

TRANSFER AND RECEPTION OF THE KYIVAN SPIRITUAL, ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THREE WOODEN CHURCHES IN MARAMUREȘ, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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The eighteenth-century iconographic program of three wooden churches in Maramureș County – those of Borșa, Poienile Izei and Ieud Deal – include the portraits of saints connected to the ecclesiastical and political history of Kyiv. In the first of these churches, located in Borșa, there is a depiction of Saint Theodosius from the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves (Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra), on the eastern wall of the altar, painted in 1775 by an anonymous artist, with the inscription Пр[ε]под[о]бнии Ѳ[ε]одоси Печерскіи [“prepodobni Theodosii Pecherskyi”] (fig. 1) and another saint, who now looks like a holy woman. The inscription by this figure has been partially lost, but the letters Преподобнии... (“prepodobnii...”) can be read (fig. 2). On the opposite wall, a miraculous or historical scene is depicted (fig. 3). The hierarchs represented in this scene are wearing the Russian *klobuk*** and the architecture of the church building depicted in the centre of the composition is similar to the Russian style. In the second wooden church, located in the village of Poienile Izei, there is a depiction, painted in 1794 by a local artist, Gheorghe Plohod, of 12 monks at an altar: six on the upper level of the northern wall (М: Антоние, Теодосіе, Маіси, Ауѣетіе, Мелетіе, Сиргіе) and six opposite, on the southern wall (Єфрем, Герасим, Шофоніе, Даміан [Дометіе?, Деметріе?], Ѳофан, Ѳодор) (figs. 4-5). The monks are wearing typical Russian monastic clothing. In the third wooden church in Ieud Deal (the Hill Church), painted in 1782 by Alexander Ponehalski, there are murals depicting Peter, Metropolitan of Kyiv (“Петра Митрополить ди ла Кієвь”) (fig. 6); knyaz (Prince) Apostle Vladimir (958-1015) (“Кнѣза Аптл Владіміра”) (fig. 7); Metropolitan Jonah of Moscow (+1461, recognised as a saint in 1596) (“ІѠны: Мтропліт: Мѡковски”) (fig. 8); and Metropolitan Aleksei of Russia (+ 1378)¹ (“Алеѣіа Мітрополіт Російскіе”) (fig. 9).

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** An item of non-liturgical clerical clothing of Slav tradition, worn by monks and bishops. In Russian/ Ukrainian tradition it is rounded on top. The higher ranks of ecclesiastic hierarchy wear a white *klobuk* (the patriarch, the metropolitan). In the Greek Orthodox tradition, this headdress is flared on top. The word *koukoulion* is synonym to *klobuk*.

¹ An icon depicting “Metropolitan Alexios Surrounded by Hagiographic Scenes” was painted by Dionysios at the end of the fifteenth century for the Dormition Cathedral in Kremlin; today it is *Annales Universitatis Apulensis Series Historica* 25, I (2021): 261-280; <https://doi.org/10.29302/auash.2021.25.1.13>.

Analysing the inscriptions with the names of the persons represented, it was possible to identify a certain correspondence with their place of their origin. For example, in the case of the saints depicted at Ieud Deal and Borșa, the inscriptions indicate their place of origin: Peter, Metropolitan of Kyiv; “Theodosius Pecherskii” (from the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves); Jonah, Metropolitan of Moscow; and Aleksei, Metropolitan of Russia. This facilitates the identification of the person represented. But the inscriptions do not always indicate the identity of the saint depicted precisely. For example, we have the names of the monks depicted in the church in Poienile Izei, but no link to their place of origin. In the Synaxarion of the Eastern Church, one can find many saints with similar names who lived in different periods. Another issue is the identity of Peter, Metropolitan of Kyiv, painted in the altar of the Ieud Deal church. There were two famous metropolitans in Kyiv with the same name: Peter the Primate of the Russian Church, who lived in the fourteenth century, and Peter Mohyla, who lived in the seventeenth century. Which one was represented in the church in Ieud Deal? Another research question arises from the partially altered inscription in the church in Borșa: who is the holy person represented in the altar, next to Theodosius from the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves? Did the artist depict a woman or is what we see the consequence of a repainting/restoration that changed the features of the portrait?

The aim of this study is, firstly, to elucidate the identity and origin of the saints represented. Secondly, it aims to shed some light on the origins of the thematic influences. The paths of transfer and reception of the images depicted are key to identifying the connecting links between Maramureș and the Church of Kyiv, especially the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves. The temporal range of the study is the eighteenth century, the time in which the paintings in all three churches were created. We may see that, in this context, the presence of the aforementioned images in the iconographic program of the wooden churches indicates some ties between the village communities and Kyiv.

The identity of the saints

In the church in Borșa, on the eastern part of the half-vault of the altar, there is a depiction of the Mother of God on a throne, with the Child on her knees. On either side of the throne, there are two saints kneeling (fig. 10). One of them, according to the inscription, is Theodosius from Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. The identity of the other saint remains, for now, a mystery. The features of the portrait suggest a holy woman, but the partially lost inscription still preserves the word “Преподобни”, which is in masculine form, not the feminine form, “Преподобна”. Analysing the inscriptions, two different “hands” can be

part of the Tretyakov Gallery’s collection in Moscow. M. V. Alpatov, *Early Russian Icon Painting* (Moscow: ISKUSSTVO, 1978), 150. Nikodim Pavlovich Kondakov, *Icons* (New York: Parkstone Press International), 151, fig. 103.

detected, that is, two different painters inscribed the texts with the names of the saints. It is obvious that the original inscription has been disturbed by another hand (see figs. 1 and 2 for details). This second “author” (painter or restorer) of the inscription was familiar neither with the subject of the composition, nor the Cyrillic letters. It appears to me that either the image we see now, or the last letter of the inscription preserved (the “и” (“i”) from Преподобни - “prepodobnii”) is a result of misunderstanding the original Cyrillic letters, combined with conservation issues and the challenges of restoration.

First, let us assume that the figure represented is St Anthony from Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. He was the co-founder of the monastery, together with St Theodosius. Both of them were very popular in Russia, Ukraine and the Polish-Lithuanian territories, hence they were often painted together; indeed, Theodosius was an inseparable companion of Anthony in the iconography of that time. Another argument supporting the assumption that St Anthony is depicted is that compositions depicting Theotokos flanked by the two founders of the monastery, similar to the one in Borşa, had been widespread throughout the region since the eleventh century, when the first icon was painted. The icon was known under the name “Mother of God of the Caves” or the “Svensk Mother of God” (Kyivan School).² In Michał Janocha’s analysis of the development of iconography of saints Theodosius and Anthony in the former territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russia,³ he identified several compositions depicting the two holy monks either together or separately. The most widespread composition was the Svensk icon, where the two saints were always depicted on either side of Theotokos. There were other icons also developed from this prototype, but with some changes, for example, a different throne, different blessings, gestures or body position, and so on.

Variants of this scene also appeared and developed in engravings.⁴ One type of icon depicting Theotokos with Christ and the two founders of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra was reproduced in an engraving of the Akathist, in 1693 in Kyiv (sheet 187).⁵ Comparing the scene depicted in the church in Borşa with these

² The icon, which is 67 x 42 cm, was attributed to Alimpios, an iconographer from Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Today it forms part of the collection of the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. *Icoane* [Icons], (Oradea: Aquila ’93, 2007), 28, 33; Kondakov, *Icons*, 45, fig. 31.

³ Michał Janocha, “Iconografia świętych ojców ruskiego monastycyzmu” [Iconography of the Holy Fathers of Ruthenian Monasticism], in Alicia Nowak and A. Gronek, eds., *Rola monasterów w kształtowaniu kultury ukraińskiej w wiekach XI-XX* [The Role of the Monasteries in Shaping Ukrainian Culture in the 11th-20th Centuries] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Szwajpold Fiol, 2012), 13-42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁵ Роксолана Косів [Roksolana Kosiv], “Господи нехай буде благословення Твое на цьому місці”: іконографія та причини популярності св. Антонія і Теодосія Печерських на творах риботицьких майстрів 1670-1750-х рр.” [“Lord, Let Your Blessing Be on This Place”:

two types of composition (the Svensk icon and the engraving of the Kiev Akathist, 1693 edition), it can be seen that the engraving was the inspiration for scene depicted in Borșa. There are other types of icons depicting the Theotokos with Child and the saints Theodosius and Anthony, in particular, paper icons that were printed at the Monastery of the Caves.⁶ It should be noted that in the iconography of the region, the two saints, Anthony and Theodosius, were inseparable. They were depicted together in icons as two spiritual fathers, and as symbols: one the symbol of the eremitic (anchoretic) life and the other of the coenobites.

Secondly, let us speculate a little, taking into account the preference for Theodosius over Anthony and Anthony's eventual oblivion from the collective memory, as presented by G. P. Fedotov.⁷ Based on this, we could speculate that the artist who created the icon in Borșa depicted a female saint and not Anthony of the Caves. In this case the inscription was misinterpreted by the second "hand" or painter. At this stage of the argument, it is important to examine what the painting restoration documentation says. It is possible that the female features of the portrait in its current form and the preserved inscription were the result of a misunderstanding when repainting or restoring the image. Various conservation and restoration works were carried out at the church between 1954 and 1959 (building restoration),⁸ then in 2009 and 2011 (restoration of the architecture and paintings).⁹ The mural in question was restored in 2011. According to the restoration documentation, conservation issues made it difficult to recognise the scenes depicted. The church had partially caught fire in the past and, as a result, the wall painting was covered with smoke residues. Rain was another problem, having penetrated the old wooden shingle roof and modified the colours. Variations in temperature, humidity and other environmental factors had caused the plaster and colour layers to become detached from their wooden support, accelerated the ageing of the binding agent. Thanks to these problems, it was, according to the

Iconography and the Reasons for the Popularity of St Anthony and St Theodosius of Pechersk on the Icons of 1670-1750s by the Rybotychi Masters"], in *Вісник Львівської національної академії мистецтв, Проблеми Пластичного та Ужиткового Мистецтва* 36 (2018): 96.

⁶ Waldemar Deluga, "Ukrainian Prints from the Lavra Pecerska Monastery in Kiev (17th and 18th Centuries)," *Apulum. Series Historia et Patrimonium* 59 (2013): 22-23.

⁷ G. P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind: Kievan Christianity, the Tenth to the Thirteenth Centuries*, vol. I (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1966), 110-111.

⁸ Files no. 1168 and no. 1169 for the church of Borșa, fund Direcția Monumentelor Istorice [Directorate of Historical Monuments, henceforth cited as DHM], Institutul Național al Patrimoniului archive [National Institute of Heritage, henceforth cited as NIH], Bucharest.

⁹ The restoration file of the church from Borșa, fund Programul Național de Restaurare [National Program for Restoration, henceforth cited as NPR], NIH archive: building restoration and painting conservation/restoration (there is no inventory number). The restoration was carried out by conservators Cornelia and Dinu Săvescu. The painting was investigated by art historian Ana Dobjanschi.

documentation, very difficult to read the inscriptions. For these reasons, St Theodosius was assumed to be St Elijah and the other saint was identified as a holy woman, although no name was given.¹⁰ A photograph made before the restoration, preserved in the aforementioned documentation, allows comparison of the image of the composition before and after restoration. We may ask, in this context, whether the art historian's suggestion (constrained by the severe conservation issues) influenced the restoration process. In this case, we have two hypotheses: either the word Преподобнии ("prepodobnii") is a misinterpretation involving the final letter being replaced with an "и" ("i"), inspired by Theodosius's inscription, or the final visual presentation of the composition is a reinterpretation, turning a male figure into a female one. The intervention of another artist's hand is also obvious in the inscription of the name of Theodosius, which is clearly a distortion of the initial text. In the case of the other saint, it is hard to clarify the issue because of the lack of evidence. However, given that the two founders of the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves were largely inseparable in iconography throughout centuries, and taking into account the obvious repainting, it was most probably St Anthony that was initially depicted in the altar of the wooden church in Borşa.

The identity of the saints represented in the church in *Ieud Deal* is clear, with one exception: the identity of Peter, Metropolitan of Kyiv. There were two famous metropolitans of Kyiv with the same name, living centuries apart from each other. On the one hand, taking into consideration that the metropolitan was represented among other medieval Kyivan Rus' saints, he could be Peter (+1326, recognised as a saint in 1339), the first Hierarchy of the Russian Church, contemporaneous with knyaz Vladimir, sometimes called "equal to the Apostles". Metropolitan Peter, together with the other figures depicted – such as knyaz Vladimir, metropolitans Aleksei and Jonah, and saints Anthony and Theodosius of the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves, were not only the most famous saints of the Eastern Orthodox world, but were venerated and cherished, both in the Moscow Orthodox Church and by the Old Believers, and also figured in both popular piety and in elite circles.¹¹ They were permanent fixtures in the "pantheon" of the patrons of the Russian Church, hence they were usually painted together.¹² There were four hierarchs that had the same

¹⁰ Ibid., Painting conservation and restoration, 3.

¹¹ Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 74-77, 104.

¹² They were painted on all types of icons (both wooden icons and metal ones). Mirosław Piotr Kruk, "Dewocjonalia Rosyjskie (Moskiewskie) z Pól Bitewnych muzeah Polskich" [Russian (Moscow) Devotional Objects from Battlefields in Polish Museums], in A. E. Мусин [A. E. Musin] and O. A. Щеглова [O. A. Scheglova], eds., *В камне и в бронзе. Сборник статей в честь Анны Песковой* [In Stone and Bronze. Essays Presented in Honour of Anna Peskova] (St Petersburg: Russian Academy of Science, Institute for the History of Material Culture, 2017) [Proceedings, vol. XLVIII]), 241-252.

feast day (5/18 October): Peter, Aleksei, Jonah and Philip. Their feast was established in 1596, but Philip was not added to the memorial until 1875. This could be why he was not depicted in the iconographic composition in the Ieud Deal church.

On the other hand, this Metropolitan Peter of Kyiv could also have been Metropolitan Peter Mohyla (1586/1597-1647), of Romanian origin and a great defender of Orthodoxy in the region. On this topic, two Romanian art historians (I. D. Ștefănescu and Anca Bratu) have stated that it is Peter Mohyla represented at Ieud Deal, but they did not present much evidence.¹³ I here attempt to further elucidate the issue of the identity of this Kyivan metropolitan by re-evaluating the evidence.

Peter Mohyla was the son of Simeon, hospodar of Wallachia (1601-1602) and Moldavia (1606-1607), and of the Hungarian princess, Margareta. Simeon, supported the ecclesiastical politics of Maramureș County. He sent a letter in 1607 to the captain of Huszt, Valentin Drugeth of Hamonna, asking him to return the Peri monastery to the Romanian bishop. In response to his requests, in a document issued on the March 9, 1607, Count Valentin Drugeth not only returned the monastery, but also called Simeon Mohyla “our beloved neighbour and friend,”¹⁴ suggesting they had good political ties.

After Simeon Mohyla lost the Moldavian throne, Peter and his mother sought refuge in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (now Ukraine). Peter was educated in Lviv, at the Dormition Brotherhood, which was Orthodox at that time. In 1627 he was elected Archimandrite of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, and in 1633 he was consecrated Metropolitan of Kyiv. He died in 1646 and was buried at Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Taking into consideration his Romanian origins (he spoke Romanian, so he could be a connecting link between Romanians and Kyiv), his father’s ties with Maramureș, his status in the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom (as Archimandrite of the Monastery of the Caves, Metropolitan of Kyiv and founder of the Theological Academy), we may conclude that he was the one represented in the church mural in Ieud Deal. By the time Alexander Ponehalski was decorating that church, Peter Mohyla was more than famous in the region and several portraits had already been painted.

¹³ I. D. Ștefănescu, in *Arta veche a Maramureșului* [The Old Art of Maramureș] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1968), 130, suggests that Peter Mohyla was represented due to his writings in defence of Orthodoxy, and that the depiction of other saints reflected the ties between Maramureș, Moldavia and Russia; Anca Bratu, *Pictura murală maramureșeană: meșteri zugrăvi și interferențe stilistice* [Mural Painting of Maramureș: Masters and Stylistic Interference], ed. by Ana Bărcă (Bucharest: Editura ACS, 2015), 133, footnote 147.

¹⁴ Al. Cziple, “Documente privitoare la Episcopia de Maramureș” [Documents Regarding the Diocese of Maramureș], *AARMSI*, II series, XXXVIII (1916), 288-289. Huszt, March 9, 1607, Valentin Drugeth de Hamonna was asked by Maramureș County and by the Moldavian hospodar, Simeon, to return the Peri monastery to the Romanian bishop.

The oldest portrait still preserved today, made during his life, is a fresco in the church of the Berestovo Monastery¹⁵ (today incorporated in Kyiv). The church was restored and rebuilt, with the financial support of Peter Mohyla, in 1643. The mural was painted by two Greek brothers known as John and George.¹⁶ In the scene depicted at Berestovo, Peter Mohyla is kneeling in front of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Great Hierarch enthroned. On either side of the throne, Theotokos and knyaz Apostle Vladimir are depicted. As Waldemar Deluga, and later Vera Tchentsova, remarked, there are resemblances between the portrait of Peter Mohyla from Berestovo (fig. 11) and the portrait of Ieremia Movilă (fig. 12), as well as with the portrait of Metropolitan Gheorghe Mohyla (fig. 13), depicted in Sucevița Monastery as having a short, brown beard.¹⁷ Saint Vladimir was painted with a short grey beard. The features of the portraits depicted at Ieud Deal are different from those at Berestovo. The beard of Metropolitan Peter is longer, as is the beard of knyaz Vladimir; their colours (brown for Peter and grey for Vladimir) correspond to the age of each respectively. Waldemar Deluga analysed other depictions in a study dedicated to the portraits of the Mohyla family.¹⁸ He concluded that the official portraits of Peter Mohyla were typical of West Ukrainian compositions: the hierarch was depicted between a window or a curtain and a table with a crucifix, with books, a clock, and heraldic symbols on the wall.¹⁹ Although the Ieud Deal portrait of Metropolitan Peter is stylistically different from the others investigated here, there is one resemblance: the colour of the beard, which reflects the age of the metropolitan. Metropolitan Peter of Kyiv and all Rus' (+1326, recognised as a saint in 1339) was older and was always depicted with a grey beard.

According to Serhii Plokyh, Peter Mohyla was extolled as a ruler of Ruthenia and compared with the Kyivan Rus' hospodars Vladimir the Great and Yaroslav the Wise.²⁰ Given that he was also often compared with knyaz Vladimir and painted next to him, my opinion is that it is Peter Mohyla, the

¹⁵ Ioana Feodorov, "La Kiev, pe urmele portretelor mitropolitului Petru Movilă" [In Kiev, Following the Portraits of Metropolitan Peter Mohyla], in Constantin Manolache, ed., *Istorie și Cultură. In onorem academician Andrei Eșanu* [History and Culture. In honorem of the Academician Andrei Eșanu] (Chișinău: Biblioteca Științifică, Secția Editorial-Poligrafică, 2018), 718. She made a record of the portraits of Peter Mohyla made between seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. She searched in the Kyivan churches and monasteries (Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, Berestovo Monastery), church books (manuscripts and printed books), Kyivan museums, other church collections.

¹⁶ Vera Tchentsova, "Pour un corpus des inscriptions grecque de l'église Saint-Sauveur de Berestovo," *Museikon* 1 (2017) : 79.

¹⁷ Waldemar Deluga, "Portraits de la famille Movilă du XVII^e siècle," *RRH-BA* 31 (1994): 82; Tchentsova, "Pour un corpus," 79.

¹⁸ Deluga, "Portraits de la famille Movilă," 73-85.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

²⁰ Serhii Plokyh, *La porțile Europei. O istorie a Ucrainei* [The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine] (Bucharest: Editura Trei, 2018), 124-125.

Metropolitan of Kyiv, depicted in the altar of Ieud Deal church. Was it something new or strange in the development of iconography in Romanian churches for a relatively recent ecclesiastical figure to be substituted for other well-known saints? There is a precedent in the paintings of Sucevița (1595-1596), where instead of the image of the hymnographer Joseph, the artist painted metropolitan Mitrophanes. M. P. Kruk argues that this choice could have been related to the desire to honour the Metropolitan of Moldavia (1591-1595), who bore the same name.²¹

The holy monks depicted in the paintings in church in Poienile Izei could have been inhabitants of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. One of the main pieces of evidence supporting this are the Russian monastic clothes and *koukoulion*²² they are wearing. The journal of Paul of Aleppo mentions the Antiochian Patriarch Makarios's visit to the land of the Cossacks.²³ He provided useful details about Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra: the appearance of the monks' cells, how many monks lived there, and so on. He also described the buildings, including the main church, and the monastic clothing. On this last matter, he wrote that the monks wore a black suiting *podkap* (a monastic headdress, also called *kamilavka*), a black linen coat that looked like velvet, and a very large *kamelaykion** that covered the eyes and had buttons up to the neck.²⁴ Created almost a century after Paul of Aleppo's description, the mural in Poienile Izei still preserved many of the details he mentioned, although not the colours of the monastic clothing, which could have been chosen for aesthetic reasons. The monks' clothes are similar to the ones depicted in the mural in Borșa, where the inscription confirms that Theodosius is represented.

Another key piece of evidence is found in the names, which suggest that the monks depicted in Poienile Izei were inhabitants of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Some of the names are similar to those mentioned in the Paterik²⁵ of the Lavra (Anthony, Theodosius, Moses, Sergey, Damian, Theodor); others are identical to those mentioned in the Akathist, printed in Kyiv in 1764 (Meletie, Efrem, Theophan). There are three holy monks – Auxentie, Gherasim and

²¹ Mirosław Piotr Kruk, *Zachodnioruskie ikony Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem w wieku XV-XVI* [West Russian Icons of the Mother of God with the Child in the Fifteenth - Sixteenth Centuries] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2000), 38.

²² The *koukoulion* is a piece of monastic headdress, like a hood, round on top in Russian/Ukrainian tradition.

²³ Paul de Aleppo, *Jurnal de călătorie. Siria, Constantinopol, Moldova, Valahia și Țara Cazacilor* [Journal Travel. Syria, Constantinople, Moldavia, Wallachia and the Land of the Cossacks], ed. by Ioana Feodorov (Brăila: Editura Istros a Muzeului Brăilei Carol I, 2020), 466-571.

* *Kamelaykion* is similar to *epanokamilavkion*. It is a black veil put on the *kamilavka*. Together they form the *koukoulion* or the *klobuk*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 513-514.

²⁵ *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, ed. by Omeljan Pritsak (Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1989).

Sofronie – that I have not yet been able to identify; their names are not found in the Paterik or in the Akathist. The cult of the holy monks from the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves was officialised in 1670 and the “Lives of the Saints of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra” was written between 1680 and 1690 by Dimitrios (who later became metropolitan of Rostov) while he was a member of the monastic brotherhood.²⁶ In consequence, at the end of the eighteenth century, when the church in Poienile Izei was decorated, they were very well known in the region.

The origin of the thematic influence – the nature of the ties between Maramureş and Kyiv

The paths of transfer and reception of the images depicted are key to identifying possible ties between Maramureş and Kyiv. In the attempt to trace the pathways through which thematic influence was transferred and identify the ties between the parish churches and Kyiv, I developed three hypotheses, set out and discussed below.

Hypothesis 1. There was an artistic linkage between Maramureş and Kyiv.

I started researching this hypothesis taking into account the possibility that the artists who painted the aforementioned churches in Maramureş had developed their skills in the Kyivan artistic and ecclesiastic environment. They came to Maramureş with that cultural-artistic background and naturally depicted the most famous saints of the region. This hypothesis opens up interesting research perspectives and questions: where did they study iconography? Who was their teacher? Were the saints depicted in the aforementioned churches in Maramureş frequently painted in Polish-Ukrainian churches or were these representations unique in the region?

Saints Anthony and Theodosius from the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves were very popular in the region and were often depicted in iconography. Roksolana Kosiv produced an interesting study on the reasons for their popularity, with a special focus on icons made between 1670 and 1750 by artists who mostly worked for the churches in the Przemyśl and Mukachevo diocese of the Ukrainian (Rus’ ka) Church.²⁷ After analysing 20 icons depicting the saints, she states that the theme was inspired by the engravings in Lviv and Kyiv liturgical books, and that the church building painted in the centre of the compositions, between the two saints, often reflected the local architecture. She argues that the presence of such icons is evidence of a unity with the spiritual centre of Kyiv, and that it reflects the importance of the two monks as role models due to their spiritual experiences gained from practicing “angelikos bios.”

²⁶ Feodorov, “La Kiev,” 713.

²⁷ Kosiv, “Господи нехай буде,” 93-107.

Another important aspect, as far as this subject is concerned, is the opinion of Paul Bushkovitch.²⁸ According to him, the cult of Anthony from Pecherska was established after 1394 in the northern principality of Tver and his feast appeared in Moscow liturgical books after 1400. By that time, he was clearly recognised as a saint, although no relics existed and the establishment of his sainthood was not officially proclaimed by a church council.²⁹ After 1550, an uncorrupted body was found near the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves. That body was identified as Saint Anthony, the founder of the monastery. The case of Saint Theodosius was equally typical: his cult developed at the end of eleventh century; in 1103 his name was included in the Synodyk. The cult went into decline after the Mongol destruction of Kyiv in 1238, but it was revived at the same time as the monastery's revival in the seventeenth century.³⁰ This decline and revival of the cult of the saints was also reflected in iconography. As Roksolana Kosiv notes, few icons were painted in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but the theme started to regain popularity from the middle of the seventeenth century, due to the masters of Rybotycze (1670-1750) who worked for the Przemyśl and Mukachevo diocese. She highlights their important contribution to the development of the theme in the iconography of the region.³¹ Due to the fact that the parishes in Maramureș were placed under the full jurisdiction of the Mukachevo eparchy at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the cult of the saints and the iconographic theme also spread in Maramureș. Today, icons depicting the two holy monks are preserved in Polish, Ukrainian, Hungarian and Russian collections.³²

²⁸ Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society*, 75-78 and 102.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

³¹ Kosiv, "Господи нехай буде," 94.

³² Some of them were published, such as the icons from the collection of the History Museum in Sanok: Katarzyna Winnicka, *Ikony z XVII wieku w Muzeum Historycznym w Sanoku. Katalog Zbiorow* [Icons from the Seventeenth Century in the Historical Museum in Sanok. Collection Catalog], vol. III (Sanok, 2018), 24, cat. no. 12, seventeenth-century icons from Stańkowa (inv. no. MHS/S/3506); 63, cat. no. 59, seventeenth-century icon from Owczary (inv. no. MHS/S/4467); 74, cat. no. 74, seventeenth-century icon from Dobra Szlachecka (inv. no. MHS/S/4162); 76, cat. no. 79, seventeenth-century icon from Ulucz (inv. no. MHS/S/3715) and cat. no. 82, seventeenth-century icon from Mików (inv. no. MHS/S/3795). An icon from the Greek-Catholic religious collection in Nyiregyháza has been published in Bernadett Puskás, "Icônes de la collection gréco-catholique d'art religieux de Nyiregyháza," *Apulum. Series Historia et Patrimonium* 51 (2014), 311, fig. 2, seventeenth-century icon from Tolcsva (inv. no. 2010.165). Roksolana Kosiv studied and published some icons painted in the 1750s in the Rybotycze centre: "Icons from Wola Wyżna and Świątkowa Mała Churches of the Master Yakiv from Rybotycze 1670-1680-s," *Series Byzantina XVII* (2019): 41-58; Eadem, "Творчість ікономаляра Івана Крулицького в контексті діяльності риботицького осередку (1700-ті рр.)" [Works of Art by Ivan Krulytskyu in the Context of the Activity of the Icon Painting Centre in Rybotycze (1700's)], *ВІСНИК, Історія мистецтва* 5 (2017): 89. Others are exposed, for example the eighteenth-century icon at the Archdiocesan Museum in Przemyśl (inv. no. MAPrz la/5523).

Given the popularity of the two saints from Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra – whose fame extended beyond the boundaries of Kyiv as they became regional saints, the popularity of Kyiv – which was often compared to Jerusalem and considered a holy place of the region,³³ and the popularity of the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves, it was natural that the holy monks from the Lavra were also being depicted in neighbouring regions, such as Maramureș.

The author of the wall painting in Borșa seems to have studied iconography somewhere in the Polish-Ruthenian region or came from that region to Maramureș. He used both the Romanian and church Slavonic languages to write the inscriptions accompanying the scenes. This was unusual, as Romanian masters of the eighteenth century typically did not use the Slavonic language any more. Some stylistic similarities can be detected between the iconography from Borșa and icons from the Sanok region, Rybotycze, and other Ruthenian areas. The master who created the murals in Borșa seems to have been familiar with the engravings in books printed in Lviv and Kyiv in the seventeenth century. As discussed above, I suggest that this master was not local, but rather was commissioned to come to Maramureș to paint the church murals. Since there are no other similar wall paintings preserved in Maramureș, we can only hypothesise on his origin; however, the ties with Ruthenian iconography are not in doubt.

The case of the church in Ieud Deal is different. The author of the wall painting, Alexander Ponehalski, was not born in Maramureș, but somewhere in Eastern Slovakia.³⁴ He came to Maramureș after the plague in 1740, married Elena from Berbești and lived the rest of his life in Maramureș, where he undertook a wealth of artistic activity. In the church in Călinești Căeni, one of the first he painted that is still preserved today, he did not depict the aforementioned saints. However, they are depicted in the last church he painted: the one in Ieud Deal. This suggests that it was not the master's own artistic and cultural background but other reasons and other ties with Kyiv (maybe ecclesiastic ones or cultural transfer through religious books) that drove the decision to depict the saints.

³³ Lilya Berezhnaya, "Topography of Salvation: 'The New Jerusalem' in Ruthenian Polemical Literature (End of the Sixteenth - Beginning of the Seventeenth Century)," in D. Frick, S. Rohdewald, S. Wiederkehr, eds., *Lithuania and Ruthenia. Studies of a Transcultural Communication Zone (15th-18th Centuries)* [Research on Eastern European History] (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2007), 246-271.

³⁴ Alexandru Baboș, "Mărturiile istorice adunate în biserica de lemn din Oncești cu rezonanțe în arhitectura, arta și limba Țării Maramureșului" [Historical Evidence Gathered in the Wooden Church from Oncești with Echoes in Architecture, Art and the Language of the Land of Maramureș], *AMMar.* 15 (2019): 143.

The name of the master who created the murals at Poienile Izei was recently discovered by Alexandru Baboș.³⁵ He was a local master, Gheorghe Plohod from Dragomirești village, father of the well-known local master, Ioan Plohod. Stylistically there are no obvious resemblances to iconography from Poland or Ukraine, but a thematic influence on his work from that region can be detected, suggesting the existence of other kinds of ties with those areas.

Hypothesis 2. There was both an ecclesiastic and an artistic linkage.

Considering one of the means of iconography – as a document which reflects its own epoch – it is my conjecture that the thematic approaches seen in the three studied churches reflects the local and regional historical context and was a manifestation of regional piety. Following this path, I propose that the local churches (that is, the ecclesiastic communities) of the three villages may have had ties with the Kyivan Metropolitanate. There are factors that support the development of such a linkage: the pilgrimage to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra³⁶ and Kyiv's status as the “the New Jerusalem”;³⁷ the mobility and migration of the population from one area to another for other reasons (trade, plagues, social issues, etc.);³⁸ and Kyiv's educational system (it is possible that local community members studied at Mohyla's Theological Academy). The roots of the ecclesiastical ties between Poienile Izei and Kyiv can be detected in the seventeenth century through the existence of an antimimension issued in 1632 by Jeremiah Tisarovskyi, Bishop of Lviv. The antimimension was discovered in 1962 during the restoration of the church, inside the Holy Table of the Altar. The antimimension is now on display in the Orthodox Archbishopric Museum in Cluj-Napoca. Its engravings are similar to those printed by the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves.³⁹ Not only are the engravings a link to the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves; V. A. Tkachuk argues that “the main sources of supply of holy relics of saints for antimensions were the Greek East, the Kyiv-Pechersk Monastery (the

³⁵ Alexandru Baboș and Mihai Covaci, “Raport de cercetare al unor picturi din bisericile de lemn maramureșene” [Research Report on Some Paintings of the Wooden Churches from Maramureș], *AMMar.* 16 (2020): 612.

³⁶ Viorel Ciubotă, Vasile Rus et al., eds., *Episcopia greco-catolică de Mukachevo. Documente*, [Greek-Catholic Diocese of Mukachevo. Documents] vol. II (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 2012), 86, doc. no. 39: A pilgrimage certificate issued in 1740 by the Archimandrite of the Lavra, Timothy, preserved in the State Archives of Transcarpathia, fund 64, opis 1, file 233, f. 1.

³⁷ Regarding Kyiv as the New Jerusalem, see Berezhnaya, “Topography of Salvation;” Eadem, “His Foundation is in the Holy Mountains. Some Remarks on the New Jerusalem Symbolism in the Age of Mazepa,” *Series Byzantina* 4 (2006): 71-82.

³⁸ Livia Ardelean, “Câteva date privind epidemiile din Maramureș în secolele XVI-XVIII” [Some Datas on Epidemics in Maramureș in the seventeenth - eighteenth Centuries], *RAM* 10 (2017): 41-70.

³⁹ Deluga, “Ukrainian Prints,” 25-26; Idem, *Grafika z kręgu Ławry Pieczarskiej i Akademii Mohylańskiej XVII i XVIII wieku* [Graphics from the Circle of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and Mohyla Academy of the 17th and 18th Centuries] (Kraków: Collegium Columbianum, 2003).

relics of its righteous), the sacristy of the Holy Synod (only in the eighteenth century).⁴⁰ According to his research, in the Metropolitanate of Kyiv, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the abbots and the Institute of Kliros (*Capitul*) (fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) helped the bishops to sanctify and issue new antimensions. The abbots were also responsible for the distribution of antimensions in the territories established by the metropolitan.⁴¹ At the time the antimension from Poienile Izei was issued, Peter Mohyla was Archimandrite, Abbot of the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves. Based on what has been said so far, it is possible to conceive that the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves was the centre which established ties with this spiritual and artistic centre, echoes of which arrived in Maramureş in the form of the icons of the two saints.

Hypothesis 3. There was cultural transfer through printed books.

This hypothesis assumes that the scenes depicted in the churches in Borşa and Poienile Izei were inspired by the engravings in liturgical books printed in the region. For example, in the case of Borşa, the master seems to have been familiar with the engravings in seventeenth-century liturgical books printed in Lviv and Kyiv, such as the Book of Gospel, the Apostle, the Triodion, the Penticostarion, the Minaion, the Anthologion, and so on. The compositions of some scenes were inspired by Ilya's engravings and others used by the printing houses of Kyiv and Lviv.⁴² The iconographic themes in the murals in Poienile Izei were mainly inspired by the Triodion and the Penticostarion. There are also a few scenes inspired by Menaion or the Book of Gospel. There is a detail of a pelican inserted in the scene depicting the Crucifixion of Christ that was, most probably, inspired by an engraving in the Liturgikon, which was printed in 1691 at the printing house of the Stavropegiion Brotherhood in Lviv.

The Kyivan holy monks depicted in the churches in Borşa and Poienile Izei are mentioned in the Paterik of the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves, in the Akathist (Canon of the Assembly of Saints from the Close Caves and Far Caves) and in *The Life of the Saints*, written by Peter Mohyla. An edition of the Paterik was published in 1661 and contained engravings by Ilya; another was published in 1702 with engravings by L. Tarasevich.⁴³ The sermon of the holy

⁴⁰ В. А. Ткачук [V. A. Tkachuk], "Українські православні антими́нси XVII-XVIII ст.: система функціонування та смислове навантаження" [Ukrainian Orthodox Antimensions of 17-18th C.: System of Their Functioning and Meaning] (PhD Diss., Taras Shevchenko National University Kyiv, Kyiv, 2018), 8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴² Waldemar Deluga's study "Les gravures orthodoxes et gréco-catholique de la République Polonaise des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles," in *Revue des Études Slaves* LXVI, no. 2 (1994): 167-284, offers rich information about the engravers who worked in Lvov and Kyiv and also about the history of the printing house.

⁴³ Muriel Hepell, Introduction to *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, XXXV; Deluga, "Les gravures orthodoxes et gréco-catholique", 272-274.

monks from the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves was established in 1670, so in the eighteenth century, when the churches in Maramureș were painted, their cult had clearly extended beyond the borders of local piety. Engravings of saints Theodosius and Anthony were depicted on the title pages of many religious books.⁴⁴ Engravings of their images were printed on the title page of the *Anthologion*, 1619; in the *Akathists* (1674 and 1693); in the 1661 edition of the *Paterik*, illustrated by Master Ilya; in the 1702 edition of the *Paterik*; and in the 1709 edition of the *Akathist*, illustrated by Master Titus, which also depicted the Cathedral of the Kyivan Caves Lavra.⁴⁵ Their printed portraits were like a landmark. The liturgical books printed in Kyiv also bore engravings depicting knyaz Apostle Vladimir.⁴⁶

Although, no Kyivan liturgical printed books have been found to date in Maramureș,⁴⁷ the masters or founders of the churches could have had access to the the *Paterik* and to the stories described therein. The unique scene depicted in Borșa, on the western wall behind the altar, could be a miraculous scene from the history of the Cathedral of the Assumption Church of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. The transfer of iconographic themes from the books printed by the Kyivan Metropolitanate and their appearance in the iconography of the churches in Maramureș proves that there were ties between the two worlds, especially cultural and artistic links, but also ecclesiastical and sometimes even political ones.⁴⁸

Conclusions

From the above analysis of origins of the themes depicted in the wooden churches in Borșa, Poienile Izei and Ieud Deal, I propose that it is reasonable speak of the transfer and reception of Kyivan spiritual, artistic and cultural influences in the eighteenth-century iconography found in Maramureș.

Taking into consideration factors such as the historical context of eighteenth-century Maramureș (the issue of ecclesiastic authority at the beginning of the eighteenth century and the start the bishops of Mukachevo's

⁴⁴ Volodymyr Stasenko, *Christ and the Virgin in the Woodcuts of the Seventeenth Century Galician Cyrillic-Printed Books: Peculiarities of Their Portrayal and Interpretation* (Kyiv: Ukrainian Academy Printing House, 2003).

⁴⁵ Kosiv, "Господи нехай буде," 96.

⁴⁶ Stasenko, *Christ and the Virgin*, 36.

⁴⁷ They were brought to Maramureș, but it is possible they have vanished or they are unknown by scholars (nobody has yet an inventory of the religious books circulating in Maramureș that were printed outside the Romanian territories). A document issued in 1757, preserved in the State Archives of Transcarpathia, mentioned that the Bishop of Mukachevo had to prevent religious books from Moscow entering Maramureș. The document was published by Viorel Ciubotă, Vasile Rus et al., eds., *Episcopîa greco-catolică de Mukachevo. Documente*, vol. III (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 2015), 336-337, doc. no. 57.

⁴⁸ Miroslaw Piotr Kruk's study "The Lvov 'Oktoih' of 1630 in the collection of the Jagellonian Library in Cracow," in *Series Byzantina* 1(2003): 128, analysed the printed book, emphasising all the links (cultural and political) between the Ruthenian, Polish and Moldavian lands.

full jurisdiction over the county at the end of that century); the geographical position of this county (which was not far from Kyiv); and the mobility of the population between the two regions, we may conclude that the presence of the aforementioned themes was the result of the artistic and the cultural ties between Maramureş and the Kyiv region. These ties were at times strengthened by ecclesiastic linkages due to pilgrimages to Kyiv, especially to the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves.

The arguments presented in this study imply that the scenes depicted in the three wooden churches in Maramureş were part of an iconographic phenomenon as a result of the region having Kyiv as its spiritual, cultural and artistic centre.

Acknowledgement

This study was undertaken with the support of a performance scholarship granted by University 1 December 1918 of Alba Iulia, contract no. 371/30.06.2021.

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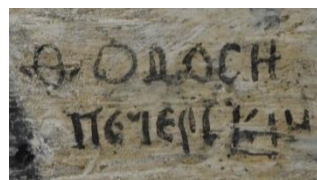


Fig. 1. Saint Theodosius from the Kyivan Monastery of the Caves, Borşa, 1775, unknown master, full image and details of the inscription.



Fig. 2. Unknown saint, Borşa, 1775, unknown master, full image and detail of the inscription.



Fig. 3. Miraculous scene, altar, western wall, Borșa, 1775, unknown master.



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Figs. 6-7. Peter Metropolitan of Kyiv, and Knyaz Apostle Vladimir, altar, Ieud Deal, 1782, master Alexander Ponehalski.



Figs. 8-9. Jonah Metropolitan of Moscow, and Alexei Metropolitan of Russia, altar, Ieud Deal, 1782, master Alexander Ponehalski.



Fig. 10. Theotokos flanked by the holy monks from Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, Borşa, 1775, anonymous master.



Fig. 11. Portrait of Peter Mohyla, Berestovo.

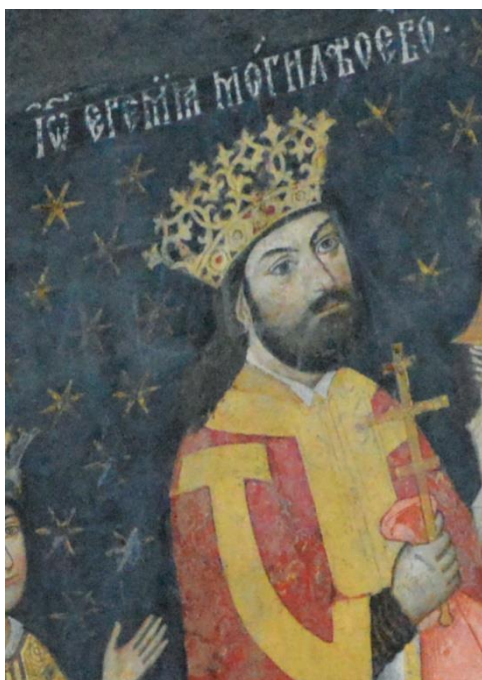


Fig. 12. Portrait of Ieremia Movilă, Sucevița.

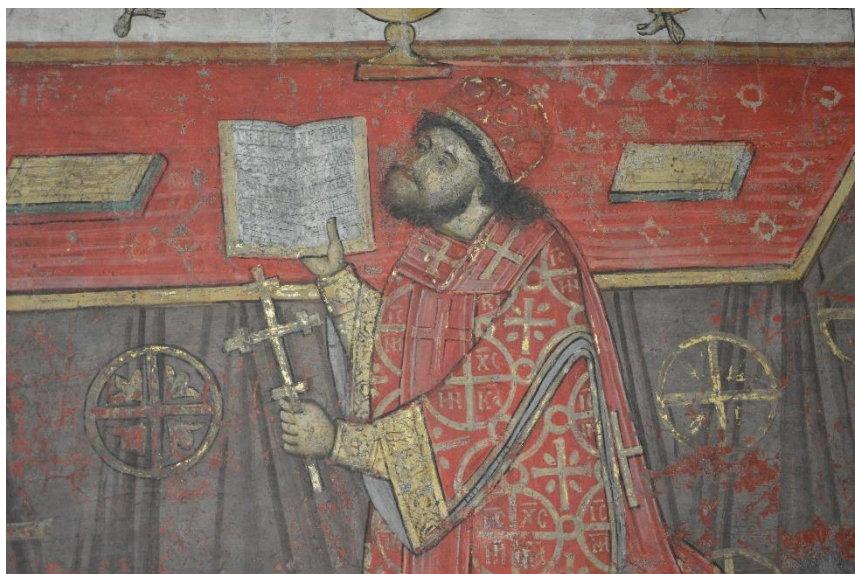


Fig. 13. Portrait of Metropolitan Gheorghe Movilă, Sucevița.