "miraculous stag" was also depicted in the Procession of the Magi scene in Velemér, see MAKKAY 1997, pp. 27, 61. Cf. footnote 11.

26   This can be discerned from the notebook, where Gróh's watercolours from Turnišče, at the time stored in the monument office in Budapest, are listed together with the explanations of their contents, see ZRC SAZU, UIFS, Terenski zapiski Franceta Steleta, XVII A, 1932, fol. 21v.

27   MARCUS DE KALT 1867, table between pp. IV and V. We are referring to fol. 3r (or p. 5) from the *Illuminated Chronicle*.

28   The chapter opens with "Accidit autem dierum /…/", cf. *The Illuminated Chronicle* 2018, p. 14.

29   Cf. the description in CSAPODI GÁRDONYI 1968, p. 78. For the most recent information on the stylistic and iconographic analysis of the illuminations, see MAROSI 2018, pp. 54–70; LUCHERINI 2021.

just the most obvious difference: unlike the mythical scene, in which the illuminator emphatically depicts the noble way of life of the Hungarian ancestors hunting in the Maeotian Swamp,[30] the Turnišče hunting scene is much more diverse in terms of the genre and set in a distinctly overgrown forest. But we will elaborate on this later.

In any case, the presented contextualisation of France Stele's hypothesis is clearly merely speculative. Even otherwise, doubts are being raised about it. Depictions of the proposed scene are extremely rare, to my knowledge even non-existent at medieval sacred locations. It is difficult to imagine the scene as part of the otherwise richly conceived iconographic programme of the Turnišče church mural, even as an invention of the commissioner (or painter). Moreover, the mural was not fully presented until the most recent restoration works, which justifies its re-examination and detailed analysis.[31] It makes more sense to look, already at the outset, for the interpretation of the otherwise profane hunting scene in the collection of saintly legends featuring the motif of the "miraculous stag", which is also not rare.[32] The most famous hunting tales include those of St Eustace[33] and St Hubert,[34] who, in a miraculous vision, saw the Crucified among the antlers of a stag; or the touching story of St Genevieve, wrongly sentenced to death for alleged adultery, whose innocence is established by her husband during a hunt for a hind that had nourished her runaway wife and newborn child in the forest.[35] In my opinion, the scene depicts the legend of St Giles, who was well known in the Middle Ages, even in the present-day Slovenian territory.

The Legend of St Giles

The Benedictine monastery in Saint-Gilles-du-Gard in Provence, southern France, represents the centre of the veneration of the hermit and abbot St Giles (c. 640–720), who founded the monastery and was also buried there. As the site was located at the crossroads of prominent pilgrimage paths to Rome, Santiago de Compostela in Spain, and even Jerusalem, mass pilgrimages to St Giles appeared as early as the 11th century, spreading his cult throughout Europe.[36] At that time, his cult also reached the area north of the Alps, where Bishop Otto I of Bamberg, in 1120 (or 1124), built the chapel of St Giles with the hospital under the monastery of St Michael (Michaelsberg)

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[30] MAROSI 2018, p. 48.

[31] This was already pointed out by BOGYAY 1986a, p. 249.

[32] For an overview of the Christian tradition, see BERZE NAGY 1927, pp. 73–76.

[33] TSCHOCHNER WERNER 1994a, col. 194.

[34] TSCHOCHNER WERNER 1994b, col. 548.

[35] MOLLE 1994, col. 360.

[36] ELIS 2012, pp. 67–70; see also MAYR 1994, cols. 51–52.

for the relic, the thumb of the saint, which was brought to Bamberg from a pilgrimage to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Therefore, it is not surprising that one of the first St Giles's churches in this part of Europe is the church of Camporosso in Valcanale (Friuli), also built by Bishop Otto, probably in the 1120s.[37] In Styria and Carinthia, St Giles even became the provincial patron saint. Apart from many others, the city church of Graz (now the cathedral), first mentioned in 1174, and the one in Klagenfurt were also dedicated to St Giles, though the latter was documented as the church of St Giles only as late as the middle of the 14th century.[38] The role of the Benedictine monastery in Somogvár near Lake Balaton in Hungary was not negligible, as it was Giles's most prominent shrine east of the Alps. It was founded in 1091 by King Ladislaus I of Hungary with the support of the Benedictines of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, who also settled the monastery.[39] At the royal court of the Polish Piast dynasty, to which Ladislaus was related, the saint's cult was spreading ever since St Giles's miraculous intervention at the birth of the later King Boleslav III in 1086.[40] All of this attests to the extraordinary importance of Giles's saintly cult and the trust in his intercession. Let us mention at least two of the most notable miracles in his legend.[41] Charlemagne's absolution from an unconfessed sin certainly qualifies among the miracles that were particularly popular in the medieval dynastic circles and which demonstrated the power of Giles's saintly intercession.[42] The sin was so shamefully great that it was unspeakable. Thus, an angel placed it in writing on the altar during a mass celebrated by Giles. It was only through Giles's intercession that the sin was forgiven.[43] The second miracle, also relevant to the present discussion, is related to the miraculous rescue of a hind, known from Giles's *vita*. After the death of his noble parents, Giles set out from Athens and, with stops in between, headed to France, where he lived as a hermit in a cave, nourished only by the milk of a hind. Giles's hind was repeatedly pursued by the hunters of the Visigothic King Wamba[44] and only remained at large due to the saint's intercession. Instead of the

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[37]   HÖFLER 2016, p. 414. About the beginnings of the expansion of the cult of St Giles in the present-day Slovenian territory and its immediate neighbourhood, see HÖFLER 2016, pp. 413–414; see also STEGENŠEK 1905, pp. 187, 213, 217. For more information about Styria and Carinthia, see MEZLER 1955; ELIS 2012, pp. 77–121.

[38]   Among the earlier churches dedicated to St Giles is the one in Tigring, mentioned in 1136, see HÖFLER 2016, p. 414.

[39]   For the historical circumstances of the monastery's founding, see KISS 1999. About the prevalence of the cult in Hungary, see BÁLINT 1974. St Giles was quite popular in the northern part of the Medieval Hungary, the parish church of Bardejov was also dedicated to him.

[40]   About the beginnings of St Giles's cult in Poland, see SOSNOWSKI 2024.

[41]   The saint's miracles mostly adhere to the proven hagiographic approach of *imitatio*. Like St Martin, Giles shares his cloak with a beggar; like St Nicholas, he rescues a group of sailors; and even like Jesus, he exorcises a demon, cf. *The Golden Legend* 1995, pp. 147–149.

[42]   Cf. MAYR 1994, col. 52.

[43]   Summed up after *The Golden Legend* 1995, p. 148. About the importance of this miracle for the expansion of St Giles's cult in Poland and Hungary, see SOSNOWSKI 2024, pp. 91–92.

[44]   Cf. MAYR 1994, col. 52.

hind, an arrow wounded Giles. The unfortunate event was witnessed by the bishop and the King, both of whom humbly begged the saint's forgiveness. Giles refused all the assistance offered and gifts promised. Instead, he modestly proposed to build a new monastery, whose abbot he would later become.[45] In the famous medieval collection of Jacobus de Voragine, the *Golden Legend*, the most dramatic part of the legend reads as follows:

> *Word of this reached the king, and, suspecting how matters stood, he came out with the bishop and a throng of huntsmen. When the dogs did not dare to come close to the doe but turned tail howling, the huntsmen surrounded the place, which was so thickly overgrown with thorn bushes as to be impenetrable. One of them incautiously shot an arrow, hoping to drive out the quarry, but instead inflicted a serious wound on the man of God as he prayed for his doe. The soldiers then cut a way through the brambles and came to the hermit's cave. There they found the old man wearing a monk's habit, white-haired, venerable with age, and the doe stretched out at his feet.*[46]

The hunt for the hind became one of the central scenes from the legend of St Giles. Apart from the Benedictine habit that the hermit consistently wears, the hind even represents his saintly attribute. The distinctly profane character of the hunt probably also contributed to the scene's predominance among the artistic depictions of the saint's legend.[47] This scene has never before been noticed in Slovenian medieval mural painting. To find other visual models, we will therefore need to examine the collection of preserved examples from the broader (Central European) area, which, though also limited, is still representative enough for a general insight into the issue at hand.

The *Krumlov Picture Codex* (*Liber depictus*) contains what is probably the most extensive visual representation of St Giles's legend. The purpose of this uniquely designed codex is still not fully understood, but its origins can be traced back to the establishment of the Franciscan monastery in the Bohemian town of Český Krumlov by the Rosenberg family around 1358.[48] The contents of the codex, as outlined in an ink drawing, are divided into two parts. The first part consists of the *Biblia pauperum* illustrations, while the second part comprises thirty-four saintly legends, including a cycle of some twenty scenes from the legend of St Giles.[49] The distinctly narrative-based legend is presented in horizontal bands of pictures arranged along the length of

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[45]   Summed up after *The Golden Legend* 1995, p. 148.

[46]   *The Golden Legend* 1995, p. 148.

[47]   About the iconography, see MAYR 1994, cols. 52–54.

[48]   The codex is kept at the Austrian National Library in Vienna under the signature Cod. 370. For more information about it, see SCHMIDT, UNTERKIRCHER 1967. The digitised codex is available in its entirety at: https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_6072567.

[49]   The individual scenes are not always clearly separated, so their number is only approximate.

*5. Part of the illustrated legend of St Giles in the Krumlov Picture Codex, around 1358
(© Austrian National Library, Vienna, Cod. 370, fols. 62v–63r)*

both folios of the open manuscript, with a scant Latin explanation added to each scene.[50] Among the many other miracles of St Giles, the story about the hind is also presented, broken down into five images: Giles takes refuge in a desert cave; Giles drinks hind milk; the hind hunt and the animal's rescue; Giles refuses the King's gifts; and the erection of the monastery. The central scene of this part of the legend is presented in the middle of folio 63r (Fig. 5). The event's dramaturgy is characterised by a group of horsemen with the King, the bishop, and several hunting dogs. A soldier with a crossbow rides at the front while the hind runs from him towards the saint's shelter. The wounded Giles is portrayed kneeling in front of the cave with an arrow piercing his knee.

A similar sequence of events can also be discerned in one of the oldest painted legends of St Giles in a mural in the chancel of the succursal church of St Rupert, originally a castle chapel, in Weißpriach, Salzburg (Figs. 6–7). The scenes, set in a distinctly drawn landscape setting, belong

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50   The legend is presented on fols. 62r (middle) – 63v (bottom). The scenes largely follow the text of the *Golden Legend*, see SCHMIDT, UNTERKIRCHER 1967, p. 11; they are listed on pp. 82–83.

6.–7. Legend of St Giles, mural in the chancel of the succursal church of St Rupert in Weißpriach, 1180–1185 (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Gorazd Bence)

among the finest works of the Salzburg monumental painting from 1180–1185.[51] In the lower band of the mural on the southern wall, the continuous cycle begins with a portrayal of Giles drinking hind milk, followed by the equestrian hunting scene. The first of the scenes on the northern wall probably used to depict the hind's rescue, followed by the illustration of Giles's request to construct the monastery, while the cycle concludes with his miraculous intervention during the mass. Unfortunately, the scene with the hind is the least preserved, as only a part of the cave with the saint remains.

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51   LANC 1998, p. 436.

The mural on the northern wall of the chancel of the old parish church in St. Egydien an der Drau in Carinthia also represented a rather extensive cycle. The mural from around 1460 belongs to the circle of the Villach painting workshops and is attributed to the so-called Master of Tessendorf.[52] Originally, Giles's legend was presented in two bands, probably consisting of four scenes, of which only the hunt for the hind has been fully preserved (Fig. 8).[53] The vivid depiction consists of a fashionably clothed group with the King, two hounds, a hunter pointing a crossbow straight at Giles, and the hind hiding in the cave behind him. Giles gazes dejectedly straight into the eyes of the hind, pointing at the arrow protruding from his abdomen with his right hand.

8. Hunt for St Giles's hind, mural on the northern wall of the chancel of the old parish church of St Giles in St. Egydien an der Drau, around 1460 (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Gorazd Bence)

The depiction of St Giles's legend on the outer right wing of the Apocalypse Altarpiece by the workshop of Master Bertram of Minden from Hamburg from the late 1380s is iconographically unique. The retable is kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.[54] The saint's legend is the subject of three images on the left side of the painted panel, while the hunting scene is depicted at the bottom (Fig. 9). Its composition consists of two events from the legend, taking place simultaneously. On the left side of the image, we can still follow the crowded group of hunters on horseback, headed by the King and the bishop; while on the right side, the latter two figures are already on their knees, begging forgiveness from the wounded saint. Giles, who has taken an arrow straight to the chest, comforts the frightened hind in his arms. Two other peripheral motifs enrich the contents of the scene: using an axe, one of the men has made a path for the horsemen

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52   HÖFLER 1982, pp. 24–25.

53   In the upper part, only a part of St Giles's habit remains visible; while in the lower right scene, the King and a kneeling deacon are portrayed, probably from the scene of the miracle at mass. Cf. HÖFLER 1982, pp. 24–25, repr. 68, 71.

54   About the design and dating, see WORM 2019, pp. 160, 162. The reproduction is available on the Museum's website: https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O89176/altarpiece-with-45-scenes-of-altarpiece-master-bertram/?carousel-image=2009CR8203.

9. Hunt for St Giles's hind on the Apocalypse Altarpiece, around 1390 (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

through the densely overgrown forest; while another figure has sounded his hunting horn to gather the dogs around him after the premature conclusion of the hunt.

Typological reductions in the depiction of the scene, featuring only the saint and the hind, perhaps with the sole addition of the archer to intensify the drama of the depicted event, are no less eloquent in terms of contents. The miniature from the prestigious *Hungarian Angevin Legendary*, commissioned by the Hungarian royal court with the illuminator's workshop of Bolognese-oriented painters after 1330, belongs to the first group. The individual parts of the codex have been preserved scattered in several locations, but it originally contained at least fifty-eight saintly legends.[55] One of the most extensive parts of the preserved codex, which includes an illustrated legend of St Giles, is now kept in the Vatican Apostolic Library. The cycle consists of eight paintings, primarily representing St Giles's miracles, including the scene with the hind.[56] The miniature dramatically captures the moment when the saint, pierced by an arrow, collapses to the ground of the overgrown rocky landscape, supporting himself with his right hand, while the terrified hind with antlers (!) hides behind him. Just as a curiosity, let us add that the next scene shows a disinterested wounded saint, whom the two main protagonists of the hunt ask kneeling for forgiveness.

The depiction of St Giles on a mural painting in the succursal church of St Vitus in Altenmarkt (Wies) in Styria by the workshop of the Master of Einersdorf from the end of the 14th century adheres to a similar composition reduction (Fig. 10).[57] In terms of the composition, the portrayal of St Giles with the hind is placed in the area of the wall beneath the vault, just above the window

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[55]   BORECZKY 2018, pp. 294–295. For the latest comprehensive discussion on the manuscript, see SZAKÁCS 2016.

[56]   Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome, Manuscript Vat. lat. 8541, fols. 94r, 95v; the miniature with St Giles and the hind can be found on fol. 94r, bottom right. The entirety of the digitised codex is available at: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.8541. For the illuminations of St Giles's legend, see SZAKÁCS 2016, pp. 154–155.

[57]   LANC 2002, pp. 663–664 (Textband); see also HÖFLER 2004, pp. 244–245, 251.

10. St Giles with the hind, mural in the chancel of the succursal church of St Vitus in Altenmarkt (Wies), around 1400 (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Gorazd Bence)

on the northern side of the chancel's polygonal termination, with St Paul the Hermit depicted as a pendant on the opposite side of the chancel. Surprisingly, the depiction deviates from the legend, as in this case, the saint is supposedly pulling an arrow from the wounded hind (!).[58] Because the end of the arrow is not explicitly marked with feathers, it is more likely that Giles is merely pointing to his wound with his left hand while turning around towards the frightened hind behind him.

An excellent example of the type of depiction that also features an archer can be found on the right outer wing of the 1427 Calvary Altarpiece by the painter Thomas of Coloswar (Fig. 11). The work was created for the Royal Benedictine Monastery in Hronský Beňadik in Slovakia and is now kept in the Christian Museum in Esztergom.[59] The panel painting features the wounded saint comforting the frightened hind in front of a church building, faced by an archer peeking from an overgrown forest and brandishing a drawn bow. Of all these examples, the latter depiction is characterised by the distinctly intensified dramaturgy of the event, co-created by the apparent linear path of the arrow that the hind has miraculously avoided. The arrow is painted twice: on the right, it is still in the shooter's drawn bow, while on the left, it has already pierced Giles's chest.

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[58]   LANC 2002, p. 664 (Textband).

[59]   POSZLER 2006. For the most recent in-depth stylistic analysis, which places the painter between the International Gothic style of the Prague court and the works of Nuremberg painters at the beginning of 15th century, see JÉKELY 2017, pp. 69–73.

11. *Thomas of Coloswar: St Giles on the Calvary Altarpiece, 1427 (© Christian Museum, Esztergom, photo: Attila Mudrák)*

The Turnišče mural should also be placed in the historical context of thoroughly studied medieval depictions, which attest to the extent and significance of the saintly cult of St Giles. Let us finally take a detailed look.

So, what can we still discern from the mural fragment today? Only the upper half of the scene has been preserved, but even that is difficult to make out (Fig. 12). The schematic drawing made during the study of the painting *in situ* will therefore be helpful for the iconographic reconstruction (Fig. 13). From the left, the scene begins somewhere behind the back of the full-length holy monk figure from the donor portrait. The two depictions seem to flow into each other, as there are no clear visual caesurae between them.[60] The scene's conclusion on the right side has been destroyed, but we can assume it ended by the church's medieval southern portal. The scene's entire upper length was accompanied by an inscription band, of which only a fragment on the right remains. Most information can be gleaned from the right half of the mural, where the colour layer is best preserved. The peculiarity of the exceedingly dynamic composition is that the scene actually takes place in a forest.[61] A hunting party, consisting of at least three figures on the right side, is depicted among the trees. The figure in the foreground, wearing a sort of fur-lined headdress[62] and looking back at the companion in the background, gesticulates energetically. It is the only character still depicted on horseback, of which only the head and mane remain. There is

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[60]   If we look for a comparison only in the context of Aquila's mural in the nave of the Turnišče church, it is sufficient to mention the legend of St Catherine of Alexandria on the northern wall, which is depicted without any clear boundaries between the many scenes – they are merely arranged from left to right, cf. BALAŽIC 1994a, p. 61, table XXIII.

[61]   The scene could be placed alongside the depiction of a hunt in the basement of a house in the Main Square in Bad Radkersburg, Austria, from around 1390, which was also painted by Aquila's workshop, cf. LANC 2002, p. 27 (Textband), table 29 (Tafelband). As a mere backdrop, the forest is depicted in the opening scenes of Ladislaus' legend in the Turnišče church nave, cf. the relevant reproductions, see HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, pp. 80–82.

[62]   Similar headgear is worn by the Hungarian noble magnates in the scene of Ladislaus' election as king in the Turnišče church nave, cf. HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, repr. on p. 82.

12. Hunting scene on the southern wall of the nave in Turnišče
(© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Gorazd Bence)

13. Schematic drawing of the donor portrait and the hunting scene in Turnišče
(Drawing: Gorazd Bence)

no way to know whether this is the Visigothic King Wamba wearing hunting garments, though his and the bishop's portrayals could be expected somewhere around this spot. The archer wearing a pointed headdress with an upturned brim,[63] portrayed in profile, stands out from the group. His bow, pointing towards the left side of the scene, is no longer drawn, so the arrow has already been fired.[64] Due to the mural's poor state of preservation, it is impossible to make out precisely what was happening in the lower half of the scene. However, the upper part of a figure, of which only the head and hands clasped in a pleading gesture remain, is still visible. This could simply be another member of the hunting party (?).[65] Judging from its preserved back end, the swiftly running wild animal on the left side could be identified as a hind.[66] However, the image of a previously overlooked prominent figure in the background seems more significant. We can just barely make out the outline of its dark grey clothes, an outstretched left arm, and a fragment of a head with eyes. It is more difficult to say whether the figure is depicted seated in a cave.[67] Could this nevertheless be St Giles, towards whose arms the frightened hind is running and towards whom the arrow has been shot? In my opinion, the key to solving the previously unexplained hunting scene lies precisely in the depiction of the overlooked figure behind the hind. The figure's still tangible features are suspiciously reminiscent of the holy monk from the donor portrait, wearing a dark grey habit and a tonsure. Given the historical context of veneration and the iconographic design of the depiction of the central scene from the legend of St Giles, one cannot help but also recognise this very hind hunting scene in the mural in the nave of the church in Turnišče.

DONOR PORTRAIT

I have already pointed out that the hunting scene is linked to the scene of Mary with the Child, the holy monk, and the donor, painted next to it without any apparent visual or notable spatial caesurae (cf. Figs. 1 and 13). In fact, we could even say that the hunting scene is a part of the

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[63] STELE 1935, p. 17, identified this type of headgear as "characteristic" of the miniature paintings in the *Illuminated Chronicle*. In the Turnišče church nave mural, such headwear can be found in several other instances, for example in the depictions of the Cumans from Ladislaus' legend or the executioners in the martyrdom of St Peter and St Lawrence. For reproductions, see HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, pp. 77, 79, 81, 84. For more information about such headgear, featured in the codex, see MAROSI 2018, p. 67.

[64] Cf. the depiction of the drawn bow of the archers from Ladislaus' legend in HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, repr. on pp. 81, 84.

[65] The depiction could also be a repeated portrayal of the King and the bishop during their plea for forgiveness. Conditionally, France Stele identifies the figure as a donor portrait, see ZRC SAZU, UIFS, Terenski zapiski Franceta Steleta, XVII A, 1932, fol. 21v.

[66] According to his notes, Stele first identified the depicted animal as a horse and later as a deer or a doe, cf. footnote 10.

[67] Cf. the image of St Paul the Hermit in the cave on a mural in Martjanci, painted by Aquila's workshop in 1392. For a reproduction, see HÖFLER, BALAŽIC 1992, p. 103.

donor's portrait. Based on the arguments presented, it is sensible that the holy monk in the donor portrait is recognised as St Giles, who, as the patron saint, intervenes with Mary and the Child on behalf of the donor who is kneeling before him. Given the context of the hunting scene interpretation so far, it has not yet been possible to determine who the donor was.[68] Nevertheless, already Támas Bogyay identified the donor as a male figure,[69] while Tekla Szabó even interpreted him as a cleric.[70] Could it be that a priest called Giles might have worked in Turnišče when Aquila was completing the nave mural?[71]

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[68] Cf. BOGYAY 1986a, p. 249; BENCE 2012, p. 46.

[69] BOGYAY 1986a, p. 249.

[70] SZABÓ 2018, p. 150.

[71] I am preparing a separate discussion on the donor portrait from 1389 in Turnišče. I would like to thank my colleague Gordana Šövegeš Lipovšek for her assistance with the interpretation of the Hungarian literature.

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Gorazd Bence

Lov na čudežnega jelena ali Egidijevo košuto?
K ikonografiji stenske poslikave ladje stare župnijske cerkve v Turnišču

Povzetek

Čeprav je motivno izredno bogata stenska poslikava ladje stare župnijske cerkve Marjinega vnebovzetja v Turnišču, ki jo je pod patronatom dolnjelendavske rodbine Bánfi do leta 1389 naslikala delavnica Janeza Aquile, dodobra raziskana, se med prizori še vedno najde kakšna nerazrešena ikonografska zagonetka. V to skupino sodi tudi fragmentarno ohranjeni prizor na spodnjem pasu poslikave južne stene ladje, ki je v literaturi obveljal za narativno upodobitev lova. Umetnostni zgodovinar in konservator France Stele je doslej edini, ki je poskušal razvozlati njegov vsebinski pomen. Leta 1935 je v prizoru prepoznal lov na jelena in ga povezal z vsebino srednjeveške kronike o izvoru Madžarov, vendar postavljene hipoteze ni nikjer obširneje pojasnil. Zgolj iz njegovih terenskih zapiskov in iz namiga madžarskega umetnostnega zgodovinarja Támasa Bogyayja iz leta 1986 je mogoče sklepati, da je Stele najverjetneje mislil na mit o začetkih širjenja madžarskih prednikov v vzhodnih delih Skitije. Košuta, ki sta jo med lovom zasledovala, je pripeljala brata Hunorja in Magorja do Majotskega močvirja ob Azovskem morju, kjer sta si pred madžarsko stalno naselitvijo v Karpatskem bazenu začasno ustvarila nov dom. Motiv mitskega lova je v različnih oblikah razširjen v izročilu številnih evrazijskih nomadskih ljudstev, značilnosti te pripovedi pa povzemajo tudi srednjeveške zgodovinske kronike, kot je znamenita *Slikovna kronika* (*Chronicon pictum*), ki je nastala v krogu madžarskega anžujskega dvora po letu 1358. Četudi se zdi ideja o upodobitvi te tematike v turniški ladji zelo mikavna, se o tem vseeno pojavljajo dvomi. Likovne upodobitve mita o zasledovanju košute so sila redke, še več, v srednjeveških sakralnih prostorih jih sploh ne najdemo. Tudi kot naročniško invencijo si upodobitev mita v sicer bogato zasnovanem ikonografskem programu stenske poslikave turniške ladje le težko predstavljamo. V prispevku je zato na podlagi zgodovinskih izhodišč in primerjalnega srednjeveškega likovnega gradiva argumentirano predstavljena teza, da je bolj smiselno, če izrazito profano zaznamovan prizor lova iščemo znotraj posameznih svetniških legend. Ponovni ogled in detajlna analiza stenske poslikave razkrivata, da gre v prizoru za osrednji del legende iz življenja puščavnika in opata sv. Egidija, ki je bil v srednjem veku zelo priljubljen. Razgibana kompozicija turniškega prizora lova se odvija v gozdu. Med drevesi na desni je vidna vzhičena lovska druščina vizigotskega kralja Vamba z lokostrelcem, ki meri na pobeglo košuto na levi. Na levi strani prizora je bila doslej spregledana slabo vidna sedeča figura, h kateri se zateka prestrašena košuta. Upravičeno lahko v njej prepoznamo upodobitev sv. Egidija, s čigar priprošnjo je bila košuta med lovom rešena, njej namenjena izstreljena puščica pa je nesrečno poškodovala prav svetnika. Prizor lova se brez večje likovne cezure navezuje na upodobitev Marije z Detetom, nekim svetim menihom in donatorjem. V nadaljnjih raziskavah bo zato smiselno, da tudi v podobno upodobljenem menihu prepoznamo sv. Egidija, ki pred njim klečečega donatorja kot njegov imenski zavetnik priporoča Mariji z Detetom. S tem pa so nakazane tudi nove možnosti za identifikacijo anonimnega donatorja, ki je bil že doslej prepoznan kot klerik.

Portuguese Medieval Wall Paintings

Missing Pieces for a Long-Awaited Artistic Inventory

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Introduction

This paper will discuss some of the oldest and most interesting mural painting collections that still exist in Portugal, covering a wide range of morphologies, functions, and subjects. Other countries' perceptions of the medieval period differ from the prevalent one in Portugal. Until the 16th century, and in some regions of Portugal until the 17th century, Gothic was the dominant style. This poses a challenge to some scientific fields of knowledge, such as Art History, which strives to categorize works of art according to a specific period.

Despite its peripheral location, Portugal has a long tradition of mural painting that stretches from north to south of the country and includes the islands of the Azores and Madeira. This tradition goes back as far as 21,000 BC with rock art complexes from the Neolithic period, and there are also collections of Roman mural paintings dating from the 2nd to the 4th centuries AD. However, there is then a large gap from the 7th to the 14th century with no mural paintings, which has led Portuguese art historians to wonder why the void from the Visigoth or Romanesque periods. It is difficult to provide a definitive answer to this question, nevertheless, we will discuss some hypotheses that could explain this gap, redefining the term "medieval" in Portuguese art. Although the North of the country has a greater number of wall paintings from the first decades of the 15th century, our focus will be on some examples from the Centre and South (Alentejo), where some rare specimens of medieval paintings can still be found, contradicting the claims that regional instability inhibited the production of mural paintings.

A Fascinating Finding: Portuguese Mural Painting

Art historian Vergilio Correia pioneered the scholarly study of Portuguese mural painting by performing documentary surveys and analysing its aesthetic affinities.[1] Following his trip to Italy in 1913, where he came into contact with fresco painting, he began to draw parallels between Portuguese and Italian paintings, which he considered a paradigm of excellence. As a result, many stylistic and technical misunderstandings emerged: not only do Portuguese mural paintings result from a combination of different techniques (fresco, oil, tempera), but they are also the product of other stylistic influences, both local and foreign. Before Correia, the subject of mural painting appears to have been overlooked, which was more of an ethnographic rather than a historic scope. Furthermore, public and private entities responsible for the management and preservation of Portugal's artistic heritage were unaware of heritage that only survived in extremely precarious conditions. Correia's main interest, however, was to identify paintings from the 16th century, considered the Golden Age of Portuguese painting. He was also the first author to propose that easel painters were possibly involved in the mural assemblages, a working hypothesis that is still difficult to prove for the earliest periods since written documents are scarce.[2]

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Portuguese government launched an intensive campaign of restoration interventions in mural paintings in the North of the country, where the oldest examples had been identified. The interventions followed a principle of stylistic unity, resulting in formal and material changes to many sites.[3] On the other hand, in the South of the country (Alentejo and the Algarve), the practice of intensive whitewashing of the interior and exterior of buildings ultimately contributed to the survival of a significant number of medieval and early Renaissance mural paintings to the present day. This is most likely one of the reasons why no systematic research has been carried out on polychrome coatings in late medieval architecture.

At the turn of the 20th century, historical monuments had been regarded simply as a means of representing key moments or episodes in Portugal's history, with a special focus on the medieval period. Luís Keil (1881–1947) was one of the authors responsible for Portugal's artistic inventories. He wrote at a time when a value was placed on buildings that served as testimony to the nation's history, particularly castles and other monuments where, as the author stated, "[...] history took precedence over art [...]".[4] As a result, anything that did not match the "authenticity" standard was erased, wiping out centuries of historical records and presenting a distorted image of late medieval architecture. Luís Keil did not ignore the existence of mural painting in historic buildings, however,

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1   CORREIA 1921.
2   AFONSO 2002.
3   *Boletim da Direcção Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais*, 106, 1961, pp. 1–21.
4   KEIL 1943, p. LVII.

he added that "[...] unfortunately, the paintings that we see today are almost all more modern, having replaced the earlier ones, either by their deterioration or by the evolution of tastes and styles [...]".[5] The author was also conscious of the fact that many of the changes which the paintings had undergone were the result of occasional repaints, many of them poorly executed.

By this time Portugal experienced a series of restoration interventions involving the detachment of mural painting ensembles, primarily for purist stylistic reasons. After the paintings were removed, the buildings were left in their "original" state, with the bare stone showing. Needless to say, a lot of mural paintings were destroyed during this experimental process.[6]

Michel Pastoureau had already addressed the problem of understanding colour, stating that "[…] it is society (rather than the artist or scholar) that makes colour, gives it definition and meaning, creates its codes and values, organizes its practices and determines its issues. […]".[7] This sentence points to changes in society's perception of architecture, perfectly reflecting what happened in Portugal, at least until the late 1960s.

Túlio Espanca was another author who devoted a large portion of his work to the creation of an art inventory in Portugal. Between 1966 and 1978, he focused on the Alentejo region in all its variety, contributing significantly to the (re)discovery of regional wall painting.[8]

Nevertheless, it was not until the 1980s that the historiography of mural painting gained real momentum, thanks to a new, systematic approach by art historians. The new studies focused on the Late Gothic and early Renaissance, primarily in the North of the country, where previous studies had already indicated the existence of some of the oldest mural paintings. Teresa Cabrita Fernandes' inventory, completed in 1982, was a pioneering work that paved the way for new historiographical work;[9] this approach was then followed by other scholars, who built on her work. From 2001 onwards, studies by Catarina Valença, Luis Afonso, and Paula Bessa have adopted a broader perspective, suggesting authorship for many wall paintings, while at the same time identifying their main characteristics, models and sources of inspiration, from Hispano-Flemish to the Italian Renaissance.[10] More recently Joaquim I. Caetano conducted an extensive survey of stencil models used in the decorative motifs of 15th and 16th-century mural paintings, identifying some workshops active during this period.[11]

Portuguese mural painting scholars have focused their attention on two main artistic centres in the Alentejo region: first and foremost, the city of Évora in the geographic centre of the region

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[5]   KEIL 1943, p. XXXVIII.
[6]   *Boletim da Direcção Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais*, 106, 1961, pp. 1–21.
[7]   PASTOUREAU 2000, p. 9 (free translation by the author).
[8]   ESPANCA 1973, pp. 94–112.
[9]   FERNANDES 1982.
[10]   GONÇALVES 2001; BESSA 2007; AFONSO 2009.
[11]   CAETANO 2010.

because of its political and cultural importance between 1495 and 1557; and second, the city's neighbouring towns and villages which were, as a result, affected by its aesthetic currents.

It is important to stress, though, that the majority of these studies have focused on Renaissance, Mannerist and Baroque paintings, as the surviving works in these artistic styles are more abundant. Further, it must be noted that all the recent studies share an urgency to include these works in a comprehensive inventory of national mural painting, as an inventory is a necessary working tool which requires constant updating.[12]

Inventory Challenges

Since the first half of the 20th century, the creation of an inventory of Portuguese heritage is a goal that has been shared by many institutions involved in cultural heritage preservation, with numerous initiatives being launched. Although they all agree on the basic point that an inventory is a crucial working tool, no coordinated effort has been made to put it into practice.

The first and most important is the *Artistic Inventory of Portugal* (Inventário Artístico de Portugal) created between 1943 and 1995 and comprising 17 volumes dedicated to different regions. The first volume, as noted above, was written by Luís Keil and focuses on the area north of Alentejo,[13] however the most in-depth work on this region was undertaken by Túlio Espanca.[14] Even today, Espanca's research is the foundation on which recent inventories and databases are based, including those available on digital platforms.

The overlapping inventories of Portuguese cultural heritage are a result of a long-standing lack of coordination between different government ministries, which dates back to the beginning of the 20th century as one of the immediate effects of the so-called *Separation Law of the State from the Church* (20 April 1911). This radical law primarily affected the Catholic Church, which is the dominant faith in Portugal, and stipulated that from that day on the Roman Catholic apostolic faith ceased to be the state religion. As an immediate consequence, the Catholic Church lost its legal personality and its assets were nationalized.[15] This was the second moment in less than a century in which the State assumed a secular character, which in turn had an impact on the national historical-artistic heritage. The first was in 1834 when Religious Orders were dissolved and their assets confiscated. Republican anti-clericalism would reach a climax in 1911, right after the proclamation of the Republic (1910), with the new law also extending to the secular clergy's

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[12]   DIAS 2007, pp. 219–280.
[13]   KEIL 1943.
[14]   ESPANCA 1973, pp. 94–112; ESPANCA 1975; ESPANCA 1978.
[15]   CATROGA 1988.

immovable and movable property, which had escaped the law of 1834.[16] Along with the Separation Law, the State established a management structure for the Church's vast and valuable heritage, incorporating it into the newly established national, regional and municipal museums, which had already been provided for in the 1911 law. At the same time, commissions comprising Church members and prominent civil society figures were appointed to conduct inventories of the country's places of worship and their assets.

Diplomatic relations between Portugal and the Holy See were re-established in 1918, but it was not until 1940 that they were normalized through the *Concordat*. This would also mark the beginning of the State's returning a limited portion of the Catholic Church's assets. At the same time, the State set itself a five year period (until 1945) to classify as national heritage the objects and buildings (churches, monasteries, chapels) which were not to be returned. As a result, various government ministries have shared monument-related competencies with the Church, which to this day has given rise to considerable difficulties in institutional management and coordination. One of the outcomes was the creation of multiple inventories, the majority of which were dedicated to movable objects (altarpieces, paintings, statues, jewellery, etc.). Inventories that are available online include the *National Secretariat for Cultural Assets of the Church*,[17] the *Information System for Architectural Heritage*[18] and *Matrix Net*, an online common catalogue of the 34 museums of the Portuguese Museum Network,[19] the last two of which are the responsibility of the Portuguese General Directorate of Cultural Heritage. City councils have also invested in compiling local inventories, albeit with a strong emphasis on already known works. Other parts of Portugal's artistic heritage, such as tiles, stuccos, graffiti or mural paintings are only mentioned in connection to architecture and are never as standalone inventory entries. Although the importance of mural painting is often stressed, its preservation has never been considered to be a priority.

Another obstacle to maintaining an updated inventory is the lack of specific funding. Some of the existing inventories are the result of funded research projects which means that, when they come to an end, all the associated tasks cease. The problem is exacerbated in the case of buildings with mural paintings which lack legal protection, making them vulnerable to poorly executed interventions or even the destruction of the paintings. The current state of the inventory of Portuguese heritage is, therefore, something of a paradox. On the one hand, as we have seen, there is a diverse range of coexisting inventories with inevitable overlaps in scope, resulting in the duplication of work and wasted resources. On the other hand, the vast majority of these inventories are outdated and incomplete due to a lack of investment, which compromises their usefulness.

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[16]   FERREIRA 2016.

[17]   The inventories made by the Catholic Church are also available in SIMÕES 2015. Cf. https://www.bensculturais. com/areas-de-actuacao/inventario/588-inventario-on-line.

[18]   Cf. http://www.monumentos.gov.pt/Site/APP_PagesUser/Default.aspx.

[19]   Cf. http://www.matriznet.dgpc.pt/MatrizNet/Home.aspx?Lang=EN.

The Intriguing Absence of Medieval Wall Painting in the South of Portugal

Since the second half of the 20th century, mural painting scholars have attempted to identify the reasons for the apparent absence of early medieval wall painting, particularly in Alentejo, where, paradoxically, this medium (later) came to be longest practiced in both erudite and vernacular architecture. The abundance of local materials (limestone, pigments, lime) in the region has, for centuries, been a decisive factor in the success of the medium.[20]

Some theories have attributed the absence of mural painting throughout the Early Middle Ages to the upheavals that the Iberian Peninsula experienced under Muslim rule between the 8th century and 1492, which ended in the Christian reconquest.[21] During this period, the frontiers of Portugal's kingdom were being established, and the insecurity felt has been suggested as one of the main reasons for the lack of large constructions and mural decorations.

We must also not overlook the role of military orders (Christ, Santiago, Avis, Hospital) in shaping the South of the country during the 12th century. The vast territory of Alentejo and Algarve was owned by resp. divided up between the different orders, which, in some cases, established their headquarters there. The first to arrive was the Order of the Knights Templar (later renamed as the Order of Christ), in 1169.[22] This early arrival was soon followed by the military Order of Santiago (1175), and the Order of Avis (1176).[23] It is not known when the Order of St John of the Hospital, founded in Jerusalem, came to Portugal, though this is thought to have happened at the beginning of the 12th century. According to historical records, the Order's knights fought alongside King Afonso Henriques in the reconquest of Lisbon from its Muslim rulers in 1147. However, they did not become established in Alentejo until the 13th century.[24] These orders lost their military vocation in the 16th century. Now that the threat of new Islamic invasions had receded and after the union of the Portuguese and Spanish crowns (1580), there was no longer such an urgent need to defend the national borders. Only when the insurgency against the Spanish broke out, resulting in the restoration of Portuguese independence in 1640, were military orders considered essential again, this time as members of the national armed forces rather than as separate militias.

Administrative documents from the orders of Christ and Santiago concerning the condition of their places of worship in Alentejo and Algarve help to give us a slightly better understanding of the extent of mural painting in these spaces in the early 16th century.[25] Individual depictions of saints within panels or frames, displayed along the aisles and in the main chapels, appear to

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[20] MONTEIRO 2013, pp. 15–16.
[21] COELHO 1963, p. 26.
[22] FARIA 1995, p. 159.
[23] SANTOS 2009, p. 5.
[24] ALMEIDA 1967, p. 148.
[25] DIAS 1979, pp. 179–185; LAMEIRA, SANTOS 1988, pp. 40–43.

1. St Bartholomew and St Margaret, around 1490–1520, Church of Santa Maria, Marvão (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

have been the preferred compositions inside churches, chapels and hermitages. Unfortunately, the current state of conservation of the majority of these buildings does not reflect the decorative richness of the mural paintings described in late medieval documentary sources. In the church of Santa Maria in Marvão, it is still possible to observe an example of a well preserved mural painting of three saints (St Mary Magdalene, St Bartholomew, and St Margaret) standing side by side next to a tomb (1490–1520) (Fig. 1).[26]

In Alentejo, it is not easy to find an example of mural painting earlier than the 16th century, with one important exception: the castle of Amieira do Tejo in Nisa. The castle was built in the 14th century to defend the northern territories of Alentejo next to the Spanish border. In one of its secondary towers several mural paintings were discovered, one of which represents a *Calvary* (Fig. 2). The presence of a religious painting in a military architectural context has no parallel in similar buildings in Portugal, and the work was attributed to soldiers who were defending this castle during periods of conflict with the Spanish troops. Luis Afonso has already noted the existence of similar works on the other side of the boarder, namely in the castles of Zafra and Villalba de los Barrios, in the neighbouring province of Badajoz (Extremadura).[27] The unusual nature of this painting, which was unrivalled in the region, drew the attention of the General Directorate

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[26]   AFONSO 2009, 2, p. 460.
[27]   AFONSO 2009, 2, pp. 55–56.

2. Calvary, late 14th century–early 15th century,
Castle of Amieira do Tejo, Nisa (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

3. Siren, 1332, Olivenza Castle, Badajoz (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

4. Monastery of Santa Maria da Vitória, 1386–1565, Batalha (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

of Culture to the importance of preserving this cultural heritage, encouraging further studies.[28] Furthermore, in the same tower traces of an inscription were discovered near the paintings, enabling them to be dated to the late 14th or early 15th century.[29]

Older works of art, in the form of graffiti rather than mural paintings, have been left on the walls of another castle on the southeastern border with Spain. The castle is located in Olivenza, a small town of Alentejo which was annexed by Spain in the 19th century. The study of historical graffiti, which share some of the characteristics of mural painting, has yet to be undertaken. Olivenza's graffiti ranges from geometric (lines, stars, etc.) to figurative (a mermaid with a human head and a bird's body, warriors, boats) and heraldic (a coat of arms). According to a date found in the mortar, these graffiti can be dated to 1332 AD, and they also bear resemblance in several respects to similar drawings found in Amieira castle (Fig. 3).

Amieira castle is an exception, not only in Alentejo but in Portugal as a whole. When looking for older mural paintings, we must broaden our search to include other areas, in the centre of the country and closer to the capital Lisbon. Such is the case of Batalha, a small town with an important historic role because it was the site of a great military victory won by the Portuguese against the Spanish between 1383 and 1385. To celebrate this historic event, a monastery was built, symbolically dedicated to *Our Lady of the Victory* (Fig. 4).

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[28]   LOPES 2007.
[29]   BOTTO 2007.

5. Ceiling of the monastery sacristy, 1402–1433, Batalha
(Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

6. Angels' music (detail), 1402–1433, monastery sacristy, Batalha
(Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

Different categories of mural painting are preserved inside (and outside) the building. The most important from an artistic standpoint are those covering the vault of the church sacristy, directly executed on the stone. The paintings are dated between the completion of the sacristy (1402) and the death of the patron, King John I (1433). There are life-size angels carrying the monarch's shields and playing musical instruments on the ceiling. The group was described as a "Celestial Court", an apologia for the new dynasty, and, at the same time, a celebration of its legitimacy obtained through victory over the Spanish (Figs. 5, 6).[30]

Another location with polychrome coatings and gildings is the so-called "Founder's Chapel", which was completed between 1433 and 1434 as a pantheon for the tombs of King John I, his wife and their descendants, the Avis dy-

7. The Founder's Chapel, around 1433–1434, Batalha (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

nasty. As noted at the beginning of this paper, the drastic restoration procedures carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries in some of Portugal's most iconic buildings resulted in the bare stone, which now also characterises the appearance of this chapel (Fig. 7). However, important interdisciplinary research work has recently revealed that the "Founder's Chapel" was originally painted and gilded, which points to a whole new aesthetic associated with medieval buildings until now ignored by national art historiography.[31] It is important to emphasize, however, that when we refer to mural painting in this context, we are often referring to polychrome coatings with no narrative composition. Iconography is scarce and restricted to the heraldry of the princes

[30]   AFONSO 2009, 2, p. 107.
[31]   RODRIGUES 2018, p. 109.

8. Detail of one of the painted tombs, after 1434, the Founder's Chapel, Batalha
(Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

9. Graffiti (detail), Monastery of Santa Maria da Vitória, Batalha
(Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

buried in sarcophagi around the chapel (Fig. 8). The only signs of polychrome and gilding were found in capitals, arches and the tombs themselves in the central area, where the king and queen's sarcophagi are located.[32] The painting and gilding registered were directly executed on stone support, as in the sacristy, without a preparatory layer, which must have contributed to their fading over the centuries.

Furthermore, the Batalha monastery also features an intriguing collection of graffiti that completely cover the walls of one of its cloisters, as well as various locations on the outer walls. The drawings, made using charcoal and red pigment in a *fresco* technique, are figurative and geometric, also including small sentences and signatures. It is difficult to explain the purpose of this intriguing mural group, which stands out in plain sight, but its antiquity seems to be unquestionable (Fig. 9).[33]

10. Rotunda, 12th–16th century, Convent of Christ, Tomar (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

The efforts to glorify a new dynasty extended more evidently to Late-Gothic architecture. This is very clear in the case of the Convent of Christ in Tomar, built in the 12th century by the Knights Templar. This Romanesque building was originally composed of a round church, or rotunda which on the inside is an octagonal prism unfolding into sixteen sides (Fig. 10). Inside the citadel, the rotunda served as the knights' private oratory. Its typology is shared by byzantine churches, which adopted the Romanesque style following the Crusades. After the expulsion of the Templars, the castle and rotunda were occupied by the order of Christ, of which King Manuel l was the Grand Master (1484). The vault and ornamentation of the central structure were completed between 1510 and 1518. The king commissioned a decorative scheme that featured mural paintings both inside and outside the rotunda, with Mudejar motifs (nonfigurative, stars, etc.) combined with

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[32]   RODRIGUES 2018, pp. 35–39.
[33]   ESTRELA 2010.
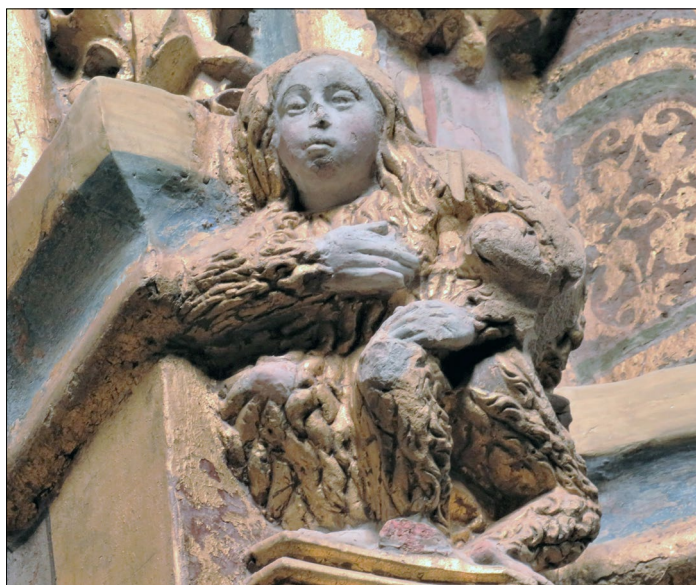
11. Wild men and women, early 16th century (detail), Convent of Christ, Tomar (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

heraldic ornaments and nautical elements inspired by Portuguese maritime discoveries. In 1510, the rotunda received a cycle of paintings depicting episodes from Christ's life, which covered most of its outer walls. This cycle was complemented in the late 1530s by easel paintings depicting the miracles and martyrdoms of several saints on the lower level of the ambulatory. The geometric paintings on the columns date from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when the Portuguese crown was held by Spanish kings, and covered the Manueline paintings that were in the same location. Some of the most important national and foreign artists worked in this convent, adding to the mystical aura created by the king's iconography (armillary sphere, cross of Christ, royal coat of arms). The statues of saints, angels and prophets surrounding the rotunda were executed by the Flemish sculptor Olivier de Gand, who worked in Portugal between the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The high level of decoration in the interior of the rotunda is due to the coherent dialogue created between different arts in their relation to architecture. It is a foretaste of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or "the global work of art" that would later prevail during the Baroque period. The emphasis on the use of gold in the rotunda turns it almost into a reliquary, where sacred elements are mixed with profane ornaments (acanthus leaves, dry branches, ropes, playing *putti*), royal iconography and fantastical elements like the "wild men and women" displayed in the chapters, a reference to the medieval imaginary, populated by beings in their most primitive state (Fig. 11).

The polychrome coatings and gildings extend from the ceiling to the columns, capitals, arches, and doors (Fig. 12). Various ornamental interventions took place in the rotunda over the ages, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries, while maintaining the aesthetic coherence of the site. Between 2008 and 2009, conservation work carried out by the firm Nova Conservação concentrated

12. Painted columns of the rotunda, late 16th century, Convent of Christ, Tomar (Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

on cleaning, repairing and consolidating the chromatic layer, as well as on occasionally removing the repainting that displayed significant chromatic and technical disharmony in comparison with the original.[34] The last significant intervention inside the rotunda took place in 2013.

It is also in the rotunda of the convent of Christ that we find some of the oldest gilded stuccos in Portugal from the early 16th century, with monstrous figures playing trumpets and men on horseback (Fig. 13). This artistic syncretism between the Late-Gothic naturalist tradition and a new decorative order, which included the Roman grotesques and ornaments inspired by the contact with other cultures during Portuguese overseas discoveries, slowly made their way into Portuguese Art, resulting in the *Manueline style*, as referring to king Manuel I, during the 16th century.

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[34]   Pinturas da Charola 2008, p. 29.

*13. Gilded stuccos,
early 16th century (detail),
Convent of Christ, Tomar
(Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)*

It is possible that the intensive coating of architectural or sculptural elements with polychromies and gilding reflected a Portuguese medieval pictorial tradition before the massive use of figurative and narrative mural paintings. This theory requires further corroboration from yet-undiscovered documentary sources, however, it reminds us of the role of polychrome coatings which enhance the architecture: "[…] The wall becomes immaterial through polychromy, allowing the architectural domain to enter the pictorial domain. Thus, interior, exterior, and sculpture polychromies were discovered to be linked in a single plan: that of the image. Polychromy has undoubtedly served as a unifying factor […]".[35]

To speak of Portuguese medieval mural painting implies extending the boundaries of the very concept of "medieval". Commonly, the term "late Gothic" is used for convenience, which allows the introduction of a broader range of pictorial groups of high artistic quality, extending from the late 14th to the first decades of the 16th century. To validate such a perspective, we conclude by recalling the case of the so-called *Painted Houses* in Évora, which are said to have been the former residence of Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama. The frescoes are all displayed in the backyard of this manor house and were created between 1520 and 1530. Despite their date, the paintings reflect a direct inspiration from the medieval bestiary tradition, which was adopted in the literature of the Iberian Peninsula. The paintings represent both real and fictitious creatures, portraying vices and virtues as humanity's moral mirror (Figs. 14, 15).

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[35]   VUILLEMARD-JENN 2013, p. 55 (free translation by the author).

14. Mermaid, around 1510–1534, Painted Houses of Vasco da Gama, Évora
(Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

15. Hydra, around 1510–1534, Painted Houses of Vasco da Gama, Évora
(Photo: Patrícia Monteiro)

Conclusion

To conclude, there are several possible explanations for the apparent scarcity of Early Middle Ages mural painting in Portugal. First, there was a long period of the Christian reconquest of the Portuguese territory from the Moors, who had occupied the Iberian Peninsula since the 7th century, which in turn created an unstable climate for permanent construction on a large scale. Second, early medieval structures would have existed, but no records of them have survived because all of their components were reused in other structures during the Middle Ages. Third, polychrome coatings of architectural or sculptural elements may have been the only possible extent of early Christian mural painting. Finally, a fourth possible explanation: the continual reuse of the same buildings, together with the ready availability of resources in Portugal for the practice of mural painting (lime, limestone, sand, colours) encouraged repeated painting campaigns, some of which have destroyed the earlier ones.

Whatever the reason (or reasons), Gothic was the most enduring national style, lasting well into the 16th century. This compels us to reconsider the chronological boundaries of these aesthetic genres, which were not uniform in Western Europe. The inclusion of foreign aesthetic influences and their reinterpretation in light of local traditions distinguishes Portuguese mural art from that of other European traditions. Given this reality, a mural painting inventory is an essential tool that researchers currently lack. Only then would it be possible to take a diachronic look at wall painting from prehistory to the present. More mural paintings may, unfortunately, vanish before such time as a result of abandonment, vandalism, or ineffective conservation efforts.

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Srednjeveške stenske poslikave na Portugalskem
Manjkajoči koščki za dolgo pričakovani umetnostni inventar

Povzetek

Inventarizacija portugalskih stenskih poslikav je že dolgo deziderat, vendar jo nacionalni umetnostni zgodovinarji vedno znova odlagajo. Odsotnost tega orodja je prispevala k zanemarjanju preučevanja portugalskega stenskega slikarstva in posledično k pomanjkanju strategij za njegovo ohranitev. Tako kot druge zahodnoevropske države ima tudi Portugalska dolgo tradicijo stenskega slikarstva, ki sega v rimsko obdobje. Kljub temu romansko stensko slikarstvo ni navzoče v nacionalni umetnostni panorami, kar ostaja ena največjih skrivnosti portugalske umetnostne zgodovine. Prispevek preučuje nekatere hipoteze, ki bi lahko pojasnile to anomalijo; ta je še očitnejša na jugu države, zlasti v pokrajini Alentejo, kjer je stensko slikarstvo prisotno že več kot tisočletje. Hkrati predstavlja pregled nekaterih najstarejših portugalskih stenskih kompozicij, kar izpodbija stališča nekaterih, ki trdijo, da srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva na Portugalskem sploh ni bilo.

New Discoveries about the Murals in the Chapel of Turjak Castle, Slovenia

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The present article focuses on a mural painting initially included in the digital corpus of medieval mural painting in Slovenia until approximately 1380.[1] During the research, however, it turned out that the dating published in the literature was incorrect. Several such cases were identified during the preparation of the corpus. However, the one presented below was one of the most difficult to solve, as it involves a mural that is barely mentioned in the literature and extremely poorly preserved: the mural in the Turjak Castle Romanesque chapel.

Turjak Castle, located about twenty kilometres southeast of Ljubljana, is one of the most prominent and recognisable examples of castle architecture in Slovenia (Fig. 1). It played a visible role in the Slovenian art, religious, economic, political, and military history in several historical periods from the Middle Ages to World War II.[2] Architecturally, the castle now presents itself as a purely Renaissance building. However, it still contains well-preserved parts of the Romanesque and Gothic phases of its construction.[3] The castle chapel of St Pancras[4] represents one of the most impressive remains of the medieval building. Its late Gothic mural is one of the most exquisite monuments of medieval mural painting in Slovenia (Fig. 2). The painting is distinguished by a row of coats of arms at the vault's apex, while the walls feature scenes that have not been entirely

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[1] The digital corpus is the result of the research project titled *Transformations – From Material to Virtual. Digital Corpus of Mural Painting – New Dimensions of Medieval Art Research in Slovenia* (J6-2587), co-funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency. The project website can be found at: https://uifs.zrc-sazu.si/en/ programi-in-projekti/transformations-material-virtual-digital-corpus-mural-painting-new-dimensions.

[2] *Grad Turjak* 2020 is an extremely comprehensive interdisciplinary monograph, providing an overview of all the earlier literature about this castle. It also presents the latest discoveries about this location from a variety of perspectives.

[3] For a recent and exceedingly meticulous study of the architectural and historical development of the castle, see SAPAČ 2020 (with all the earlier literature).

[4] For more information about the chapel's *patrocinium*, see HÖFLER 2022, pp. 347–348 (with further references).

preserved. The upper band on the northern nave wall features a depiction of the Procession and Adoration of the Magi; in the band below it, fragments of a row of standing apostles are still visible today; while a curtain was painted in the lower band. The mural on the nave's southern wall was also designed in three bands. The upper band consists of a row of sixteen female and male saints and martyrs. From east to west, the middle band first features a kneeling donor with St Lawrence above him; St Michael weighing souls is painted next to this scene; while

1. *Turjak Castle from north-east, around 2013 (Igor Sapač's private archive)*

St Helena and St Mary Magdalene are portrayed below him. This is followed by the Crucifixion and the Coronation of Mary, while St Ursula, St Barbara, St Erasmus, and St Christopher are depicted under this motif. These scenes are followed by seven saints in two horizontal bands. The mural on this wall is concluded by Virgin and Child with St Anne (*Anna Selbdritt*) and two female saints, though only St Dorothy can be identified. A curtain was also painted in the lower band of the southern nave wall. The now unpreserved motifs of the Nativity scene, St George slaying the dragon, and the Annunciation were once painted on the triumphal arch wall. The apse, which is also no longer preserved, used to feature Christ on a rainbow in a mandorla with Mary kneeling beside him and presumably St John the Baptist.[5] This is the only more comprehensively preserved medieval castle chapel mural in the Slovenian territory.[6]

Before the late Gothic mural was painted, the Turjak Castle chapel had been extensively altered. It was built already in the first half of the 13th century, when it was a single-nave space with an open roof structure or a flat ceiling and a semi-circular apse. During the late Gothic adaptation, the chapel was extended westwards by a third (Fig. 3). To this end, the original western wall with a Romanesque portal was demolished, the northern and southern walls were extended, and a new western wall was constructed with a moulded late Gothic stone portal and a small oblong rectangular window with a late Gothic stone frame. In the 14th or 15th century, the southern wall

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[5]   For further information about the Gothic murals in Turjak Castle, see STELE 1935, pp. 1, 6, 34; STELE 1969, pp. 40, 60, 78, 119; STELE 1972, pp. XXIV, CXVI–CXVII; MIKUŽ 1991, pp. 24–27, 32, 33, 36, 37, 42, 43; HÖFLER 2001, pp. 195–199; STOPAR 2007, pp. 59, 66–69; STOPAR 2008, pp. 237–238; ŠKULJ 2010, pp. 137–144; KOSI, HAJDINJAK 2020; MAHNIČ 2020; OTER GORENČIČ 2020a, pp. 164–173; OTER GORENČIČ 2020b, pp. 428–430; SAPAČ 2020, pp. 675–681, 747; all with further references.

[6]   HÖFLER 2001, p. 197.

2. *Turjak Castle, Gothic chapel, view towards the east (© Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute of Art History, Ljubljana (ZRC SAZU, UIFS), photo: Andrej Furlan)*

of the castle chapel was statically reinforced with two pier-shaped stone buttresses due to the addition of an auxiliary building (perhaps the castle chaplain's apartment was located in one of its rooms). In the Gothic chapel's interior, the northern wall is slightly uneven due to the extension of the chapel towards the west. The Gothicised chapel with three new semi-circular windows in the southern wall featuring funnel-shaped window splays on the outer and inner side of the wall was covered with a massive barrel vault with an ogival cross-section made of sawn tuff. The portal under the central window was constructed in the 16th century. The preserved Romanesque window

BUILDING STAGES

- before 1200
- 13th century
- 14th century
- 2/2 15th century
- 1520–1541
- 1549–1575
- 1592–1618
- 1618–1632
- around 1637
- 1669–1688
- 18th century
- 19th century

N

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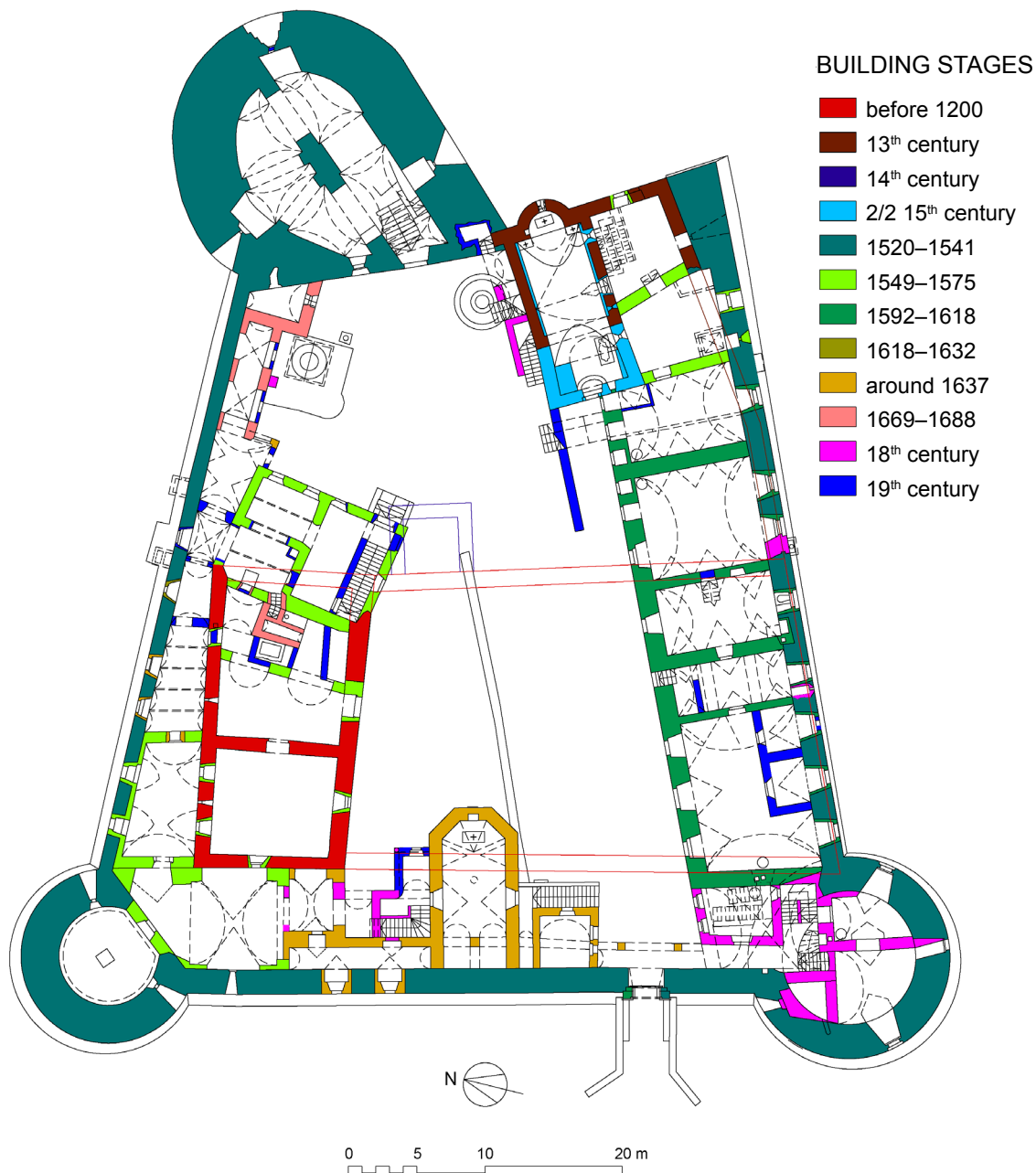
3. *Turjak Castle, ground-floor plan from around 1941 with colour-coded architectural development stages*
with the Gothicised Romanesque castle chapel in the southeastern part of the building complex
(drawing by Igor Sapač, 2019, based on photogrammetric images taken by the Geodetic Institute of Slovenia in 2001)

4. *Turjak Castle, Gothic chapel, view towards the west gallery (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

in the western part of the southern wall was partially covered by the Gothic chapel's new vault and therefore walled up from the outside.[7] Shortly before the Gothic mural was painted, the west gallery was added to the Gothicised chapel, covering the upper part of the chapel's west portal jambs. Originally, it featured a larger opening above (Fig. 4). Access to the west gallery was provided by a portal high in the southern part of the chapel's western wall, which could be reached by an

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[7] SAPAČ 2020, pp. 721–727, 739, 747, 748 (with all the earlier literature).

5. *Turjak Castle, view of the former Romanesque chapel towards the east above the vault of the Gothic chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

external wooden staircase along the chapel's western wall. The construction of the west gallery shortened the length of the nave's interior from about 11.8 m to 9 m, while the width remained unchanged from 4.7 m in the west to 4.3 m in the east.[8] The construction of the west gallery allowed the nave of the chapel, whose length had been shortened, to be painted on the northern, southern, and eastern walls from the floor to the apex of the vault. The chapel's apsidal part was also painted, while the western wall with the west gallery remained unpainted.

The Romanesque chapel, which was thus constructed before the middle of the 13th century (Fig. 5), was incorporated into the castle wall of the presumed outer or second Romanesque castle bailey. Inside, it measured about 7.1 m long and up to 5 m wide. Its rectangular floor plan was thus designed in a 1:$\sqrt{2}$ ratio. The thickness of the southern nave wall was about 75 cm, while the north nave wall measured about 80 cm. The interior diameter of the semi-circular floor of the semi-domed apse measures 2.6 m, while its depth is 1.6 m (Fig. 6). Apart from a partially preserved window in the southern wall, close to the western wall, it probably received light only from a window in the axis of the apse and could be entered through a portal in the western wall. The Romanesque chapel's nave was much higher than the present Gothicised nave. The chapel was also plastered, at least on the inside.[9] The length of the Romanesque chapel is evident from the presented remains of the original western wall on the northern and especially the southern wall of the original nave above the Gothic chapel.

Igor Sapač suggests that the chapel was altered and extended around the middle of the 15th century or shortly after 1443 at the initiative of Engelhard of Auersperg (1404–1466) and presumably

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[8]   SAPAČ 2020, pp. 681, 750.
[9]   SAPAČ 2020, pp. 721–727.
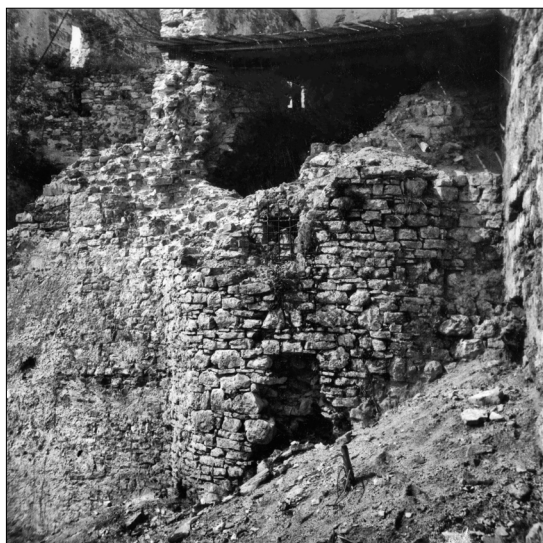
6. *Turjak Castle, exterior of the derelict Romanesque castle chapel apse in 1950 (© Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Heritage Information and Documentation Centre (INDOC Centre), photo: Marijan Zadnikar)*

also his brother Volker of Auersperg (1401–1455) while the paintings were commissioned by Engelhard's son Pankraz II of Auersperg (1441–1496) soon after his marriage in 1469, perhaps together with his brother Lorenz of Auersperg (c. 1442–1479). Although the new murals were apparently planned immediately after the adaptation, it appears that their implementation was then slightly delayed,[10] as in March 1949, the restorer Peter Železnik discovered that they were painted on an older limewashed plaster that had been originally prepared for the frescoes. He added that the fresco plaster was well bound to the base because the lower plaster had been hammered.[11] In 1954, Marijan Zadnikar stated that the plaster with the mural had been applied on top of an older plaster that had been hammered during the painting process. The hammered whitewashed plaster also extended into the splays of the semi-circular windows on the Gothicised chapel's southern wall, which were constructed at the same time as the vault.[12] According to recent research, the chapel was painted after 1469, or between 1469 and 1496, when Turjak Castle was in the hands of Pankraz II of Auersperg and his wife Anna, born Countess of Frankopan.[13] The analysis of the depicted armours reveals that the chapel was most probably painted around 1470 or in the 1470s.[14] It is debatable (although not impossible, of course) whether twenty-five years or more truly passed between the Gothic adaptation and the mural's creation. It is also arguable whether the older whitewashed plaster was originally prepared for painting because the fact that it was whitewashed

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[10] SAPAČ 2020, pp. 748–750. For biographies of the abovementioned representatives of the Turjak (Auersperg) dynasty, see PREINFALK 2005, pp. 427, 477, 496, 522, 553, 559, passim. See also the genealogical tables in KOSI 2020, p. 143; PREINFALK 2020, pp. 60–61.

[11] Ministry of Culture, Heritage Information and Documentation Centre, Ljubljana (INDOC Centre), Arhiv spisov, 42/1949, Peter Železnik, Poročilo za morebitno snemanje fresk v grajski kapeli na Turjaku, 19 March 1949; cf. Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute of Art History (ZRC SAZU, UIFS), Terenski zapiski Franceta Steleta, CXIX, 13 October 1946, fols. 20v–21r; ZRC SAZU, UIFS, Terenski zapiski Franceta Steleta, CXXI, 16 September 1954, fols. 37v–21r.

[12] INDOC Centre, Zapiski Marijana Zadnikarja, XXX, 17 September 1954; ZADNIKAR 1959, p. 304.

[13] Cf. KOSI, HAJDINJAK 2020, pp. 314, 317, 330–333; MAHNIČ 2020, p. 297; SAPAČ 2020, pp. 681, 747, 749.

[14] Cf. LAZAR 2008, p. 150; OTER GORENČIČ 2020a, p. 172; SAPAČ 2020, pp. 747, 749; LAZAR 2021, p. 77.
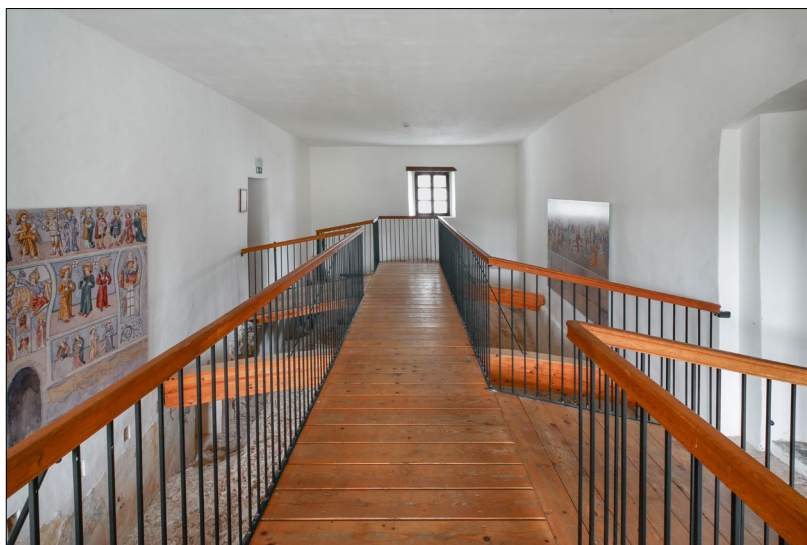
7. *Turjak Castle, view of the former Romanesque chapel towards the west above the vault of the Gothic chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

indicates that it was not made to be painted on. If it had been, it would probably not have been bleached but merely hammered before applying another layer.[15] Moreover, plaster dries relatively quickly. It is only suitable for painting for about three to four hours, after which a crust starts to form on the surface and lime from the plaster no longer binds the applied pigments. In theory, the new layer of plaster could have been applied soon after the old layer. At this time, it is difficult to firmly establish why the painting process was not initiated immediately. It is certain, however, that anything from a few months to twenty-five years or more could have passed between the application of the first and the second plaster layer.

The existing literature does not address the mural in Turjak Castle's Romanesque chapel (Fig. 7). Janez Höfler does not mention it in his review of medieval frescoes in Slovenia.[16] Earlier references to these murals can only be found in France Stele's notes, in a probing report, and the writings of Ivan Komelj, while more recent references were made by Polona Šega, Mojca Arh Kos, Ivan Stopar, Igor Sapač, and Katja Mahnič. However, all these notes are exceedingly brief.

In 1927, in his field notes, France Stele observed that in the apse, under the painting of Christ in a mandorla, the Virgin Mary, and possibly St John the Baptist, an older mural layer could still be seen in some places, but nothing of it could be discerned (Fig. 8).[17] In the probing report, probably written in 1962, we can read that during the restoration works to reconstruct the collapsed part of the semi-domed apse, a layer of plaster between the nave wall and the Gothic vault

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[15]   I would like to thank Dr Anabelle Križnar for the consultation and her opinion about this issue.

[16]   HÖFLER 2001, pp. 195–199.

[17]   ZRC SAZU, UIFS, Terenski zapiski Franceta Steleta, LXX, s. d. 1927, fol. 1v.

8. *Turjak Castle, remains of murals in the semi-dome of the Gothic chapel's apse around 1927 (© INDOC Centre, photo: France Stele)*

with traces of older murals was revealed. It was ascertained that the nave's northern and southern walls had been painted before, though it was not verified to what extent. The author of the report highlighted the characteristic green, light red, and black contours on the original whitewashed plaster. He wrote that the intensity of the hues was well preserved but that apart from three narrow faces, a red banner, and a crown, nothing was found that could provide a more detailed iconographic definition of the mural. Because of the crown, visible at the far left side by the apse, he assumed that the mural on the southern wall was likely the Procession of the Magi, although he was aware that this was not in accordance with the established tradition of depicting the Procession on the northern wall. He concluded that the hues were typical of the period around 1300 and a few decades later, while the low crown with trefoils suggested the Gothic period.[18] On 25 July 1962, after a field inspection, Ivan Komelj wrote that the newly discovered murals were most probably related to the Romanesque chapel's first construction phase and he dated them, still

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[18]   INDOC Centre, Zapiski različnih avtorjev, Turjak, grajska kapela, undated and unsigned. Although the document is not signed or dated, it is, according to the opinion of Igor Sapač, a note by Ivan Komelj from 1962. I would like to thank Dr Igor Sapač for the consultation on the authorship and year of this note; cf. SAPAČ 2020, pp. 682, 735, 875–876, 880. After a consultation with Mrs Metka Košir from the INDOC Centre, it has turned out that, judging from the analogy with comparable records, this document was more likely written by the restorer who carried out the probing in the chapel. I would like to thank Mrs Metka Košir for her tireless efforts to establish the authorship of this document. Given that Ivan Komelj mentions newly discovered murals in 1962 (see note 19), the year of this document is, indeed, most likely 1962. In 1962, the financial resources for the conservation and restoration works in Turjak Castle were also approved. See INDOC Centre, Popis spisov, Turjak; INDOC Centre, Arhiv spisov, 185/1962.

uncleaned and fragmentarily preserved, to the first half of the 14th century.[19] On 3 August 1962, in his fieldwork report, he noted that the remains of the mural on the northern and southern walls above the Gothic vault in the chapel were painted using the *al secco* technique on a damp original plaster applied directly to the wall. He pointed out the strong black contours of the faces and the predominance of green and red colours. He wrote that the colouring was very vivid, typical of the early 14th century, but that an even earlier dating to the 13th century could not be ruled out. He also underlined that the mural was already Gothic in character and that Mary's crown featured a barely noticeable trefoil.[20] In 1966, Ivan Komelj dated the Romanesque chapel mural above the Gothic vaults to the beginning of the 14th century,[21] based solely on the light green, cinnabar red, and black colours. He mentioned that the mural on the chapel's southern wall probably depicted the Procession of the Magi.[22]

In 1988, Polona Šega included a single sentence in a popular booklet on Turjak Castle, stating that above the chapel's Gothic vault, the old mural was still partially preserved on the northern, eastern, and southern walls, where a simply painted Romanesque window was also located.[23] In 2008, Ivan Stopar wrote that the Gothic painting had replaced the earlier Romanesque mural, which was still recognisable in the fragments above the chapel's Gothic vault.[24] Already in 2006, in a presentation of the restoration works in the castle, Mojca Arh Kos stated that fragments of a late Romanesque mural were visible above the chapel's Gothic vault.[25] In 2020, she wrote once again that "preserved fragments of a late Romanesque mural are still visible" above the vault of the Turjak Castle's Gothic chapel.[26]

Igor Sapač wrote somewhat more extensively about the mural in the Romanesque chapel. In his presentation of the architectural and historical development of Turjak Castle, he summarised that the new Gothicised chapel's vault covered the earlier figural mural paintings from the first half of the 14th century, visible above the chapel.[27] According to Ivan Komelj's dating of the figural painting in the Romanesque chapel to the early 14th century, Sapač assumed that it was painted after 1318 when the castle had been additionally secured and fortified, and its wooden parts, in particular, had been renovated. Igor Sapač expressed a well-founded opinion that the murals in the apse – which, as mentioned above, France Stele had noticed under the Gothic

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[19]   INDOC Centre, Arhiv spisov, 185/1962, Ivan Komelj, Poročilo o službenem potovanju na Turjak, 25 July 1962.

[20]   INDOC Centre, Arhiv spisov, 185/1962, Ivan Komelj, Poročilo o službenem potovanju na Turjak, 3 August 1962.

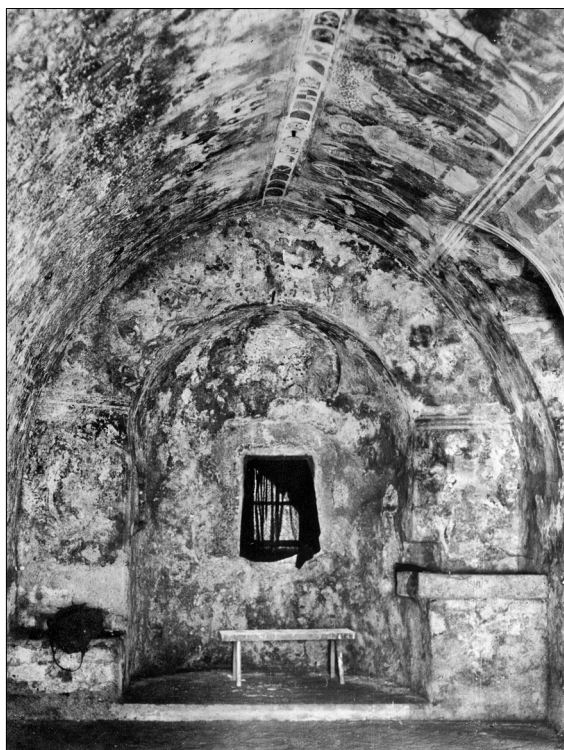[21]   KOMELJ 1966, p. 45.

[22]   KOMELJ 1966, p. 68.

[23]   ŠEGA 1988, p. 31.

[24]   STOPAR 2008, p. 237.

[25]   ARH KOS 2006, p. 186.

[26]   ARH KOS 2020, p. 603.

[27]   SAPAČ 2020, pp. 747, 749.

9. *Turjak Castle, in old photographs, the lower hammered layer is clearly visible on the castle chapel's triumphal arch and in the apse (© INDOC Centre, photo: France Stele)*

chapel's mural in 1927[28] (Fig. 9) – also belonged to these paintings.[29] With regard to the preserved fragments of the Romanesque chapel mural, Igor Sapač also wrote that they "are still visible now, and although they are very blurred, they fully confirm Komelj's findings".[30] He also took a clear stance regarding this mural's style. He considered it most likely that it was created in the first third of the 14th century by Italian or Friulian itinerant painters, adding that although "only modest and poorly identifiable fragments remain, these murals are exceptionally important from the cultural-historical perspective as the oldest documented frescoes in castle chapels in the Slovenian area and one of the few from the period before the middle of the 14th century in this territory".[31] He added that the murals had been fully uncovered and restored after Komelj had written both notes in the first half of the 1960s. He also underlined that traces of the mural were still clearly visible on the remains of the Romanesque window splay and that "sacred heads with halos and light green, ochre, and black hues" were also clearly discernible.[32]

In the last article on Turjak Castle's medieval chapel, Katja Mahnič summarises that the preserved fragments of the Romanesque chapel's mural were first discovered in 1962 when Ivan Komelj assumed that the southern nave wall had been decorated with the Procession of the Magi and dated it to the beginning of the 14th century. Meanwhile, some thirty years earlier, France Stele could still see the remains of an earlier mural in the apse as well but could no longer identify the individual motifs. When the chapel was extended and vaulted in the middle of the

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[28]   See note 17.
[29]   SAPAČ 2020, p. 735.
[30]   SAPAČ 2020, p. 682.
[31]   SAPAČ 2020, p. 682.
[32]   SAPAČ 2020, pp. 682–683.

15th century, the mural was first covered with plaster, which was then hammered before new frescoes were painted.[33] The author relied on Igor Sapač's findings about the castle's architectural and historical development, and she also wrote that the chapel's first mural could be dated based on two documents from 1318, which mention the castle's renovation.[34] She raised the question of whether the chapel had remained unpainted from the time of its construction until around 1318 or whether the mural from around 1318 might have already been a repainting. She believes it is possible that the chapel was originally unpainted. According to Katja Mahnič, the relatively long period between the chapel's construction and the creation of the mural around 1318 seems understandable, considering the extinction of the free noble family of Auersperg and their replacement by a ministerial family as lords of the castle. She points out that a mural created around 1318 would have had a considerable symbolic significance, as it could have been perceived as an act of consolidating the family's self-identity established through *memoria*.[35] Mahnič then continues: "Regardless of whether the old castle chapel was, in fact, painted only as late as in 1318 or earlier, we cannot say much about its decoration. Therefore, we cannot judge the totality of the visual indications that established it as a memorial space. The mural's surviving fragments indicate that the southern nave wall featured the Procession of the Magi scene. Regardless of the unusual placement of this scene on the southern wall, its choice is not surprising /.../."[36]

This concludes what can be read in the existing literature about the preserved mural layer in the Turjak Castle Romanesque chapel. What is missing is a presentation and an attempt to identify the still visible motifs and a more appropriate or expert dating of the murals in relation to their iconography and style because dating based on colours is quite problematic, questionable, and unreliable. The abovementioned assumption that the Procession of the Magi is "probably" depicted on the southern wall is the only note regarding the mural's iconographic programme.[37] The word "probably" was later omitted in the subsequent publications by other authors, and the depiction of the Procession on the southern wall became a fact. The dating to around 1300 or shortly after also became undisputed, though limited to around 1318. *In situ*, however, much more can be seen than what has been described in the literature. Furthermore, the identification of the iconographic scenes adorning the walls of Turjak Castle's Romanesque chapel and the manner of their depiction allow for a much more appropriate dating. Therefore, it is possible to ascertain much more than the literature suggests.

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[33]   MAHNIČ 2020, pp. 279–280. That the first murals in the chapel were painted in the first half of the 14th century is also summed up by KOSI, HAJDINJAK 2020, p. 314, after the articles by Katja Mahnič and Igor Sapač (MAHNIČ 2020; SAPAČ 2020).

[34]   MAHNIČ 2020, pp. 293–294.

[35]   MAHNIČ 2020, pp. 294–297.

[36]   MAHNIČ 2020, p. 297.

[37]   KOMELJ 1966, p. 68; cf. notes 19–20.

10. *Turjak Castle, conserved and presented fragment of the original southwestern corner of the former Romanesque chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

Today, we can no longer say whether the Romanesque chapel had already featured paintings before the preserved layer. We can at least consider that the apse might have been decorated with the usual late Romanesque iconography, as this also corresponds to the motifs of the Gothic mural that France Stele still saw in the apse. The preserved mural layer can now be seen from a wooden platform installed between 1998 and 2002 above the apex of the chapel's Gothic vault. At that time, it replaced a reinforced concrete slab from the 1960s, which had been removed before 1993.[38] Although an *in situ* inspection initially reveals that the mural layer of the former Romanesque chapel is exceedingly poorly preserved, a careful study of the still visible details nevertheless provides many new insights into its iconographic programme and dating. Consequently, it also allows for some new reflections on the chapel's Gothicisation.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from a close inspection of the walls above the chapel's Gothic vault is that all the walls of the Romanesque chapel featured murals – i.e., the northern and southern nave walls, the triumphal arch wall, and – according to France Stele's notes, mentioned above – also the apse. The chapel's western wall is no longer preserved. However, as indicated by the preserved fragment of the original southwestern corner of the chapel, the mural probably continued on the western wall (Fig. 10). So, what else can still be discerned today? Is the

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[38]   ARH KOS 2020, p. 603; SAPAČ 2020, pp. 682 (n. 127), 890, 912 (No. 1.20). The concrete slab was placed in 1964, as it is evident from the document: INDOC Centre, Arhiv spisov, 141/1969, Predračun za restavracijo in konservacijo srednjeveških fresk na Turjaku.

11. *Turjak Castle, remains of murals on the northern wall of the former Romanesque chapel*
(© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)

only iconographic identification – the supposed depiction of the Procession of the Magi on the southern wall – correct? Let us start with the northern nave wall (Fig. 11).

The traces of colour, preserved on the northern wall, reveal that – just like on the southern wall – the mural once extended all the way to the western wall. More distinct fragments are visible from about the middle of the nave wall to its eastern end. The painting is very poorly preserved, but it is nevertheless clear that it featured a multi-figural scene. Several heads can be discerned, and at least two horses are visible in the lower part just above the Gothic vault. In one spot, as many as six heads in a group can still be seen (Fig. 12). One would expect that this wall featured the Procession of the Magi. However, judging from the still visible parts of the mural, the figures appear to be facing west. A definitive assessment proves difficult due to the poor state of preservation. If the Procession of the Magi was nevertheless painted here, it must have been an extraordinarily complex and monumental composition with many protagonists – similarly, in fact, as the Gothic chapel painting, where a scene with the same iconographic motif also features many protagonists, some of whom are also looking towards the west. The mural on the northern wall reached up high, probably to the top of the Romanesque walls. It continued on the northern and southern parts of the triumphal arch wall, as indicated by the traces of colour, though nothing more can be discerned.

12. *Turjak Castle, fragmentarily preserved heads in a multi-figural scene on the northern wall of the former Romanesque chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

13. *Turjak Castle, remains of murals on the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

Much more can be said about the mural on the southern wall (Fig. 13).[39] The first thing to note here is that the Procession of the Magi – the only iconographic motif of this mural mentioned in the literature – was not depicted on this wall. If this motif was painted in the Romanesque chapel, it was featured on the northern wall. A clearly discernible Crucifixion motif occupies most of the eastern part of the southern wall (Fig. 14). The crown with trefoils, which was mentioned by the author of the probing report and supposedly belonged to the Procession scene, depicted on this wall, is not visible. What can still be discerned, though, is the right hand

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[39]   A series of openings stands out above the presented half walled-up original Romanesque window in the upper part of the southern wall near the western wall and on the northern wall of the chapel. According to Igor Sapač's findings, these small, narrow upright rectangular openings are not remnants of the chapel's former Romanesque beamed ceiling, but rather most probably parts of the former, 16th-century wooden floor construction that decayed after 1943. In case that the Romanesque chapel had a flat ceiling rather than an open roof at all, the ceiling must have been installed higher up. See SAPAČ 2020, pp. 683, 723. The claim in ARH KOS 2006, p. 186, as well as in ARH KOS 2020, p. 603, stating that these are "the openings of an originally flat-roofed chapel", is therefore incorrect.

14. *Turjak Castle, Crucifixion on the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

15. *Turjak Castle, Crucifixion on the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel, detail of Christ (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

16. *Turjak Castle, Crucifixion on the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel, detail of Christ's head (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

17. *Turjak Castle, Crucifixion on the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel, the left thief (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

18. *Turjak Castle, Crucifixion on the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel, the right thief (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

of Christ on the cross and the annual rings painted on the wood of the cross (Fig. 15). At the junction between the right arm and the body, a staff with a vinegar-soaked sponge, offered to Jesus on the cross by the Roman soldier Stephaton, is visible (Stephaton's hand on the staff can be seen, while the outlines suggest his body). Christ's face and the blackened halo are also clearly recognisable (Fig. 16). To Christ's left, another cross and a head on top of the cross are also visible (Fig. 17). The head belongs to the left thief. The upper part of a tree with a thin trunk and a bushy crown can be seen next to the left thief's cross. The Crucifixion scene is completed by a third cross on Christ's right side, where the leg of the right thief and the rope tying his hand to the cross are still visible (Fig. 18).[40] In the space between, a group of soldiers face Christ (Fig. 19). The first of them, a

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[40]   About the practice of tying and nailing limbs to the cross, see MERBACK 1999, pp. 77–83, 88.

19. *Turjak Castle, Crucifixion
on the southern wall of the former
Romanesque chapel, a group of
soldiers next to Christ's cross
(© ZRC SAZU, UIFS,
photo: Andrej Furlan)*

20. *Turjak Castle, Martyrdom
of St Sebastian pierced by arrows
on the southern wall of the former
Romanesque chapel (© ZRC SAZU,
UIFS, photo: Gorazd Bence)*

bearded man, wears a tall pointed hat, clearly characterising him as a Jew. He holds a spear in his hand, pointing it at Christ. It is easily discernible that he is pointing his left hand to his left eye. Through this gesture, we recognise him as Longinus – the centurion who was converted under the cross. In this context, the distinctly accentuated Jewish hat also takes on a new meaning, as it identifies him as a converted Jew. According to the most common legend, Longinus was a Roman centurion who was blind or suffered from an eye disease. At the Crucifixion, he thrust his spear into Christ's side. A few drops of blood from Christ's wound dropped into his eyes from the spear, and he was healed. When darkness and an earthquake followed Christ's death, Longinus converted and became a Christian. He started preaching in Caesarea and suffered

21. *Turjak Castle, Romanesque window in the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

martyrdom for the Christian faith.[41] Behind Longinus, at least six other faces are visible in two rows – a large group of soldiers facing Christ. Some of them are holding flagpoles with banners and flags. To the left, above Christ's cross, what remains of the depiction of the sun is still visible. The exceedingly monumental Crucifixion composition was four and a half metres long, taking up two-thirds of the entire southern wall's length.

Apart from the Crucifixion, another previously overlooked motif can be identified towards the west, on the southern wall of Turjak Castle's former Romanesque chapel: St Sebastian (Fig. 20). His portrayal is extraordinary and striking, as he is tied to a tree or trunk in such a manner that the trunk is in the foreground, while the naked saint is behind it. As the mural is poorly preserved, the arrows in his body are not visible. However, they are being shot at him by two executioners brandishing crossbows on his left and right. The one on his left is wearing tight-fitting trousers and a distinctively short fashionable tunic with a skirt, whose lower hem concludes in a zig-zag; while the trouser legs of the executioner to St Sebastian's right are of different colours. The St Sebastian scene is completed by a partially preserved Romanesque window. Its funnel-shaped window splay was also painted. The mural partly consists of painted decoration, while stencils were also partly used (Fig. 21).

On the other side of the Romanesque window, by the western wall, another motif can be identified on the southern wall, which – as far as it can be discerned based on its state of preservation – also extended to the western wall. Judging from a recognisable staff, a bishop or abbot was clearly depicted here. Meanwhile, an animal that is rather difficult to identify stands on its hind legs by

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41 About the written sources influencing the creation of the legend of Longinus, the origin of his name, the facts and fiction about him and his life, and his depictions in art, see JEFFRIES PEEBLES 1911, pp. 1–55; PETZOLDT 1994.

the human figure's right leg (Fig. 22). The two most likely possibilities are that it is a bear or a pig. St Sebastian may thus have been the first in a row of saints that could have continued on the western wall of the chapel. As the animal has a strap on its back and a bear's head, the first possibility to consider is that St Corbinian, the Bishop of Freising, might have been depicted here. His portrayal would not be surprising, as the Auerspergs maintained connections with the Bishops of Freising in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. Already the daughter of Majnclin of Auersperg-Hmeljnik (1262 – before 1313) married Georg of Guttenwerd, which was in the hands of the Bishops of Freising. Otočec, where Heinrich III (the 14th century) found his second wife, was also a Freising fief.[42] Furthermore, Ortolf II (died in 1409) was a feudatory of the Bishop of Freising in Lower Carniola, while Gottfried (the 14th century) had the same role. Two other Auerspergs – Andreas III (the 15th century) and Johann II (the 15th century), who belonged to the inner family circle of Ortolf II and

22. *Turjak Castle, St Anthony the Hermit (?) on the southern wall of the former Romanesque chapel (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

Gottfried – appear in the feudal books of the Bishop of Freising at the beginning of the 15th century.[43] At the beginning of the 1420s or around 1422, Herbard VIII (died around 1453), a territorial chamberlain in Carniola and Windic March, was, for around four years, even the steward of the Loka seigniory, which was in the hands of the Bishops of Freising,[44] meaning that he managed the

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42 See PREINFALK 2005, pp. 389, 443, 554, 555; cf. PREINFALK 2020, pp. 49–50.

43 See PREINFALK 2005, pp. 65, 411, 441, 450, 495, 556; cf. PREINFALK 2020, pp. 49–50. For an overview of the Freising properties owned by the Auerspergs, see BLAZNIK 1958, pp. 42–43, 45–48, 51–52, 54, 58–59, passim. On the cited pages regarding the period after 1392 and until the middle of the 15th century, Blaznik also mentions Wilhelm, Diepold, Georg, and Engelhart Auersperg.

44 For more about this, see BLAZNIK 1973; BIZJAK 2005a; both with further references. Cf. PFISTER 2005.

(Škofja) Loka Castle. Herbard VIII was the son of Wilhelm from the younger branch of the Auersperg family and Elisabeth of Reitenburg, the court mistress to Duchess Viridis of Milan and after 1414 to Duchess Cymburgis of Masovia, i.e. first to Ernest the Iron's mother and then his wife.[45] This connection is significant because the Bishops of Freising were also closely associated with Vienna and the Austrian territory in general, to which the Auerspergs were also closely related.[46] Already since 1156, the largest and wealthiest part of the Freising estates was located in Austria. The Bishops of Freising owned Freisinger Hof in the very centre of Vienna, between the church of St Stephen and Graben. Some of them spent most of their episcopate in Vienna. Bishop Berthold of Freising (1381–1410) was even the chancellor and reformer of the University of Vienna and then the chancellor of the Austrian dukes. His successors also maintained close ties with the Austrian court in the first half of the 15th century. Last but not least, the illegitimate son of the Count of Cilli, Herman II, was also the Bishop of Freising at that time. Naturally, such a close connection between Freising and Vienna resulted in strong artistic connections between the two cities and their spheres of influence.[47] In the 15th century, Freising's artistic influence thus extended as far beyond the borders of the Diocese itself as the south of the Holy Roman Empire. On the other hand, renowned masters from Vienna, Augsburg, Munich, and other relevant art centres worked in the Diocese of Freising, leading to intensive artistic exchange.[48] In the Middle Ages, depictions of St Corbinian or his cult of worship can be found in the locations associated with the Diocese of Freising.[49] Outside the Diocese of Freising, the *patrocinium* of St Corbinian can also be found in the Diocese of Brixen,[50] which was also closely connected with the Slovenian territory in the Middle Ages.[51] As only fragments of the scene with the saint have been preserved in the Turjak chapel, another possible interpretation is that the depicted animal is a pig and, therefore, an attribute of St Anthony the Abbot (St Anthony the Great). In medieval depictions, St Anthony also appears with his staff, which most often reaches the ground, in four possible versions.[52]

As already stated, the mural has so far been dated to as early as the 13th century, the time around the year 1300, and to the early 14th century or around 1318. However, do the monumental Crucifixion, the stylistic language of the still visible faces, the two fashionable executioners of the

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[45] Cf. JAKIČ 1997, pp. 328–329; PREINFALK 2005, pp. 56–57, 446, 553.

[46] For the connections between the Auerspergs and Vienna and the Austrian area in the 15th century, see KOSI, HAJDINJAK 2020, pp. 319, 324, 325, 326, 328, 331; OTER GORENČIČ 2020a, pp. 173–175, 178; OTER GORENČIČ 2020b, pp. 383–384; all with further references.

[47] About this, see STEINER 1989, pp. 94–96, 104; GÖTZ 2005.

[48] See STEINER 1989, pp. 89–104; STEINER 1994, pp. 13–14; STEINER 2005c.

[49] HARTIG 1924, p. 147.

[50] HARTIG 1924, pp. 148–149.

[51] About this, see BIZJAK 2005a; BIZJAK 2005b (with further references).

[52] BRAUN 1943, cols. 88–89.

naked St Sebastian, and the saint at the western end of the southern wall truly allow for such a dating?

First, let us examine the Crucifixion. The first depictions of the crucified Christ with the two thieves, Dismas and Gestas,[53] date back to the 5th century. One of the earliest examples from the years between 430 and 440 can be found on the main portal of the church of Santa Sabina in Rome. Already around the year 600, a painted wooden reliquary box known as the *Sancta Sanctorum icon*, which is now kept in the Museo Sacro Cristiano museum in the Vatican, shows Christ with both thieves, Mary, St John, Longinus, and Stephaton.[54] In the late Middle Ages, the depiction of the crucified thieves' bodies became increasingly expressive.[55] Precisely in the Austrian territory, especially in Styria, the motif of the thieves hanging over the cross from behind with their backs bent developed in the 15th century, most notably from the mid-15th century onwards. From the Austrian area through Bavaria, this way of depicting the bandits, notably the impenitent thief Gestas, also spread to German painting.[56] This manner of depiction represents a specific reference to the punishment of Jews and thus to the classical pair personifying Christianity (Ecclesia) and Judaism (Synagoga) next to Christ on the cross, corresponding to other antithetical pairs related to the Crucifixion, such as the Sun and the Moon, Longinus and Stephaton, Dismas and Gestas, etc. Such a posture prevents the impenitent thief from making eye contact with Christ and symbolically depicts the Jewish "blindness", thus portraying the Jewish gaze as inverted, diabolical, perverted, and dangerous.[57] The Crucifixion of Christ with both thieves and several accompanying figures under the cross can already be found in illuminated manuscripts in the Rabbula Gospels of 586, preserved in the Biblioteca Laurenziana library in Florence (Cod. Plut. I 56, fol. 13r).[58]

Changes in the manner in which the Crucifixion of Christ is depicted, especially concerning the number of figures under the cross, can be traced from the 7th and 8th centuries onwards and then again from the Crusades, especially the Fourth Crusade when many Crucifixion images were brought to the West from the East. The interest in the specific locations where the Passion took place kept growing ever since the First Crusade. All of this went hand in hand with the emergence of mendicant orders and later with the popularity of the text *Meditationes vitae Christi* and other written sources that introduced new forms of piety.[59] A crucial step forward in the scenic innova-

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[53]   About the names Dismas and Gestas and their affirmation, see MERBACK 1999, pp. 23–26, 84–85.
[54]   DITTMEYER 2014, pp. 42, 74; cf. SCHILLER 1968, p. 101; LUCCHESI PALLI, JÁSZAI 1994, cols. 608–610; MERBACK 1999, pp. 50–52, 78–79; DECKERS 2005, pp. 53, 55; STEINER 2005a, p. 72.
[55]   Cf. MERBACK 1999, pp. 72–73; DITTMEYER 2014, pp. 74–76.
[56]   About this, see MERBACK 1999, pp. 172–176, 185–186, 210; cf. DITTMEYER 2014, p. 75.
[57]   Cf. MERBACK 1999, pp. 186–195.
[58]   Cf. SCHILLER 1968, pp. 102–104; LUCCHESI PALLI, JÁSZAI 1994, cols. 609–610; MERBACK 1999, pp. 52–54; DECKERS 2005, pp. 53–54.
[59]   Cf. SCHILLER 1968, pp. 102–124, 164–171; MERBACK 1999, pp. 54–59; cf. ROTH 1967, pp. 11–43.

tions regarding the Crucifixion was made in the Italian mural painting of the first half of the 14th century. The Calvary that Pietro Lorenzetti painted between 1316 and 1319 in the lower church of the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi marks the onset of a new manner of depiction, while the Duccio di Buonisegna's Calvary on the back of his Maestà in the Siena Cathedral from 1308–1311 represents a turning point in panel painting.[60] Gradually, the Crucifixion with both thieves, an increasing number of narrative details, and a large number of protagonists became commonly used in the 14th-century Italian painting. Its origins can be traced to Giotto. In the 15th century, the scene with an increasing number of persons and events surrounding the Crucifixion also became widespread in German painting.[61] Although the Crucifixion in a crowd can already be found, for example, as early as around 1350 in the Predigerkirche church in Erfurt[62] – while, in panel painting, it also appeared as early as the second half of the 14th century[63] – the Crucifixion with the two thieves in a crowd of thirty or more people did not truly assert itself in mural painting north of the Alps until the early 15th century, culminating in the Salzburg examples around the middle of that century.[64] On the contrary, in the 15th-century Italian painting, the Crucifixion with a modest number of protagonists reasserted itself.[65] In the Austrian territory, one of the earliest examples of the so-called Crucifixion in a crowd or *Kreuzigung mit Gedräng* type in mural painting, dating back to 1370, can be found in the Church of St Magdalene (Magdalenenkirche) in Judenburg.[66]

In the Turjak Castle chapel, the left and the right thief do not seem to have been depicted in the same manner, as is often the case in late medieval artworks.[67] As allowed by the state of preservation, it appears that the left bandit was tied to the cross from behind with his head hanging over the cross, as the front of the cross appears empty. Already in the so-called Kaufmann's Crucifixion from around 1340 or about a decade later, the two thieves are already hanging on the backs of their crosses over their transversal parts. The upper parts of their bodies and their legs curve around the upright parts of the crosses. We are referring to a Czech work that is on display at the Gemäldegalerie gallery in Berlin.[68] Kaufmann's Crucifixion is also one of the earliest examples of the Crucifixion in late medieval painting outside Italy that features the two thieves.[69] Another

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[60]   MERBACK 1999, pp. 60–61, 84, 85–88.
[61]   Cf. ROTH 1967, pp. 44–117; SCHILLER 1968, pp. 164–171; LUCCHESI PALLI, JÁSZAI 1994, cols. 628–630, 633–635; LANC 2002, pp. 170–171, 174–175 (Textband); STEINER 2005a, p. 73.
[62]   See MÖBIUS 1979, pp. 76–77, repr. 82; cf. SCHILLER 1968, p. 169.
[63]   See the examples in MERBACK 1999, pp. 88–91, 121–122, 124.
[64]   HÖFLER 1996, p. 99; cf. VODNIK 2001, p. 220; STEINER 2005a, p. 73.
[65]   SCHILLER 1968, p. 168.
[66]   LANC 2002, pp. 170–171, 174–175 (Textband), table 212 (Tafelband).
[67]   See MERBACK 1999, pp. 26–27, 172–176, 185–197, 218–241, 218–265.
[68]   See DITTMEYER 2014, p. 75, colour reproduction 3; cf. MERBACK 1999, pp. 121–122; SCHMIDT 2005, pp. 229–258; https://smb.museum-digital.de/object/61522.
[69]   Cf. SCHILLER 1968, p. 169.

example of the two thieves hanging from behind the crosses can also be found, for instance, on the Idar-Oberstein retable from around 1400 or in the depiction of the Crucifixion by the Master of the Sterzinger Altarwings from the middle of the 15th century.[70]

Depictions of Longinus pointing at his left eye with his left index finger are rare in the Italian territory. A similar detail can be found on the panel of the Crucifixion painted by Simone Martini around 1340.[71] In manuscript illuminations, Longinus pointing to his left eye with his left hand can be traced back to at least around 1300.[72] In the 14th and 15th centuries, this detail is relatively common, especially in panel painting north of the Alps.[73] In the German territory, it persisted as long as until the 16th century, for example in the panel painting of the Crucifixion from around 1530, now kept in the Diocesan Museum in Klagenfurt but originating from the succursal church of St Paul near St. Urban (Hoch-St. Paul).[74] Between 1451 and 1459, this detail can also be found in the Slovenian territory, in the depiction of the Crucifixion in the succursal church of the Holy Spirit in Slovenj Gradec.[75] Fine examples from the 15th century also include the illumination depicting the Crucifixion from around 1420–1430 in the Book of Hours of Elizabeth the Queen, kept in the British Library in London (MS. Add. 50001, fol. 37v),[76] and the Calvary by Kempten Master from 1460–1470 on a panel painting kept in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum museum in Nuremberg.[77] In manuscript illuminations, the motif of Magdalene kneeling on the ground next to the cross can be found as early as the second quarter of the 11th century,[78] while in monumental painting, Mary Magdalene kneeling on the ground with her hair down and clinging to the cross can be traced continuously from the 1300s onwards, as it was not until the 14th century that this motif became established. Giotto's depiction of Magdalene under Christ's cross in the Crucifixion scene in the Cappella dell'Arena chapel in Padua was a major influence, even in painting north of the Alps.[79]

In the Slovenian territory, the monumental Crucifixion of the so-called Calvary type is extremely rare. Most of the depictions belong to the so-called devotional type with Christ on the

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[70] For both reproductions, see DITTMEYER 2014, colour reproduction 7–8; see also MERBACK 1999, p. 116.

[71] SCHILLER 1968, p. 168.

[72] SCHILLER 1968, p. 168.

[73] SCHILLER 1968, p. 168.

[74] See the reproduction in HÖFLER 1998, repr. 222 (Cat. No. 53).

[75] In the Brixen Crucifixion painting from around 1450, kept at the Diözesanmuseum Freising museum, Longinus points to his left eye with his right hand, see STEINER 2005b, repr. on p. 205. In the Crucifixion painting by the Master of The Regler Altar from around 1450–1455, kept in the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karslruhe gallery, Longinus points to his right eye with his left hand, see MERBACK 1999, repr. 52.

[76] See MERBACK 1999, repr. 76.

[77] See MERBACK 1999, repr. 50.

[78] SCHILLER 1968, p. 169.

[79] Cf. SCHILLER 1968, pp. 166–167; STEINER 2005a, p. 73.

cross, Mary, and St John. Only exceptionally do they include other accompanying persons such as Mary Magdalene, Longinus, or a group of sorrowful women, as seen, for example, on the southern nave wall of the succursal church of St Stephen in Zanigrad from around 1400–1410[80] or on the northeastern side behind the altar of the succursal church of St Anthony the Abbot in Skorno pri Šoštanju from the late 15th or early 16th century, or from before the year 1526.[81] The oldest example of the Crucifixion with Mary and St John, as well as with the two thieves, can be found in the parish church of St Peter and Paul in Vitanje. The scene from around 1330–1340 was originally displayed on the southern exterior of the nave. However, in the 1980s, it was taken down and placed on the triumphal arch wall, where it can be seen today.[82] One of the most representative examples of the Calvary type of Crucifixion in medieval mural painting in the territory of present-day Slovenia can be found on the former southern exterior of the chancel of the parish church of St Michael in Dovje in Upper Carniola in the middle of the 15th century.[83] The work in question is the largest Crucifixion with the greatest number of protagonists in Slovenia.[84] Also in this painting, the two thieves are tied to their crosses from behind. Even before then, the Crucifixion with both thieves and accompanying figures can be found, for example, on the southern nave wall of the succursal church of St Nicholas in Pangrč Grm from around 1380–1400.[85] Around 1410–1420, such a scene was painted in the rotunda – the succursal church of the Virgin Mary and St Nicholas in the Prekmurje region's village of Selo.[86] In the middle of the 15th century, a multi-figural Crucifixion can be found on the northeastern side of the chancel in the succursal church of St James in Naklo pri Črnomlju.[87] Shortly after the middle of the century, a

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[80]   For the basic information about the Zanigrad mural, see HÖFLER 1997, pp. 151–154; HÖFLER 2000 (with earlier literature).

[81]   For the basic information about the mural in Skorno pri Šoštanju, see HÖFLER 2004, pp. 185–186 (with earlier literature); BADOVINAC 2006. In the parish church of St George in Ptuj, on the nave's northern wall, there is a painting of Christ on the cross between Mary and St John from around 1440. The donor and his family are kneeling behind Mary, while St Peter is behind St John. For more information about the mural in the parish church in Ptuj, see HÖFLER 2004, pp. 153–160. On the northern exterior of the nave of the succursal church of St John the Baptist in Tomišelj, next to the Crucifixion with Mary and St John from the first decades of the 15th century, a remnant of another figure with an inscription band, perhaps the good centurion, remains visible; about this painting, see HÖFLER 2001, pp. 191–192.

[82]   For the basic information about the Vitanje mural, see HÖFLER 2004, pp. 240–241 (with earlier literature).

[83]   For the basic information about the Dovje mural, see HÖFLER 1996, pp. 98–99; LEBEN 1998, pp. 167–169; VODNIK 2001; VIGNJEVIĆ 2023.

[84]   VODNIK 2001, pp. 223, 227.

[85]   For the basic information about the Pangrč Grm mural, see HÖFLER 2001, pp. 143–148 (with earlier literature).

[86]   About the murals in the Selo rotunda, see KRIŽNAR 2001; KRIŽNAR 2002, pp. 94–101, 189–196, passim; HÖFLER 2004, pp. 179–182; BALAŽIC 2008, pp. 99–107, 206–210, passim (all with earlier literature). Concurrently, in the years around 1410–1420, the Crucifixion with all three crosses was also painted on the northern nave wall of the succursal church of St Judoc in Šentjošt nad Horjulom, though only fragments of it have been preserved. About this mural, see HÖFLER 2001, pp. 183–184.

[87]   See HÖFLER 2001, pp. 138–140 (with earlier literature). In the middle of the 15th century, the Crucifixion with

similar scene appeared in the Passion cycle on the northern chancel wall of the succursal church of the Holy Spirit in Slovenj Gradec;[88] and in 1526, it was painted on the area on the chancel's southern wall beneath the vault in the succursal church of the Mother of God in Marija Gradec near Laško.[89] Circa 1530, a Crucifixion with Mary, St John, both thieves and only three other assisting figures can be found in the succursal church of St Peter above Begunje na Gorenjskem.[90] It is significant that the Crucifixion of Christ with the two thieves, the angels, and a considerable number of persons under the cross – from Mary Magdalene and the sorrowful women to the centurion, the group of soldiers, and other accompanying figures – can also be seen in the Turjak chapel's Gothic mural. The latter example may not be a mass Calvary depiction with horsemen and many additional genre scenes. However, with two larger groups next to Christ's cross, it is nevertheless one of the few examples of a multi-figural Crucifixion in medieval mural painting in the Slovenian territory.

Based on the presented examples, we find that the manner in which the Crucifixion in the Romanesque chapel of Turjak Castle was executed does not support its dating to the first quarter of the 14th century, as it portrays the crucified Christ and the two thieves hanging from behind their crosses and a multi-figural group beneath the cross, while its stylistic language features exquisitely drawn and shaded faces and helmets. Based on the still visible stylistic and iconographic details, the mural can therefore be dated to around or after 1400. The annual rings, clearly painted on the wood of the crosses, are typical of the 15th century in particular.[91]

What about the portrayal of St Sebastian? First, it should be underlined that St Sebastian being painted next to the Crucifixion is definitely not a coincidence. The martyrdom of St Sebastian pierced by arrows next to a stone pillar or – especially north of the Alps – next to a tree trunk is directly linked to the motif of Christ's Passion or the Flaggelation,[92] while the arrows are also

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both thieves may have also been painted as a part of the Passion Cycle on the nave's western wall of the succursal church of St Nicholas in Žužemberk. About this mural, see HÖFLER 2001, pp. 226–230.

[88] For the basic information about the Slovenj Gradec mural, see HÖFLER 2004, pp. 186–189; OTER GORENČIČ 2020c (both with earlier literature).

[89] For the basic information about the mural in Marija Gradec near Laško, see HÖFLER 2004, pp. 131–136; VIGNJEVIĆ 2005.

[90] For the basic information about the painting in Sv. Peter nad Begunjami, see HÖFLER 1996, pp. 169–171; GLOBOČNIK 2007, pp. 93–94 (with earlier literature). In the Slovenian territory, the Crucifixion with several accompanying figures was also depicted in 1504 in the succursal church of St Andrew in Dole pri Krašcah. The mural is located on the northeastern side of the chancel. However, because of the window that was built subsequently, only fragments with Roman soldiers on horseback and soldiers playing dice for Christ's garment have been preserved. About the mural in Dole pri Krašcah, see HÖFLER 1996, pp. 95–98 (with earlier literature).

[91] This conclusion is supported by the review of the depictions available at the link https://realonline.imareal.sbg. ac.at/; as well as by the examples in LANC 2002.

[92] For examples of the Flagellation with a centrally placed Christ and his two tormentors to his left and right, while Christ, like St Sebastian at Turjak, is placed behind the pillar that is in the foreground, see VLACHOS 2021, repr. 1, 3–4.

reminiscent of Christ's crown of thorns. The parallel is represented by the idea that St Sebastian intercepted the arrows (of the plague) to ensure the salvation of the people. Like Christ, he therefore sacrificed himself for the people, while the tree to which he was tied can consequently be associated with the tree of life and thus once again with Christ. In the Middle Ages, Christocentric interpretations were often attributed to St Sebastian. Christ and his suffering therefore represented a model for St Sebastian, making the latter a kind of semblance of the Man of Sorrows and thus a perfect example of *imitatio Christi*.[93]

Already around the years 820–830 – in the Stuttgart Psalter from the Saint-Germain-des-Prés Abbey (Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. bibl., fols. 23, 74v) – we encounter an image of a naked Sebastian tied to a pillar, while torturers shoot arrows at him or one of them stabs him with a spear.[94] In mural painting, the martyrdom of St Sebastian pierced by arrows as part of a cycle can be found on an unpreserved fresco in the church of San Sebastiano al Palatino in Rome from the 11th century[95] and as a stand-alone depiction in the old Lateran Palace in Rome in the 12th century.[96] Although St Sebastian is one of the principal plague saints,[97] barely any portrayals of him from the middle of the 14th century have been preserved. The manner of depicting him as a naked, handsome young man with arrows in his body started to take root in Italian art towards the end of the 14th century, while during the 15th century, it also flourished in German territory. By far the greatest number of scenes with St Sebastian originate from the 15th and the early 16th century. Stand-alone depictions of St Sebastian without his torturers became standard in Italian painting from the second half of the 15th century onwards. Especially after the first quarter of the 15th century, so-called *Pestblätter* were the main reason for St Sebastian's popularity in artworks.[98]

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[93] Cf. RÉAU 1959, pp. 1193, 1196; ASSION 1994, col. 318; MARSHALL 1994, pp. 495–496, 500; BOECKL 2000, p. 77; MARSHALL 2002, pp. 248, 256–257; LARGIER 2005, pp. 287–288; BARKER 2007, pp. 106–107; DITTMEYER 2014, pp. 90–92; HÖLLINGER, GOERTZ 2023, pp. 41, 42–43, 65–67.

[94] See HÖLLINGER, GOERTZ 2023, pp. 46–48.

[95] See HÖLLINGER, GOERTZ 2023, pp. 48–49. BARKER 2007, p. 94, states that this mural cycle dates from the 10th century. Meanwhile, BERGDOLT 2000, pp. 40, 55, repr. 10, even states that the work could potentially be dated to the 8th century.

[96] See HÖLLINGER, GOERTZ 2023, pp. 50–51. BARKER 2007, pp. 95, 96, also mentions a fresco in the crypt of the Cathedral of Anagni from the years 1173–1179. Furthermore, BARKER 2007, p. 95, writes that the supposedly earliest independent depiction of Sebastian, pierced by arrows, dating back to the 11th century, has been preserved at the Scala Santa in Rome with its prototype at Santa Maria in Pallara. Santa Maria Pallara is another name for the church of San Sebastiano al Palatino. BERGDOLT 2000, pp. 40, 55, repr. 11, underlines that the oldest surviving example of the depiction of the martyrdom of St Sebastian pierced by arrows is a fresco in the crypt of the cathedral in Anagni from the second half of the 12th century.

[97] Before the year 680, Sebastian was not known as a plague-related saint. About this issue and the development of his cult regarding intercession against the plague during the Middle Ages, see KÜNSTLE 1926, pp. 525–528; RÉAU 1959, pp. 1191–1199; MARSHALL 1994, pp. 488–500; BERGDOLT 2000, pp. 37–40, 55; BOECKL 2000, pp. 55–56; MARSHALL 2002, pp. 240, 244–247, 250–251, 258–260; BARKER 2007; HÖLLINGER, GOERTZ 2023, pp. 33–59; all with further references.

[98] Cf. HADELN 1906, pp. 14–16, passim; SCHREIBER, HEITZ 1918, p. 7, and the relevant reproductions;

23. *Novo mesto, Lower Carniola Museum, mural taken down from the eastern part of the upper band on the southern wall of the Turjak Castle's Gothic chapel nave, portraying St Stephen (?), St Sebastian, and St Gregory the Pope (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*

In Turjak Castle's Romanesque chapel, St Sebastian is portrayed naked, while his placement is exceedingly original, as the tree trunk is in the foreground. Such depictions are rare. In the French territory, a similar depiction in manuscript illuminations can be found in The Hours of Jean de Boucicaut (*Les Heures du Maréchal Boucicaut*), created between 1412 and around 1416.[99] St Sebastian can be found on fol. 21v as part of a series of full-page depictions of saints. He is stepping from behind the tree trunk. With his body facing the viewers, he is turning towards his right while looking to the left towards his attackers, who are firing arrows at him. His right arm is wrapped around the tree trunk, and his hands are tied together at the wrists.[100] St Sebastian pierced with arrows next to a tree whose trunk is in front of the saint, was also portrayed in the second half of the 15th century in a relief depiction on the decoration of the stoop (*Beischlagwange*). Today, this work is kept in the Museum of Gdańsk.[101] The depiction of St Sebastian in Turjak Castle's Gothic chapel is also telling, as here, the saint is also painted next to a tree in a very dynamic pose (Fig. 23), which also partially

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KÜNSTLE 1926, pp. 525, 527–528; BRAUN 1943, cols. 642, 647; RÉAU 1959, pp. 1191–1195; RONEN 1988, pp. 77, 88; ASSION 1994, cols. 318, 320, 323; BERGDOLT 2000, pp. 37, 55–56; BOECKL 2000, pp. 55–56, 60, 61, 76–77; LARGIER 2005, pp. 287–289; BERGER 2007, pp. 56–57; DITTMEYER 2014, p. 91; HÖLLINGER, GOERTZ 2023, pp. 53–56, 59–62, 71. See also note 97.

[99]   Regarding dating, see CHÂTELET 2000, p. 221.

[100]   CHÂTELET 2000, p. 248.

[101]   See BRAUN 1943, col. 647, repr. 350.

places the tree in the foreground. St Sebastian from the Gothicised Turjak chapel is now kept in the Lower Carniola Museum in Novo mesto, where it had been moved after World War II for preservation. The fresco fragment taken down from the eastern part of the upper band on the southern wall of the nave shows two more saints alongside Sebastian.[102] An even more explicit placement of St Sebastian behind a tree can be found on 15th-century *Pestblätter*. One such example is an Italian wood engraving from around 1450–1465, kept in the Biblioteca Classense Ravenna library,[103] where St Sebastian is also placed in the background while his tormentor's fancy outfit is similar to that of the executioners in the Turjak chapel.

The attire of the Turjak chapel executioners is characterised by a short upper garment, trouser legs of non-uniform colours, and a crossbow. The crossbow held by Sebastian's torturers has a long, slender stock. The bow is also very long and relatively thin. The structure is probably composite or made of yew wood rather than steel. It appears to be a medium-power weapon, as the shooter wears a typical belt, originally probably with a tensioning hook attached. Given the crossbow's dimensions and the way it was cocked, in the Slovenian or Eastern Alpine area, such a military or hunting crossbow belongs to the 14th or early 15th century. The men next to Christ's cross are wearing armour, and at least one of them in the top right has a pointed helmet. The next man on the left is obviously wearing a helmet and probably a chain collar as well. These details suggest dating to around 1400 or perhaps a few decades sooner or later. However, because the painting is so fragmentarily preserved and there are so few identifiable details – only outlines of the crossbow and helmet are preserved – this does not allow for a definite dating based on the military equipment.[104]

The literature uses the term *mi-parti* to refer to trouser legs of different colours. While examples of different-coloured socks can be identified from the 10th century onwards,[105] as of the 15th century, the *mi-parti* became the typical official garment of town servants and musicians, even north of the Alps – following the example of Italian cities, where it can also be found before then. This manner of dress was modelled on musicians, vassals, and servants, initially of lower social status but eventually also of court servants of a higher social status in court culture. *Mi-parti* garments often featured heraldic colours as a sign of belonging to a particular noble family or town. At the end of the 15th and throughout the 16th century, *mi-parti* garments were worn by *Landsknechts* and mercenaries.[106] Characteristically, in the Turjak chapel, the two-coloured trousers are worn by the saint's torturer, as the negative connotation of *mi-parti* garments was well

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102   SAPAČ 2020, pp. 677–678, 868 (n. 805).
103   SCHREIBER, HEITZ 1918, p. 12, repr. 12.
104   I would like to thank Dr Tomaž Lazar for his opinion on the depicted military equipment.
105   Cf. MERTENS 1983, p. 8; MERTENS 1993, p. 190.
106   MERTENS 1983, pp. 8–20, 30–37; MERTENS 1993, pp. 190–191, 193–198.

established in late medieval painting, especially to symbolically mark executioners, torturers, shooters, or bailiffs, who also wear fashionable and, in particular, tight-fitting clothes in scenes depicting torture or the execution of a sentence.[107] It should also be pointed out that tight clothing, snugly fitting the slim bodies, and ever shorter skirts were features that began to take hold in central Europe, following courtly examples, in the mid-14th century before they were fully developed in the 15th century. Many urban and other dress codes or prohibitions on wearing (overly) short men's clothes from the middle of the 14th and 15th centuries have been preserved.[108] The Gothic fashion of the so-called heraldic trousers, or trouser legs in heraldic colours, was also well known in Italy. By the end of the 14th century, this fashion had faded into obscurity in many places, especially in northern Italian cities such as Milan, Florence, and Venice. However, it reasserted itself after 1400 as a sign of belonging to a particular aristocrat, ruler, or even a specific fraternity (the *Compagnia della calza* is a perfect example). In the second half of the 15th century, two-colour trousers can also be found in the highest social strata.[109] In our context, the most intriguing mural painting is the portrayal of St Sebastian from around 1400–1420 in the church of St Nicholas in the hamlet of Rojen in South Tyrol. All that remains of the scene are the two crossbowmen. They are wearing tight-fitting *mi-parti* pants and *mi-parti* upper garments that only cover the top parts of their legs.[110] In the Turjak chapel, the lower parts of the crossbowmen's skirts are trimmed in a triangular shape. In the Middle Ages, *mi-parti* garments with triangularly trimmed lower hems were one of the characteristic features of musicians and (court) jesters after the so-called *Zaddeltracht* had become a distinctive element of the extravagant court fashion in the late 14th and early 15th centuries.[111] A fine example of a person wearing tight-fitting *mi-parti* trousers and a short skirt, whose lower hem concludes in vegetally shaped ribbons, is the man pouring water in the Pontius Pilate Washing His Hands scene by the Master of the Obersteiner Altar from around 1420, kept in the Landesmuseum Mainz museum.[112]

All the iconographic and stylistic details of how St Sebastian is depicted in the Turjak chapel – which, like the Crucifixion, have never even been noticed before – suggest that the mural must have been painted in the 15th century. Based on comparisons, the depiction of the two executioners with their tight-fitting trouser legs of different colours in combination with the completely short skirt of the tunic with a triangularly trimmed lower hem and the portrayal of the naked Sebastian with the tree in the foreground suggest that the mural was created after 1400.

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[107]   About this, see MERTENS 1983, pp. 20–23; JARITZ 1993, pp. 210, 211; MERTENS 1993, pp. 197–198.
[108]   See WOLTER 1988, pp. 30–44.
[109]   See MERTENS 1983, pp. 26–30.
[110]   A reproduction is available at the link: https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/suche#%7B%22s%22:%22sebastian%22%7D.
[111]   MERTENS 1983, pp. 37–38; cf. FALKE 1881, p. 191.
[112]   See VLACHOS 2021, repr. 7–8.

Furthermore, we should also take note of the stencilled pattern in the window splay next to St Sebastian. In the Slovenian territory, the use of stencils can be observed especially from the end of the 14ᵗʰ century onwards. After the first decades of the 15ᵗʰ century, murals were barely ever painted without any textile patterns.[113] The use of stencils represents another argument against the possibility that the mural could have been painted at the beginning of the 14ᵗʰ century. The central motif of the pattern in the Romanesque window splay is a hexagonal star with smaller star and circle-shaped forms arranged concentrically around it. In the Slovenian area, hexagonal stars with similar decorations between their arms can be found between 1450 and 1455, for example in the succursal church of St Radegund in the village of Srednja vas pri Šenčurju and the parish church of St Andrew in Mošnje.[114]

What of the saint accompanied by an animal? One such example of a bear climbing on St Corbinian is known from sculpting, where such a portrayal can be found in the early 16ᵗʰ century on a sculpture from the former winged altar in the church of St Mary in Treuchtlingen.[115] In the medieval mural painting in the Slovenian area, the legend of St Corbinian has been preserved in the chancel of the succursal church of the Holy Cross on the Križna Gora hill above Škofja Loka, where it was painted in 1502.[116] Regarding the dating of the painting in the Turjak chapel, it is crucial to note that the earliest surviving depiction of St Corbinian with a bear as an attribute is known from a panel painting belonging to the former winged altar of the church of St Andrew in Freising from around 1440.[117] The second oldest work of this kind is a colour wood engraving from around 1460, kept in the Rothschild collection in Paris.[118] This raises three possibilities: either the depiction of St Corbinian at Turjak Castle is the oldest that has been preserved; the entire mural in the Turjak chapel was not painted until around the middle of the 15ᵗʰ century (in this case the Turjak chapel's adaptation and extension might have taken place a few years or even a decade after 1450); or the saint depicted is not St Corbinian but rather St Anthony the Hermit. Iconographically, his depiction alongside St Sebastian would be entirely justified, as St Anthony

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[113]   About this, see VODNIK 1998, p. 20, passim.

[114]   See VODNIK 1998, p. 79.

[115]   A reproduction is available at the link: https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/suche#%7B%22fc%22:%22 bildthema-OR(Hl.%20Korbinian)%22%7D.

[116]   About this mural, see CEVC 1944; CEVC 1963; HÖFLER 1996, pp. 114–117; DOBLER 2003 (all with further references).

[117]   Sandsteinfigur 1994, p. 134; cf. HARTIG 1924, pp. 154, 155, 161–162; KÜNSTLE 1926, pp. 388–390; RÉAU 1958, pp. 344–345. At the exhibition at the Diözesanmuseum Freising museum in the first half of 2024, the painting from the Church of St Andrew is presented as one of the oldest depictions of St Corbinian with the bear. It is set in the period around 1455, see https://hdbg.eu/presseportal/detail/aelteste-darstellung-des-hl-korbinian-mit-dem-baeren/2898. However, SCHUSTER 2024, pp. 123, 125, in the exhibition catalogue, states that this panel painting dates from around 1450–1460 and that it was originally in the former Stift St Veit in Freising.

[118]   Cf. HARTIG 1924, pp. 162–163; KÜNSTLE 1926, p. 388; LIEVERT 1953, p. 541; RAMISCH 1994, col. 339. For further examples, see HARTIG 1924, pp. 163–175.

was also an intercessor in the struggle against the plague.[119] With such an iconographic design, the painting would point to Christ as the Saviour and offer believers the possibility of abandoning their sinful life and repenting and atoning for it while simultaneously, through an intercession to St Sebastian and St Anthony, praying that the plague may spare them from death or never happen again. The combination of St Anthony and St Sebastian can be encountered in Westphalia, where such an analysis has been carried out, from around 1400 onwards.[120] They are often encountered as a pair in late medieval art.[121] They can also be found in panel paintings until the first half of the 16th century, for example at Bouzov Castle in Czechia, where they are part of a quartet that also includes St Elizabeth of Hungary and St Jerome.[122] One of the most famous examples of these two saints appearing together can be seen on the closed outer wings of Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece from 1512–1516.[123] At the beginning of the 15th century, St Sebastian was painted alongside the scenes from the life of St Anthony the Hermit in the Chapel of St Anthony in Waltalingen, Switzerland. Also in this case, the two shooters firing crossbows at Sebastian are wearing tight-fitting *mi-parti* trousers as well as a short skirt or tunic.[124] As a plague saint, St Anthony often appears in the company of St Sebastian and St Roch.[125]

From the 14th century onwards, St Anthony is usually depicted wearing the Antonite habit.[126] However, he can also be portrayed wearing ordinary clothes rather than exclusively a habit.[127] In German medieval art, depictions of St Anthony can be found mainly from the end of the 14th century onwards, though most of them are from the 15th century. By the 16th century, this saint's popularity in art had faded notably.[128] In Western European art, the images of St Anthony with his attributes – a staff, pig, bell, book and/or a tau cross – thus culminated in the 15th century.[129] The pig stands on the saint's left or right side and follows him like a dog or a lamb, often looking up at him or even climbing on him with its front legs.[130] This detail has also been preserved in the

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[119] Cf. RÉAU 1958, p. 104; DORMEIER 1988, pp. 272, 273, 289, 293, 301, 302, 304; Pest 1994, col. 409; TSCHOCHNER 1994, col. 156; BOECKL 2000, p. 53.

[120] KORTE 1952, p. 59.

[121] KRAEHLING 1938, p. 14; cf. BOECKL 2000, pp. 53, 77, 138; MÜLLER 2015, p. 70.

[122] A reproduction is available at the link: https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/suche#%7B%22s%22:%22antonius%22%7D.

[123] SAUSER 1994, col. 214.

[124] See the reproduction in KRAEHLING 1938, p. 45, repr. 1. A part of this mural is no longer preserved, cf. https://www.zh-kirchenspots.ch/content/e1665/e1666/e6325/e3457/index_ger.html.

[125] KRAEHLING 1938, p. 15; SAUSER 1994, col. 210.

[126] BRAUN 1943, col. 88.

[127] This is evident already from the review of his depictions on the website at https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/.

[128] BRAUN 1943, col. 87; RÉAU 1958, p. 106.

[129] SAUSER 1994, col. 209.

[130] BRAUN 1943, cols. 92–93.

Turjak chapel. The pigs often have the so-called St Anthony's bell tied around their necks, while an examination of the surviving depictions reveals that when appearing alongside this saint, the pigs often wear a sort of bandage – a white ribbon like the one seen on the animal depicted at Turjak. A similar white ribbon is also tied across the belly of the pig next to St Anthony the Hermit on the southern wall of the southern transept in the parish church of St Matthew in Murau, dating from around 1330.[131] The depiction of St Anthony's animal attribute in a mural from 1415–1425 in the succursal church of St John in Prado (Agums) in South Tyrol also features a white ribbon.[132] A white spot is also visible on the pig looking up at St Anthony in a stained-glass window from the chancel of the former chapel of Corpus Christi in the castle in Wiener Neustadt from the early 1420s or from before 1424, which is now kept in the Neukloster there.[133] A pig rising on its hind legs and wearing a white bandage – though, like in most cases, painted in a dark grey tone – is also depicted next to St Anthony on the winged Mariastein altarpiece from around 1425, kept in the Musée d'art et d'histoire museum in Geneva.[134] The pig next to St Anthony in a mural from 1480–1500 on the western wall of the evangelical church in Stitnik, Slovakia, is also wearing a white ribbon.[135] Given that the peak of the depictions of St Anthony in (Central) Europe can be traced to the 15th century, the Turjak example – if it is identified as St Anthony – can still only be placed in the 15th century. All the other surviving iconographically undisputed portrayals of St Anthony in medieval mural painting, of which there are fewer than five in Slovenia, were created in the 15th or early 16th century. An exception is the mural in the succursal church of the Our Lady on the Rock in Vuzenica, where the image of an abbot belongs to the phase from around 1400. However, due to its fragmentary preservation and missing attributes, it cannot be confirmed with any certainty that the portrayed figure is definitely St Anthony the Hermit.[136] Other churches that should be mentioned include the parish church of St Urh in Branik[137] and the old parish church of St Oswald in Zgornje Jezersko.[138] Here – and most likely also in the succursal church of St Andrew in Vrhovlje pri Kožbani[139] – both St Sebastian and St Anthony are depicted, while in Branik,

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[131] LANC 2020, p. 282 (Textband), table 355 (Tafelband).

[132] A reproduction is available at the link: https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/suche#%7B%22s%22:%22antonius%22%7D.

[133] See BUCHINGER, OBERHAIDACHER-HERZIG, WAIS-WOLF 2015, pp. 415, 417, 419–420, repr. 639.

[134] A reproduction is available at the link: https://www.mahmah.ch/collection/oeuvres/triptyque-du-couvent-de-mariastein/f-0132.

[135] A reproduction is available at the link: https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/suche#%7B%22s%22:%22 antonius%22%7D.

[136] About this mural, see HÖFLER 2004, pp. 248–252.

[137] About this mural, see HÖFLER 1997, pp. 75–78 (with earlier literature).

[138] For an iconographic presentation of the entire mural, see STELE 1921, pp. 113–137; HÖFLER 1996, pp. 187–190; LEBEN 1999 (with further references).

[139] About this mural, see HÖFLER 1997, pp. 147–150 (with earlier literature).

St Roch is also portrayed. The facts that could cast doubt on the identification of the animal in the Turjak chapel as a pig are its head and its colour, though the latter does not match that of a bear either.

Stylistically, the head of Longinus is most suitable for dating. As the upper layer of the painting has peeled away and only the drawing of Longinus' head survives, a definitive assessment is difficult. However, judging from the preserved drawing, it is an example of the so-called second Prague style at the stage represented by the Viennese Ducal workshop, which specialised in stained glass windows. In Slovenia, two works from around 1410–1420[140] by masters related to the Viennese Ducal workshop survive: the second mural in the rotunda or the succursal church of the Virgin Mary and St Nicholas in Selo and the Procession of the Magi in the chancel of the Abbey Church of St Daniel in Celje.[141] The quality of the Turjak murals, however, is remarkably higher and raises them closer to the so-called Upper-Styrian Ducal workshop, which focused on monumental mural painting and was active mostly in the Duchy of Styria. The Turjak murals show a red pre-drawing with a wide brush and decisive strokes. Compared to the stylistic level in Selo and Celje, the drawing is much more detailed, especially around the eyes, and can be compared to the works of the Upper-Styrian Ducal workshop (e.g. the murals in the former church of the Friars Minor in Bruck an der Mur; the murals in the succursal church of St Rupert in Bruck an der Mur are also interesting for comparison, as is the mural of the cemetery chapel in Riffian near Meran by Master Wenzel, related to these two Styrian works).[142] Analysis of the iconographic details in the Turjak Castle chapel suggests that we could date the mural to the first quarter of the 15th century. A comparison with the works of the Upper-Styrian Ducal workshop and the lack of characteristics of the international Gothic style, however, indicate that the most likely time of creation is around 1400 or, better, the beginning of the 15th century. The saint on the western part of the southern wall could thus be identified as St Anthony the Hermit. Despite its poor condition, the preserved mural of the Romanesque chapel is therefore an extremely important and remarkable monument of medieval mural painting in Slovenia.

On the same wall where it was painted in the Romanesque chapel, the Crucifixion of Christ with both thieves and several accompanying figures was also painted below, in the Gothicised

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[140]   KRIŽNAR 2001, p. 22; KRIŽNAR 2002, pp. 189, 197.

[141]   The parallel with the Viennese Ducal workshop was brought to my attention by the academician Dr Janez Höfler, for which I am very grateful. About the mural in the rotunda in Selo, cf. n. 86. About the mural in Celje, see KRIŽNAR 2001; KRIŽNAR 2002, pp. 94–101, 197–199; HÖFLER 2004, pp. 88–89; both with further references. On the Viennese Ducal workshop, which specialised in stained glass windows, see also FRODL KRAFT 1992; SCHMIDT 2000, pp. 478–481; BUCHINGER, OBERHAIDACHER-HERZIG, WAIS-WOLF 2015, pp. 15, 21, 259, 262, 265, 277, 407, 408, 580, 582.

[142]   I would like to thank Dr Anabelle Križnar for the consultation on the fragment, which reveals a connection with the so-called second Prague style and Ducal workshop in Upper Styria. For all the above mentioned examples, see KRIŽNAR 2002, pp. 62–72, 161–164, 175–180, 203–204; LANC 2002, pp. 50–64 (Textband).

24. *Turjak Castle, mural on the Gothic chapel's northern wall (© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)*
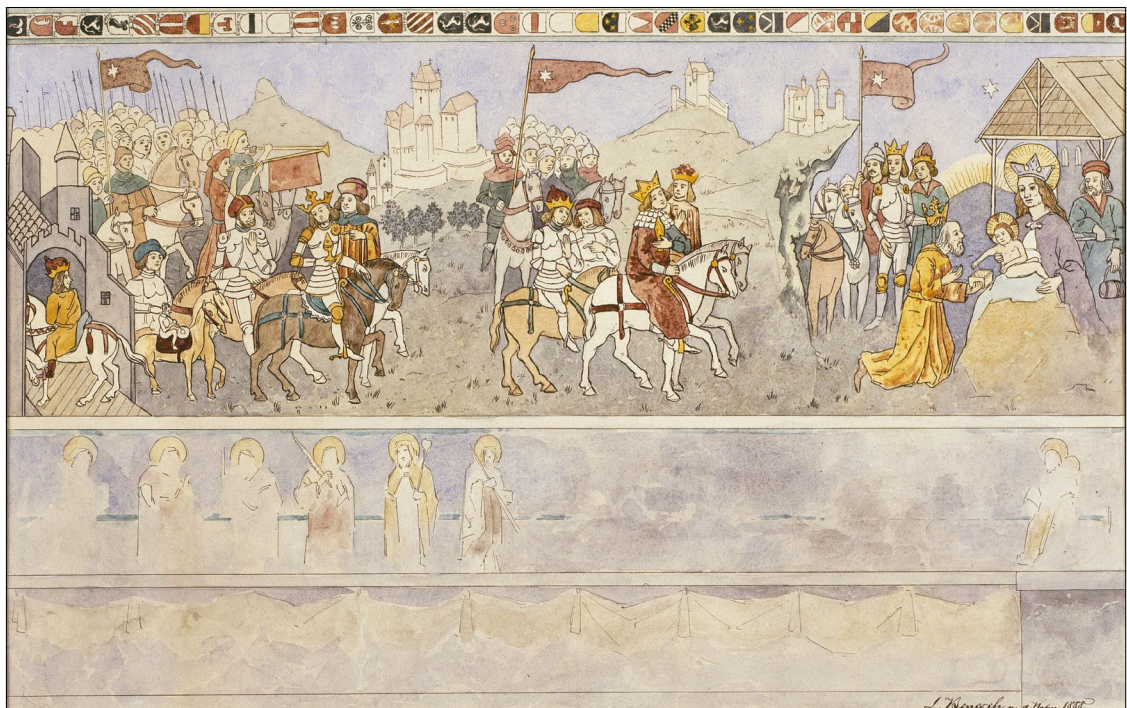
25. *Ladislav Benesch: Procession of the Magi, the northern wall of the Turjak Castle Gothic chapel,*
a pen-and-ink drawing combined with watercolour and graphite pencil, from 1888
(© Print Cabinet of the National Museum of Slovenia, photo: Tomaž Lauko)

26. *Turjak Castle, mural on the Gothic chapel's western part of the southern wall*
(© ZRC SAZU, UIFS, photo: Andrej Furlan)
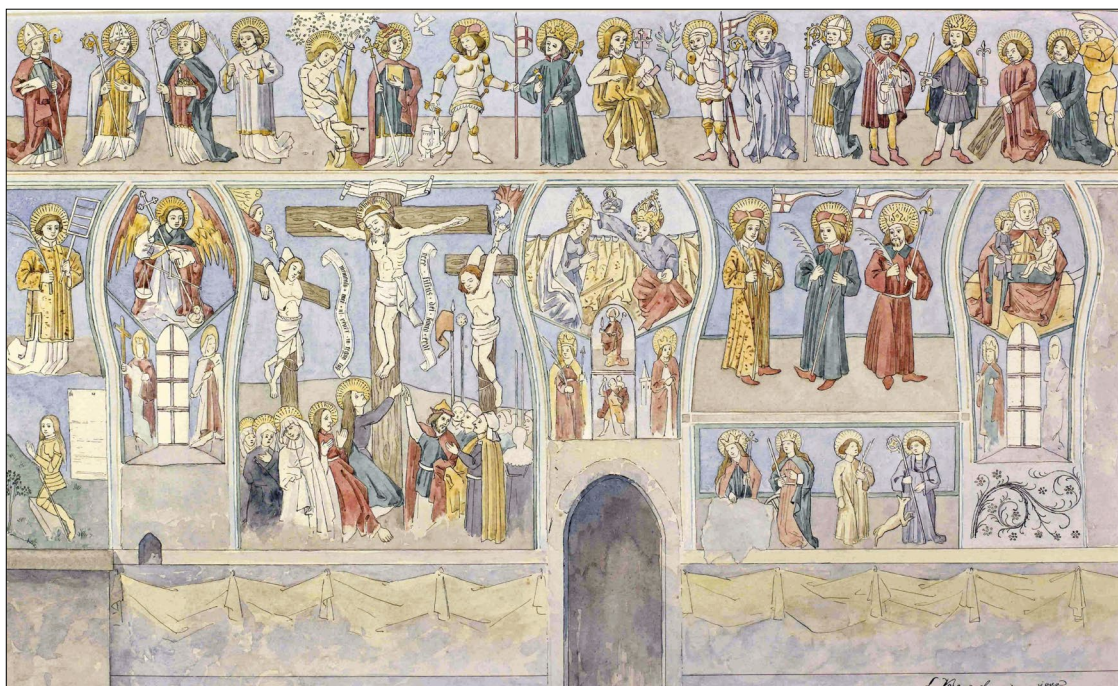
27. *Ladislav Benesch: mural on the southern wall of the Turjak Castle Gothic chapel,*
a pen-and-ink drawing, combined with watercolour and graphite pencil, from 1888
(© Print Cabinet of the National Museum of Slovenia, photo: Tomaž Lauko)

chapel. Here, Mary Magdalene stretches her arms towards Christ's cross, while a similarly depicted group of soldiers, with the first of them wearing a markedly Jewish hat, stands out. The Procession of the Magi is also painted in the Gothic chapel below, on the same wall as presumably in the Romanesque chapel (Figs. 24–25). The row of saints can also be found in both the Romanesque and Gothic chapels (Figs. 26–27). In the late Gothic mural, St Sebastian is also depicted in a surprisingly dynamic posture. Therefore, we can conclude that the iconography of the older painting also determined, at least to some extent, the iconographic design of the younger painting. We do not know whether St Corbinian or St Anthony the Hermit were also painted in the Gothic chapel, but it is possible, as a row of saints, not all of whom have been preserved, was painted in the chapel. The new discoveries about the mural in the Romanesque chapel at Turjak Castle do not only bring many new insights into its iconography and dating but also allow for a better understanding of the iconographic concept of the Gothic chapel, but above all, they uncover an exceptionally high quality and valuable monument of medieval wall painting in Slovenia.[143]

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Nova odkritja o poslikavi kapele na gradu Turjak

Povzetek

Članek obravnava stensko poslikavo, ki je bila sprva uvrščena v digitalni korpus srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva na Slovenskem do okoli leta 1380, a se je med raziskavo izkazalo, da je datacija, objavljena v literaturi, napačna. Gre za fragmentarno ohranjeno plast poslikave v romanski kapeli gradu Turjak. V literaturi manjkata tako predstavitev in poskus identifikacije motivov, ki so še vidni, v navezavi na ikonografijo in slog pa tudi ustreznejša časovna umestitev. Edini zapis o ikonografskem programu predstavlja domneva, da je na južni steni upodobljen Pohod sv. Treh kraljev, časovno pa se poslikava umešča v 13. stoletje, v čas okoli leta 1300, v zgodnje 14. stoletje oziroma okoli leta 1318. Poslikava, ki si jo je mogoče ogledati z montažnega lesenega mostovža nad obokom gotsko prezidane romanske kapele, je zelo slabo ohranjena, natančen študij še vidnih detajlov pa kljub temu omogoča številna nova spoznanja tako o ikonografskem programu kakor tudi o dataciji, posledično pa omogoča tudi nekaj novih premislekov o gotizaciji kapele.

Danes so ostanki poslikav v nekdanji romanski kapeli, ki je bila pred prezidavo poslikana po vseh stenah, vidni na severni, predvsem pa na južni ladijski steni. Na severni steni so razločnejši fragmenti vidni od sredine ladijske stene pa vse do njenega vzhodnega konca. Kljub slabi ohranjenosti je razvidno, da je bil tukaj večfiguralni prizor. Razpoznavnih je več glav, v spodnjem delu tik nad gotskim obokom pa tudi vsaj dva konja. Morda je bil tu naslikan Pohod in poklon sv. Treh kraljev; vsekakor je bila to kompleksna in monumentalna kompozicija s številnimi protagonisti. Če je omenjeni ikonografski motiv bil naslikan v romanski kapeli gradu Turjak, je bil torej na severni in ne na južni steni.

Večji del južne stene zavzema motiv Križanja. Vidna je desna roka Kristusa na križu, vidne so letnice na lesu križa, ob stiku desne roke in telesa je vidna palica z gobo s kisom, ki jo rimski vojak Stefaton podaja Kristusu. Na Kristusovi levi je viden še en križ in glava na vrhu križa. Ta seveda pripada levemu razbojniku. Tik ob križu levega razbojnika je viden zgornji del drevesa s tankim deblom in košato krošnjo. Na Kristusovi desni strani je viden tretji križ z nogo desnega razbojnika in vrvjo, s katero je bila njegova roka privezana na križ. H Kristusovemu križu je obrnjena gruča vojščakov, od katerih ima prvi, bradati mož visoko zašiljeno judovsko čepico. V roki drži sulico, ki jo usmerja proti Kristusu, z levico pa kaže v svoje levo oko. S pomočjo te geste ga prepoznamo kot stotnika Longinusa. Za Longinusom je v dveh vrstah vidnih vsaj še šest nadaljnjih obrazov; gre torej za številčno skupino vojščakov, obrnjeno h Kristusu. Nekateri od njih imajo v rokah drogove s praporji in zastavicami. Levo nad Kristusovim križem je viden ostanek upodobitve sonca. Monumentalna kompozicija Križanja se je v dolžino razprostirala štiri metre in pol in s tem zavzemala dve tretjini dolžine južne stene.

Poleg Križanja je v smeri proti zahodu mogoče prvič identificirati še en doslej spregledani motiv, in sicer sv. Boštjana. Način njegove upodobitve je izjemno presenetljiv, saj je na drevo ali deblo privezan tako, da je v prvem planu deblo in šele za njim goli svetnik. Puščic v njegovem telesu zaradi slabe ohranjenosti ni videti, jih pa z leve in desne vanj s samostrelom streljata rablja v izraziti modni opravi s kratko tuniko s krilom s trikotniško zaključenim spodnjim robom in z oprijetimi hlačnicami; rabelj desno od Boštjana ima hlačnici različnih barv. Prizor s sv. Boštjanom zaključuje deloma še ohranjeno romansko okno. Njegovo lijakasto ostenje je bilo prav tako poslikano, okras je bil deloma naslikan s šablonami.

Na drugi strani romanskega okna, tik ob zahodni steni, je prvič prepoznan še en motiv. Tu je bil upodobljen škof ali opat. Vidna je palica, ob njegovi desni nogi pa se, postavljena na zadnji dve nogi, vzdiguje žival, ki jo težko povsem prepričljivo identificiramo. Najbolj verjetni se zdita dve možnosti, in sicer da gre za medveda ali pa za prašiča. S sv. Boštjanom se je tako morda začela svetniška vrsta, ki bi se lahko nadaljevala še na zahodni steni kapele. Ker ima žival opasan hrbet in medvedjo glavo, je bil tu morda upodobljen sv. Korbinijan. Njegova upodobitev ne bi bila presenetljiva, saj so konec 14. in v začetku 15. stoletja Turjaški imeli nekaj povezav s freisinškimi škofi. Če pa je upodobljena žival prašič, je bil tu naslikan sv. Anton Puščavnik.

Večfiguralno Križanje, modna rablja golega sv. Boštjana in svetnik na zahodnem koncu južne stene ne omogočajo časovne umestitve, kakršna je za to poslikavo in celo brez ikonografske identifikacije motivov predlagana v literaturi. Monumentalno Križanje z zelo dobro izrisanimi in senčenimi obrazi je mogoče umestiti šele v čas okoli leta 1400 ali po njem. Tudi način upodobitve obeh rabljev sv. Boštjana s tesno telesu prilegajočim se oblačilom, s hlačnicama različnih barv in povsem kratkim krilom tunike s trikotniško zarezanim spodnjim robom ter golega sv. Boštjana z drevesom v prvem planu lahko postavimo šele v prvo polovico 15. stoletja. Tudi uporaba šablon v okenskem ostenju govori proti temu, da bi poslikava lahko nastala v začetku 14. stoletja. Osrednji motiv vzorca v ostenju romanskega okenca je šesterokraka zvezda, okoli katere so koncentrično razporejene manjše zvezdaste in krožne oblike. V slovenskem prostoru šesterokrako zvezdo, ki ima med kraki soroden okras, najdemo v letih 1450–1455, in sicer v podružnični cerkvi sv. Radegunde v Srednji vasi pri Šenčurju in v župnijski cerkvi sv. Andreja v Mošnjah. In svetnik z živaljo? Najstarejša ohranjena upodobitev sv. Korbinijana z medvedom kot atributom je znana šele s tabelne slike nekdanjega krilnega oltarja cerkve sv. Andreja v Freisingu iz okoli leta 1440. To pred nas postavlja tri možnosti: ali je upodobitev sv. Korbinijana na Turjaku najstarejša ohranjena, ali je celotna prva poslikava turjaške grajske kapele nastala šele okoli sredine 15. stoletja, ali pa upodobljeni svetnik ni sv. Korbinijan, marveč sv. Anton Puščavnik. Njegova upodobitev poleg sv. Boštjana bi bila ikonografsko povsem upravičena, saj je bil tudi sv. Anton priprošnjik zoper kugo. Čeprav je od 14. stoletja sv. Anton praviloma upodobljen v noši antonitov, ga najdemo tudi v neredovnem do tal segajočem oblačilu. Prašič ob sv. Antonu pogosto pogleduje navzgor ali se celo s sprednjima nogama dviguje k njemu. Prav ta detajl je ohranjen tudi v turjaški kapeli. Prašiči imajo okoli vratu večkrat privezan t. i. Antonov zvonček, pregled ohranjenih upodobitev pa razkrije, da imajo pogosto tudi nekakšno prevezo, bel trak, kakršnega vidimo na živali, upodobljeni na Turjaku. Glede na to, da je vrhunec upodobitev sv. Antona v (srednje)evropskem prostoru mogoče zaslediti v 15. stoletju, tudi turjaški primer – če ga prepoznamo kot sv. Antona – spet lahko postavimo edinole v čas po letu 1400.

Slogovno še najoprijemljivejša za datacijo je Longinusova glava. Ker je zgornja plast poslikave odluščena, je dokončna opredelitev otežena. Vseeno pa lahko po ohranjeni risbi sklepamo, da gre za primer t. i. drugega praškega sloga na stopnji, ki jo predstavljala Dunajska vojvodska delavnica. V slovenskem prostoru se povezujeta z Dunajsko vojvodsko delavnico, specializirano za vitraje, druga poslikava rotunde v Selu ter Pohod in poklon sv. Treh kraljev v prezbiteriju opatijske cerkve svetega Danijela v Celju iz časa okoli 1410-1420. Kvaliteta turjaških fresk je v primerjavi s temi deli bistveno višja, kar stenske poslikave romanske kapele gradu Turjak postavlja bližje t. i. Gornještajerski vojvodski delavnici, ki se je osredotočala na monumentalno slikarstvo. Na Turjaku je vidna predrisba, izdelana s širokim čopičem in odločnimi potezami. V primerjavi s slogovno stopnjo v Selu in Celju je veliko podrobnejša, zlasti okoli oči, in jo lahko primerjamo z deli vojvodske delavnice na Gornjem Štajerskem. Analiza ikonografskih posebnosti poslikave romanske kapele na gradu Turjak kaže na možnost časovne umestitve v prvo četrtino 15. stoletja. Sorodnost z deli gornještajerske vojvodske delavnice in hkratna

odsotnost značilnosti mednarodnega gotskega sloga pa kažeta, da je najverjetnejši čas nastanka okoli leta 1400 ali začetek 15. stoletja. Svetnika na zahodnem delu južne stene je tako mogoče prepoznati kot svetega Antona Puščavnika. Ohranjena stenska poslikava romanske kapele je tako kljub slabi ohranjenosti izjemno pomemben spomenik srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva na Slovenskem.

Kristusovo Križanje z obema razbojnikoma in več spremljevalnimi osebami, med katerimi izstopa sorodno koncipirana skupina vojščakov, od katerih ima prvi poudarjen judovski klobuk, je na isti steni, kot je bilo naslikano v romanski kapeli, naslikano tudi spodaj v gotsko predelani kapeli. Prav tako je Pohod in poklon sv. Treh kraljev na isti steni, kot je bil domnevno upodobljen v romanski kapeli, upodobljen tudi spodaj v gotski kapeli. Tudi vrsto svetnikov najdemo tako v romanski kot v gotski kapeli. Sv. Boštjan je tudi na poznogotski poslikavi koncipiran v presenetljivo dinamični drži. Ugotovimo torej lahko, da je ikonografija poslikave romanske kapele vsaj do neke mere določila tudi ikonografsko zasnovo poslikave gotizirane kapele. Nova odkritja o poslikavi romanske kapele na gradu Turjak s tem prinašajo ne samo številna nova spoznanja o njeni ikonografiji in dataciji, marveč omogočajo tudi boljše razumevanje ikonografske zasnove gotizirane kapele, predvsem pa razkrivajo izjemno kakovosten spomenik srednjeveškega stenskega slikarstva na Slovenskem.

IMAGES, LITURGY AND ILLUSIONISM

LATE GOTHIC WALL PAINTINGS IMITATING WINGED ALTARPIECES

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In the study of late medieval church interiors, it is frequently observed that the medium of wall painting was commonly used in the decoration of altars: often, although not exclusively, in the case of side altars in smaller village churches.[1] The medium was also regularly employed in this period, as any scholar of late medieval wall painting will know, to imitate through illusionistic means three-dimensional objects: primarily architectural elements, but also pieces of liturgical furnishings such as sacrament houses[2] or liturgical niches,[3] as an eye-catching and cost-effective way of visually highlighting significant parts of a church interior.

At the intersection of these two phenomena stand wall painting compositions which imitate three-dimensional forms of altar decoration, such as a wall painting in the chapel of St Faith in Westminster Abbey (c. 1300) combining a horizontal panel retable with an imitation statue of the titular saint in a tabernacle shrine,[4] or the composition by Lippo Vanni in the church of San

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[1]   On wall paintings serving as altar decoration, see BRAUN 1924, pp. 530–534; MICHLER 1990, pp. 101–106; FUCHSS 1999, pp. 26–29, 154–165, 168–169, 176–180, 191–196, 198–203; HAASTRUP 2004; KROESEN 2010b, pp. 44–51, 63–64, 86–91, 100–103, 115–116, 133–135; KROESEN, STEENSMA 2012, pp. 66, 68; KROESEN 2014, pp. 164–167; KÓNYA 2022 (with references to earlier literature focusing on the territory of medieval Hungary).

[2]   As, for example, several spectacular wall painting compositions enlarging a more modest sacrament niche into a monumental illusionistic sacrament house in the regions of Tyrol, Carinthia, Styria and Salzburg; see TIMMERMANN 2009, pp. 215–219. In the territory of medieval Hungary, the illusionistic wall painting decoration of the sacrament niches in Spišská Sobota (*Szepesszombat*) and Strážky (*Nagyőr*, both today in Slovakia) are cases in point; see DVOŘÁKOVÁ, KRÁSA, STEJSKAL 1978, pp. 143, 145–146.

[3]   Examples can be found in the decoration of the Baroncelli chapel by Tadeo Gaddi in the Santa Croce in Florence (c. 1328–1330), on the southern chancel wall of the parish church in Velemér (Hungary), painted by Johannes Aquila in 1377–1378, and in St Stephen's chapel in Morter, South Tyrol. Of the two illusionistic niches painted on the western wall of the Smíšek chapel in the St Barbara church in Kutná Hora, one is captured in a half-open state, creating the illusion of a moveable door; see JÉKELY 2004, p. 114; KROESEN 2010a, p. 245; BOKODY 2015, p. 42.

[4]   MICHLER 1990, pp. 103–104; FUCHSS 1999, pp. 168–169; WILLIAMSON 2004, pp. 365–367.

Francesco in Siena (c. 1360–1370) faithfully imitating the characteristic structure and iconographic scheme of Italian polyptychs of the period.[5]

This paper focuses on wall paintings imitating winged altarpieces, which have not yet been studied as a group before. While examples from medieval Transylvania[6] provide the starting point for the analysis, I examine them in the wider context of comparable works of art from Central Europe. After presenting an overview of the surviving Transylvanian examples of wall painting compositions insipred by the medium of winged altarpieces,[7] I provide in the second part of the paper a brief survey of analogues from other parts of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary as well as from South Tyrol, Styria, Lower Austria and Bavaria. In the third part of the paper, I look at general patterns in wall painting representations of winged altarpieces in terms of connections between their form, iconography, and function. The main questions driving my analysis are how the three-dimensional format of winged altarpieces was transposed and adapted into the medium of wall painting and what the possibilities and limitations of this adaptation were.

Wall Painting Compositions Imitating Winged Altarpieces in Transylvania

In the town of Mediaș (*Medgyes* in Hungarian), the chapel of the so-called Tower of Mary located to the south-east of the parish church was decorated around 1450–1460 with a coherent figural program embedded in a framework of *grisaille* architectural elements (Figs. 1–2).[8] On the eastern wall, the representation of an open triptych can be seen, which used to serve as decoration for the altar that once stood against the wall, with a rectangular lacuna in the plaster below the illusionistic altarpiece suggesting the position of the altar. In the central panel of the triptych, the figure of God the Father can be seen, holding the lifeless body of Christ in front of him by his chest. On the right wing of the altarpiece, St John the Baptist is depicted, holding in his left hand a white disk, on which a fragmentary representation of the Agnus Dei with a flag can be discerned and at which he is pointing with his right hand.

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[5]   SÖDING 2010, p. 153, with further bibliography.

[6]   Medieval Transylvania is understood here as a historical region today in Romania that formed the easternmost part of the Hungarian Kingdom in the Middle Ages.

[7]   A recently revealed fragmentary wall painting in Fântânele (*Gyulakuta*) came to my attention after the submission of this manuscript. The composition painted on the southern side of the chancel arch, facing the nave, consists of a rectangular panel featuring figures of standing saints (possibly Sts Cosmas and Damian) topped by an ogee-arched panel in the superstructure, with the representation of the Man of Sorrows standing in his tomb with the arma Christi. I thank art historian Attila Weisz and restorer Lóránd Kiss for drawing my attention to this example and providing photos of the wall painting.

[8]   FABRITIUS 2006, pp. 41–44; JENEI 2012, pp. 54–57, with references to the earlier literature.

1. Mediaș (Medgyes, Mediasch), the wall painting decoration of the eastern wall of the chapel in the so-called Tower of Mary, c. 1450–1460 (Photo: Anna Kónya)

2. Mediaș (Medgyes, Mediasch), imitation triptych on the eastern wall of the chapel, c. 1450–1460 (Photo: Anna Kónya)

Of the pendant figure on the left wing only fragments of a long dress reaching the ground survive in the lower part of the panel. This figure was most probably the Virgin Mary,[9] who would have been an obvious pendant to St John the Baptist, as in an analogous representation of the so-called *Notgottes* or Trinity Pietà in the central panel of the former high altarpiece of the Spitalkirche in Weilheim, Bavaria (c. 1470–1480).[10] Further, on the basis of analogues with representations of the related theme of the Throne of Mercy flanked by the figures of the Madonna and St John the Baptist,[11] it is plausible that the Virgin Mary was depicted here with the child Christ in her arms.[12]

The spatial relationship of the wall painting retable to the altar was more flexible than would have been expected in the case of a three-dimensional altarpiece. Presuming that the placement and the size of the medieval altar coincided with the lacuna visible today, the mural altarpiece was not attached to the altar mensa, but positioned somewhat above it, nor was it vertically aligned with the altar block (which was placed slightly to the left compared to the central axis of the eastern wall); the painter thus seems to have aimed for symmetry in the composition of the wall painting decoration of the eastern wall and the best visual effect for the illusionistic triptych.

It is interesting to observe the *trompe l'oeil* technique used to suggest an impression of depth, challenging the notion of a flat, coherent wall surface.[13] The winged altarpiece is framed by a grid of imitation tracery, where shading is used to create a spatial effect. What is more, the triptych is not simply fitted into this frame, but positioned "before" it, as a real three-dimensional object would be placed (overlaps with the architectural background can be observed in the corners), while the three panels of the triptych appear as niches shown in perspective, housing monumental, statuesque figures, again suggesting a fictitious depth behind the wall surface. One should note at the same time that the composition with an imitation carved stone frame and statue-like figures in the side panels as well as in the central shrine bears no close resemblance to a specific type of a three-dimensional retable common at the time, which may be due to the fact that winged altarpieces were not yet so widespread in the region in the middle decades of the 15th century as they came to be a few decades later.

A closer resemblance to three-dimensional retables can be observed in the wall paintings from the village parish church in Racu (*Csíkrákos*, c. 1500).[14] Here two compositions imitating winged

9   DRĂGUȚ 1979, p. 257; FABRITIUS 2006, pp. 41–42; JENEI 2012, p. 55.
10   HEBERLEIN 2010, p. 149.
11   In a South Tyrolean panel from around 1450 (Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Inv. Nr. IN 1945) and a triptych from the end of the 15th century attributed to the Master of Palanquinos (private collection, see *Sotheby's Old Master Paintings Day Sale, 04 December 2008,* Lot 152, https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2008/old-master-paintings-day-sale-l08037/lot.152.html).
12   On the hypothetical reconstruction of this figure, see KÓNYA 2023, pp. 414–417.
13   See also JENEI 2012, pp. 54–56.
14   LÁNGI, MIHÁLY 2002, pp. 18–19.

3. Racu (Csíkrákos), imitation winged altarpiece
on the southern side of the chancel arch, c. 1500
(Photo: Anna Kónya)

4. Racu (Csíkrákos), fragment of an imitation winged
altarpiece on the northern side of the chancel arch,
c. 1500 (Photo: Anna Kónya)

altarpieces survive on the eastern wall of the nave on both sides of the chancel arch, which was a common location for side altars in the late medieval period.[15] On the southern side, a winged altarpiece in a closed state was depicted with the standing figures of two female saints on the outer side of the wings (Fig. 3). The saint on the left, holding a brownish oval-shaped object, probably a loaf of bread, as an attribute, can be identified as St Elizabeth;[16] to the right, the figure of St Helen holding the Holy Cross can be seen. One can note that the frames of the panels were decorated with a rosette-shaped stencilled pattern reminiscent of the stencilled gilding on the wooden frames of contemporary winged altarpieces. The composition is crowned with a superstructure imitating a carved gable.

The fragmentary composition on the northern side of the chancel arch probably represented an altarpiece in an open state, with the upper part of the central panel and of the right wing as well as part of the superstructure surviving (Fig. 4).[17] On the right wing, the figure of St Dorothy

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15   KROESEN 2010b, pp. 95–112.
16   JENEI 2016, p. 134.
17   The fragments of drapery folds in the upper left part are from an earlier wall painting layer; see LÁNGI, MIHÁLY 2002, p. 18.

*5. Maiad (Nyomát), Crucifixion scene
on the southern side of the chancel arch,
c. 1480–1500 (Photo: Anna Kónya)*

holding a basket can be recognised; of the figure represented in the centre, only a fragment of the halo is visible. It seems likely that the Virgin Mary was depicted here, possibly with the child Jesus. On the one hand, the association of a virgin martyr such as St Dorothy with the Madonna – and possibly with another virgin martyr saint on the left wing – would have been a common iconographic formula, as can be seen in a wall painting composition serving as a retable in Poniky (*Pónik*), Slovakia,[18] or in the central shrine of the altarpiece from Jimbor (*Székelyzsombor*) in Transylvania.[19] On the other hand, the representation of the Virgin Mary would have fitted into the general pattern noted by Justin Kroesen that, from among the side altars on both sides of the chancel arch, the northern one was often dedicated to the Virgin.[20] From the territory of medieval

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18   JÉKELY 2021, pp. 307–310, with references to the earlier literature.
19   SARKADI NAGY 2012, pp. 156–158, repr. II. 55; FIREA 2016, pp. 211–214, repr. 454/2.
20   KROESEN, STEENSMA 2012, p. 17; KROESEN 2014, p. 167.

6. Maiad (Nyomát), fragment on the northern nave wall, c. 1480–1500 (Photo: Anna Kónya)

Hungary, several wall painting compositions representing the Virgin Mary placed on the northern side of the chancel arch, exemplifying a similar arrangement survive.[21]

In a small village church in Maiad, two compositions taking over some elements of the structure of winged altarpieces survive. On the southern side of the chancel arch, the wall painting, which probably served as a retable to the side altar once positioned there, is composed of a main panel showing the Crucifixion and a "predella" below, with two kneeling angels holding a chalice and a host wafer in the centre, flanked by the fragmentarily surviving figures of St Peter with a key and St Paul with a sword (Fig. 5).[22] The bipartite structure evoking the form and iconography of actual altarpieces provides a good opportunity for the vertical juxtaposition of the historical body of Christ crucified on the Cross with his sacramental body under the species of the consecrated bread and wine, suggesting the essential identity of the two.

A second, fragmentarily surviving composition on the northern nave wall, close to the chancel arch seems to imitate the carved superstructure of an altarpiece (Fig. 6). In the centre, the faint outlines of Christ on the Cross can be recognised – his wide-spread arms, his head tilted to the right, a fragment of his right leg, and the wavy line of the end of his loin-cloth – before

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[21]   Examples include representations of the Madonna in Bădeşti (*Bádok*) in Romania, in Csaroda (Hungary), in Očová (*Nagyócsa*), Kraskovo (*Karaszkó*), and Poniky (*Pónik*) in Slovakia and Horjani (*Gerény*) in Ukraine.

[22]   On this composition, see JÉKELY, KISS 2008, pp. 272–273; KÓNYA 2017, pp. 13–14.

7. Tiocu de Jos (Alsótők), the recently revealed wall paintings on the chancel arch and the side walls of the nave, probably 1519 (Photo: Anna Kónya)

a pale green coloured cross with an unusually long vertical arm. This central part is flanked by openwork tracery of vegetal scrolls, topped by leaf motifs and framed by crocket-decorated pinnacles. A somewhat comparable, although more elaborate arrangement is found in the altarpiece in Băgaciu (*Szászbogács*) dating from 1518.[23] There is no information on what the lower part of this composition looked like or whether it resembled a winged altarpiece. Its function is also not entirely clear; we can presume on the basis of its position on the northern wall that it probably did not serve as a retable to a side altar standing at the chancel arch, usually facing the east, but that it still might have formed the visual environment of such an altar.

In Tiocu de Jos (*Alsótők*), four compositions inspired by the structure, iconography and decoration of early 16th-century winged altarpieces were revealed between 2020 and 2022 on the nave side of the chancel arch and the adjoining eastern sections of the nave walls (Fig. 7).[24]

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23   SARKADI NAGY 2012, pp. 125–127, repr. II. 7; FIREA 2016, pp. 133–135, repr. 422/1.

24   On this wall painting ensemble, see my forthcoming study: Az alsótőki templom újonnan feltárt falképei, *In Situ. Műemlékvédelem a Kárpát-medencében*, 4, 2023 [2024].

*8. Tiocu de Jos (Alsótők),
the Coronation of the Virgin
on the southern side of the chancel
arch, probably 1519
(Photo: Anna Kónya)*

Originally, all fragmentarily surviving compositions probably had a tripartite structure made up of a predella, a central panel and a superstructure. Each pair of wall paintings – a wider, multi-figure narrative scene on the chancel arch and a narrower image featuring figures of standing saints on the northern resp. southern nave wall – probably together formed the decoration for the side altars which once stood each side of the chancel arch.

On the southern side of the chancel arch, the Coronation of the Virgin Mary by God the Father and Christ was depicted, topped by a superstructure evoking the carved and gilded vegetal ornaments of contemporary winged altarpieces (Fig. 8). On the adjoining southern nave wall, the fragmentary figure of *Maria in Sole* survives over a predella decorated with a volute coiled around a six-petal red rosette (Fig. 9).

*9. Tiocu de Jos (Alsótők), imitation predella on the southern nave wall,
probably 1519 (Photo: Anna Kónya)*

*10. Tiocu de Jos (Alsótők), wall painting retable
on the northern side of the chancel arch, probably
1519 (Photo: Anna Kónya)*

*11. Tiocu de Jos (Alsótők), four female saints
on the northern nave wall, probably 1519
(Photo: Anna Kónya)*

The fragmentary composition painted on the northern side of the chancel arch can hypothetically be identified as the Adoration of the Magi (Fig. 10). Below, a composition type widely found on predellas, the Man of Sorrows rising from his tomb, flanked by the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist was depicted in a field which evokes the inverted trapezoid shape of contemporary altarpiece predellas. In the centre of the superstructure, the Martyrdom of St Sebastian was painted between two triangular fields filled with vegetal decoration. On the northern wall, a fragmentary composition, divided into four panels, each containing the figure of a standing female saint survives (Fig. 11). In the upper row, the figures of Mary Magdalene and St Helen can be hypothetically identified. In the lower row below, St Barbara and probably another virgin martyr saint were depicted.

Based on an inscription on the upper decorative border of the Coronation of the Virgin (MA • 1 • [5?...] 9 •), the ensemble probably dates from 1509 or 1519; formal analogues with contemporary winged altarpieces[25] point to the latter date.

Analogues from Central Europe

Widening the geographical scope, I would like to provide a brief overview of Central European examples of wall paintings imitating winged altarpieces in more or less chronological order. Staying within the territory of medieval Hungary, but turning to medieval Upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia), two examples survive in the town of Košice (*Kassa*).

In the parish church of St Elizabeth, a composition resembling a triptych in an open state was painted probably around 1440 in the first northern side apse, with the Lamentation of Christ in the larger central panel, and two pairs of fragmentarily preserved Passion scenes on the wings (Fig. 12).[26] A fragment of a similar wall painting triptych survives on the eastern wall of the nearby chapel of St Michael with the date 1487 inscribed on the top.[27]

Another composition imitating a triptych is fragmentarily preserved on the southern side of the chancel arch in the parish church in Žip (*Zsip*, Fig. 13).[28] Its central part is almost completely

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[25] For instance, with the altarpieces from Saeş (*Segesd*, 1520–25) and Armăşeni (*Csikmenaság*, 1523); see SARKADI NAGY 2012, pp. 134–137, 238–240, repr. II. 21, II. 176, II. 178; FIREA 2016, pp. 129–132, 301–304, repr. 421/1, 497/1.

[26] RADOCSAY 1977, pp. 25, 140; DVOŘÁKOVÁ, KRÁSA, STEJSKAL 1978, pp. 105–106; *Magyarországi művészet* 1987, p. 704; TOGNER 1988, pp. 53–54; JÉKELY 2009, p. 111 (raising the possibility of a later dating, approximately 1480–1490).

[27] JÉKELY 2009, p. 111.

[28] The mural altarpiece is younger than most of the wall painting decoration of the church probably painted around 1400, its fragmentary state however does not allow a more precise dating based on stylistic traits. While the composition has been so far dated to around 1500, formal analogues with altarpieces from around 1450–60

12. Košice (Kassa), St Elizabeth's church, wall painting triptych in the first northern side apse, c. 1440 (Photo: Béla Zsolt Szakács)

13. Žíp (Zsip), wall painting triptych on the southern side of the chancel arch, second half of the 15th century (Photo: Gergely Kovács)

destroyed, but on the basis of the surviving fragments, we can surmise that an illusionistic niche with a semicircular plan may have accommodated the central figure. The two pairs of panels on the wings each contained the representation of a standing saint, of which now only St Paul holding a sword can be recognized in the lower panel of the right wing.[29] The triangular motif visible over the left wing may be an echo of the row of triangular gables appearing in a group of altarpieces in the region dating from the middle decades of the 15th century.[30]

Leaving the territory of medieval Hungary, an elaborate composition representing a winged altarpiece was painted in 1497 on the southern side of the chancel arch in the parish church in Burgusio (*Burgeis* in German) in South Tyrol (Fig. 14).[31] The figure of the Madonna crowned by two angels and surrounded by rays of sun painted in the central panel is flanked by Sts Sebastian and Zeno represented on the inner side of the open wings, while a statue-like figure of the Man of Sorrows catching his own blood flowing from the side wound into a chalice was placed in the centre of the superstructure. On the predella, the Holy Face held by two angels was represented. The illusion is enhanced by details such as the shadow of the superstructure resembling the shadow a three-dimensional object would cast if placed before a wall and lit by light coming from the southern windows.[32]

14. Burgusio (Burgeis), imitation winged altarpiece on the southern side of the chancel arch, 1497 (Photo: Anna Kónya)

(see below) suggest the possibility of a somewhat earlier dating. On the wall painting triptych and its dating, see BIATHOVÁ 1987, pp. 13–14; TOGNER 1988, pp. 118–119; KOVÁCS 2021, pp. 154, 156.

[29]   KOVÁCS 2021, p. 154.

[30]   Examples: Matejovce (*Mateóc*), c. 1450, Liptovská Mara (*Liptószentmária*), c. 1450–60.

[31]   SÖDING 2010, pp. 155–156; KROESEN 2010b, pp. 100–101; both with further bibliography.

[32]   SÖDING 2010, p. 156.

In the church of the former Cistercian monastery in Neuberg an der Mürz in Styria, a monumental triptych was painted on the western wall in 1505.[33] The composition, which is now largely covered by the organ tribune, represents the Holy Kinship in the central field and the Fourteen Holy Helpers in pairs of two as well as the Crucifixion in the smaller-sized side panels. The same master painted a triptych one year later in the chapel of the tower base in the parish church of Sankt Radegund bei Graz (1506), with the central image of the Pietà filling an ogival wall niche, flanked by the figures of Sts Andrew and Sebastian on the wings.[34] In both cases, the red colour of the imitation carved stone frames echoes the colour of the surrounding architectural elements. In the church of St Andrew in Weitensfeld im Gurktal in Carinthia, a fragmentary composition can be seen to the right of the portal on the western exterior façade, the surviving parts of which resemble a winged altarpiece in an open state with a central panel showing the martyrdom of the church's patron saint and an elaborate superstructure including a central gable panel with a three-figure Crucifixion.[35] The recently restored wall painting triptych in the Bishop's Gate porch of the Stephansdom in Vienna, painted around 1515, features St Leopold in the centre flanked by Sts Catherine and Margaret on the wings.[36]

In the Sts Peter and Paul church in Westerbuchberg in Upper Bavaria, a closed polyptych was painted in 1524 on the eastern wall of the southern aisle, with the figures of the Fourteen Holy Helpers divided between the panels of the exterior side of the wings and the stationary wings, as well as the superstructure, where an imitation statue of the Madonna is placed in the centre on a corbel, accompanied by a kneeling donor figure.[37]

The list of wall paintings representing winged altarpieces may be further expanded with compositions imitating a single element of the altarpiece structure (such as an illusionistic predella painted in 1493 in the southern altar niche of the St Michael's chapel in Taufers im Münstertal in South Tyrol[38]), and with works of art continuing the trends outlined above, but dating after the Late Gothic period (such as a wall painting triptych featuring the figures of plague saints Roch, Sebastian and Fabian in Kaindorf, Styria, probably dating from 1560).[39]

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[33]   LANC 2002, pp. 292, 296–300 (Textband), tables 388–392 (Tafelband).
[34]   LANC 2002, pp. 555–559 (Textband), table 806 (Tafelband).
[35]   I thank the restorer József Lángi for drawing my attention to this example.
[36]   RAINER 2021.
[37]   KROESEN 2010b, pp. 101.
[38]   WEINGARTNER 1948, p. 64.
[39]   I thank Christoph Tinzl for drawing my attention to this composition.

General Patterns

I am thus aware of altogether around sixteen wall painting compositions imitating the structure and decoration of Late Gothic winged retables. In terms of chronology, most of the examples date from the end of the 15th century or from the first quarter of the 16th century, corresponding to a flourishing period for the medium of winged altarpieces. Earlier representations include the wall painting triptychs in Košice (probably c. 1440) and Mediaş (c. 1450–1460). The latter composition, as I have noted, is a less close imitation of a specific retable type than most later examples; here the winged altarpiece genre is more like a visual idea which provides the starting point for the composition.

An interesting question concerns the relationship between form and function, that is to what extent wall painting compositions imitating the form of winged altarpieces actually functioned as retables. In most cases, the representations are positioned on the eastern nave wall on either side of the chancel arch or on the altar wall of a chapel, where they were likely connected to altars. It is interesting to note, however, that the format of the winged altarpiece was sometimes adapted without taking over its function, that is in the cases of compositions painted on the western wall of the nave (Neuberg an der Mürz), the exterior (Weitensfeld im Gurktal) or in other contexts where they were not associated with altars (the triptych in the Bishop's Gate porch of the Stephansdom in Vienna).

Focusing on the cases where the wall paintings probably functioned as a retable, an interesting aspect is that while an essential feature of a winged altarpiece was its variability due to its movable wings, which could be opened and closed, this feature for obvious reasons could not be reproduced in wall paintings, which could either depict an open or a closed state. In most cases an open state was captured, probably as it was more convenient to place the main iconographic theme representing the titulus of the altar in a larger-sized central panel, corresponding to the open state. As an exception, themes displaying an even number of figures such as the Fourteen Holy Helpers in Westerbuchberg or any pair of saints (like Sts Elizabeth and Helen in Racu), could be best arranged in a composition imitating a closed altarpiece.

In Racu, there is a unique solution, with one of the two imitated winged altarpieces surviving on both sides of the chancel arch depicted in an open and the other in a closed state. The simultaneous representation of the two states might have been a visual strategy to suggest the variability of the imitated object in the static medium of wall painting. The fragmentary composition on the northern nave wall in Tiocu de Jos, featuring standing figures of female saints in four compartments, might originally have also evoked in its structure and iconography the outer panels of contemporary winged altarpieces visible in a closed state, as opposed to an open state represented on the adjacent composition on the northern side of the chancel arch.

Another limitation inherent in the medium of wall painting was that unlike their three-dimensional counterparts, wall painting retables had to fit the narrow wall surfaces of the piers

of the chancel arch or the piers dividing the aisles, where side altars were usually located, which enabled only a relatively small-scale representation of the main theme in the central panel when a winged altarpiece in an open state was depicted. One possible way to overcome this constraint was to represent only the vertical elements of the winged altarpiece structure on these narrow surfaces, as in Maiad (predella and central panel) and Tiocu de Jos (predella, central panel and superstructure).

In conclusion, the examples presented above demonstrate different ways in which the structure, decoration, and iconography of winged altarpieces were imitated in the medium of wall painting. Despite its limitations, the adaptation of the format provided an eye-catching means of altar decoration as well as an opportunity for ingenious solutions, serving well the ambition prevalent in the Late Gothic period to illusionistically extend the wall painting's flat surface into a three-dimensional space.[40]

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Anna Kónya

Podobe, liturgija in iluzionizem
Poznogotske stenske slikarije, posnemajoče krilne oltarje

Povzetek

V poznem srednjem veku je stensko slikarstvo s svojimi iluzionističnimi učinki pogosto služilo posnemanju kosov liturgične opreme ali arhitekturnih elementov. To je bil hkrati privlačen in cenovno ugoden način, kako vizualno poudariti pomembne dele cerkvenih notranjščin. Zlasti v naslikanih oltarjih je velikokrat najti odmeve sodobnih tridimenzionalnih retablov. Posnemanje krilnih oltarnih nastavkov v stenskem slikarstvu, ki je bilo razširjeno od okoli sredine 15. stoletja dalje, predstavlja mikaven predmet raziskovanja, ki doslej še ni bil sistematično obdelan. Članek, ki se osredotoča predvsem na primerke iz srednjeveške Transilvanije, v analizo pa pritegne tudi analogije iz drugih delov srednjeveškega ogrskega kraljestva ter z Južne Tirolske, s Štajerske, iz Spodnje Avstrije in z Bavarske, preučuje, kako je bil tridimenzionalni in variabilni format krilnega oltarnega nastavka prenesen v medij stenskega slikarstva in zanj prilagojen ter kakšne so bile možnosti in omejitve takšnih prilagoditev.

The Two Mediaeval Churches of Camporosso in Valcanale, Italy

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Around the year 1007, the village of Camporosso,[1] along with the rest of the Canale Valley,[2] became the property of the bishops of the newly-founded Diocese of Bamberg thanks to its founder, Emperor Henry II. Sometime after this, it also became the local ecclesiastical centre.[3] Its main church, dedicated to St Giles (Sant'Egidio), was, according to written sources, built by Otto I, bishop of Bamberg, who ruled between 1106 and 1139, and was elevated to the status of mother church for the entire Canale Valley.[4] Today, the village has two churches; therefore, it also has two patron saints – St Giles and St Dorothy. The small church of Saint Dorothy is located on a steep hill in the west, the traditionally older part of the village (Fig. 1), while the much bigger church of Saint

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[1]   Its full name is Camporosso in Valcanale. The village is called Žabnice in Slovene, Saifnitz in German, and Cjamparos in Friulian.

[2]   It is called Valcanale in Italian, Kanalska dolina in Slovene, Kanaltal in German, and Val Cjanâl in Friulian. The Valley is located in the tri-border area between Italy, Austria, and Slovenia. Today, the entire valley belongs to Italy, but in the Mediaeval period, it was formally a part of the Duchy of Carinthia and predominantly Slavic in terms of population. Cf. HÖFLER 2016, pp. 117–118.

[3]   The nearby and later dominant town of Tarvisio only came into existence in the 14th century. It was first mentioned in 1310 (RESMAN 1999, p. 316). Only in 1399 were the Friulian inhabitants of Tarvisio allowed to build their own church. Up to that point, their parish church was still the Camporosso mother church of St Giles. Cf. DOMENIG 2014, p. 29; HÖFLER 2016, p. 118.

[4]   The year when the Camporosso parish was established is not known. From an ecclesical perspective, its territory originally belonged to the mother parish of St Johann unter dem Dobratsch in the Gail Valley. However, probably in the 13th century it was assigned to the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, a branch of the Roman Hospital of Santo Spirito in Saxia founded in Gemona. At that time, the church in Camporosso must have already been a parish church. Cf. HÖFLER 2016, p. 118. It is unlikely that the parish was founded by the Bamberg bishop Otto I, who built the church sometime between 1106–1139, as often claimed, because he was only the owner of the domain, while the church rights belonged to the Patriarch of Aquileia and he alone could establish a parish.
Despite the exact year of the founding of the mother parish being unknown, it is often incorrectly dated to 1106. Cf. MENIS 1991, p. 51; PASCHINGER 1995; BUFON 2001.

1. Camporosso in Valcanale, the church of St Dorothy, view from the north (Photo: Katarina Richter)

2. Camporosso in Valcanale, the church of St Giles, view from the east (Photo: Katarina Richter)

3. Camporosso in Valcanale, the interior of the church of St Giles including two frescoes by Thomas of Villach (Photo: Katarina Richter)

Giles lies in the northeast part (Fig. 2).[5] The architecture of both churches is typically Carinthian Gothic because the entire valley was part of the Duchy of Carinthia in mediaeval times.[6]

The parish church of St Giles is surrounded by a graveyard. The rather large mid-15th-century building[7] has a central nave, a typical Gothic presbytery (Fig. 3) with external buttresses, and a Late Gothic complex ribbed vault. Its two side naves are a 17th-century addition.[8] Its patron saint matches that of the original mother parish from the 12th century, while the age of the actual church building does not. The much smaller and simpler church of St Dorothy consists of a porch, a simple and slender pointed-arch-shaped portal, a single nave with a flat plastered ceiling and a Gothic

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[5] The west part of the village, also known as Filja, is allegedly named after its Roman predecessor (from the Latin word villa). The east part of the village is called Vesa. Cf. *Kunst-Topographie* 1889, p. 302; GLIHA KOMAC 2014, p. 31.

[6] The entire valley is a distinctly Carinthian area in terms of Mediaeval artistic influences. Not only architecture but other artworks and particularly frescoes have been preserved in several churches as well. The most widely known Mediaeval artwork in the valley is the high-quality winged altarpiece from the village of Pontebba, produced by the Villach Carving Workshop in 1517. Cf. DEMUS 1991, pp. 330–343; DEMUS 1995, p. 168; HÖFLER 1998, pp. 153–161.

[7] A record of the consecration of the church of St Giles has been preserved (BERGAMINI 1991, p. 435): /…/ *1471 il vescovo di Ferentillo potè solennente consacrare la nuova chiesa in villa Sapniz de Camporubeo cum tribus in ea altaribus et cimiterio /…/.*

[8] CEVC 2001.

4. Camporosso in Valcanale, the church of St Dorothy, the presbytery interior (Photo: Katarina Richter)

5. Camporosso in Valcanale, the church of St Dorothy, the presbytery exterior (Photo: Katarina Richter)

presbytery. There is also a later-built bell tower next to it with a sacristy on the ground floor. A thick triumphal arch wall with a pointed arch-shaped opening separates the nave from the presbytery, which has simple ribbed vaulting and four massive buttresses supporting its walls from the outside (Figs. 4–5). The church has been modified and its walls painted over several times, but its original form is still clearly recognisable. The church of St Dorothy is sometimes dated to the 11th or 12th century, which roughly corresponds to the founding of the mother parish, but no tangible evidence for this claim is available.[9]

In the accessible sources, there is considerable confusion regarding the Camporosso churches, sometimes even about the basic distinction between the two of them.[10] In addition, the church

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[9]   This confusion is profound, and even on the fairly new information plaque outside the church from 2021 or 2022, there are two conflicting pieces of information regarding the church's origin, mentioning both the 11th and the 14th centuries as the possible centuries of construction.

[10]   In MIGGLAUTSCH 1995, p. 206, the patronages of the Camporosso churches are listed the wrong way round and as a result the buildings are incorrectly dated. While the church of St Dorothy was supposedly built in

of St Dorothy is often not even mentioned. Some sources describe it superficially, but the questions of its age and function are never discussed or answered.[11] However, the available sources are rarely backed up by professional opinions, and in some cases, no sources are cited at all. The majority of the uncited information most likely comes from the "Saifnitz" entry of the *Kunst-Topographie des Herzogthums Kärnten* from 1889.[12] Most texts only provide a few basic facts regarding the church of St Giles, while the smaller and at first sight much less interesting church of St Dorothy is barely mentioned. It appears that the authors of some of the older sources might not even have been aware of the existence of two churches in Camporosso, and simply attributed all the available data to the one they knew about – the parish church of St Giles. However, it is difficult to assign criticism in this situation due to the lack of academic attention given to both buildings, and particularly to the church of St Dorothy. Therefore, we will shift our focus to it in order to explore its potential significance further.

After all the confusion regarding the available data, the question that arises is "which church is which?" What is the relationship between the two church buildings and what is the significance of the smaller one? Is there a chance that the modern-day St Dorothy is in fact the original parish church,[13] as is claimed in some sources and might be a possibility according to the Austrian art historian Otto Demus?[14] The answer is no. The claim was never supported by reliable evidence but only by more circumstantial arguments such as, for instance, that the smaller church resides in the older part of the village and is believed to be considerably older than the church

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the 16th century, the seat of the parish is correctly attributed to the church of St Giles. The church of St Giles is more correctly dated to the 12th century as the seat of the mother parish in PASCHINGER 1995, p. 52. In the descriptions on the website of Le Chiese delle Diocesi Italiane (http://www.chieseitaliane.chiesacattolica.it/chieseitaliane/index.jsp), both Camporosso churches are indicated as possible locations of the original mother parish church, which, of course, can only apply to one of them. There is also a record (https://www.dom.it/sv-doroteja-v-zabnicah_santa-dorotea-a-camporosso/) that says that the church of St Dorothy was enlarged between the 15th and 17th centuries, which is unlikely as the small building would originally have been even smaller than it is today. However, the description is applicable to the side naves of the church of St Giles. Some of the accessible sources regarding the Camporosso churches are problematic because they do not cite their sources of information, which in turn makes them less reliable. In some cases, there is no confusion, and the churches and their ages appear to be more accurately discernible (e.g. DEMUS 1995).

[11] Cf. BERGAMINI 1991, p. 436. The church is not mentioned in Mateja Poljšak's diploma thesis (POLJŠAK 1997), which includes the Late Gothic churches in the area of the Canale Valley among other areas. St Dorothy was most likely not considered a Late Gothic building.

[12] *Kunst-Topographie* 1889, pp. 302–304.

[13] If true, this claim would mean that a change of patronage would have to have taken place at some point in the Middle Ages. Such an occurrence is not unheard of. Regarding the question of patron saints, Janez Höfler (HÖFLER 2016, p. 373; translated by Katarina Richter), wrote the following: "When researching the history of patronages, we must be aware that the documented patronage of a church, if it is a fairly late one, is not necessarily its original patronage. However, researchers of this topic warn against hasty conclusions. Nevertheless, it appears that patronages did not change very often in the Middle Ages."

[14] DEMUS 1995, p. 172.

of St Giles.[15] The modern-day situation regarding the church's location in the older part of the settlement is hardly relevant as today both churches are situated inside the village. Furthermore, a mother church was not tied to a single settlement as a mother parish commonly covered an extensive territory and belonged to the patriarch. It makes sense that such a church would have originally been positioned outside a settlement.[16] For example, the cadastral map of the First Military Survey of the Habsburg Empire from the 18th century[17] clearly shows that both Camporosso churches were even at that time still located outside the village or at best at its periphery, and that in the following centuries the village spread closer to them. Additionally, a notable limitation of the church of St Dorothy is the lack of a cemetery in its vicinity. In mediaeval times, a (mother) parish church had baptismal and funeral rights, and therefore its own cemetery. In our case, the cemetery surrounds the Church of St Giles and not that of St Dorothy. Thus, it is evident that the founding church of the mother parish was indeed a predecessor of the current church of St Giles.[18]

The Camporosso parish has been dedicated to the same saint from the very beginning. This is a documented fact[19] and comes as no surprise as St Giles was already an established church patron in the Slovene lands in the 12th century, and it was Otto I,[20] bishop of Bamberg, who built several churches dedicated to this very saint.[21] The Camporosso church of St Giles was not built in the mid-15th century, but merely rebuilt due to the poor condition of its predecessor, and then consecrated in 1471.[22] On the other hand, more tangible information regarding the origins of the church of St Dorothy has yet to be found.

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[15]   One source even claims that the foundations of the church of St Dorothy were laid in 1007 or 1017, but no original source is provided for this information. See GLIHA KOMAC 2014, p. 31.

[16]   The original positioning of mother churches outside settlements does not come as a surprise. The fact that mother churches covered extensive and at the time of their establishment often still scarcely populated or uninhabited areas, is only starting to gain importance. Cf. HÖFLER 2015, p. 12.

[17]   The First Military Survey of the Habsburg Empire was carried out between 1763 and 1786. Several Habsburg cadastral and military maps are available at arcanum.com (https://maps.arcanum.com/en/map/firstsurvey-inner-austria/?bbox=1504729.1214417631%2C5861928.52089057%2C1507915.872900063%2C5862995.817697269&map-list=1&layers=138).

[18]   *Stato personale* 1977, p. 199; BURBA 1998, pp. 16–17.

[19]   The following information regarding the founding of the mother parish is provided in HÖFLER 2016, p. 118: /…/ *in montanis Chanol 2 capellas, unam in honorem sancte Gertrudis Virginis et alteram in honore sancti Egidii /…/.*

[20]   This information might prove relevant because the Canale Valley area, along with the nearby Carinthian town of Villach, was part of the domain of the Bishops of Bamberg at that time. Cf. GRAFENAUER 1990, p. 394.

[21]   MENIS 1991, p. 51; HÖFLER 2016, pp. 118, 413–414.

[22]   The year of consecration matches the creation time of two frescoes on the north nave wall, right next to the presbytery. The scenes of the *Flagellation* and the *Crucifixion of Christ* were painted by Thomas of Villach, the most prominent Carinthian fresco painter of the late 15th century. Both scenes match his most famous fresco cycle in the church of St Andrew in nearby Thörl (Carinthia) quite well. Cf. BERGAMINI 2014, p. 92; RICHTER 2021–2022, p. 122.

What, then, is the role and age of the Church of St Dorothy? According to a 16th-century census, there were four parishes in the Canale Valley at the time, and three sacral buildings are listed in the village and parish of Camporosso – the church of St Giles, the sanctuary on the peak of Monte Lussari, and the church of St Dorothy.[23] In contrast to the other two churches, the significance of the small church of St Dorothy continued to diminish throughout the centuries. Records of several canonical visitations to the Camporosso parish between 1751–1777[24] attest that St Dorothy had seen better days. While most of these reports diligently describe the other two churches in the Camporosso parish – St Giles as the parish church and the Monte Lussari one as a notable pilgrimage site – the church of St Dorothy is hardly mentioned[25] or omitted entirely. Regardless of the reasons for this lack of information, it still hints at the insignificance of the small church. One record, however, is somewhat longer and provides the following description: "Filialis S[anctae] Dorotheae V[irginis et] M[artyris] ut dicitur cons[ecrata] h[a]bet aras 3, 1 h[uius]. t[ituli]., 2 B[eatae] V[irginis], 3 s[ancti] Wolfgangi, deest ubique cerata, arae miserae et misere instructae, sacristia modica, unicum h[a]bet calicem, paramenta 4, albas 3, campanas 2 coemeterium nullum, dotem nullam, nisi forte cum dote matricis confusam."[26] The text describes the altars of the church as "miserae et misere instructae," or miserable and poorly equipped. The church had in fact been richly endowed, but its dowry was taken over by the parish church.

The rather scarce mentions, or complete lack thereof, of the church of St Dorothy mirror the contemporary lack of interest in the church. However, this has changed as both the interior and exterior of the inconspicuous church were fairly recently stripped of their coats of yellow paint,[27] revealing several layers of mediaeval frescoes. They adorn the north and west walls of the nave (Fig. 6) and there are indications that the wall paintings also extended to the south nave wall. Now that their uncovering and conservation process has been completed,[28] it has at last been possible for them to be properly studied, dated and attributed. The north wall is adorned with the scenes of *The Journey of the Magi* along with the *Adoration of the Magi*, while the scenes painted on the east wall include Biblical scenes and images of saints, including the *Martyrdom of St Acacius*. This excellent and rather well-preserved fresco cycle was undoubtedly painted by

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[23]   MENIS 1991, p. 42.

[24]   Historical Archive of the Archdiocesan Curia, Gorizia, Atti delle visite pastorali di Carlo Michele d'Attems (1751–1777).

[25]   For example, one of the descriptions only acknowledges the church's existence and states that it has three altars. In: Historical Archive of the Archdiocesan Curia, Gorizia, Atti delle visite pastorali di Carlo Michele d'Attems, 16 (1762), fol. 55v.

[26]   Historical Archive of the Archdiocesan Curia, Gorizia, Atti delle visite pastorali di Carlo Michele d'Attems, 6 (1751), p. 149.

[27]   The outside of the church was renovated in 2019 and the inside in the periods of 2018–2019 and 2020–2021. Information provided by fresco restorer Angela Cecon.

[28]   The frescoes were found in 2013 but not uncovered immediately.

the Older Villach Painting Workshop of Master Friedrich of Villach,[29] the major exponent of fresco painting in Carinthia of his time.[30] The frescoes were created in the mid-15th century, roughly the same period as the Workshop's other most extensive fresco cycles, such as the one in St Gandolf (Carinthia, Austria).

The fresco layer painted by Master Friedrich and his workshop is not the only one preserved inside the church. There are at least two more, which are even older. On the north nave wall, a partially preserved section of a fresco with its decorative border is visible just below the edge of the *Magi* scenes. Although not easily discernible, it likely depicts another scene portraying the *Martydrom of St Acacius*. Fortunately, this layer is dated as well – to 1401. On the south side of the east nave wall, a section of the "Villach" fresco layer is missing, revealing an even older scene, a fine figure of St Florian.[31]

6. Camporosso in Valcanale, the church of St Dorothy, view of the 15th century wall paintings from the choir loft (Photo: Katarina Richter)

The multiple fresco layers which include works of considerable quality provide us with some new though circumstantial evidence. It is intriguing that two of these layers – the one from 1401 and Master Friedrich's cycle – were painted within the span of just a few decades. At the time, a fresco cycle produced by Friedrich of Villach himself was likely the best that money could buy locally and thus represented the epitome of artistic investment in this part of Carinthia. Circumstances such as these are more likely to be associated with a prominent parish church, such as St Giles, or a significant pilgrimage site, such as the one on Monte Lussari, rather than in an insignificant filial church. As the church of St Dorothy was neither, and considering its lack of

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[29]   Master Friedrich was an accomplished painter and a representative of the Late Soft Style. He was active in the middle of the 15th century. Cf. HÖFLER 1981–1982.

[30]   The medieval wall paintings in the Camporosso church of St Dorothy were described, attributed and dated for the first time in RICHTER 2021–2022.

[31]   A figure of an unidentifiable bishop has been uncovered on one of the presbytery walls. In terms of style it belongs to the same layer of wall paintings as the depiction of St Florian. Cf. RICHTER 2021–2022, pp. 126–128.

prominence in later centuries, we can deduce that it must have had a prosperous patron in the late Middle Ages. Although his identity remains unknown, some clues regarding the patron's status and the church's age can be discerned from the building itself.

A very important clue may be the choice of St Dorothy as the church's patron saint. On examining Janez Höfler's book *On the First Churches and Parishes in the Slovene Lands*,[32] we can see that, according to the available evidence, church patron saints in these lands up to and including the 13th century were more often than not male. Practically the only exception were churches, dedicated to Mary, and the late Middle Ages, especially from the second half of the 14th century onward, is precisely the period when St Dorothy was a particularly popular saint.[33]

The church was most likely connected to a member of the clergy. Although St Dorothy is not typically regarded as a patroness of the clergy, some indications have been found and a possible connection established, once again by Janez Höfler. He noted St Dorothy's presence in some other (otherwise unconnected) locations with depictions of clergy members, more precisely canons, praying directly to the saint or having a basket, the attribute of St Dorothy, painted in their coat of arms. Two such examples can be seen in frescoes inside the pilgrimage church at Ptujska Gora, Slovenia (painted in 1424–1426) and in the cloister of Brixen cathedral, Italy (painted around 1410–1420).[34]

There are indirect clues that would appear to validate such an interpretation in the case of Camporosso as well. The fresco cycle painted by Master Friedrich of Villach is unfortunately not preserved in its entirety and the potential original presence of any depictions of a canon, a basket or St Dorothy remains unknown. However, there is a curious detail in the scene that shows the motif of Mary, Virgin of Mercy. Although the scene is not preserved in its entirety, the people kneeling whom Mary is providing shelter for under her cloak clearly represent a specific homogeneous group. Clad uniformly in white, they could be identified as members of the clergy.

For one last bit of information, we must once again return to the 18th century visitations of the parish. One record relays the following information regarding the church: "Altera Filialis Ecclesia S. Dorotheae V. et M. in colle Domui canonico vicino."[35] It provides evidence that a canon's house stood in the vicinity of the church at the time, leading us to speculate that this situation may date back to the Middle Ages, which would support the claim that the church of St Dorothy was the establishment of some church dignitary at the time.

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[32] HÖFLER 2016; title translated by Katarina Richter.

[33] The cult of saints was a key part of Christianity in medieval times and St Dorothy belongs to a rather distinct group of saints. She is one of the Virgines Capitales along with St Barbara, St Catherine, and St Margaret. In mediaeval times, these Virgin Martyrs were far more widely known and venerated than they are today. While their cult was strongest in central Europe and the Germanic lands, St Dorothy was immensely popular on her own as well. See WEED 2010, pp. 1066, 1072.

[34] The suggested connection between St Dorothy and canons is further discussed in HÖFLER 2011, pp. 150–153.

[35] Historical Archive of the Archdiocesan Curia, Gorizia, Atti delle visite pastorali di Carlo Michele d'Attems, 23 (1769), p. 306.

The presence of frescoes of rather high quality painted by Master Friedrich and his Older Villach Workshop definitely puts the church of St Dorothy on the map. The frescoes themselves provide us with the currently most precise clue regarding the identity of the patron and the age of the actual church building. The fresco layer painted in 1401 is only the second oldest, and the oldest visible layer of frescoes, the one featuring the image of St Florian, suggests that the church must have been built at the latest in the 14ᵗʰ century. The church of St Dorothy in Camporosso was thus most likely built as an ex-voto establishment with significant financial resources at its disposal during the High Middle Ages.

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Srednjeveški cerkvi v Žabnicah (Camporosso in Valcanale)

Povzetek

Žabnice so vas v danes italijanski Kanalski dolini, ki je v srednjem veku formalno v celoti pripadala vojvodini Koroški, etnično pa je bila pretežno slovenska. Tako ni presenetljivo, da je dolina, kar zadeva srednjeveško umetnost, območje z močnimi koroškimi vplivi. Danes je najpomembnejši kraj v Kanalski dolini mesto Trbiž, pred njegovim nastankom pa so bile najpomembnejše Žabnice, ki so bile s cerkvijo sv. Egidija cerkveno središče celotne Kanalske doline.

V vasi stojita dve cerkvi. Manjša in preprosta cerkev sv. Doroteje stoji na griču nad zahodnim delom vasi, večja župnijska cerkev sv. Egidija pa v vzhodnem delu. Glede starosti prve nimamo zanesljivih podatkov, patrocinij druge pa se ujema s patrocinijem ustanovne cerkve pražupnije iz 12. stoletja, medtem ko je sama zgradba nastala v 15. stoletju. V dostopni literaturi je glede žabniških cerkva precej zmede. Mestoma se celo zdi, da se pisci niso dobro zavedali obstoja dveh cerkva v vasi in so vse obstoječe podatke pripisali cerkvi sv. Egidija, cerkev sv. Doroteje pa je pogosto komaj omenjena ali pa kar izpuščena. Nerazjasnjeno ostaja predvsem vprašanje njene resnične starosti in funkcije.

Župnijska cerkev v Žabnicah, naslednica prvotne cerkve iz zgodnjega 12. stoletja, je v jedru poznosrednjeveška zgradba. Delne odgovore glede cerkve sv. Doroteje ponuja nedavno odkritje več plasti srednjeveških stenskih poslikav, med katerimi je tudi kvalitetno delo delavnice mojstra Friderika Beljaškega iz sredine 15. stoletja. Kvaliteta poslikav namiguje, da cerkev v srednjem veku ni bila le nepomembna podružnica, ampak je bila dobro podprta s strani neznanega naročnika, ki je verjetno prihajal iz duhovniških vrst, kar potrjujejo tudi vse oprijemljivejše povezave kanonikov oziroma korarjev s sv. Dorotejo kot njihovo zavetnico.

Slovenian Frescoes at Yugoslav Medieval Art Exhibitions during the 1950s

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The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia sent art exhibitions abroad as part of formalised cultural exchange programmes, which played a vital role in cultural diplomacy and the country's positioning in the international arena.[1] One of the most important exhibition projects and simultaneously the first such presentation of Yugoslavia in the West after World War II was the exhibition Yugoslav Medieval Art (*L'art médiéval yougoslave*), which opened in Paris in 1950. Over the next decade, a series of smaller spin-off exhibitions of "Yugoslav"[2] frescoes followed in some of the most notable Western European art centres. All of these exhibitions also presented artworks from the territory of Slovenia – mostly copies of Gothic frescoes created for this very purpose – to foreign audiences.

The exhibitions in question raise numerous research questions, including their organisation, concept, reception, role in cultural diplomacy, and their impact on the development of medieval studies and (contemporary) visual arts. So far, researchers have only analysed Miroslav Krleža's introduction to the Paris exhibition in the context of developing the concept of Yugoslav culture and art,[3] while all other questions remain open. The present chapter therefore focuses on a few crucial foundations for further research, specifically examining exhibitions that included

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[1] On the state's cultural diplomacy, see DOKNIĆ 2013.

[2] Because Yugoslavia did not exist at the time, the use of the adjective "Yugoslav" to describe phenomena related to the Middle Ages is somewhat problematic. Yugoslavia brought together nations with very varied and dissimilar artistic and cultural pasts, and most of its republics sought to preserve the national character of their own heritage, rather than accept the imposed unification of the Yugoslav cultural space. In the present discussion, it is therefore used with appropriate caution and only when referring to the names of relevant exhibitions.

[3] ZIMMERMANN 2010, pp. 174–176; ZIMMERMANN 2016, pp. 473–484; BAGO 2021, pp. 285–293. See also the recording of Ivana Bago's lecture "Yugoslav Fanonism in Three (Exhibitionary) Acts: 1950/1972/1989" at the seminar titled *Art Exhibiting in Slovenia, from the Early 19th Century to Today*, organised by the Department of Art History of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and the Igor Zabel Association, 24 May 2021 (https://igorzabel.org/en/news/2021/Ivana-Bago-Fanonism).

artworks from Slovenia. Drawing mainly on the sources from the fonds of the Federal Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in the Archives of Yugoslavia, the Heritage Information and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Archives of France, and Archive of the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade,[4] it focuses on the aspects that are most relevant for understanding the inclusion of Slovenian frescoes into the Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions. It provides insight into the project of copying medieval frescoes in post-war Slovenia; presents the Paris exhibition in detail from the viewpoint of its organisation, conception, and execution; identifies the exhibitions of Yugoslav medieval frescoes that included Slovenian works; and, by analysing the media responses to them, evaluates the place of Slovenian frescoes in the projects under consideration. Due to the extensive scope of the topic, the wider reception of the exhibitions is only presented in broad terms and will remain a subject for further research.

The Copying of Medieval Frescoes in Slovenia

The first serious initiatives to copy frescoes from the territory of Slovenia date back to the interwar period, though they did not yield any concrete results at the time. They were limited to attempts by Matej Sternen, who created a few copies in the old parish church of St Oswald in Zgornje Jezersko during the 1920s.[5] The situation changed after World War II when, in 1947, the first official initiative to start systematically copying frescoes came from Belgrade, specifically from the Ministry of Education and the Committee for Culture and Art of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.[6] This was a state project financed with extraordinary loans,[7] and it was mainly inspired by the special, high-profile collection of medieval fresco copies (the so-called *Musée de la Fresque*), which had opened in 1937 at the French Monuments Museum (*Musée des Monuments français*) in Paris under the leadership of its director Paul Deschamps (1888–1974) to enrich the existing collection of architectural sculpture casts.[8] The collection had played a prominent role in the surge of interest in French medieval mural painting. Following the French model, the intention was to assemble a similar collection in Yugoslavia, which would "allow for the establishment of a fresco museum

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[4]   I would like to thank Mr Bojan Popović from the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade for his generous assistance with the research and for providing access to the relevant documents.

[5]   JENKO 2007, pp. 20, 47. The author also briefly covers the project of copying medieval frescos for the Paris exhibition; see pp. 23, 25.

[6]   Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Heritage Information and Documentation Centre, Ljubljana (INDOC Centre), Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk), No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Škofja Loka, 27 November 1947.

[7]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, Izredni kredit za kopiranje fresk, 14 December 1948.

[8]   DESCHAMPS 1945; FINANCE 2013. On Deschamps and his work, see THIBOULT 1975.

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and facilitate the organisation of exhibitions abroad."[9] The project achieved both goals: in 1953, the Gallery of Frescoes was opened in Belgrade,[10] while the copies were exhibited abroad several times, most notably at the great exhibition of Yugoslav Medieval Art in Paris in 1950. The exhibition's concept kept changing throughout the initial post-war years, and at least from 1947 onwards, the intention was to also include works from the territory of Slovenia.[11]

In Slovenia, the copying of the frescoes was carried out under the auspices of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the People's Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana, which, as early as November 1947, invited a few selected painters to take part in the project. The archival sources list Marij Pregelj, Nikolaj Omerza, Lojze Kogovšek, Miha Maleš, Maksim Sedej, and Riko Debenjak.[12] The intention was to exhibit the copies as early as 1948, but it was not yet determined where. Therefore, the project should have started immediately, and the murals should have also been copied during the winter.[13] However, due to the lack of time for organisation, adverse weather conditions, and shortage of painting and technical materials, the works – except for a few field visits and the first attempts at copying – were delayed until the following spring.[14]

[9]   A letter from Vladimir Ribnikar to the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, 8 June 1948 (reproduced in POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 24).

[10]   About the creation of the gallery, see POPOVIĆ 2022, pp. 33–40.

[11]   According to the initial plans from 1947, the copies were to be included in the Federal Exhibition of Mural Paintings in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk), No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Škofja Loka, 27 November 1947). Later plans propose to present them at the exhibition "Twelve Centuries of the Civilisation of the South Slavic Peoples" on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb in 1948 (Pripreme 1947). The account of events is outlined somewhat differently in Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade (AY), 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 2: In 1948, an idea allegedly circulated to organise a Paris exhibition of Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, which would be copied by the French. At the beginning of 1949, the concept was extended to also include frescoes from Slovenia and Croatia, as well as sculptures and architecture. On 28 February, a two-day conference was organised to refine the concept. The initial intention was to open the exhibition on 15 September 1949 (Archives nationales de France, Pierrefitte (NAF), 20150160/3, Fresques yougoslaves, Le conservateur du Musée des Monuments français à Monsieur le Directeur des Musées de France, 13 January 1949). However, due to time constraints, it was postponed, first to February and later to March 1950 (AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 5).

[12]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk), No. 280, 1947. Later, the frescoes were also copied by numerous other Slovenian artists, for a complete list of authors of those kept at the National Gallery in Ljubljana, see JENKO 2007, pp. 123–140, for a list of those kept at the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade, see POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 323.

[13]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk), No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Škofja Loka, 27 November 1947. The plan for the Škofja Loka District People's Committee included the following locations: Suha, Križna Gora, Godešič, Gosteče, and Crngrob.

[14]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk (pozivi zaradi gotskih fresk), No. 280, 1947, a letter from Fran Šijanec to OLO Križna Gora near Škofja Loka, 15 December 1947.

In April 1948, a second, more urgent order came from the Committee for Culture and Art of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, requesting that the systematic copying of frescoes and architectural sculpture begin in all Yugoslav republics as soon as the weather allowed.[15] Simultaneously, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the People's Republic of Slovenia organised a competition and invited all members of the Association of Visual Artists to participate in the creation of trial copies.[16] The jury, consisting of the Institute Director Fran Šijanec, France Stele, Gojmir Anton Kos, and Matej Sternen, selected two teams of artists. In May, they started systematically copying the frescoes following the work plan drawn up by France Stele.[17] The first two work sites were in Prilesje near Kanal ob Soči and Suha just outside Škofja Loka, while in the summer, works also began in Križna Gora and the Chapel of St Martin in Svete gore near the river Sotla.[18] While the payment depended on the quality of the final product, the working conditions were difficult: the artists working on the copies complained about inappropriate accommodation, food supply problems, and poor weather conditions due to the rainy summer.[19]

In the field, the artists worked in accordance with the written instructions of Jaroslav Kratina (1893–1973), one of the most experienced fresco copyists in Yugoslavia.[20] Kratina provided detailed written instructions regarding the preparation of the materials, the priming process, and other relevant technical instructions for making copies using the tempera technique. To teach copying to as many artists as possible, each group was also assigned a student from the Academy of Fine Arts, who could then pass on the acquired knowledge and experience to their peers.[21] One of the project's vital goals was also to offer art and architecture students the opportunity to

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[15]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, a letter from Vlado Madjarić to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 1 April 1948.

[16]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, Kopiranje fresk, natečaj, 10 April 1948.

[17]   Stele selected the locations and specified the copying sequence; see INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, a letter from Vlado Madjarić to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 1 April 1948; France Stele, Seznam fresk, ki bi prišle v poštev za kopiranje, 21 November 1947.

[18]   In Prilesje near Kanal ob Soči, the works were overseen by Riko Debenjak, assisted by Maksim Sedej and Mirko Kujačić. Meanwhile, in Suha near Škofja Loka, the copying was led by Rajko Slapernik, assisted by Karel Jakob and Ivan Čargo, though the latter was soon replaced by Aleksandra Ivanc due to – according to the Commission – the insufficient quality of his work. In the summer, the copying also began in Križna Gora (Tine Gorjup, later joined by Maksim Sedej) and in the Chapel of St Martin in Svete gore near the river Sotla, where Fran Stiplovšek worked; see INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, Fran Šijanec, Poročilo o kopiranju fresk, 10 July 1948; cf. VELEPIČ 1949.

[19]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, Ciril Velepič, Poročilo o kopiranju fresk v LR Sloveniji v letu 1949, 1 October 1949.

[20]   INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, Miha Maleš, Snemanje starih fresk po navodilu prof. beograjske umetniške akademije Jaroslava Kratine, 2 April 1948; additional instructions: INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, Rajko Slapernik, Dodatek k navodilu profesorja Kratine za pripravo materjala, ki ga bomo rabili pri kopiranju fresk, 10 April 1948.

[21]   POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 322.

study mural painting directly.[22] This was particularly important in the first post-war years because of the notable increase in commissions for murals in public spaces, which the local artists (except church fresco painters) had little experience with.[23]

At the suggestion of the Yugoslav diplomatic representation in France, nine experienced experts from France were invited to Serbia during the summers of 1948 and 1949 to teach the local artists the approach they used to make copies for the *Musée de la Fresque*.[24] The technique in question involved using the so-called *Stic B*,[25] a coating applied in two layers to a finely woven canvas to capture the structure of the original base, including the defects and damage. These bases would then be painted on using a casein emulsion. The process resulted in high-quality copies with convincing colours that could also be easily transported in rolls. A few promising individuals from each republic were selected for the training, who would then share the newly acquired knowledge with their colleagues back home.[26] Slovenia was represented by Marijan Tršar, who described his experience with copying frescoes at the Sopoćani Monastery in 1948 in his published diary.[27] He underlined the aspiration to imitate the very process of creating medieval frescoes rather than just their actual appearance as a crucial advantage of the French approach to copying. The French emphasised the integrity of the brush strokes and strived to reproduce them as faithfully as possible during the copying process. Instead of painting the damage on the fly, as was the practice in Yugoslavia, the French would usually not add "damage" to the copies until the end, when they erased the painted strokes in selected places. Their means of achieving the "faded" look of finished, dried paintings, characteristic of the *fresco buono* technique, was also different. Instead of painting with a higher white colour content like the Slovenian copyists, they imitated the intense colours of fresh frescoes, which they merely covered with a white pigment application at the very end.[28] In April 1949, Rajko Slapernik and Karel Jakob were also sent to

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[22]   A ten-year deadline was set to complete the project.

[23]   The most experienced of the painters tackling such commissions was Slavko Pengov, while Riko Debenjak, Tone Kralj, Gojmir Anton Kos, Marij Pregelj and several others also took on the challenge of painting large-scale works in the first post-war years. For an overview of profane mural painting after 1945 see PAVLINEC 2008.

[24]   In 1948, eight French artists (Elisabeth Faure, Marthe Flandrin, Irene Mesdrikoff, Marcel Nicaud, André Regnault, Leon Raffin, Charles Bouleau, and Maxime Rihet) arrived in Yugoslavia to copy the frescoes, followed by nine artists a year later; see POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 18. Such an agreement was reached by Paul Deschamps and Ambassador Marić from the Embassy of Yugoslavia in 1948; see DESCHAMPS 1950, p. 7; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 1, 4.

[25]   An industrial coating containing silica sand, i.e. a paint invented in 1919, suitable for direct application to concrete or cement plaster; see STAHL 2006, pp. 93–103.

[26]   POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 26, does not mention any Slovenians involved, although that was not the case.

[27]   TRŠAR 2012, pp. 99–115. About Tršar's copying efforts in Slovenia, see the chapter "*Kopiranje fresk*", pp. 133–142.

[28]   TRŠAR 2012, pp. 104–105.

*1. Karel Jakob copying
a fresco in Turnišče
(Tovariš, 12 August 1949)*

Belgrade to learn the new technique and then introduce it to their colleagues.[29] Since then, frescoes in Slovenia intended for the Paris exhibition were only copied using this technique.[30]

After the spring of 1949, the copying project became much more intense and completely focused on preparing the major exhibition in Paris, planned for the end of the year. The works were carried out under intense time pressure, with even lower payment and worse working conditions than before.[31] The demand to systematically copy all the frescoes in each individual building regardless of their quality[32] was replaced by the new guidelines from the exhibition organisers, who drew up a priority list of frescoes to be copied first. The list included Turnišče (Figs. 1–2),

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[29] INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, Edo Turnher, Kopiranje fresk, 7 May 1949.

[30] By the end of the Paris exhibition, it was realized that the new technique had also caused some problems. Some of the copies had darkened, while a few of the copyists had allegedly failed to follow the instructions for the preparation of the materials, causing the base to peel (for example, the copy of the Magi from Mače). In addition, some unacceptable copying practices had allegedly been used, such as drawing on tracing paper and damping the frescoes; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 5.

[31] INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, a letter from Edo Turnher to Miroslav Krleža, 11 June 1949.

[32] INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk, No. 145, 1948, a letter from Vlado Madjarić to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 1 April 1948.

2. Ivan Sagadin copying a fresco in Turnišče (Tovariš, 12 August 1949)

Martjanci, Sv. Primož above Kamnik, and Beram in the Croatian Istria,[33] which ended up on the list along with the Slovenian frescoes, likely due to France Stele's influence in the selection of localities.[34] At its own prerogative, the Slovenian team, led by the Institute's conservator Ciril Velepič (1908–1992),[35] also used the financial and material resources that the Exhibition Organising Committee approved primarily for copying the works at the stated locations for the work sites elsewhere in Slovenia – in Bodešče, Mače, Muljava, Vrzdenec, Vrh, Visoko, and Crngrob.[36] During the final stages of the work, the team ran out of funds for the copying in Beram, leading to a financial audit of the Slovenian Exhibition Organising Committee.[37] After much complaining, the project finally received additional financing.

The Selection of Copies of Slovenian Frescoes
for the Exhibition *L'art médiéval yougoslave* in Paris

The resulting copies, which were exhibited in the National Gallery in Ljubljana for a brief three days before being sent to Belgrade,[38] were evaluated by two commissions. The first panel, composed of local experts (Ivan Zorman, Fran Šijanec, Ciril Velepič, France Stele, Gojmir Anton Kos,

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[33] INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, a letter from France Drenovec to Worksites of the Exhibition Organising Committee, 6 July 1949. Every ten days, those in charge had to send work reports to the Belgrade Exhibition Organising Committee.

[34] As the foremost proponent of the so-called geographical art historical method, Stele and his Italian and Austrian colleagues convincingly argued for the common characteristics of medieval mural painting across the territory of the Southern Alps spanning through Northern Italy, Southern Tyrol, Friuli, Carinthia, and Central Slovenia to Istria (Slovenian and Croatian); see STELE 1970, pp. 38–41.

[35] About Velepič, see e.g. *Velepič* 2013.

[36] See e.g. INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, a letter from France Drenovec to Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the People's Republic of Slovenia, 20 July 1949, and other correspondence in the same folder.

[37] INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, Ivo Frol, audit decision, 27 July 1949.

[38] INDOC Centre, Kopiranje fresk in odlivanje plastike, No. 100, 1949, Ciril Velepič, Poročilo o kopiranju fresk v NR Sloveniji v letu 1949.

and Matej Sternen), examined the works already in the field in Slovenia, while a jury appointed by the Ministry of Science and Culture of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, which started its work at the end of September 1949 in Belgrade, was in charge of the final selection of the copies.[39] The jury was chaired by Đurđe Bošković, a specialist in medieval architecture, while one of its most prominent members was Miroslav Krleža, the leader and organiser of the entire exhibition project. Slovenia was represented by France Stele.[40]

After examining the copies judged to be of very high quality, the jury decided to exhibit more than just the originally planned frescoes from Martjanci, Turnišče, Sv. Primož nad Kamnikom, and Beram. Except for the copies of the frescoes from Sv. Primož nad Kamnikom, which were omitted due to the decision to include only works up to the 15th century, and those from Vrh pri Želimljah, likely excluded because their author, Johannes of Ljubljana, was already represented by works from Muljava and Visoko, copies from all the remaining buildings where the French technique had been used were presented. The following works were therefore included: frescoes from Muljava (succursal church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, The Death of Mary by Johannes of Ljubljana), Visoko pod Kureščkom (succursal church of St Nicholas: The Virgin/ Luxuria by Johannes of Ljubljana), Mače nad Preddvorom (succursal church of St Nicholas: The Procession of the Magi), Bodešče (succursal church of St Leonard: St George), Crngrob (pilgrim church of the Annunciation of Mary: The Apostle, The Birth of Christ by Master Bolfgang), Beram (church of St Mary: The Procession of the Magi by Vincent of Kastav), Vrzdenec pri Horjulu (succursal church of St Cantianus: Nativity), Martjanci (parish church of St Martin, St Martin by Johannes Aquila), and Turnišče (old parish church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary: Angel, The Legend of St Ladislaus, Apostles, and Death of St Catherine by Johannes Aquila). This covered all of the most notable medieval painters and the most significant stylistic movements of the 14th and 15th centuries in the entire territory of Slovenia.

The few surviving archival documents related to the jury's selection process reveal a few isolated and peculiar details, for example that the Dance of the Dead fresco from Beram was excluded at Oto Bihalji-Merin's initiative because similar works supposedly also existed in other cultures, or that Đurđe Bošković was concerned that the fragment from Turnišče, depicting a part of the legend of St Ladislaus with his defeat of the Cumans, should not be included in the exhibition for political reasons.[41] Both considerations were taken into account, leading to the

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[39]   The jury carried out a part of its work in Ljubljana and Zagreb.

[40]   According to the Decision on the formation of the jury for the selection of copies of frescoes, the following experts were also appointed as Commission members: Milo Milunović, Đorđe Andrejević - Kun, Oto Bihalji -Merin, Ljubo Babić, Ljubo Kece, Svetozar Radojčić; see Archive of the Gallery of Frescos, Belgrade (AGF), Rodoljub Čolaković, Decision on formation of jury (scanned copy of the document).

[41]   AGF, Slovenačke freske. It is unclear why exactly the defeat of the Cumans was deemed inappropriate; perhaps it was simply because it depicted a battle.

exhibition of the Procession of the Magi from Beram and a different part of St Ladislaus' legend from Turnišče instead. According to the initial concept from the summer of 1949, the exhibition should have included, alongside the Gothic frescoes, a cast of the Prince's Stone from Zollfeld plain and an "early Romanesque cast" (without a more precise definition). However, for unknown reasons, they were not included in the exhibition.[42]

The *L'art médiéval yougoslave* Exhibition, Paris, 1950

The *L'art médiéval yougoslave* exhibition, which opened on 9 March at the *Musée des Monuments français* museum in the *Palais de Chaillot* at the *Place du Trocadéro* in Paris, was planned as the most important and largest Yugoslav art exhibition in the West (Fig. 3). During the Cominform period after the dispute between Tito and Stalin in 1948, when Yugoslavia had to redefine its foreign policy, the country also developed such projects to better position itself within the bloc division of the world and increase its reputation in the West. The exhibition was therefore an extensive, exceedingly ambitious and challenging project with strong support from the authorities, and it proved to be a resounding success.[43] The exhibition, originally scheduled to remain open until 24 May, was extended until 25 June. In two and a half months, it was seen by some 38,000 visitors,[44] including many prominent names from the academic and artistic world, such as art historians Louis Réau, David Talbot Rice, Germain Bazin, Bernard Berenson, Otto Demus, the heads of major art institutions worldwide, as well as the artists Tristan Tzara and Marc Chagall.[45]

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[42] The Slovenian copies from seven locations, the Prince's Stone, and the Renaissance cast were to be placed in hall XIII, together with five *stećci* tombstones, a copy of the fresco from Zagreb Cathedral, and a cast from Istria; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949, XIII dvorana.

[43] According to Đilas's memoirs, the project was also costly, though it helped "dispel the prejudices about the South Slavs as a primitive people devoid of European culture"; see DJILAS 1983, p. 70, cited after ZIMMERMANN 2010, p. 174. The total expenses incurred by the Yugoslav Embassy in France for the exhibition between January 1949 and June 1950 amounted to around 37.5 million dinars, while approximately 15 million dinars were spent by the Organizing Committee in Yugoslavia (including their worksites); see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Stanje kredita za izložbu n. d. 30. VI. 50; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Troškovi izložbe srednjevekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije.

[44] Archives of Fine Arts, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Zagreb (AFA CASA), 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Grafikon posetnika izložbe. The total number of 38,000 includes 30,850 tickets sold and around 7,000 free tickets.

[45] AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Važne posete.

3. Main entrance to Palais de Chaillot, Paris (Jugoslavija, Winter 1950)

Since Yugoslavia wanted to appear in Paris as a single country with a shared past, one of the essential goals of the exhibition was to present to the Western audience the common history of the new Yugoslav republics and peoples, as was supposed to be reflected in the examples of medieval art on display. The collection consisted of 205 exhibits and included a few originals but mostly copies and casts of medieval works from the new Yugoslav republics.[46] It was divided into four parts. The most extensive part consisted of frescoes from Serbia and Macedonia; the second one included the so-called *stećci* (i.e. medieval tombstones) and some other monuments from Bosnia and Herzegovina; the third one comprised architectural sculpture from the Croatian Adriatic; while the fourth part contained Gothic frescoes from Slovenia and Croatia (Figs. 4–5). The leader of the successful exhibition project was the writer Miroslav Krleža, who organised the event together with a large group of associates, including a number of art experts. The process also involved the intense cooperation of a few politicians, most notably the Yugoslav Ambassador to France, Marko Ristić (1902–1984).[47] Some of the most notable reports and correspondence

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[46]   The exhibits included 205 fresco copies and 62 casts, while the originals comprised ten icons, a single wooden statue, and eleven frescoes; see VELEPIČ 1950.

[47]   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske

reveal that the exhibition's preparation and reception was also closely monitored by the Minister of Education and Culture Rodoljub Čolaković, as well as one of the most prominent Yugoslav politicians, the President of the Commission for International Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Milovan Đilas.[48]

Although the idea for a similar exhibition had already been conceived earlier, its actual organisation did not begin in earnest until 1949.[49] Paris was probably chosen as the location at least a year earlier when the French copyists' visit to Yugoslavia was being organised. Initially, the event was supposed to be held at the even more prestigious Petit Palais, which proved to be a less

4. List of frescoes from Slovenia – hall II (L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950)

srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona šema Odbora za organizovanje izložbe srednjevekovnog slikarstva i vajarstva naroda Jugoslavije, February 1949. The document contains an extensive and complex plan of tasks and their distribution among the participating associates. Deputy Erih Koš, members Đurđe Bošković, Cvito Fisković, Jaroslav Kratina, jury members Dimče Koco, Oto Bihalji - Merin, Aleksandar Deroko, Antun Augustinčić, Mile Milunović, Veljko Petrović. Slightly differently, in the introduction to the catalogue, Deschamps mentions Bošković, Fisković, Kratina, France Drenovec, and Radivoje Ljubinković; see *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950, pp. 4–5. The final report refers to Krleža, Drenovec, Bošković, Fisković, Kratina, Koco, and Ljubo Babić; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 11. See also the list of participating associates in the catalogue *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950.

[48] E.g. AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organiziciona priprema izložbe, p. 1. The document mentions that a copy was sent to Milovan Đjilas.

[49] AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona šema Odbora za organizovanje izložbe srednjevekovnog slikarstva i vajarstva naroda Jugoslavije, February 1949.

154 **LA MARCHE DES ROIS MAGES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale Sainte-Marie à Scrilievo près de Beram. — R. P. de Croatie (Istrie).
Les peintures de l'église furent exécutées par le maître Vincent de Kastav. Dans le cadre d'une composition gothique se manifestent déjà les tendances vers l'esprit de la Renaissance.
1474. H. 1,60; L. 8,00.
Relevé de Sédeï, Omerza, Preguel, 1949.

155 **L'APOTRE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Tserngrob. — R.P. de Slovénie.
Milieu du XVᵉ siècle. H. 0,53; L. 0,41.
Relevé de D. Petritch, 1949.

156 **LES APOTRES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale de Tournichtché. — R.P. de Slovénie.
Une partie des peintures de cette église furent exécutées par le peintre Johannes Aquila de Radkerspurga.
Fin du XIVᵉ siècle. H. 1,70; L. 1,80
Relevé de Karél Jacob, 1949.

157 **SAINT MARTIN.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Martiantsi. — R. P. de Slovénie.
Les peintures ont été exécutées par le peintre Johannes Aquila de Radkerspurga.
1392. H. 2,00; L. 1,44.
Relevé de V. Horvat, 1949.

158 **PROCESSION DES ROIS MAGES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Matché. — R.P. de Slovénie.
Exemple de la peinture gothique de l'époque, œuvre d'une main sûre et d'un style épanoui.
1467. H. 2,50; L. 1,85.
Relevé de S. Ivants, 1949.

159 **SAINTE CATHERINE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale de Tournichtché. — R. P. de Slovénie.
Milieu du XIVᵉ siècle. H. 1,30; L. 1,80.
Relevé de Karél Jacob, 1949.

160 **SAINT GEORGES.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Bodéchtche près de Bled. — R.P. de Slovénie (pl. 51).
Les formes de la peinture gothique de l'époque ont été transformées par des peintres artisans dans le sens de la rusticité et du réalisme paysan.
Milieu du XVᵉ siècle. H. 2,30; L. 1,75.
Relevé de Raïko Slapernik, 1949.

161 **DORMITON DE LA VIERGE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Mouliava. — R. P. de Slovénie (pl. 49).
Les peintures sont exécutées par le peintre Johannes de Laybaco (Jean de Lioubliana). De la riche décoration de cette église rurale ne sont restés que des fragments.
1456. H. 2,50; L. 1,98.
Relevé de Tshoro Chkodlar, 1949.

162 **ADORATION DE L'ENFANT.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église de Tserngrob. — R.P. de Slovénie (pl. 50).
Milieu du XVᵉ siècle. H. 1,80; L. 2,40.
Relevé de D. Petritch, 1949.

163 **ANGE.** Détail de la peinture murale de l'église paroissiale de Tournichtché. — R. P. de Slovénie.
Milieu du XIVᵉ siècle. H. 0,95; L. 0,80.
Relevé de J. Sagodin, 1949.

5. List of frescoes from Slovenia – hall XII (L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950)
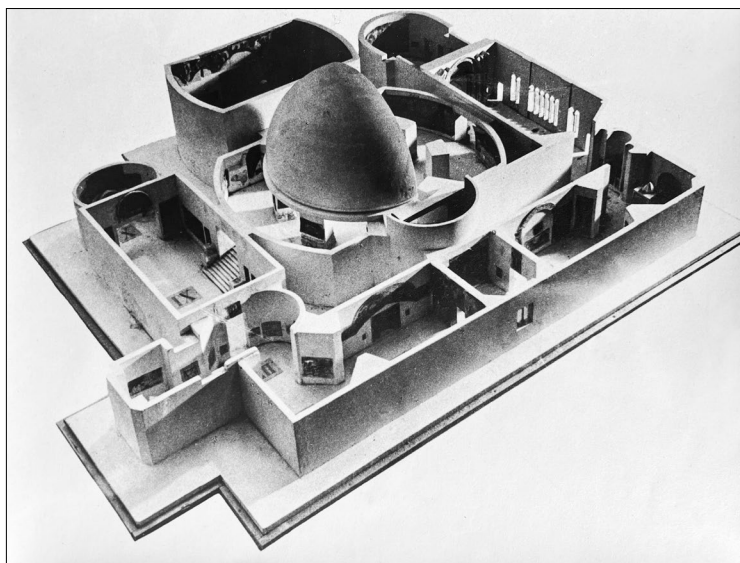
6. Ljubo Babić: a model of the exhibition halls for L'art médiéval yougoslave in Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

suitable venue due to its price, the specifics of the premises, and the inconvenient dates available.[50] Finally, the 2nd floor of the *Palais de Chaillot* in the *Musée des Monuments français* museum was chosen, and it was rented free of charge – probably due to the collaboration with this institution, established during the copying project.[51]

The materials for the exhibition were transported to Paris in as many as fifteen railway freight cars,[52] which, along with the artefacts, also contained the entire walling, made in Croatia according to the plans prepared by Ljubo Babić, a painter and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb (Fig. 6). The entire second floor of the museum, which was still completely empty at the time, was devoted to the exhibition and later intended to house the *Musée de la Fresque* museum.[53] For the occasion, the Yugoslavs divided the venue into thirteen specially designed halls. The dome-covered main hall, designed in the style of St Donatus in Zadar and most demanding

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[50] AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 11.

[51] NAF, 20150160/3, Fresques yougoslaves, Le conservateur du Musée des Monuments francais à Monsieur le Directeur des Musées de France, 13 January 1949.

[52] AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Izvestaj br. /../ o toku priprema za izložbu naše srednjevekovne umetnosti u Parizu, 28 December 1949.

[53] DESCHAMPS 1950, p. 7. Precisely at that time, as the UN General Assembly vacated the premises, all partition walls were removed, leaving the organisers free to design the venue. See also NAF, 20150160/3, Fresques yougoslaves, Le conservateur du Musée des Monuments francais à Monsieur le Directeur des Musées de France, 13 January 1949.

7. Hall VI, frescoes from Mileševo Monastery, carpets with floorplans of the monastery, model of the monastery, L'art médiéval yougoslave, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950)

to assemble, had already been set up as a trial at the premises of the Zagreb Fair (*Zagrebački velesajam*).[54] The halls were also furnished with carpets that the *Zadruga Ćilim* cooperative from Zagreb had produced especially for this purpose, according to Babić's plans (Fig. 7).[55] The carpets featured the floor plans of the most notable monasteries presented at the exhibition, attesting to the incredible detail and amount of thought that went into the exhibition's concept. The plan was also to place twelve billboards in the halls containing inscriptions from papal bulls, synods, and excommunications. However, these were censored by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs just a few days before the opening.[56] The texts that the Yugoslav side described as "documentary materials" and were meant to demonstrate the centuries-long rebellious, autonomous position of

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[54] AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organiziciona priprema izložbe, p. 1.

[55] AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 9.

[56] The final report lists thirteen of these: "Duces Venetiarum contra Slavos Meridionales ab anno 805 usque ad annum 1433, Epitheta in epistulis summorum pontificum romanorum, Gregorius I. – A. D. 600, Johannes X. – A. D. 925, Alexander III. – A. D. 1177, Lucius III. – A. D. 1185, Innocentius III. – A. D. 1200, Gregorius IX. – A. D. 1234, Nicolaus IV. – 1291, Bonifatius VIII., - A. D. 1298, Bonifatius VIII. – A. D. 1303, O Konradu, biskupu portuenškom g. 1223, O Raineriu g. 1180." See AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 7–8.

the Yugoslav peoples who had refused to submit to authority were evaluated as political propaganda that had no place at an art exhibition.[57]

The exhibition's concept had already been thoroughly changed during the earlier stages of its preparation. According to the first exhibition plan from the summer of 1949, the Yugoslav organising committee had planned to include even more exhibits to give the exhibition a more overtly political propaganda tone.[58] At the entrance, visitors would thus be greeted by Avgustinčić's bronze statue of Tito and a large Yugoslav coat of arms,[59] while in one of the first halls, the so-called Jajce catacombs would be recreated[60] – i.e. the medieval underground church, carved out of rock, where Tito supposedly stayed during World War II – to emphasise the continuity and parallels between the "Yugoslav" Middle Ages and the National Liberation Struggle. The catacombs were also to be furnished with various "didactic" artefacts showing the industrialisation and progress of infrastructure in Yugoslavia and presenting the selected historical rebellions. Photographs from the National Liberation Struggle and the post-war reconstruction, as well as a large mosaic with the date of the Second Meeting of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, were also to be added.[61] The relevant sources do not state the reasons for abandoning this exceedingly propaganda-oriented concept. Thus, the question remains open whether this change was also requested by the French or if the organisers themselves may have realised that such an approach would not be successful. The exhibition project with a greater focus on the medieval artworks themselves, as it was ultimately carried out, was therefore more refined and certainly better received by the public.

The exhibition's ideological aspirations were pursued in other ways, including the comprehensive and abundantly illustrated catalogue with as many as three introductory texts (Fig. 8). The first introduction was written by Paul Deschamps, the director of the museum that hosted the exhibition. He briefly presented the cooperation between France and Yugoslavia regarding the

[57]   The sources mention Louis Joxe, who was responsible for France's cultural relations at that time, as the main opponent to the Yugoslav plans; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona priprema izložbe, p. 2.

[58]   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949.

[59]   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949, I dvorana.

[60]   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949, Ia dvorana.

[61]   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Ljubo Babić, Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije / skica za postav/, 1949, Ia dvorana.

copying and highlighted some of the exhibition's main attractions, which he placed in the context of Western European medieval art and compared to French monuments.[62] Đurđe Bošković and the conservator Radivoje Ljubinković contributed the outline of the development of medieval art based on the longer texts written by the experts from the individual republics, which, however, were quite disparate and therefore unsuitable for publication in such form.[63] However, the most notable (and most widely circulated) text in the catalogue was written by the mastermind behind the exhibition project, Miroslav Krleža, who attempted to prove the equality of medieval art from the territory of Yugoslavia with Western art,[64] and to connect the otherwise quite diverse exhibits created in culturally and politically very different environments.[65] In the text that was ultimately published, he highlighted anti-conformism and the struggle against oppressors as a common thread that united the medieval art and the culture of the South Slavs, who had persisted in the "in-between" territory between the East and the West since the Middle Ages.[66] Simultaneously, he distinctly pointed out the parallels with the Yugoslav geopolitical situation after the Cominform dispute.[67] All this was allegedly most evident in the so-called *stećci*, i.e. the medieval tombstones of the heretical Bogomil sect from the Bosnian region,[68] which had rebelled against the feudal state and the Church. Krleža described the artistic decoration of the Bogomils as primal, mysterious, rebellious, and "free from all false conventions",[69] interpreting it as proof of an autonomous Yugoslav

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[62] DESCHAMPS 1950.

[63] AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 9–10. The text on Slovenian art was written by Izidor Cankar, whose contribution was misplaced in Paris, so Ciril Velepič wrote another version. Cankar's text could not be used, as it was only found after the catalogue had already gone to print. For copies of some of these documents, see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Đurđe Bošković, Srednjevekovna umetnost jugoslovenskih naroda (a bust containing a variety of texts on different aspects of medieval art). About preparation of the catalogue, see also AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), a letter from Radivoje Ljubinković about work on the catalogue, 12 January 1949. Cf. BOŠKOVIĆ, LJUBINKOVIĆ 1950.

[64] Given the exhibition's audience and Yugoslavia's geopolitical situation at the time, the introduction contains far fewer references to Eastern art.

[65] KRLEŽA 1950b.

[66] KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 14: "Never in its history East nor West, our civilisation in artibus presents itself within these coordinates of spirit and artistic style as a third component, which, in line with its internal law of movement, was strong enough not to halt and resilient enough not to passively submit to stronger civilizational forces."

[67] About the importance of Krleža's theses and their place in the subsequent discourse on the so-called Third Way and the definition of Yugoslav culture, see ŠUVAKOVIĆ 2012, p. 485; ZIMMERMANN 2016, pp. 473–484; BAGO 2021, pp. 285–293.

[68] It has since been proven that *stećci* are not exclusively connected with the Bogomils; see e.g. PURGARIĆ-KUŽIĆ 1995, pp. 251–253.

[69] KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 15.
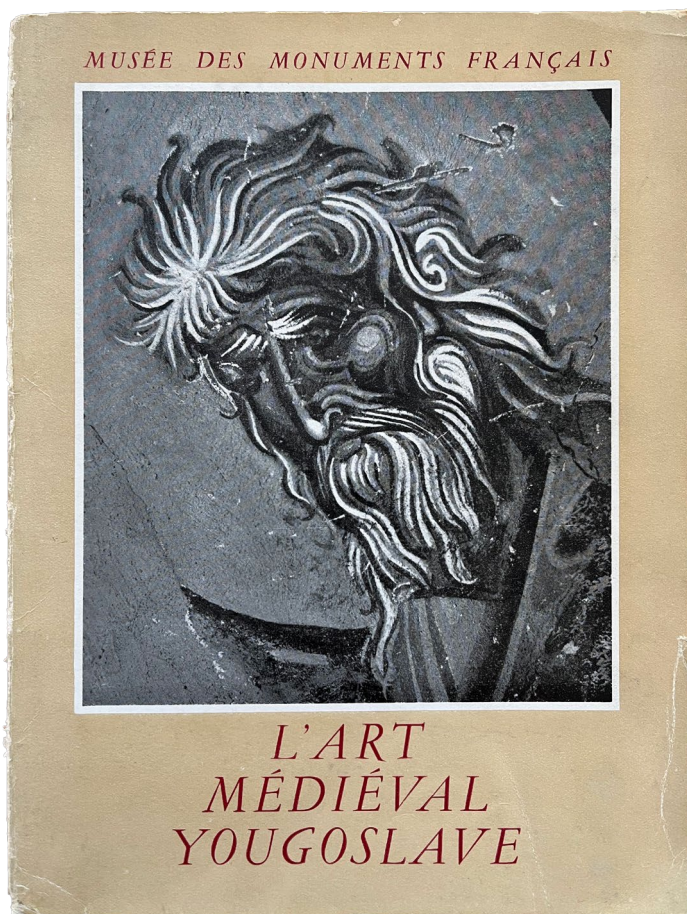
8. Exhibition catalogue for
L'art médiéval yougoslave,
Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950
(L'art médiéval yougoslave 1950)

culture in the Middle Ages[70] and devoting by far the most attention to it in his text as well as in the exhibition itself. He also highlighted Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, noting the stylistic influences from other cultural backgrounds while simultaneously emphasising their inherent originality and defiance of contemporary (Byzantine) trends. In particular, he highlighted the Master from Sopoćani.[71] The development of this "free" art, which Krleža occasionally compares to Fauvism, was largely a result of favourable circumstances related to the autonomy of the Serbian Orthodox Church and state.[72]

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[70]   ZIMMERMANN 2016, p. 479.
[71]   Conclusion (KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 18): "The South Slavic civilisation was destroyed in a cycle of wars so that Western Europe could live and harmoniously create artistic works, without which the history of humanity would be unimaginable. This exhibition is merely a modest proof that our artists also participated in this endeavour."
[72]   KRLEŽA 1950b, p. 18.

9. Miroslav Krleža:
"A propos de l'exposition de la sculpture
yougoslave du Moyen age à Paris
*en MCML. Plaidoyer pro domo"*
(Yougoslavie, Winter 1950)

The French organisers also censored Krleža's text, and because of the delay with the corrections, the opening of the exhibition had to be postponed from 24 February to 9 March.[73] The original text is not available in the archives, and the extent of the requested corrections has not been documented. In 1950, Krleža also published an essay on the exhibition, subtitled "A Plea for the Homeland" (Fig. 9),[74] which he intended as a vindication of Yugoslav art before Western Europe and therefore wrote about the exhibition and its motivation even more propagandistically. The essay was published in a special French-language issue of the magazine *Jugoslavija*, accompanied by elaborate illustrations of medieval artworks and photographs from the exhibition. Allegedly, the French banned its distribution as well as the distribution of any other Yugoslav editions about the

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73   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organiziciona priprema izložbe, p. 2.
74   KRLEŽA 1950a. Accompanied by a series of articles on Yugoslavia.

exhibition.[75] This essay was likely a version of the introduction that Krleža wrote for the catalogue, whose publication the French censors had prevented but which the Yugoslavs nevertheless used to disseminate the propaganda about the exhibition in their publications.

The promotion of the exhibition abroad was well thought out and meticulously executed. Alongside advertisements, promotional texts in the press,[76] and posters that were put up around Paris already three weeks before the exhibition (Fig. 10), images and longer texts about medieval art with a list of literature were circulated to the relevant media before the opening. A special issue of the popular magazine *Art et Style* was agreed upon,[77] and although the Yugoslav organisers complained they could not influence its contents, they still wanted to subsidise its publication to make it available to the public free of charge.[78] The exhibition was accompanied by lectures on medieval art by some of Yugoslavia's leading art historians, including France Stele.[79] Three
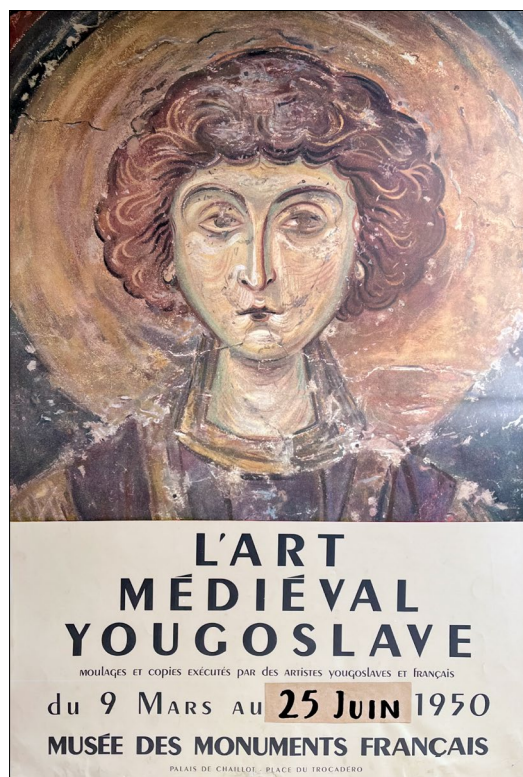
10. Exhibition poster for *L'art médiéval yougoslave* in Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

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75   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu.

76   DESCARGUES 1950a; MARESTER 1950; VRINAT 1950. Many texts about the exhibition were published in foreign-language publications issued by various Yugoslav organisations, e.g. LJUBINKOVIĆ 1949; KERLEJA 1950; LIOU-BINKOVICH 1950, and also numerous short texts in *Bulletin d'information yougoslave. Bratstvo i jedinstvo (Paris)*.

77   L'art médiéval yougoslave (title of special issue), *Art et Style*, 15, 1950. The editorial, titled "Visible Indivisible", was written by Vercors (the pseudonym of Jean Marcel Adolphe Bruller). The magazine contained 40 heliographs (including Vrzdenec and Visoko from Slovenia) and two colour artwork reproductions.

78   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona priprema izložbe, p. 4, 1 March 1950. The document does not clarify whether the plan was in fact implemented.

79   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Organizaciona priprema izložbe, p. 6; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Predavanja održana u izložbi. According to Veno Pilon, who was among those in charge of overseeing the exhibition, these were not very succesful overall; see CANKAR, PILON 2015, p. 46.

documentaries were also supposed to be filmed for the Paris exhibition, but ultimately, only one was screened – on the *stećci* tombstones.[80] In cooperation with the embassies, the Commission even drew up lists of experts in medieval art from each country to invite them to the exhibition's opening and reimburse their travel expenses.[81] The increased reach of the exhibition would hopefully also stir up interest in its future appearances in other countries, and considerable effort was invested in a campaign to bring it to the United States of America after Paris.[82]

The excellent attendance and public interest,[83] which led the event to be marked as the highlight of the season,[84] were accompanied by numerous media reactions, most of which were markedly positive.[85] The majority of the articles described the exhibition as one of the highlights and surprises of the year, underlining especially the importance of gaining insight into previously little-known but astonishingly high-quality art, while also lauding the project for creating an impressive collection of copies. Most of the articles would focus on the Bogomil *stećci* tombstones and describe them as a mysterious artistic expression of heretics, but they were even more enthusiastic about the Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, which were supposedly the greatest discovery

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[80]   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, pp. 10, 20. The other two documentaries (one on the Adriatic art, the other unspecified, but most likely about frescoes and monasteries) were not completed.

[81]   See e.g. AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), a letter from W. P. Jowett to F. Drenovec, 11 November 1949 (a list of the British experts considered for participation); AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), a letter from Alex. N. Dragnich to F. Drenovec, 15 November 1949 (a list of American experts); AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), O italijanskim bizantolozima koje bismo pozvali u Pariz na izložbu fresaka (a list of Italian experts).

[82]   AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Propagandni materijal za izložbu srednjevekovne umetnosti u SAD; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Borislav Bogdanović, Izveštaj o preliminarnim pripremama za priredjivanje izložbe jugoslavenske srednjevekovne umetnosti u USA; AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), several notes by M. Sardelic on talks with American representatives, June 1950; etc.

[83]   One of the Lyon weaving mills was supposed to design new fabric patterns based on some of the ornaments presented at the exhibition, while a photographic editorial for the fashion magazine *Sillhuette* was to be shot there as well; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 20.

[84]   CANKAR, PILON 2015, p. 45.

[85]   Longer, in-depth articles include: BEAULIEU 1950; BOURET 1950; CHERONNET 1950; DESCARGUES 1950b; PICHARD 1950; RÉAU 1950; see also AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Louis Cheronnet, "Romantisme primitif et classicisme romantique", *Opera*, 1950 (newspaper clipping).

of the exhibition. The reviews would also mostly repeat the thesis that the art presented was the so-called "third" link between the West and the East. On the contrary, some of the more serious analyses took issue with this very postulate of Krleža's and labelled his introduction as exceedingly tendentious and propagandistic, while they nevertheless, without exception, acknowledged the remarkable quality of the exhibition.[86]

The Travelling Exhibitions of Yugoslav Medieval Frescoes

Due to the success of the Paris exhibition, the demand for Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions increased significantly. Even before the Paris exhibition opened, the media had reported plans to also organise it in New York, Washington, Chicago, and London.[87] However, by the time it closed, the organisers had still not drawn up a definitive, detailed touring schedule.[88] The effect of the exhibition on Yugoslavia's reputation in the West was a significant consideration regarding its future touring schedule.[89] Thus, it is unsurprising that the most intensive efforts were invested in organising it in the United States, which was the most crucial location in the strategic, geopolitical sense. However, this aspiration was only achieved a few years later and in a slightly different form, as those exhibitions did not include copies of any Slovenian frescoes.[90]

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[86] DU COLOMBIER 1950, a critique of the catalogue's introduction and Krleža's text in the *Jugoslavija* magazine, as well as the focus on the Bogomils instead of the much superior frescoes. BILLIET 1950, p. 82, reproaches the "Titoist authors" (excluding Deschamps) for their unfounded attempt to integrate the exhibits with Western European art.

[87] DESCARGUES 1950a; FAURE 1950.

[88] When the exhibition closed, the organisers were still undecided whether to send it to the USA or Zagreb; see AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), Zaključni referat o Izložbi srednjovjekovne umetnosti naroda Jugoslavije u Parizu, p. 22. At the same time, in June 1950, arrangements were being made to move the exhibition to Venice in the spring of 1951, where it would be shown at the Biennale from April to the end of June; see Historical Archives of the Biennale of Venice, Venice, b. 15, Pratiche con il Comune di Venezia, 1947–1963, 19, Mostra monumentale dell'arte jugoslava del medioevo – Proposta Ivekovic.

[89] AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Komisija za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom, Beograd, Ambasada FNRJ, 2 November 1953: "At this point, we cannot yet confirm where the exhibition will appear next. That will depend on the assessment of where we can benefit from it the most in terms of cultural promotion, and on the offers – i.e., on the exhibitors' responsibilities, exhibition venues, etc.".

[90] The initial plan was to transfer the exhibition to the United States of America immediately after it was closed in Paris, and to show it at various important venues around the country to avoid multuple transportation costs connected with sending it over the Atlantic. It seems that the plans were postponed due to trouble with scheduling multiple venues in succession at short notice; see e.g. AY, 317, Savet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), several notes by M. Sardelic on talks with American representatives, June 1950. The question of reducing the number of exhibits for easier and more economical transport to the United States of America is raised in AY, 317, Savet za

Before being transferred to other Western European countries, the exhibition was also presented to the native public in Zagreb's Art Pavilion (*Umjetnički paviljon*) in 1951.[91] The concept remained roughly the same, though with a few changes to adapt it to the domestic audience. Due to the smaller exhibition venue, the number of exhibits was reduced, yet all the copies of Slovenian frescoes shown in Paris were also included on this occasion.[92] The title was different – "*Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije*" or "The Yugoslav Nations' Medieval Art Exhibition" – probably to avoid the more problematic notion of the "Yugoslav medieval art", which might have been perceived as exaggerated by the domestic audience that was more familiar with their own history and sought to preserve the national character of the heritage of their own republics. The legend for the map of the locations of the exhibited monuments was also different, categorising them as belonging either to the western or eastern circle rather than to the individual nations, as had been the case in the Paris catalogue. A further addition was a transcript of Josip Broz Tito's speech given at the Second Session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia in Jajce in 1943, announcing the liberation of the major part of Yugoslavia, which preceded the translation of the introduction that Krleža had written for the Paris exhibition. The speech was captioned "1463–1943" to underline the parallel between the medieval "Yugoslav" art and civilisation, suppressed in 1463 by foreign oppressors (in this case, the Ottomans, who invaded Bosnia at the time), and the new Yugoslavia (founded in 1943), where it could once again fully flourish after centuries of foreign domination.

While making further plans, it became clear that the financial and organisational burden of transporting the entire exhibition with its extensive collection of casts would be too significant. Thus, at the initiative of the Federal Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, a smaller exhibition of Yugoslav medieval frescoes was assembled in the following years under the auspices of Milan Kašanin, the head of the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade,[93] and it travelled around Europe between 1953 and 1956. It was staged in some of the most renowned galleries and museums: in 1953 in the United Kingdom (Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Gallery, 20 August – 27 September;[94] London, Tate Gallery, 23 October – 13 December (Fig. 11));[95] in 1954

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nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ, 88, Veze sa inostranstvom, 1946–1951, 125, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti (1950–1951), a letter from Popović to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Čolaković, July 1950.

[91] Catalogue: *Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti* 1951.

[92] As this venue was smaller, the collection of exhibits here included twenty originals and thirty fresco copies less than the Paris event.

[93] POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 35.

[94] Catalogue: *Yugoslav Medieval Frescoes* 1953a.

[95] Catalogue: *Yugoslav Medieval Frescoes* 1953b. For a report on the exhibitions in London and Edinburgh, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložbe fresaka, 6 May 1953.

11. Exhibition Yugoslav Medieval Frescoes (Replicas), Tate Gallery, London, 1953 (Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964)
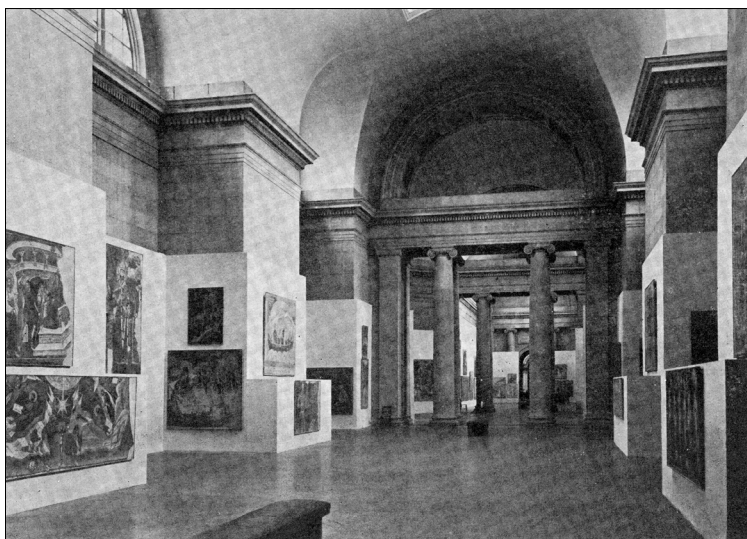
12. Exhibition Fresques médiévales yougoslaves, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 1954 (Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964)
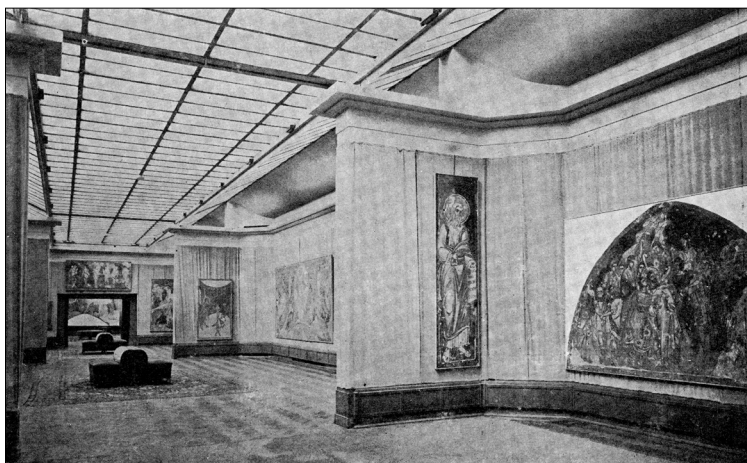
in the Netherlands (Utrecht, Centraal Museum, 3 January – 15 February),[96] Germany (Düsseldorf, Kunstverein, 21 February – 28 March;[97] Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 20 July –

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[96] Catalogue: *Joegoslavische middeleeuwse fresco's* 1954. For basic information, as well as a photograph of the exhibition, see Centraal Museum Utrecht, Joegoslavische middeleeuwse fresco's, https://hdl.handle.net/21.12130/exhibit.07B242C2-CB2A-4318-B88A-02672DFB5D06.

[97] For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izvještaj o otvorenju izložbe jugoslovenskih sredovjekovnih fresaka u Düsseldorfu 21. februara 1954, 24 February 1954.

*13. Exhibition Mittelalterliche
Fresken aus Jugoslawien,
Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna, 1955
(Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964)*
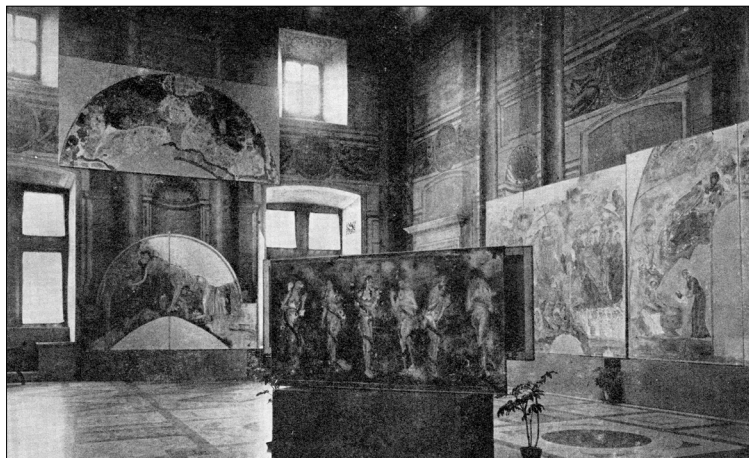
*14. Exhibition Affreschi
medievali jugoslavi, Palazzo
Venezia, Rome, 1955
(Naše freske u inostranstvu 1964)*

August;[98] Belgium (Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 2 April – May) (Fig. 12), Switzerland (Zurich, Kunsthaus, 2 June – 11 July),[99] and Austria (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 23 October –

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[98]   About the problems with the organisation in Munich, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203 Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from the Embassy of the People's Republic of Yugoslavia in Bonn, 10 August 1953: "Furthermore, we are still negotiating with Munich and expect to be successful here as well, despite the reserved stance of the responsible Munich circles towards everything that is Yugoslav (because of the strong influence of the Vatican)."

[99]   For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložba freska u Cirihu, 29 July 1954.

5 January 1955)[100] (Fig. 13); in 1955 again in Germany (Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, 26 January – 28 February),[101] in Finland (Helsinki, Ateneum, 18 March – 17 April),[102] Denmark (Kopenhagen, Charlottenburg, 4 June – 4 July),[103] and Italy (Venice, Padiglione Centrale della Espositione Internationale d'Arte ai Giardini, 11 September – 2 October;[104] Rome, Palazzo Venezia, 19 October – November (Fig. 14)),[105] where the tour also concluded in 1956 (Milano, Palazzo della Permanente, 11 January – 5 February).[106] Although there was a demand for further exhibitions, e.g. at the Landesmuseum in Graz, the custodian of the copies, the Gallery of Frescoes, refused to allow for any more.[107] The copies of all exhibited frescoes, including those from

[100]   For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložba "Srednjovekovne freske u Jugoslaviji" u Beču.

[101]   Catalogue: *Mittelalterliche Fresken* 1954. For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izveštaj o izložbi fresaka održanoj u Hamburgu.

[102]   Catalogue: *Keskiaikaisia freskoja* 1955.

[103]   For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izveštaj o izložbi "Jugoslovenska srednjevekovna umetnost" u Kopenhagenu.

[104]   Catalogue: *Affreschi medievali* 1955. The initiative to organize the exhibition in Venice to coincide with the 18th International Congress of Art History (11–18 September 1955) came from France Stele; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from France Stele, 21 January 1955; AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Ivo Frol, Izložba srednjovekovnih fresaka u Jugoslaviji, 28 January 1955; AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izložba fresaka u Italiji, 29 January 1955. Contrary to the organizers' expectations, who anticipated that the public would be "knocked off their feet," the exhibition was received rather poorly. This was likely due to the inferior venue within the otherwise very representative *Giardini*, the absence of an organized ceremonial opening, and a lack of publicity; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from France Stele, 3 October 1955.

[105]   For a report on the exhibition, see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izvještaj o izložbi naših fresaka, 21 October 1955. The reception of the exhibition in Rome was apparently very good, much better than in Venice. On 22 October France Stele held a guided tour and lecture, both with good attendance; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from France Stele, 31 October 1955.

[106]   To coincide with the exhibition, France Stele held a lecture for members of the press; see AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, newspaper clippings, 15 January 1956. For a list of exhibitions, see also *Naše freske u inostranstvu* 1964, p. 3; POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 35.

[107]   AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, a letter from Ivo Frol to Landesmuseum Joanneum, 17 January 1956; AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Marko Ristić to General Consulate of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in Graz, 6 February 1956.

15. The main hall (hall XII), Slovenian frescoes seen in the background, L'art médiéval yougoslave, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

Slovenia, namely became part of the collection of the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade, where they are kept to this day.[108]

While these exhibitions focused on Serbian and Macedonian frescoes, they also included some from Slovenia and Croatia, though not as many as in Paris. The following copies were exhibited: those from Mače (The Procession of the Magi, in some cases also The Virgin Adoring),[109] Turnišče (Angel), and Visoko (The Last Judgement/The Damned Woman and the Devil), while Croatia was included with Beram (Dance of the Dead and/or The Procession of the Magi)[110] and Butoniga (Head of Christ). The much more modest exhibition catalogues replaced Krleža's introduction with one by the director of the Gallery of Frescoes, Milan Kašanin, who also very briefly, in a single short paragraph, mentioned the Slovenian frescoes.[111] As the years progressed, a foreword by Svetozar Radojčić – completely ignoring the Slovenian copies – was also added to some of the catalogues.[112] The reception of these exhibitions was similar to that of the Paris exhibition, as anticipated. Additionally, despite some disapproval from the organizers, they were very popular among various Christian and religious associations.[113] The organisers

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108 For a list of all copies of Slovenian frescos, see POPOVIĆ 2022, p. 323.

109 For example in London, where more space was dedicated to the exhibition.

110 In Paris only The Procession of the Magi.

111 E.g. KAŠANIN 1953. In some cases, one of the introductions was written by a local art historian; see e.g. JAMES 1953; TALBOT RICE 1953.

112 E.g. the Venice exhibition catalogue: RADOJČIĆ 1955.

113 AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967,

were also dissatisfied with the media's frequent reference to "Byzantine" rather than "Yugoslav" frescoes,[114] which attested to the less-than-successful promotion of the idea of an autonomous Yugoslav medieval art and a common cultural history among the Yugoslav nations.

The Reception and Role of Slovenian Frescoes at the Yugoslav Medieval Art Exhibitions

Despite the expert community's overwhelming and mostly positive response to the abovementioned exhibitions, very few reactions were noted regarding the presented copies of Slovenian frescoes. Both in Paris and at the other exhibitions abroad, more attention would always be paid to the other parts of the exhibition,[115] which is not surprising given its concept and, to some extent, also its layout. In France, most of the Slovenian copies were placed in the main, central hall, whose concept was the closest to being "Yugoslav", as it was the only one to bring together artworks from as many as four (of the five) participating republics (Fig. 15).[116] However, it also contained the *stećci* tombstones, set up as that hall's main attraction. The middle of the room featured a cast of one of the most splendid examples of this kind in existence, the so-called Zgošća Stećak,[117] with 17 other *stećci* tombstones arranged around it, while copies of Serbian, Slovenian, and Croatian frescoes hung on the walls (in groups according to the republics) (Fig. 16).[118] Together with two Croatian copies from Zadar, the copies of the frescoes from Vrzdenec and Visoko were placed in another hall among the architectural sculpture casts from the Croatian Littoral, including the magnificent portal from Trogir (Fig. 17).[119] Therefore, the Slovenian and Croatian

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203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Izvještaj o otvorenju izložbe jugoslovenskih sredovjekovnih fresaka u Düsseldorfu, 21. februara 1954, 24 February, p. 3. Among other things, the report mentions that a few days after the opening of the exhibition in Düsseldorf, the local Association for Christian Culture organised an event with a screening of the film *Život fresaka*, followed by a lecture on medieval art, after which a Gregorian choir performed medieval music. The excerpt is underlined, with the word "*koješta!*" ("ridiculous!") added in red. The part of the report stating that the exhibition attracted considerable interest from religious associations is also underlined.

[114] The organisers specifically referred to the Catholic magazine *Tablet*, where, while discussing the Edinburgh exhibition, the frescoes were referred to as Byzantine without mentioning their Yugoslav origins.

[115] The same is true of Croatian frescoes, whose number was significantly smaller. They were only included in the Paris event but not in the other Yugoslav fresco exhibitions.

[116] Macedonia was not represented here, while Montenegro was not a part of the exhibition at all; see *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950, pp. 52–57.

[117] In the catalogue *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950, p. 54, this exhibit is listed as the "Bogomil funerary monument of 'Koulin Ban'". For more information about it, see MAZRAK 2021.

[118] Alongside Beram, also frescoes from the sacristy of St Timothy from the Zagreb Cathedral.

[119] Hall II included casts from Trogir, Zadar, Split, Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Rab; see *L'art médiéval yougoslave* 1950, pp. 31–33.

16. Hall XII, Slovenian frescoes, L'art médiéval yougoslave, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950.
From left to right: Birth of Christ, Crngrob; Death of Mary, Muljava; St George, Bodešče;
Death of St Catherine, Turnišče; Procession of the Magi, Mače; St Martin, Martjanci (Tovariš, 3 July 1950)

17. Hall II, fresco of the Nativity from Vrzdenec on the left wall,
L'art médiéval yougoslave, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 1950 (© AFA CASA)

fresco copies were placed in such a manner as to leave the centre stage to the other artworks. Based on the available photographs, it is very difficult to glean any relevant information about the layout of the exhibits at the travelling exhibitions of Yugoslav frescoes. However, given the modest number of Slovenian copies included, we can assume they were probably not particularly highlighted.

In the texts accompanying the exhibitions, Slovenian works were even more noticeably placed in the background. Krleža's introduction did not discuss the Slovenian frescoes at all, though they were included in the other two catalogue texts of the Paris exhibition. They were briefly, in just a few sentences, presented in the outline of the development of medieval art, written by Bošković and Ljubinković,[120] as well as in Paul Deschamps's preface. The latter particularly highlighted the Nativity scene from Vrzdenec and placed it alongside the French frescoes with the same motif from the church of St Julian in Poncé-sur-le-Loire (from the 13th/15th century (?)) and the crypt of the Benedictine abbey church of Saint-Amant-de-Boixe (from the 14th century).[121] This is probably why, after the exhibition, the French also made a copy of this work for their copy collection, kept at the *Museé des Monuments français* museum. The texts by Yugoslav authors, published in foreign-language editions by Yugoslav publishers, largely ignored the Slovenian frescoes as well.[122] In the best cases, they merely included an occasional reproduction. For example, they were featured in this manner in the *Les Nouvelles yougoslaves* magazine, published by the *L'Agence Yougoslave d'Information* agency in Paris, where details of the frescoes of St Martin from Martjanci and The Procession of the Magi from Mače were published, though the latter was misidentified as the fresco from Beram because of an erroneous caption.[123] Fewer materials are associated with the travelling exhibitions of frescoes, and even among those, no references to the Slovenian frescoes can be found, let alone any more detailed treatments.

The copies of Slovenian frescoes did not receive any special attention from the foreign media, either. In the *Art et Style* magazine, Vercors illustrated the diversity of the artworks exhibited in Paris by also referring to Luxuria from Visoko, which he compared to Cranach.[124] All other French texts that have been reviewed, even the more elaborate ones written by art historians, completely ignored the Slovenian Gothic frescoes, even though two lectures by France Stele on

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[120]   Preparing the texts for the catalogue involved a lot of work and complications, as nothing was good enough.

[121]   DESCHAMPS 1950, p. 9.

[122]   Of course, there were many references to Slovenian frescoes in the local press, but these are not relevant to understanding the reception of the exhibitions abroad and are, therefore, not discussed here.

[123]   AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, "L'art médiéval yougoslave au Palais de Chaillot," *Les Nouvelles yougoslaves*, 25 March 1950 (newspaper clipping). A reproduction of Nativity from Vrzdenec was published in KRLEŽA 1950a, p. 41. Other publications (without references to Slovenian frescoes): BOŠKOVIĆ 1950, p. 6; KERLEJA 1950.

[124]   Apart from Luxuria, he also pointed out the Archangel from Mileševo, the fresco that he compared to Tintoretto, and the *stećci* tombstones.

Slovenian medieval art were organised in Paris as part of the exhibition's accompanying programme.[125] In some texts, the copies of Slovenian frescoes are mentioned as one of the groups of exhibits, though they are mostly not singled out at all. Nevertheless, the exhibition did resonate beyond the borders of France and Yugoslavia.[126] In the context of the reception of the Slovenian frescoes, the report written by Otto Demus is particularly relevant, as he (understandably) highlighted them as the part of the exhibition that was most relevant for Austria, although he did not elaborate on them in detail. However, he underlined the significance of the copying project itself and wished they also adopted it in Austria to assemble their collection of frescoes.[127]

Due to the volume of the materials relevant to the present research, it was impossible to carry out a comprehensive and systematic analysis of sources. However, the newspaper archive collected by the organisers[128] and some other available sources provide a relatively good insight into the media reactions to the "spin-off" mural exhibitions. The events were mostly seen as exhibitions of Serbian and Macedonian frescoes exclusively,[129] and it is particularly surprising that even the Yugoslav expert publications treated them as such.[130] In the rare cases when Slovenian copies were also mentioned, they were mostly merely listed as the less important of the two groups presented, similarly as Kašanin introduced them at the beginning of the catalogue text.[131] Only the Italian press elaborated on the Slovenian part of the exhibition, especially the Trieste *Il Piccolo* newspaper, which severely criticised the historically unfounded concept of "Yugoslav medieval frescoes" whose use the organisers forced as an umbrella term for the diverse range of artworks created in completely dissimilar cultural and historical circumstances. Unlike most other publications, *Il Piccolo* highlighted the Gothic frescoes from Slovenia and Istria (especially

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[125] 27 May: La peinture médiévale Slovene, 3 June: L'art médiéval slovene. Sa position geographique; see AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Conferences avec projections.

[126] Longer contributions include the following, for example: BRUSSE 1950 (Netherlands); MAEHLE 1950 (Norway); AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Max Huggler, "Mittelalterische Kunst in Jugoslawien", *Der Bund (Bern)*, 16 April 1950 (newspaper clipping) (Switzerland); AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Richard Dupierreux, "L'art médiéval yougoslave", *Le Soir*, 12 April 1950 (newspaper clipping) (Belgium); AFA CASA, 1950. Srednjovijekovna umjetnost u Jug. – Pariz, Richard Dupierreux, "La peinture chez les Slaves du Sud", *Le Soir*, 13 April 1950 (newspaper clipping) (Belgium). The latter article focuses on Croatian painting and mentions Slovenia once.

[127] DEMUS 1950, pp. 75–76. The contribution was also reported on by ZADNIKAR 1950, p. 206.

[128] AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, transcripts of media coverage.

[129] BIRCHLER 1954a; BIRCHLER 1954b; "Im Kunsthaus" 1954.

[130] *Naše freske u inostranstvu* 1964.

[131] KAŠANIN 1953, p. 7: "The first group, which is of much greater importance for the history of art, comprises the frescos of the central and southern regions of the country. They were painted in the Orthodox Churches of the area and are connected with the Christian East. The second group, comprising a considerably smaller number of frescoes, is composed of the paintings of the north-western parts of Yugoslavia. These frescoes are to be found in the Roman Catholic churches of the Roman and Gothic style. They are certainly not without the naïve charm of the provincial art of spontaneous expression." See also "Medieval Art" 1953.

the works of Vicent of Kastav) as much superior to the Serbian and Macedonian murals, which it described as reactionary and rigid.[132]

It was probably precisely because of such arguments that the short history of the participation of Slovenian frescoes at Yugoslav medieval art exhibitions ended in 1956. By that time, some of the exhibits (as well as their transport packaging) had also been quite damaged, so the authorities had to cancel all ongoing arrangements to send the exhibition to the United States of America for at least a year.[133] Throughout the 1960s, new editions of exhibitions of Yugoslav medieval frescoes continued to be regularly staged abroad, initially mainly outside Europe in South and North America. However, these events no longer included any Slovenian works but instead focused only on Serbian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin paintings.[134] Meanwhile, however, the project of copying frescoes continued in Slovenia as allowed by the available financial resources, and a representative collection was established, which is now kept at the National Gallery.[135]

In 1971, the copies of Slovenian frescoes were once again presented in Paris, this time in the *Grand Palais* palace at the exhibition titled *L'art en Yougoslavie de la préhistoire à nos jours*, thus in a significantly different context, not specialised in the Middle Ages.[136] It was not until 1983 that they once again became part of a presentation of medieval art abroad. This time, they were included, together with frescoes from Serbia and Macedonia, in the exhibition *Mittelalterliche Fresken in Jugoslawien* in Villach (22 August – 16 September), organised by the National Museum in Belgrade and the National Gallery in Ljubljana.[137]

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[132] BALDI 1956.

[133] AY, 559, Savezna komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 91, Likovne umetnosti, muzeji i galerije, 1953–1967, 203, Izložba jugoslovenske srednjovekovne umetnosti 1953–1966, Ivo Frol, Izložba fresaka u SAD, 31 August 1956.

[134] Brazil (Bienale de São Paulo, 1961), Venezuela (Caracas, 1962), Uruguay (Montevideo, 1962), Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1962), Mexico (Monterrey, Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Xalapa, 1962; San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi, and Durango, 1963), Chile (Santiago de Chile, Viña del Mar, Punta Arenas, Antofagasta, 1963); Canada (Ottawa, 1962; Montreal, 1962–63; Vancouver and London, 1963). The USA tour lasted from 1964 to 1966, and the exhibition visited most major cities (New York, Washington, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Los Angeles, etc.). Afterwards, exhibitions were also held in Eastern Europe, for example in Romania, Hungary, and the Soviet Union. The commissioner in charge of these exhibitions was Nada Antić-Komnenović from the Belgrade Gallery of Frescoes; see POPOVIĆ 2022, pp. 47–49. In 1964, there were also initiatives to create a new version of the medieval art exhibition, which would also present paintings from the western part of Yugoslavia. However, the course of the events is unclear; see JENKO 2007, p. 38; National Gallery Archive, Ljubljana (NGA), Umetnostni fond, 16 (VII/3), Kopiranje fresk. Srednjeveške freske in kopije – seznami, Ksenija Rozman, Zapisnik, 5 October 1964.

[135] JENKO 2007, pp. 26–44. NGA, Umetnostni fond, 16 (VII/3), Kopiranje fresk. Srednjeveške freske in kopije – seznami, Ksenija Rozman, Zapisnik, 5 October 1964: the financial support for the project was obtained because of the intention to keep exhibiting the collection, but apparently not in the context of joint Yugoslav presentations.

[136] *L'art en Yougoslavie* 1971. About the medieval part of the exhibition, see IVANČEVIĆ 1972.

[137] *Mittelalterliche Fresken* 1983. The exhibition featured twelve copies from nine locations in Slovenia. This time, their presentation was much more equivalent and balanced than in the 1950s. The accompanying catalogue texts on both parts of the exhibition were of equal length: Emilijan Cevc wrote about the Slovenian frescoes, while Nada Komnenović elaborated on the Serbian/Macedonian examples.

The elaborate Paris exhibition was a well-considered and carefully conceived project with a concept that was very understandable, given the country's aspirations during its first major artistic presentation in the West. With this exhibition, Yugoslavia strived to present an overview of medieval artistic endeavours over a large territory, which necessarily included artworks exceedingly dissimilar in terms of quality as well as the socio-political and cultural context in which they had been created. As France Stele emphasised in a 1953 article that looks back on the exhibition's concept, the event had been notable precisely because of its broad and diverse programme, whose purpose had been to allow the organisers "to address the general art-historical issue of the Balkan Peninsula".[138] Such a selection inevitably led to pronounced differences in the reception of the various parts of the exhibition. The Byzantine-influenced frescoes were the most highlighted and highest-quality exhibits. As expected, both professionals and the general public responded to them with the most enthusiasm. Bogomil art also garnered significant attention due to its unusual nature and the way it was presented in the accompanying texts and at the exhibition itself. It could also be conveniently associated with Yugoslavia's position, goals, and aspirations. The other parts of the exhibition remained in the background, as is also clearly evident from the reception of the Slovenian frescoes. As reported by Veno Pilon, who was among those in charge of overseeing the Paris exhibition, »the great Masters of Sopoćani, Nerezi, and Mileševo, with their monumentality and combativeness, somewhat overshadowed Johannes de Laybaco and the gracefulness of his school.«[139] These were not particularly outstanding in terms of quality, and they were also difficult to integrate into the narrative about the anticipation of the new Yugoslavia in the Middle Ages. Therefore, they were not sufficiently and appropriately included in the texts that the organisers used to contextualise the exhibition, so the public more or less overlooked them. The situation at the subsequent spin-off fresco exhibitions during the 1950s was similar: there, the Slovenian frescoes also unsuccessfully "competed" for attention with Serbian and Macedonian ones until the organisers decided to refine the concept and excluded the Slovenian copies from the more recent versions of the otherwise very successful exhibition.[140]

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[138]   STELE 1953.

[139]   CANKAR, PILON 2015, p. 46.

[140]   In addition to research programme P6-0061 and research project J6-2587, stated in the colophon, this chapter is also a result of the research project "Exhibiting of Art and Architecture between Artistic and Ideological Concepts. Case Study of Slovenia, 1947–1979" (J6-3137), financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

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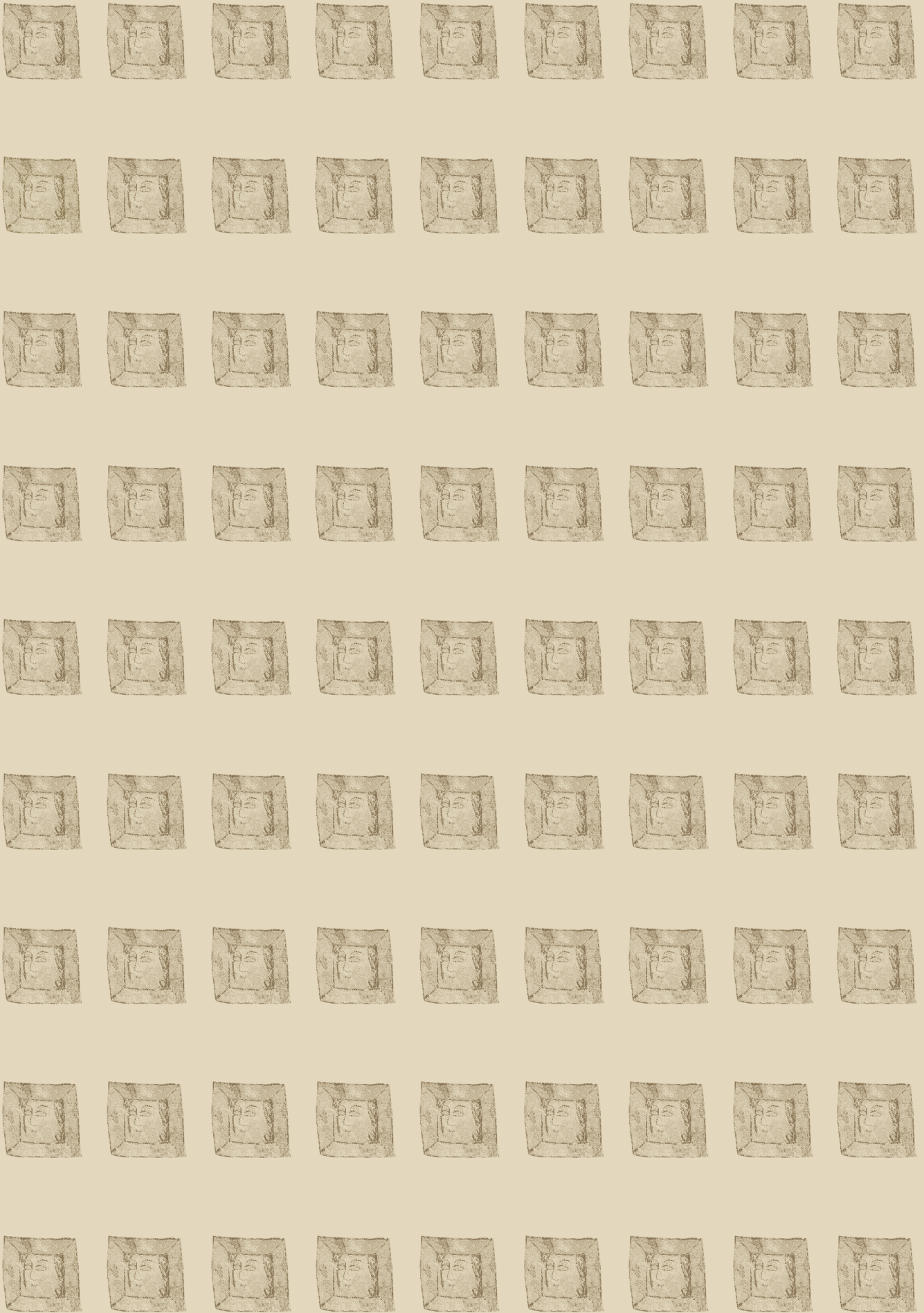
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Slovenske freske na jugoslovanskih razstavah srednjeveške umetnosti v petdesetih letih 20. stoletja

Povzetek

Socialistična federativna republika Jugoslavija je umetniške razstave v tujino pošiljala v okviru formaliziranih programov kulturne izmenjave, ki je igrala pomembno vlogo v kulturni diplomaciji in pozicioniranju države v mednarodnem prostoru. Eden od najpomembnejših razstavnih projektov in hkrati prva tovrstna predstavitev Jugoslavije na Zahodu po drugi svetovni vojni je bila razstava Jugoslovanska srednjeveška umetnost (*L'art médiéval yougoslave*) v Parizu leta 1950, med letoma 1953 in 1956 pa je bila organizirana še vrsta manjših razstav, osredotočenih na jugoslovanske stenske poslikave, ki so gostovale v nekaterih najpomembnejših umetnostnih središčih zahodne Evrope. Na vseh omenjenih razstavah so bile tuji publiki predstavljene tudi umetnine iz Slovenije. Šlo je za kopije gotskih stenskih poslikav, ki so bile po večini izdelane prav za ta namen.

Navedene razstave odpirajo vrsto raziskovalnih vprašanj, in sicer od njihove organizacije, koncepta, recepcije in vloge v kulturni diplomaciji do vpliva na razvoj medievistike in (sodobne) likovne umetnosti. Doslej so se raziskovalci osredotočali le na analizo uvodnika Miroslava Krleže k pariški razstavi v kontekstu razvoja koncepcije jugoslovanske kulture in umetnosti, vsa preostala vprašanja pa so ostala odprta. Pričujoča razprava se zato osredotoča na nekaj pomembnih izhodišč za nadaljnje raziskovanje, pri čemer jemlje pod drobnogled razstave, ki so vključevale umetnine iz Slovenije. Opira se predvsem na vire iz fonda Zvezne komisije za kulturne zveze s tujino Arhiva Jugoslavije, iz Informacijsko-dokumentacijskega centra za dediščino pri Ministrstvu za kulturo Republike Slovenije, iz Francoskega nacionalnega arhiva in Arhiva Galerije fresk v Beogradu. Obravnava zlasti tiste aspekte, ki so za razumevanje umestitve slovenskih del na razstave jugoslovanske srednjeveške umetnosti najbolj relevantni: prinaša vpogled v projekt kopiranja srednjeveških fresk v povojni Sloveniji, natančno predstavi razstavo v Parizu z vidika njene organizacije, zasnove in izvedbe, identificira razstave jugoslovanskih srednjeveških fresk, ki so vključevale tudi slovenska dela, in na podlagi analize medijskih odzivov nanje ovrednoti mesto slovenskih stenskih poslikav znotraj obravnavanih projektov.