

# Icon Painters of Lancrăm

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ANA DUMITRAN

**T**HOUGH CONSECRATED since its first bibliographical record as a center of Romanian glass painting, one of the oldest and remarkable from an artistic point of view, every time the research was resumed Lancrăm proved to be a more and more complex and hard to clear topic. Actually, one could say that each step forward has rather been a collateral progress and even an upheaval of the few certainties related to the icon painters of this place near Sebeș, which became well known first of all as the place of birth of Lucian Blaga. The literature accumulated over time is not substantial in quantity, compared to things written on other centers of glass icons, and most of it is not even relevant. Therefore it will be reviewed only in a selective manner, with comments only related to those works that contributed to a real progress of research.

The author of the first study on Lancrăm as an artistic center was Gheorghe Pavelescu, who included the new place on the map of Transylvanian Romanian painting in 1942, along with Maierii Bălgradului and Laz, another neighbouring place.<sup>1</sup> The conclusions drawn on that occasion were supported by discussions with the inhabitants of the village, who named the Costea family as keepers of the secret of glass painting and indicated the icon heritage of the church, where a group of icons of feasts has been discovered, among them one painted in 1787 by Nicolae Zugravul (“The Painter”), an icon of Jesus painted by Ioan Costea in 1841 and a “Dormition of the Mother of God” painted by Ilie Costea in 1877. Piled up in a single paragraph, rather as an information than an intent to create a coherent construction, this confuse way of describing the topic makes it impossible to understand if the author supported the idea of a kinship between the three mentioned painters, especially between the first two, or not. Ștefan Meteș was in favor of the version suggesting kinship and he provided us a family tree in which each of the three artists represents a generation.<sup>2</sup> Juliana and Dumitru Dancu doubted the kinship without totally excluding it, while they mainly stressed the stylistic differences between the icons, the same Gheorghe Pavelescu had studied.<sup>3</sup>

The Dancus mentioned another name Gheorghe Pavelescu hadn't been noticing, "Ba[...] zug[rav] (painter)"<sup>4</sup>, creator of four icons ("Saint Elias", "Saint Demeter", "Saint George" and "Synaxis of the Archangels" – the latter with a signature) which are regarded to be older than the feast icons from 1787.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, nothing is said about him being part of the Costea family or even of the group of icon painters from Lancrăm. In Marius Porumb's view of things, this painter became known as Barbu Zugravul and his relationship to Lancrăm was considered accidental and materialized only in the painting of the four icons for the local church.<sup>6</sup> For the researcher from Cluj, Nicolae Zugravul himself only had such a transient relationship to Lancrăm.<sup>7</sup>

While probably taking into account certain similitudes between the feast icons of Nicolae from 1787 and two icons from Galda de Jos (district of Alba), found in a private collection from Bucharest (white background, decoration of the margins made out of rhombs circumscribed by zigzag bands, coloring), the Dancus made a connection between Lancrăm and their author, "Petru Zugrav", who has signed one of them in 1795. The doubt related to his workshop – "maybe in Lancrăm"<sup>8</sup> – was proven right, because later on Ioana Cristache-Panait has showed that the author of these pieces of work is Petru of Topârcea.<sup>9</sup>

Back to the two Costea icon painters, Ioan and Ilie, the Dancus see them as father and son, but nothing of the son's work was found in the Lancrăm church, not even the icon dated 1877 that Pavelescu had seen, just an incompetent "restoration" of the icon "Saint Theodore Tyro", dated 1831, March 14, that is thought to be the work of his father.<sup>10</sup>

In 1959 the bishopry of Alba Iulia took over the custody of some of the icons that were the heritage of the church in Lancrăm. Among the works that left the village in that year there was a "Lamentation of Jesus" signed by "Ioan Costea, Lancrem, 1823", the only painting known up to our days that explicitly mentions Lancrăm as the painters residence. The credits for discovering this icon go to Gelu-Mihai Hărdălău,<sup>11</sup> who assigned the initiative of using silvered and gilded paper in the technical process to the artist, as the use of these accessories in Lancrăm had been first noticed in 1839, for an icon of the "Mother of God surrounded by prophets", painted for the church in Văltori, near Zlatna.<sup>12</sup>

A remarkable contribution to the history of the center was recently made by Ioana Rustoiu, who took the task of studying the parish registers. Her findings, though they do not clear the problem of genealogies, shed a light on social and demographic realities which – we have to take it – won't ever bring more. First of all, the word "painter" was never found, although there are certain notes on the occupation of those who, at a certain point in time, got married, baptized their children or were buried in the parish cemetery. Moreover, since they are common, it was predictable for names such as Nicolae, Ioan, Petru or Ilie to be

found among the men of the Costea family. The chance to trace the icon painters thus depended on the rarity of these names and on the possibility of the succession of generations to follow the family tree already made by Gheorghe Pavelescu.

The results of this direction of research were the following: one Nicolae Costea got married in 1774 and the next year he baptized a son, Petru. He had two more daughters.<sup>13</sup> There is no other information on him.

In 1809, a son was born to Petru Costea, Ioan, who died in 1814. When his death was registered, the profession of his father was mentioned as well: institutor.<sup>14</sup> This Peter might have been a painter as well, but he definitely is not the same whose name was mentioned in connection with Lancrăm, because it was proven that one is indeed Petru from Topârcea. The institutor Petru Costea baptized another son with the name of Ioan in 1816.<sup>15</sup> This one is also not the painter with the same name usually mentioned, because the icon from 1823 is too well painted to be the work of the beginner (the artist would have been 7 years old at that time !). So he must have been born years before. Another Ioan Costea is mentioned in the parish register beginning with 1813, when he baptizes the first of his ten children. He lived until 1852.<sup>16</sup> Because in the parish register there is no other mention of anyone with this name, he must very likely be the painter who signed the icons from 1823 and 1841. But none of his children is called Ilie.

We find the future painter with this name among the descendants of the institutor Petru. He was born in 1852, son to Pavel Costea, Petru's youngest son, so he was a grandson to the latter. He also had 10 children.<sup>17</sup> He died on the 1st of January 1921.<sup>18</sup>

So the painters are pretty distant relatives. Maybe Ioan Costea the painter and Petru Costea the institutor were relatives, but not of the first degree. The two seem to have been of the same generation. Ioan might have been a great-uncle to Ilie, but their kinship is irrelevant, as the death year of the first is the same with the latter's year of birth. Generally, for a transmission of the craft within the family, the intermediary generations have to be taken into account.

The in-depth research of the biography of Petru from Topârcea shed a new light on his collaborator's contribution in accomplishing the mural painting of the church from his birthplace, done in two stages: in 1789 and 1807, every time with the help of "Nicolae Zugrav (painter) [from] Ludoș".<sup>19</sup> While Ioana Cristache-Panait<sup>20</sup> and Alexandru Hamat<sup>21</sup> both agree that this was Petru's apprentice, the second researcher goes further and, fundamented on a detailed stylistic analysis of the icons signed by Nicolae from Ludoș, compared to the feast icons of Nicolae Zugravul from 1787, claims the two are one and the same person.<sup>22</sup> Because he is too difficult to contradict, the list of the painters from Lancrăm loses another name and, more important, the chance of being considered of old age, as

the oldest icon with a date assigned and certainly painted by an artist from Lancrăm becomes the one signed by Ioan Costea in 1823.

**A**S A conclusion we can say that today's stage of research is as follows: from the painters active in Lancrăm, two are known, with the names of Ioan Costea, with paintings dated between 1823 and 1841, and Ilie Costea, with paintings dated between 1877 and 1916; the rest of the icons from the heritage of the Lancrăm church, which constituted the foundation on which the center was "built", prove to belong to artist's who worked here only occasionally and, very likely, before the beginning of the activity of the other icon painters; the kinship between the two known painters is relatively distant and the biological line is even interrupted (Ilie was born on Ioan's death year), so that we have to assume there were intermediaries, artists who, for the time being, stay anonymous, members of the Costea family or not.

So there is very little certain information. If we add that the works accessible for research signed by the two are fewer than the fingers on one hand, the situation is rather dramatic, because in the scientific circuit there are many works attributed to Lancrăm, but very few of them have anything in common with the signed paintings; on the other hand, these works form an extremely unitary group, with a lineage that is easy to identify. Another obstacle is the fact that there are painting workshops in the neighboring villages other than Lazul, the only center where things are clear. None of the painters whose names we know from Căpâlna, Răhău, Săsciori and Sebeșel left signed icons so that we could get hints on their stylistic features<sup>23</sup>, and it could not be established with whom they were educated in order to even suspect what influences we have to look for. But something from their work must have survived. And because the separation from the works of Mărginimea Sibiului hasn't been performed yet, the danger of confusion will stay at a high level until the discovery of hints that allow the differentiation of artists identified by signature from this mix.

We will further focus on the activity attributed to Lancrăm and Sebeș Valley and we will leave aside works that could be associated to Laz.

**W**E BEGIN with **Ioan Costea**. His signed icons are "The Lamentation of Jesus", dated 1823 and kept in the Lancrăm church until 1959, then in the collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba-Iulia (inv. 489)<sup>24</sup> (FIG. 5), and "Jesus Great High Priest and Teacher", dated 1841 and that can still be found in the Lancrăm.<sup>25</sup> With a high degree of probability we can also assign him the icon of the "Mother of God with the Child, surrounded by prophets" from Văltori, dated 1839<sup>26</sup>, now kept in the museum collection of the Negraia Monastery (FIG. 6), a representation of "Saint Demeter", kept in a



FIG. 1. Ioan Costea (assign), *The Mother of God with the Child, surrounded by prophets*, Văltori, 1839, collection of the Negraia Monastery.



FIG. 2. Anonymous 1, *Mater dolorosa*, Siebenbürgisches Museum Gundelsheim (inv. nr. smg 14493.01).

private collection from Ingolstadt<sup>27</sup> and one of “Saint George”, owned by the National Museum of the Great Union in Alba Iulia (inv. Et. 12808), purchased in 1968 from Maria Cristea of Săsciori (FIG. 7). We notice the preference for a dotted adornment of the clothing, often under the form of flowers, the contours doubled with a thick grey ink, for the shade, the almost semicircular eyebrow arching and the balanced use of pink and of a type of olive green.

Speaking of **Ilie Costea**, personally I've only seen his signature on two wooden crosses, one of them painted in 1888<sup>28</sup> (FIG. 8), the other in 1916.<sup>29</sup> I haven't found the tiny physiognomic features that can be seen on the two artefacts on any of the glass icons I've studied or I've known from the bibliography.

Almost all other things studied further on were made with the help of silvered paper, so that, if we prove that the artists discussed from now on belong indeed to the Lancrem center, we will be able to say that the usage of this material was predominant in this area, compared with the other artistic centers altogether.

First of all we identify the work, impressive by its dimensions, of an artist – named, for now, **anonymous 1** – with a very steady and accurate drawing, whose distinctive feature is the particular way of drawing the eyebrows, with an elegant arching, abruptly delimited when reaching the nose by a short line that suggests a slight frown (FIG. 2), a feature that is only found in this painter's work.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes this detail is not used for all persons of a composition, but normally it is always there. Other features are the abundant use of pink when displaying carnation, the lights traced with white ink, that turns into dots on the lips, a thick grey ink for the shade doubling the contours and the use of shades of green that remind us of the icons of Petru from Topârcea and Nicolae from Ludoş. These colors and the frames, painted with floral or geometrical patterns are the main reasons to doubt the fact that the painter originates from Lancrem, a feeling shared with other researchers.

His collection is impressive, not necessarily by the many topics he approached, but rather by their unique character, compared to traditional iconography. The Western sources of his creation are numerous, though we shouldn't ignore that some of the representations can also be found in Athonite stamps, such as "The Mother of God with the Child" crowned by two angels<sup>31</sup> or the *Pietà*, with the Virgin's heart pierced by a sword<sup>32</sup>. Actually, the particular rendition of the eyebrows seems to originate in the stamps printed in Mount Athos. Transylvanian sources are also present, if we think of the stamps from Hăşdate, identified in the images with Adam and Eve<sup>33</sup> and in some of the icons of Jesus enthroned.<sup>34</sup>

His most frequent topic, from what is known, is the "Mater dolorosa". In painting the icons the pattern used was always the same. The differences are insignificant and rather connected to the coloring and to the landscape. The representations on silvered paper background are predominant, with the Mother of God, depicted in half-section to the right, dressed in a maphorion, with the hands put together for prayer and crying many tears in front of a crucifix with Jesus crucified and a bloodied body. Mary's monogram is placed in the upper corners, usually framed by two decorative roundels. The silvered background is enlivened by flowers made up of differently colored points or with little stars. There are also icons where the silvered paper is replaced with cobalt-blue paint and



FIG. 3. *The Mother of God with the Child*, Athonite stamp, 1846  
(*apud* Papastratos 1990).

Mary's maphorion has a red lining, with the shrill chromatic mix troubling the atmosphere of deep sadness usually depicted by this representation.

Works that illustrate this topic were identified in the district of Alba, in Cetatea de Baltă (two pieces, one still in the church, the other in the collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia, inv. 485) (FIG. 13), Șibot (the collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia, inv. 400) (FIG. 14) and at the Râmeț Monastery (two pieces). Such a representation can be found in the "Cornel Irimie" collection of the Astra museum from Sibiu<sup>35</sup>, and five others belong to public or private collections in Germany.<sup>36</sup>

One piece, found in a private collection in (FIG. 12), of a very sensitive performance, is very useful for the link it helps us make with two other icons, otherwise impossible to assign to the same artist. We are speaking about a representation of "The Three Hierarchs", kept in the van Riesen collection in Munich<sup>37</sup> (FIG. 11) and about an icon of "Saint Nicholas on the throne", with the scene of the endowment of the poor girls depicted at the bottom, kept in the museum collection from Sibiel<sup>38</sup>. On a white-grey background, in a frame with different flowers, among each a stylized rose, the characters are almost summary outlined and the colouring is dominated by a type of red-orange and a type of olive green hardly used in the other icons. The two icons mentioned here lack

the eyebrows painted as cedillas. But compared to the “Mater dolorosa”, their paternity becomes clear. The possibility to assign these two icons to this artist is very auspicious, as the icon in Sibiel is dated 1843 and could be a hint for the beginnings of the painter’s career.

Another precious piece is kept at the Astra Museum from Sibiu, originally from Poiana Sibiului (inv. 1099 OC),<sup>39</sup> which, at the bottom, on the maphorion of the Mother of God, has the year 1853 and the initials P.O. Unfortunately they don’t point to one of the painters whose name is known in Lančrãm or anywhere else in the Southern area of Transylvania. But it might not be the name of the artist, but of the one who ordered the icon.

Another very well represented topic, which is usually a rarity in other centres is “The Holy Trinity in One Body”, a bust with a scepter in its left hand, while the right gives the blessing, with two pairs of cherubs on its sides, belonging to a character with three twin heads with the physical features of Jesus but who illustrates at the same time the presence of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. Copies of this type of icon were identified at the Sebeș museum,<sup>40</sup> The Ethnography Museum in Cluj-Napoca,<sup>41</sup> the “Cornel Irimie” collection of the Astra museum in Sibiu<sup>42</sup> and the Brãila museum.<sup>43</sup>

Another version of the Holy Trinity is “The Crowning of the Virgin”, that can also be found among the works of this artist,<sup>44</sup> depicted with an effusive explosion of color.<sup>45</sup>

The images of “The Mother of God with the Child”, as inspired by the Athonite stamp mentioned above, are also frequent enough. One is kept at the Negraia Monastery (FIG. 16), others are in private collections in Germany.<sup>46</sup> There is another version showing a certain interest for local models, post-Brãncoveanu, still used by Simion Poienaru of Laz. An icon with such a representation, kept in a private collection in Ingolstadt, stands out by its very small dimensions as well (7 x 5 cm), but also because an actual passe-partout of gilded paper has been added to the image (FIG. 19).

A composition taken from a stamp of Gheorghe Pop from Hãșdate with “Jesus Christ High Priest and Teacher”,<sup>47</sup> has been kept in the Lančrãm church, from where it was transferred in the collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia (inv. 492)<sup>48</sup> (FIG. 20). Also seated on the throne, but in the “Deesis” version, Jesus can be seen in an icon from the Stancu collection from Loman (district of Alba) (FIG. 21) and in two others offered for sale by the Fischer Auction House in 2006<sup>49</sup> and 2008.<sup>50</sup> A version of this composition with a stylized throne, reminding of the icons from Nicula dated 1796 and until recently referred to as Iernuțeni icons,<sup>51</sup> was part of the Dancu collection.<sup>52</sup> Surrounded by prophets,<sup>53</sup> baptized in the river Jordan by the Forerunner John,<sup>54</sup> together with the apostles at the Last Supper,<sup>55</sup> praying with tears of blood before the bitter chalice



the angel offers in the garden of Gethsemane,<sup>56</sup> flogged at the pier,<sup>57</sup> nailed to the cross,<sup>58</sup> rising full of life above the grave in a scene of “Resurrection”,<sup>59</sup> or offering Himself as Eucharistic sacrifice, as He squeezed the vine of life in the chalice of communion,<sup>60</sup> the Savior is represented with the same physiognomic features which, beside the identity of the person, uncover old models of Russian-Ukrainian origin. The last version mentioned above, “Christ – the vine” has also a version with a bust of Jesus, framed by giant grapes, with the cross-bearing orb in His left and discreetly making the sign of benediction with His right. An icon with this representation is kept by the Sibiel museum.<sup>61</sup>

Icons such as “The Birth of the Mother of God”,<sup>62</sup> “The entrance of the Theotokos in the temple”,<sup>63</sup> “The Flight to Egypt”,<sup>64</sup> “The Sunday of all saints”<sup>65</sup> are dynamic compositions, with a lively coloring, even though the chromatic palette is limited. “The Birth of Jesus” seems to have the same qualities, but its black and white publishing prevents the study of details.<sup>66</sup> An important icon is “The Lamentation of Jesus” from the Museum of Oltenia, because on its bottom it is dated 1864.<sup>67</sup>

The icons illustrating the story of Prophet Elias,<sup>68</sup> had an undisputed success, one of them being also the proof of the craftsmanship of the artist as a colorist.<sup>69</sup> The same goes for the icons of Saint Haralambos, depicted on a magnificent throne, with the Plague chained at his feet and framed by the miniature images of Jesus and of the Mother of God.<sup>70</sup> More rarely, Saint Haralambos holds a big Evangel in his hands,<sup>71</sup> and it is in these version that he sometimes joins Saint John the Baptist, depicted with wings and with the platter with his severed head at his feet.<sup>72</sup> There are also representations of the Forerunner alone, where he is also depicted with wings, holding the platter with the precious burden in his hands.<sup>73</sup> The preferred stance of Saint Nicholas is as saviour of the portionless maids and of the three wrongly convicted princes,<sup>74</sup> but he also joins Saint John the Baptist, with the Evangel in his hand, just as Saint Haralambos.<sup>75</sup> Saint George slays the dragon,<sup>76</sup> sometimes also receiving the crown of victory from the angel,<sup>77</sup> in the presence of the princess,<sup>78</sup> or else helped by Saint Theodore Tyro.<sup>79</sup> The Three Holy Hierarchs wear their canonicals with emphasis,<sup>80</sup> and Adam and Eve guard the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>81</sup>

The icon from the church in Şibot, today in the collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia, is totally unusual (inv. 396) (FIG. 29), as its surface is divided in 16 squares, each with one character.<sup>82</sup> On the upper row we can see Jesus, The Mother of God with the Child, Saint John Baptist and Saint Apostle Peter, on the next row Saint Apostle Paul, Prophets David and Elias, beneath Saints Gregory, Basil and John and on the last cassette of the fourth row, Saint Paraskeva. Besides the unusual composition, the icon is surprinsing because of the use of gilded paper as well.

Another unusual icon is the one where, on two overlapped registers, scenes from the “Passion of Jesus” are depicted: on the upper part, in the middle, “Judas’ Kiss”, flanked by Peter hearing the rooster singing for the third time and “The Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane”; on the lower part, “The Flogging” along with the image of the “Lamb of God” and a judgement scene.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the icon belongs to the category of works that are fully painted, without using the silvered paper background.

The last icon mentioned here, kept in the wooden church of Curechiu (district of Hunedoara)<sup>84</sup> (FIG. 31), an unusual composition for the Romanian world, therefore rarely depicted, can also be assigned to Anonymous 1. Actually, I’ve only seen this scene, “The Judgement of Jesus in Front of the Sanhedrin” once, on a painting on wood,<sup>85</sup> which the artist, aware of the fact that the theme is unusual, provided with an explanation. Thus, a rectangular tablet was added to the lower part of the composition, containing the following text: “This pattern can be found in Vienna, Austria, carved in stone. And it has seen the light in the year of 1805, May 30. And now, in the year of 1841, it has been taken from the model and put on wood by him Costandin Ghiță Popescu Olănescu. By Ilie, Painter.” The representation of this artist, probably born south of the Carpathians, has many resemblances with the glass icon from Curechiu, but it definitely doesn’t follow the same pattern, as the latter has more similitudes with a stamp by Johann Christoph Böcklin, printed around 1700, probably in Lepizig.<sup>86</sup> Of course, it was only a similar much newer copy that came in the hands of the Romanian painter, obviously interested in new topics, even when they didn’t comply with the teaching of the Eastern Church, a teaching he confessed, regardless of him being Orthodox or Greek-Catholic.

The more than 90 icons that were found are, of course, only a small part of the work of the mentioned artist. But his workshop wasn’t used only to create icons, but also to teach other painters who tried, with their talent and diligence, to imitate their master as much as they could. One of the disciples, **Anonymous 2**, almost succeeded. His notable features are the litheness of the drawing and, from a moment on, a shade of cobalt-blue. The models he used are the same as his predecessor’s, often confused with each other. The main difference one has to look for is the way of depicting the eyebrows, here only with a half-round arching.

A relatively significant number of works from this painter has been preserved. We know two icons depicting “The Crowning of the Virgin”,<sup>87</sup> one of “The Mother of God with the Child” enthroned and surrounded by prophets,<sup>88</sup> an icon of the “Archangels Michael and Gabriel”,<sup>89</sup> three icons of “The Annunciation”,<sup>90</sup> one “Flight into Egypt”,<sup>91</sup> four icons with “The Baptism of Jesus”,<sup>92</sup> a “Palm Sunday” – without the silvered paper background,<sup>93</sup> a *Pietà*, where Mary appears with the heart pierced by a sword,<sup>94</sup> a “Resurrection of Jesus”,<sup>95</sup> two icons of “Saint



FIG. 4. *Pietà*, Athonite stamp, 1843 (apud Papastratos 1990).

Nicholas the Wonderworker”,<sup>96</sup> one icon of “Saint Haralambos”,<sup>97</sup> two with “Saint George slaying the dragon”<sup>98</sup> and two with “Saint George and Saint Theodore Tyro”.<sup>99</sup> The previous artists’s version of “Jesus – the Vine” is also to be found in the collection,<sup>100</sup> as another sign of the great closeness between the two icon painters. A less talented fellow-painter we will call **Anonymous 3** tried to follow the same master. His drawing is gawky, even rigid, totally lacking litheness, the characters look somehow scared because of the way their eyes are depicted, the noses seem flat and the space between the moustaches gives the feeling of deformity. A personal feature of his seems to be a belt in the form of chain links that can be found in some of the icons that were identified.<sup>101</sup>

The artist has been lucky: the number of his works that were preserved – much smaller than for the previous icon painters – is still important, compared to the icons of the painters from the Costea family, for instance. We know five representations of the “Sunday of all Saints”<sup>102</sup>, three of “Prophet Elias”,<sup>103</sup> two of “Saint George slaying the dragon”,<sup>104</sup> two of “Saint Nicholas”,<sup>105</sup> one of “The Crowning of the Virgin”,<sup>106</sup> another one of “Apostles Peter and Paul”,<sup>107</sup> a “Birth of Jesus” and a “Heavenly Table”.<sup>108</sup> He may also be the author of the two representations of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of life,<sup>109</sup> which used woodcut from Hășdatele as pattern.

Only two works of another artist, **Anonymous 4**, are known: a “Mother of God with the Child surrounded by apostles”, kept in the collection of the Râmeț Monastery (FIG. 35) and an “Archangel Michael” from a private collection from Făgăraș. The author of these icons was very concerned with depicting blushing faces and the result is a strange mixture of shades and light that makes the faces look dirty.

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**U**SUALLY THE icons presented here were located by previous researchers either on the Sebeș Valley, Lancrem included, or in Mărginimea Sibiului and even in the Făgăraș County. Especially the icons of the first anonymous artist are assigned everywhere around, without any concern to see the similitudes, even though, as we have seen, the associations were at hand, as an impressive number of works has been preserved, scattered on a wide area. Of an undisputable artistic quality, with a sophisticated repertory, the products of his workshop found their buyers easily, in competition with the ones of the icon painters of Laz, but probably cheaper, because of the silvered paper or sometimes gilded background. Because of this chromatic artifice, the colour palette remained limited, but we can speak about a certain interest for the depicting of carnation, with experiments involving several shades of pink. It seems that the existence of the centre itself depended on the manufacturing and selling of silvered paper, as its disappearance from the market led to a decrease of interest in glass painting in Lancrem. Maybe this is the explanation for the lower number of paintings of the newer generations of artists, but also for the fewer works that can be assigned to Lancrem, compared to the ones of the Poienaru family from Laz or of the Prodan family from Maieri, with hundreds of icons preserved from their creation. But we cannot explain the extreme rarity of icons by Ioan Costea and the lack of interest in signature and dating in the case of the other painters mentioned here.

From the perspective of the style, the link between Ioan Costea and the first anonymous painter is very fragile. The slightly aquiline form of the nose, achieved by a pronounced representation of the nasal septum, often found in the icons of the anonymous artist, can also be seen with the miniature characters of the 1839 icon “The Mother of God surrounded by prophets”, assigned to Ioan Costea (FIG. 1, 6). The same goes for the stylized rose that can be seen in this icon, in the “Mater dolorosa” from the Bucharest collection (FIG. 12) and in the two icons assigned to the first anonymous by analogy, kept in the van Riesen Collection (“The Three Hierarchs”, FIG. 11) and in the Sibiel Museum (“Saint Nicholas”). A vague resemblance can be suspected between the third anonymous and Ilie Costea, but the particular artistic features of the latter cannot be analyzed only by looking at the painted crosses, his complete known work. Nevertheless, a rep-

resentation of the “Crucifixion” from the Sibiel Museum<sup>110</sup> seems to come close enough to the author of the icons with “The Sunday of All Saints” listed above and to the one of the painted cross from 1888 (FIG. 8), so that we can hope that this identity superposition has enough chances to be proven at a future more in-depth research. Until then, the location in Lančrăm of the anonymous painters discussed herein remains a mere assumption.

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**A**FTER THIS research, the history of icon glass painting in Lančrăm is nevertheless subject to certain changes: the contribution of Nicolae was excluded and thereby the genealogy of painters with a missing generation; the present workshop started its activity around the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, meaning much later than thought before. Based on this new chronology, the similitudes between the glass painting of the beginnings of the workshop from Laz and the supposed Lančrăm painters has to be redirected towards other centres. At least five painters lived in Lančrăm, only two of them known by their names, Ioan and Ilie Costea. Ioan was a skilled master, but it is possible that he didn’t paint too much. The most talented seems to be the first anonymous, with works dated between 1843 and 1864. The other icon painters grew around him and Ilie Costea might have been one of them. In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the activity of the workshop decreased, it was redirected towards wood and board painting – as testified, through examples as well, by one of Ilie Costea’s daughters<sup>111</sup> –, but with no significant outcomes. Under the pressure of renewal, of the marginalization of vernacular art, the glass painting from Lančrăm died with discretion and dignity, two of its permanent qualities that are made immortal not only in the surviving icons, but also in the nostalgic and belated admiring poem *In Memory of the Painter Peasant*, written by Lucian Blaga on the occasion of the last icon painter’s death.

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□

## Notes

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3. Juliana Dancu, Dumitru Dancu, *Pictura țărănească pe sticlă*, Editura Meridiane (Bucharest, 1975), 90.
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17. *Ibid.*, 320.
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39. Alina-Geanina Ionescu, *Icoane pe lemn și sticlă din principalele colecții sibiene*, Editura “Astra Museum” (Sibiu, 2009), 82, no. 220.
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41. Ion Mușlea, *Icoanele pe sticlă și xilografurile țăranilor români din Transilvania* (Bucharest, 1995), 118, fig. Y5; Ana Dumitran, “Din iconografia creștinismului românesc: Sfânta Troiță într-un trup,” *Apulum*, XXXVI (1999): 422, fig. 5b; Dumitran, “Sfânta Troiță într-un trup”, 305, fig. 21.
42. Dumitran, “Sfânta Troiță într-un trup”, 304, fig. 20; Coman-Sipeanu, 105, nr. 35.
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47. Kiss-Grigorescu, cat. 33.
48. Gelu-Mihai Hărdălău, "Icoane pe sticlă și lemn în colecția Episcopiei Ortodoxe de Alba Iulia," *Îndrumător Pastoral*, VII (1983): 57.
49. Fischer 2006, 248, nr. 747.
50. Fischer 2008, 73, nr. 62.
51. Ana Dumitran, "Despre icoanele pe sticlă așa-numite de Ierņuțeni," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, series *Historica*, 15/I (2011): 173-174.
52. Dancu, Dancu, *Pictura țămănească*, pl. 111.
53. Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 3).
54. Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 39).
55. Collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia, icon originally from Găbud (fig. 9); Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 139.
56. Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 60).
57. *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 124, no. 81 (fig. 10).
58. Fabritius, Nentwig, 111, no. 75.
59. *Icōne romene su vetro* (Venezia, 1992), 15; Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 164.
60. Fabritius, Nentwig, 81, no. 46; *Poesie des Glaubens*, 45.
61. Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 114.
62. Cornel Irimie, Marcela Focșa, *Icoane pe sticlă* (Bucharest, 1969), pl. 76-77.
63. Fabritius, Nentwig, 172, nr. 135. The same is published in *Rumänische Hinterglaskönnen*, Vestisches Museum Recklinghausen, 9. März bis 3. Mai 1992, Glasmuseum Rheinbach, 9. Mai bis 7. Juni 1992, Herausgegeben von Ruth Fabritius, Eva Hausteine-Bartsch, Ferdinand Ullrich (Recklinghausen, 1992), 97.
64. Dancu, Dancu, *Hinterglasmalerei*, 151. Another copy in Fischer 2008, 24, nr. 7.
65. Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 249.
66. Dancu, Dancu, *Hinterglasmalerei*, 147.
67. *Ibid.*, 148.
68. Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 97); in the mean time, a second work changed its owner (fig. 23). For other copies, see: Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 213; Fischer 2008, 91, nr. 83.
69. Fischer 2008, 79, nr. 67.
70. Fabritius, Nentwig, 225, no. 188; Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 82); Dr. Fischer Kunstauktionen. 195. Auktion – Teil II. *Kunst & Antiquitäten*, Samstag, 27. November 2010, 238, nr. 857; Nicula Monastery, recent acquisition; collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia, inv. 533 (fig. 24).
71. Ingolstadt, private collection (fig. 25).
72. Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 73).
73. Fabritius, Nentwig, 190, nr. 150; Roșca, pl. 77.
74. *Hinterglasbilder. Europa – Asien – Afrika. Ausstellung des Staatlichen Museums für Völkerkunde Dresden* (Dresden, 1996), 26, fig. 26 (without silvered paper background); Fabritius, Nentwig, 237, no. 206; *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 108, no.



- 62; Fischer 2006, 248, no. 746; Fischer 2008, p. 50, no. 32, p. 90, no. 82; *Poesie des Glaubens*, 30; Râmeț Monastery, inv. 125.
75. Dancu, Dancu, *Hinterglasmalerei*, 127.
76. Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 86).
77. Dancu, Dancu, *Hinterglasmalerei*, 149. Another copy in *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 123, nr. 80 (fig. 30).
78. Fabritius, Nentwig, 212, no. 174.
79. Pop collection, Gherla; another copy in 168. *Fischer-Auktion. Kunst. Keramik*, 1. Dezember 2007, 191, no. 577.
80. City Museum of Sebeș, inv. 4066 (Ioana Rustoiu, *Icoanele Lazului*, Editura Altip (Alba Iulia, 2007), 349, fig. 243); Fabritius, Nentwig, 240, nr. 211; *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 122-123, no. 78 (fig. 28); Ingolstadt, private collection (fig. 26); National Museum of the Great Union, Alba Iulia, inv. Et. 12021, purchased from Ioan Coltor, Alba Iulia (fig. 27).
81. Ingolstadt, private collection (Roșca, pl. 54).
82. Hårdäläu, "Zugravi și icoane", 625.
83. Irimie, Focșa, pl. 91-92.
84. Roșca, pl. 61.
85. Kept at the Romanian National Art Museum, Bucharest, inv. i 141.
86. Szilárdfy Zoltán, *Ikonográfia-kultuszörténet. Képes tanulmányok*, Balassi Kiadó (Budapest, 2003), pl. CCXXI, no. 442, the author's collection
87. Coman-Sipeanu, 103, nr. 34; National Museum of the Great Union, Alba Iulia, inv. Et. 13588, purchased from Vasile Breazu from Șugag-Vârtoape (district of Alba) (fig. 32).
88. Glass icons museum of Sibiel.
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90. Ibid., 176, nr. 140; Cornel Ilimie, Hedwiga Rușdea, *Hinterglasmalerei und Holzschnitte in der rumänischen Volkskunst* (Sibiu, s. a.), cat. nr. 127 (with illustration); wall church of Șpălnaca (jud. Alba).
91. Irimie, Focșa, pl. 81.
92. Fabritius, Nentwig, 92, no. 54-55; *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 102, no. 55; Fischer 2008, p. 25, no. 8.
93. Irimie, Focșa, pl. 78. The same icon also published by Irimie, Rușdea, cat. no. 128 (with illustration) and in *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 117, no. 72.
94. Irimie, Focșa, pl. 80.
95. Collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia, inv. 397, origin: the Șibot church.
96. Collection of the Orthodox Archbishopry of Alba Iulia, inv. 163, origin: the Mogoș-Miclești church (fig. 22); Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 202 (without silvered paper background).
97. Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 243.
98. Fabritius, Nentwig, 209, no. 171; Coman-Sipeanu, 141, no. 53.
99. Coman-Sipeanu, 143, no. 54; *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 107, no. 61.
100. Dancu, Dancu, *Hinterglasmalerei*, 149.

101. “The Sunday of All Saints”, Râmeș Monastery (district of Alba); “Prophet Elias”, Recea Monastery (district of Mureș); “The Birth of Jesus”, private collection.
102. Râmeș Monastery (Gelu-Mihai Hărdălău, “Icoanele pe sticlă din colecția muzeală a Mănăstirii Râmeș,” *Îndrumător Pastoral*, III (1979): p. 156); Pop collection, Gherla (Roșca, pl. 56); Fabritius, Nentwig, 257, no. 222; *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 104, no. 57; Fischer 2008, p. 49, no. 31.
103. Fischer 2008, p. 84, nr. 74 (same work at Fischer 2005, p. 240, no. 699); Recea Monastery (district of Mureș); Nicula Monastery (district of Cluj), recent acquisition.
104. *Zerbrechliche Heiligenwelten*, 106-107, no. 59, 61 (fig. 33).
105. Ikonen Museum, Frankfurt am Main; Stancu collection, Loman (district of Alba) (fig. 34).
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108. Dancu, Dancu, *Hinterglasmalerei*, pl. 112.
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110. Nicolau, Popescu, Alexandrescu, 143.
111. Dancu, Dancu, *Pictura țărănească*, p. 93.

### Abstract

#### Icon Painters of Lancrăm

After this research, the history of icon glass painting in Lancrăm is nevertheless subject to certain changes: the contribution of the painters Nicolae and Petru was excluded and it was established that the activity of the workshop the present workshop started its activity around the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, meaning much later than thought before. Based on this new chronology, the similitudes between the glass painting of the beginnings of the workshop from Laz and the supposed Lancrăm painters has to be redirected towards other centres. At least five painters lived in Lancrăm, only two of them known by their names, Ioan and Ilie Costea. Ioan was a skilled master, but it is possible that he didn't paint too much. The most talented seems to be the one named in this study the first anonymous, with works dated between 1843 and 1864. The other icon painters grew around him and Ilie Costea might have been one of them. In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the activity of the workshop decreased, it was redirected towards wood and board painting, but with no significant outcomes. Under the pressure of renewal, of the marginalization of vernacular art, the glass painting from Lancrăm died with discretion in the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Keywords

glass ikon, glass painting, anonymous painter, Laz, Sebeș, Sibiu, Ioan Costea, Ilie Costea, Petru from Topârcea, Nicolae from Ludoș.