

**THE LIGHT OF
THY COUNTENANCE
GREEK CATHOLICS
IN HUNGARY**

METROPOLITAN
CHURCH
SUI IURIS OF
HUNGARY

DEBRECEN
2020

Cover images: wall-painting of the Pantocrator (by Zsolt Maklár) in the Nyíregyháza Seminary Chapel and a fragment of the icon *Christ the Great High Priest* from the iconostasis of Velyki Kom'yaty (*Magyarkomját*)

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Scripture quotations have been taken from the *English Standard Version* (Crossway Bibles, 2001). Passages from the Divine Liturgy have been adopted from the English translation of the *Ruthenian Recension* (2015). Sections from the Divine Office are from *Horologion* (Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA, 2019). The source of quotations and phrases from the Akathist Hymn is a traditional anonymous English translation.

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Designed by: Márton Borbás, Stalker Studio

Prepress: Endre Földi, Stalker Studio

Project manager: Erzsébet Rubóczki

Printed by: Keskeny és Társai 2001 Kft.

ISBN 978-615-5964-11-4

Published by: Metropolitan Church *sui iuris* of Hungary
The publisher is represented by: Fülöp Kocsis
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This publication was created in preparation for the 2020 International Eucharistic Congress.

IV.2.2 Art Trends in the 19th and 20th Century and Greek Catholics

Szilveszter Terdik

The Age of the Painters of the Eparchy: the 19th Century

Mihály Mankovits returned home from Vienna in 1813 and became the first official painter of the Eparchy of Mukacheve. Bishop Bacsinszky noticed the young man's talent, who encouraged him to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in the Imperial City, but the old high priest did not live to see the homecoming of his protégé.¹ Mankovits held office until his death in 1853, although it was increasingly difficult for him to work in his last years because of his illness. Several of his many iconostases have survived, but we do not know any of his works from the area of the present Hajdúdorog Metropolitanate. He worked mostly under Bishop Elek Pócsi (1816–1831) and Bazil Popovics (1838–1864). He painted the official portrait of the former (Picture 1).² Archival documents testify that both high priests listened seriously to Mankovits' opinion concerning the orders of the parishes, and the pastors were always warned through the deans of the importance of consulting the painter of the Eparchy.³

The style of the master was determined by the pictorial traditions of the Eparchy of Mukacheve, that became dominant at the end of the previous century on the one hand and by the painter's academic studies and experience he gained during his travels on the other hand. Mankovits sometimes tried to push the boundaries even on the most traditional part of the iconostases, on the main images, when, for example, in the case of depictions of the Mother of God, he also used forms borrowed from the Madonnas of the Italian and Spanish Baroque religious paintings. Adherence to the late Baroque style of the Vienna Academy was not as dominant in his painting as in the art of the painters of the Hajdúdorog iconostasis, János Szűcs and particularly Mátyás Hittner. Mankovits worked with several assistants to fulfil his orders received from the vast area of the eparchy.

Uniquely, he always mentioned them by name in the Latin memorial inscriptions of their making on the backside of iconostases.

Several painters wanted to get the vacant post after Mankovits' death. Bishop Popovics only appointed his successor a few years later, Ferdinand Vidra (1815–1879), a Roman Catholic born in Veszprém, influenced by the art of the Nazarenes, a widely travelled artist after his study trip to Italy. Vidra was already working on the iconostasis of Buj in Szabolcs County in 1854 and he was a "restorer" in the cathedral of Uzhhorod, where he painted a large ceiling mural in the nave in 1858. He settled in Bilky (*Bilke*), Bereg County and painted only religious subjects. Bishop Popovics regulated the duties of the painter of the eparchy in detail in his letter of appointment in 1859.⁴ Numerous works by Vidra still exist today, mainly in Transcarpathia, but he also painted the iconostasis of the church in Garadna, which once belonged to the Eparchy of Prešov.⁵

György Révész (1821–1875); of Greek Catholic origin, represented a similar trend in art. He studied at the Vienna Academy for a year in the early 1840s, settled in Uzhhorod after returning home, hoping to receive many orders from the bishop. He also painted several iconostases at that time, including one in Streda nad Bodrogom (*Bodrogszerdahely*), which has survived in the best condition. He fought in the War of Independence of 1848 and had to hide for a while after the defeat. He lived and painted in Munich in the 1860s. He received large assignments in Hajdúdorog and Sátoraljaújhely after returning home, settled in the latter city and died there as well.⁶

Révész already painted a picture of *The Last Supper* for the church of Hajdúdorog in 1857 (see Cat. IV. 24). When the church was rebuilt from 1868 to 1869 in the Romantic style of the period, and was added side-aisles with galleries on the north and south sides, he was commissioned to paint a mural with a special iconography on the ceiling vault of the

The paper was written with the support of the Research Group 'Greek Catholic Heritage' under the Joint Programme 'Lendület' (Momentum) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and St Athanasius Greek Catholic Theological College.

¹ On the academic training in Vienna in the period: Jávör, Anna: *Művésztnövendékek Bécsben: Az akadémiai képzés lehetőségei, gyakorlata és rangja a 18. században*, in: Buzási, 2016, 9–34. Beszkid, 1914, 422–427.

² Oil on canvas; 104 × 78 cm. The painting is not signed, but it is attributed to Mankovits based on considerations of style criticism. Uzhhorod, József Boksay Transcarpathian County Museum of Fine Arts, No. VF 95.

³ Mankovits' painting work has been worked up since 2017 and the first results are available here: http://magyaramagyarert.hu/images/pdf/pixit_mankovits_mihaly_uj.pdf (downloaded: 30 May 2020).

⁴ Puskás, 2008, 261–262.

⁵ Terdik, 2011a, 73–74.

⁶ I briefly described his life and art: Terdik Szilveszter. Révész György (1821–1875) festőművész, *Görögkatolikus Szemlélet*, 4(2017), 2. szám, 70–73.

IV.2.2

(1)



western apse of the nave: *The Destruction of Idols in the Age of St. Stephen*. This theme was already present in Hungarian art since the 18th century, but there was an important novelty in Révész's composition: King St. Stephen, who erected the cross, was accompanied by Greek instead of Latin bishops. One of them was certainly Hierotheos, who was sent with the chieftains baptized in Constantinople to convert the Hungarians according to the Byzantine chronicles.⁷ In Hungarian historiography, the Greek mission in the 10th century was first dealt with by the

protestant Gottfried Schwarz in the first half of the 18th century, using it as a historical argument against the claims emphasizing the importance of the papacy in Hungarian Christianity.⁸ Hungarian Greek Catholics could already encounter the fact of the early Byzantine conversion and the person of Bishop Hierotheos in the teaching part of the first Hungarian songbook published by Parish Priest of Hajdúböszörmény Ignác Roskovics Sr (1822–1895). One of the important messages of the text was that the Byzantine conversion in Hungary preceded the arrival of Latin missionaries.⁹ The emerging movement, fighting for the establishment of an independent Hungarian Greek Catholic Eparchy and the official acceptance of Hungarian as a liturgical language, also held its first general assembly in Hajdúdorog in 1868. The relationship between Hungarians and Byzantine Christianity in the age of the Árpád dynasty was strongly emphasized among the historical arguments of the Hajdúdorog movement. Révész's mural was the first visual imprint of this movement.

After the deaths of Bishop Popovics and Vidra, the role of the painter of the eparchy was no longer as decisive as earlier. Ignác Roskovics Jr. (1854–1915) – the son of the aforementioned presbyter – emerged in the last decades of the 19th century, was the first Hungarian Greek Catholic artist to gain a really nationwide fame. He studied painting in Budapest (1875–1880) and then in Munich for three years. He won various state and church scholarships and awards, and soon became one of the favourite artists of the period, creating both altar and genre paintings.¹⁰

His early work was a picture of St. Cyril and Methodius, painted in 1876 and signed in Cyrillic letters, presumably based on Nazarene engravings, probably commissioned by the Bishop of Mukacheve¹¹ (Picture 2). He also painted iconostases: four main images for Búdszentmihály (today: Tiszavasvári) and

⁷ More details about the mural: Terdik, 2013b, 189–190, Picture 1. The painting perished in the 1930s.

⁸ The latest historiographical study of this issue: Tóth, 2016, 103–136.

⁹ It was first published in 1862 (see Cat. IV. 40) and then several times more. I quote an explanation of the sentence of the *Creed* concerning the Church from the 1893 edition: "However, there are mostly two rites in the Catholic Church: there is the Greek rite in the 1st eastern countries, followed by the Greeks, Russians and Romanians, the Arab, Syrian and Chaldean peoples, each listening to the Divine service in their own language, the first Hungarians were converted to this Greek rite by the former Greek Bishop Hieroth and as the oldest rite in Hungary, it is called old, that is, the faith of the old rite; the 2nd rite is the Latin, most prevalent in the western parts and is followed in Latin everywhere among the different nations." *Prayer and Songbook of the Old-Faith—According to the Eastern or Greek Rite of the Holy Ordinary Apostolic Mother Church—for the Spiritual Edification of Greek Catholic Christians*, translated and edited by Ignác Roskovics, Debrecen, 1893, 13 [Seventh edition].

¹⁰ Gamassa-Szabó, Bernadett. Roskovics Ignác – Egy méltatlanul elfeledett festő legkiemelkedőbb munkái, in: Kerny, Terézia – Tüskés, Anna (szerk.): *Omnis creatura significans*, Budapest, 2009, 279–283. Terdik, Szilveszter. Roskovics Ignác (1854–1915) festőművész emlékezete, *Görögkatolikus Szemlélet*, 4(2017), 4. szám, 46–47.

¹¹ Oil on canvas; 114 × 76 cm. Uzhhorod, József Boksay Transcarpathian County Museum of Fine Arts

(2)



a complete iconostasis for Krasna (*Красна/ Tarackraszna*) in 1879.¹² He was commissioned to paint the whole Cathedral of Prešov in 1880. He completed most of the work: he conserved the baroque murals of the nave's vault, placed portraits of the Church Fathers next to them, painted the sanctuary completely – depicting Cyril and Methodius in the apse, the four evangelists and the Holy Trinity on the vault, but he stopped his work painting large-scale

compositions on the side wall of the nave for an unknown reason.¹³ Although he lived in Budapest from 1885, formally he still held the title of the “official painter” of the Eparchy of Mukacheve. Roskovic received important government orders in 1900: He painted the picture program of the so-called St. Stephen's Hall in the Royal Castle of Buda, rebuilt by Alajos Hauszmann. He was awarded the Small Gold Medal of the State for his plans in 1900. He also won the competition for a new altarpiece, depicting St. Stephen in the Buda Castle Church a year later.¹⁴

One of his last large Greek Catholic assignments was related to the Church on Rózsák Square in Budapest. He painted his altarpiece *The Patrona Hungariae* (see Cat. IV.27.) in 1905 and he was commissioned to paint the pictures of the iconostasis on canvas two years later. The remodelling of this former Roman Catholic church according to the requirements of the Byzantine rite was largely paid by the patron, the Capital City. A traditional, multi-line, multi-image iconostasis was initially envisaged according to the plans preserved in the Budapest Archives¹⁵ (Picture 3), which, however, was only realized as an open structure of accentuated medieval structural elements containing a few but monumental paintings (Picture 4). Roskovic must have painted the two main pictures (*Christ the Teacher* and *The Mother of God with the Child*) and *The Last Supper*. The three figures of the Calvary group on the pediment may also be his work, as well as the *Annunciation* on the fence-like Royal door made of wrought iron, but the David and Moses medallions above the main images seem to be of a different style.¹⁶ We do not yet know, who was behind the radical simplification of the original design of the iconostasis. Roskovic's two main icons had a great influence on Hungarian Greek Catholics until the middle of the 20th century.

¹² Приймич, 2014, 169–170.

¹³ The viewer is clearly informed in a rather unusual way, in the signature of his large mural (*Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*) painted on the north side of the nave: “Interrupted/16 Dec1881/ Roskovic”. He was requested to paint the work in September 1880 (AGKA, Protokoll Podací, 1880, Inv. Č. 185, signat. 3026). Roskovic asked for a payment of HUF 400 for the conservation of four old paintings on the ceiling of the nave on 19 November 1881, which was approved (AGKA, Protokoll Podací, 1881, Inv. Č. 186, signat. 3258). It is not yet known, why he stopped to do it a month later.

¹⁴ Roskovic also painted two compositions related to St. Stephen near the doors in addition to the full-figured paintings of the kings and saints of the Árpád Dynasty. The paintings in the hall were made with faience-porcelain technique of the Zsolnay Factory, the cardboard of the pictures were also painted with oil in size 1:1 by Roskovic. The two compositions of St. Stephen survived. More details about them: *Aranyérmek, ezüstkoszorúk: Művészskultusz és műpártolás Magyarországon a 19. században*, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 1995. június–november [Kiállítási katalógus], Konceptió: Sinkó, Katalin, Budapest, 1995, 340–342. Terdik, Szilveszter. Egy XIX. századi ikonográfiai kísérlet, II, Roskovic Ignác Szent István-képei a budai várban, in: Kerny, Terézia – Smohay, András (szerk.). *István a szent király: Tanulmánykötet és kiállítási katalógus Szent István tiszteletéről halálának 975. évfordulóján*, Székesfehérvár, 2017, 178–183. The hall was almost completely destroyed in World War II and is currently reconstructed.

¹⁵ Ink on paper. BFL, XV. 17. d, 328, KT T 20/81 / a.

¹⁶ On matters related to the iconostasis: Terdik, 2013b, 201, footnote 24.

IV.2.2

(3)



The photo of *Christ the Teacher* was placed on the endpaper of the songbook published in 1929, edited by the parish priest of Rózsák Square, Gábor Krajnyák, which further increased its publicity. Roskovics paintings were copied on some iconostases with more or less success (for example: Nyírkáta, Beregdaróc, Nyírmártonfalva).

Roskovics did not abandon his academic style in his works commissioned by the Greek Catholics, sometimes only the setting of the figures – especially in the case of the main icons – and the homogeneous golden background of the paintings and the Greek letters indicate which church community was his client. There is nothing to be surprised about in this period: the art of the Orthodox world was also dominated by academism, the rediscovery of the technical and formal heritage of traditional icon painting just began at that time.¹⁷

¹⁷ All about it: Gatrall – Greenfield, 2010

¹⁸ See their activities: Terdik, Szilveszter. „Kitűnő munka, kiváló versenyképesség és nagybantermelés”: Réтай és Benedek egyházi műiparintézete, *Fons*, 15(2008), 325–360.



(4)

Businesses, so-called arts and crafts institutes, specializing in the production of cheap and fast to make equipment and devotional articles emerged on the Hungarian Greek Catholic “market” in the last decade of the 19th century. Some of them survived even until the nationalization.¹⁸ The number of individual painting assignments fell sharply due to the strong role of these institutes.

Church constructions at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

Most of the communities committed to the aspirations of Hungarian Greek Catholics lived in larger towns on the periphery of the Eparchies of Mukacheve and Prešov. The significance of these parishes was shown in the later established Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, as they became the dominant, opinion-forming communities of the new Eparchy, where the emerging Greek-Catholic middle-class of white-collar workers lived. New churches were built in these towns due to the boom after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, which was further enhanced by the festive atmosphere of the millennium of the country’s existence at the end of the century.

Construction began in Nyíregyháza in 1895 and the new church was consecrated two years later, on 10 October. The eclecticism of the cross-shaped building with its two-tower façade was also noticed by the contemporaries, when they emphasized: “The new church is so cleverly composed of the elements of the real Greek, so-called Byzantine (sic!) and modern (renaissance) architectural systems, that it gives the

(5)



viewer the overall impression of an integrated work...¹⁹
The new monumental church in Hajdúböszörmény, consecrated on 8 May 1898 by Bishop Gyula Firczák, also had two towers. An elongated sanctuary joined the three-aisled hall here.²⁰

The independent Greek Catholic parish of Debrecen, affiliated to Hajdúböszörmény, was only founded in 1902 after several attempts. Architect János Bobula Jr of Budapest (1871–1922) was contracted in 1906 for building the church. The new church was completed two years later, but the money ran out, so the building was consecrated only on 22 May 1910 by Bishop Firczák.²¹ The church, oriented towards the east, has a regular Greek cross floor plan

and a dome. The sanctuary is polygonal (enclosed by three sides of the octagon) and the tower was built on the left side of the main entrance. A narthex is connected to the western arm of the cross and the façade is dominated by a rose window above. The whole building was covered with red brick, while the courses were made of white limestone and artificial stone (Picture 5).

Bobula first designed a Greek Catholic church in Neo-Byzantine style in 1904, in Jakubany (*Szepesjakabfalva*), and published his drawings in his own magazine, the *Budapesti Építészeti Szemle* (*Budapest Architecture Review*), as a result of which the people of Debrecen asked him to do this work. He defined his church as of “Romanizing Byzantine” style, as it evokes the Byzantine proportions of the building and the Romanesque style in many details.²² The construction of the church in Jakubany began later, than in Debrecen and the works took a longer time, than planned. Bobula also designed the furnishings of the church in Debrecen together with an iconostasis according to the floor plans, but this was not realised due to the lack of money. But the altar with a Byzantine canopy and the pulpit were completed by the Rétay and Benedek Institute of Art from Budapest.²³

Bobula took part in longer study trips to England and other Western European countries and successfully combined traditional historicizing elements with new trends, which was also reflected in his application of the latest technical achievements (for example the vaults and the concrete dome were built with the so-called Rabitz technique). The details of his Byzantine churches sometimes really came from the Romanesque style, yet the mass ratios of the buildings seem to be innovative. The tall nave is illuminated by many windows, but Bobula abandoned the drum of the domes and opened the windows directly into the dome,

¹⁹ A nyíregyházai gör. szert. kath. új templom, in: Melles, Emil (szerk.): *A Szent Kereszt naptára az 1897. közönséges évre*, V. évfolyam. Ungvár, [1896], 80–83. The church was built according to the plans of local architect Bertalan Vojtovics. It has been the Cathedral of the Eparchy of Nyíregyháza since 2015. See its history: Nyirán, János – Majchricsné Ujteleki, Zsuzsa. *Források a nyíregyházi Szent Miklós görögkatolikus székesegyház történetéhez*, Nyíregyháza, 2017.

²⁰ A h.-böszörményi új templom, in: Melles, Emil (szerk.): *A Szent Kereszt naptára az 1899. közönséges évre*, VII. évfolyam, Ungvár, [1898], 60–63. The church was designed by Architect Vilmos Kolacsek of Kassa (Košice). The entire church had to be demolished for static reasons, with the exception of the two towers, in 1983. The church in Böszörmény is close to the Greek Catholic church in Kassa in its style. The construction began in 1882, but its towers were only completed at the beginning of the 20th century. Cf. Borovszky, 1904, 147–148. Szeghy, Gábor. *Katedrálly chrám košických gréckokatolíkov*, *Pamiatky a múzeá*, 61(2013), č. 3, 40–45.

²¹ A debreceni gör. kath. egyház szervezésének és építkezéseinek története, in: *Görög katolikus naptár 1911iki évre*, Ungvár, 1910, 50–73.

²² A szepesjakabfalvi gör. cath. templom, in: *Budapesti Építészeti Szemle*, 13(1904), 281–282. The floor plan is on page 282 and next is the drawing of the south facade of the church.

²³ The plans were published: altar (without canopy): *Egyházi Műipar*, 10(1910), 102; pulpit–ibid., 103. He also designed the altar for the seminary chapel in Ungvár, which is similar. The plan: *Egyházi Műipar*, 7(1907), 152.



(6)

evoking early Byzantine architecture (Picture 6). The bell tower was a highlighted element, which was alien to Byzantine traditions, but the designer had to observe the needs of the audience socialized in Western culture. In addition to the abundant light inside the churches, the indivisibility and the unity of the space were important, providing a sufficient space for the liturgical movements, while making the liturgical acts clear and easy to follow for the believers at the same time.

Bobula designed a Greek Catholic church in Čemerné (*Varannó-Csemernye*), built in 1914, with a different structure and floor plan, than the churches in Jakubany and Debrecen – octagonal nave and tower in the middle axis of the facade.²⁴ This church was considered by many people to be the work of Ödön Lechner, an outstanding master of Hungarian national architecture due to its Art Nouveau solutions.²⁵

The construction of the first Greek Catholic church in Miskolc began in these years. Parish Priest Szólón

²⁴ Construction began in 1913 and the church was already blessed by Canon of Prešov, József Vojtovics a year later. Vojtovics submitted the case of the church construction to the Bishop of Eperjes in a letter dated 14 March 1913, saying that the former church had become life-threatening and had been closed by the authorities. The new church was designed by the “famous architect” János Bobula. Contractors Lizits and Páltsek from Eperjes were assigned with the construction, while Péter Melocco with the cement and stone works. The cost of the works was estimated at 68,395 crowns (AGKA, 1376/1913). The iconostasis and altar in the new building were completed in 1892, suggesting that they were saved from the previous building. Cf. *Schematismus Venerabili Cleri Graeci Ritus Catholicorum Dioeceseos Prešovensis (Fragopolitanae) et Administraturae Apostolicae Dioec: Munkačensis in Slovachia, Pro anno Domini 1944*, Prešov, 1944, 105–106.

²⁵ Krasny, 2003, 301–302; Borza–Gradoš, 2018, 692. Bobula already used several architectural elements of the church (e.g. the haystack

(7)



Schirilla proclaimed his objective in 1908: "We will start the construction of the church, which will be the centre of the Hungarian altar language in the Eparchy of Prešov, from where it will spread further among non-Hungarian speaking churches."²⁶ Construction began in 1910 according to the plans of János Galter Jr. and the church was consecrated on 15 September 1912 in honour of the Dormition of the Mother of God.²⁷

The floorplan of the church forms a Latin cross and the tower emerges on the façade. The architecturally modest exterior plaster ornaments also feature Art Nouveau and historicizing motifs of the period.

The furnishings of the church in Miskolc are special and unique. At the request of the parish priest, the canopied altar, erected in 1912, was decorated with "Hungarian" motifs and the construction of the iconostasis was also continued in Hungarian style, but it was only completed in 1918²⁸ (Picture 7).

The furnishings were made by Rétay and Benedek's Institute of Art in Budapest. Usually the carvings were made in their workshops, but the paintings, which seem to be the Byzantine versions of Nazarene art, were presumably obtained from other workshops in Southern Germany and Bohemia. The demand for being Hungarian was met by decorating the homogeneous surfaces of the furnishings with so-called national ornaments in Miskolc. Certain trends, intensified from the end of the 19th century, tried to discover the ancient layers of the art of each modern nation in ornamentation. In Hungary, József Huszka, a drawing teacher from Szeklerland (Transylvania), was an obsessed researcher of the subject. His books presented the Hungarian ornamentation of "Turan", that he considered to be ancient and directly related to folk decorations, embroidered coats and embroidery, etc. His teachings were not accepted by the scholars of his time, yet his collections had an impact on the art of the period.²⁹ Ödön Lechner tried to translate this oriental form of expression into architecture: the best example was the building of the Museum and School of Applied Arts in Budapest, completed in 1896. There are similar motifs on the furnishings of the church in Miskolc two decades later: in addition to the Hungarian ornaments covering the iconostasis and the canopy, the recessed and notched pillars of the canopy evoke the ceramic columns of the open foyer of the Museum of Applied

arches of the ground floor of the tower) on the tower of the Munkács Town Hall (1899–1901). Cf. Deschmann Alajos: *Kárpátalja műemlékei*, Budapest, 1990, 93, Picture 106.

²⁶ *Egyházi Műipar*, 9(1909), 41.

²⁷ About the church construction: Papp, András. *Halasztani immár nem lehet: A miskolc-belvárosi (Búza tér) görögkatolikus egyházközség megalakulása és küzdelmei*, Miskolc, 2010, 69–79.

²⁸ Terdik, Szilveszter. A vallás, a kultúra és a nemzet emlékműve – A nagyszebeni ortodox székesegyházról, in: Keller, Márkus (szerk.). *Szemközt a történelemmel* (Studia Ignatiana, III), Budapest, 2003, 85–86. The structure of the latter is unusual, as a large opening was left in the central part, so that the main altar remains visible from the nave. This solution was presumably introduced in the Eparchy of Eperjes in the late 19th century under Galician (Ukraine) influence.

²⁹ On the theories of ornamentation in the 19th century, the roots and their influence: Debates About National Ornamentation Between 1873 and 1907 by Katalin Sinkó: *Viták a nemzeti ornamentika körül 1873–1907 között*, in: Vadas, Ferenc (Ed.). *Romantikus kastély: Tanulmányok Komárik Dénes tiszteletére*, Budapest, 2004, 399–434.



(8)

Arts, designed by Lechner, who was inspired by the forms of Indian and Persian buildings.³⁰

The interwar period between the two wars and the first decades of socialism

Greek Catholics were not in an easy position in the traumatized environment of Hungary following the First World War and the collapse of the Monarchy. The appropriate institutions of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog were not established due to the war, it did not have its own seminary and the ordinands were educated in the Central Roman Catholic Seminary in Budapest. Public opinion became hostile again, the Hungarian identity of Greek Catholics was often questioned, sometimes calling them Romanian or sometimes Slavic.

In this perspective, it is no wonder that relatively few works of art were made in the interwar period. Hungarian saints began to occupy a prominent place in the iconography of Greek Catholic churches from the 1930s, as a result of the jubilee years proclaimed

in honour of St. Emeric and St. Stephen. A new altar was built in the church on Rózsák Square in Budapest in 1934, with Byzantine motifs taken from the so-called St. Stephen's sarcophagus. The nave was also repainted at this time, highlighting historical themes: one of the murals shows St. Stephen and Queen Gizella visiting the Greek nuns in Veszprémvölgy, who worked on the coronation mantle. This painting is one of the early works of Manó Petrasovszky (1902–1976), who was born in a family of priests and graduated from the Budapest School of Applied Arts.³¹ The interior of the Baroque St. Florian's Chapel on Fő Street in Buda, which had become the property of Greek Catholics, was renovated a few years later. The iconography was developed by Greek Catholic Art Historian Tibor Gerevich (1882–1954), the pictures were painted by Jenő Medveczky (1902–1969) of the Roman School.³²

The culmination of the historical theme and Petrasovszky's work at the same time is a monumental panel he painted in the apse of the Church in

³⁰ Sisa, József. Lechner: Az alkotó génius, in: Id. (Ed.): *Lechner: Az alkotó génius*, Budapest, 2014, 19–20.

³¹ Terdik, 2013b, 193–197, Pictures 3 and 4. About Petrasovszky's life and oeuvre: Olbert Mariann: Petrasovszky Emmánuel (1902–1976), *Miskolci Keresztény Szemle: a KÉSZ ökumenikus kulturális folyóirata*, 3(2007), 2. szám, 62–80; Olbert, 2010; Matits, Ferenc – Olbert, Mariann. Petrasovszky Leó és Emmánuel festőművészek munkássága, *A Herman Ottó Múzeum évkönyve*, 49(2010), 365–378.

³² Memorial inscriptions refer to the renovation in 1938 in the vestibule of the church. Legeza, 2011, 30; Terdik, 2013b, 195–196.

(9)



Máriapócs in the first years of the Second World War, featuring important figures related to the history of the shrine and Hungarian Greek Catholicism in addition to presenting the veneration of Mary in Hungary.³³

Petrasovszky was commissioned to paint several churches in the communist period. He decorated the triumphal arch of the church in Miskolc with a mural depicting Hungarian saints worshipping the *Patrona Hungariae* in the first half of the 1950s, so a Hungarian theme was added to the Hungarian ornamentation three decades later.³⁴ We can read about Petrasovszky's artistic principles, his relationship to religious themes and the Eastern tradition in his writings published in the columns of the magazine *Keleti Egyház* (*Eastern Church*) before the Second World War. He learned icon painting mainly from the works of German Catholic authors, whom he considered to be worth following. He did not touch on the issue of Hungarian Greek Catholic art separately, but he was rather interested in the relationship with the Eastern tradition.³⁵ In comparison, he basically

referred to the traditions of icons only by using the golden background and Greek letters in his works, like Roskovic's. His style was initially determined by Baroque religious painting and the realistic experience of the modern age on his early murals (Végardó) and his altarpieces (Martyrdom of St. Peter and Paul, Sárospatak, 1942; Picture 8) alike. His painting became more expressive during the decades of communism and seemed to be inspired by the late Gothic style of Germany, especially Grünewald: his figures became elongated, sometimes almost distorted, referring to the spiritual experience of the depicted persons (cf. the former altarpiece of St. Nicholas Church in Nyíregyháza, painted in the 1960s; Pic. 9).

The rediscovery of icons after the Second Vatican Council

The relationship with the iconostasis radically changed several times in the area of today's Hajdúdorog Metropolitanate in the 20th century. The beginning of the break with the traditions was indicated by the fact

³³ Terdik, 2013b, 195–197, Pictures 5 and 6. The sketch of the mural: *ibid*, Cat. 442. 251. Majchricsné Ujteleki – Nyirán, 2019, 201–209.

³⁴ The painting of the mural was commissioned in 1951 and consecrated in 1954. GKPL, I–1–a, 2203/1951, 1587/1952, 1286/1954, 1729/1954.

³⁵ Petrasovszky Emánuel: A bizánci művészet szelleme, I–VI, *Keleti Egyház*, 1(1934), 65–69, 95–100, 154–158, 191–195, 227–232, 258–263. *Id. A bizánci képrás mai szemmel, Keleti Egyház*, 4(1937), 60–66, 171–178.



(10)

that most of the city churches built around 1900 no longer had any iconostasis (e. g. Nyíregyháza, Hajdúböszörmény, Debrecen) and the existing ones were demolished in many places in the interwar period. This trend lasted until the 1960s.³⁶

What could have been the reason why the central towns of the later Eparchy of Hajdúdorog were the first in the Carpathian Basin, where the special decoration of Greek Catholic churches, the iconostasis, was deliberately neglected? Obviously, much depended on the financial strength of the community, but a more important factor could have been the attitude of the priest and the believers. It should be noted about the financial background, that the First World War proved fatal for several parishes, because the money collected for the iconostasis was invested in war loans, which became completely devalued and no funds were left for these works later. The attitude of the clergy and the believers to the Byzantine liturgy must have changed by the beginning of the 20th century and became dominant in the first half of the century. Due to Roman Catholic influence, more and more people believed that the altar and the priest should be seen

during the liturgical acts. The iconostasis could no longer be seen in its original context, as a link mystically connecting the heavenly forces and the earthly community, but it was rather regarded as a wall disturbing and separating the spectacle. It is difficult to decide which group played a greater role in the spread of the new approach: the clergy or rather that part of the believers, who wanted to conform to the majority of the society in all areas, including the Latin rite of the Catholic Church, which was regarded to be of a higher order at that time. An important factor in the development of resentment against the iconostasis may have been the fact that the Greek Catholic clergy studied almost entirely in a Roman Catholic environment in the interwar period, which posed a threat to the Greek rite, as István Miklósy, the first bishop of the Eparchy warned, when he urged the government to set up a Greek Catholic seminary. Although the ordinands studying in the Latin seminary had rite teachers, the two churches in the capital did not set a really good example with their furnishings.

It seems that Bishop Miklós Dudás did not encourage the building of iconostases until the 1960s,

³⁶ I have already written about this issue before: Terdik, Szilveszter. La trasformazione del ruolo dell'iconostasi nella tradizione greco cattolica ungherese, *Folia Athanasiana*, 14(2012), 59–66.

(11)



although he did not support the demolition of the existing ones at all. Every dean was asked in 1960 to report in detail, when and where, who and why demolished an iconostasis in each district. We only know some of the answers. Thereafter, the Eparchy emphatically drew the priests' attention to the fact, that the furnishings of the churches could not be changed without the bishop's permission.

A radical change was brought about by the decision of the Second Vatican Council on the Eastern Catholic Churches, which encouraged them to return to the original traditions of their rite. Of course, this also had an effect on the formation of liturgical spaces.

An iconostasis was built in the Eparchy after a long time, in the chapel of the seminary, on the initiative of Pál Bacsóka (1929–1995), with the blessing of Bishop Miklós Dudás in 1965.³⁷ The pictures of the iconostasis were painted by Alice B. Bélaváry³⁸ (Picture 10).

It was a big problem that there were no artists familiar with icon painting at that time, as the technical and iconographic knowledge severely declined in Orthodox communities from the 19th century, as they also came under almost complete Western influence. The relationship to icons began to change radically throughout Western culture from the early 20th century, especially after the First World War. Icon painting was despised by painters, who pursued realism and naturalism in art, favoured by the academies, but it was just rediscovered by avant-garde groups of modern artists. They were particularly impressed by the abstract nature of the icons. The Soviet Union sold the icons of many demolished churches to the West, although later they began to restore the more valuable pieces themselves, and consequently the traditional technique of icon painting was rediscovered.³⁹ Hungarian Greek Catholics could read about the second flourishing of icons from the articles of Manó Petrasovszky in the 1930s. However, the effect of the rediscovered icons in Hungarian cultural life can only be seen really from the 1960s. The publishers of the Socialist Bloc published a number of icon albums. The “friendly” socialist countries became the almost exclusive destination due to travel limitations, where the receptive Hungarian audience directly saw the icons.

The availability of art albums also determined the pictorial program of the churches. Painter János Szilágyi (1911–1978) worked in several places from the 1960s. He painted a large mural in the apse of the church of Mátészalka in 1967, commemorating the first Hungarian Holy Liturgy celebrated in Rome, according to the text on the painting. It is already visible on the Christ of this mural, that Szilágyi used albums of old Russian paintings as models (Pic. 11). When he planned the painting of the church in Csengerújfalú in 1973, Bishop Dudás asked him to make the

³⁷ Új ikonosztázion Nyíregyházán, *Új Ember*, 21(1965), 52. szám, 6. Nagymihályi refers to the Council and briefly outlines the process: Nagymihályi Géza. Régi és új a görögkatolikus magyarság egyházművészetében, in: Timkó, Imre (Ed.). *A Hajdúdorogi Bizánci Katolikus Egyházmegye jubileumi emlékkönyve, 1912–1987*, Nyíregyháza, 1987, 78–80.

³⁸ Alice B. Bélaváry was the daughter of painters István Burchard Bélaváry and Enrica Coppini and the widow of painter Ödön Vaszkó. She was living in Pestszentlőrinc and died on 19 December 1972 in Budapest. Her art was defined by the modern trends of the period. She also painted iconostases for Tiszaeszlár and Rakaca (for the chapel). Her art was praised mainly in the Catholic press in the 1960s. See: Freskókartonok között, *Új Ember*, 18(1962), 46. szám, 4. Sinkó, Katalin. Bélaváry B. Alice műtermi kiállításáról, *Vigilia*, 28(1963), 6. szám, 373.

³⁹ Gatrall – Greenfield, 2010. Jazykova, Irina. „Io faccio nuova ogni cosa”: *L'icona nel XX secolo*, Bergamo, 2002.

(12)



compositions even more Byzantine in terms of iconography, based on an icon album from Novgorod.⁴⁰

Parish churches also began to construct iconostases after the example of the seminary chapel. Pál Nagy-Megyeri (Mezőzombor, Ózd, Nyírlövő) was considered an artist, who surpassed copying and making only reproductions. He was inspired by modern painting and used a more abstract formal language,

Painter László Puskás came from a family of priests in Transcarpathia. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Lviv and received assignments since the 1980s. He integrated the best of modern art in his icon painting. He painted murals in the churches of many places (e.g. Garadna, Felsőzsolca, Sárospatak, Hajdúdorog) in addition to iconostases (e.g. Mogyoróska, Vizsoly). He also made mosaics mostly for Roman Catholic, but also Orthodox orders after 1990. His most significant work was the cycle of Hungarian saints in the Hungarian chapel of the

⁴⁰ Noted by my father, Mihály Terdik, the parish priest at the time.

(13)



Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Kraków and a mosaic of the martyr Blessed Tódor Romzsa in the garden of the Greek Catholic Chapel of Sárospatak-Kispatak in 2011 (see also Cat. III.51., IV.49–51.).

László Kárpáti studied drawing and humanities and then worked as a museologist. He began to work as an artist in the late 1970s, observing technical and formal traditionalism. His icons are characterized by a very precise structure of drawing and a restrained, sometimes almost avant-garde use of colours (see Cat. IV.48). He has also revived traditional decoration techniques in several cases. His works are there in many of our churches, even in Hungarian communities in Slovakia (Nagytrákány/Velké Trakany, Királyhelmeç/Kráľovský Chlmec).

Icon painting also gained a new momentum after the political changes: a group of artists, who graduated from the College (later University) of Fine Arts, deliberately began to paint icons. One of them, Zsolt

(14)



Maklárý paints icons in “full-time”, taking only church and private orders (see Cat. IV.52–53). His wife, graphic artist Teréz Maklárý also became a partner in his work and she painted some groups of pictures on her own (e.g. Nyírlövö, Nyíregyháza-Örökösföld; Pictures 12–13). Zsolt Maklárý introduced a quality showing technical and iconographic knowledge in his church mural painting, that had long been unknown for Hungarian Greek Catholics. In addition to his murals (e.g. Tiszaújváros [Picture 14], Bekecs, Gáva, Kispatak, Szatmárnémeti, Tokaj), his iconostases are also of outstanding significance (e.g. Hajdúböszörmény, Gáva, Bekecs, Nyíregyháza-Kertváros, Debrecen; Picture 15). His works can also be found in Hungarian Greek Catholic churches across the border. He is currently working on the murals of the rebuilt chapel of the seminary in Nyíregyháza. His art is characterized by a conscious search for a specific Hungarian way of icon painting.

Sculptor Géza Sallai, teacher at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in Budapest, made the new bronze gate of the Hajdúdorog Cathedral for the centenary of the founding of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog in 2012 (Picture 16),⁴¹ in addition to some iconostases (e.g. Nyíregyháza-Jósvaváros, Szirmabesenyő, Lövöpetri). The iconography evokes the typological system of medieval antecedents, the formation of the figures starts from Byzantine shapes, but the motifs of the frame structure are surprisingly modern.

Viktória Monostory creates and experiments in various genres in addition to traditional reproduced graphic works and panel pictures. She created an icon with a special effect most recently, combining the techniques of making enamel, glass and mosaic (cf. Cat. IV.61).

The representatives of the younger and the youngest generations are the painter-restorers, who also paint icons. János Korényi (iconostases: in Satu Mare and Szolnok) and Tamás Seres started from very different traditions and they have a perfect technical knowledge. Sometimes they try to surpass the present possibilities and boundaries of icon painting. Tamás Seres gave evidence of a technical and not only formal diversity, when he painted exterior murals, that are rare in our tradition (on the facade of the Bishop’s Residence and the Cathedral in Miskolc, the Monastery of Sajópálfala). Among his iconostases, the monumental paintings in the St. Nicholas Cathedral in Nyíregyháza are also very diverse in terms of iconography (its stone-clad structure was designed by László Kárpáti), which characterizes the iconostasis of the seminary chapel that is now being built (Pictures 17 and 18).

We can say that the existence and the necessity of the iconostasis is perhaps not questioned by anyone in the clergy today and not disputed by the majority of the believers. The painters and carvers, who work on iconostases, are mostly well acquainted with the traditions, but they are also highly trained in arts and crafts. Of course, the real question is whether these iconostases built with a great material sacrifice are accompanied by a proper reflection on behalf of the community: that is, whether they really promote the deepening of faith, or just become empty monuments of exhibitionism. Because it is not the size of the iconostasis, the amount of the shining gold, but instead its quality and rather the internal life of the communities, which really shows that the icons—fulfilling their

⁴¹ Lakos, Attila. Sallai Géza hajdúdorogi bronz templomkapujáról, *Műértő*, 14(2012), 12. szám, 8.



(15)

original role—can and could form their customers and observers to become the true witnesses of the Word.

The issue of tradition and modernity in architecture

The relevant reinterpretation and application of the Byzantine tradition in architecture is much more difficult than in painting. The architecture of Greek Catholicism in the interwar period was determined by the attraction to the Neo-Baroque (e.g. the churches of Nyírbátor and Penészlek), as it was typical of the majority religious communities in the country. The new central buildings of the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog in Nyíregyháza were designed in Neo-Baroque style in the 1940s, of which only the Episcopal Palace was not built (see Cat. IV.36).

It was not easy to build a church for a long time after the communist takeover and the building

communities often had to face the deliberate objection of the authorities.⁴² The seminary in Nyíregyháza set a good example in reviving the tradition, as in the case of the iconostasis. The bishop at that time, Imre Timkó was committed to the revival and strengthening of Eastern spirituality and he set the objective that the change in mentality should also be reflected in external shapes. In the case of the churches, he wanted to give a model with the new chapel,⁴³ designed by László Dávid and consecrated on 16 August 1981. The building really followed the traditions of Byzantine architecture: the dome sits on an octagonal drum above the square-shaped central hall and the sanctuary is enclosed by the three sides of the octagon. You can enter the liturgical space of the church through a small narthex. The exterior masonry was covered by brown and yellow ceramic tiles with horizontal stripes.

⁴² Rév, 1987, 8. Everything required permission from the State Office for Church Affairs. See the articles by Edit Lantos about the church constructions of the period, e.g. Lantos, Edit. Logikai készlet: Új építésű római katolikus templomok (1960–1970), *Ars Hungarica*, 44(2018), 135–154.

⁴³ Timkó, Imre. A bizánci liturgiát körülvevő kultikus egyházművészet, in: Id (szerk.). *A Hajdúdorogi Bizánci Katolikus Egyházmegye jubileumi emlékkönyve, 1912–1987*, Nyíregyháza, 1987, 65–75.

(16)



The church and the parsonage of Edelény was the Greek Catholic building of the period, which received the most attention and recognition from the profession.⁴⁴ It was designed by Ferenc Török in 1979, who had already designed several churches since the

1960s and it was completed in 1983. It was commissioned by Suffragan Bishop of Hajdúdorog Szilárd Keresztes, who expected the designer to study the Byzantine traditions thoroughly before starting the work according to the architect's recollection, even by undertaking a study trip to Greece. The architect began to implement the plans to meet these requirements. Török said that he was captivated by the double attachment to the Eastern Catholic Church, his adherence to Eastern traditions during the design of the church and the loyalty to Rome at the same time, that could have been reflected in architecture according to him. At the same time, the house, the church marks the unchangeable in the changing world for the architect, that he thought to have really experienced at the buildings of the monasteries of Athos. The completed church in Edelény has a hexagonal floor plan, the roof has a low pitch and an open truss with a hexagonal glass lantern in the middle. The whole church was covered with crushed grey marble from Rakaca. It really seems to evoke Eastern traditions with the use of local materials, due to the contrast of stone and wood and with the impressive, Mediterranean-inspired exterior and central floor plan.⁴⁵

Ferenc Török and his students designed several churches in the following decades, which were also appreciated by the profession: e.g. Nyíregyháza-Jósvaváros, Kazincbarcika, Fehérgyarmat (the last two were designed by Mihály Balázs), Hodász, gypsy and Hungarian church (Gábor Csanádi), Csepel (Péter Fejérdy). The most significant project after the turn of the millennium was the new building of the College of Theology in Nyíregyháza, designed by Mihály Balázs. Next to this building, the construction of the new museum of the Metropolitanate and guest house will start now (plans: Mihály Balázs, Dávid Török).

Of course, masters of other architectural trends were also represented here. Several buildings were designed by Csaba Bodonyi (e.g. Encs, Ózd, Szikszó). The "organic" architects were represented by Tamás Nagy (Szolnok) and Imre Makovecz, who designed the church in Csenger with a wooden dome, which replaced the modern basilica—designed by Ferenc Bán and consecrated in 1983—fifteen years later.

The general features of churches built between 1980 and 2008 can be summarized as follows: 1. a floor plan using regular central shapes: square, circle,

⁴⁴ Rév, Ilona. Napjaink templomépítészetről, *Művészet*, 27(1986), 9. szám, 44–47. Rév, 1987, 93–95.

⁴⁵ *Architektúra – Vallomások: Török Ferenc*, Budapest, 1997, 22–23, 40. Floor plan and good photo documentation with a short description by Ferenc, Török: *Magyar Építőművészet*, 76(1985), 1. szám, 31–33.



(17)

octagon and hexagon, which are sometimes extended with different asymmetrically structured annex spaces to break the centrality; 2. the combination of natural materials, stone, brick and wood cladding and structures, wood is mostly used in dome-like and tower-like superstructures or lanterns; 3. they deliberately (?) do not have spherical shapes (dome or half-dome) due to technical difficulties and high material costs on the one hand, as well as the fear of becoming similar to the substandard orthodox church buildings in neighbouring countries on the other hand; 4. the relationship of architects to the other genres of art is not always clear: there is often resentment and distrust against murals, icons and decorations.

Although most of the architects sought to study the traditions and the liturgy of the commissioning community in order to take them into account in the design, the judgment of the community of the users about the result was often ambiguous. No wonder, as the Greek Catholic communities are also diverse, constantly



(18)

seeking new ways. Buildings of the Latin tradition would still be an example to follow for many of them.

The Liturgical Committee of the Eparchy began to work actually from the time of Bishop Fülöp Kocsis, where, in addition to the bishop (bishops from 2011), theologians and secular experts compiled a document on the fundamentals of church building to help the architects commissioned to design churches (the Committee of Ecclesiastical Art and Church Building was set up in 2015 after leaving the Liturgical Committee).

The document strongly urges the active application of the Byzantine tradition in the spirit of the *Instruction to the Eastern Catholic Churches*,⁴⁶ issued in Rome in 1996, but also draws attention to the importance of observing the local traditions. Only a few churches were built in the last decade (e.g. Miskolc-Szirma, Gödöllő, Dunakeszi, Nyíregyháza-Örökösfield, Szikszó, Budaörs). It is not easy to assess them: they formally draw a lot from the

⁴⁶ The document was issued in 1996, but the Hungarian translation was only published in 2010. The title: *Instructions for applying the liturgical provisions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, <https://katoikus.hu/dokumentumtar/2976> (downloaded on 1 May 2020).

Byzantine tradition, which was sometimes too little for the client, but rather too much for the architects. It is not yet clear where the thin borderline between tradition and modernity lies (or may lie), that would connect the ordering communities and the architects, who are loyal to their professional principles, instead of separating them.

List of pictures

1. Bishop of Mukacheve Elek Pócsi's portrait by Mihály Mankovits. Transcarpathian Boksay József County Museum of Fine Art, Uzhhorod
2. Saint Cyril and Methodius by Ignác Roskovics, 1876. Transcarpathian Boksay József County Museum of Fine Art, Uzhhorod
3. The plan of the iconostasis at the church on Rózsák Square in Budapest, 1905. Budapest City Archives
4. The iconostasis at the church on Rózsák Square in Budapest.
5. The Protection of the Mother of God Greek Catholic Cathedral in Debrecen
6. The dome of the cathedral in Debrecen with murals by Ferenc Lohr, 1910.
7. The iconostasis at the Dormition of the Mother of God Greek Catholic Cathedral in Miskolc
8. *The Martyrdom of the Apostles St. Peter and Paul* by Manó Petrasovszky.
9. *Crucifixion* by Manó Petrasovszky. Episcopal headquarters, Sáropatak
10. *Iconostasis* by Alice B. Bélaváry, 1965. The inner chapel of the Seminary in Nyíregyháza
11. *The Reigning Christ* by János Szilágyi, mural. The Protection of the Mother of God Greek Catholic Church, Mátészalka
12. *The Mother of God with the Child* by Teréz Maklárý. Holy Trinity Greek Catholic Church, Nyíregyháza-Örökösöld
13. *Christ the Teacher* by Teréz Maklárý. Holy Trinity Greek Catholic Church, Nyíregyháza-Örökösöld
14. *Pantocrator* by Zsolt Maklárý. Greek Catholic Church, Tiszaújváros
15. *Iconostasis* by Zsolt Maklárý, 2011, Cathedral, Debrecen
16. Bronze gate by Géza Sallai, 2012. First Cathedral, Hajdúdorog
17. *The Mother of God with the Child* by Tamás Seres. Iconostasis at the Seminary Chapel of the Protection of the Mother of God, Nyíregyháza
18. *Christ the Teacher* by Tamás Seres. Iconostasis at the Seminary Chapel of the Protection of the Mother of God, Nyíregyháza

The Mother of God with the Infant Jesus

Catalogue IV.21



by Mátyás Hittner (?),
first half of the 19th century,
oil on wooden panel
133 × 70 cm, supplemented 154,5 × 70 cm
Conserved by Alexandra Erdős, Tamás Sándor Szabó
(Hungarian University of Fine Arts), 2015/16.
Greek Catholic Church of the Protection of the Mother of God, Nyírpazony

IV.2.2

The Mother of God stands on a foreshortening light-coloured ground against a brown background, holding her child on her left hand and a translucent globe in her right hand, which Jesus seems to support with his left and bless with his right hand. The Virgin Mary's surprisingly colourful clothes are richly pleated: her underdress is white and blue, her robe is pale and darker pink with a green lining and a thick ochre border. There are no captions on the picture, a golden halo shines around the head of the Virgin Mary and Jesus.

The parish of Nyírpazony was founded at the end of the 17th century. The first wooden church was replaced by an adobe church, built by the community from around 1760 and consecrated on 7 May 1766 (according to the old calendar) by Dean of Szabolcs and Parish Priest of Hajdúdorog András Bacsinszky. The records of the 18th and 19th century visitations show, that the church had an iconostasis (1781, GKPL, IV – 1 – a, fasc. 2, no. 16). The picture wall was renewed around 1822, but it is not clear how it was done and the dean visiting the parish was not satisfied with the result (Nyirán–Majchricsné Ujteleki, 2017, 313). No altarpiece was mentioned during any of the visits. Local Parish Priest Miklós Máthé described the iconostasis in more detail in 1895: his description says that the four main pictures were painted on wooden panels and the other rows of pictures on canvas –cf. *Kelet*, 8(1895), 7 February. Late-19th-century inventories record a Marian image for the altar. In 1881, the following entry was made: 'The altar is brick-built, with one step at the front; the altarpiece painted on a board shows the Blessed Virgin holding the Infant Jesus in her left arm' (translated from the Hungarian original). (DAZO fond 151, opis 14, no. 16, fol. 10r)

In 1929, the local parish priest asked for permission from Bishop István Miklósy to examine an old image of Mary owned by the parish and, if it was valuable, to offer it for sale to the Primate's Gallery (now the Christian Museum) in Esztergom and spend the money for building a new church. The bishop authorized the investigation, but we have no information as to whether it was done. According to the parish priest, this picture used to be an altarpiece (GKPL, I–1–a, 1929/940). A new church was built between 1930 and 1935 to replace the old church, which was in a poor condition. It was then or perhaps even earlier, that the old iconostasis perished and only the royal door survived. At the moment, it is not possible to decide whether the icon presented here is the same as the altarpiece mentioned in 1929 or as the sovereign-tier icon of the Mother of God from the

old iconostasis. Of the two options, the former appears to be more plausible, especially in light of the 1881 inventory cited above.

The icon of the Mother of God was truncated at the bottom and the top at some time and a closer examination of its conservation also revealed, that it was originally closed in an arc, as the imprint of an arched frame could be observed in the painting of the dark background. We have no information about the painter of the image. On the basis of style criticism, we classified it among the works of Mátyás Hittner, a painter born in Baja. According to archival sources, the main image of the Mother of God on the iconostasis in Hajdúdorog is certainly his work. The pictures in Hajdúdorog and Pazony show similar pictorial solutions, based on which the latter is also dated to the first decade of the 19th century and it is conditionally considered to be Hittner's work. During the conservation, the arched top of the Pazony image and the cut-off lower section were also restored and Mary's missing foot was painted after the pattern of the main image in Hajdúdorog. The Pazony icon may once have been highly revered in the community, as the traces of the nails on which jewellery and votive gifts could once be hung can still be seen on the shoulders of the Virgin Mary. (Sz. T.)

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IV.2.2 Bishop St. Nicholas the Wonderworker *Catalogue IV.22*



by *István Melczer, 1849*
oil on canvas; contemporary gilded wooden frame with
cast decorations
painting: 74.5 × 61 cm, frame: 88 × 73.5 cm
Conservation: *Róbert Cseke (Hungarian University of Fine
Arts), 2012/13.*
*Greek Catholic Church of The Nativity of the Mother of
God, Csegöld*

Writing on the back:
*A csegöldi templomnak / adta / B. Vécsey Miklós. /
Festette Melczer István / kir. Táblai Előadó / 1849
esztendőben Pesten.*
*For the church in Csegöld / given / by Miklós B. Vécsey. /
Painted by István Melczer / Clerk at the Royal Court of
Justice / in 1849 in Pest.*

Bishop St. Nicholas stands in full bishop's vestments in a frontal setting against a blue background (his Old Church Slavonic name is written in Cyrillic in the background), blessing with his right hand, holding an open book in his left hand, where the beginning of the gospel passage of his feast can be read in Old Church Slavonic: "And he came down with them, and stood on a level place ..." (Luke 6:17). There is a sea or river with different types of boats behind him.

Csegöld's Gothic brick church was built in the 14th century and rebuilt at the end of the following century, then taken away from the Reformed Church by the Vécsey

family, the patrons of the village in 1780 and handed over to the newly settled Roman Catholic serfs and five years later it was transferred to the larger Greek Catholic community. Although the building suffered major alterations in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century, it still retains many medieval details (cf. Terdik, 2014h, 179–180).

The significance of the image of St. Nicholas is raised by the fact that the memories of the personal care of the patron is quite rare in our churches. However, Baron Miklós Vécsey (1789–1854) not only wanted to please his Greek Catholic serfs, but also expressed his respect for his own patron. Incidentally, Vécsey dealt a lot with the country's water affairs, especially with the issue of the regulation of the Tisza River, which may also have encouraged him to honour the patron saint of sailors, Bishop Miklós in this form. The painter of the picture, István Melczer (1810–1896), was not a professional artist, only an art-loving lawyer, who could certainly have had a close relationship with Vécsey, perhaps in connection with national politics. This image is a dilettante work in a good sense, its creator presumably copied Serbian or Greek engravings and icons, which were also easily accessible in Pest, as these two Orthodox communities had churches in the city.

A year later – perhaps encouraged by the gift of the patron – the community began to build the iconostasis on its own. József Stéfány, a painter living and working in Satu Mare (*Szatmárnémeti*) was contracted for woodwork, painting and gilding. He undertook to complete the work by 26 July 1851, for which he received 500 forints in four instalments and 8 butts of wheat (NYEL, II–4–a). The iconostasis completely perished during the reconstructions, we can only have an idea about it on the basis of a photograph taken around 1900: it was a plank wall filling almost the entire triumphal arch and was adorned with a few very simple carved ornaments. Almost nothing can be seen from the paintings on the photo, all that is certain is that Vécsey's painting of St. Nicholas was on the iconostasis as a main picture. (Sz. T.)

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Terdik, 2011a, 75–76, 185, Picture 88.

IV.2.2 The Removal of Christ from the Cross

Catalogue IV.23



second half of the 19th century
oil on zinc plate
64 × 95 cm

Conservation: Anna Bajzik (Hungarian University of Fine Arts), 2015/16.
Greek Catholic Ecclesiastical Art Collection, No. 2012,197.
(A85), Nyíregyháza

The body of the dead Christ is lowered by three men standing on a ladder with the help of a white sheet, assisted by Apostle John, Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene and a third woman standing in the foreground. The composition is a distant variant of P. P. Rubens' 17th century altarpiece from Antwerp of the same subject and its painter certainly knew the famous antitype or one of its later versions from an engraving.

The iconostasis of the church in Nyíradony, made in the 1860s, was demolished in 1952 and most of the surviving paintings were given to the Greek Catholic Ecclesiastical Art Collection in 1983. A photograph from the 1930s was preserved in the Photograph Collection of the Museum of Ethnography, which clearly shows that it had only two lines with thirteen icons (published in Terdik, 2011a, 187, Pic. 96). The main image of St. Michael was signed by Ernő Gyulai in 1865 (Sz. Kürti, Katalin. *Köztéri szobrok és épületdíszítő alkotások Debrecenben és Hajdú-Biharban*, Debrecen, 1977, 26–27, Picture VII).

The painting *The Removal from the Cross* hung above one of the deacon's doors. During the conservation, it turned out that the picture was substantively repainted, which was confirmed by the examination of the other images of the iconostasis: at least two or three painters worked on them. *The Removal from the Cross* was reworked very soon after its completion according to the cross-sections taken from its coat of paint. The same was done with the main images of Christ and St. Michael, while the images of the Apostles showed no trace of reworking.

The picture above the other deacon's gate (*The Last Supper*) – whose style is the closest relative of this painting – was repainted in a similar way. On this basis, we can assume that the paintings in the lower line were made earlier than those of the apostles, so the painter of the latter had to “standardize” them and harmonize the already existing paintings with his own works. During the rework, the background of all the paintings was changed to a characteristic purple, cloudy sky. Only the icon of St. Michael has a signature (Ernő Gyulai) on its upper coat of paint, which is different in style, but we can still not clearly identify the painter of *The Removal from the Cross* on this basis. We know from the research of Katalin Sz. Kürti, that Gyulai's name appeared in 1863 together with István Burszky, another artist from Debrecen and they worked together several times according to the contemporary press. There is no information available about Gyulai after his work in Adony in 1865, he seems to have left Debrecen for good. Burszky died in 1877 – cf. Sz. Kürti Katalin: *Régi debreceni családi képek* (A Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei, 48), Debrecen, 1987, 22, 24. The closely following painting interventions on the pictures in Nyíradony suggest, that they also worked together here and Gyulai may have completed and standardized the paintings. The other work of the painter is not or little known. (Sz. T.)

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IV.2.2 The Last Supper

Catalogue IV.24



by György Révész, 1857
oil painting on canvas in contemporary frame
87 × 178 cm with frame:
Conserved by Ferenc Varga, 2020.
Signed at the bottom left: *festette Révész 857.*
*The first Greek Catholic Cathedral of the Presentation of
the Mother of God, Hajdúdorog*

Most of the disciples sit behind a table set with a long white tablecloth. Christ sits in the centre, blessing the bread in his left hand with his right hand, certainly saying the very founding words of the Eucharist. The figure of the Saviour is highlighted by the dazzling light of the background, shining and then gradually fading from behind the two columns of the room, surrounded by drapery. A two-armed candle hangs from the ceiling. Five disciples sit on the left of Christ, one of them stands at the end of the table. Judas sits in the foreground, staring at Christ with a distorted look and slightly leaning forward, squeezing his purse in his left hand on his thigh. Of the seven disciples at Jesus' right, the unbearded John sits next to the Master, one of the two disciples at the end of the table stands, but they can hardly be seen in the darkness. The full-figure apostle sitting in the foreground raises his right hand in front of his forehead, as if blinded by the bright light coming from behind the Master. The water jug at his outstretched left foot may refer to the foot washing.

The details of how the picture was ordered are not yet known. It was the main altarpiece of the Hajdúdorog Cathedral until the 1950s, when it was replaced by

a large canvas painting by Manó Petrasovszky (see Cat. IV.47.). Its painter, György Révész studied painting in Vienna in the 1840s and then in Munich after the War of Independence in 1848, in which he also took part. He wanted to become the official painter of the Diocese of Mukacheve before the revolution, but he was not appointed by the chief pastor in the end. He also painted several iconostases and pulpits in other churches. He received a larger assignment in 1868, when he painted *St. Stephen Converts the Hungarians* on the vault above the western gallery, ten years after the completion of the altarpiece in Hajdúdorog. (Sz. T.)

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IV.2.2 Chalice

Catalogue IV.25



1880s, master stamp B, Diana-head hallmark
silver, gilded; hammered, cast
height: 24 cm, stand diameter: 16.5 cm, mouth
width: 9.8 cm
Conserved by Veronika Szilágyi, 2017.
Greek Catholic Ecclesiastical Art Collection, No. 1999.8.
(B 8), Nyíregyháza

The stand of the chalice has a profiled rim, the mantle is cone-shaped and is adorned with two lines of cast silver overlays depicting Greek crosses, shining in front of a background with aureole, placed in medallions of different diameters. The vase-shaped nodus has reliefs of instruments referring to the Passion of Christ. Among the floral ornaments of the bowl, there are silver twenty-kreuzer coins, mint between 1839 and 1848, each showing the side with the *Patrona Hungariae*. An engraved inscription runs around the edge of the stand: „Gavora József. Budapest Pásztorý Árkád 1883 november 20-án. – József Gavora. Budapest, Árkád Pásztorý on 20 November 1883.”

József Gavora operated a company trading in devotional articles with József Zambach from 1880 in Budapest – cf. *Központi Értesítő*, 5(1880), No. 125. Árkád Pásztorý (1844–1916) was a Basilian monk, who served in Máriapócs at the time of making the inscription, but it is not yet known what event was commemorated by this chalice. It is possible, that it was made for sale, as the companies trading in sacred objects also turned up at the pilgrimages in Pócs. However, Pásztorý's relationship with his order deteriorated and he carried on priestly work independent of the Basilians from 1902. He bequeathed his property and estates to the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog, founded in 1912. He died at their temporary headquarters in Nyíregyháza during the First World War. This chalice came into the possession of the Eparchy from his legacy, which evokes the memory of goldsmith's works with coins by its making technique, popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. (Sz. T.)

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Puskás, 2012, 9 (photo without description)