

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

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 d'Arcano, 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/dArcano/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 re-located 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 collapse¹¹ 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

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 parroci 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 restoration 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

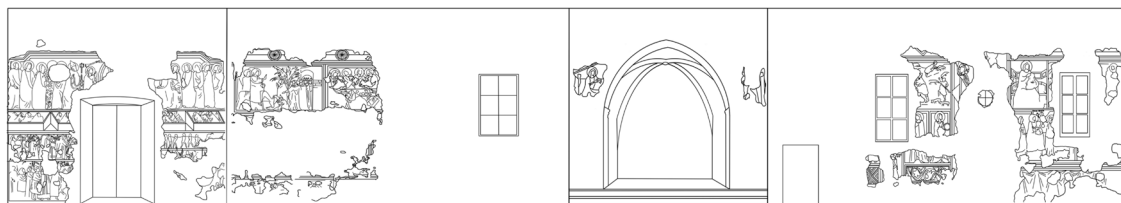
While the oldest layer reveals a figure of the *Young Christ*, the second layer shows a small fragmentary figure (Fig. 3), a typical Trecento representation of a donor. Similar examples can be found in many different locations in Friuli: the kneeling female figure on the entrance wall of the church of 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 church¹⁶ 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

¹⁴ Cf. BURBA 1969, p. 55; CASADIO 1983, p. 80.

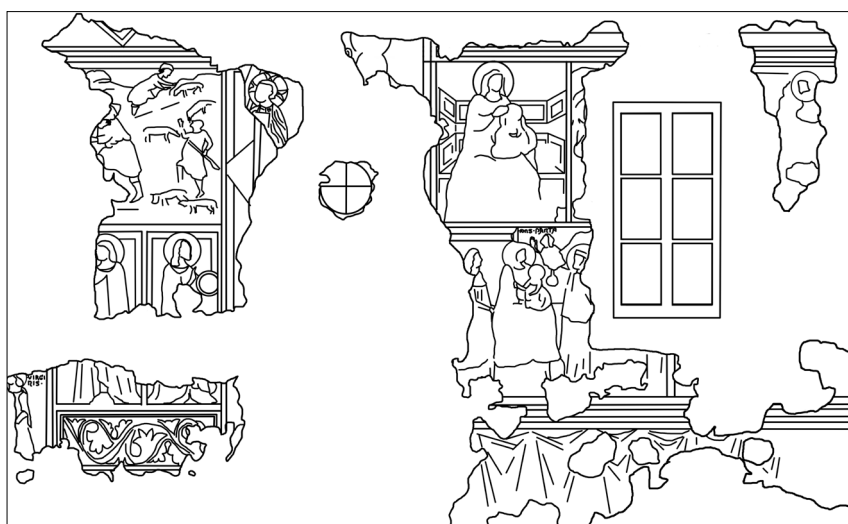
¹⁵ BURBA 1969, p. 55.

¹⁶ For the scene with Odoric of Pordenone, see VESCU 2011, pp. 110–111, 116–118, with older bibliography.

¹⁷ For the fresco painting in the Basilica of Aquileia, 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)



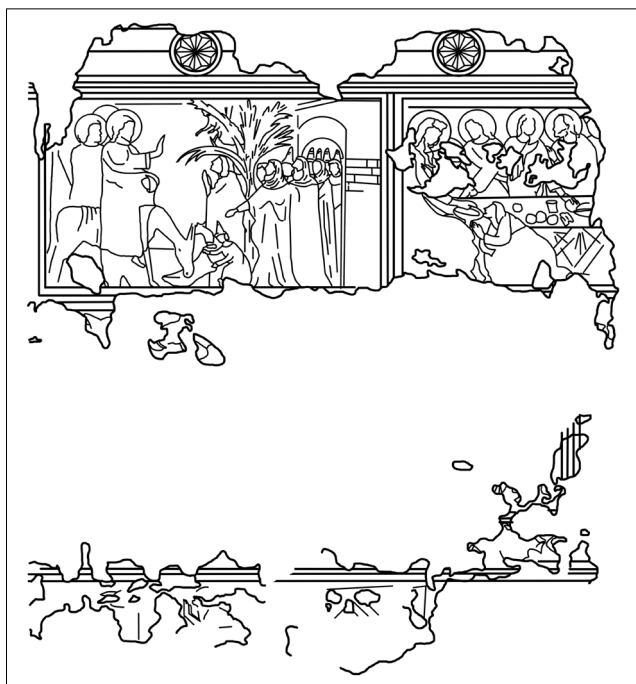
6. South nave wall, Church of St Maurus, Arcano Superiore (Drawing: Sara Turk Marolt)

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

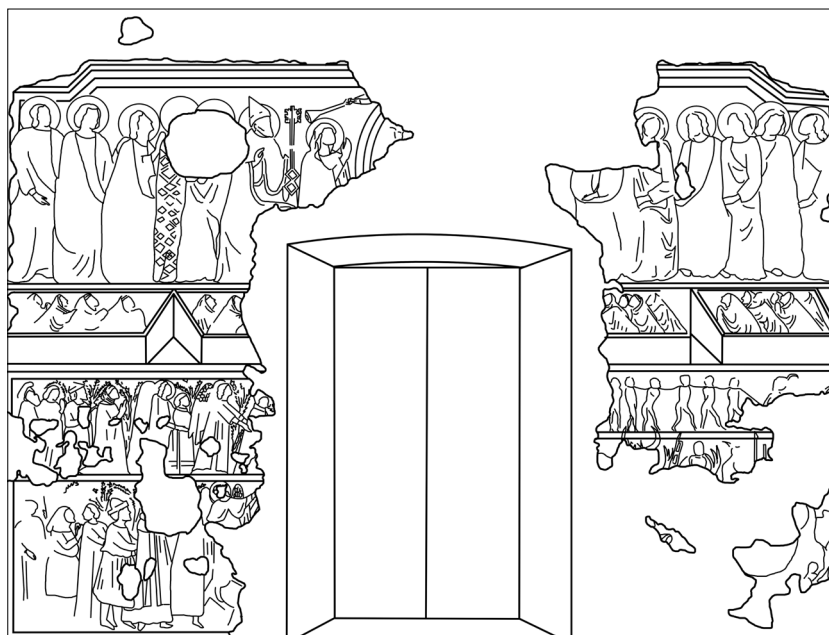
The other murals, covering all four walls of the nave, belong to the third layer (Fig. 5). They include the *Last Judgement* on the entrance wall, the cycle depicting scenes from the life of Christ and figures of saints on the lateral walls as well as the two fragments on the triumphal arch (Figs. 5–8).¹⁹ 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

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 d'Arcano, 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 Caliarì 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 dados 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

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 Pasiàn 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 Caliarì in her diploma thesis (1994) written under the

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

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-

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)



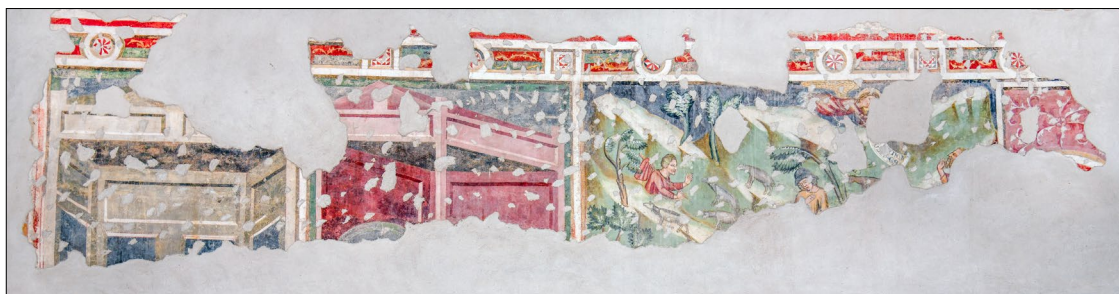
18. *Female figure*, entrance wall, Church of St Francis, Udine (Photo: Sara Turk Marolt)

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 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



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



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 Pasián di Prato (Fig. 24), dated to the 1340s by Enrica Cozzi.⁴² Another important

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 Pasián 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 *guarnaccas*) 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

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, Pesian 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 Pesian 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.

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

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

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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 vhdod 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 pravih 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 naštetni 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.