

The Parish Priests of the Saxons as Patrons of the “Arts”

A contribution to an Ecclesiastical Prosopography of Medieval Transylvania*

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. . . **I**TEM PRO ecclesia mea lego lecturam meam maiorem et sermones Haselbach de tempore et de sanctis, et tapetas pro decore ecclesie. Item crucem argenteam deauratam pro ecclesia. . . These are but a few of the entries listed in the last will of Mathew of Rupea, parish priest of Dealu Frumos (*Matheus de Rupe Pulchrimontis plebanus*) drawn up on 10 February 1502.¹ The document, probably one of the best-known clerical testaments from late medieval Transylvania,² illustrates well the typical behaviour of clergymen towards the Church, involving donations of a material kind. Sometimes, these donations could be categorized as “art”. In exchange, the institution provided a reasonable amount of spiritual rewards (masses,³ prayers, commemorations) to help the donor’s soul after death. At stake was a shorter time of purgatorial torments and personal salvation.

We don’t know the fate of Mathew’s donation, except for some of his books. They were offered to the Dominican friars of the Holy Cross convent in Sibiu,⁴ and some of them survive until today. The link with the donor is marked by ownership notes such as: *presens volumen ab honorabili domino Mathia de Pulcromonte plebano Monasterio est aut fratribus in eo degentibus*. . .⁵ From another manuscript note we find out that in 1503 Mathew was already dead, and his donation was carried into effect as intended: a memorial item, a stimulus for prayers for the benefit of his soul (*Hunc librum cum omnibus libris dominus Matheus plebanus de pulcromonte contulit*

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fratribus ordinis predicatorum sancte crucis ad Cibinium pro memoria perpetua. Cuius anima requiescat in pace sancta. 1503. O mater dei memento mei.)⁶

Mathew's case is illustrative of a widespread trend: hundreds of his fellow clergymen in medieval Transylvania, and particularly in the Saxon region, acted as donors and protectors of the Church. In a conference paper⁷ I argued that, especially in localities of a second rank from the *Universitas Saxonum*, the person of the parish priest was the most conspicuous figure in respect of patronage.⁸ Even though on the privileged Land of the Kings (*fundus regius*) legal patronage of churches was transferred by Hungarian kings to the Local Communities,⁹ the latter remained in the background by comparison with the much more energetic and visually-active individuality of the parish priests. Certainly, the real support of the Church as an institution, and for particular edifices (church buildings, parish houses, their endowment etc) was provided by the local community (and especially by its elite) and, at a higher level, by the political corpus of the *Universitas Saxonum*. The inhabitants (*seniores et universi populi*) acted as real patrons (in the terms of *ius patronatus*) when they gathered for the election of the parish priests (thus exercising *ius praesentandi*). It is also true that these communities comprised economic and administrative leaders, and it was up to them to contribute to a larger extent. However, the most proficient users of visual symbols of patronage (inscriptions, coat of arms, tombstones, "portraits" etc) seem to have been the parish priests.

The present study has a twofold goal. Firstly, it argues for the assumption which I have just made above. With this aim, it considers a series of case studies, some of which are already known, but the majority is yet unpublished. It provides evidence of the patronage enterprises of parish priests (such as building stages, internal decoration, donation of various liturgical items etc.) trying at the same time to identify their promoters. The analysis comprises visual and documentary sources, heraldry and inscriptions. The second aim is to contribute to a much-needed but hitherto unpublished ecclesiastical prosopography of Transylvania. One of the results of these enquiries and case studies was to lead me to a more accurate comprehension of the individual careers and biographies of parish priests. Some of them will be considered in the following pages.

I.

IN THE apse of the parish church of Cisnădie, on the embrasure of the Romanesque window on the axis, there is a mural painting depicting a priest (Fig 1) adoring the patron saint of the church: Saint Walpurgis. The two characters are identified by inscriptions: *WALBVRGIS VIRGO* and *PETRVS PLEBANVS*. They belong to a larger mural decoration comprising a fragmentary row of *Apostles* on the apse walls, and a better-preserved *Life of Jesus Christ* (*Infancy* and *Passion*) on the northern wall of the choir. The murals can be roughly dated, on stylistic grounds, to

the middle of the 14th Century¹⁰. The image of *Petrus* is the only extant "portrait" in the entire church. No other such conspicuous symbol of patronage from the Middle Ages survives (or, perhaps, has not yet been discovered so far) in the building. Who was he?

There is no documentary evidence of a *Petrus* among the priests of Cîsnădie in the course of that century, neither in the series of *Urkundenbuch*, nor in the list (useful, but capable of much improvement) drawn up by Zimmermann¹¹. However, a survey of the movement of priests between the parishes of the deanery (*decanatus*) of Sibiu, which included Cîsnădie, might prove useful. A series of identical steps in the *cursus honorum* of different persons indicates that there was a kind of observed procedure for advancing in the hierarchy, as soon as an office became vacant (be it by the death of the holder or by his appointment to a higher office). The most illustrative example for our case is the one of *Goblinus*, whose career is much better known. He was successively parish priest of Cîsnădie (before 1349.VI.16), Şelimbăr (attested 1349.VI.16)¹², Cristian (attested 1372.XII.01),¹³ and finally, in 1376, he was appointed as bishop of Transylvania.¹⁴ After he moved from Cîsnădie to the neighbouring Şelimbăr, Goblinus usurped some territories of the first benefice, gathering church taxes to the advantage of his new office. The *plebanus* of Cîsnădie, *Stephanus*, brought a suit against him in the court of the deanery (1349.VI.16). The quarrel continued later, in 1364, but at this time the protagonists were *Hermannus*, priest in Cîsnădie, and *Petrus*, priest in Şelimbăr.¹⁵ It seems to be very probable that *Petrus* was previously, some time between 1349 and 1364, *plebanus* of Cîsnădie. The dating of the frescoes in the church fits in with this scenario.

II.

THE CHURCH in Biertan is one of the most productive examples as far as evidence of patronage is concerned. The case of *Johannes baccalaureus, plebanus* between ca. 1510-1520, is well known.¹⁶ In a very short review, let us recall the coats of arms of the priest displayed on the altarpiece (Fig 2) whose renewal¹⁷ was sponsored by him, on the intarsied door of the sacristy (Fig 3), and on his tombstone.¹⁸ A large and eye-catching inscription (Fig 4), written above the triumphal arch facing the nave, reminds the beholders of the patronage of Johannes who financed the reconstruction of the church: *Anno Nat[iv]itatis Domini n[ost]ri 1522. Erecta est hec edis sacra ac instituta impendiis venerabilis d[omin]i baccalaurei Joha[n]nis qui tum parochiani hic fungebatur munere quem tandem eiusdem nepos magister Lucas subsecutus eandem ex sua legatione testamentali finire per industriam Iacobi cementarii civis cibiniani curavit.*

The focus here will be changed from Johannes to his successor (and nephew) *Lucas plebanus*. He held the office for a long time (between 1520 and 1547),¹⁹ and he had a significant career. For several years he occurs as *decanus generalis* (1527,²⁰

1528,²¹ 1530²² etc.). Probably, his solid education accounted for his rise. Even though his name is not mentioned in the volume of Sándor Tonk,²³ one recent piece of comprehensive research on the registers of the University of Vienna²⁴ includes our *Lucas*. He became *magister artium* in 1513-1514.²⁵ Some time between 1525 and 1530 he obtained a doctoral degree.²⁶

Lucas not only finished the work of construction initiated by his predecessor, but he also contributed to the internal decoration of the edifice. I have argued elsewhere that he commissioned an altarpiece of Saint Anne in 1524.²⁷ Parts of the architectural frame of the retable and its predella, undertaken in a Renaissance style, is still preserved in the church. In 1523, the sculptor Ulrich came from Braşov to Biertan and previous literature has assumed that he was responsible for the Renaissance portals and the pulpit of the church. What has passed unobserved until now is that on the pulpit there is a “portrait” of the donor.

On three of the four available stone parapets of the goblet-like pulpit, Ulrich (presumably) carved figural scenes. They are traditionally identified as *Vision of the Prophet Simeon*, *Crucifixion* and *The Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane*. In fact, the first-mentioned scene (Fig 5), with a man kneeling in front of *Mater Dolorosa* with her breast pierced by a sword, is by no means a prophetic vision. Instead, the position of the character in the act of reading and the individualised features of the representation plainly suggests the presence of the donor. A mature man dressed in a priestly robe has the vision of *Mater Dolorosa*²⁸ in the moment of his devotional readings. This is a very common way of depicting donors or patrons in late medieval imagery.²⁹ The only extant image of a donor in the entire church in Biertan, made ca. 1523-1525, represents in my opinion the portrait of *Lucas plebanus*.

III.

THE MODEL of patronage of *Johannes baccalaureus* from Biertan was seemingly inspiration for neighbouring Richiş. The inlaid door of the sacristy in Biertan, with its elaborate lock, has a dating inscription (1515) and the coats of arms of the commissioner. At Richiş, a very similar door was constructed one year later. It also has intarsia (both doors were probably executed in the atelier of Johannes Reychmut from Sighişoara), a complex locking system, the dating year (1516), and a coat of arms (Fig 6). The armorial bearings (on red, an aquatic bird – swan? – proper with its head immersed in water) are similar to the ones displayed on the altarpiece (ca. 1520-1525) traditionally located in Nemsă³⁰ (Fig 7). I have assumed that the altarpiece originated in fact in Richiş,³¹ and it was part of the endowment programme of the church commissioned by the local parish priest. At that time, the priest was *Petrus Wöl*, whose career and life can be much better reconstructed than previously has been attempted, by gathering together scattered documentary information.

Gernot Nussbächer, in a very concise article,³² had some interesting hints concerning *Petrus*. Given the fact that in his later career *Petrus* was known as *decretorum doctor*, and no information had been found in the registers of the University of Vienna, Nussbächer assumed that he completed his studies in Italy. In my opinion, this is true, and it can also be documented. In 1502.VI.10 a certain *Petrus plebanus ecclesie Sancte Helene possessionis Saros partium Transsilvanarum sub corona regni Hungarie. . . nunc in studio urbis Rome degens. . .*, asked the officials of the abbey *Sanctus Anastasius ad Scala Coeli* for some relics for his church in remote Transylvania. The document, unpublished,³³ represents in fact a kind of certificate for the authenticity of the relics,³⁴ such a charter relating to Transylvania being very rare. This *Petrus* studied in Rome, and afterwards at Padua (1505, Padua: *Petrus Pannonius plebanus de Saros de Transilvania*³⁵), and maybe there he acquired the doctoral degree. I presume³⁶ that, after Șaroș pe Târnavă, *Petrus* moved to the higher ranked parish in Richiș. Here, he first occurs as *plebanus* in 1509 and he held the office until 1529.³⁷ He commissioned the intarsied door for the sacristy (1516) and an altarpiece for a secondary altar of his church (1520–1525) displaying his coats of arms. In 1529, when he also became *decanus generalis*, he moved to Sibiu, exchanging places with *Martinus Hutter* (*Pileus* or *Pillades*). This switch took place at a difficult moment, when the disorders provoked by the ever-growing influence of the Reformation began to get out of control. And indeed, *Petrus Wol* was the last *plebanus* of Roman faith of Sibiu. His successor, *Matthaeus Ramser* (*Ramasus*) adopted the Reformation.

In addition to the coats of arms of *Petrus*, there is a further sign of priestly patronage in the church of Richiș. Above the arch facing the central nave of the basilica, an inscription recalls that the vault of the edifice was constructed in 1451, in the time of Christian: *Anno dni m° cccc° li° completa est testudo hec . . . Cristanni decretorum doctoris. . .* His life and career can also be reconstructed by assembling dispersed data³⁸: he was priest in Gușterița (occurs ca. 1419-1436), he acquired a doctoral degree at Vienna in 1436, he moved afterwards to the parish of Dumitra (occurs 1446-1447), and finally he became *canonicus* of the cathedral in Alba Iulia and parish priest in Richiș (occurs ca. 1451-1453).

In the parish in Richiș in the 15th and 16th centuries there were two distinguished personalities with impressive careers and far-reaching influence. Their patronage involvement in the church they presided over is still to be seen today.

IV.

IN THE same ecclesiastical district,³⁹ another important medieval monument is to be found at Moșna. On the exquisite tabernacle from the choir there are exhibited the insignia (Fig. 8) of its commissioner: *Johannes plebanus*. As far as I know, it has not been noticed that this slightly-damaged coat of arms (ca. 1493-1494), bears a close relationship to the one displayed on the parish house of Sibiu

(dated 1502), and the one on the key-stone of the same church in Moşna (1525) (Fig 9). All three belong to one individual or, maybe, to one “family”. Let us discuss the evidence separately.

Johannes of Moşna is ascribed in the literature as the one who was responsible for the reconstruction stage of the church which resulted in the edifice that exists today. The large hall-church with its twisted pillars, the portals, the sacristy door, the *sedilia* and the tabernacle, all masterfully sculpted, are considered to be the result of the collaboration between *Johannes*, as patron or commissioner, and Andreas Lapicida, a sculptor and master mason from Sibiu, as executor of the commission.⁴⁰ The dating year above the southern portal of the church, 1493, indicates the end of the reconstruction stage.⁴¹ In 1498, *Johannes*, acting as a “patron of the Renaissance”, recommended and stood guarantee for the master who intended to undertake a commission for St Servatius church in Cristian, near Sibiu.⁴² It should be noticed that the initiative for the rebuilding of the parish church in Cristian came from the community, which represents a clear indication of the real patronage in the Saxon territories of Transylvania.

The coat of arms of *Johannes* of Moşna (fig. 8) represents a demi-horse issuant from a crown and keeping a lost (and thus unidentified) object in its forepaws (of which one is missing). The upper part of the beast’s head is also slightly damaged.

Let us move now to *Johannes* of Alţâna, who was a prominent figure in Sibiu at the very beginning of the 16th century. In his quality of *plebanus* of the town, and (again) with the close collaboration and support of the municipality, he obtained large prerogatives for his church from Pope Alexander VI. A papal charter issued in 1503.IV.26 stipulates that the priest could use at 10 great festivities of the liturgical year the *insignia* of a bishop (*dilectus nobis in Christo Johannes plebanus parochialis ecclesie beate Marie Virginis Cibiniensis . . . missam cum mitra, baculo, anulo et alyis pontificalibus insigniis celebrare et benedictionem solempnem . . . possit concessit*).⁴³ These privileges raised the status of the parish in Sibiu to a quasi-episcopal church.

Already in 1502, *Johannes* of Alţâna had placed his coat of arms on the façade of the parish house facing the church (fig. 10). The armorial bearings, atypical for the province, are of much interest. The shield in the form of *testa di cavallo* is flanked by four busts and is explained by a four-line inscription placed above: *Arma Johan(n)is de Olczna q(ue) Cesar / Fridericus dedit addidit Crucem / hierusolima sancta alma Roma / firmanit Anno dom(in)i 1502*.⁴⁴ This unusual coat of arms is explained as follows: the arms were granted by the Emperor Frederick III (the bust in the right lower corner), augmented by the addition of the Cross of Jerusalem, and confirmed later by the Pope (Alexander VI, the bust in the left lower corner). The upper figures are respectively St John the Evangelist (saintly patron of the priest), and the priest *Johannes* himself.⁴⁵ The mentioned augmentation is, very probably, the Latin cross (*crucem*). Is this a sign of a pilgrimage undertaken to Jerusalem? The cross is held by the principal charge of the armorial bearings. This main figure can hardly be

identified. Recently, restorers "invented" a figure resembling a bird of prey. Older photographs (*fig. 11*) of the object reveal a beheaded demi-animal issuing from a crown. It had a tail and a trunk of a horse, even if it has usually been interpreted as a lion.⁴⁶

Coming back to the church of Moşna, one notices two shields on the vault of the choir. One, at the east, represents the *Virgin Mary with the Child* (*Fig 12*), as a visual explanation of the dedication of the church. It bears also a dating year: 1525.⁴⁷ The other is certainly a coat of arms: on the azure shield, a demi-unicorn proper issuant from a crown (*fig. 9*). It might be, presumably, the arms of the *plebanus* of Moşna at that time. Between ca. 1502 and (before) 1536 the parish priest of the borough was *Alexander*. He was a highly-educated man,⁴⁸ and the earliest documents in which he occurs name him as *decanus* of Mediaş and *decretorum doctor*.⁴⁹

Now, which is the connection between the persons and coat of arms mentioned above?

An unpublished document⁵⁰ from 1515.V.02 makes it clear. The act contain a donation of a vineyard made by *Alexander*⁵¹ for the benefit of his soul, those of his friends and relatives and that of his predecessor and paternal uncle *Johannes de Olczna*: . . . *pro perpetua memoria et salute anime sue suorumque amicorum . . . in refrigerium anime venerabilis domini Johannis de Olczna predecessoris et patru sui quondam plebani. . . . parentum ac omnium suorum consangvineorum. . . .* Afterwards, it is specified that *Johannes* was not only priest of Moşna, but also of Sibiu. The vineyard had to serve as *dos* for a newly-established perpetual sung mass: . . . *tamen fati conditione imposita quod post obitum ipsius domini doctoris Alexandri in ecclesia Musnensi per singulos suos successores qualibet feria secunda prefata missa defunctorum celebrarent et ad finem decantheretur cum pleno choro pro animarum. . . . domini Alexandri doctoris, Johannis de Olczna quondam Muschnensis et civitatis Cibiniensis plebani.*

Thus, the "two" *Johannes*, of Moşna and Sibiu, were in fact one and the same person, with a long and remarkable career.⁵² Even though he did not acquire higher degrees at the university,⁵³ he managed to rise high in the hierarchy: he was *decanus* of Mediaş, canon of the cathedral in Alba Iulia, *plebanus* and *praepositus*⁵⁴ of the great parish church in Sibiu for which he obtained quasi-episcopal privileges. He also obtained armorial bearings from the Emperor Frederick III, some time before 1493, and confirmation for the augmentation of his arms from the pope.

The coats of arms discussed above, each one a fragmentary survival, may be reconstituted by merging the still-existing elements. If it is true that the arms on the vault at Moşna belonged to *Alexander* and they were family insignia, than all the elements should be read as follows: azure shield containing a demi-unicorn, proper, issuant from a golden crown. At Moşna the horn is missing, at Sibiu the head is missing. Those pertaining to *Johannes* had an additional sign, which came from the augmentation of the arms: the Cross of Jerusalem.

Both parish priests were "patrons of the arts" for their churches. *Johannes* rebuilt the church in Moşna (with the entire sculptured programme), but also the

parish house in Sibiu (portal with coat of arms above). The northern porch of the church was also constructed at his time (1509), but with the support of the municipality.⁵⁵ *Alexander*, presumably, rebuilt the vaults of the choir in Moşna (1525), but he also donated a remarkable chalice for his church (1508). It bears the inscription *D[ominus] Al[exander] P[lebanus] M[usniensis]*.⁵⁶ It seems that *Johannes* and his nephew had a special relationship with the “artist” *Andreas Lapidida*. An account from 1501.XI.21 of the municipality of Sibiu mentions that a sum was paid for a celebration in the house of the sculptor: *ad solemnitates primitiarum consanguinei ipsius egregii domini plebani Cibiniensis celebrates in domo domini Andree Lapididae fl. 3*.⁵⁷ In my opinion, this record could refer to the formal appointment to office of *Alexander consanguineus* of *Johannes* and his successor at the church in Moşna.⁵⁸

Last but not least, the kindred priests were also patrons in liturgical terms. They established a new liturgical service (*missa solennis*, *missa cantata*) in the church of Moşna. Their memory was also preserved by the display of personal insignia (coat of arms, inscriptions) in the churches.

V.

A FINAL CASE will take us into another region and ecclesiastical unit: the district and deanery of Braşov. The church of Prejmer,⁵⁹ with its centralised, Greek-cross initial plan, is one of the most interesting medieval monuments of the province. It is well-known that, at the beginning of the 16th century, the church was transformed. The western arm of the cross was prolonged (the plan thus changed into a Latin cross) and new vaults were built on the extension. A western tribune was also built, and access was ensured underneath its vault. This intervention is dated ca. 1510-1515. One keystone of the net vault reveals the year: *150II* (sic! 1511). Another keystone, shield shaped, displays three initials: *LBP*. In another part of the church, near the pulpit, a Renaissance portal was constructed. It was probably meant to provide access for a chapel located in the short northern nave. An inscription indicates the year *1518* and the same initials *LBP*.

It has not yet been acknowledged, but these three initials are indices for “patronage”, pointing to the initiator of the transformation stage of the church: *Lucas Boesbart* (or *Biesbart*) *Plebanus*. There is sparse information about him, but a short “biography” can be drawn up. The earliest records are from the registers of the University in Vienna. He was there in 1493-1494,⁶⁰ but there is no sign that he acquired a degree. In 1495, *Lucas*, as a *famulus* of *Henricus plebanus* of Feldioara, is found at the University of Bologna.⁶¹ His status as a *famulus* indicates he had no origin in the upper class, although a relative (Nicolaus Boesbart, perhaps his father) is found in 1498 as judge of the community in Prejmer.⁶² In 1507 he was a chaplain in Braşov.⁶³ Sometime before 1511 he became parish priest of Prejmer, and the only indications of his presence there are the two inscriptions with his initials from 1511 and 1518. A

record in the confraternity book of the deanery of Braşov records his death in 1519. VIII.11: *Hac die obiit venerabilis dominus Lucas Boesbart plebanus in Prazmar*.⁶⁴

In spite of a rather modest career and familial background, *Lucas* conducted the renovation programme of the church, and he made visible his “patronage” by implanting his initials. Even marked on a shield, the letters are not proper armorial bearings.⁶⁵ However *Lucas* used the power of the visual as a vehicle for remembrance, and also disguised letters in the charges of a long-lasting and all-pervading symbolic system: heraldry.

The examples cited in the present study are but a few from a far larger repertory. An important criterion for the selection of these case studies was that little was known about the parish priests involved. Even though some of the data is published, the link between art objects and persons has not previously been made (or at least it was rather less explicit). This study aims to prove that parish priests of the Saxon communities in late medieval Transylvania acted as “patrons” of their churches. Although they were not real patrons (in the way noblemen were on their estates) they knew how to use the visual marks of patronage. On the one side, they were often descended from high-ranking families of the region.⁶⁶ On the other, very many of them were cultivated men. They travelled abroad and followed courses at foreign universities, visited shrines and churches filled with heraldry, inscriptions, tombstones, donor portraits etc. In their society they were the most experienced in using such visual and memorial items.

The study argues that Transylvanian art of the time could be better interpreted or comprehended if one investigates its patrons, commissioners, instigators, or sponsors. A significant proportion of these “patrons” were clergymen. In my view, an ecclesiastical prosopography of Transylvania should be undertaken as soon as possible, given the fact that much of the documentary data is already available. The value of such a collected corpus of information readily available in print would be enormous and it would become a fundamental reference tool for medieval research in the region.



Notes

1. Edited in Fabritius 1875. See the original at MOL Arcanum Dl. 21091.
2. For other Transylvanian testaments, see: Lupescu Makó 2001.
3. . . . *in celebratione missarum Deum ob anime mee salutem exoraverint*. . . (Fabritius 1875), 374.
4. *Item omnes libros meos, videlicet: Totum corpus iuris positum cum scriptis super libros decretalium, Practicam novam, Vocabularium iuris, Institutiones, Margaritham deoce (?) et alios libros iuris canonici. Item Bibliam, Summam Reyneris, que alias Pantheloya (?) intitulatur 20 . . . continentem. Sancti Thome, Rationale divinatorum, Mariale Bernardini ordinis Minorum et alios duos libros, videlicet Thomam de veritate et Contra gentiles et plures alios libros, tam in*

- theologia, quam in iure canonico, prout in registro continentur, pro monasterio Sancte Crucis.* . . (Fabritius 1875), 375–376.
5. Müller 1878, 307.
 6. *Ibid.*, 325.
 7. *Symbols of Patronage in Medieval Transylvania. The Priests of the Saxons as Patrons of the Arts in the Conference Cuius Regio.* . . Alba Iulia, March 2012.
 8. The “patronage” here encompasses both religious/liturgical and “artistic” aspects.
 9. The charter known as *Andreanum* (1224) confirmed a previously-established status: . . . *secundum antiquam consuetudinem.* . . (*Ub.* I, doc. 43).
 10. Fabini 1998.
 11. Zimmermann 1879.
 12. . . . *contra dominum Goblinum plebanum de Schellenberg eo modo, quod idem dominus Goblinus ab illo tempore quod Heltam venisset pro plebano.* . . (*Ub.* II, doc. 638).
 13. 1372.XII.01: . . . *dominum Goblinum plebanum de insula Cristianii.* . . (*Ub.* II, doc. 996).
 14. 1376.V.05 (*Ub.* II, doc. 1046; 1047)
 15. 1364.IX.14: . . . *dominus Hermanus plebanus in Heltha dominum Petrum plebanum de Schellmerk pro quibusdam decimis.* . . *coram nobis ordine iudiciario convenit.* (*Ub.* II, doc. 813).
 16. New contributions have been made by Albu 2009 and Sarkadi Nagy 2011.
 17. The altarpiece has a 1483 part and one augmented in 1515 which was financed by *Johannes*.
 18. The study by Albu assumes that *Johannes* died in 1526. I still believe that the date marked on the tombstone is 1520.
 19. Nussbächer 2012, 85 and 96.
 20. 1527: *M. Lucam Plebanum Bırthalbensem, seu Decanum Generalem* (Benkö 1781, II), 199.
 21. 1528: *Lucas plebanus in Berthalom decanus generalis sedis Megyes* (*Ub. Kisd. Kap.*, doc. CCLIV)
 22. 1530: *Lucas artium liberalium doctor, plebanus de Berthalom, ac sedis Meggyes et Zazsebes aliarumque Sedium Saxonicalium decanus generalis* (*Ub. Kisd. Kap.*, doc. CCLXII)
 23. Tonk 1979.
 24. *AEA* 2007
 25. *AEA* 2007, 4, no. 25878 (1513–1514): *Lucas Bırthalben dominus*; no. 26028 (1514. I.09): *Lucas Transilvanus magister*.
 26. 1525.V.05: *venerabilibus dominis doctoribus Lazaro de Eczel, Petro de Riomfalwa et magistro Luca de Berethalom plebanis* (MOL Arcanum DF 246291); 1530: *Lucas artium liberalium doctor, plebanus de Berthalom, ac sedis Meggyes et Zazsebes aliarumque Sedium Saxonicalium decanus generalis* (*Ub. Kisd. Kap.*, doc. CCLXII)
 27. Firea 2010a, II, 10–11, 66–69.
 28. The Virgin Mary was also the patron saint of the church.
 29. See, for example: Harbison 1985.
 30. Roth 1916, 158–160.
 31. Firea 2010b.
 32. Nussbächer 2012, 89.
 33. MOL Arcanum: DF 245573.
 34. . . . *mediam partem capitis, unum dentem integrum, unam spatulam integram, minorum ossum brachii.* . . etc. (MOL Arcanum: DF 245573).

35. Tonk 1979, no. 2064, 321.
36. On the basis of thorough research of the sources.
37. See the annexe to this study: *Petrus Wol*
38. See, annexes: *Christianus*.
39. *Decanatus Megyensis* (of Mediaş).
40. Fabini 1977.
41. Works in the interior probably continued for a while after this date. But, in my opinion, the activity of *Andreas* at Moşna has to be dated before 1494. Afterwards he was engaged upon work in Cârța (1495), Sibiu (1497) and Cristian (1498).
42. 1498.XI.08. MOL Arcanum DF 245271.
43. MOL Arcanum DF 245583.
44. Apud, Albu 2002, cat. 23.
45. Albu 2002, cat. 23.
46. Reissenberger 1884, p. 71; Albu 2002, cat. 23.
47. This dating of the vault is very hard to explain. One explanation, although difficult to accept, is that the vault was finished only in 1525. How then could the tabernacle and the rest of the interior furniture have been constructed? Another explanation, more plausible, is that part of the vault was rebuilt after a calamity. We know about an earthquake which struck Transylvania in November 1523. After this earthquake, it is known that a part of the vault in Sebeş was reconstructed.
48. He is recorded in Vienna in 1484-1485 (Tonk 1979, no. 33, 200).
49. See the annexes: *Alexander*.
50. MOL Arcanum, DF 246279
51. . . . *egregius dominus Alexander de Olczna utriusque juris doctor plebanus et rector memorate parochialis ecclesie Muschnensis*. . . (MOL Arcanum, DF 246279)
52. Reconstructed in the annexes. See: *Johannes de Olczna*.
53. In 1457, a certain *Johannes de Alczna* is found at the university Vienna (*Johannes de Alczna dedit 4 den.* (Schrauf II, p. 99; Tonk 1979, nr. 1013, p. 258). There are no further evidence about him.
54. The large number of chaplains (ca. 30 at the end of the 15th century. *Ub.* VII, doc. 4005), as well as the endowment of the former *praepositura Cibiniensis* and of the Cistercian monastery of Cârța made the parish church of Sibiu an institution similar to a collegiate church (*praepositura, collegiata*).
55. *Post perfectionem porticus ecclesiae ex opposite plebani deputatum est magister Nicolao lapicidae vestimentum et dedit dominus magister civium pro panno fl. 3, den. 0, (Quellen Herm. I, 543).*
56. Dâmboiu 2008, 307 cat. 56.
57. *Quellen Herm.* I, 359.
58. And not necessarily a wedding, as usually is interpreted.
59. Salontai 2006.
60. *Lucas Biesbart ex Tartlen* (Tonk 1979, 282, no. 1371).
61. *Lucas Bosbart de Tartlonu* (*Kb* 13, 1890, 78).
62. Nussbächer 2008, p. 185.
63. *Ibid.*, 175.
64. *Quellen Kronst.* IV, 292.
65. Another piece of evidence for his rather humble origin.

66. The indicative *dominus* in the registers of the universities is not rare.
 67. 1536.V.17: *Item Mathias Ramazi de Bros et in eadem oppido plebanus existens electus est in plebanum Cibiniensem* (*Herm. Kirchenbuch*, 364)

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Abstract

The Parish Priests of the Saxons as Patrons of the “Arts”:
A contribution to an Ecclesiastical Prosopography of Medieval Transylvania*

The present article analyses several “indicators” of patronage (such as donor portraits, inscriptions, coat of arms etc.) extant in different medieval churches of southern Transylvania. The analysis has a twofold goal. On the one hand it argues that, especially in localities of a second rank from the *Universitas Saxonum*, the person of the parish priest was the most conspicuous figure in respect of “artistic” patronage. With this aim, it considers a series of case studies, some of which are already known, but the majority is yet unpublished. It provides evidence of the patronage enterprises of parish priests (such as building stages, internal decoration, donation of various liturgical items etc.) trying at the same time to identify their promoters. The analysis comprises visual and documentary sources, heraldry and inscriptions. On the other hand, it contributes to a much-needed but hitherto unpublished ecclesiastical prosopography of Transylvania. One of the results of these enquiries and case studies was to lead me to a more accurate comprehension of the individual careers and biographies of parish priests. Some of them will be considered in the following pages.

Key words

Transylvanian Saxons, late medieval art and architecture, patronage, parish priests, ecclesiastical prosopography, heraldry, inscriptions, medieval universities

ANNEXES

Petrus Wol dd

Plebanus of Șaroș pe Târnavă (occurs ca. 1502-1505)

1502-06-10: *Petrus plebanus ecclesie Sancte Helene possessionis Saros partium Transsilvanarum sub corona regni Hungarie. . . nunc in studio urbis Rome degens. . . ask for relics at the abbey Sanctus Anastasius ad Scala Coeli (. . . mediam partem capitis, unum dentem integrum, unam spatulam integram, minorum ossum brachii. . .)* (MOL Arcanum DF 245573)

1505: *Petrus Pannonius plebanus de Saros de Tr.* at Padua (Tonk 1979, nr. 2064, p. 321)

Plebanus of Richiș (occurs 1509-1529)

1509.VIII.18: *Petrum de Rychfalwa* (MOL Arcanum DF 285622)

1514.II. 20: . . . *item honorabiles et discretos Lazarum de Sarus, Petrum de Rychonfalwa, Alexandrum de Muschna decretorum doctores. . .* [charter drawn by the public notary Lucas Duerner] (MOL Arcanum DF 285626)

1515: *Petrus* (*Ub. Med. Kap.*, doc. XXXII)

1520: *Petrus de Richimo. . . plebanus* (*Quellen Kronstadt I*, p. 267)

1521: *Petrus Wol* <*Ub. Med. Kap.*, doc. XXXVIII>

1525.V.05: . . . *venerabilibus dominis doctoribus Lazaro de Eczel, Petro de Riomfalwa et magistro Luca de Berethalom plebanis* (MOL Arcanum DF. 246291)

1529: *Petrus Wol decretorum doctor; plebanus Reginius* (! sic, in fact *Richniensis*) *decanus generalis* <*Monumenta ecclesiastica tempora innovatae. . . I*, doc. 441>

Plebanus of Sibiu (1529-1536)

1533: *Egregius dominus Petrus Wol de Birthollum decretorum doctor plebanus Cibiniensis* (*Herm. Kirchenbuch*, p. 363)

1536 spring: Petrus Wol or Wal died, being replaced by Matthaeus Ramser (the first Evangelic priest of Sibiu⁶⁷)

Christianus dd

Plebanus of Gușterița (occurs ca. 1419-1436)

1419 (before) (charter of 1447.04.28 referring to ante 1419): . . . *praesentium egregius et honorabilis vir dominus Cristannus decretorum doctor tunc temporis plebanus in saepefacto Magno Demetrio. . .* (*Ub. V*, doc. 2575)

1423.IV.08: . . . *Cristannus. . . plebanus in Villa Humperti. . .* (*Ub. IV*, doc. 1928)

1430: *Cristannus plebanus in Villa Humperti. . . ; Dominus Christannus plebanus in Villa Hainperti. . .* (Schrauf K., *Magyarországi tanulók a bécsi egyetemen I*, p. 73; 130)

1433: *Dominus Cristannus plebanus in Villa Haynperti de Septemcastris pro baccalariatu 1 fl.* (Schrauf 1892, I, p. 133)

1436: *Dominus Cristannus de Septemcastris pro licencia 3 fl.; . . . pro doctoratu 1 fl.* (Schrauf K., *Magyarországi tanulók a bécsi egyetemen I*, p. 135; 136)

Plebanus of Dumitra (occurs 1446-1447)

- 1446.I.23: . . . *Cristanno pridem de Hummersdorf nunc vero de Magno Demetrio. . . plebano* (*Ub.* V, doc. 2527)
- 1447.VII.23: . . . *dominus Cristannus decretorum doctor plebanus de Magno Demetrio. . .* (*Ub.* V, doc. 2594)

Plebanus of Richiș

- 1451: *Anno dni m^o cccc^o li^o completa est testudo hec . . . Cristanni decretorum doctoris. . .* (inscription in the church of Richiș)
- 1453.I.28: *Venerabilibus et egregiis viris dominis Christanno de Ryanfalw ac Georgio plebano de Sebes canonicoque ecclesiae Transsiluanensis, sacri iuris canonici doctoribus. . .* (*Ub.* V, doc. 2808)
- 1453.II.10 : *Cristannus de Ryanfalw, Georgius de Sebes decretorum doctores. . .* (*Ub.* V, doc. 2823)
- 1453.X.08: *Nos Christianus ac Georgius decretorum doctores, rectores ecclesiarum parochialium in Ryhanfalva et Zasschebes . . .* (*Ub.* V, doc. 2886)

Johannes de Olczna*Plebanus of Moșna* (occurs ca. 1477-1498)

- 1477.IX.23: *Johannes de Mussna, plebanus decanatusque Meggyensis decanus* (*Ub.* VII, doc. 4206)
- 1477: *Johannes plebanus de Muschna et decanus megyensis* [*Hunc librum ego Johannes plebanus de Muschna et decanus megyensis sub anno domini MCCC-CLXXVII emi iusto titulo pro florenis tredecim a Paulo Comitibus de Corona*] (F. Müller, *Die Incunabeln. . .*, p. 310)
- 1481.05.14: *Johanni de Mwszna et Hieronimo de Segesd decanis* (*Ub.* VII, doc. 4413)
- 1481.06.04: *Johannes de Musna canonicus ecclesie nostre* [ie Transsilvane] *et Maray* [??? *Hieronimus* ??] *de Seges ecclesiarum plebani* (*Ub.* VII, doc. 4415)
- 1481.11.17: *honorabilis dominus Johannes canonicus ecclesie nostre prefate* [ie Albensis Tr.] *ac plebanus parochialis ecclesie de Mwsna. . .* (*Ub.* VII, doc. 4448)
- 1492.XI. 06: *Johannes de Muschna* (MOL Arcanum DF 286728) (Concerning the division of the depopulated village *Farkastelke* between neighbouring Moșna and Mediaș)
- 1493.VI.08: *dominus Johannes de Olczona plebanus de Muschna necnon socius et concanonicus frater noster* (MOL Arcanum DF 292054)
- 1498.11.08: *Johannes de Muschna plebanus et canonicus ecclesie Transsilvane. . .* (MOL Arcanum DF 245271) (concerning the contract between *Andreas Lapicida* and the community of Cristian)

Plebanus of Sibiu (occurs ca. 1501/1502-1511)

- 1502: *Arma Johan(n)is de Olczna q(ue) Cesar / Fridericus dedit addidit Crucem / hierusolima sancta alma Roma / firmauit Anno dom(in)i 1502* (coat of arms on the parish house)

- 1503.IV.26: . . . *dilectus nobis in Christo Johannes plebanus parochialis ecclesie beate Marie Virginis Cibiniensis*. . . (papal privilege: . . . *missam cum mitra, baculo, anulo et alyis pontificalibus insigniis celebrare et benedictionem solempnem . . . posseat concessit*.) (MOL Arcanum DF 245583)
- 1505.X.10: . . . *Johannes de Olczna Cibiniensis, Blasius Schellenburgensis ecclesiarum parochialium plebani*. . . (MOL Arcanum DF 292123)
- 1507.X.13: . . . *domino Johanni de Olczna plebano et preposito ecclesie Cibiniensis*. . . (MOL Arcanum DF 292219)
- 1511.VII.04 : *Johannes* died (Seivert 1777, p. 6)

Alexander dd

Plebanus of Moşna (occurs ca. 1502-1525)

- 1502: *pro parte venerabilis et egregii viri Alexandri de Mozna decani* (MOL Arcanum, DF 246273)
- 1505: *Alexander plebanus ac legum et decretorum doctor ecclesie parochialis plebanus* (*Ub. Kisd. Kap.*, doc. CLXVI)
- 1508: *1508 D[ominus] Al[exander] P[lebanus] M[usniensis]*, inscription on a chalice (Dâmboiu 2008, p. 307 cat. 56)
- 1509.VIII.18: *Alexandrum de Mwsna* (MOL Arcanum, DF 285622)
- 1514.II.20: .. *item honorabiles et discretos Lazarum de Sarus, Petrum de Rychonfalwa, Alexandrum de Muschna decretorum doctores*. . . (MOL Arcanum, DF 285626)
- 1515.05.02: . . . *egregius dominus Alexander de Olczna utriusque juris doctor plebanus et rector memorate parochialis ecclesie Muschnensis*. . . Donation of a vineyard for the church in Moşna (MOL Arcanum, DF 246279)
- 1519: *Alexander juris utriusque doctor, plebanus de Musna, et decanus generalis capituli Medjesiensis* (*Ub. Med. Kap.*, doc. XXXIV)
- 1519.06.11: *Venerabili Alexandro dd decano* (MOL Arcanum, Dl. 246282)
- 1520: *Alexander utriusque Juris doctor Muschnensis plebanus decanusque generalis sedis Medgiensis* (*Ub. Kisd. Kap.*, doc. CC; MOL Arcanum, DF 246120)
- 1521: *Alexander* (*Ub. Med. Kap.*, doc. XXXVIII; doc. XL)



Fig. 1. Cisnădie.
Portrait of *Petrus plebanus*



Fig. 2. Biertan, altarpiece.
Coat of arms of *Johannes plebanus* (1515)

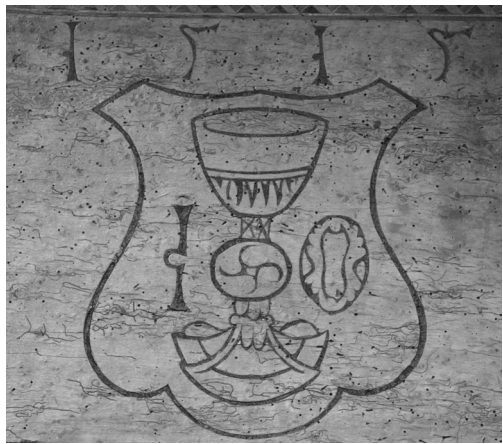


Fig. 3. Biertan, sacristy door.
Coat of arms of *Johannes plebanus* (1515)

NOTE:

If not marked otherwise, the photographs are by C. Firea.

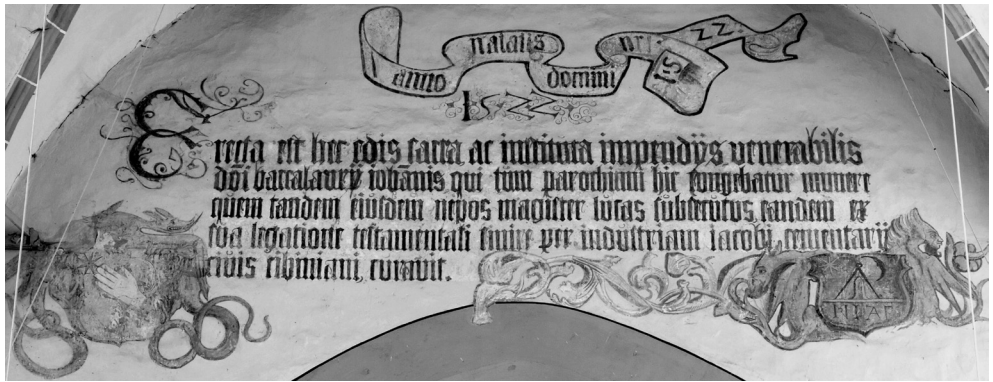


Fig. 4. Biertan. Memorial inscription of 1522



Fig. 5. Biertan, pulpit. Portrait of the donor *Lucas Plebanus* (ca. 1523)

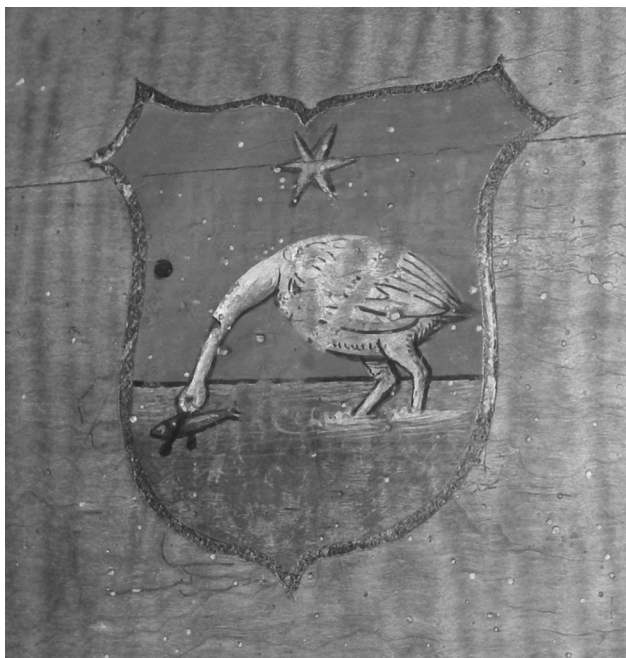


Fig. 6.
Richiș, sacristy door.
Coat of arms of *Petrus Wöl*
(attr.) (1516)



Fig. 7.
Mediaș, altarpiece of Richiș.
Coat of arms of *Petrus Wöl* (attr.)
(ca. 1520–25)



Fig. 8
Mořna, tabernacle.
Coat of arms of *Johannes de Olczna*
(ca. 1493)



Fig. 9
Mořna, vaults of the choir.
Coat of arms of *Alexander plebanus*
(attr.) (1525).
Photo R. Lupescu



Fig. 10.
 Sibiu, parish house.
 Coat of arms of *Johannes de Olczna* (1502)
 actual aspect.



Fig. 11
 Sibiu, parish house.
 Coat of arms of *Johannes de Olczna* (1502)
 previous aspect.
 Photo R. Olteanu



Fig. 12. Moşna, vaults of the choir.
Keystone with *Virgin Mary and the Child* (1525). Photo R. Lupescu.

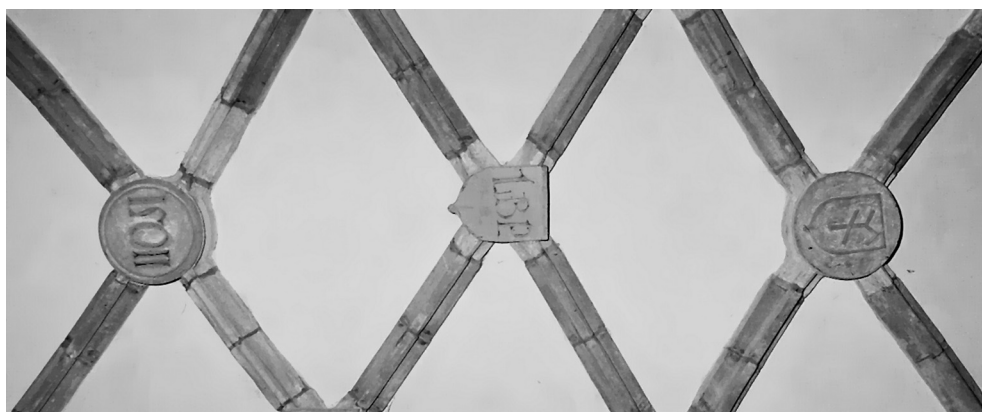


Fig. 13. Prejmer, vaults under the tribune.
Initials of *Lucas Boesbartus Plebanus* (1510). Photo Sz. Tamás.

Echi letterari italiani nella Transilvania del XIX secolo*

GIORDANO ALTAROZZI

L'OTTOCENTO È definito a ragione il secolo delle nazionalità. Nel corso di questo secolo «lungo» diverse popolazioni prendono coscienza delle loro peculiarità e della loro individualità storica, cercando la propria affermazione prima culturale e poi politica. Tale processo segue però traiettorie diverse a seconda che si faccia riferimento alla parte occidentale o a quella centro-orientale del continente, con conseguenti fenomeni diversi e una differente periodizzazione. Mentre infatti in Europa occidentale lo Stato moderno, affermatosi già nel corso del XV secolo, porta con il suo accentramento territoriale del potere a una prima omogeneizzazione delle masse e alla comparsa di primi nuclei nazionali,¹ in quella centro-orientale l'affermazione della nuova forma di organizzazione del potere risulta più fragile, e proprio qui la rifeudalizzazione che caratterizza molte parti del continente durante la crisi del Seicento è più forte.² Questo passo indietro sul piano del sistema politico produce un ritardo anche su quello culturale e sullo sviluppo di un senso di appartenenza nazionale. Mentre infatti in Europa occidentale, interessata pure da frequenti e consistenti penetrazioni da parte di elementi allogeni durante l'epoca medievale, la centralizzazione politica e culturale comporta una progressiva e rapida assimilazione di tali elementi e la conseguente nascita di una nazione in senso moderno, favorita anche dalla particolare conformazione geografica che facilita l'identificazione di frontiere naturali chiare, nella parte sud-orientale del continente la situazione rimane più fluida.³ In mancanza di un potere centrale forte, le differenze locali rimangono consistenti, e alle nazionalità storiche, spesso dominanti, si affiancano una serie di popolazioni che mantengono lingua, cultura, usi, costumi e spesso istituzioni proprie, e che danno

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